EXPLORING STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF INTENSIVE LISTENING IMPLEMENTATION IN INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: Intensive listening has gained significant attention in enhancing listening skills among students. While its benefits have been well documented in primary and secondary education, there is a notable gap in research regarding its implementation among university students. This study aims to address the gap by investigating the implementation of intensive listening at a higher education level, particularly exploring the students' perceptions towards its implementation. By using a qualitative case study design, this study involved first-year students from English language education at one public university in Bandung, Indonesia. Data were collected using open-ended questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observation and analyzed thematically using NVivo software. Findings revealed that the students reported their positive perceptions regarding the implementation of intensive listening in the classroom which enhanced their listening skills, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Nevertheless, they encountered challenges with unfamiliar vocabulary, accent, and rate of speech. Several strategies to cope with the challenges were implemented, and it suggests the critical role of the lecturer in supporting the success of the implementation of intensive listening in the classroom.
Keywords: *Intensive listening; listening comprehension; listening strategies; university students.*

INTRODUCTION

Listening is a critical skill in language learning, accounting for 40–50% of communication in English (Mendelsohn, 1994; Cheung & Kul, 2010). Sadiqzade (2024) emphasized that listening is fundamental to understanding and effective language output. Intensive listening aims to teach vocabulary and grammar (Renandya, 2011) and enhances accuracy in areas like tenses (Ahmadpour & Asadollahfam, 2018). Effective classroom implementation is crucial, as factors like students' perceptions and challenges impact learning outcomes (Hazari, 2014; Tolhairi, 2023). Studies, such as those by Purnamaningwulan (2022) and Su

et al. (2023), suggest that listening journals and challenges in extensive listening provide further insights into student engagement.

Students face difficulties such as unfamiliar accents, rapid speech, limited vocabulary, and poor audio quality (Lestari et al., 2019; Rullu, 2022). These findings align with Diora and Rosa (2020), who categorize listening challenges into media, listener factors, and the physical environment. Positive perceptions, like using music to aid listening, improve learning outcomes (Tolhairi, 2023). Additionally, students' critical thinking skills in integrated listening activities are linked to

tools like podcasts (Mayawitri, 2023) and other media, as suggested by Yusuf and Ali (2022).

Intensive listening focuses on linguistic details like phonemes and grammar (Brown, 2003; Ahmadpour & Asadollahfam, 2018) and improves fluency through detailed comprehension tasks (Ducker & Saunders, 2014). Tools like Basic Tactics for Listening provide practice in pronunciation, supported by technology (Al-Baekani, 2019; Binarkaheni et al., 2022). On the other hand, extensive listening emphasizes comprehension through student-chosen materials that match their interests, often implemented via listening journals and summaries (Ivone & Renandya, 2019; Purnamaningwulan, 2022). Studies like those by Asrimawati et al. (2024) and Ruswandi et al. (2024) highlight that such methods boost comprehension and engagement in both extensive and intensive settings.

Listening is complex, and students encounter challenges such as pace, vocabulary, and concentration (Ningsih & Mariyati, 2022; Harianja et al., 2022). Awareness of proficiency boosts confidence during learning (Goh & Taib, 2006). Teachers must employ suitable instructional media (Bingol et al., 2014; Su et al., 2023), and students must adopt coping strategies to address difficulties. Studies by Mandiri et al. (2022) and Wahyuningsih and Salsabila (2023) suggest tailored listening materials and student feedback as essential components for improving learning outcomes. Innovative tools, such as podcasts and TED Talks, have also been effective in enhancing listening skills (Gunawan et al., 2023).

Research into intensive and extensive listening highlights the importance of balancing precision-focused tasks with enjoyable, comprehension-based activities. As noted by Andriani et al. (2024) and Azkiya et al. (2024), integrating diverse strategies ensures better engagement. Ultimately, both learners and educators must adapt methods to address specific classroom challenges, fostering more effective listening practices (Rasyid et al., 2023; Rusmiati et al., 2024).

Vandergrift (1999) classified listening strategies into several types, including metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. Metacognitive strategies engage learners in planning, monitoring, and evaluating their listening tasks. In contrast, cognitive strategies involve actions like inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words, predicting outcomes, filling in gaps in information, summarizing content, and translating between languages. Meanwhile, socio-affective strategies focus on

collaborative learning, such as students seeking help from peers and working together. Apart from that, this strategy also includes decreasing anxiety and increasing self-motivation. These listening strategies are crucial to the listening process and can be applied to assist students in enhancing their listening abilities (Al-shehri & Alhamami, 2023). Furthermore, Maden and Önal (2020) found on their research that the students' accomplishments and their listening strategies were positively correlated. It can be concluded that listening strategies are crucial in the classroom in order to achieve the learning outcomes.

Previous research has investigated listening strategies in the classroom. For instance, Bao (2017) investigated the strategies taught by teachers and those employed by students in the classroom. The study revealed a positive correlation between the strategies introduced by teachers and those adopted by students. Apart from that, Lewier and Nendissa (2020) also examined the listening strategies in the classroom. It was found that many of the students used socio-affective strategies and metacognitive strategies. On the other hand, previous study by Seladorai et al. (2021) found that students frequently employ social strategies through interactions with other students in the classroom.

Table 1. *The challenges and the strategies in listening classroom according to Diora and Rosa (2020).*

Challenges	Strategies
Listening Media	Meta-Cognitive: Learners in planning, monitoring, and assessing their listening tasks
Listener	Cognitive: Inferring the meaning of unknown words, anticipating results, filling in missing information, summarizing content, and translating between languages
Physical Setting	Socio-Affective: Collaborative learning, such as students asking their friends and working together

Table 2. *The challenges and the strategies in listening classroom according to Harianja et al. (2022)*

Challenges	Strategies
Speaking pace	Meta-Cognitive: Learners in planning, monitoring, and assessing their listening tasks

Vocabulary	Cognitive: Inferring the meaning of unknown words, anticipating results, filling in missing information, summarizing content, and translating between languages
Concentration level	Socio-Affective: Collaborative learning, such as students asking their friends and working together

In conclusion, between challenges and strategies are interconnected each other. In order to face or even prevent the challenges, students and lecturers have to find out the appropriate and effective strategies. Both lecturers and students have crucial role in achieving the learning outcomes and receiving a better learning process. Thus, between lecturers and students have to cooperate together.

METHOD
The qualitative case study design is considered the most suitable for this research, as it focuses on gaining insights into human understanding and behavior through the perspectives of individuals' opinions. The qualitative case study design highlights the social constructions of reality (Chowdhury & Shil, 2021). In addition, this approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of a specific case or bounded system, necessitating a thorough understanding of an event, activity, process, or multiple participants (Creswell, 2002). The research was carried out within the English Language Education Study Program at a public university in Bandung, Indonesia. The participants consisted of 35 first-semester students enrolled in the Listening for General Communication course. Pseudonyms were allocated to all participants in this study to protect their privacy (Audette et al., 2020).

This study used an open-ended questionnaire, interviews, and classroom observations as its main tools. These instruments were employed to explore students' perceptions of intensive listening in the classroom and to identify the challenges they faced during the process. Initially, the students completed the open-ended questionnaire, which included a series of questions about their views on the implementation of intensive listening, the difficulties they encountered, and the strategies they used to overcome or alleviate these challenges in the context of intensive listening. Then, five of them were interviewed to provide more extensive elaboration and/or further insights on previous questionnaires that were deemed questionable. Thus, additional cross-checking is required. Each

participant was interviewed for around 15-20 minutes. The researcher utilized Bahasa Indonesia to simplify the process for the participants, and the excerpts in the article were translated into English. The observation was conducted in the intensive listening classroom. The learning process was documented, and photographs of various classroom activities were captured. Some notes regarding the activities and the real-life situation in the classroom were also taken. The classroom observation strengthened the data collected from open-ended questionnaires and from interviews. To see how intensive listening was implemented in the classroom, the intensive listening activities in the classroom were recorded. Based on the observation, a handbook was given to the students. The handbook consisted of multiple sections within a single unit. Subsequently, students were instructed to listen to the accompanying audio and respond to the questions provided in the handbook. Apart from that activity, in the last section of a unit in that handbook, there was a dictation and a pronunciation section. In those sections, the students learned how to pronounce words correctly. Apart from the activities in the classroom, weekly assignments were also given to them.

The data gathered were analyzed through thematic analysis, a technique for identifying, examining, organizing, describing, and reporting the themes found within a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2021) outlined six steps in thematic analysis: familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Following these steps, the researchers utilized the NVivo software to assist with the data analysis process. This software streamlined the analytical process, minimized the risk of overlooking data, and increased the overall trustworthiness of the findings. Additionally, it expedited the analysis process. Initially, the data from the questionnaire were analyzed, leading to the selection of five students for interviews. Subsequently, data from both the questionnaire and interviews were analyzed together. All collected data were coded into three primary themes: students' perceptions, challenges, and coping strategies. Finally, the study's conclusions were categorized into two groups: positive and negative perceptions. The researcher conducted three steps of analysis. First, the researchers input all data instruments, such as open-ended questionnaire, interview, and classroom observation. Then, the

researchers reviewed all collected data. After that, themes have been created based on the findings. As a result, the researchers were able to immediately draw conclusions on students' perceptions, their challenges and coping strategies in the intensive listening classroom.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Students' perception toward the implementation of intensive listening in the classroom
The assessment of the data gathered regarding students' perceptions of intensive listening in the classroom was based on four primary criteria: individual goals and motivations, the sensory characteristics of the stimulus, personal experiences, and the contextual background of the stimulus (Sperling, 1957).

Student's personal goals and drives
The collected data show that most students agreed that integrating intensive listening into the classroom could improve their English skills. Students' responses about their personal goals and drives were explained through open-ended questionnaires and interviews as stated below:

> "The intensive listening classroom really helped me in improving my English language skills because I learned several new vocabularies that I did not know before, and I know how to pronounce these new words" (SQ5)

> "Intensive listening improved my language skills. For example, I became more familiar with listening to conversations in English with different accents. I got used to it, so I can understand it better. I also learned and got new vocabulary." (SI3)

> "Intensive listening is very helpful in improving language skills. In addition, through listening, I understand how to pronounce words in English better than through reading books only. Apart from that, I can also familiarize myself with the tone of voice or intonation when speaking English." (S26)

Students were accustomed to engaging with English conversations, as one of the intensive listening activities in the classroom involved listening to audio recordings and answering related questions. The lecturer selected the audio materials, which typically included both conversations and monologues. Additionally, the lecturer provided corrections for any mispronunciations. There was also an exercise focused on teaching students the correct pronunciation of words. Through these activities, students were able to enhance their pronunciation and vocabulary while becoming more familiar with English audio.

Sensory nature of stimulus
Even though the students stated that the audio or video for intensive listening tends to be short, the students faced several challenges in the intensive listening classroom. Furthermore, the content of audio or video played a big role because it could also influence their perception. Although the lecturer determined the audio, students thought that the material or the audio was appropriate. This finding was supported by the student's response below:

> "The material that has been given by the lecturer is related to what we are studying in the classroom." (SQ5)

Nevertheless, sometimes, the quality of the audio was unclear and not good enough. It was the lecturer's duty to prepare appropriate and interesting audio or learning material that can help students to obtain or reach their learning objectives. Rachmaniputri et al. (2020) found on their research that students tend to like the material if it is interesting for them.

Apart from that, the audio for intensive listening was short but the students are required to catch detailed information because they have to answer questions related to the audio.

Students' personal experience
The following discusses students' individual experiences related to intensive listening:

> "Before I enrolled in the Listening for General Communication course. I did not know anything about Intensive Listening." (SQ30)

> "I never did the listening comprehension activity before. I know the intensive listening term and intensive listening activities when I took the course in college. "(SQ21)

The findings revealed that some of the students did not have many experiences in listening comprehension before they joined the intensive listening classroom. As a result, students faced difficulties or challenges in the intensive listening classroom. As a result, foreign language teachers hold a crucial role in improving students' ability to comprehend spoken language efficiently (Renandya & Farrel, 2010). The lecturer has to

introduce intensive listening to the students and choose an effective method of teaching intensive listening to help them increase their ability to process spoken language.

Background or setting of stimuli
Most of the students claimed that the intensive listening classroom was less enjoyable than extensive listening because the audio was not that interesting. This can be a challenge for them because they have to stay focused on listening to the audio. This statement was supported by the student's response below:

> "Sometimes I get bored and sleepy because the audio is not that interesting" (SQ3)

However, they agreed that the intensive listening classroom could help them improve their English ability. Other technical elements such as seating arrangements, speaker-listener distance, listening equipment, and students' preparation were vital to consider when assigning exposure to all students in the classroom (Rachmaniputri et al., 2020)

Students' challenges in the intensive listening classroom and their strategies to cope with it
Based on the data collected, students encountered several challenges in the intensive listening classroom. Most of these challenges are associated with obstacles related to information processing, English language skills, learning resources, and the language of instruction. (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Consequently, students developed their own strategies to address the difficulties they experienced in the classroom.

Information processing barriers
Barriers to information processing are connected to several factors, including speech recognition, processing speed, memory retention, interpretation, and distractions. These barriers significantly influence the manner in which auditory input is processed within the human brain (Chen, 2005). It was mentioned in the student's answers from the questionnaire:

> "I encountered some unfamiliar vocabulary, which led to confusion in comprehending their meanings." (SQ11)

> "The speaker's voice in the audio is quite rapid, and at times it is not audible clearly at the back of the classroom, as the speaker is positioned only at the front." (SQ15)

> "Sometimes it is hard for me to stay focused, perhaps because there are so many people in the classroom and the environment is not as calm as if I did intensive listening activity when I was alone." (SQ13)

From the students' answers, it can be concluded that in terms of information processing barriers, the challenges that they perceived in the classroom were their difficulties in understanding the audio due to unfamiliar words, fast and unclear audio, and noisy classroom. It was crucial for the students to stay focused on listening to the audio because they were required to capture the detailed information from the audio. These challenges are linked to information processing, arising from the listeners' primary processing capacity and their perceptual attention during the language comprehension process (Chen, 2005).

Strategies for information processing barriers
There were several strategies that students used to deal with these challenges, such as note-taking, asking the lecturer or friends for unfamiliar words, writing down the unfamiliar words, and trying harder to be more focused when listening to the audio. These strategies were mentioned in the questionnaire:

> "The method that I used to overcome the challenges was to search and write the keywords from the audio." (SQ11)

> "The other strategies were asked directly to the lecturer and to classmates." (SQ20)

> "I wrote down every vocabulary that I did not know and then tried to find the meaning through Google." (SQ17)

> "Listened to the audio at the quiet place and tried to be more focused on listening to the audio." (SQ15)

Note-taking and writing unfamiliar words refer to cognitive strategies, and asking their friends or lecturer refers to socio-affective strategies. When the students take notes or write unfamiliar words, they can try to find the meaning after they finish listening to the audio. This strategy also found in the previous research by Awinindia (2023). On the other hand, if they do not have much time, they can directly ask their lecturer or their friends for the meaning of unfamiliar words. Attempting to decipher the meanings of unfamiliar words can enhance students' comprehension of audio content,

as it enables them to grasp the meanings of those words. Then, sometimes environmental distraction is out of their control, so they have to try harder to be more focused and careful when listening to the audio, which is categorized as a metacognitive strategy.

English proficiency barriers
Students' listening comprehension was also affected by their English proficiency level. The study found that challenges related to vocabulary knowledge and general English proficiency were some of the difficulties students faced in the classroom. Most of the students stated that they discovered unfamiliar words when they were listening to the audio for the intensive listening class. This finding corroborates previous findings, showing that a lack of vocabulary substantially impacts listening comprehension and creates a challenge for the students (Permatasari et al., 2023).

Furthermore, overall English proficiency also influenced students' understanding and capturing detailed information from the audio. This challenge affects some students because every student has a different level of English proficiency. Strategy acquisition impacted the stage of proficiency (Chen, 2005). Students recognized that English proficiency is a key factor affecting their listening comprehension abilities.

Strategies for English proficiency barriers
Thus, their strategy to increase their English proficiency level was to practice over and over so they could get familiar with the English audio. This strategy refers to metacognitive strategies, in which students prepare and practice their listening skills. The other strategy, which was to write down unfamiliar words and find their meanings, could also help them enhance their vocabulary mastery. As stated earlier, this kind of strategy refers to cognitive strategies. These strategies were stated in the questionnaire and interview below:

> "I often watched educational videos on YouTube to improve my English skills." (SQ14

> "Practiced over and over again, the more often you repeat it, the more you get used to it." (S13)
> "I tried to listen more often to various English contents such as podcasts." (SQ26)

Watching educational YouTube videos and listening to various English contents are believed to be effective in enhancing students' English proficiency level. This is line with previous research by Dewi (2023) that stated YouTube helps students enhance their listening abilities. In addition, Nisa et al. (2022) stated on their research that podcasts was a useful tool for enhancing students' listening comprehension.

Material barriers
Material barriers refer to the audio that was being used for intensive listening activities. In this type of challenge, students claimed that the material was not interesting, and they felt bored, so it was difficult for them to stay focused while listening to the audio. These results align with the research conducted by Permatasari et al. (2023), indicating that several students encountered challenges when listening to unfamiliar subjects. They tended to be less focused when they listened to unfamiliar topics because they did not understand several terms and might not be interested in the topic. In addition, they mentioned facing difficulties related to speech speed, accents, and audio clarity.

Some students mentioned that the speakers in the audio spoke too quickly, making it difficult for them to understand the meaning and grasp the detailed information. The level of English proficiency influenced this challenge. Students with a high level of proficiency did not have any problem with the speaker's speech rate in the audio. Meanwhile, students who had a middle to lower proficiency level had a problem with the speaker's speech rate because they thought that it was too fast. Another factor that interfered with students in the intensive listening classroom was accents. It can be concluded that the familiarity of the speaker's accent can influence students' listening comprehension. So, it is important for them to practice over and over because by practicing a lot, they can get used to varieties of English accents. Last, clarity of voice also influenced students' listening comprehension. Students claimed that the audio, which was played in the classroom, sometimes was not good enough. They mentioned that the audio was unclear, and sometimes the internet connection was bad, so the students could not catch the information and understand the audio. These findings were supported by the students' statements below:

> "Sometimes I could not follow the audio because it was too fast." (SQ31)

> "I tend to find it difficult to understand the audio because the accent and the pronunciation were

different. It made me confused in understanding the meaning from the audio." (SQ7)
"The internet connection was unstable sometimes, so the audio was unclear." (SQ13)

Strategies for material barriers
To deal with the material barriers, most of the students practiced listening to English audio more often so that they could become more familiar with the varieties of accents and keep up with the speakers' rate of speech. On the other hand, sometimes students download the audio so that the audio is clearer, and they can hear it well, understand the audio and catch detailed information. The strategies above refer to metacognitive strategies, which are planning and evaluating. If the students download the audio, it can prevent bad connection problems. Apart from that, practicing can increase their familiarity with the speaker's accent.

Medium barriers
Another challenge reported by students in the intensive listening classroom was associated with the source of the audio. Several students indicated that they were unable to hear the audio clearly due to their distance from the sound source. In terms of medium barriers, some of the students decided to sit in the front seat in order to hear the audio better. These findings were supported by the student's opinion below:

> "In the classroom, there are no headphones, so it was hard to focus on listening to the audio at the back of the classroom. Thus, my strategy was to sit at the front of the classroom". (S12)

Strategies for medium barries
As stated above, this strategy also refers to metacognitive strategies, in which students plan to sit at the front of the classroom to hear the audio better. Nevertheless, sometimes, environmental distraction, including medium, cannot be removed so listeners must increase their level of focus (Adler & Lucas, 2013; Hullbert, 1989). These environmental factors, such as distance between speakers and listeners, impacts listening skills and stimulus perception (Zaman & Sidhu, 2013). On the other hand, the lecturer has to try to reduce or prevent these barriers. For example, the lecturer has to make sure that all of the students can hear the audio clearly. Furthermore, it would be much better if the lecturer or the university provide learning tools that can help students in the learning process, for example headphones, so all of the

students can hear the audio and all of them can focus more in the classroom.

CONCLUSION
Overall, students had a positive view of the implementation of intensive listening in the classroom. They concurred that this approach could improve their English language skills. However, they faced some challenges in the classroom. These challenges were associated with barriers to information processing, English proficiency, materials, and mediums. In reaction to these challenges, students used a range of strategies, which can be classified into metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective categories. Understanding the challenges perceived by students in the classroom enables instructors to identify ways to prevent or mitigate these obstacles. Lecturers have to prepare the audio, and they have to make sure that the audio is clear. To mitigate potential network issues, it is essential for them to download the audio files. Furthermore, effective coordination between lecturers and students is necessary to enhance the learning environment and achieve the desired educational outcomes.

As stated earlier, students' perceptions and the challenges that they face in the classroom need to be examined. However, this study has its limitation which are only focused on intensive listening and only examined one classroom. Thus, for further research, researchers can examine the students' perceptions and challenges in both intensive and extensive listening classrooms.

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