

THESIS

**EXPLORING LISTENING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES WITH
AMERICAN AND BRITISH ACCENTS AMONG EFL STUDENTS**

By

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ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING

MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY

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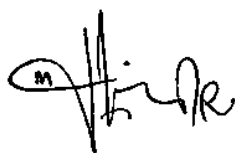
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EXPLORING LISTENING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES WITH AMERICAN AND BRITISH ACCENTS AMONG EFL STUDENTS

THESIS

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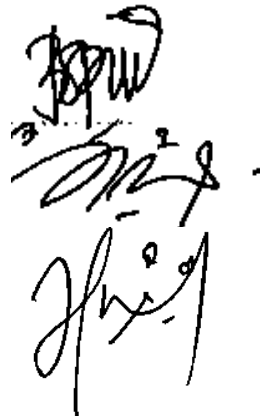
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To the Dean of Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training

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In

Malang

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

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Here with me,

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Declare that:

1. This thesis has never been submitted to any other tertiary education institution for any other academic degree.
2. This thesis is the sole work of the author and has not been written in collaboration with any other person, nor does it include, without due acknowledgement, the work of any other person.
3. Should it later be found that this thesis is a product of plagiarism, I am willing to accept any legal consequences that may be imposed on me.



Malang, 2 Juni 2026

Handwritten signature of Azka Amara Metriyandani.

Azka Amara Metriyandani

MOTTO

"So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers."

QS. Ali 'Imran (3: 139)

"Never back down just because the climb is steep. The summit belongs only to those who refuse to quit halfway."

"If you look closely, most overnight successes took a long time."
(Steve Jobs)

DEDICATION

This thesis is lovingly dedicated to my dearest parents, my ultimate safe harbor, whose infinite love, quiet sacrifices, and endless prayers have shielded me through every storm. To my beloved younger siblings, Syahdzat and Malika, who always fill my days with laughter and pure motivation. I also offer my deepest reverence to Kakung and Mbah Ni for their boundless warmth and blessings, and a beautiful tribute to the (Almh.) Mbah Ibuk and Mbah Uti, whose memory and love will forever guide my steps. My sincere appreciation also goes to Pak De Budi, Bude Mus, Mbak Muna and Mas Syahril for being my constant source of encouragement. Lastly, I am profoundly grateful to my advisor, Mr. Harir Mubarok, M.Pd., for his immense patience, brilliant insights, and inspiring guidance that brought this thesis to life. Thank you for walking alongside me in this chapter.

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This thesis, entitled '**Exploring Listening Comprehension Difficulties with American and British Accents among EFL Students,**' is submitted to fulfill the requirements for the Bachelor's degree in English Education (S.Pd) at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University Malang. The researcher deeply realizes that this milestone could not have been reached without the invaluable support, guidance, and contributions of various parties. Therefore, the researcher wishes to express heartfelt appreciation to those who have lent their hands throughout this journey.

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2. Prof. Dr. H. Muhammad Walid, M.A, as the Dean of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty.
3. Maslihatul Bisriyah, M.TESOL, as the Head of English Education Department.
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Finally, the researcher realized that this thesis is not perfect. Suggestions and constructive criticism are most welcome. Hopefully, this thesis can be beneficial and provide insight for readers, as well as for her.

Malang, 31 Mei 2026

The Researcher,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Azka Amara Metriyandani', written in a stylized, cursive script.

Azka Amara Metriyandani

LATIN ARABIC TRANSLITERATION GUIDE

Based on the collective decision of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 158 of 1987 and Number 0543b/U/1987, it has been decided that the Arabic-Latin transliteration guidelines used in this thesis are as follows:

A. Words

ا	= a	ز	= z	ق	= q
ب	= b	س	= s	ك	= k
ت	= t	ش	= sy	ل	= l
ث	= ts	ص	= sh	م	= m
ج	= j	ض	= dl	ن	= n
ح	= <u>h</u>	ط	= th	و	= w
خ	= Kh	ظ	= zh	ه	= h
د	= d	ع	= ‘	ء	= ’
ذ	= dz	غ	= gh	ي	= y
ر	= r	ف	= f		

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ABSTRACT

Metriyandani, Azka Amara, 2026, Exploring Listening Comprehension Difficulties With American and British Accents Among EFL Students. Thesis, English Education Department. Faculty of Education and Teacher Training. The Islamic State University of Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Advisor: Harir Mubarak, M.Pd

Keyword: Listening Comprehension, Listening Difficulties, American Accent, British Accent, EFL Students

This qualitative case study explores the specific listening comprehension challenges faced by fourth-semester EFL students at UIN Malang when dealing with American and British accents, analyzing the underlying factors contributing to these difficulties. Data were gathered from five primary participants through classroom observations, Google Forms questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews, then analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that students face multi-dimensional challenges. In acoustic-phonetic decoding, they struggle with word segmentation due to British vowel shifts, non-rhoticity, and American flapping. In pragmatic processing, word-for-word translation habits prevent them from mapping suprasegmental features, obscuring the speaker's true intent or tone. These challenges stem from a destructive chain reaction: a real-world exposure gap due to sterilized classroom audio, a heavy reliance on conscious cognitive strategies like searching for keywords, and rapid mental fatigue that drains working memory during decoding. Consequently, teachers are suggested to incorporate explicit phonetic training and authentic media, while students should engage in independent exposure to build phonetic automaticity and reduce cognitive overload.

ABSTRAK

Metriyandani, Azka Amara, 2026, Exploring Listening Comprehension Difficulties With American and British Accents Among EFL Students. Tesis, Tadris Bahasa Inggris. Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Pembimbing: Harir Mubarok, M.Pd

Kata kunci: Listening Comprehension, Listening Difficulties, American Accent, British Accent, EFL Students

Studi kasus kualitatif ini mengeksplorasi tantangan pemahaman mendengarkan spesifik yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa EFL semester empat di UIN Malang ketika berhadapan dengan aksen Amerika dan Inggris, menganalisis faktor-faktor mendasar yang berkontribusi terhadap kesulitan ini. Data dikumpulkan dari lima peserta utama melalui observasi kelas, kuesioner Google Formulir, dan wawancara semi-terstruktur, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan reduksi data, tampilan data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa siswa menghadapi tantangan multidimensi. Dalam decoding akustik-fonetik, mereka berjuang dengan segmentasi kata karena pergeseran vokal Inggris, non-rotik, dan kepakakan Amerika. Dalam pemrosesan pragmatis, kebiasaan terjemahan kata demi kata mencegah mereka memetakan fitur suprasegmental, mengaburkan maksud atau nada sebenarnya dari pembicara tersebut. Tantangan-tantangan ini berasal dari reaksi berantai yang merusak: kesenjangan paparan dunia nyata karena audio kelas yang disterilkan, ketergantungan besar pada strategi kognitif sadar seperti mencari kata kunci, dan kelelahan mental yang cepat yang menguras memori kerja selama decoding. Akibatnya, guru disarankan untuk menggabungkan pelatihan fonetik eksplisit dan media otentik, sementara siswa harus terlibat dalam paparan mandiri untuk membangun otomatisitas fonetik dan mengurangi kelebihan kognitif.

الملخص

مترينانداني، أزكا أمارا). ٢٠٢٦. (استكشاف صعوبات فهم الاستماع مع اللهجتين الأمريكية البريطانية بين طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. أطروحة، قسم تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية التربية وتأهيل المعلمين، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية بمالانغ.

المشرف: حرير مبارك، الماجستير .

الكلمات المفتاحية: فهم الاستماع، صعوبات الاستماع، اللهجة الأمريكية، اللهجة البريطانية، طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

تستكشف هذه الدراسة القائمة على دراسة الحالة التحديات المحددة في فهم الاستماع التي يواجهها طلاب قسم تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية في المستوى الرابع بجامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية بمالانغ عند التعامل مع اللهجتين الأمريكية والبريطانية، مع تحليل العوامل الكامنة المؤدية إلى هذه الصعوبات. تم جمع البيانات من خمسة مشاركين رئيسيين عبر الملاحظة الصفية، والاستبيانات الرقمية، والمقابلات شبه المنظمة، ثم جرى تحليلها باستخدام تقليص البيانات، وعرضها، واستخلاص النتائج منها. وكشفت النتائج أن الطلاب يواجهون تحديات متعددة الأبعاد؛ ففي مستوى التفكير الصوتي الفونيتيكي، يعاني الطلاب من صعوبة تقسيم الكلمات بسبب تحولات الحروف المصوتة البريطانية، والـ "non-rhoticity"، والـ "flapping" في اللهجة الأمريكية. وفي مستوى المعالجة التداولية، تمنعهم عادات الترجمة الحرفية (كلمة بكلمة) من استيعاب الملامح الفوق مقطعية، مما يحجب النبرة والنية الحقيقية للمتحدث. وتتبع هذه التحديات من فجوة التعرض للغة الحقيقية نتيجة الاعتماد على المواد الصوتية التعليمية المبسطة داخل الصف، والاعتماد المفرط على الاستراتيجيات المعرفية الواعية كالبحت عن الكلمات المفتاحية، مما يسبب إرهاقاً ذهنياً سريعاً يستنزف الذاكرة العاملة. وبناءً على ذلك، توصي الدراسة المعلمين بدمج التدريب الصوتي الصريح والمواد السمعية الأصلية، وتحت الطلاب على التعرض الذاتي المستقل للغة لبناء التلقائية الصوتية وتخفيف العبء المعرفي الزائد .

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the background of the study, research question, research objectives, scope and limitations of the study, significance of the study, and definition of key terms.

1.1. Background of the Study

In the era of globalization and the digital revolution of the 21st century, the ability to communicate in English has become a fundamental necessity. English, as the global lingua franca, plays a crucial role in various fields including education, business, diplomacy, and international cultural exchange. According to data from Crystal (2022) there are more than 1.5 billion English speakers worldwide, with the majority being non-native speakers. This phenomenon has created a complex linguistic landscape where variations in English accents are inevitable in international communication. This further emphasizes the importance of effective listening skills to understand and respond accurately to these various forms of speech.

The primary sense of listening plays a crucial role in human interaction with the surrounding environment. Through listening, individuals not only capture sounds but also process information, understand meaning, and build connections with the outside world. In the context of human communication, the ability to understand spoken messages or listening comprehension is the main foundation on which dialogue and the exchange of ideas are built. As a complex skill, listening comprehension involves more than just hearing words; it requires decoding sounds, understanding vocabulary, interpreting intonation, and inferring meaning in real

time (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). These intricate processes highlight that listening is not only active but also filled with challenges, especially when students are confronted with a foreign language.

The challenge of understanding from another language becomes even more complex and crucial when translated into the realm of foreign language learning. While in one's native language, the process of understanding speech occurs almost automatically, in the context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), listening skills require much greater cognitive effort (Simantiraki et al., 2023). This receptive skill is not only the basis for the development of productive skills such as speaking, but more than that, it is the key to effective oral communication and the main gateway to acquiring language. In an academic context, English language students are required to master various aspects of language, including understanding different English accents.

In Islam, the importance of language mastery has been emphasized since the story of Prophet Adam. As stated in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 31:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ
هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

“And He taught Adam the names - all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful.” (Al-Baqarah: 31).

This verse illustrates that listening is not a passive activity, but rather involves the ability to discern, reflect, and respond intelligently. Similarly, mastering listening skills in language learning, especially foreign languages, requires not only hearing but also understanding, selecting meaning, and applying it appropriately. In the

context of English as a foreign language, this also includes the ability to recognize and understand various accents, such as American and British English, which often have different phonological and intonation characteristics that challenge students' comprehension.

Exposure to those two accents in academia and everyday life through films, music, podcasts, and news is often unbalanced. Khazanah (2023), highlights that the American accent, supported by the dominance of global media and entertainment industries, tends to be more widely consumed by Indonesian language students. Meanwhile, the British accent, despite its prestige, may be less familiar to most students. Significant phonological differences between the two accents, such as vowel pronunciation (e.g., path /pæθ/ in AmE vs. /pa:θ/ in BrE), consonants (e.g., the release of the /t/ sound as a flap /d/ in AmE as in water), and intonation, can pose a major challenge for students. Systemic differences in rhythm, stress patterns, and intonation between these two accents create a different auditory landscape that EFL students are encouraged to become familiar with, especially when engaging with varied English-speaking contexts.

In the context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), particularly in Indonesia, listening comprehension skills are often a major source of difficulty for students. Data from the 2023 English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) ranks Indonesia 81st out of 113 countries with a score of 453, which falls into the low proficiency category. This finding is consistent with research by Ilahiy (2023). Wahyuningsih & Salsabila (2023), which identified that 68% of Indonesian EFL students experience significant difficulties in understanding native English

conversations, with the main factors being the speed of native speakers and unfamiliarity with accent variations.

Based on previous research, Ilahiy (2023) examined the effectiveness of British and American accents on listening comprehension among second-semester students. This quantitative study with a correlational approach divided participants into two groups, each exposed to one of the accents. The results showed that accent had a significant effect on listening comprehension, with the group exposed to the American accent showing an average score increase of 16.2 points, while the British accent group showed a lower increase of 11.28 points. These findings concluded that the American accent had a slightly better impact on students' comprehension.

Another study conducted by (Ramadhianti & Somba, 2021) highlights the difficulties Indonesian EFL students have in comprehending listening comprehension. This qualitative descriptive study used questionnaires to collect data from 85 participants who took Basic Listening classes. The main findings revealed that the main challenges experienced by students stemmed from the speed of native speakers, variations in accents in the material, and long and detailed listening texts. The implications of this study are expected to help teachers design more appropriate learning strategies to overcome these difficulties.

In a different previous research, as stated by Phomprasert & Grace (2020), has provided us with evidence, once again, that listening is one of the most difficult and simultaneously neglected language skills. Interestingly enough, they found that students' listening scores can be drastically different depending on the accent they are following, as some are easier to understand than others. While their study has demonstrated that there are significant differences in accent listening, the research

concentrated largely on first-year tertiary level students and not those at a higher level. This leads to a crucial research gap. They are students in their fourth semester of study, and they are considered to be in a transitional phase between basic and advanced levels, making it difficult for them to face the challenges because processes such as listening could take on a ‘different nature’ compared to those faced by less experienced students. Yet, this category has been relatively less explored in earlier research. Thus, it is necessary to conduct a further examination of how fourth-semester EFL students perceive various English accents so that more light can be shed on the identification of their learning problems and the design of optimal teaching strategies.

Based on a review of preliminary research, there are several significant research gaps. Research by Ilahiy (2023), successfully identified differences in effectiveness between American and British accents, but its quantitative approach, which focused on test scores, did not reveal the nature and root causes of the difficulties faced by students in depth. Meanwhile, the research by Ramadhianti & Somba (2021) and the findings of Phomprasert & Grace (2020) did acknowledge accent variation and anxiety as sources of difficulty, but neither study conducted a systematic comparative analysis of the two main accents to identify the specific and unique challenges of each accent.

In addition, the three studies did not capture the learning dynamics in a critical population, namely fourth-semester students. Most previous studies focused on first-year students or mixed samples from various semesters, thus ignoring the transition moment when students should begin to develop their ability to adapt to variations in English. This methodological gap has led to a lack of understanding

of the interaction between the phonetic characteristics of accents and the cognitive characteristics of students at specific stages of development. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by thoroughly exploring the challenges and factors that cause difficulties faced specifically by fourth-semester students in understanding American and British accents, so as to produce more targeted pedagogical implications.

In an academic environment, such as fourth-semester students in the English Language Education Study Program, are at a critical stage in the development of their language skills. They have passed the basic stage of language learning and are beginning to take more complex courses, such as Interpretive Listening, Critical Listening, or Phonology. At this level, they are expected to be familiar with different accents. However, initial observations and my experiences often show that many students still have difficulty understanding conversations or monologues that use unfamiliar accents, especially British English, even though they may be more fluent in American English. This difficulty can have an impact on their academic performance, confidence, and readiness to interact in a multicultural global environment.

This study aims to explore the challenges faced by fourth-semester students in understanding American and British English accents in listening comprehension. This study also aims to identify the fundamental factors that contribute to these difficulties, whether related to linguistic, cognitive, or affective aspects. By gaining deeper insights into the real experiences and perceptions of students, this study aims to provide recommendations for lecturers and curriculum designers in developing more effective and responsive listening materials and teaching strategies.

1.2. Research Question

Based on the background description above, the research questions for this study are formulated as follows:

1. What are the challenges faced by fourth-semester students in understanding American and British accents in listening skills?
2. What factors cause students to have difficulty understanding American and British accents in listening comprehension activities?

1.3. Research Objective

Based on the research questions that have been asked previously, the objectives of this study can be formulated as follows:

1. To identify the challenges faced by fourth-semester students in understanding American and British accents in listening skills.
2. To analyze the factors cause students to have difficulty understanding American and British accents in listening comprehension activities.

1.4. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to active fourth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at UIN Malang in the 2025/2026 academic year. This study aims to explore the challenges and factors that influence their listening comprehension of American and British English accents, with a focus on students' perceptions and experiences during listening activities. However, this study is limited to students in one semester and one institution, which may not represent the experiences of students in other semesters or universities. In addition, this study only examines listening skills related to these two accents and does not cover other language skills.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, the results of this study can contribute to the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), particularly in the study of listening skills and the influence of accent variation. At the practical level, this study has several main contributions, namely:

- a. For Students:** Can increase awareness of the importance of familiarization with various English accents and is expected to be a reflection to improve their learning strategies
- b. For Study Programs:** It can provide valuable input for curriculum development, especially in courses that emphasize listening skills, so that more attention is paid to exposure and practice with various English accents.
- c. For Future Researchers:** It can be a reference in compiling listening learning materials that take into account the gradation of accent difficulty and language variation.

1.6. Definitions of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, several key terms in this study are defined as follows:

- 1. Listening Comprehension:** The active ability to capture, interpret, and understand messages from spoken English. In this study, this ability includes understanding the direct meaning of conversations, capturing unspoken meanings, and the ability to identify detailed information in various conversational situations.

2. **Accent Variation Comprehension:** Various obstacles experienced by language students in understanding English speech with unfamiliar accents. These difficulties can stem from differences in phonological sound systems such as vowel/consonant pronunciation, intonation patterns, and speech rhythms characteristic of American English (AmE) and British English (BrE) accents.
3. **British English (BrE):** The standard form of the English language as spoken and written in the United Kingdom. In the context of this study, it specifically refers to the phonological variations and distinctive accent characteristics, such as non-rhoticity where the /r/ sound is omitted unless followed by a vowel, and specific vowel pronunciations like Received Pronunciation, that pose distinct auditory challenges for students.
4. **American English (AmE):** The standard form of the English language as spoken and written in the United States. In this study, it refers to the specific phonetic and accent features, such as rhoticity where the /r/ sound is fully pronounced, "flapping" where /t/ and /d/ sound like a quick /d/, and distinct intonation patterns that students encounter and process during listening tasks.
5. **English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Students:** Students whose native language is not English and who study English in an environment where English is not the primary language of instruction. In this study, this term specifically refers to students enrolled in English language education programs at universities in Indonesia who are the subjects of this research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the researcher reviews several literature and discusses several theories related to the variables and topics of this study to avoid misinformation and discuss previous studies.

2.1 Listening Comprehension

In the process of acquiring a second language or a foreign language, listening skills play a crucial role as the initial foundation for receiving information. As one of the receptive skills, listening is not merely a passive activity of hearing sounds, but rather an active and complex cognitive process. It is through this skill that language learners acquire linguistic input, which is then processed in the brain to build comprehension, before they are ultimately able to produce the language in both spoken and written forms.

At the higher education level, particularly for students in English language education programs, the ability to understand spoken language is key to academic success. This is because most course material, instructions, and academic interactions are delivered in the target language. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between simply “hearing” and “comprehensive listening.” Before discussing the factors and challenges that influence it further, this section will first explain the definition and deeper nature of listening comprehension itself.

2.1.1 The Definition of Listening

Listening is a skill that entails the capacity to accurately perceive and understand spoken language. This skill involves the complex process of understanding the speaker's accent or pronunciation, grammatical structure, word

choice, and general comprehension of meaning. Listening is a crucial skill that includes the ability to accurately identify and understand what others are saying. A skilled listener can handle all of these tasks simultaneously, demonstrating a high level of listening skill (Saricoban, 1999). In addition to this comprehensive definition, listening is basically characterized by the listener's effort and attention.

Downs (2008), defines listening as trying to hear something, paying attention, or taking notice. Listeners must maintain concentration during the listening process and ignore anything that might distract them. Furthermore, Miranti states in her journal, quoting Saha and Rezwan, that "listening is a skill in the sense that it is a process that is related to but different from hearing, which only involves passive perception of sound. Meanwhile, listening involves active and direct analysis of the flow of sound." Furthermore, listening is an activity in which the listener makes assumptions or guesses about the speaker's intended meaning.

Listening comprehension is a complex process that involves understanding, interpreting, and analyzing spoken messages. According to Vandergrift & Goh (2012) Listening comprehension is an active process in which listeners construct meaning through the integration of linguistic knowledge and world knowledge. This process involves three main stages: auditory perception, linguistic processing, and meaning interpretation. In the context of EFL, listening comprehension is a fundamental skill that underlies the development of other communicative competencies.

Therefore, based on those statements, listening is not just hearing, but listening is an active action that someone performs to be able to understand and receive any information that someone has given to them by using voice, directly or

indirectly. This process involves accurately perceiving accents, syntactic structures, word choices, and overall meanings, while integrating linguistic and world knowledge to construct comprehension, making it a fundamental skill for effective communication in contexts like EFL learning.

2.1.2 Cognitive Processes in Listening: Bottom-Up and Top-Down Processing

Listening comprehension is not a passive reception of sound rather, it is a complex cognitive activity that involves the simultaneous interaction of two primary cognitive processes: bottom-up and top-down (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). According to Richards (2008), bottom-up processing refers to a process where listeners decode incoming auditory data sequentially. It starts from the lowest level of linguistic cues such as phonemes, syllables, and individual words and moves up to grammatical structures to construct meaning. In this process, the listener's ability to recognize phonetic boundaries and distinct accent variations is crucial. If a learner fails to accurately decode these phonological signals, the entire bottom-up mechanism is disrupted, which often occurs when EFL students encounter unfamiliar American or British pronunciations (Field, 2008).

Conversely, top-down processing involves utilizing the listener's prior knowledge, cultural background, and contextual clues to predict and interpret the speaker's overall message (Rost, 2011). Instead of analyzing individual sounds, top-down processing allows listeners to bypass unfamiliar words or ambiguous accents by using schematic knowledge to grasp the global meaning. In real-world listening, these two processes do not operate in isolation; they work in tandem within an interactive model of processing. Experienced listeners constantly switch between bottom-up decoding and top-down inferencing to achieve successful

comprehension (Buck, 2001). However, for fourth-semester EFL students, an imbalance often occurs. When faced with rapid American or British accents, their limited bottom-up automaticity forces them to over-concentrate on decoding individual sounds, which exhausts their cognitive capacity and prevents them from effectively using top-down strategies to comprehend the actual pragmatic meaning of the discourse.

2.2 Listening Comprehension Difficulties

Listening comprehension in a second or foreign language is widely recognized as a highly challenging and problematic skill for EFL students. To systematically investigate the nature of these difficulties, especially when dealing with accent variations such as American and British English, a comprehensive theoretical framework is required. This study synthesizes four seminal frameworks of listening taxonomy proposed by Field (2009), Ruetten (1985), Rost (2013) and Buck (2010). Together, these theories map out the trajectory of listening difficulties from low-level acoustic decoding and contextual gaps to cognitive processing limitations and high-level pragmatic interpretations.

2.2.1 Phonetic and Decoding Difficulties

According to Field (2009), The primary bottleneck in non-native listening comprehension occurs during lower-level processing, specifically during the decoding stage. Decoding refers to the cognitive process of translating raw acoustic signals into recognizable linguistic units. Field asserts that EFL listeners frequently face severe challenges in phoneme recognition, the ability to distinguish foreign vowels and consonants and word segmentation, which is the capacity to identify word boundaries within a rapid stream of connected speech.

When students encounter distinct accents like American and British English, their decoding process ceases to be automatic. For instance, phonological variations such as American rhoticity (pronouncing the post-vocalic /r/) versus British non-rhoticity, or American flapping (turning /t/ into a soft /ɾ/ in words like water), create immediate perceptual distortions. Consequently, even if students possess an adequate vocabulary in written form, they fail to recognize those identical words in spoken discourse because the acoustic input does not match their internal mental lexicon. This failure in bottom-up decoding disrupts the entire comprehension chain before the listener can even attempt to process the broader message.

2.2.2 Classroom vs. Real-World Gap

While Field focuses on the internal mechanics of decoding, (Ruetten, 1985) addresses the external environmental factors by highlighting the profound mismatch between classroom listening instruction and real-world communication. Ur argues that conventional EFL classrooms often shield students from reality by exposing them exclusively to "sterilized" textbook audio recordings. These recordings feature professional speakers delivering speech at an artificially slow, deliberate pace with perfect clarity and no background interference.

In reality, authentic native speech presents a constellation of challenges that (Ruetten, 1985) It is classified as natural speech characteristic. These include unpredictable speech rates, environmental background noise, and colloquial features such as word reductions and elisions (e.g., gonna, wanna, d'you). When fourth-semester students transition from structured classroom environments to authentic media or real-world interactions, they encounter a significant

comprehension gap. The rapid tempo of natural American English or the distinct rhythmic patterns of colloquial British English become incomprehensible, primarily because the students' classroom-trained ears lack the necessary exposure to cope with these natural, unedited speech modifications.

2.2.3 Cognitive Strategies and Overload

According to Rost (2011) conceptualizes listening as a constructive and transformative cognitive process where the listener must actively manipulate information in real-time. According to Rost, successful listening relies heavily on the balanced deployment of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies involve top-down processing, such as utilizing background schematic knowledge and sentence context to infer the meaning of ambiguous words. Metacognitive strategies involve monitoring one's own comprehension and employing repair mechanisms when a portion of the input is missed.

However, when EFL students are confronted with unfamiliar or difficult accent variations, this strategic balance collapses. Because the listener must exert an excessive amount of mental effort just to decode the unfamiliar pronunciation patterns of individual words, the limited capacity of their working memory is rapidly exhausted. Rost defines this phenomenon as cognitive overload or mental fatigue. Once cognitive overload occurs, the listener's brain is no longer capable of executing higher-level cognitive strategies, such as predicting upcoming information or reflecting on the overall theme. This mental exhaustion explains why students often lose focus and miss substantial amounts of information towards the end of longer listening tasks.

2.2.4 Real-Time Processing and Pragmatic Competence (Gary Buck, 2001)

Buck (2001) emphasizes that spoken language must be processed in real-time, meaning that the auditory input is ephemeral, it exists only for a moment and cannot be paused or reviewed like a written text. To achieve full comprehension under such time-pressured constraints, a listener requires not only linguistic competence (mastery of grammar and vocabulary) but also pragmatic competence, which is the ability to understand the speaker's communicative intent within a specific socio-linguistic context.

In the context of accent variation, Buck highlights that suprasegmental features such as pitch, stress placement, and intonation contours serve as vital vehicles for pragmatic meaning. British English, for example, is characterized by highly dynamic, fluctuating intonation patterns, whereas American English tends to be relatively flatter. For an EFL learner, these distinct intonational shifts can be highly misleading. A lack of familiarity with an accent's unique melody often prevents students from accurately interpreting the speaker's emotional state, ironies, implicatures or implied meanings. Consequently, a distinct pragmatic barrier arises: a fourth-semester student may successfully understand every literal word spoken in a sentence, yet completely fail to catch the speaker's true underlying intent, tone, or humor.

2.3 English Accent Variation

2.3.1 The Nature of Accent

An accent is a crucial component of linguistic identity and a powerful signal of a speaker's geographic origin and sociolinguistic background, according to current research. Everyone agrees that accents are a natural part of human

communication because everyone talks differently (McKenzie & McNeill, 2023). The notion of accent has broadened beyond regional indicators to include any unique way of speaking a language; this definition is applicable to both native and non-native speakers. Although societal hierarchies frequently favor some accents over others, allocating greater social capital to them, there is a critical consensus in contemporary linguistics that no accent is linguistically superior (Levis et al., 2022). Building on this comprehension of accent as a social and linguistic construct, it is crucial to investigate its underlying elements and the characteristics that make it complicated.

The complex makeup of accents continues to be an important field of research. The tripartite model is supported by recent research by (Tsunemoto & Trofimovich, 2023), which breaks accent down into segmental features (the exact articulation of vowels and consonants), suprasegmental features (intonation, rhythm, and stress, the “music” of speech), and temporal features (speech rate and pausing). These features closely correspond to the earlier ideas of pronunciation, intonation, and liaisons. This arrangement emphasizes that accent is a complex phenomenon that encompasses more than just distinct sounds. Additionally, a recent study highlights the perceptual dimension, expanding on the work of Munro and Derwing. According to Kang & Yaw (2024), accent is increasingly characterized by how it affects the listener. It is the perceived departure from a listener's normal speech pattern that results in the attribution of an accent, which can impair comprehensibility and social appraisal. Combining these modern perspectives, accent can be characterized as a distinct arrangement of segmental, suprasegmental, and temporal elements that conveys a speaker's individuality and

whose social significance is jointly created by the listener. Understanding the multifaceted nature of accent is crucial, especially as the priorities of contemporary pedagogical approaches to teaching English pronunciation begin to shift.

Recent research reveals a fundamental paradigm shift in English pronunciation teaching. Selvi & Yazan (2021) book that the goal of L2 pronunciation teaching has shifted from a focus on a “native-like accent” to intelligibility and comprehensibility as the primary pedagogical goals. This theoretical shift aligns with the 2023 update of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which explicitly states that the phonological control of an idealized native speaker has traditionally been seen as the target, but that the focus on accent and accuracy over intelligibility has been detrimental to the development of pronunciation teaching. Ultimately, this shift demonstrates that accent is an inherent and natural part of English communication. Rather than striving for native-like uniformity, students are now encouraged to develop clear and comprehensible speech that reflects their linguistic background. In this view, accent is no longer a deficiency to be corrected, but a marker of true identity and diversity among English speakers.

2.3.2 The Two Accent

In this article, the researcher limits this paper to two types of English accents, namely British English and American English. These two types are the standard forms of English worldwide (Biber & Quirk, 2012). Differences between British and American Accents. There are two areas where differences between British English and American English can be observed. One is related to lexical disparities and vocabulary. Vocabulary is an important linguistic feature that shows

clear differences between the two accents. These differences are visible in several semantic areas, namely food, clothing, transportation, public facilities, and everyday items. In the case of terminology related to food, for example, British English uses aubergine, courgette, and minced meat, whereas American English says eggplant, zucchini, and ground beef. Vocabulary varies in clothing terminology too: trainers, jumpers, or dungarees in British English are sneakers, sweaters, and overalls, respectively, in American English. There are differences in transport-related terms here as well, where Britons say petrol, lorry, boot, and bonnet cap while Americans say gas, truck, trunk, and hood, respectively. There is also a divergence in everyday items for the British rubber, torch, and rucksack, corresponding to eraser, flashlight, and backpack in AmE. Even institutional and school-related lingo differ; British English words such as headteacher, staffroom, and mark have their American counterparts in principal, teacher's lounge, and grade. They show that British and American English are lexically separated over a large number of frequent contexts in everyday life, and hence, they increase the differences between the two accents.

Some factors that determine how easily a learner understands a British or American accent include the different sounds, stresses, and ways in which similar words are used. Individual accents have their own phonological, rhythmic, and intonational characteristics that may appeal to listeners differently. Judging which one the acceptability of an accent is easier to understand will depend on what is known about the learner's experiences and the stipulation that they have had some exposure to both accents. For these reasons, extensive exposure to a variety of English accents can be an effective way for students to improve their listening and

comprehension skills, as well as learn to cope with different listening styles.

Besides pronunciation, there are several key differences between British and American English in spelling and vocabulary. For example, words like "colour" and "centre" in British English become "color" and "center" in American English, reflecting systematic orthographic variation. Trudgill and Hannah, as cited in Alftberg, highlight that differences in vocabulary and pronunciation are among the most prominent differences between the two varieties. These changes occur primarily as North American communities create new concepts and experiences that require the formation of new languages.

The differences in pronunciation between British and American accents can be observed in several phonetic features. One is the use of the vowel LOT, which is usually pronounced /ɒ/ in many British accents but shifts to /ɑ/ in American English, as seen in words like not, cot, and body. Another difference lies in the phenomenon of flapping, where the /t/ sound in American English often becomes a quick, soft /ɾ/ sound. For example, words like city or water are pronounced more like "cidy" and "wader" in American English. Furthermore, post-vocal /r/ remains a key difference: American English is generally rhotic, meaning the /r/ sound at the end of words like car, near, or hard is pronounced fully, while wide British varieties drop the /r/ unless followed by a vowel. Stress placement also varies, as seen in words like research, garage, and banana, where Americans often stress the first syllable, while British speakers tend to stress the next syllable.

According to Tottie (2008), spelling variations between British and American English also follow systematic patterns. These differences can be grouped to clarify their differences. Some key contrasts include the use of -ce in

British English versus -se in American English, as in defense and defense; -mme in British English versus -m in American English, as in program and program; and -ae/-oe in British spelling, where American English simplifies it to -e, as seen in paediatric versus pediatric. Other patterns include the presence of an extra u in British words like favor and behavior, which American English simplifies to favor and behavior. British English also tends to retain double consonants in forms like traveling or focused, while American English favors traveling and focused. Finally, the two varieties differ in the use of -ise in British English versus -ize in American English, although both have historically been acceptable in the UK.

Spelling and meaning variations between British and American English can also be classified into two main groups: words that differ in spelling and meaning, and words that have the same pronunciation but different spellings. For example, check in British English is the same as check in American English, *manoeuvre* becomes *maneuver*, *kerb* contrasts with *curb*, *tyre* with *tire*, and *mould* with *mold*. Each pair of words exhibits spelling differences accompanied by different usages or meanings across regions. Meanwhile, certain terms, though pronounced the same, have different spellings depending on the variety of English used. Examples include defense versus defense, traveler versus traveler, and theater versus theater, whose spoken forms remain consistent despite orthographic differences.

Phonetic differences between British and American English can generally be broken down into three main areas: vowel quality, diphthong patterns, and consonant articulation.

2.3.2.1 Vowel

Vowels are distinguished from consonants primarily by the less radical degree of constriction imposed by the lips and tongue on the airflow through the mouth.

Table 2.1

Vowels Difference Between British Accent and American Accent

British	/ɒ/	/ɑ:/	/o:/	/yes:/	/ɑ:/	/ə/
American	/ɑ:/	/æ/	/ɑ:/	/in:/	/æ/	/ɑ:/

Table 2.2

Vowel Difference Examples

Base Word	British Pronunciation	American Pronunciation
Hot	/hɒt/	/hɑ:t/
Problem	/'prɒbləm/	/'pra:bləm/
Bottle	/'bɒtl/	/'bɑ:tl/
Chance	/tʃɑ:ns/	/tʃæns/
Pass	/pɑ:s/	/pæs/
Coffee	/'kɒfi/	/'kɑ:fi/
Calm	/kɑ:m/	/kɑ:lm/
Process	/'prəʊses/	/'prouses/
Mobile	/'məʊbaɪl/	/'moubəl/
Tomato	/tə'mɑ:təʊ/	/tə'mertou/
Drama	/'dra:mə/	/'dræmə/
Quality	/'kwɒlɪti/	/'kwa:ləti/

2.3.2.2 Diphthongs

A diphthong refers to a combination of two vowel sounds produced in one continuous movement, with both vowel elements appearing in the same syllable.

Table 2.3

Diphthongs Difference Between British Accent And American

British	/ɪə/	/əʊ/	/ɑ:/	/eɪ/	/ɪ/
American	/ɪr/	/oʊ/	/eɪ/	/æ/	/aɪ/

Accent

Table 2.4

Diphthong difference Examples

Base Word	British Pronunciation	American Pronunciation
Fear	/fiə(r)/	/fir/
Beard	/biəd/	/bird/
Boat	/bəʊt/	/boot/
Coat	/kəʊt/	/kout/
Oats	/əʊts/	/outs/
Major	/'meɪdʒə/	/'meɪdʒər/
Daylight	/'deɪlaɪt/	/'deɪlaɪt/
Ice	/aɪs/	/aɪs/
Cycle	/'saɪkl/	/'saɪkəl/
Flower	/'flaʊə/	/'flaʊər/
Brown	/braʊn/	/braʊn/

2.3.2.3 Consonant

Consonants are speech sounds produced when the vocal tract experiences obstruction, either complete closure or partial narrowing, so that air does not flow freely as in vowel sounds.

Table 2.5
Consonants: Difference Between British accent And American accent

British	/ʁ/	/t/	/ʃ/	/z/	/s/	/ð/
American	/r/	/ɾ/	/ʒ/	/s/	/ʃ/	/θ/

Table 2.6
Consonants Difference Examples

Base Word	British Pronunciation	American Pronunciation
Mother	/ˈmʌðə/	/ˈmʌðər/
Far	/fɑː/	/fɑːr/
Water	/ˈwɔːtə/	/ˈwɔːrər/
City	/ˈsɪti/	/ˈsɪri/
Measure	/ˈmeʒə/	/ˈmeʒər/ or /ˈmeʒə/
Pressure	/ˈpreʃə/	/ˈpreʒər/
News	/njuːz/	/nuːz/
Assume	/əˈsjuːm/	/əˈsuːm/
Schedule	/ˈʃedjuːl/	/ˈskedʒuːl/
Issue	/ˈɪʃuː/	/ˈɪfuː/
Cloth	/klɒθ/	/klaːð/ or /klɒθ/
Smooth	/smuːð/	/smuːð/ or /smuːθ/

2.3.3 The Components of Accent

There are three components of accent according to Nemati and Fumani, as follows:

2.3.3.1 Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the ability to apply appropriate stress, rhythm, and intonation to spoken words. As Gao et al. (2024) argue, modern pronunciation instruction should involve an integrated approach that utilizes advanced technology and real-time feedback to improve pronunciation accuracy and fluency, particularly suprasegmental aspects such as intonation, stress, and rhythm, for more natural and fluent speech. Furthermore, instruction should be tailored to individual phonetic challenges to help students address specific sound difficulties on a personal level. Emphasis on mastering the relationship between sounds and letters and on connected speech is also crucial to fluency, while a lack of innovation from teachers can hinder students. The main goal of foreign language students is to pronounce words, sentences, intonation, and stress correctly.

2.3.3.2 Intonation

Regarding intonation, Zhao et al. (2022) explain that intonation is a way of conveying information through melodic fluctuations in vocal pitch that are independent of specific words or sounds, which helps express pragmatic meaning in everyday conversation. There are several types of intonation, such as rising, falling, and peaking, each of which provides different semantic cues within the context of speech.

2.3.3.4 Liaison

Furthermore, liaisons or word linking in speech is the process of combining and arranging words smoothly in sentences, including the use of appropriate pauses and the combination of sounds between words to create connected speech that facilitates the flow of verbal communication. Teaching liaison is important to help students not only pronounce words one by one separately, but also produce natural and coherent speech (Cauldwell, 2013).

Thus, modern pronunciation teaching must combine segmental and suprasegmental mastery, as well as innovative teaching techniques and technology-based personalization and student learning context.

2.4 Factors Affecting Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is often considered one of the most difficult skills for EFL students because spoken language is fast, temporary, and full of variation. Unlike written texts, listeners cannot pause or review what they hear, which makes it easy to miss important information. These challenges become even greater when students listen to different accents, fast speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, or complex topics. Because of these common problems, many researchers have tried to identify the main factors that influence listening comprehension. Previous studies by Alzamil (2021), Nushi & Orouji (2020), and Rungsinanont (2024) show that listening difficulties usually come from three major areas: linguistic factors, cognitive factors, and affective factors. These factors work together and shape how well students can understand spoken English.

2.4.1 Linguistic Factors

Linguistic factors refer to features of the spoken text that challenge students' ability to decode auditory input. Several linguistic components have been identified as major contributors to listening difficulty. First, pronunciation and phonological variation, including differences in accent, stress, and intonation, often hinder the accurate perception of speech (Nushi & Orouji, 2020). These challenges become more pronounced when students encounter unfamiliar accent varieties such as American or British English, which differ significantly in rhythm and phonology.

Second, rapid speech rate has been widely reported as one of the most prominent obstacles, as fast delivery reduces the processing time available for comprehension (Rungsinanont, 2024). Third, connected speech phenomena, including elision, assimilation, and reduction, often obscure word boundaries, making lexical recognition more difficult (Alzamil, 2021). In addition, vocabulary unfamiliarity and complex syntactic structures also contribute to comprehension breakdowns, particularly when students encounter new terminology or dense sentence patterns characteristic of academic or authentic spoken texts (Alzamil, 2021). Overall, linguistic factors represent foundational challenges that directly affect students' ability to decode and interpret spoken messages.

2.4.2 Cognitive Factors

Cognitive factors involve the mental processes required to store, integrate, and interpret auditory information. As stated by Alzamil (2021) A fundamental element is the construct of working memory, which influences the degree to which individuals can sustain and manipulate information throughout the process of real-time cognitive engagement. Because listening input is transient and cannot be

reviewed, limited working memory capacity often leads to missed information and incomplete interpretation.

Another central factor is processing speed, which influences how quickly listeners can decode sounds and map them onto meaning, especially when the input is delivered at a fast rate or contains unfamiliar phonological patterns (Nushi & Orouji, 2021). Predictive processing, such as using context to anticipate upcoming information, also plays a role in supporting comprehension, particularly in longer or more complex listening passages (Alzamil, 2021).

Moreover, background knowledge serves as an important cognitive resource. Students who lack familiarity with the topic or context of the listening material often require more processing effort, which increases cognitive load and reduces comprehension accuracy (Alzamil, 2021; Rungsinanont, 2021). Collectively, these findings demonstrate that cognitive limitations intensify students' difficulties, especially when linguistic signals are unclear or when the content is unfamiliar.

2.4.3 Affective Factors

Affective factors encompass emotional and psychological conditions that influence students' listening performance. Research indicates that listening anxiety is one of the most influential affective barriers; heightened anxiety disrupts concentration and reduces the listener's ability to process input effectively (Alzamil, 2021). Educators should consider these factors when designing listening activities to better support EFL students and enhance their overall listening proficiency. Motivation also plays a significant role, as students with higher motivation are more likely to engage in practice and exposure to varied listening

materials, leading to better comprehension outcomes (Rungsinanont, 2021).

Additionally, confidence affects how students manage difficult listening situations, particularly when dealing with unfamiliar accents or rapid speech (Nushi & Orouji, 2021). Students who lack confidence may experience increased hesitation, which further interferes with processing. Finally, attitudes toward the speaker or accent can shape listening engagement; negative attitudes may reduce students' willingness to persist through challenging input (Alzamil, 2021).

In conclusion, listening comprehension is a multifaceted skill that poses significant challenges for EFL students due to the inherent complexities of spoken language. The interplay of linguistic, cognitive, and affective factors plays a crucial role in shaping students' ability to understand spoken English. Linguistic factors such as pronunciation, speech rate, and vocabulary complexity create barriers to effective listening. Cognitive limitations, particularly in working memory and processing speed, further exacerbate these challenges, especially when students encounter unfamiliar content. Additionally, affective factors, including listening anxiety and motivation, significantly influence students' engagement and performance during listening tasks. To enhance listening proficiency, educators must consider these diverse factors and implement strategies that address the specific needs of students, fostering a supportive environment that encourages practice and builds confidence. By doing so, they can help students navigate the complexities of listening comprehension and improve their overall language skills.

2.5 Previous Study

The researcher used five previous studies to obtain important information for continuing this research. These studies help explain why EFL students often face difficulties when listening to different English accents, especially American and British accents. The first previous study referred to in this research is by Ilahiy (2023), who examined how accent variation affects EFL students' listening comprehension. Ilahiy's findings show that students often experience difficulty when the accent used in the audio does not match the accent they are familiar with, particularly when comparing British and American accents. The study highlights that differences in pronunciation, vowel quality, and intonation patterns can create confusion for students, resulting in lower comprehension accuracy. Moreover, Ilahiy (2023) emphasizes that familiarity plays an essential role in understanding spoken English, as students tend to perform better when listening to the accent they are most frequently exposed to. This result aligns with the present research, which similarly investigates how British and American accents influence students' listening comprehension and seeks to identify which accent provides a clearer advantage for students.

The second previous study considered in this research is by Ramadhianti & Somba (2021), who investigated listening comprehension difficulties among Indonesian EFL students. Their study revealed that students frequently struggle with several aspects of listening, particularly the fast speaking speed of the speaker, the variety of accents used, and the lengthy descriptions presented in listening texts. Using a descriptive qualitative design with 85 participants from a Basic Listening class, the researchers found that accent variation stands out as one of the most

challenging factors, as students often find it difficult to interpret pronunciation differences when the speaker's accent is unfamiliar. This finding supports the present study's focus, as it emphasizes how variations in English accents, such as British and American, may affect students' comprehension. The results of Ramadhianti and Somba (2021) therefore reinforce the importance of examining accent-based comprehension challenges, highlighting the need for teachers to identify students' listening barriers to select learning materials that better support their understanding.

The next previous study considered in this research is by Jeerapan Phomprasert and Ma'ayan Grace (2020), who examined the influence of accent on university students' English listening comprehension. Their study highlighted that listening remains one of the most difficult yet least researched language skills, resulting in it being relatively neglected in instructional practice. Involving 33 first-year Business English students at Phetchabun Rajabhat University, the research revealed that the participants' listening ability was below the expected threshold. Notably, the findings showed that students achieved higher comprehension scores when listening to Australian and British accents, while their performance declined when exposed to American accents. The researchers also analyzed students' background exposure to different accents, demonstrating that previous contact and familiarity strongly influenced comprehension outcomes. These results reinforce the importance of accent consideration in listening instruction and support the relevance of the present study, which similarly investigates how accent variation, specifically British and American accents, affects EFL students' listening performance.

Another related previous study was conducted by Büyükahıska & Uyar (2019) In which it was explained that to improve ELT strategies, being introduced to a single, standardized foreign accent, frequently characterized as British, within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms may prove inadequate for authentic real-world interactions. They maintained that although listening texts in coursebooks generally feature a standardized British accent (RP), this limitation did not reflect the interaction of diverse regional varieties as encountered by students in their out-of-school activities, where English serves as an international lingua franca and takes the form of different non-native speakers' accents. Their study, in which 22 seventh-graders were asked to understand various English accents on a listening test, suggested that applications like the Facebook tool could breed complacency. The findings revealed significant variation in comprehension of the accents, which suggests that students performed differently according to the accent used in listening texts. These results underscore the need for including more accents when teaching listening to prepare students for real-life communication. In terms of the EFL pedagogy context of developing accent awareness, there were also some pedagogical implications for the study.

A further study was carried out by Kurtuldu & Ozkan (2020). Their research explored how different English accents influence the listening comprehension of non-native English speakers and also examined students' perceptions of these accents. The study involved thirty-eight pre-service English language teachers and used three types of data collection, including listening comprehension tests, a semantic differential scale, and reflective writing. The listening materials contained a range of English accents that were played in random order. The results showed

that students' familiarity with different varieties of World Englishes has a strong impact on their ability to comprehend spoken English. In addition, the study found that greater exposure to diverse accents can help reduce bias toward non-native accents and support more flexible listening skills. These findings highlight the importance of integrating a variety of accents into English language teaching, which aligns closely with the purpose of the present research that examines how exposure to British and American accents may shape students' listening comprehension.

From all the previous studies discussed above, it is clear that accent variation plays an important role in shaping students' listening comprehension. However, none of these studies specifically examines how fourth-semester students of the English Education Department experience challenges when listening to American and British accents within the same academic context. The present research introduces a new perspective by directly comparing these two dominant accents using equivalent listening materials, allowing a fairer and more focused examination of which accent creates greater difficulty for students. This approach aligns closely with the research objective of identifying the specific challenges faced by students and understanding how phonological features such as vowel shifts, stress differences, and intonation patterns shape their listening performance. By also considering students' familiarity levels and personal perceptions, this study offers a more comprehensive picture of the cognitive, linguistic, and affective factors that influence their comprehension. These combined elements highlight the novelty of the present study.

To extend this point, a clear gap in the existing literature still remains and becomes the focus of this research. While earlier works have explored general

listening difficulties, accent familiarity, and various speaking styles, very few studies have concentrated on mid-level university students, especially fourth-semester students who have completed basic listening courses but continue to face challenges in understanding accent variation. Moreover, most previous studies do not isolate American and British accents as their main variables, even though these two accents are the most frequently encountered by English Education Department students in both academic activities and media exposure. This situation highlights the need for a more targeted investigation that not only identifies the factors contributing to students' difficulties but also explains why certain accent features are more challenging than others. Addressing this gap, the present study contributes meaningful insights into accent-based listening comprehension challenges.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

In this chapter, the researcher explains the research methodology used in this study. The explanation includes the main procedures and components that guide the investigation, such as the research design, subject of the study, research instruments, data analysis, and triangulation.

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design that allows the researcher to explore the topic in depth by collecting detailed and descriptive information from participants. This approach is appropriate because it focuses on understanding students' real experiences, feelings, and challenges in a natural setting (Miles et al., 2014). Through this approach, the researcher can get a clearer picture of how students respond, interact, and deal with different situations during the learning process. According to Mohajan (2018), Qualitative research is a methodological approach that emphasizes understanding human experiences, perceptions, and social phenomena through detailed and descriptive data collection. By employing qualitative methods, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing listening comprehension among fourth-semester EFL students, particularly regarding their experiences with different English accents.

A qualitative approach is used because it allows the researcher to explore students' perceptions, experiences, and challenges in understanding different English accents in a detailed and descriptive manner. To gather rich and meaningful information, this study uses three main data collection techniques: listening task observation, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. The observation is

used to see how students react directly while listening to materials that include British and American accents. Through this process, the researcher can notice signs such as confusion, hesitation, or confidence that appear during the activity. The questionnaires help collect students' personal thoughts, feelings, and opinions about how difficult each accent is and how familiar they are with it. Semi-structured interviews are then conducted to gain deeper explanations about their listening experiences, what affects their understanding, and the strategies they use to deal with different accents.

By using a qualitative approach and a case study design, this research aims to provide a clear and detailed picture of how students process listening tasks, the challenges they face, and how they respond to different English accents, especially in British and American accents. This approach ensures that the findings truly represent the students' real experiences and the actual situation in the classroom.

3.2 Subject of the Study

This study was conducted at one of the English Education departments in Malang, where the researcher identified that many fourth-semester students still struggled with listening comprehension, especially when the listening materials contained different English accents, such as British and American accents. This observation was made during the researcher's academic activities and discussions with students, which showed that accent variation often caused misunderstandings, reduced confidence, and increased listening anxiety. Based on this situation, the researcher became interested in studying how these students perceive and experience listening activities that include different English accents.

The subjects of this research were fourth-semester EFL students who had already completed basic listening courses and were currently transitioning to more advanced listening skills. This group was chosen because they are at a critical stage where they are expected to handle more complex listening input, including the ability to recognize and understand various pronunciation patterns. Most of the students in this semester are between the ages of 19 and 20 years old. In total, the class consists of 70 students, each with different academic backgrounds, levels of listening proficiency, and personal experiences with English accents.

The researcher selected 5 students as the primary participants for this study using a purposive sampling technique. To capture a broader institutional context, these five participants were deliberately selected from two different classes. In qualitative research, this small sample size is intentionally chosen to prioritize deep, nuanced data over statistical generalization, allowing the researcher to conduct a meticulous and intensive investigation into individual student experiences. This cohort size ensures a sufficient volume of data to reach saturation while maintaining a highly manageable dataset for thorough thematic analysis. By limiting the sample to five key individuals across two separate classrooms, the researcher could dedicatedly explore distinct student narratives that would be unmanageable with a larger group.

The selection process followed a strict purposive framework based on clear criteria observed during accent-based listening tasks in both classrooms. Specifically, the researcher selected a mix of highly active and inactive students from each of the two classes to ensure maximum variation. Active students were characterized by their frequent participation, tendency to ask for clarification, and

high engagement during listening tasks, whereas inactive students tended to withdraw, stay passive, or exhibit lower confidence when encountering unfamiliar accents. Additionally, this selection accounted for variations in their actual listening performance, ranging from those who excelled to those who struggled. By combining participants from two different classes who represent opposite ends of the classroom engagement and performance spectrum, the researcher obtained rich, diverse, and detailed insights into the unique challenges and coping mechanisms students face across different English accents.

3.3 Research Instrument

In this study, the researcher used three main qualitative research instruments: observation, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. These instruments were chosen to help the researcher gather data that was accurate, complete, and as objective as possible. Each instrument played an important role in helping the researcher understand how students responded to British and American accents during listening activities.

3.3.1 Observation

The first instrument was observation. Through this method, the researcher directly observed how students reacted in real-time while working on listening tasks that involved both American and British accents. This process enabled the researcher to notice visible signs such as confusion, hesitation, frustration, or confidence. The observation method included several key aspects designed to capture students' real-time reactions during the listening tasks. Each aspect was formulated into clear, observable indicators, such as visible confusion, hesitation, frustration, confidence, requests for repetition, note-taking behaviors, and signs of

stress when the accent became difficult to understand. These indicators helped the researcher systematically record student behaviors and responses during the listening process. The observation method utilized a checklist supported by field notes, allowing the researcher to document both structured observations and unexpected behaviors that occurred during the activity. The observation checklist itself consists of indicators adopted and adapted from established literature in EFL listening research, which were refined to precisely measure student engagement and difficulties across different English accents.

3.3.2 Questionnaire

The second instrument utilized in this study was a questionnaire, consisting of 22 items. This questionnaire was designed to explore students' personal perceptions, feelings, and experiences when listening to different English accents. It contained several statements that students answered using a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree), allowing the researcher to identify how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each item. To make the questions clear and easy for all participants, especially those who struggled with English, the questionnaire was provided in both English and Indonesian. This bilingual format minimized potential misunderstandings and helped students give accurate answers based on their real experiences. The questionnaire gave the researcher an initial picture of the students' general perceptions, their familiarity with British and American accents, and the level of difficulty they expected to face.

3.3.4 Semi-structured

The third instrument was semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted to gather deeper and more detailed information about the students'

listening experiences. The researcher used Indonesian during the interviews to help students feel more comfortable and to ensure that they could express their thoughts clearly. Each student received the same core questions, but the semi-structured format allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions when needed. Through this method, the researcher explored the factors that influenced students' understanding, the strategies they planned to use, and the challenges they expected to face when listening to different English accents. The entire interview process was recorded and documented to maintain the accuracy of the data.

By using these three instruments, observation, questionnaires, and interviews, the researcher was able to gather detailed and reliable data from different perspectives. This combination of tools strengthened the overall findings and helped the researcher develop a clear understanding of how students handled listening comprehension when exposed to British and American accents.

3.4 Data Collection

This study uses three data collection techniques: observation, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. According to Miles and Huberman (2002), collecting data from multiple sources allows researchers to gain a deeper and more credible understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Therefore, the combination of these techniques helped provide comprehensive data on the challenges faced by fourth-semester English Education Department students and the factors influencing their difficulties in understanding American and British accents.

3.4.1 Observation

The observation technique was conducted during listening sessions using audio recordings in both American and British accents. In line with Miles and Huberman (2002), observation is an essential technique for capturing real-time behaviors, natural reactions, and contextual factors that cannot be fully obtained through self-reported data. The purpose of this observation was to identify students' visible responses, such as confusion, hesitation, frustration, confidence, or stress when encountering challenging accent features. The observation sheet included indicators related to engagement, behavioral reactions, and strategies such as note-taking or asking for repetition (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Throughout the session, the researcher sat at the back of the classroom without intervening, ensuring students' natural behavior was recorded accurately (Creswell, 2014). These observational results were later compared with questionnaire responses to see whether students' written perceptions aligned with their actual behaviors (Miles et al., 2014).

3.4.2 Questionnaire

After the listening activities were completed, a questionnaire was distributed through a Google Form. Following Miles and Huberman (2002), questionnaires are useful for capturing patterns, perceptions, and tendencies across a larger group of participants efficiently. The questionnaire included statements about students' familiarity with accents, perceived levels of difficulty, and factors affecting their listening comprehension, such as pronunciation differences, speech rate, and exposure frequency. A Likert-scale format was used to provide descriptive insight into students' attitudes and experiences. Students were given enough time

to complete the questionnaire independently, allowing them to respond without pressure and provide more thoughtful answers.

3.4.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted after the initial questionnaire analysis. As emphasized by Miles and Huberman (2002), interviews allow researchers to explore participants' perspectives more deeply, clarify unclear responses, and uncover insights that may not appear in quantitative data. 5 students were selected based on varied questionnaire responses to represent different experiences and difficulty levels. The interviews lasted approximately 20–30 minutes and were conducted face-to-face or online, depending on availability. Guided by a semi-structured interview protocol, the discussion focused on accent familiarity, pronunciation challenges, exposure levels, and personal strategies used to understand American and British accents. The researcher also allowed students to share additional experiences beyond the questionnaire, enabling richer and more nuanced data to emerge.

3.5 Data Analysis

In this qualitative study, the data analysis was presented in descriptive form. According to Sugiyono (2008), data analysis is a complex and demanding process because researchers must think critically, creatively, and systematically to choose the most appropriate way to process the data they have collected. The main purpose of data analysis is to make the data easier to understand so that meaningful conclusions can be drawn. After gathering the data through questionnaires, observations, and semi-structured interviews, the researcher followed several steps in analyzing the information: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

These steps helped the researcher organize the data properly and interpret it accurately.

3.5.1 Data Reduction

Data reduction was the first stage of the analysis. It refers to the process of selecting, simplifying, and organizing the raw data so that it becomes clearer and easier to interpret. At this stage, the researcher began by reviewing all the information collected from questionnaires, observations, and interviews. Then, the researcher identified which data were important and relevant to the research focus, namely, students' experiences and difficulties when listening to British and American accents.

Data reduction included several activities such as summarizing the findings, coding the data, identifying topics, and grouping similar pieces of information into clusters. Coding helped the researcher label key ideas, such as "difficulty recognizing pronunciation," "confidence level," "accent familiarity," or "listening strategies." After that, data were grouped to form patterns that could be analyzed further.

For the questionnaire results, the researcher categorized students' responses into five Likert scale categories5-point Likert scale, namely 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (neutral), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree). These categories helped the researcher clearly see the trends in students' perceptions of British and American accents. By reducing and organizing the data, the researcher was able to focus only on meaningful information and avoid irrelevant details. This process made the next stages of analysis easier and more structured.

3.5.2 Data Display

The second stage of the analysis was data display. In qualitative research, data display is an important step that helps the researcher present organized information in a clear and understandable way. This stage allowed the researcher to see the overall picture of the findings before drawing conclusions.

The data were displayed in several forms, such as narrative descriptions, tables, charts, or notes from observations and interviews. These displays helped the researcher connect different pieces of information and identify relationships between them. For example, the researcher compared students' questionnaire responses with their behavior during observation or with the explanations they gave during interviews. This comparison helped confirm whether students' written responses matched their actual experiences.

By presenting the data in an organized way, the researcher was able to understand patterns related to accent difficulty, familiarity, and listening strategies more clearly.

3.5.3 Conclusion Drawing

The final stage of the analysis was conclusion drawing. At this stage, the researcher interpreted the data that had been reduced and displayed, and then drew conclusions based on the findings. In qualitative research, conclusions are often developed gradually as the researcher reviews and rechecks the data. Early findings are considered temporary until they are supported by strong evidence.

During this stage, the researcher connected the themes that appeared in the data with the research questions. These conclusions explained how students responded to British and American accents, what difficulties they faced, and what

factors influenced their listening comprehension. The conclusions were strengthened by clear examples from observations, questionnaires, and interviews so that the findings were valid and trustworthy.

Ultimately, this analysis process enabled the researcher to provide a comprehensive explanation of students' listening experiences, their challenges with accent variation, and their personal responses to British and American accents during listening activities.

3.6 Triangulation

Triangulation is used to enhance the validity of qualitative findings by comparing data with other sources beyond the data itself. Mathison (1988) explains that triangulation provides a way to reduce bias and increase credibility through the convergence of evidence from multiple methods. This process strengthens the trustworthiness of the research because inconsistencies and overlapping patterns can be identified and interpreted more accurately. In this study, triangulation is applied by combining the results obtained from different data collection techniques to verify the consistency of information (Mathison, 1988).

According to the principles of methodological triangulation, this study uses three data collection techniques: observation, questionnaires, and interviews, to gather information from the same group of fourth-semester English Education Department students. These techniques allow the researcher to cross-check the challenges students face in understanding American and British accents, ensuring that the interpretation of the data is both credible and comprehensive.

3.6.1. Observation

Observation was conducted during listening activities involving audio materials in both American and British accents. A structured observation sheet was used to record students' visible reactions and behaviors, including signs of confusion, hesitation, frustration, confidence, note-taking, or requests for repetition. Observation data provide a direct picture of how students respond in real time to accent-related listening difficulties, offering contextual insights that may not appear in self-reported data.

3.6.2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire guidelines were used to gather students' perceptions regarding their listening comprehension of different English accents during listening activities. The questionnaire was administered non-intrusively and completed by students after the listening sessions. The aspects explored in this instrument were synthesized from the foundational listening theories of Ur (1984), Rost (1990), Buck (2001), and Field (2008), which collectively classify speech processing and listening difficulties into four core dimensions. These four categories are applied to measure students' responses toward accent familiarity, perceived difficulty, and influential listening factors such as pronunciation variation, speech rate, and exposure frequency. To measure these dimensions, each item on the questionnaire was evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale, namely 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (neutral), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree).

Presented using a Likert scale, the questionnaire systematically captures students' perceptions of their challenges when listening to American and British

accents. These data provide patterns and tendencies that help support and compare with the observation findings.

3.6.3 Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore students' experiences more deeply, allowing them to explain the challenges they encounter when dealing with different accent features. The interviews aim to complement the observation and questionnaire results by clarifying unclear responses, revealing personal strategies, and uncovering nuances in students' listening difficulties that may not emerge through other instruments.

By integrating these three methods, this study cross-checks data from multiple sources to obtain a deeper and more accurate understanding of the challenges faced by fourth-semester English Education Department students when comprehending American and British accents. This triangulated approach strengthens the internal validity of the research findings and contributes to more credible, reliable, and representative conclusions.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the finding and discussion of the study based on the two research questions. The first research question explores the challenges faced by fourth-semester students in understanding American and British accents during listening activities. The second research question focuses on identifying the factors that cause students to have difficulty comprehending these two accents. The findings are derived from three data sources: questionnaires, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews. These data are then analyzed and discussed to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' listening comprehension difficulties regarding American and British accents.

4.1 Findings

These findings were obtained through three data collection methods: questionnaires, observations, and interviews. Each method was used to provide different yet complementary perspectives in understanding the phenomenon under study. Questionnaire data were used to provide an overview of students' affective responses and habits, while observations and interviews were used to reinforce and deepen these results. The presentation of these research findings is organized according to each research question to ensure a more systematic and easily understandable structure.

4.1.1 Fourth-Semester Students' Challenges in Understanding American and British Accents

This section presents the findings related to the first research question, which explores the challenges faced by fourth-semester students in understanding American and British accents. In this study, students' challenges are systematically categorized into specific dimensions based on the integrated theoretical

frameworks. These dimensions encompass low-level acoustic decoding difficulties, classroom-to-real-world exposure gaps, cognitive overload, and real-time pragmatic processing barriers. To interpret the questionnaire results, this study used the following classification of listening comprehension difficulty levels based on mean scores.

Table 1. Listening Comprehension Difficulty Level Based on Mean Scores

Mean Scores	Level
1.00 - 2.33	Low
2.34 - 3.67	Moderate
3.68 - 5.00	High

Source: Adapted from Likert scale interpretation (Sugiyono, 2017).

Based on the table, the mean score is used to determine whether students' listening comprehension difficulty levels are low, moderate, or high. These categories are adapted from the interpretation of Likert scales used in educational research. With these categories, researchers can group students' difficulty levels more systematically. These categories also help explain trends in students' responses to the statements in the questionnaire. Thus, the questionnaire results can be interpreted more clearly and in a structured manner.

In addition, the overall distribution of the fourth-semester students' listening comprehension difficulty levels based on this classification is presented in the following table:

Table 2. Students' Listening Comprehension Difficulty Levels

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	0	0%
Moderate	55	78.57%
High	15	21.43%

Based on the data in Table 4.2, the descriptive distribution shows that 0 students (0%) are in the Low category, 55 students (78.57%) are clustered in the Moderate category, and 15 students (21.43%) experience a High level of difficulty. The absolute absence of students in the Low difficulty category reflects the real linguistic conditions of Indonesian EFL students who lack daily, real-world interaction with native speakers, making a completely trouble-free listening experience virtually non-existent. Furthermore, this trend indicates that the 70 respondents provided honest responses regarding their actual experiences, admitting that adapting to native accent variations presents a real, noticeable bottleneck in their listening activities.

The questionnaire results indicate that students' listening comprehension difficulty falls into the moderate category across all investigated dimensions. This suggests that students possess a noticeable level of difficulty in understanding both American and British accents during listening activities, though it varies across specific items. Variations in students' responses also indicate that not all students experience the same level of listening comprehension barriers. To provide a more comprehensive understanding, the findings are further presented based on each theoretical dimension of listening difficulty, beginning with the acoustic and

phonetic decoding dimension, by integrating the results from questionnaires, observations, and interviews. Therefore, targeted pedagogical interventions are needed to help students navigate these accent variations more effectively.

4.1.1.1 Acoustic & Phonetic Decoding Dimension

The acoustic and phonetic decoding dimension is about how well students can hear and understand basic sounds, words, and sentences in real-time. This looks at the difficulties students face with different vowel sounds, consonant sounds, and fast native speech, especially when they have to listen to American and British accents.

Table 3. Observation Results of Students' Listening Difficulties Based on Acoustic & Phonetic Decoding Dimensions

No.	Aspects Observed	Results Observation	
		1st	2nd
1	Acoustic Decoding Students show hesitation or look confused when British non-rhoticity occurs (e.g., dropped /r/). <i>Siswa menunjukkan keraguan atau terlihat bingung ketika terjadi aksen British non-rhotic (penghilangan bunyi /r/).</i>	Yes	Yes
2	Phonetic Discrimination Students misinterpret or struggle to catch words due to American vowel shifts or flapping /t/. <i>Siswa salah menafsirkan atau kesulitan menangkap kata</i>	Yes	Yes

No.	Aspects Observed	Results Observation	
		1st	2nd
	<i>akibat perubahan vokal atau flapping /t/ pada aksen Amerika.</i>		

Based on the observations, students clearly showed difficulties in this area.

Most students often paused or looked confused at their friends when the accents changed suddenly. They also stopped writing or missed the next sentences when they heard unfamiliar sounds in the audio. This shows that students find it hard to adapt quickly to native pronunciation. Therefore, the observation results prove that students are weak at understanding small sound changes. The questionnaire results for this section are shown in the table below.

Table 4. Questionnaire Results of Students' Listening Difficulties (Acoustic & Phonetic Decoding Dimension)

Variable	SA(5)	A(4)	N(3)	D(2)	SDA(1)
I find it difficult to recognize specific sounds in American English (e.g., the vowel sound /æ/ in the word "can't"). <i>Saya kesulitan mengenali bunyi tertentu dalam aksen Amerika.</i>	25.7%	38.6%	25.7%	10%	0%

Variable	SA(5)	A(4)	N(3)	D(2)	SDA(1)
It is hard for me to distinguish words that sound similar in British English (e.g., "bath" vs "but"). <i>Saya sulit membedakan kata-kata yang terdengar mirip dalam aksen Inggris.</i>	21.4%	35.7%	34.3%	8.6%	0%
I fail to separate word boundaries in fast-spoken American English speech streams. <i>Saya gagal memisahkan batas antar kata dalam arus ujaran aksen Amerika yang cepat.</i>	11.4%	18.6%	45.7%	21.4%	2.9%
I recognize words when I see them in writing, but I cannot recognize them when spoken in a British accent. <i>Saya mengenali kata dalam bentuk tulisan, tetapi tidak saat diucapkan dengan aksen Inggris.</i>	20%	32.9%	25%	20%	1.4%
The difference in pronouncing the /r/ sound between American (rhotic) and British (non-rhotic) accents confuses me. <i>Perbedaan pengucapan konsonan /r/ antara aksen Amerika dan Inggris membuat saya bingung.</i>	12.9%	30%	35.7%	11.4%	10%

Variable	SA(5)	A(4)	N(3)	D(2)	SDA(1)
I struggle to build the overall meaning even though I catch a few words in a sentence. <i>Saya kesulitan membangun makna keseluruhan meskipun sudah menangkap beberapa kata.</i>	22.9%	28.6%	27.1%	15.7%	5.7%
I cannot use repair strategies when I miss parts of the information while listening. <i>Saya tidak dapat menggunakan strategi perbaikan ketika kehilangan sebagian informasi.</i>	10%	25.7%	40%	18.6%	5.7%
Average	17.8%	30%	33.5%	15.1%	3.7%
	3.43 (Moderate)				

Based on the questionnaire table, the average score is 3.43, which means the difficulty level is moderate. The data shows that there is a big gap between what students read and what they hear. Students find it very hard to understand British vowel sounds and the missing "r" sound. They also struggle when American speakers connect words together very fast. This pattern shows that students are too used to standard school pronunciations. Because of this, they cannot easily tell where one word ends and the next begins when listening to real native speakers. In short, the questionnaire proves that sound changes are a common problem for students.

The interview results also support these findings. Informant J stated, *“the most difficult part... is the pronunciation of certain words like the vowel and the consonant speech... in British accent, sometimes the pronunciation sounds very different from the written form. While American accent is like the native speakers often speak too fast and like connecting the words together.”* Informant J also recalled a specific breakdown when a British speaker pronounced water as "wo-ta", admitting, *“I didn't recognize it because it sounded very different from the way I learned it in the class... I realized that it's only after hearing the context of the word a few times.”* This indicates that unaligned spelling-to-sound representations and fast word linking heavily disrupt real-time lexical retrieval. Thus, the acoustic and phonetic decoding dimension shows that low-level phonetic variations create prominent barriers to direct listening comprehension.

4.1.1.2 Processing & Pragmatic Competence Dimension

The Processing & Pragmatic Competence dimension is about high-level thinking. It looks at how students understand grammar in real-time and how they guess the speaker's feelings or real meaning through their intonation (tone of voice). This includes how students handle fast speed, voice tones, and how they use general English knowledge to understand difficult American or British audio.

Table 5. Observation Results of Students' Listening Difficulties Based on Processing & Pragmatic Competence Dimension

No.	Aspects Observed	Results Observation	
		1st	2nd
1	Real-Time Intonational Mapping Students display momentary hesitations or misinterpret conversational tones when exposed to highly expressive or unfamiliar pitch patterns. <i>Siswa menunjukkan keraguan sesaat atau salah menafsirkan nada percakapan ketika dihadapkan pada pola nada yang sangat ekspresif atau tidak familier.</i>	Yes	Yes
2	Pragmatic Cue Processing Students look unsure or require clarification when trying to separate literal lexical expressions from indirect speech acts (sarcasm, humor). <i>Siswa tampak ragu-ragu atau membutuhkan klarifikasi ketika mencoba memisahkan ekspresi leksikal literal dari tindakan tutur tidak langsung (sarkasme, humor)."</i>	Yes	Yes

Based on the observations, students showed clear difficulties in this area. During the tasks, students often found it hard to know why the speaker was talking if the expression changed. When speakers used very expressive voices or spoke too fast, students often stopped writing completely. This means they cannot process

grammar and guess the speaker's true meaning at the same time. This shows that catching single words is easy for students, but understanding the speaker's real feelings, jokes, or hidden meanings is still a big problem. The questionnaire results for this section are shown in the table below.

Table 6. Questionnaire Results of Students' Listening Difficulties (Processing & Pragmatic Competence Dimension)

Variable	SA(5)	A(4)	N(3)	D(2)	SD(1)
I struggle to process American accents in real-time because the speed exceeds my processing ability. <i>Saya kesulitan memproses aksen Amerika secara real-time karena kecepatannya terlalu tinggi.</i>	14.30%	20.00%	48.60%	17.10%	0.00%
I can understand a British accent word-for-word, but fail to catch the global meaning automatically. <i>Saya bisa memahami kata per kata aksen Inggris, tetapi gagal menangkap makna keseluruhan.</i>	20.00%	28.60%	27.10%	24.30%	0.00%
British English intonation confuses me when trying to determine the speaker's intent or tone (serious, joking, etc.).	21.40%	28.60%	28.60%	21.40%	0.00%

Variable	SA(5)	A(4)	N(3)	D(2)	SD(1)
<i>Intonasi aksen Inggris membuat saya bingung menentukan maksud/nada pembicara.</i>					
I need more time to process and understand British accents compared to American accents. <i>Saya membutuhkan waktu lebih lama untuk memahami aksen Inggris dibanding aksen Amerika.</i>	30.00%	24.30%	30.00%	15.70%	0.00%
My grammar knowledge helps me process sentences in American accents even when not all words are clear. <i>Pengetahuan tata bahasa membantu saya memproses kalimat meskipun tidak semua kata jelas.</i>	24.30%	27.10%	24.30%	24.30%	0.00%
Average	22.00%	25.70%	31.70%	20.60%	0.00%
	3.49 (Moderate)				

Based on the questionnaire table, the average score is 3.49, which means the difficulty level is moderate. The data clearly shows that students need extra time to understand the meaning of real native speech. Their school grammar knowledge

helps them guess missing words, especially in the flatter American accent. However, grammar knowledge is not enough for everything. Students still need a lot of time to process the changing voice tones in British English. This indicates that because students listen word-for-word, they cannot automatically understand if the speaker is serious, joking, or angry. Therefore, understanding hidden meanings in different accents is still moderately difficult for them.

The interview results also strongly support these findings. When explaining how phonetic features affect the interpretation of a speaker's intent, Informant W remarked, *“the difference in intonation affects me a lot... British accents... use like more intonation, but sometimes it is easier to notice the emotion, but... can also confuse me if I'm not familiar with the tone... and American accent feels flatter and easier to follow, but sometimes it is harder to know whether the speaker is serious, joking, or sarcastic.”* This reflection demonstrates that while the rhythmic variation of British speech can periodically assist emotional recognition, its structural complexity induces confusion. In contrast, the unmodulated nature of American speech compromises pragmatic discernment, creating a severe barrier to detecting underlying humor or sarcasm. Thus, the processing and pragmatic competence dimension confirms that distinct accent styles require vastly different interpretative efforts, making real-time comprehension an unstable process for students.

The research findings across all four dimensions show that university students experience a moderate level of difficulty when listening to native American and British English accents. At the acoustic level, students face a significant gap in matching written words to real-time sounds due to British vowel

shifts and fast American word-linking, making them rely heavily on slow, clear classroom textbook recordings rather than messy, real-world audio. To survive these tracking breakdowns, students actively use short-term strategies like catching main ideas, using subtitles, and replaying audio; however, processing fast native speech streams for long periods quickly exhausts their working memory and leads to severe cognitive overload near the end of tasks. Furthermore, while their school grammar knowledge helps them guess missing words in flatter American speech, their literal, word-for-word listening habits make it highly time-consuming to decode the dynamic tones of British English, which often causes them to miss the speaker's true emotions, jokes, or sarcasm. In conclusion, the transition from structured classroom audio to unscripted real-world accents remains a challenging process that requires continuous mental effort and interactive learning support.

4.1.2 Factors Causing Fourth-Semester Students' Challenges in Understanding American and British Accents.

Based on the questionnaire, observations, and interview data, there are main factors that cause fourth-semester students to struggle when listening to American and British accents. These factors relate to their learning environment, exposure, and mental capacity.

4.1.2.1 Real-World Exposure Gap

The first factor causing students' challenges is the environmental gap. This means there is a big difference between the English students hear in class and the English spoken in the real world. In the classroom, students usually listen to textbook audio that is clean, slow, and perfectly pronounced. However, this lack of

authentic exposure becomes a major factor because it makes them easily shocked when they face real native speakers.

Table 7. Observation Results on Real-World Exposure Gap as a Factor

No.	Aspects Observed	Results Observation	
		1st	2nd
1	Dependence on Classroom Audio Students appear calmer and complete worksheets more smoothly when listening to structured textbook audio compared to authentic recordings. <i>Siswa kesulitan mengikuti kecepatan bicara alami dan percakapan yang berkesinambungan (misalnya, gonna, wanna).</i>	Yes	Yes
2	Acoustic Environmental Vulnerability Students show a loss of focus or request repetitions when the audio contains distortions or background noise. <i>Siswa membutuhkan jeda audio secara sering dibandingkan dengan audio kelas standar.</i>	Yes	Yes

Based on the observations, the lack of real-world exposure clearly acts as a major factor. Most students could do their tasks well when the audio came from standard textbooks because the pronunciation was very clear. However, when they listened to real-world audio with fast talking or background noise, they quickly lost focus and missed important points. This shows that the classroom environment does

not fully prepare students, becoming a primary cause of their listening challenges.

The questionnaire results for this factor are shown in the table below.

Table 8. Questionnaire Results of Students' Listening Difficulties (Classroom vs. Real-World Gaps Dimension)

Variable	SA(5)	A(4)	N(3)	D(2)	SD(1)
I find textbook audio recordings easier to understand compared to real native speaker accents. <i>Saya lebih mudah memahami rekaman aksen dalam buku ajar dibanding penutur asli sesungguhnya.</i>	18.60%	27.10%	28.60%	18.60%	7.10%
The speech rate of American English in natural conversations makes it hard for me to understand. <i>Kecepatan bicara aksen Amerika dalam percakapan alami menyulitkan pemahaman saya.</i>	12.90%	18.60%	34.30%	21.40%	12.90%
I rarely get exposure to authentic American or British accents outside of classroom learning. <i>Saya jarang mendapat paparan aksen Amerika atau Inggris asli di</i>	15.70%	27.10%	30.00%	21.40%	5.70%

Variable	SA(5)	A(4)	N(3)	D(2)	SD(1)
<i>luar kegiatan kelas.</i>					
Background noise or interference in the audio makes foreign accents even harder to comprehend. <i>Noise atau gangguan latar belakang membuat aksen asing semakin sulit dipahami.</i>	18.60%	25.70%	24.30%	25.70%	5.70%
I feel more comfortable listening to accents in movies or podcasts than official classroom materials. <i>Saya merasa lebih nyaman mendengarkan aksen di film/podcast dibanding materi resmi kelas.</i>	17.10%	24.30%	22.90%	18.60%	17.10%
Average	16.60%	24.60%	28.00%	21.10%	9.70%
	3.17 (Moderate)				

Based on the questionnaire table, the average score is 3.17, which indicates a moderate level of impact. The responses show that students highly depend on the slow speed and clear sounds of textbook recordings. When they listen to real native conversations, the fast speed and noisy environments become a significant barrier.

This tells us that because classroom audio is too simple, the lack of authentic exposure acts as a strong factor that causes students to feel shocked and confused when they hear real-world English. In conclusion, the environmental gap is a primary cause that hinders their listening comprehension when facing unedited audio.

The interview results also support these findings. To cope with the complex realities of natural speech rates and distinct accents, Informant N stated, *“I usually repeat the audio, then pay attention again to the pronunciation of the words, and look up vocabulary that I don't understand yet. Sometimes I also use subtitles to make it easier to understand the content of the conversation.”* Furthermore, regarding the struggle with fast word-cutting or unclear segments in authentic speech streams, Informant N added, *“sometimes I join in asking questions or discussing after the listening activity, especially parts that are less clear, because discussion helps with understanding and makes me more active in learning.”* This indicates that when faced with the sharp difference between predictable textbook recordings and unscripted native speech, students must deploy heavy compensatory strategies, such as replay loops, text subtitles, and peer discussions to close the comprehension gap. Thus, the classroom vs. real-world gaps dimension demonstrates that real-world delivery speeds significantly challenge autonomous understanding, making interactive learning support highly essential.

4.1.2.2 Reliance on Cognitive Strategies

The second factor causing students' challenges is their heavy reliance on conscious cognitive strategies. Because their listening skill is not yet automatic, students are forced to use slow processing strategies, such as translating words in

their heads or actively hunting for keywords. This processing limitation becomes a major factor that causes them to fall behind the natural speed of native speakers.

Table 9. Observation Results on Reliance on Cognitive Strategies as a Factor

No.	Aspects Observed	Results Observation	
		1st	2nd
1	Translation Habit and Processing Time Students take a long time to process information because they attempt to translate the audio word-for-word. <i>Siswa membutuhkan waktu lama untuk memproses informasi karena mencoba menerjemahkan audio kata per kata.</i>	Yes	Yes
2	Dependence on External Clues Students look confused and actively search for visual clues, transcripts, or subtitles when the accent becomes unfamiliar. <i>Siswa terlihat bingung dan aktif mencari petunjuk visual, transkrip, atau subtitle saat aksen tidak familiar.</i>	Yes	Yes

Based on the observations, this reliance on cognitive strategies clearly acts as a barrier. Students could not understand the audio naturally and automatically. Instead, they spent too much time trying to translate individual words. When they encountered difficult British or American accents, they paused and tried to guess

the meaning using context. Because this process takes a lot of time, it becomes a primary factor that prevents them from catching the whole meaning of fast-paced conversations. The questionnaire results for this factor are shown in the table below.

Table 10. Questionnaire Results on Reliance on Cognitive Strategies Factor

Variable	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
When I lose track of an unfamiliar accent, I try to focus on keywords or main ideas instead of every word. <i>Ketika kehilangan arah dari aksen asing, saya fokus pada kata kunci alih-alih setiap kata.</i>	20.00%	18.60%	28.60%	27.10%	5.70%
I rely heavily on context or visual clues (like subtitles) to guess the meaning when facing difficult accents. <i>Saya sangat bergantung pada konteks/subtitle untuk menebak arti saat menghadapi aksen sulit.</i>	18.60%	20.00%	31.40%	22.90%	7.10%
I need more time to process and understand British accents compared to American accents. <i>Saya butuh waktu lebih lama untuk memproses dan memahami aksen</i>	30.00%	24.30%	30.00%	15.70%	0.00%

Variable	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
<i>Inggris dibanding Amerika.</i>					
My grammar knowledge helps me process sentences in American accents even when not all words are clear. <i>Pengetahuan tata bahasa membantu saya memproses kalimat meskipun tidak semua kata jelas.</i>	24.30%	27.10%	24.30%	24.30%	0.00%
Average	23.23%	22.50%	28.57%	22.50%	3.20%
	3.40 (High Level)				

Based on the questionnaire table, the average score is 3.40, which indicates a high level of impact. The data shows that students depend highly on external help and extra processing time. Instead of naturally understanding the speech, a large percentage of students must actively search for keywords, use visual clues, or rely on grammar rules to decode the meaning. This high reliance proves that their listening process is not yet automatic. This lack of automatic processing acts as a strong factor that causes confusion when native speakers use dynamic intonation or fast connected speech.

The interview results strongly support this processing factor. When explaining how they deal with unfamiliar accents, Informant N admitted that they

cannot process the audio directly and must rely on active strategies: *"I usually repeat the audio, then pay attention again to the pronunciation of the words... Sometimes I also use subtitles to make it easier to understand the content."* Furthermore, Informant N explained that differing intonations demand even more processing time: *"British accents use like more intonation... it can also confuse me if I'm not familiar with the tone."* This confirms that the students' need for extra processing time and their habit of decoding language piece-by-piece act as a major factor that causes their listening comprehension to break down.

4.1.2.3 Mental Fatigue and Cognitive Overload

The third factor causing students' challenges is the physical and mental limitation of the human brain, known as cognitive overload. Listening to unfamiliar foreign accents requires extreme and continuous focus. Because students use too much mental energy trying to decode unfamiliar sounds at the beginning of the audio, their brains quickly become exhausted. This mental fatigue acts as a biological factor that causes a breakdown in their listening comprehension.

Table 11. Observation Results on Mental Fatigue as a Factor

No.	Aspects Observed	Results Observation	
		1st	2nd
1	Loss of Focus Over Time Students display a visible decrease in attention and focus towards the end of a long audio session. <i>Siswa menunjukkan penurunan perhatian dan fokus yang</i>	Yes	Yes

No.	Aspects Observed	Results Observation	
		1st	2nd
	<i>terlihat jelas menjelang akhir sesi audio yang panjang.</i>		
2	Signs of Cognitive Exhaustion Students show signs of giving up, such as stopping taking notes or looking frustrated during fast native speech streams. <i>Siswa menunjukkan tanda menyerah, seperti berhenti mencatat atau terlihat frustrasi saat mendengar aliran bicara asli yang cepat.</i>	Yes	Yes

Based on the observations, mental exhaustion is a powerful physical barrier. During the first few minutes of the audio, students usually looked prepared and could answer the questions. However, as the audio continued, they started to lose their focus, rub their eyes, or stop taking notes. This visible drop in concentration proves that processing fast and unfamiliar accents drains their working memory. Therefore, mental fatigue becomes a primary factor that forces their listening comprehension to stop halfway through the task. The questionnaire results for this factor are shown in the table below.

Table 12. Questionnaire Results on Mental Fatigue Factor

Variable	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
I find it mentally fatiguing to maintain concentration when listening to an unfamiliar accent for a long time. <i>Mendengarkan aksen asing dalam durasi lama membuat saya lelah secara mental.</i>	22.90%	21.40%	32.90%	17.10%	5.70%
My focus decreases towards the end of a long audio session featuring native accents. <i>Fokus saya menurun menjelang akhir sesi audio panjang yang menampilkan aksen penutur asli.</i>	12.90%	11.40%	31.40%	31.40%	12.90%
My brain feels overloaded when processing fast native American or British speech streams for extended periods. <i>Otak saya terasa kepenuhan (overload) saat memproses aliran bicara asli yang cepat secara lama.</i>	12.90%	28.60%	28.60%	21.40%	8.60%

Variable	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
I miss important information because of cognitive exhaustion near the end of a long listening task. <i>Saya melewatkan informasi penting akibat kelelahan kognitif menjelang akhir tugas.</i>	14.30%	20.00%	48.60%	17.10%	0.00%
Average	15.75%	20.35%	35.38%	21.75%	6.80%
	3.18 (Moderate)				

Based on the questionnaire table, the average score is 3.18, indicating a moderate but significant impact. The table clearly proves that cognitive exhaustion is a critical factor causing students' difficulties. A large number of students admitted that their focus drops and their brains feel overloaded when listening to fast speech for a long time. Because their working memory reaches its limit, they end up missing important information near the end of the task. This data confirms that no matter how much vocabulary students know, the limitation of mental energy will eventually cause them to fail in catching the complete message.

The interview results provide strong live evidence of this mental fatigue factor. Informant A described how listening to an unfamiliar accent for an extended period severely drains their mental energy: *"Yes. So, listening to unfamiliar foreign accents, especially for a long time, can make me tired mentally. Like, after some time, it's decreasing my focus and it becomes harder to follow the conversation."* Furthermore, Informant A gave a real-life example of how this cognitive overload

directly causes them to lose track of the story when watching native videos or movies: *"For example, just watch a movie with a British accent with a long time, or I watch a lot of episodes in British accent. It really makes me sometimes tired. And sometimes I start missing the important information of the movie because my brain gets overloaded."* This narrative confirms that cognitive exhaustion is a natural biological factor that undeniably causes students to struggle when dealing with continuous authentic English accents.

Overall, the findings indicate that students' challenges in understanding American and British accents are caused by a combination of environmental and cognitive factors that trigger one another. It begins with the real-world exposure gap, where students' heavy dependence on clear classroom audio leaves them unprepared for the natural speed and background noise of authentic native speech. Because their ears are not trained for these unfamiliar accents, they are forced to rely heavily on slow cognitive strategies, such as translating word-for-word and actively searching for external clues. Ultimately, this intense and continuous mental processing drains their working memory, leading to severe mental fatigue and cognitive overload. Together, these three interconnected factors perfectly explain why students easily lose focus, feel frustrated, and miss important information when listening to real-world English for an extended period.

4.2 Discussions

4.2.1 Discussion of Fourth-Semester Students' Challenges in Understanding American and British Accents

The results of the study indicate that fourth-semester students experience significant and distinct listening challenges across two major dimensions of speech

perception: acoustic-phonetic decoding (bottom-up level) and pragmatic competence (top-down level). This finding is supported by the distribution of data from the questionnaires and observations, where a large majority of students demonstrate moderate-to-high difficulty when exposed to natural American and British speech streams. These findings suggest that while students have a good foundation of written English vocabulary, their ability to parse and process spoken native accents in real-time is not yet fully stable or consistent across various communication situations. Listening comprehension is not a passive reception of sound; rather, it is an active and complex cognitive process where listeners must accurately decode auditory input, recognize pronunciation patterns, and link their linguistic knowledge with knowledge of the world to construct meaning (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). This condition indicates that students' listening challenges are highly dynamic and fluctuate depending on how well they can focus and filter out acoustic distractions in their listening environment (Downs, 2008).

Regarding the acoustic-phonetic decoding dimension (answering RQ1), the research findings indicate that students face severe difficulties when dealing with the lower-level linguistic cues of British and American English. According to (Cauldwell, 2013), bottom-up processing requires listeners to sequentially decode incoming data from phonemes and syllables up to grammatical structures. However, the data reveals that this bottom-up mechanism is completely disrupted when students encounter distinct native accent variations. Students experience an "acoustic blur" caused by segmental and temporal variations, such as British vowel shifts (where the LOT vowel /ɒ/ in words like hot or problem changes quality) and British non-rhoticity, where the post-vocalic /r/ is dropped in words like far or

mother. Similarly, students struggle with American consonant articulation features like flapping, where the /t/ sound is turned into a quick, soft /ɾ/ in words like water and city, as well as rapid word-linking or liaison. This failure in sound segmentation means that even if students know a word in written form, they fail to recognize it in spoken discourse because the acoustic input does not match their internal mental lexicon (Field, 2009). This finding aligns with Ramadhianti & Somba (2021), who found that accent variations and rapid speaker delivery rates are the most difficult barriers for Indonesian EFL students, causing immediate confusion because their ears are untrained for natural phonetic modifications.

Regarding the processing and pragmatic competence dimension (answering RQ1), the research results indicate that students face high-level challenges when interpreting the speaker's true communicative intent through suprasegmental features. Pragmatic competence in listening involves the ability to understand a speaker's meaning, emotional state, or implied messages within a socio-linguistic context, which is heavily carried by pitch, stress placement, and intonation contours (Buck, 2010). The findings show that students are frequently misled by the dynamic, fluctuating intonation patterns of British English or the relatively flatter tone of American English, making it difficult for them to detect implicit meanings like sarcasm, irony, or humor. According to Zhao et al. (2022), intonation modifies vocal pitch to communicate vital clues without relying on specific words. Because these fourth-semester students have a strong habit of translating literal words sentence-by-sentence, they rely too much on literal definitions and miss these prosodic clues. This imbalance occurs because their limited bottom-up automaticity forces them to spend all their energy decoding basic sounds, preventing them from

effectively using top-down schematic knowledge to capture global meaning (Rost, 2013). This finding is strongly supported by (Ilahiy, 2023), who stated that EFL students are easily misled by vowel quality and intonation shifts when an accent differs from what they are accustomed to, directly lowering their comprehension accuracy.

Overall, the challenges faced by students show a profound gap between their classroom preparation and the acoustic realities of native speech. In processing native accents, students face a double burden where they must simultaneously handle linguistic and cognitive pressures. This difficulty can be explained through Cognitive Listening Theory, which shows that human working memory has a limited capacity when processing new or unautomated information (Alzamil, 2021). In accent-based tasks, students experience a heavy cognitive load because their brains are forced to over-concentrate on fixing sound distortions at the lower level, leaving no mental room for higher-level pragmatic interpretation. This dual demand increases learning complexity and reduces comprehension success, especially when students face rapid native speech streams (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). This condition is further complicated by affective elements, as noted by Rungsinanont (2021), where a lack of confidence and high listening anxiety cause students to hesitate more when facing challenging accents, which further disrupts their real-time concentration and prevents them from catching the overall theme of the conversation.

4.2.2 Discussion of Factors Causing Fourth-Semester Students' Challenges in Understanding American and British Accents

The results of the study indicate that the factors causing students' listening difficulties are a combination of environmental, linguistic, and cognitive limitations that interact with one another. The data reveals that the factor with the most significant impact is the real-world exposure gap, followed closely by a heavy reliance on conscious cognitive strategies and mental fatigue. These findings align with the comprehensive listening frameworks proposed by Ruetten (1985) and (Rost, 2013) which state that listening difficulties are created by a mismatch between instructional environments and real-world processing limits. This is evident from the interview and questionnaire results, where students admitted that their long-term dependence on clean, slow classroom audio directly caused their failure to understand authentic accents. When faced with natural native interactions, their comprehension did not last very long because their processing speed could not match the rapid flow of spoken language. This indicates that while standard language inputs provide a basic foundation, a lack of authentic exposure acts as a primary factor that destabilizes a student's listening performance (Nushi & Orouji, 2020).

Regarding the real-world exposure gap factor, the environmental difference between classroom instruction and authentic language delivery acts as a major barrier. Ruetten (1985) argues that conventional EFL classrooms often shield students from reality by exposing them exclusively to "sterilized" textbook audio recordings delivered at an artificially slow, deliberate pace with perfect clarity. The data from observations and questions clearly shows that students feel comfortable

with these standard textbook recordings but experience a severe "listening shock" when exposed to authentic native streams. Authentic speech presents natural characteristics such as unpredictable speech rates, environmental background noise, and colloquial word reductions like *gonna* and *wanna* (Ur, 1984).

This finding is highly consistent with Galante and Piccardo (2021), who emphasize that modern language learning must shift its focus toward real-world intelligibility and comprehensibility rather than idealized, perfect native models. Because the university's curriculum primarily utilizes standard, studio-recorded British and American English to maintain high academic accuracy (Biber et al., 2021), students are rarely exposed to unedited, messy native speech outside the classroom. This institutional lack of accent-diversification training indirectly contributes to the students' vulnerability when they face real-world media or podcasts.

Regarding the reliance on the cognitive strategies factor, the research findings indicate that students' use of non-automatic processing serves as a heavy mental burden. According to Rost (2011), successful listening relies on a balance of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, but when confronted with unfamiliar accents, this balance collapses. The findings show that because students cannot decode British or American sounds automatically, they are forced to deploy heavy, conscious compensatory strategies to survive, such as relying on text subtitles, hunting for random keywords, and using grammar rules to guess meanings. Informant N explicitly stated that they must constantly replay the audio loops and look up vocabulary just to find word boundaries. While Gao et al. (2023) note that modern pronunciation and fluency require an integrative understanding of

connected speech (*liaison*), students' processing speed remains too slow because they decode language piece-by-piece. This slow processing speed prevents them from keeping up with the rapid tempo of natural American or the unique rhythmic melodies of British English, causing their comprehension to break down during continuous conversations (Alzamil, 2021).

These findings must also be understood within the institutional context of the university's English department curriculum. The department primarily utilizes standard, studio-recorded British and American English audio to maintain high academic accuracy during formal lectures and listening laboratory sessions. Institutional support through highly structured curriculum design is important because it helps students master explicit grammatical rules and standard academic vocabulary (Zacharias, 2013). However, this structured approach often excludes exposure to natural variations, non-standard dialects, or unedited speech rates (Lauder, 2008). Through this standard curriculum, students develop strong theoretical English skills but lack specialized phonetic training for real-world variation, such as dealing with background noise, overlapping conversations, or rapid dialectal shifts (Kirkpatrick, 2010). Consequently, this lack of accent-diversification training within the institutional setting indirectly contributes to the students' vulnerability when they face real-world speech streams outside the classroom.

In terms of the mental fatigue and cognitive overload factor, students' internal cognitive capacity directly limits their level of success during prolonged listening tasks. Spoken language exists only for a moment and cannot be paused, which requires intense and continuous mental concentration (Buck, 2001). The

observation and questionnaire data show that while students start listening tasks with good focus, they display a visible decrease in attention, rub their eyes, and show signs of frustration near the end of long audio sessions. Informant N detailed how watching long videos in a British accent completely exhausts their brain, causing them to miss important information near the end of the task. This phenomenon matches Rost's (2011) theory of cognitive overload and mental fatigue. Because students waste too much mental energy trying to decode unfamiliar phonetic features (like American flapping or British non-rhoticity) at the beginning of an audio track, the limited capacity of their working memory is rapidly exhausted (Alzamil, 2021). Once cognitive overload occurs, the brain can no longer execute higher-level predictive processing or reflect on the overall theme, forcing their active comprehension to fail before the audio ends.

Overall, the research findings indicate that these three factors do not act in isolation; instead, they interact with one another in a destructive chain reaction. The real-world exposure gap acts as the initial environmental cause, which leaves students unprepared for authentic speech features and forces them to rely heavily on slow, conscious cognitive strategies to decode basic native sounds. Concurrently, this continuous and intense mental processing drains their limited working memory capacity, leading to severe mental fatigue and total cognitive overload near the end of listening tasks. This finding matches Ramadhianti and Somba (2021), who noted that the combination of rapid speed, long descriptions, and unfamiliar accents forms an overwhelming barrier for students. Therefore, the development of listening competence among these fourth-semester students cannot be achieved by merely teaching vocabulary; it requires a unified instructional

approach that simultaneously expands authentic environmental exposure, builds automatic phonetic decoding, and reduces cognitive exhaustion in real-time processing.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents the conclusions from the research conducted on fourth-semester students' listening challenges and the underlying causative factors in understanding American and British accents within an English Foreign Language (EFL) classroom context.

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the listening challenges faced by students (R1) manifest when they are unable to keep up with the natural speed, word reduction, and background noise of authentic conversations among native English speakers. To overcome these challenges, students are forced to rely on consciously slow cognitive strategies such as using subtitles, keyword hunting, and discussing with peers in order to persevere in completing difficult tasks. Although these strategies help them infer context, they drastically reduce the students' information processing speed, making it impossible for them to keep up with native speakers' conversations as they unfold in real time. Ultimately, this intense mental effort completely depletes their limited working memory capacity, leading to severe mental fatigue toward the end of a long listening task and causing their active comprehension to break down or cease entirely.

These challenges were found to arise from causal factors (R2) in the form of an interrelated chain reaction between environmental and cognitive factors, with the real-world exposure gap serving as the primary trigger. Long-term institutional reliance on "sterile" and slow classroom audio textbooks leaves students completely unprepared and lacking in sound recognition automation when

confronted with variations in accents. These environmental factors trigger cognitive overload that exhausts students' brain capacity. As a practical implication for addressing these factors, university English departments need to develop advanced listening courses and redesign language lab modules. Teachers and curriculum developers must implement targeted strategies such as systematic scaffolding, explicit phonetic tracking, and deliberate exposure to unedited, authentic media from native speakers to strengthen listening automation, support academic resilience, and ensure students' communicative success when encountering variations of English in the real world.

5.2 Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions can be offered for students, teachers, schools, and future researchers. For students, it is important to actively engage in independent auditory exposure outside the classroom by listening to diverse, unedited native speech streams through podcasts or films without constantly relying on text subtitles. Students are also encouraged to practice active tracking techniques like language shadowing to familiarize their ears with natural connected speech features, vowel shifts, and native intonation contours. Developing both bottom-up automaticity and top-down inferencing can help reduce the cognitive burden experienced during advanced listening tasks, supporting stronger self-confidence and better academic performance.

For lectures, it is recommended to implement practical teaching strategies such as systematic scaffolding, explicit phonetic tracking of accent variations (e.g., American flapping and British non-rhoticity), and the integration of authentic audio materials to help students automate word segmentation. Teachers should also

design tasks that prioritize top-down global comprehension over literal decoding to build students' confidence. For institutions, continuous curriculum updates and professional development programs should be strengthened to improve teachers' competence in delivering authentic, accent-diversified listening instruction, thereby creating a more supportive and resource-rich language learning environment.

For future researchers, it is suggested to expand the scope of this study by investigating the long-term efficacy of explicit connected speech instruction across broader demographic variables and proficiency levels. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how cognitive load diminishes over time when students are exposed to diverse varieties of English. Additionally, future investigations could explore the impact of specific digital language learning tools and AI-driven speech recognition software in accelerating bottom-up automaticity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. The Research Instrument Used for The Classroom Observation

No	Observed Dimensions / Indicators	Result Observation		Observation Results / Additional Notes
		Yes	No	
1	Acoustic & Phonetic Decoding a. Students show confusion or ask for repetition when British non-rhoticity occurs (e.g., dropped /r/).	✓		Students paused or frowned when words like water or car were pronounced in British audio.
	Acoustic & Phonetic Decoding b. Students misinterpret words due to American flapping /t/ (e.g., /t/ sounding like /d/).	✓		Several students wrote down wrong vocabularies that sounded similar in American style.
2	Classroom vs. Real-World Gaps a. Students struggle to follow natural speech rates and connected speech (e.g., gonna, wanna).	✓		Students complained that the native speakers spoke "too fast" and words blended together.
	Classroom vs. Real-World Gaps b. Students require the audio to be paused frequently compared to standard classroom audio.	✓		The lecturer had to replay specific authentic segments up to 3 times.
3	Cognitive Process & Fatigue a. Students exhibit signs of listening anxiety or mental fatigue during long audio tracks.	✓		Signs of losing focus, leaning back, or sighing after 15 minutes of continuous listening.
	Cognitive Process & Fatigue b. Students completely stop taking notes when they miss a specific accent-dependent word.	✓		Some students stopped writing entirely when they got stuck on one unfamiliar British term.
4	Pragmatic Processing a. Students misunderstand the speaker's implicit meaning, tone, or sarcasm.	✓		Students answered literal facts correctly but failed to guess the speaker's real emotional expression.
	Pragmatic Processing b. Students show difficulty adapting to the dynamic pitch changes of British intonation.	✓		Students expressed confusion regarding the rising and falling tones of British speakers.

Appendix 2. The Research Instrument Used for Questionnaires

Category	Statement
Phonetic & Decoding Difficulties	I find it difficult to recognize specific sounds in American English (e.g., the vowel sound /æ/ in the word "can't"). (Saya kesulitan mengenali bunyi tertentu dalam aksen Amerika).
	It is hard for me to distinguish words that sound similar in British English (e.g., "bath" vs "but"). (Saya sulit membedakan kata-kata yang terdengar mirip dalam aksen Inggris).
	I fail to separate word boundaries in fast-spoken American English speech streams. (Saya gagal memisahkan batas antar kata dalam arus ujaran aksen Amerika yang cepat).
	I recognize words when I see them in writing, but I cannot recognize them when spoken in a British accent (Saya mengenali kata dalam bentuk tulisan, tetapi tidak saat diucapkan dengan aksen Inggris).
Classroom vs Real-World Gap	I find textbook audio recordings easier to understand compared to real native speaker accents. (Saya lebih mudah memahami rekaman aksen dalam buku ajar dibanding penutur asli sesungguhnya).
	The speech rate of American English in natural conversations makes it hard for me to understand. (Kecepatan bicara aksen Amerika dalam percakapan alami menyulitkan pemahaman saya).
	I rarely get exposure to authentic American or British accents outside of classroom learning. (Saya jarang mendapat paparan aksen Amerika atau Inggris asli di luar kegiatan kelas).
	Background noise or interference in the audio makes foreign accents even harder to comprehend. (Noise atau gangguan latar belakang membuat aksen asing semakin sulit dipahami).
Cognitive Strategies in Listening	When I don't understand an American accent, I try to guess the meaning from the sentence context. (Ketika tidak memahami aksen Amerika, saya berusaha menebak maknanya dari konteks).
	I actively use my background knowledge about the topic to help me understand British accents. (Saya aktif menggunakan pengetahuan topik untuk membantu memahami aksen Inggris).
	I am able to reflect on and evaluate the message content even if the speaker's accent is unfamiliar to me.

	(Saya mampu merefleksikan isi pesan meskipun aksen pembicara tidak familiar).
	I struggle to focus on meaning because I concentrate too much on how the accent is pronounced. (Saya kesulitan fokus pada makna karena terlalu berkonsentrasi pada cara pengucapan).
	I feel confident in understanding the overall meaning when listening to an American accent. (Saya merasa percaya diri untuk memahami makna keseluruhan ketika mendengar aksen Amerika).
	I feel confident in understanding the overall meaning when listening to a British accent. (Saya merasa percaya diri untuk memahami makna keseluruhan ketika mendengar aksen Inggris).
Processing & Pragmatic Competence	I struggle to process American accents in real-time because the speed exceeds my processing ability. (Saya kesulitan memproses aksen Amerika secara real-time karena kecepatannya terlalu tinggi).
	I can understand a British accent word-for-word, but fail to catch the global meaning automatically. (Saya bisa memahami kata per kata aksen Inggris, tetapi gagal menangkap makna keseluruhan).
	British English intonation confuses me when trying to determine the speaker's intent or tone (serious, joking, etc.). (Intonasi aksen Inggris membuat saya bingung menentukan maksud/nada pembicara).
	I need more time to process and understand British accents compared to American accents. (Saya membutuhkan waktu lebih lama untuk memahami aksen Inggris dibanding aksen Amerika).
	My grammar knowledge helps me process sentences in American accents even when not all words are clear. (Pengetahuan tata bahasa membantu saya memproses kalimat meskipun tidak semua kata jelas).

Appendix 3. The Research Instrument for Interview

Category	Interview Question
Phonetic & Decoding Difficulties	When listening to American or British accents, which specific sound or pronunciation aspects cause you the most difficulty? <i>(Ketika mendengarkan aksen Amerika atau Inggris, aspek bunyi atau pengucapan mana yang paling sering membuat Anda bingung?)</i>
	Have you ever experienced a situation where you know a word in writing, but fail to recognize it when spoken in a specific accent? Can you share that experience? <i>(Pernahkah Anda mengalami situasi di mana Anda tahu suatu kata dalam bentuk tulisan, tetapi gagal mengenalinya saat diucapkan dalam aksen tertentu? Bisa ceritakan pengalamannya?)</i>
Classroom vs Real-World Gap	What is the biggest difference you feel between listening to textbook audio in class and listening to native speakers in the real world (movies, podcasts, live speech)? Which is harder and why? <i>(Apa perbedaan terbesar yang Anda rasakan antara mendengarkan audio rekaman buku ajar di kelas dengan mendengarkan penutur asli di dunia nyata? Mana yang lebih sulit dan mengapa?)</i>
	How do natural speech rates and word reductions (like gonna, wanna, d'you) in those accents affect your understanding? <i>(Bagaimana pengaruh kecepatan bicara asli dan fenomena pemotongan kata seperti "gonna, wanna, d'you" dalam aksen tersebut terhadap pemahaman Anda?)</i>
Cognitive Strategies in Listening	Do you have a specific strategy for understanding difficult accents? Can you explain the strategy?
	Can you share your experience learning English through authentic accent materials?
Processing Speed & Pragmatics	What do you usually do (your strategy) when you suddenly lose track or do not understand what an American or British speaker is saying? <i>(Apa yang biasanya Anda lakukan ketika tiba-tiba kehilangan arah atau tidak memahami apa yang diucapkan oleh penutur ber-aksen Amerika/Inggris?)</i>
	Does listening to an unfamiliar foreign accent for a long duration cause you mental fatigue (cognitive overload)? How does it affect your focus towards the end?

Category	Interview Question
	<i>(Apakah mendengarkan aksen asing yang tidak familiar dalam durasi lama membuat Anda mengalami kelelahan mental? Bagaimana hal itu memengaruhi fokus Anda di akhir sesi?)</i>
	Do you find yourself missing more information at the end of the audio? <i>Apakah Anda merasa kehilangan lebih banyak informasi di akhir audio?</i>
Challenges of Vocabulary	Do you often encounter unfamiliar words when listening to American/British accents?
	How often do you feel frustrated because you cannot understand the vocabulary used in the listening?
	Do you think the vocabulary used in the audio is too difficult? Can you give an example?
Challenges of Sentence Structure	What do you think about the sentence structures used in authentic listening materials?
	Do you experience difficulty understanding the sentence structure? Which structure is the most difficult?
	Do you think the sentence structure in authentic accents is different from what you usually learn? How?
Challenges of Accent & Pronunciation	Do American or British accents affect your comprehension?
	Which accent is more difficult for you to understand? Why?
Challenges of Topic & Content	Do you find the listening topics difficult, interesting, or confusing?
	Have you ever been confused by a particular type of listening material? Please give an example.
	Is there a topic that you find most difficult to understand? Why?
	Which topic do you find the most interesting? Why?
Challenges of Cultural Context	Have you ever found a listening section difficult because it relates to a foreign culture?
	Can you describe an experience when a part of the listening felt “foreign” or beyond your understanding?
	Do you think cultural elements in the listening material make it more difficult to understand?
Preferences	Do you prefer listening to native-speaker audio or simplified listening materials? Why?

Category	Interview Question
	Which accent type of listening is more difficult for you? Why?

Appendix 4. Validation Sheet

VALIDATION SHEET

Instrument Validation Sheet for Research Entitled

“EXPLORING LISTENING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES WITH AMERICAN AND BRITISH ACCENTS AMONG EFL STUDENTS”

Validator : Harir Mubarak, M.Pd
NIP : 19870708201802011152
Expertise : Listening
Validation Date : 17 April 2026

A. Introduction

This Validation sheet is used to obtain an assessment from the validator on the research instrument that will be used in this research. Every feedback is essential to improve the quality of the research instrument. The researcher owes a lot for the willingness of the validator in filling out this validation sheet.

B. Guidance

Please give a score on each item of the statement using the sign (✓) in the scale as follows: 1 = Very Poor, 2= Poor, 3 = Average, 4 = Good, 5 = Very Good.

C. Assessment Rubric

No.	Indicators	Score					Feedback/ Suggestions
		1	2	3	4	5	
1.	The research instrument is well constructed.				✓		
2.	The research instruments are reliable with the research questions.				✓		
3.	The research instruments are clear and understandable for students.				✓		

4.	The research instruments are relevant to the English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) mathematics classroom context				✓		
5.	The research instruments are easy to understand.				✓		
6.	The research instruments can help the researcher collect accurate and detailed classroom data.				✓		

D. Suggestion

I hope these instruments can dig up the data in the field based on your research questions.

E. Conclusion

Based on the validation sheet above, it can be concluded that the instruments that have been made is:

Please give a strikethrough (example) on the answer that does not match your conclusion.

- ①. Appropriate to be used to collect data without revision.
2. Appropriate to be used to collect data within the revision.
3. Not appropriate to be used to collect data.

Malang, 17 April 2026

Validator,



Harir Mubarak, M.Pd

NIP. 19870708201802011152

96

96

Items	Kelas	# Q1	# Q2	# Q3	# Q4	# Q5	# Q6	# Q7	# Q8	# Q9	# Q10	# Q11	# Q12	# Q13	# Q14	# Q15	# Q16	# Q17	# Q18	# Q19	# Q20	# Q21	# Q22	30.14	Count 26	Column 27
Silaturahmi Astaheriy	ICP	2	5	3	4	5	5	3	3	4	5	3	2	5	4	5	4	3	4	4	5	3	4	2	79	3.59
Fajarul Ush Shorobah	ICP	2	5	3	3	5	4	3	3	5	3	5	3	4	3	3	3	4	5	4	5	5	2	3	82	3.79
Budhiyung Mubarakah	ICP	2	5	3	4	4	2	3	2	4	2	2	2	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	5	2	3	64	3.01
Aspek Mubajrah	ICP	2	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	4	5	5	4	3	5	4	3	3	5	5	3	5	5	80	4.09
Indah Adami	ICP	4	5	3	3	4	5	2	5	2	5	2	4	4	3	2	5	2	5	4	4	3	2	2	76	3.45
Fitriawati	ICP	4	5	4	2	4	5	3	5	3	2	5	5	4	3	4	4	2	3	2	4	5	4	2	81	3.68
Agatha Basyah	ICP	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	2	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	88	4.00
Indah Nurwah	ICP	5	5	3	4	3	4	4	4	5	3	5	5	4	3	5	5	4	4	3	3	4	2	2	80	3.64
Adhira Tama	ICP	5	5	3	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	5	5	3	5	5	80	3.64
		264	264	255	245	227	240	232	238	228	228	214	214	217	194	224	220	212	240	245	228	246	225			
Shahr 5		18	15	8	14	9	16	13	9	11	13	14	14	14	8	13	9	10	14	12	17	17	17	16		
Shahr 2		27	25	13	23	21	20	19	19	19	18	17	16	20	22	16	20	16	20	20	20	19	17	17		
Shahr 2		18	24	22	18	25	19	20	24	21	22	19	19	23	22	22	22	21	24	22	20	21	17	17		
Shahr 1		7	6	15	14	8	11	10	10	10	10	14	14	12	9	16	12	12	17	15	11	11	11	11		
Shahr 1		0	0	2	1	7	4	0	0	4	0	4	4	4	0	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Shahr 5		22.7%	21.4%	10.4%	20.0%	12.0%	22.0%	16.4%	12.0%	18.6%	17.1%	17.1%	17.1%	20.0%	14.4%	18.6%	12.0%	14.3%	20.0%	20.4%	20.0%	19.4%	17.1%	17.1%		
Shahr 2		28.6%	21.7%	18.4%	23.7%	20.0%	26.4%	20.4%	18.6%	20.0%	21.7%	22.9%	21.4%	24.3%	11.4%	20.0%	20.4%	20.0%	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%	24.7%	24.7%	24.7%		
Shahr 2		22.7%	24.7%	42.7%	22.7%	26.1%	27.0%	26.4%	24.3%	20.0%	20.0%	22.9%	22.9%	22.9%	20.4%	21.4%	20.4%	20.0%	27.1%	28.6%	28.6%	24.7%	24.7%	24.7%		
Shahr 1		0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	5.4%	10.0%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.7%	5.7%	11.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	7.1%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%		

Appendix 6. Transcript Interviews

Interview Questions
Dimension: Phonetic & Decoding Difficulties Q1: When listening to American or British accents, which specific sound or pronunciation aspects cause you the most difficulty? Answer • J: "Kalau saya pribadi sebenarnya sudah cukup terbiasa dari kecil, jadi tidak terlalu ada masalah besar. Paling hanya beberapa kata <i>slang</i> baru saja." • D: "Awalnya waktu transisi ke materi asli, saya sempat bingung dengan aksen Inggris (British) terutama bunyi 'R' yang hilang (<i>non-rhotic</i>) dan glottal stop. Tapi sekarang setelah terbiasa, malah lebih suka karena kedengaran jelas." • N: "Saya sering bingung membedakan vokal yang mirip di aksen Amerika, atau intonasi naik-turunnya. Jadi saya harus cari tahu dulu di YouTube cara pengucapannya agar akrab di telinga." • A: "Lumayan bingung di aksen British, terutama pengucapan kata-kata yang huruf vokalnya jadi pendek atau berubah total dari tulisan yang biasa saya lihat. Harus fokus sekali baru ngeh bunyinya." • NA: "Kadang bingung banget. Bunyinya seperti menyatu semua, terutama kalau penuturnya ngomong cepat. Saya tidak bisa membedakan kata satu dengan kata lainnya." Q2: Have you ever experienced a situation where you know a word in writing, but fail to recognize it when spoken in a specific accent? Can you share that experience? • J: "Jarang ya, karena kalau sudah tahu tulisannya, biasanya langsung konek saat didengar." • D: "Pernah waktu awal-awal dengar kata '<i>Schedule</i>' atau '<i>Water</i>' di aksen British. Di tulisan tahu banget, tapi pas diucapkan kok beda banget bunyinya. Tapi setelah tahu polanya, sekarang langsung paham." • N: "Pernah, misalnya kata-kata ilmiah atau istilah asing. Di tulisan saya tahu artinya, tapi pas diucapkan dengan aksan Amerika yang cepat, saya sempat tidak sadar kalau itu kata yang sama sampai saya baca transkripnya." • A: "Iya, sering membantu kalau ada teksnya, tapi kalau cuma audio saja langsung bingung. Contohnya kata-kata yang ada huruf 't' di tengah tapi di aksan Amerika dibaca mirip 'd' (<i>flapped t</i>). Tahu katanya, tapi pas didengar rasanya asing." • NA: "Sering sekali. Di kertas saya tahu artinya, tapi pas di audio penutur asli, saya tidak mengenali kata itu sama sekali sampai rasanya bingung sendiri dari awal."
Dimension: Classroom vs Real-World Gap Q3: What is the biggest difference you feel between listening to textbook audio in class and listening to native speakers in the real world (movies, podcasts, live speech)? Which is harder and why? Answer • J: "Buku ajar jauh lebih lambat dan kaku. Dunia nyata lebih natural. Bagi saya tidak ada yang terlalu sulit karena sudah biasa nonton film tanpa subtitle." • D: "Bedanya jauh sekali, dulu pas pertama dengar dunia nyata sempat <i>culture shock</i> karena di kelas audionya sangat rapi dan pelan. Dunia nyata jelas lebih menantang tapi justru lebih seru karena melatih kita tahu cara ngomong yang asli."

- N: "Di kelas itu artikulasinya sengaja diperjelas. Di dunia nyata seperti podcast, mereka bicaranya mengalir saja. Dunia nyata lebih sulit karena banyak gangguan suara latar juga."
- A: "Dunia nyata jauh lebih sulit. Di kelas kita bisa tebak polanya karena kosakata yang dipakai itu-itu saja. Di film atau video asli, bahasanya cepat dan bahas hal-hal yang tidak ada di buku pelajaran."
- NA: "Dunia nyata susah banget, saya hampir tidak paham kalau tidak pakai *subtitle*. Rekaman di kelas jauh lebih mudah karena lambat. Kalau di dunia nyata, mereka ngomongnya seperti tidak ada jeda."

Q4: How do natural speech rates and word reductions (like gonna, wanna, d'you) in those accents affect your understanding?

- J: "Tidak berpengaruh, karena di percakapan sehari-hari emang pakainya itu, jadi sudah otomatis paham."
- D: "Awalnya membingungkan, tapi setelah sering latihan soal dan adaptasi lewat media, singkatan-singkatan seperti itu justru bikin percakapan jadi terasa lebih mudah dipahami."
- N: "Cukup memengaruhi di awal. Saya harus membiasakan diri menerjemahkan 'd'you' menjadi 'do you' di otak saya, tapi lama-lama jadi terbiasa."
- A: "Agak mengganggu fokus. Kalau mereka potong katanya terlalu banyak, saya jadi salah tebak arti kalimatnya. Kadang ngerti polanya, tapi bingung karena potongannya terlalu cepat."
- NA: "Sangat membuat bingung. Kalau sudah ada pemotongan kata begitu, sebelum saya sempat mikir artinya, audionya sudah pindah ke kalimat lain. Jadi langsung ketinggalan."

Dimension: Cognitive Strategies in Listening

Q5: Do you have a specific strategy for understanding difficult accents? Can you explain the strategy?

Answer

- J: "Tidak ada strategi khusus, mengalir saja karena dasarnya sudah biasa mendengarkan dari dulu."
- D: "Strategi saya adalah sering latihan dengan sampel audio yang bervariasi dan membiasakan diri mendengarkan tanpa melihat teks dulu baru mencocokkannya kemudian."
- N: "Saya biasanya belajar mandiri lewat YouTube, mencari konten yang membahas perbedaan aksent tersebut lalu mencatat istilah-istilah uniknya."
- A: "Membaca pelan-pelan instruksinya jika ada teksnya, lalu mencoba fokus pada kata kunci (*keywords*) di audio, bukan mendengarkan kata per kata."
- NA: "Jujur tidak tahu strateginya. Kadang kalau sudah susah banget di awal, saya langsung merasa tidak bisa dan kehilangan arah untuk mendengarkan lanjutannya."

Q6: Can you share your experience learning English through authentic accent materials?

- J: "Sangat membantu dan menyenangkan karena saya belajar dari game dan film sejak SD, jadi prosesnya natural saja."
- D: "Proses adaptasinya seru. Dari yang awalnya bingung dengan aksent asli, lama-lama setelah dipraktikkan terus, malah bikin kemampuan *listening* saya naik drastis dibanding cuma dengar audio kelas."
- N: "Saya menggunakannya dengan cara mencocokkan apa yang saya dengar di film dengan kamus atau Google jika ada istilah aksent lokal yang tidak saya tahu."

- A: "Membantu tapi tidak selalu mulus. Kalau materi videonya mirip dengan topik yang saya tahu, saya bisa paham. Tapi kalau topiknya baru dengan aksen kental, saya harus mengulang videonya dari awal."
- NA: "Pengalamannya bikin kurang percaya diri. Karena setiap kali coba dengar materi asli tanpa teks, rasanya materi itu terlalu jauh di atas kemampuan saya sekarang."

Dimension: Processing Speed & Pragmatics

Q7: What do you usually do (your strategy) when you suddenly lose track or do not understand what an American or British speaker is saying?

Answer

- J: "Tetap lanjut mendengarkan saja, karena biasanya maksudnya tetap bisa ketebak dari kalimat selanjutnya."
- D: "Tetap tenang dan mencoba menebak maknanya dari konteks kalimat secara keseluruhan (*word problems context*)."
- N: "Saya coba ingat-ingat bunyi kata terakhirnya, lalu kalau bisa diulang, saya akan putar kembali bagian itu."
- A: "Saya langsung ragu dan memikirkan kata yang hilang tadi, akibatnya bagian audio setelahnya malah jadi ikut tidak kedengaran."
- NA: "Biasanya langsung panik dan tidak fokus lagi sampai audionya selesai karena sudah merasa tertinggal jauh."

Q8: Does listening to an unfamiliar foreign accent for a long duration cause you mental fatigue (cognitive overload)? How does it affect your focus towards the end?

- J: "Tidak terlalu berpengaruh karena sudah biasa mendengar dalam durasi lama."
- D: "Awalnya iya bikin lelah, tapi sekarang sudah tidak lagi karena otak sudah otomatis memproses aksennya."
- N: "Tergantung topiknya. Kalau topiknya berat dan aksennya asing, di akhir-akhir sesi fokus saya pasti menurun karena capek menerjemahkan."
- A: "Iya, sangat bikin lelah. Kalau durasinya panjang, di bagian akhir saya sering kehilangan fokus karena energi otaknya sudah habis di awal kalimat."
- NA: "Sangat berpengaruh. Baru beberapa menit saja rasanya otak sudah lelah karena dipaksa berpikir keras, akhirnya di akhir sesi saya cuma mendengar suara tanpa tahu artinya."

Q9: Do you find yourself missing more information at the end of the audio?

- J: "Tidak, informasi yang didapat dari awal sampai akhir cenderung stabil."
- D: "Sekarang sudah tidak lagi, karena fokusnya sudah terlatih konstan dari awal sampai akhir."
- N: "Sedikit berpengaruh, kadang di bagian akhir ada detail kecil yang terlewat karena konsentrasi berkurang."
- A: "Iya benar, sering kali jawaban atau info penting di bagian akhir audio malah terlewat karena saya masih sibuk memahami bagian tengahnya."
- NA: "Iya, hampir selalu kehilangan informasi di bagian akhir karena di posisi itu saya biasanya sudah menyerah untuk paham."

Challenges of Vocabulary

Q10: Do you often encounter unfamiliar words when listening to American/British accents?

- J: "Jarang sekali, paling hanya istilah-istilah yang sangat spesifik."
- D: "Kadang-kadang ada, tapi itu justru bagus karena bisa menambah *vocabulary* baru buat saya."
- N: "Lumayan sering, terutama kalau penuturnya menggunakan idiom lokal atau istilah budaya mereka."
- A: "Iya lumayan sering, dan kalau ada satu kata asing saja, itu langsung bikin saya bingung dengan seluruh isi kalimatnya."
- NA: "Sering banget, rasanya banyak sekali kata yang belum pernah saya pelajari sebelumnya."

Q11: How often do you feel frustrated because you cannot understand the vocabulary used in the listening?

- J: "Hampir tidak pernah merasa frustrasi."
- D: "Dulu sempat frustrasi saat awal adaptasi, tapi sekarang rasanya biasa saja karena itu bagian dari belajar."
- N: "Kadang-kadang frustrasi kalau kosakatanya benar-benar penting untuk menjawab pertanyaan tapi saya tidak tahu artinya."
- A: "Sering ragu dan agak frustrasi, apalagi kalau kosakatanya terdengar mirip dengan kata lain tapi artinya berbeda."
- NA: "Sangat sering frustrasi, bahkan kadang sebelum audionya selesai saya sudah merasa malas duluan karena tidak paham kosakatanya."

Q12: Do you think the vocabulary used in the audio is too difficult? Can you give an example?

- J: "Bagi saya kosakatanya masih dalam batas wajar dan tidak terlalu sulit."
- D: "Tergantung tingkatannya, tapi secara umum kalau kita sudah terbiasa dengan materi otentik, kosakatanya tidak semenakutkan itu."
- N: "Kadang terlalu sulit kalau masuk ke topik khusus, seperti istilah hukum atau sains dalam aksen British."
- A: "Iya, kadang bahasanya terlalu formal atau sebaliknya, terlalu banyak *slang* gaul yang tidak diajarkan di sekolah."
- NA: "Iya terlalu sulit untuk saya, contohnya kata-kata penghubung kalimat yang diucapkan cepat, saya tidak tahu itu maksudnya apa."

Appendix 7. Documentations



Appendix 8. Curriculum Vitae

CURRICULUM VITAE

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