

## **INVESTIGATING PROBLEMS FACED BY STUDENTS IN LISTENING SECTION OF TOEFL TEST**

**ROMADHON**

*Piksi Input Serang Polytechnic*

[romadhon@piksiinputserang.ac.id](mailto:romadhon@piksiinputserang.ac.id)

First Received: 17-08-2022; Accepted: 30-09-2022

### **Abstract**

Finding out what holds back students from doing well on the TOEFL listening exam is central to this study's overall aim. In this study, the quantitative descriptive approach was used. A sample of 36 participants from Piksi Input Serang's fifth semester accounting diploma class served as the basis sample for this study. The study instrument was based on an instrument cited from Hamouda (2013). There are a total of 27 inquiries spread across 7 sections in the questionnaire. The majority of participants, as measured by both mean and dominating factor, identify problems with the physical environment, such as distractions from background noise and distorted audio from a low-quality CD player, as significant barriers to their studies. It's safe to say that the participants have it toughest when it comes to the listening test's actual material and environment.

**Keywords:** TOEFL, Listening section, Problems

### **INTRODUCTION**

Both TOEFL and IELTS are two of the most commonly accepted standardized measures of English language proficiency among countries that do not speak English as first language. Fundamental abilities in reading, writing, speaking, and listening will be put to the test in both exams. However, there are special differences between the tests in terms of structure, value and approach taken. The most striking difference between TOEFL and IELTS is how the test is carried out, the TOEFL test is computer/digital based, while IELTS still uses a written test on paper (Li, 2018).

Someone can have good English skills, but the company will not know the standard if they do not show proof. TOEFL scores can be official evidence that can help companies measure applicant's English language skills with international standard references (Pazokizadeh, 2013). Several companies in the United States, Canada, and Australia, and other English-speaking countries accept TOEIC certificates for applicants from non-English speaking countries. But that does not mean the TOEFL certificate will not be useful.

Having a good TOEFL score means being able to master English in full, because most of the TOEIC exams only test listening and reading, but do not evaluate the participants' oral and writing abilities. A TOEFL certificate can also be a differentiator from other candidates,

especially if they have a good TOEFL score (Chang Liu, 2019). Companies will prefer a CV with a TOEFL score in various matters such as positioning, transfer to a foreign office, or promotion.

Listening skills are crucial in learning a new foreign language (Samad et al., 2017), since receiving language information is the essential component of learning a new language, especially a foreign language. Acquisition occurs while the learner has input that is completely understandable to him/her (Puput Arianto, 2017). Because it gives the learner crucial information and contributes significantly to their language development, listening is a key component of language learning. (Liu, 2014). Listening skills are an important part of getting understandable feedback. Learning will not take place without input. Listening comprehension provides the right prerequisites for acquiring and extending further language skills. The improvement of listening skills is linked to the development of speaking abilities. Listening is the most important ability in language learning since it is the most common communication function in daily life. (Silviyanti et al., 2020). Listening comprehension offers insight and can be used to teach listening. Learners may struggle to develop comprehensible listening abilities, but it can also create opportunity for teachers to exercise listening more efficiently. Learning to listen helps students excel in language learning, which improves input comprehension. Learners become more encouraged to use spoken English, including conversations with native speakers, as their listening comprehension improves (Kaneko, 2015).

Several issues, such as insufficient vocabulary, poor grammar, and misunderstandings of listening passages, might intensify learners' listening comprehension problems (Fitria, 2021). There are also internal problems which make listening the most difficult such as: listening carefully to the speech and what the speaker is saying, focusing on high scores, and other distractions that can affect TOEFL scores (Silviyanti et al., 2020). Text comprehension is the ongoing process of constructing coherent knowledge and reasoning at various text and context levels while utilizing a finite amount of working memory. The recollection of the listening part is also a challenge for language learners due to the restricted capacity of working memory (Maulidiah, 2017).

According to the explanation above, listening comprehension is the most widely used ability and plays a significant role in the acquisition of foreign language especially English language skills. Listening is a crucial language skill that allows people to get the most knowledge, awareness, and education about the world and human challenges, as well as their ideals and appreciation (Pratama et al., 2018). The above factors have the potential to cause Listening disadvantages in academic subjects and can also degrade students' Listening skill. Auditory function is very important in language development. This is evident in children's language development and acquisition. Listening is the most beneficial activity in this scenario. Children do not recognize words at first, but as they become accustomed to listening to adults, their language develops (Hussein, 2015).

Learning a language requires a lot of listening since it gives students important information. Humans learn to speak through comprehending linguistic information they have received. However, if the incoming language is not thoroughly studied, no learning progress will be made. Furthermore, without the ability to listen, communication is impossible (Rahmalia, 2017). This situation must be carefully considered in order to break down barriers in listening lessons and allow students to better understand what is being heard.

There are four types of listening factors, namely, the listener factor, the speaker factor, the stimulus factor and the context factor. "EFL skills" are the most important listening elements for EFL hearing problems (Saraswaty, 2018). The structure of the listening material causes a number of different listening difficulties. According to the study (Saraswaty, 2018), listening is not particularly important, and educators may not give students listening strategies.

Listening skill issues are tied to four factors: message, speaker, listener, and physical environment. Furthermore, various investigations have been undertaken to identify TOEFL listening issues (Maulidyah, 2017; Pratama et al., 2018; Rina & Tiarina, 2021; S. et al., 2020; Silviyanti et al., 2020; Syaifullah, 2018; Tengku Maya Silviyanti\*, 2017). In conclusion, numerous studies have been conducted to identify the difficulty. It is in accordance to the fact that listening is defined as the capacity to comprehend and recognize what someone else is saying and its goal is to understand what others are saying in English. So to investigate its

difficulties is really important and crucial for language learning development especially for ESP learners.

## METHOD

The study sample consisted of the fifth semester accounting diploma students who got training from the Golden Cycle English Academy collaborating with English instructors at Piksi Input Serang throughout the academic year 2020-2021. The fifth semester AK19A class consisted of 36 students, and the whole population was sampled for this study.

For data collection, the researcher used questionnaires. The (Hamouda, 2013) questionnaire was used. Because of redundancy, the researcher removed certain survey questions. The questionnaire's goal is to elicit students' perception and self-reported listening comprehension problems. The questionnaire was handed out at the end of the training. The researcher distributed a Google Form link to participants via Whatsapp group conversation, which had 27 phrases organized into 7 tables. They have up to three days to complete the surveys.

After collecting and processing all of the data, the researcher examines the data using the descriptive quantitative approach. The researcher used descriptive statistics. These descriptive statistics, such as frequency and percentage, are gathered to identify the general trends in the listening comprehension problems that students experience.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Finding

The results are organized into seven categories, each of which has 27 statements asking students about their difficulties with listening comprehension. Section one asked students regarding their concerns about the content of the TOEFL listening section. This section contains six statements. To determine how frequently and in what proportion the participants experienced the issue during the TOEFL listening phase, the questionnaire items were evaluated.

Table 1: The Content

Item	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total
------	-----------	-------	-----------	-------	--------	-------

No.						%
1.	It is hard for me to understand listening section with many unfamiliar vocabularies.	(2)	(26)	(0)	(8)	(36)
		5.6%	72.2%	0%	22.2%	100%
2.	Complex grammar and structure limit my comprehension on listening section.	(6)	(26)	(0)	(4)	(36)
		16.7%	72.2%	0%	11.1%	100%
3.	I experienced difficulty in comprehending long speech.	(0)	(22)	(8)	(6)	(36)
		0%	61.1%	22.2%	16.7%	100%
4.	Listening to a long speech makes me feel exhausted and lost.	(4)	(24)	(6)	(2)	(36)
		11.1%	66.7%	16.7%	5.6%	100%
5.	I have difficulty in comprehending every single word in listening section.	(0)	(30)	(0)	(6)	(36)
		0%	83.3%	0%	16.7%	100%
6.	I find it hard to comprehend the listening passage.	(0)	(28)	(2)	(6)	(36)
		0%	77.7%	5.6%	16.7%	100%
	Mean	5.5%	72.2%	7.4%	14.8%	100%

The substance of the text being listened to was represented in the table above as one of the seven factors of listening difficulty. There are a total of six (6) items, and each outcome appears once. Twenty-six of the survey's thirty-six respondents (72.2%) selected "sometimes" for the first question, and this trend continued with question two. Twenty-two respondents picked "sometimes," eight picked "often," and six picked "often" for the third question, which asked how lengthy the spoken text was. The other concern is that listeners become exhausted and muddled during the course of a lengthy spoken text. Twenty-four of the 36 students (66.7%) said they encounter these problems "sometimes," six said "often," two said "always," and four said "never." As for the fifth point, thirty students (83.33 percent) voted "sometimes," six voted "always," and 0 student voted "often" or "never." The final component

is number six. 28 out of 42 students (77.8%) say they have trouble understanding the paragraph at least sometimes, with 6 saying they have trouble "always," 2 saying they have trouble "often," and 0 saying they never have trouble.

Table 2: Listening Issue Caused by Linguistic Feature.

Item No.	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total %
7.	It is surprising and challenging for me to comprehend slang and informal language.	(2)	(30)	(0)	(4)	(36)
		5.6%	83.3%	0%	16.7%	100%
8.	I find the pronunciation of the native speaker recognizable but I cannot understand the words	(4)	(26)	(8)	(4)	(36)
		11.1%	72.2%	22.2%	11.1%	100%
9.	When I heard to the unfamiliar words, I stop to listen and give a thought on the meaning of the word	(8)	(22)	(6)	(0)	(36)
		0%	61.1%	16.7%	0%	100%
10.	I have trouble following the long, complicated spoken text.	(0)	(26)	(6)	(4)	(36)
		0%	72.2%	16.7%	11.1%	100%
	Mean	9.7%	68%	13.9%	8.4%	100%

Language-specific challenges are summarized in the second table. The second table holds 4 objects. Among the 36 students surveyed, 30 (83.3%) said they sometimes had trouble understanding common slang and phrase, while 4 (11.1%) said they always have trouble, 2 (5.6%) said they never have trouble, and none said they often have trouble. The second row in this table describes a situation in which the speaker is familiar with the word's pronunciation but not its meaning. Twenty out of thirty-six (55.6%) students picked "sometimes" as their most frequent option. Eight (22.2%) students select "often," four (11.1%) select "never," and four (11.1%) select "always." In the third question, 22 out of 36 students (61.1%) said they

sometimes pause the audio to figure out what an unfamiliar phrase means, whereas 8 said they never do this (22.2%), 6 said they usually do this (16.3%), and none said they did this "often". This table concludes with a caution on overly complicated and lengthy statements. Out of the 36 students polled, 72.2% answered "sometimes," 16.7% "often," 11.1% "always," and 0% "never" for this particular item.

Table 3: Hindrance Caused by Inability to Keep focused.

Item No.	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total %
11.	When I already know the answer in my head, I have trouble listening to speech clearly.	(6)	(20)	(8)	(2)	(36)
		16.7%	55.6%	22.2%	5.5%	100%
12.	I find it difficult to focus because I am simultaneously searching for the solutions and listening to the conversation.	(8)	(22)	(4)	(2)	(36)
		22.2%	61.1%	11.1%	5.5%	100%
13.	I lose my concentration when listening to overwhelmingly long speech.	(2)	(24)	(6)	(4)	(36)
		5.6%	66.7%	16.7%	11.1%	
14.	When the recording is of low quality, I get distracted.	(4)	(14)	(8)	(10)	(36)
		11.1%	38.9%	22.2%	27.8%	
	Mean	13.9%	55.6%	18%	12.5%	100%

Distraction is the topic of the third table. This table consists of 4 data points. Twenty students (55.6% of the sample) reported losing concentration "sometimes" when the respondents guessed the answer in their heads; eight students (22.2%) reported doing so "often;" six students (16.7%) reported never; and two students (5.6%) reported always. The next statement, twenty-two (61.1%) students selected "sometimes," eight (22.2%) selected

"never," four (11.1%) selected "often," and two (5.6%) selected "often" for this item. The next table entry discusses problems with attention span when confronted with lengthy text. From a total of 36 participants, 24 (66.7%) select "sometimes," 6 (16.7%) select "often," 4 (11.1%) select "always," and 2 (5.6%) select "never." This table concludes with losing focus in the situation of a subpar recording. Of the 36 students surveyed, 14 (38.1%) said they had this problem "sometimes," 10 (27.2%) said they had this problem "always," 8 (22.2%) said they had this problem "often," and 4 (11.1%) said they "never" had this problem.

Table 4: Students' Perceptions of Listening Problems as Related to Psychological Factors.

Item No.	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total %
11.	When I do not comprehend the spoken word, I become anxious and tense.	(10)	(20)	(0)	(6)	(36)
		27.8%	55.6%	0%	16.7%	100%
12.	I have difficulty understanding the uninteresting spoken text, which I find difficult to comprehend.	(16)	(10)	(4)	(6)	(36)
		44.4%	27.8%	11.1%	16.7%	100%
13.	I cease listening when I am unable to comprehend the spoken word.	(28)	(6)	(2)	(0)	(36)
		77.7%	16.8%	5.6%	0%	100%
	Mean	50%	33.3%	5.6%	11.1%	100%

The data on how students associated psychological traits with listening difficulties is presented in Table 4. Twenty students (55.6% of the sample) picked "sometimes," ten students (27.8%) picked "never," six students (16.7% of the sample) picked "always," and none of the students picked "often." The second thing on this list is apathy toward the oral presentation of content. According to the data in the table above, 44.4% of the students surveyed reported being "never" disturbed, while 27.8% reported being "sometimes" disturbed, 16.7% were "always" disturbed, and 11.1% were "often" disturbed. In the next



question, 28 students (77.8%) picked "never," while 6 (16.7%) picked "sometimes," 2 (5.6%) picked "often," and none picked "always."

Table 5. Comprehension Issues Affecting the Listener.

Item No.	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total %
11.	It is tough for me to have a general knowledge of the spoken material upon first hearing.	(6)	(24)	(2)	(4)	(36)
		16.7%	66.7%	5.6%	11.1%	100%
12.	When I am listening, it is tough for me to foresee what will occur next.	(6)	(18)	(4)	(8)	(36)
		16.7%	50%	11.1%	22.2%	100%
13.	I have difficulty recalling words or sentences I have just heard.	(2)	(18)	(6)	(10)	(36)
		5.6%	50%	16.7%	27.8%	100%
14.	Without transcripts, listening to English is challenging for me.	(2)	(24)	(4)	(6)	(36)
		5.6%	66.7%	11.1%	16.7%	100%
15.	I find it challenging to respond to questions that need a lengthy response.	(4)	(28)	(2)	(2)	(36)
		11.1%	77.7%	5.6%	5.6%	100%
	Mean	11.1%	62.2%	10%	16.7%	100%

The issue of the listener will be discussed in the following section. There are five things to look at on the table. The first result is about why it is so tough for the average person

to grasp the speech comprehension. Of the 36 students polled, 24 (66.75%) said "sometimes" when asked if they had trouble gaining a broad comprehension from a single listening, whereas 6 (16.7%), 4 (11.1%), and 2 (5.6%) said "never" or "always" or "often," respectively. Secondly, the content is unclear and hard to foresee. When asked whether it was easy or hard for them to anticipate what would happen next, 18 students said "sometimes" (50%) and 8 said "always" (22.2%) and 16 said "never" (16.7%), the rest 4 students said it was "often". The third topic is a recently heard word or phrase that is challenging to recall quickly. Eighteen students (50%) reported experiencing this issue sometimes; ten students (27.8%) reported experiencing this difficulty always; six students (16.7%) reported experiencing this difficulty often; and two students (5.6%) reported never experiencing this difficulty. The absence of transcripts is a challenge number four. According to the data in the fourth column, 22 students (66.7 percent) report having trouble "sometimes" when listening to English with no transcript. Sixteen percent of the students surveyed reported answering "always," while eleven percent said "often," and two reported never. Having trouble thinking of a complete answer to a question that requires a lengthy explanation (like "why" or "how") appears in the fifth category. A total of 28 students (77.7%) have "sometimes" experienced this, four students "never" felt this situation, two students voted "often" and other two voted "always".

Table 6: Comprehension Issues Related to the Speaker of Listening Test.

Item No.	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total %
23.	It is difficult for me to comprehend listening section, which is full of uncertainty and breaks.	(4)	(28)	(2)	(2)	(36)
		11.1%	77.7%	5.6%	5.6%	100%
24.	It is hard for me to comprehend the interpretation of vocabularies that are not pronounced clearly.	(2)	(10)	(8)	(16)	(36)
		5.6%	27.8%	22.2%	44.4%	100%

<b>25.</b>	I find it hard to comprehend when the speakers of the audio speak really fast.	(2)	(12)	(10)	(12)	(36)
		5.6%	33.3%	27.8%	33.3%	100%
	Mean	7.4%	46.3%	18.5%	27.8%	100%

This section is the result of students' issue in understanding the speaker's speech patterns, which contains hesitation and pauses, which is the first of three parts in this table. According to the data in the table above, 28 students (77.7%) have experienced this at least once, while 4 students (11.1%) have said they have never experienced it and two students (5.6%) have selected "often" and "always" for the first element. When it comes to the second item, students often struggle to grasp the intended interpretation of vocabularies that are not pronounced clearly. To further complicate matters, many words which are not pronounced in a way that is easily understood by students. From a total of 36, 16 (44.4%) said they "always" experienced this. 10 students voted "sometimes" (27.8%), 8 students voted "often" (22.2%), and two students voted "never" (5.6%) felt this situation. In the third part twelve students (33.3% of the sample) reported finding this to be both "sometimes" and "always" tough to deal with, while ten students (27.8% of the sample) selected "often," and two students (5.6%) voted for "never" felt it was hard.

Table 7: Listening Comprehension Issues Caused by the Physical Environment.

Item No.	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total %
<b>26.</b>	Surrounding noises distract my listening.	(2)	(14)	(2)	(18)	(36)
		5.6%	38.9%	5.6%	50%	100%
<b>27.</b>	Unclear CD noises hinder my listening comprehension.	(4)	(10)	(4)	(18)	(36)
		11.1%	27.8%	11.1%	50%	100%
	Mean	8.3%	33.4%	8.3%	50%	100%

The final issue is environmental listening difficulties. Each outcome can be seen in the table above. Eighteen out of thirty-six students (50%) reported that they "always" (always)

found it challenging to deal with noises around them, while fourteen (38.1%) reported that such noises "sometimes" interfered with them, and two (5.6%) reported that such noises "never" (never) disturbed them at all. Last but not least, this table includes information on a subpar CD player. With regards to the table's final sentence, 18 participants (50%) choose "always," 10 (27.8%) select "sometimes," 4 (11.1% select "never," and 4 (11.1% select "often").

## **Discussion**

### **The Content of the Listening Section**

The first element of (Hamouda, 2013) listening comprehension challenges is about the substance of the listening section. The element ranks top out of seven in terms of listening comprehension issues encountered by students taking the TOEFL Prediction test at Piksi Input Serang. The findings revealed that students had issues with the listening component of the TOEFL test, which was influenced by the listening materials. The first statement on the questionnaire regarding the content of the TOEFL listening test asked whether or not the students' ability to understand what was being said was hampered by unfamiliar words. The majority of students claimed that jargon and other new words made it difficult to understand what they were hearing. It is possible that the student's low vocabulary is one of his or her problems. This finding is consistent with (Rina & Tiarina, 2021), who reported that the most common difficulty in the TOEFL listening part was a lack of vocabulary knowledge. This finding also supports the research finding of (Kaneko, 2015) who found that insufficient vocabulary knowledge is a major barrier to large percentage of students' listening comprehension.

The duration of the listening text was another factor that contributed to the students' inability to comprehend the conversation. A long spoken text, according to the majority of students, hindered their listening comprehension. Furthermore, due to the long duration of a spoken text, students had difficulty grasping the message. It is further illustrated by Hamouda's (2013) research findings, which reveal that the duration of a spoken text is a critical element that negatively affects learners' listening comprehension. In terms of listening content, the researcher discovered that students had difficulty grasping the context of text since they attempted to hear and absorb every word that was stated. This confirms (Putera

Jaya et al., 2021) argument that some language learners make the unnecessary and futile action to understand every word of inbound speech. The student was exhausted because there was not a long enough interval in each section of the TOEFL listening session. Grammatical complexity appears to be a sign of the difficulties that students had in listening section of TOEFL test. It made it difficult for the students to pay attention. In this context, reduced forms are the key problem. The students think that the listening section sometimes leaves them puzzled. According to the findings, students encounter several issues while dealing with challenging grammatical structures.. This supports (Saraswaty, 2018) study, which found that low grammar skills are a barrier to listening comprehension.

### **Linguistic Feature**

There are specific problems with the slang language. The first section of the TOEFL listening test may contain a variety of slang phrases and idioms because it focuses on brief discussions in everyday contexts, such as hafta for have to, wanna for want to, and so on, and also slang vocabulary. Use of such colloquial and slang phrases can pose complications for Accounting Diploma students since there is no dedicated curriculum regarding colloquial and slang words. According to the findings of this study, respondents admitted that they found it challenging to comprehend a listening activity because of the usage of slang and idiomatic language.

Unknown vocabularies uttered by the speaker can often be a difficulty for learners, causing them to stop listening. Listening section with lengthy sentences and audio passage with complex were also other factors that affected the students' comprehension. Gaining hints and clues in long passages are the crucial element that listeners must pay close attention to. Regrettably, many learners may fail to detect the cues that suggest how the speaker is changing points, providing an example, or reiterating a topic. These signs are easily ignored, particularly by inexperienced listeners.

### **Inability to maintain concentration is a hindrance.**

The third factor that contributes to problems in the TOEFL listening section is inability to concentrate. Many students reported that they lose concentration during a discussion whenever they anticipated an answer. It can be stated that when students find out the answer, they stop paying attention to the spoken text. However, occasionally students find

the answer while also listening to the conversation, which causes them to lose focus. Another issue that students confront is trying to comprehend the next query as it is being spoken. Many students might be contemplating another question, therefore they will not be paying attention to the information.

After focusing on listening for prolonged time, the students lose focus. The students said that they had difficulties staying attentive when the content is lengthy. If the activity is lengthy, it would be better to divide it into shorter sections by pausing or changing the speakers (Banditvilai, 2019). A large percentage of Politeknik Piksi Input Serang students lose focus if they encounter new vocabulary. They were paying attention, but rather looking for the interpretation of the new vocabulary. As a result, individuals are unable to fully comprehend what they have heard, which also has an influence on their listening comprehension.

### **Psychological Factors**

The psychological attribute is one of factors that students indicated as their difficulties with listening comprehension when taking the TOEFL test. When students do not comprehend the listening content, it indicates that they do not entirely fear and worried about it. They are just concerned with the score they will receive as a result of it. Since they must have a TOEFL score of at least 400 in order to graduate.

One of the items connected to psychological traits is that the students experience anxiety issues. When they do not comprehend the spoken text, they become uncomfortable and concerned. The statement is supported by the majority of pupils. According to Hamouda's (2013) research findings, relatively significant percentages of students admit that they occasionally feel frightened and anxious when they do not comprehend the spoken material. Interpreting the topic of the spoken text is also influenced by curiosity and motivation. The students had no difficulties comprehending the spoken material, which was not of significance to them. When they are having difficulty understanding a listening text, a large percentage of students never quit listening. The decision to cease listening during the TOEFL test may have been a mistake because it had an impact on the results of the other listening test section. This conclusion contradicts Hamouda (2013), who discovered that at least half of the learners frequently and consistently quit listening.

### **Problems from the Listener**

The listeners or students themselves are the next aspect that affects how well the TOEFL listening session goes. This is the third most typical problem that students taking the TOEFL test run into when it comes to listening comprehension concerns. Almost all of the students agreed that it was challenging to infer the basic meaning from the first listening and predict what will happen next. This matter concerned the listener. The listener's competence can influence their comprehension (Wang, 2019).

It reveals that the vast majority of students said they consistently had trouble identifying words they were familiar with because of the way they were pronounced. The majority of students were unable to recognize words because of the manner they are uttered. This outcome is also consistent with (Liu, 2014) finding, which argues that The listener might not recognize a word as the same phrase or might not even be aware that it exists if it is spoken differently than it was when it was first taught. The students' descriptions of remembering include things like "fast forgetting the term after being uttered," "difficulty recalling the meaning of recognized phrases," and "difficulty recalling the definition of the phrase after being taught." Majority of students make mistakes when it comes to memorizing previously learned words. They have a tendency to forget words quickly, which occasionally creates issues when taking the TOEFL listening test.

The fact that the students struggle to comprehend the material while listening to English without transcripts implies that textual support in the form of transcripts provided before listening exercises never aids the students in understanding the text. It is clear that students' training habits are the main cause of their listening difficulties. This might be due to the fact that transcripts enable listeners to confirm that they have heard the entire tape.

The results also indicate that a large number of students reported finding it challenging to respond to questions that demanded more than a short answer. In accordance with this study, many participants have trouble responding to listening questions that call for long answers, such why and how questions (which also demand writing competence at the expense of listening). This supports (Jyoti, 2020) claim that the difficulties in listening test is partially due to because of the supply of unnecessary tasks that need reading, speaking, and writing abilities in addition to listening skills

### **Comprehension Issues with the Speaker**

The speaker factor is the most minor problem that fifth-semester accounting students who took the TOEFL listening section experienced. Nearly 50% of students occasionally struggle to comprehend authentic speech that is filled with hesitations and pauses. This supports past research findings that demonstrate hesitations and pauses in spontaneous speech cause perceptual problems and comprehension difficulties in non-native speakers (Putera Jaya et al., 2021).

Some speakers' imprecise pronunciation is also seen as a contributor of listening difficulties. Most students think that having trouble understanding their English listening is caused by poor pronunciation. The findings show that, except for one student, the other students consistently struggle to understand the meanings of words that are not stated correctly. When the pronunciation is unclear, students have a difficult time understanding what they are hearing (Zur, 2020).

The next issue that students experience, according to their responses, is their speech pace. Higher speech rates, whether created by a computer or naturally, have a negative impact on EFL learners' comprehension. There was just one student who thought this was not a big deal. It makes no difference how swiftly the speaker speaks. and the remainder choose to be a huge difficulty sometimes, often, and constantly, which might affect the result of the TOEFL listening test.

Because they have no control over the audio speaking pace, the students struggle greatly with listening comprehension (Rahmalia, 2017). This is consistent with the findings of research conducted by Hamouda (2013), who found that one of the biggest obstacles to understanding the listening exam is the speaker's overwhelming rate of delivery.

### **Issues with Listening Comprehension Caused by the Physical Environment**

The final aspect cited by Hamouda (2013) is listening comprehension problems correlated to physical environment, which is the bottom two position and a problem for the TOEFL listening test emerged as the deciding factor for listening tests. Noise is one of the factors that impedes listening comprehension. Room's noise from both the interior and outdoor is a hindrance to comprehension. Noise from the environment and the recording itself may draw the listener's focus away from the listening section's particular topic. The first result



in Table seven shows that the majority of students find it tough to focus when there are distractions around them. This study is also consistent with the findings of Hamouda (2013) and (Samad et al., 2017), who found that noises can interfere with their listening comprehension.

The majority of students think that poor recording quality or low-quality audio or recording are to blame for their difficulties understanding what they are listening to. The listener's ability to understand can also be hampered by unclear noises brought on by subpar equipment. It's a part of the appendices. This is comparable to the inability to focus aspect, which showed that poor recording quality could impair listening. This finding backed up by Hamouda's research (2013). Based on this finding, it is possible to assume that the EFL students face significant challenges due to the low quality of the equipment's tapes/disks.

## **CONCLUSION**

It might be argued that the TOEFL Listening section is rather more challenging than the Reading and Writing sections. It's no surprise that numerous individuals struggle to enhance their English Listening abilities. However, compared with the other parts of the TOEFL, listening abilities cannot be quickly honed. Listening properly and sorting out the phrases that are heard is a process that occurs over time and through a series of steps. Several people find the listening section in the TOEFL test to be the most challenging for them. Before taking the TOEFL, students and learners can get a head start on the structure segment and reading by familiarizing themselves with the grammar subject, learning and memorizing a large amount of fundamental vocabulary, and practicing extensively with the TOEFL's standard questions. Since there are so many inside and outside variables that could impact how challenging it is to do well on TOEFL listening tests, it can be stated that it is a pretty complicated task. The health and mental state of the listener are examples of internal influences. One of the most significant factors that influence the effectiveness and efficiency of listening is the listener's physical condition. That is to say, the degree to which each aspect contributes to comprehension difficulty is dependent on the others. The environment is an external factor (physical environment and social environment). The effectiveness of listening is significantly impacted by contextual circumstances. Both the social and physical surroundings have a role as environmental factors. In order to become effective listeners,

students and trainees need to be aware of and cognizant of the elements that affect the listening process and work to reduce or eliminate such influences wherever possible. The ability to listen attentively is crucial in a variety of contexts, including but not limited to the classroom. Because one of the goals of listening is communicating and obtaining information, becoming a good listener can help us learn more, get more perspective and foster closer human bonds.

## REFERENCES

- Banditvilai, C. (2019). *Methods To Overcome Common Listening Problems Encountered By Thai Students Learning English*. May, 13–21. <https://doi.org/10.20472/iac.2018.935.005>
- Chang Liu. (2019). The Use of Listening Metacognitive Strategies in TOEFL Listening Classroom. *The Use of Listening Metacognitive Strategies in TOEFL Listening Classroom*, 01(01), 13–18. <https://doi.org/10.12677/oetpr.2019.11003>
- Fitria, T. N. (2021). An Analysis of the Students' Difficulties in TOEFL Prediction Test of Listening Section. *ENGLISH FRANCA : Academic Journal of English Language and Education*, 5(1), 95. <https://doi.org/10.29240/ef.v5i1.2212>
- Hamouda, A. (2013). *An Investigation of Listening Comprehension Problems Encountered by Saudi Students in the EL Listening Classroom*. 2(2), 113–155.
- Hussein, B. A.-S. (2015). Theory and practice in language studies. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 5(3), 642–646. <http://www.academypublication.com/ojs/index.php/tpls/article/view/tpls0503541548/134>
- Jyoti, R. (2020). Exploring English Language Students' Difficulties in Listening Comprehension. *Journal La Edusci*, 1(3), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.37899/journallaedusci.v1i3.125>
- Kaneko, M. (2015). Vocabulary Size Required for the TOEFL iBT Listening Section. *The Language Teacher*, 39(1), 9. <https://doi.org/10.37546/jalttlt39.1-2>
- Li, Y. (2018). A Comparison of TOEFL iBT and IELTS Reading Tests. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 06(08), 283–309. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2018.68023>
- Liu, O. L. (2014). Investigating the Relationship Between Test Preparation and TOEFL iBT® Performance. *ETS Research Report Series*, 2014(2), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ets2.12016>
- Maulidyah, N. (2017). *THE STUDENTS' PROBLEMS IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION* Noor Maulidiyah A Lecturer of English Education Department at Tarbiyah and Teachers Training Faculty of IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin.
- Pazokizadeh, Z. (2013). *the Effect of the Listening To Formal Lectures on Iranian Advanced Students' Listening Ability in Toefl Ibt*. 1(3), 20–27.
- Pratama, B. P., Of, F., & Training, T. (2018). *THE ANALYSIS OF TOEFL LISTENING TEST OF FOURTH SEMESTER STUDENTS IN BORNEO UNIVERSITY OF*.
- Puput Arianto. (2017). English Education: Jurnal Tadris Bahasa Inggris. *The Implementation of Note-Taking Strategy in Listening Class*, 10(1), 119–134.
- Putera Jaya, H., Petrus, I., & Kurniawan, D. (2021). Listening Comprehension Performance and Problems: A Survey on Undergraduate Students Majoring in English. *Indonesian Research Journal in Education /IRJE/*, 5(2), 375–386.

- <https://doi.org/10.22437/irje.v5i2.14428>
- Rahmalia, G. (2017). Students' Strategies in Taking TOEFL Listening Test Aina Razmalia \* and Sofyan A. Gani. *Research in English and Education Journal*, 2(December), 1–9.
- Rina, P., & Tiarina, Y. (2021). Journal of English Language Teaching An Analysis of English Department Students' Difficulties in Answering TOEFL Test of Listening Comprehension. *English Language Teaching*, 10(1), 28–35. <https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v10i1.1113555>
- S., N., Nur Fadila, E., & Ahmad, Z. (2020). Listening Comprehension Problems Among Efl Vocational School Students. *ELLTER Journal*, 1(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.22236/ellter-j.v1i1.4907>
- Samad, I. A., Jannah, M., & Fitriani, S. S. (2017). Efl students' strategies dealing with common difficulties in toefl reading comprehension section. *International Journal of Language Education*, 1(1), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v1i1.2869>
- Saraswaty, D. R. (2018). Learners' Difficulties & Strategies in Listening Comprehension. *English Community Journal*, 2(1), 139. <https://doi.org/10.32502/ecj.v2i1.1003>
- Silviyanti, T. M., Rahmadhani, R., & Samad, I. A. (2020). Efl students' strategies in answering the listening section of the longman toefl. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 7(1), 237–246. <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v7i1.13007>
- Syaifullah. (2018). *the Analysis of Students' Ability on Listening Comprehension of Toefl Testat Sixth Semester Students of English Education Department*. 313–322.
- Tengku Maya Silviyanti\*, I. A. S. and R. R. (2017). The Students' Problems in Listening to Paper-Based TOEFL Test. ISSN:2581-2742 *Proceedings of The 1st National Conference on Teachers' Professional Development September 30, 2017, Banda Aceh, Indonesia*, 61, 18–28.
- Wang, Y. (2019). The impact of TOEFL on instructors' course content and teaching methods. *Tesl-Ej*, 23(3), 1–18.
- Zur, S. (2020). EFL Students' English Listening Comprehension Problem: A study of English Teacher Education Program. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 7(1), 268–273. <https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.71.7649>