



**A NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF TWO ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS  
EXPERIENCES IN ENHANCING LISTENING PROFICIENCY**

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**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

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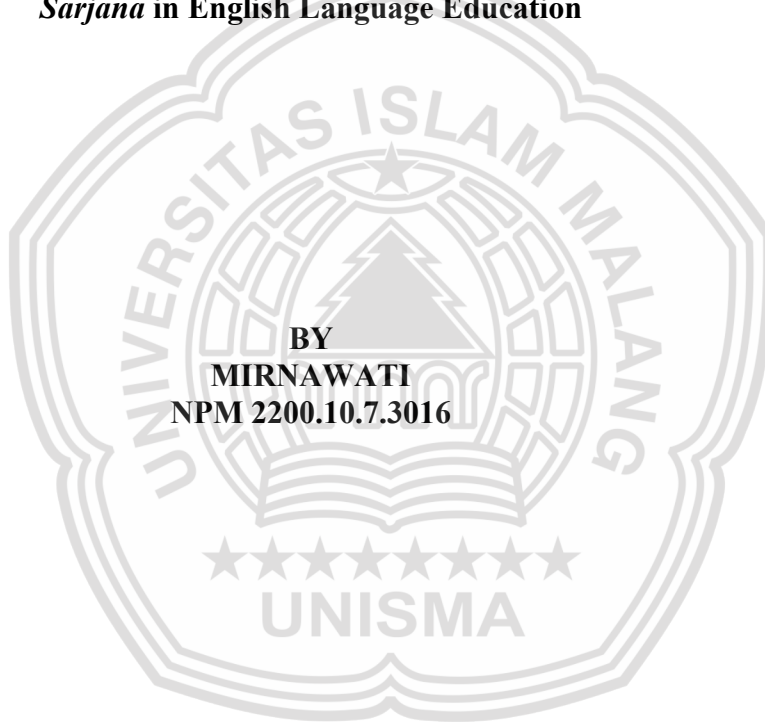
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## ABSTRACT

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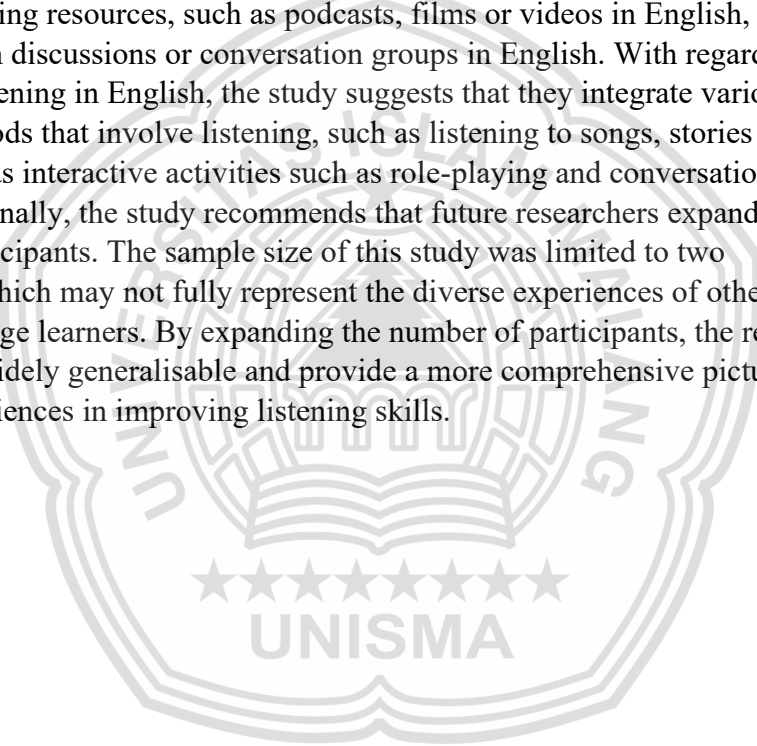
The objective of this research is to examine the experiences of two English language learners in enhancing their listening abilities through a narrative approach. This research employs a qualitative methodology with a narrative inquiry approach to explore the individual narratives and experiences of two English language learners with disparate backgrounds and learning contexts. The research was conducted at a private university in Malang, East Java, Indonesia. The research was conducted at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, specifically in English Department. The participants in this study are two students at the university. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, then analysed using thematic analysis to identify key themes related to the development of listening proficiency.

The results indicated that both learners had their first listening lesson in high school. The first listening material consists of listening to songs. Furthermore, the participants encountered difficulties in their learning to listen in high school. These included challenges in understanding the accent and speaking speed of native speakers, as well as internal problems in the right ear in one of the participants. To overcome these difficulties, the participants employed a number of strategies, including Watching films, listening to music and podcasts in English. Furthermore, the participants engaged in repeated listening to the audio materials in order to enhance their comprehension of the content.

During their college years, participants encountered several challenges in enhancing their listening skills. These included audios that played too fast, accents

that were increasingly diverse, and difficulties in focusing on listening to audio. Nevertheless, they demonstrated effective adaptive strategies, including the practice of listening to audio materials with various accents, independent study, and found a comfortable place when listening to audio listening. This experience enriches the understanding of how English language learners can overcome listening barriers and develop their skills independently.

The study offers several suggestions for language learners, including the recommendation that students become more active in identifying and utilising a range of listening strategies. This can be achieved by making effective use of authentic learning resources, such as podcasts, films or videos in English, and participating in discussions or conversation groups in English. With regard to teachers of listening in English, the study suggests that they integrate various teaching methods that involve listening, such as listening to songs, stories or news, as well as interactive activities such as role-playing and conversation simulations. Finally, the study recommends that future researchers expand the sample of participants. The sample size of this study was limited to two participants, which may not fully represent the diverse experiences of other English language learners. By expanding the number of participants, the results can be more widely generalisable and provide a more comprehensive picture of learners' experiences in improving listening skills.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter defines the research background, research problems and question, objective of the study, the significance of the study, and definition of the key terms.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Traditionally, listening skill is one of the English language skills that is very difficult for language learners to learn. According to Willy Renandya's theory (2011), listening involves more than just accurately understanding what is being said; it also involves reacting correctly to the speaker, particularly in face-to-face interactions when participants must be able to the speaker, particularly in face-to-face interactions when participants must be able to participate vocally in the conversation. This is influenced by several factors, and one issue that often arises is the lack of practice in listening skills, which causes difficulties for students to understand information conveyed orally (Hadijah & Shalawati., 2021). Listening is an essential element in learning English as a foreign language, of all the English language skills. The ability to listen effectively was of significant importance in everyday life. In order to communicate effectively, meaningfully and naturally in English, students need to listen to different types of English consistently and repeatedly. At the beginning of language learning, listening is the basic skill that is used. However, a common obstacle faced by English language

learners is the difficulty in improving their listening skills. Many factors can affect this difficulty, Toni, Susilowati and Sartipa., (2020) in their research found that some factors include lack of vocabulary, accent varieties and poor grammar knowledge. These things are often found in English learners in Indonesia, because considering Indonesia considers English as a non-native language.

In the context of learning English as a non-native language, learners must develop proficiency in four key skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. These skills are interconnected, and it is crucial for learners to master all four. In particular, listening is a fundamental aspect of communication. Those who have acquired sufficient proficiency in the English language are able to express their ideas, feelings, and desires in both oral and written forms. Furthermore, they are able to explore the knowledge required to navigate the demands of the contemporary world (Yunus et al., 2023). Therefore, listening is an important skill for developing concept understanding and communication skills (Barclay, 2019). In Indonesia, English language learners get their first listening lessons in high school. Usually the teacher gives the students basic listening skills such as listening to English songs. Teaching students listening with songs has many benefits, As Ismail and Damayanti (2019), demonstrated that incorporating songs as an educational tool can enhance student learning outcomes, this is a valuable recommendation for English teachers. There are numerous benefits and advantages when teachers select songs as a medium to enhance learners' listening skills. In another study by Andayani (2022), the benefits include students enjoying



songs more than conventional classroom learning, which leads to a more enjoyable learning process. Furthermore, learners acquire English skills with greater ease, thereby facilitating a more fluid and effective learning experience compared to traditional methods.

The average student receives their first listening lesson in high school. It is not uncommon for students to encounter challenges in learning to listen effectively, As stated by Harianja, Lumbantoruan, Sinaga, Purba and Napitulu., (2022), Students sometimes suffer with foreign word unfamiliarity, speech rate, accents, pronunciation errors, poor recording quality, and limited resources. The learners prior knowledge, in addition to inexperience and background noise from the surroundings, are contributing reasons to these challenges. Bahri and Ismahani (2022), stated that they discovered that speaking quickly, having a little vocabulary, needing to focus, and using language that wasn't widely used were the issues they had when listening to English.

Despite the numerous challenges that high school students encounter in developing listening skills, a few strategies are presented to overcome these difficulties. Teachers can utilise engaging teaching methods to convey lesson content, enhance the classroom experience, and create an enjoyable learning environment. One such method is audiolingual teaching. The audio-lingual method prioritizes the frequent repetition of words, fostering an environment where students can effortlessly employ the target language, ultimately enhancing their comprehension and usage skills (Sihombing, Silalahi, Trimeli, Sianturi, Panjaitan & Napitupulu., 2022). In another study by Saragih, Marpaung and

Saragih., (2022) found that podcasts are one of the media that influence the learning process of students, especially when learning listening skills. In other words, students may employ podcasts as a strategy to enhance their listening abilities. One educational tool that inspires and engages students in learning English listening is podcasts. This is consistent with the results Yaacob, Amir, Asraf and Zain., (2021) which found that students' listening comprehension skills are significantly improved by YouTube and video podcasts. According to additional studies, practicing listening abilities with cake apps has been shown to enhance listening proficiency (Putri, Djunaidi & Uzer., 2023). Meanwhile, a study conducted by Rahayu (2023), found that the use of animated films as media has significantly improved students' listening skills.

The listening skills acquired at the high school level are still at the level of general listening. The learning of listening at the college level is distinct from that at the high school level. It is inevitable that students will encounter numerous challenges in this context, particularly those pursuing an education in English. The tertiary-level listening comprehension challenges faced by students differ according to their English language skills (Hardiyanto, Tanjung & Suharjono., 2021). Their findings show that low-level students face difficulties with foreign words (message content), speaking speed (speaker), and lack of vocabulary (listener). Then at the medium level students found difficulty with speaking speed (speaker) and noise (physical setting). Meanwhile, high-level students face difficulties with long spoken texts (message content), accent variations (speakers) and noise (physical setting). Similar findings by Rahmadhiati and Somba (2021),



showed that the speaker's pace of speech, the range of accents they employ, and the length of the description in the listening text are the listening issues that EFL students encounter the most. The research results from Fegasanti and Priyatmojo (2019), demonstrate how the three types of listening materials, listeners, and the physical environment are related to the challenges that students encounter with listening comprehension. Furthermore, relying on others, being too shy to ask questions, having emotional disturbances, having lectures that go too quickly, not giving rewards and reinforcement, and losing focus are all contributing factors to students' inability to understand the material.

During high school, students are typically taught listening strategies by their teachers. However, at the college level, they must develop their own strategies to overcome listening difficulties. One of them is the use of YouTube in learning listening, students highlight several advantages of learning to listen through YouTube, such as increasing vocabulary, ability to understand context, and confidence in expressing themselves in English, (Nissak, Rahmati & Hidayanti., 2023). A variety of strategies were identified by students at the high school and college levels to address the challenges they encountered in enhancing their listening abilities. The use of these strategies is certainly important to improve their listening skills, as Hidayanti and Umamah (2019), found that students who successfully apply more strategies than students who are less successful, have better listening skills. These strategies are increasingly developing technology and the times are becoming increasingly diverse, which is expected to improve the process of students in improving their listening skills.

A review of the literature on language learning revealed a multitude of studies that addressed the challenges faced by language learners and proposed strategies to overcome these difficulties. This research was inspired by the observation that many of these studies focused on the enhancement of listening skills in language learners. In other words, if other studies focus on revealing the problems faced by language learners and strategies to improve listening skills, then this research focuses on the journey process of language learners in improving their listening skills, in two periods (high school and college life) in the context of three dimension of narrative inquiry (past, present and future). Previous studies have rarely employed the design of narrative inquiry, and thus, in this study, researchers identified a novel approach to utilising narrative inquiry. The utilisation of this design enables researchers to investigate the narratives surrounding the achievements of English learners in enhancing their listening abilities.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

Based on the background of the study the researcher writes the research questions as follows:

1. How do English language learners experiences in enhancing the listening skills?
2. What are the challenges faced by English language learners in enhancing listening skills?

3. What strategies do English language learners employ to enhance their listening skills?

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

According to the research questions above, the researcher formulates the purpose of the research as follows:

1. To uncover the experiences of English language learners, do for enhancing their listening skill.
2. To explain the challenges faced by English language learners in enhancing their listening skill.
3. To find out the strategies that used by English language learners for enhancing their listening skill.

### 1.4 Significances of the Study

Theoretically, this study is meaningful in terms of developing an understanding of how a narrative inquiry approach can be applied to explore the journey of improving listening skills in English language learners. It contributes to the wider field of language acquisition and teaching methodology.

Practically, this study can provide insights into effective strategies and interventions to improve listening skills in English language learners in Indonesia. Teachers and educators can benefit practically from the results of this study, gaining valuable tools to improve their teaching practices and better support language learners in the development of their listening skills.

### 1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The objective of this research was to ascertain the experiences of two English language learners in the process of improving their listening skills. Additionally, the study aimed to identify the challenges that language learners encounter in improving their listening skills and the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. However, the scope of this study was limited to two participants, which may not fully represent the range of experiences of other English language learners.

### 1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To further understand the terms in this study, the following is an explanation of the brief definitions outlined:

**Listening Proficiency** means the ability to understand and interpret spoken language effectively.

**Enhancing listening** means Improving or advancing listening skills through various means.

**English Language Learners (ELLs)** This refers to Individuals who are learning English as a non-native language.

**Exploring journey** means the investigation or exploration of a topic to gain a deeper understanding. In this context, it is likely to refer to the process or journey of language learners in improving their listening skills.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter presents the findings of the research and discusses the findings with theories or previous findings to conclude.

#### 5.1 Conclusions

The objective of this study is to ascertain the manner in which language learners enhance their listening abilities. The study commenced with an examination of the experiences of language learners from high school and college, the challenges they encountered when attempting to improve their listening skills, and the strategies they employed to overcome these difficulties. The study recruited two participants who had notable experiences in improving their listening skills. The research design employs a three-dimensional space narrative inquiry approach, encompassing interactions, continuity, and situations within each participant's narrative.

The objectives of this study were met based on the findings of this study. First, the results of the analysis indicated that both participants commenced their learning of listening in high school. Their initial listening material consisted of English songs. Furthermore, both participants elected to pursue a degree in English education at one of the private campuses in East Java.

Second, during their studies in high school, both participants encountered several difficulties in their efforts to enhance their listening abilities. The first participant, Ls, reported feeling particularly unfamiliar with the accent on the audio. Furthermore, she also encountered difficulties with the speed of the audio played. The second participant (Kr) has an internal problem in her right ear, in addition to experiencing confusion when encountering foreign words in audio listening. Furthermore, she encounters difficulties with accents in audio listening. The challenges that the participants encountered during their college education also differed, given that they were pursuing a degree in English education. The first participant (Ls) perceived the audio material presented by the lecturer to be of an excessive speed, and the accents used in the audio listening exercises to be increasingly diverse. The second participant (Kr) also encountered several challenges. As with the other participants, she found it difficult to focus when listening to audio. Furthermore, she admitted that she had anxiety when listening to audio.

Third, in order to overcome their challenges in high school, the first participant employed a number of strategies, including the viewing of films, the listening to of YouTube videos, and the listening to of music and podcasts in the English language. The second participant also employs a range of strategies to address these challenges. These include regular practice of listening skills through repeated exposure to audio materials. To address the issue in their college, the first participant engaged in practice exercises involving listening to audio material with a range of accents to overcome this issue, participants seek a comfortable



listening environment and engage in relaxation techniques, such as breathing exercises, to enhance their sense of comfort and relaxation when listening to audio materials. Additionally, participants engage in the practice of viewing Western films with the objective of enhancing their listening abilities.

## 5.2 Suggestions

Finally, based on the results, suggestions are made to English language learners, teachers of English listening, and future researchers.

### 5.2.1 For English Learner Students

A number of suggestions have been put forth by various scholars for language learners who wish to enhance their listening abilities. Firstly, students should be encouraged to adopt a more active approach to developing their listening skills. This could involve identifying and utilising a range of listening strategies, such as noting key points, requesting clarification when necessary and utilising contextual information to infer the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. Secondly, students should utilise a range of authentic learning resources, including podcasts, English films or videos, and English discussions or conversation groups. This will facilitate the acquisition of aural skills in the context of different accents and speaking styles. Finally, the organisation of structured and regular study time can facilitate the consistent improvement of students' listening skills. It is recommended that students allocate a specific time each day for listening practice.

### **5.2.2 For English Listening Teachers and Lecturers**

It is recommended that teachers adopt a multifaceted approach to instruction, incorporating a diverse array of pedagogical techniques that engage students in active listening. These may include the use of audio-visual materials such as songs, stories, or news, as well as interactive activities such as role-playing and conversation simulation. Furthermore, teachers can provide specific and constructive feedback on students' mistakes and achievements in listening skills. This will assist students in identifying areas requiring improvement and in devising strategies for addressing them. Finally, teachers can utilise technology, such as language learning apps, audio-visual aids and online platforms, to create a dynamic and engaging learning environment. The utilisation of technology can facilitate the provision of a diverse range of materials and resources.

### **5.2.3 For Future Researchers**

It is recommended that future researchers expand the sample of participants. The present study involved a limited number of participants, which may not fully represent the diverse experiences of other English language learners. By including a larger number of participants, the results can be more widely generalisable and provide a more comprehensive picture of learners' experiences in improving listening skills. Further research could focus on the role of technology in improving listening skills. An investigation into the utilisation of digital tools, such as language learning apps, podcasts, and online videos, by

English language learners and their efficacy in enhancing listening skills could prove to be an intriguing and pertinent area of inquiry. Future researchers may also wish to examine the influence of emotional factors, such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence, on listening skills. A more comprehensive grasp of the emotional aspects may facilitate the development of more efficacious interventions.



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