



**AN ANALYSIS OF THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY NON-
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS IN LISTENING SECTION OF
TOEFL**

SKRIPSI

**BY:
ALIYAH ANJANI
NPM 218.01.07.3.076**



**UNIVERSITY OF ISLAM MALANG
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
NOVEMBER, 2022**



**AN ANALYSIS OF THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY NON-
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS IN LISTENING SECTION OF
TOEFL**

SKRIPSI

**Presented to
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
University of Islam Malang
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
sarjana in English Language Education**

**BY
ALIYAH ANJANI
NPM 21801073076**

**UNIVERSITY OF ISLAM MALANG
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
AUGUST, 2022**

ABSTRACT

Anjani, Aliyah. 2022. *An Analysis of the Difficulties Encountered by non-English Department Students in Listening Section of TOEFL. Skripsi*, English Education Department Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Islamic Malang. Advisor 1: Nuse Aliyah Rahmati, S.Pd. MA.; Advisor II: Ika Hidayanti, S.Pd., M. Pd.

Keywords: TOEFL, TOEFL difficulties, Listening comprehension

TOEFL is one of standardized test which have been applied by many universities especially for the graduation standard requirements for the students, including in University of Islam Malang. The aim of this study is to know students' difficulties in doing the TOEFL listening section both from external and internal factors.

This study uses qualitative research with narrative inquiry design and collected the data by doing an interview. The study was conducted to 5 non-English Department students of UNISMA who were selected through purposive sampling technique based on a criterion of students that have taken the TOEFL test in UNISMA. To analyse the data, the researcher transcribed the finding of an interview in a form of words followed by the process of editing to examine the irrelevant data then the researcher coded and organized the data in order to provide the final result accordance with the research questions.

The result of this study reveals that the difficulty from the external factors include: the speakers' accent, the speakers' speed, complexity of sentences, length of sentences, idioms, unfamiliar vocabularies, noise from outside, and room temperature. While the internal factors include: lack of concentration and the difficulty in answering the restatement question, negative question, passive question, contrary meaning question, idiomatic question, long conversation and monolog part question. Overall, the researcher claimed that listening skills cannot be improved just in a short time since the listeners need to prepare and take stages both from external and internal way in order to comprehend the message delivered properly. In addition, it suggested for further researchers to explore the strategies to overcome the difficulties in passing listening TOEFL test.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the context of the study, the research problem, the objective of the research, significance of the research, scope and limitation, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Context of the Study

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is a standardized academic English test taken by non-native speakers in measuring English comprehension. In Indonesia TOEFL is used in some purposes, such as admitting new students' requirements in certain universities, international job companies, government institutions, and overseas studying. Abboud and Hussein (2011) contend that, "more than 5000 university, colleges, and licensing agencies in 90 countries accept the TOEFL scores". From the purpose mentioned above, it can be concluded that TOEFL mastery has the main role in passing many requirements. With that being said, learning English especially in TOEFL does not intend for English Department students only, assuming that TOEFL mastery has been increasing the opportunity for students in general of getting a good career.

Foreign Language Development Centre (P2BA) of University of Islam Malang who has the responsibility to developing students' mastery of English, accepts TOEFL as a requirement for graduation.

Each institutions has different standard score in passing TOEFL and P2BA set out the range minimum score in 450 for non-English Department students and 500 for English Department students. The test was conducted in 2 sessions there are the preparation test and the post-test. The first test named the preparation test was aimed to measure students' first score or mastery in TOEFL. The last one was the post-test. In thispart of the test, the students' scores were recorded as a determination of whetherthey passed or need to retake a test in order to get the required score.

Antoni (2014) affirmed that completing the TOEFL test is not as simple as passing the English subject in general. Most of students are failing to fulfil the required score needed by University. Saifuddin (2012) mentioned that many students think that TOEFL is extremely difficult particularly for students who have never done the test before. Students encounter difficulties in doing TOEFL that influence the score result. To investigate which part students got difficulties the most, the researcher took a pre-research on non-English students of Islamic University of Malang. The researcher discovered that some students had strugglesin listening section.

Looking at these facts the researcher focuses on analysing listening section. Some previous studies have been conducted regarding the exploration of the difficulties in listening section of TOEFL. Listening difficultiesinclude excessive anxiety, concentrating, understanding vocabulary, drawing conclusions on conversations, and idioms (Soali 2020). Students need to have

some strategic way as they are listening to more lengthy and various passages; moreover, they should be adapted to listen to both dialogues and monologues in TOEFL (Silviyanti 2020).

Improving listening skills rely on the ability in vocabulary understanding, syntactic and grammatical structures, inference, character's thoughts and emotion, and the comprehension to monitor. Enhancing listening skill is not a small task, it needs explicit and systematic instruction toward the vocabulary knowledge (Kim and Pilcher 2016). Teng (2002) expressed that there are 4 factors called listener factor, speaker factor, stimulus factor, and context factors affect students' listening comprehension. According to Chastain (1998), listening comprehension has 4 different components. First, the comprehension to distinguish sounds including intonation structures and voice qualities in the second language and to differentiate between them and the same sound in the native language. Second, the ability of recognize the whole message of the speakers. Third, the capability to keep the message in one memory until it can be processed. Fourth, the comprehension that is involving different steps.

There are a lot of obstacles that listeners may encounter in the listening comprehension. First, quality of the recorder, the low quality of sound system can influence the comprehension of the listeners. Second, cultural difference, as accordance with the statement from Bingol et al., (2014), the listeners should be familiar with the cultural knowledge of language that has an important role on the listeners' view. Third, accent, unfamiliar accents either native or non-native can influence the listeners to understand message spoken. According to Goh

(1999), 66% of learners expressed that speaker's accent is one of the most significant factors that influence listener comprehension.

Fourth, unfamiliar vocabularies, the ability of recognizing the meaning of every word can cause the positive impacts and generate the interest of the listeners during the listening activity. Fifth, length and speed of speech, the listeners' level of listening can determine the ability to comprehend into long parts and keep all messages in their mind. According to Underwood (1989), the speed of the speaker can make listening passage difficult. The difficulties mentioned above are caused either by the speakers' issues or the listening materials itself. Furthermore, the listeners who have experienced the problems mentioned above might had the difficulties in doing listening section of TOEFL often.

Listening comprehension is considered as much more essential in both EFL classrooms and SLA research. Based on Mendelson (2014), the total time of communication spend, they were: listening up to 40-50%; speaking 25-30%; reading 11-16%; and writing 9% and it can be captured that listening took the important role in the communication activity. Listening comprehension involves an active process of capturing and constructing message spoken from both verbal and non-verbal messages (Nunan 1998). As mentioned by Feyten (1991), Listening activity is important as in-person communication with estimates that it accounts for more than 45% of the time spent communicating.

"Learning a language is an emotional experience that the learning motivation will have a crucial effect on the learning process" (Huchinson & waters 1878). From this statement, it was obviously explained that emotional factors take an important part to determine the successfulness of the learning. Ellis(1994) explained that in general, there are several factors influencing the second language learning such as age, aptitude, intelligence, cognitive style, attitudes,motivation, and personality.

According to Mirhadizadeh (2016) the factors of learning language can be divided into 2 groups of internal factor and external factors. As accordance with Brown (2007), those 2 factors are specified by the individual students like motivation, attitude, personals practice and study habits. Based on Brown (2007),external factors can be different for each individual, but the common factors are usually come from the circumstances outside of the students' control. External factors are frequently deal with books, curriculum development, and course.Internal factors include cognitive and meta-cognitive as an intelligence factor,perception, self-esteem, learning model, etc (Mirhadizadeh 2016).

Based on all of the related explanation above, one of possible and plausible way to cope with the problems above is by recognizing the factors that affect the difficulties in TOEFL listening section, considering that TOEFL was anauthentic instrument of the measurement of listening comprehension. Looking at those facts the researcher was interested in exploring the difficulties in doing TOEFL listening section both from external and internal factors. Finally researcher gives title "An Analysis of the Difficulties Encountered by Non-

English Department Students of Islamic University of Malang in Listening Section of TOEFL”.

1.2 Research Problems

Based on the discussion above, the problems of this study were formulated as follows.

1. What are the external factors influencing the difficulty in answering listening section of TOEFL in non-English Department students of University of Islam Malang?
2. What are the internal factors influencing the difficulty in answering listening section of TOEFL in non-English Department students of University of Islam Malang?

1.3 Objectives of Research

According to the previous research questions stated, the objectives of this study were intended to:

1. Investigate the external factors influencing the difficulty encountered by non-English Department students of University of Islam Malang in answering listening section of TOEFL.
2. Investigate the internal factors influencing the difficulty encountered by non-English Department students of University of Islam Malang in answering listening section of TOEFL.

1.4 Significance of Research

Theoretically, this research is aimed to contribute and provide the information related to the difficulties in listening section of TOEFL. Also, the researcher hopes that it will bring awareness and enhance the strategy to overcome the problems that affect listening ability on TOEFL especially for the students of University of Islam Malang.

Practically, this study is expected to be an additional insight for students to evaluate their preparation from both external and internal way before passing the listening section of TOEFL. Also, the research can be used as guidelines for the future study related to the analysis of students' difficulties especially in listening section of TOEFL.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Research

According to the graduate requirement of students in University of Islam Malang, students were asked to pass the TOEFL based on their faculty minimum scores. TOEFL contains English 4 sections in total. They are listening, grammar and structure, reading, and speaking (IBT TOEFL). However, this research focused to investigate the difficulties in listening section of TOEFL in Non- English department students of University of Islam Malang.

The researcher is fully aware that this research had some limitations. First, due to the implementation of an online learning system in University of Islam Malang, the researcher gathers the data by interviews with 5 non-English

Department students of University of Islam Malang who have passed the TOEFL via Zoom Meeting. Second, the scope of the participants was small and localize so the result of this research could not fully be generalized into a much wider population. Third, the interview session between the researcher and the participants are conducted in Indonesian because of some conditions as the participants are from non-English Department students. Therefore, the transcript of the data interview from Indonesian to English was not too accurate and need to be validated by the participants first.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To prevent misconception of the terms used in the study, it was necessary for the researcher to provide several definitions as follow:

1. Difficulty

The term difficulty in this study is something or a situation that students hard to understand or accomplish. It refers to the problem that students may encounter in listening section of TOEFL such as unfamiliar vocabularies, speakers' speed, noise from outside, concentration disruption, etc.

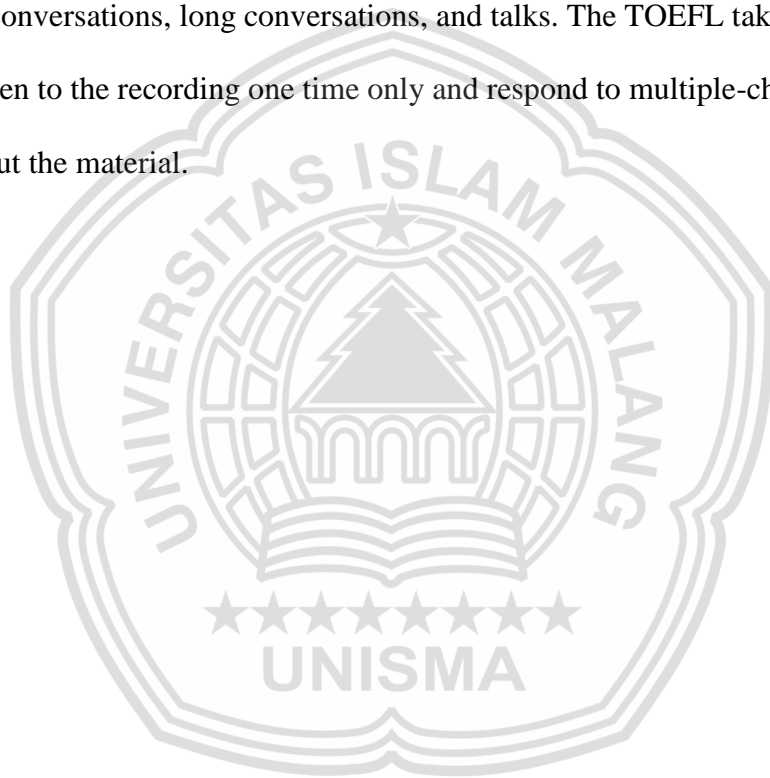
2. TOEFL

Foreign Language Development Centre (P2BA) of University of Islam Malang used the Test of English Proficiency (TEP) as a graduate requirement for students.

However, the terms and condition including questions, skill sections, rules, and scores are the same as Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) in general.

3. Listening Section

Listening section is the first section of TOEFL that consists of both academic (formal) and non-academic (informal) speeches. Those speeches include short conversations, long conversations, and talks. The TOEFL takers are required to listen to the recording one time only and respond to multiple-choice questions about the material.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter provides the conclusion of the research and suggestion for improvement. The researcher concluded the result from the discussion and proposed suggestion for teacher, students and English learners in general, and also for future researcher who are interested in similar study.

5.1 Conclusion

The objectives of this study are to explore the difficulties encountered by non-English Department students in doing listening section of TOEFL both from external and internal factors. Based on what narratively written in the previous chapter, the researcher would like to draw the following conclusion. From the result of the investigation, the difficulties are caused by the external factors, involving accent of the speakers, speed of the speakers, sentences complexity, sentences length, unfamiliar vocabularies, idiom used, noise from outside, and room temperature. Most of the participants reveal that those problems occurred as the unfamiliarity to listen into native spoken. Also, environmental conditions have a big influence on the successness of the listening process. Moreover, the internal factors include the lack of concentration and the ability to master all the types of listening questions. Overall, the researcher claimed that listening skills cannot be improved just in a short of time since the listeners need to take process and preparation in order to comprehend the message delivered.

5.2 Suggestion

Based on the conclusion of the research, the researcher provides some suggestions as follow:

1. Suggestion for English Listening Lecturers

The researcher hopes that the result of this study can be an evaluation to improve the English learning activities especially for listening skill. Based on the study obtained by the researcher, the lecturers should give the motivation for students to be more practicing listening activity. It also suggested for the lecturer to always take the advantages of various teaching listening strategies through movies, song, and games. In fact, the finding of this study found that the major difficulties faced by the students are caused by the listening materials itself, such as the vocabularies, idiom, and the structure of the sentences.

2. Suggestion for Students

Students should be more practicing listening activity as a reason of familiarity to comprehend the message spoken in TOEFL. It includes the knowledge of vocabulary, idiom, sentence structure, and the ability to answer the question based on its types. Also, in order to optimize the listening activity during the TOEFL, the students require to prepare everything included the condition of their physical and environment properly.

3. Suggestion for Future Researchers

The researcher strongly suggests for the future researcher to expand the scope of the participant in order to get more varied sample. Also, for the future researcher who interested in similar study can develop the investigation by analyzing the strategies that should be done to overcome the problems.



REFERENCES

- Abboud, Z. A. R., & Hussein, N. J. (2011). The difficulties faced by advanced Iraqi foreign learners in passing the ITP TOEFL test. *Journal of Basrah Researchers (Humanities Series)*, 36(4): 110-138.
- Antoni, R. (2014). An analysis on 6th semester students' TOEFL experience at English Department of Teachers Training and Education Faculty of Pasir Pengaraian University. *Jurnal Pendidikan Edu Research*, 3(1).
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Irvine, C. K. S., & Walker, D. (2006). *Introduction to research in education*. Cengage Learning.
- Asher, J. J. (1977). Children learning another language: A developmental hypothesis. *Child development*, 1040-1048.
- Bakri. (2003). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Surabaya: Vidipres Offest.
- Bejar, I., Douglas, D., Jamieson, J., Nissan, S., & Turner, J. (2000). TOEFL 2000 listening framework: A working paper. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Bernard, H. (1988) *research Method in Cultural Antropology*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications,
- Bingol, M. A., Celik, B., Yildiz, N., & Mart, C. T. (2014). Listening comprehension difficulties encountered by students. *Journal of Educational and Instructional Studies in the World*, 4(4), 1–6.

- Bogdan, Robert C. dan Biklen Kopp Sari, (1982). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*. Allyn and Bacon, Inc.: Boston London.
- Brown, H. (2012). D.(2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. *H. dauglas brown*.
- Carroll, J. B. (1977). On learning from being told In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Learning and instruction* (2nd ed., pp. 496-512). Cambridge; Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.
- Chairuddin & Ulfa, M. (2018). Students Difficulties in Passing Listening Section in TOEFL Prediction Test. *Seuneubok Lada: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sejarah, Sosial, Budaya, dan Kependidikan*.
- Chastain, K. (1998). *Developing second-language skills: Theory and practice* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, Norman K. dan Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.). (2009). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Terj. Dariyatno dkk. Jogjakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Derwin, T.M., & Munro, M.J. (2005). *Second Language Accent and Pronunciation Teaching: A Research- Based Approach*. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39, 379-397.
- Dewi, S. D. (2017). *Grammatical Knowledge: Does it Affect Listening Comprehension*. *Anglo Saxon: Journal of the English Language Education Study Program*.

Ellis, R. (1986). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

ETS (2007). *TOEFL iBT tips. How to prepare for the TOEFL iBT*.

ETS. (2004). *TOEFL exam essentials: test of English as a foreign language*. New York: Learning Express

ETS. (2016). *Bulletin for paper-based testing (PBT)*. USA: TOEFL Bulletin.

ETS. (2018). *TOEFL Program history*. Educational testing served. United States, USA.

Feyten, C. M. (1991). The power of listening ability: An overlooked dimension in language acquisition. *The modern language journal*, 75(2), 173-180.

Fitariana, C., & Rahim, A. (2021). Students Problem in Answering Listening Section of TOEFL at non English Study Program of UPN Veteran Jakarta. *Globish (An English-Indonesian Journal for English, Education and Culture)*.

Fitria, N. T. (2021). An Analysis of the Students' Difficulties in TOEFL Prediction Test of Listening Section. *English Franca: Academic Journal of English Language and Education*.

Gilakjani, A. P., & Sabouri, N. B. (2016). Learners' Listening Comprehension Difficulties in English Language Learning: A Literature Review. *English Language Teaching*, 9, 123-133.

- Goh, C. (1999). How Much Do Learners Know about the Factors That Influence Their Listening Comprehension?. *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), 17–40.
- Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a Conceptual Framework for Mixed-Method Evaluation Designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11(3), 255–274.
- Hamouda, A. (2013). An investigation of listening comprehension problems encountered by Saudi students in the EL listening classroom. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education*
- Hidayanti, I., Zuhairi, A., & Kurniasih. (2021). Strategy Preference in Listening: A Profile EFL Students to Answer TOEFL Test. *Indonesian Journal of English Education (IJEE)*.
- Hussein, R.F., Khanji, R., and Makhzoomy, K.F.(2000).“The acquisition of idioms: Transfer or what?” *Journal of King Saud University, languages and translation*, 23-34.
- Hutchinson, Tom; Waters, Alan. (1987). *English for specific purposes : a learning-centered approach* / Tom Hutchinson, Alan Waters. New York :: Cambridge University Press,.
- Kim, Y.-S. G., & Pilcher, H. (2016). What Is Listening Comprehension and What Does It Take to Improve Listening Comprehension? June 2016, 159–173.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-31235-4_10

- Lodico, M., Spaulding, D., & Voegtle, K. (2006). *Methods in educational research: From theory to practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- MA, M. A. B., & MA, C. T. M. (1996). Listening comprehension difficulties encountered by students in second language learning class. *Listening*, 3.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Sage publications.
- Mendelsohn, D. (1994). *Learning to listen: A strategy-based approach for the second-language learner*. San Diego, CA: Dominie Press.
- Mendelsohn, D. (1998). "Teaching Listening", *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 18: 81-101. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190500003494>
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Mirhadizadeh, N. (2016). Internal and external factors in language learning. *International Journal of Modern Language Teaching and Learning*, 1(5), 188-196.
- Nemati, A., Qareqani, K., & Fumani, M. R. F. Q. (2016). The investigation of listening comprehension problems of American accents for Iranian B.A. students of translation studies. *Online Journal of Humanities*, 1(1), 1-8.
- Nunan, D. (1998). Approaches to teaching listening in language classroom. In proceedings of the 1997 Korea TESOL Conference. Taejon, Korea: KOTESOL.

Ockey, G. J., Papageorgiou, S., & French, R. (2016). Effects of Strength of Accent on an L2 Interactive Lecture Listening Comprehension Test. *International Journal of Listening*, 30(1-2), 84-98.

O'Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Phillips, D. (2000). *Longman complete course for the TOEFL tests: preparation for the computer and paper tests*.

Phillips, D. (2001). *Longman complete course for the TOEFL test: Preparation for computer and paper test*. White Plains, N. Y.: Longman

Phillips, D. (2011). *Complete Course for the TOEFL Test*. Allen Asch. USA: longman.

Pratiwi, L. (2017). *An analysis of the difficulties encountered by non-english department student's in toefl test of listening section (a case study at Arabic Education Department IAIN SMH banten) (Doctoral dissertation, Uin Sultan Maulana Hasanudin Banten)*.

Rahmati, A.N, & Kurniasih. (2019). *Analisis Kesulitan Mahasiswa Jurusan Non Bahasa Inggris dalam Mengerjakan TOEFL Listening*. Seminar Nasional Pendidikan dan Ilmu Matematika (SENANDIKA).

Saifuddin, Irham Ali, et al. (2012) *Buku Pintar TOEFL*, Jogjakarta: DIVA Press

- 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. DOI: 10
- Setiawan, A. (2013). *A Study On Difficulties Of Listening Comprehension Of Toefl At State Islamic College (Stain) Of Jurai Siwo Metro* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Metro).
- Soali, M., & Pujiani, T. (2020). An Error Analysis of Non-English Students Department in Answering Listening Section in TOEFL. *J-LEE – Journal of Law, English, and Economics*, 2 (01), 21-39.
- Stirling, B. (2017). *TOEFL Strategies: A Complete Guide to the iBT*. Nova Press.
- Sugiyono, D. (2013). *Metode penelitian pendidikan pendekatan kuantitatif, kualitatif dan R&D*.
- Sulistyo, G. H. (2009). TOEFL in a brief historical overview from PBT to IBT. *Bahasa dan Seni*, 37(2): 116-127.
- Teng, H. C. (2002). An investigation of EFL listening difficulties for Taiwanese college students. *Selected papers from the Eleventh International Symposium on English Teaching/ Fourth Pan- Asian Conference*. 526-533.
- Underwood, M. (1989). *Teaching listening*. Addison-Wesley Longman Limited.
- Wilson, J. J. (2008). *How to teach listening*. Harlow: Longman.

Yin, K. Robert. (2011). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*. The Guilford Press.

New York, London

