

CHALLENGES IN E3 LISTENING SKILLS: PERSPECTIVES OF UNIVERSITAS ADVENT INDONESIA STUDENTS

Anisa Nurjanah^{1*}, Nelson Balisar Panjaitan¹

¹Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Advent, Indonesia

*Corresponding author email: anisanrjnh356@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated Universitas Advent Indonesia's perceptions of the challenges and importance of E3 English listening skills in the context of academic and career development. Using a quantitative approach and data collection through a closed Likert-type questionnaire, 125 students from various study programs at Universitas Advent Indonesia responded to the study. The analysis showed that most students experienced several challenges in developing their listening skills, with 45.3% agreeing that such barriers existed. However, they also recognize the importance of listening skills, with 49.67% agreeing that it is vital to their academic success. Furthermore, 52.97% of the students agreed that the strategies used in the listening test were effective methods to improve their comprehension. In addition, most respondents supported recommendations to improve the teaching and learning of listening skills at Adventist University, with 50.93% agreeing with such efforts. This study sheds important light on the development of listening skills in higher education and provides valuable insights for efforts to improve them.

Keywords: Challenges, Listening skill, E3, Student perceptions

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INTRODUCTION

English is an essential international language in many aspects of modern life, including global communication, education, and professional careers (Oray, 2019). In higher education, English language proficiency is a highly sought-after skill because it can open doors of opportunity for students in global competition. As Brown (2007) says, "English has an increasingly important role as the language of international communication in the current context of globalization." English proficiency is needed in daily communication and effective academic learning in a university setting. Globally, language proficiency in academic instruction significantly affects academic achievement. Language is considered an essential means of acquiring knowledge and skills which can be tailored to individual needs (Ramapela, 2014).

Listening skills are essential to effective communication and building good relationships. As stated by Thomas Gordon in his book entitled "Teacher Effectiveness Training" (1974), "The ability to listen attentively is the key to understanding the needs and feelings of others." Listening well allows one to fully understand what the other person is communicating, including their emotions, thoughts, and goals. This allows for better relationships and more effective cooperation and minimizes misunderstandings and conflict. The academic journal "The Importance of Effective Listening Skills in the Workplace," written by Sheri Melander-Smith and published in *The Journal of Human Resources and Adult Learning* in 2005, explains that good listening skills increase productivity, efficiency, and job satisfaction.

According to Kurita (2012), Listening is critical in language learning as it provides feedback and enhances learners' linguistic proficiency. Pourhosein and Sabouri (2016) and Rost (2009) state that listening is an active mental ability. It helps us understand the world around us and is one of the necessary parts of creating successful communication. Many studies in language learning have shown that listening comprehension plays an essential role in the learning process (Ahmadi, 2016). According to Longman (2004), Listening is essential to communication. Without effective listening, communication will be disrupted. Listening is the capacity to receive and interpret messages accurately during communication.

According to Alzamil (2021), The majority believed that speaking and listening were the two most crucial abilities to master, but listening was also the most difficult. As Cuncic (2024) says, "Listening skills are not only about the ability to understand the words being listened to, but also the ability to understand the overall meaning, context, and gist of what is being listened to. Listening is a complex skill that involves understanding the meaning of the whole discourse, not just word-by-word understanding (Vandergrift, 2007).

Richard (Brown, 2000) states that listening can be difficult due to various factors. One is grouping information into precise parts such as phrases, clauses, and constituents (clustering). In addition, it is also essential to recognize and understand the repetition, reformulation, and addition of words common in spoken language (redundancy). Spoken language often uses simplified forms that may not be taught in formal learning experiences (reduced forms), so listeners need to understand and

follow the speaker's delivery rate. Listeners also need to understand and adjust to colloquial language usage, such as idioms, slang, and shared cultural knowledge (colloquial language). In addition, stress, rhythm, and intonation also play an important role in spoken language comprehension. Finally, managing interaction in conversation, from listening to speaking back, is also challenging.

English Exit Exam (E3). The E3 exam evaluates students' English language skills before leaving university. This exam may include various evaluation components, including listening skills, grammatical structures, and reading in English, which are important aspects of overall English proficiency. As such, E3 aims to ensure that students graduating from Universitas Advent Indonesia have sufficient English proficiency to move on to the next stage of their academic or professional lives. Therefore, Universitas Advent Indonesia has set E3 as one of the assessment standards every student must achieve before graduating as a higher education institution responsible for providing comprehensive academic support. Given the diverse linguistic backgrounds of its students and the globalized nature of education and the world of work, the university places significant emphasis on developing English language skills, especially in listening comprehension.

This research aims to provide a deeper insight into the challenges faced by Universitas Advent Indonesia students in developing their listening skills and how these factors influence their perceptions. With a better understanding of students' perspectives, it is hoped that steps can be taken to refine learning approaches and provide better support for them in overcoming these difficulties. By

understanding the challenges students face in developing E3 listening skills, it is hoped that appropriate solutions or strategies can be found to improve English language learning in the university environment. Thus, this study has implications for teaching practices at Universitas Advent Indonesia and contributes to further understanding the learning of listening skills in English as a foreign language. The novelty of this study lies in the perspectives of Universitas Advent Indonesia students on their difficulties with the E3 listening section. This can provide valuable insights for educators to improve listening and teaching strategies to be more effective. The primary research questions are:

1. What specific challenges do Universitas Advent Indonesia students encounter in developing their E3 skills, with a focus on the listening aspect?
2. How do students perceive the importance of E3 listening skills in their academic and professional development?
3. How do these perceptions influence their motivation to overcome challenges in this skill area?
4. What recommendations can be made from the perspective of Universitas Advent Indonesia to improve the teaching and learning of E3 English listening skills at the university?

RESEARCH METHOD

The collected data will be analyzed using descriptive analysis methods to identify common patterns in university students' challenges honing their listening skills. This analysis will provide a deeper insight into the problems faced by university students, which can then be used

to formulate more effective recommendations and learning strategies. This study aims to explore Universitas Advent Indonesia students' perceptions of challenges in E3 listening skills. This study used a quantitative approach to collect data through a Likert scale questionnaire using Google Forms. The population of this study is the Adventist University of Indonesia students who have taken the E3 exam and students who meet the criteria. We used non-probability and purposive sampling techniques to select the sample. One hundred twenty-five students from various study programs who met the requirements became respondents in this study. The questionnaire consisted of 24 question items divided into four research questions. Respondents were asked to provide their responses using a Likert scale with five options: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5). By using this method, the research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by university students in improving their listening skills in the academic environment, as well as assist in formulating more effective learning strategies and appropriate recommendations for developing their listening skills.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section discusses the research findings comprehensively, supported by robust data from the research. The research focused on four main research questions, each explored through 24 carefully designed questionnaire questions. The results from the data analysis provide valuable insights into the research topic, while the discussion explores the implications of the findings in a broader context. As such, this section explains the research results and contributes to understanding and developing knowledge in the relevant field.

Research Question 1: What specific challenges do Universitas Advent Indonesia students encounter in developing their E3 skills, with a focus on the listening aspect?

This table presents the survey results on students' perceptions of the challenges facing the E3 (English et al.) in the listening section. These challenges were evaluated through certain statements presented in the table, to which respondents responded using a Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

Table 1. Perception of Challenges

No.	Statements	Likert Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Overwhelmed by fast speech and accents in E3 listening tasks.	1.6%	12.8%	32.8%	43.2%	9.6%
2.	Struggle with distinguishing similar words or phrases in E3 oral text.	0.8%	12.8%	26.4%	50.4%	9.6%
3.	Difficulty maintaining focus during E3 listening tasks.	2.4%	11.2%	40%	37.6%	8.8%

No.	Statements	Likert Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
4.	Struggle to recall important information during E3 tests.	0%	12%	35.2%	46.4%	6.4%
5.	Sometimes challenged by identifying emotions in E3 oral text.	1.6%	12.8%	34.4%	44.8%	6.4%
6.	Struggle with unfamiliar cultural references in listening sections.	4%	8%	30.4%	49.6%	8%
Total		1.73%	11.6%	33.2%	45.3%	8.1%

Based on the data analysis, Universitas Advent Indonesia experiences several challenges in developing its E3 skills, primarily listening. Before further discussion, it should be noted that the total percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statements in this table reached 45.3%, while 33.2% were in the neutral category. One of the significant challenges is the unusual speed of speech and accents that students encounter in the E3 exam listening task. This can make them feel overwhelmed, as stated by 43.2% who agreed and 9.6% strongly agreed with this statement. As stated by Brown (2015), speed of speech and accent variations can be a significant obstacle in foreign language listening comprehension. Furthermore, distinguishing similar words or phrases in the spoken text of the E3 exam was also a significant challenge, with 50.4% of the respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This indicates the difficulty in understanding the subtle differences between similar words in a listening context, as also highlighted by Richards (2019).

Another challenge was maintaining focus and concentration during the E3 exam listening task. This reflects the difficulties experienced by 40% of respondents who agreed and 37.6% who strongly agreed.

Johnson (2020) suggests that external and internal distractions can interfere with the listening process and reduce the quality of comprehension. In addition, students also face difficulties remembering and retrieving vital information from the listening part during tests or assessments. About 46.4% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, highlighting the need for effective information recovery strategies and recall techniques (Smith, 2018). Furthermore, many students found it challenging to distinguish intonation or tone of voice that indicates emotion or attitude in oral texts during the E3 exam. This reflects the difficulties faced by 44.8% of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed. According to Richards (2019), understanding intonation and pragmatic meaning are essential to listening skills. Difficulty understanding and listening to passages containing unfamiliar cultural references or contexts was also a challenge, with 49.6% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This highlights the need to increase cultural awareness and understanding of social context in language learning (Brown, 2015). Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that Universitas Advent Indonesia students face some challenges in developing their

listening skills in the context of the E3 exam. These challenges include speed of speech, difficulty distinguishing similar words, difficulty maintaining focus, difficulty recalling information, difficulty understanding intonation, and difficulty understanding cultural context. Therefore, there is a need for holistic learning approaches and effective teaching strategies to overcome these challenges and improve students' listening skills.

Research Question 2: How do students perceive the importance of E3 listening skills in their academic and professional development?

This table presents the survey results on the importance and motivation perceived by respondents regarding E3 listening skills, as well as their motivation to improve these skills. The data is presented in specific statements followed by respondents' responses using a Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

Table 2. Importance and Motivation

No.	Statements	Likert Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Good E3 test listening skills are critical to my academic success at Universitas Advent Indonesia.	0%	2.4%	20.8%	44.8%	32%
2.	Good E3 test listening skills are essential for my future career prospects and professional development.	0%	1.6%	20%	48%	30.4%
3.	I am motivated to improve my E3 test listening skills because I understand their importance in achieving my academic and professional goals.	0%	0.8%	19.2%	52.8%	27.2%
4.	I feel proud and motivated when I improve my E3 test listening skills.	0%	3.2%	17.6%	48.8%	30.4%
5.	Strong listening skills will help me understand lecture material better, improving my academic performance.	0%	2.4%	16%	52%	29.6%
6.	I rely on my prior knowledge and experience to help me understand and interpret oral information in listening tasks.	0%	1.6%	25.6%	51.2%	21.6%
Total		0%	1,87	19,89	49,67	28,57

Based on the questionnaire results, it can be seen that most Universitas Advent Indonesia strongly perceive the importance of listening skills (E3 listening skills) in their academic and professional development. Of the total number agreeing with all statements, 49.67% of students agreed that listening skills are fundamental, while 28.57% strongly agreed. One finding is that students know the importance of listening skills for academic success. 44.8% agreed, and 32% strongly agreed that good listening skills are critical to their academic success at Universitas Advent Indonesia. This aligns with research by Richards (2019), which shows that solid listening skills can improve students' understanding and academic performance. Not only for academic success but also for future career and professional development, students view listening skills as very important. 48% agreed, and 30.4% strongly agreed that good listening skills are essential for their career prospects. Previous research by Brown (2015) also confirmed that good listening skills are highly valued in the work environment and can open up wider career opportunities. Furthermore, students feel motivated to improve their listening skills because they understand the importance of these skills in achieving their

academic and professional goals. This suggests that awareness of the importance of listening skills intrinsically drives motivation to learn and improve these skills (Johnson, 2020). In the context of listening skill development, students also feel proud and motivated when they see improvements in their listening skills. This shows that mastery of listening skills is not only a goal but also a source of student achievement and pride (Richards, 2019). From the above discussion, it can be concluded that Universitas Advent Indonesia students strongly understand the importance of listening skills in their academic and professional development. This suggests that improving listening skills must be emphasized in their learning context.

Research Question 3: How do these perceptions influence their motivation to overcome challenges in this particular skill area?

This table presents the survey results on practical strategies, and resources respondents use to improve their E3 listening skills. The data is presented as specific statements followed by respondents' responses using a Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

Table 3. Effective Strategies and Resources

No.	Statements	Likert Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I benefit from feedback on my E3 test listening performance from the instructor or peers.	0%	0.8%	32.8%	53.6%	12.8%
2.	I use strategies such as taking notes or predicting content to improve my understanding during E3 test listening tasks.	0.8%	7.2%	31.2%	46.4%	14.4%
3.	I find it helpful to conduct regular self-assessments of my E3 test listening skills to track	0%	1.6%	28.8%	55.2%	14.4%

No.	Statements	Likert Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	progress and identify areas for improvement.					
4.	I seek out additional resources. Such as books or online courses. To supplement my E3 test listening practice outside of class hours.	2.4%	4.8%	32%	48.8%	12%
5.	Using strategic processing skills helps me improve comprehension and overcome comprehension difficulties in listening tasks.	0.8%	2.4%	33.6%	53.6%	9.6%
6.	I believe that developing my critical thinking skills will improve my performance in listening comprehension tests.	0%	1.6%	24.8%	60%	13.6%
	Total	0.66%	3.07%	30.40%	52.97%	12.90%

From the overall total agreement to all statements, it can be seen that 52.97% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the given statements, while 30.40% were in a neutral position. This shows that most respondents positively perceive the strategies and practices related to E3 listening skills, although some are neutral in their views. The third research question highlighted how these perceptions influenced their motivation to overcome challenges in specific skill areas. Looking at the questionnaire results above, there is a pattern showing that students have a favorable attitude toward certain practices that can improve their listening skills. For example, the majority of students agree that they benefit from feedback from their instructors or peers (53.6% agree and 12.8% strongly agree), as well as using strategies such as taking notes or predicting content to improve their understanding during listening tasks (46.4% agree and 14.4% strongly agree). The self-assessment approach also appeared beneficial to most students, with

55.2% agreeing and 14.4% strongly agreeing that regular self-assessments of their listening skills helped them track their progress and identify areas for improvement.

In addition, most students also believed that using strategic processing skills and developing critical thinking skills would improve their performance in listening comprehension tests. In this regard, Brown's (2015) research emphasizes the importance of feedback in language learning, while Johnson (2020) highlights the role of processing strategies in improving listening comprehension. Furthermore, Richards (2019) shows that self-assessment practices can increase motivation and learning effectiveness, while Smith (2018) emphasizes the importance of critical thinking skills in solving problems and understanding complex listening content. Thus, positive perceptions of strategies and practices that support listening skill development can provide students with a motivational boost to overcome challenges

in E3 listening skills, especially if they realize the benefits to their learning progress.

Research Question 4: What recommendations can be made from the perspective of Universitas Advent Indonesia to improve the teaching and learning of E3 English listening skills at the university?

This table presents the survey results and recommendations for improving E3 listening skills based on respondents' responses. The data is presented in certain statements followed by respondents' responses using a Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

Table 4. Recommendations for Improvement

No.	Statements	Likert Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Incorporating interactive activities and group discussions into E3 test listening practice sessions can increase engagement and learning.	0%	0.8%	34.4 %	52%	12.8%
2.	Providing additional support resources. Such as workshops or mentoring. That specifically targets E3 test listening skills. Can help students overcome challenges.	0%	2.4%	30.4%	54.4%	12.8%
3.	Providing access to a variety of E3 test listening materials. Including different accents and speaking speeds. It can better prepare students for diverse listening scenarios.	0%	1.6%	30.4%	51.2%	16.8%
4.	Establishing a peer mentoring program where those more proficient in E3 test listening assist others in improving their skills can build a supportive learning environment.	0.8%	1.6%	33.6%	50.4%	13.6%
5.	Develop an online platform that provides interactive and adaptive E3 test listening skills exercises to meet students' individual needs.	0%	0%	35.2%	48%	16.8%
6.	Encourage cooperation between language lecturers and lecturers of other courses to integrate E3 test listening practice into their curriculum.	0%	2.4%	32%	49.6%	16%
Total		0.13%	1.47%	32.67%	50.93%	14.80%

Based on the data presented, it can be seen that the majority of Universitas Advent Indonesia have a reasonably optimistic view regarding the efforts that can be made to improve the learning of E3 English listening skills. 50.93% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements, while 32.67% were neutral towards them. First of all, it should be noted that most respondents agreed that including interactive activities and group discussions in the E3 exam listening practice sessions could enhance engagement and learning. This is consistent with previous research showing the importance of active interaction in improving listening comprehension (Jones, 2018). Furthermore, providing additional support resources, such as workshops or mentoring targeting E3 exam listening skills, can help students overcome the challenges (Smith, 2020). In addition, most students agreed that accessing various E3 exam listening materials, including different accents and speaking rates, could better prepare them for diverse listening scenarios (Clark, 2019). It is also important to note that establishing a peer mentoring program, where those who are more proficient in E3 exam listening help others improve their skills, can build a supportive learning environment (Garcia, 2021). Other recommendations include developing an online platform that provides interactive and adaptive E3 exam listening skills exercises and encouraging cooperation between language lecturers and lecturers of other courses to integrate E3 exam listening exercises into their curriculum. Considering the results of this questionnaire, recommendations for improving the teaching and learning of E3 English listening skills at Universitas Advent Indonesia could include a range of strategies, from providing

additional resources to cross-course collaboration. This is expected to make a significant contribution to improving students' understanding and listening skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, Universitas Advent Indonesia faces significant challenges in developing E3 English listening skills. A total of 45.3% admitted to various difficulties, including problems with speaking speed, distinguishing similar words, difficulty maintaining focus, difficulty understanding intonation, and problems understanding unfamiliar cultural contexts. Nonetheless, the data also showed that students firmly understood the importance of listening skills in academic and professional contexts. Almost half of them, i.e., 49.67%, agreed that listening skills are essential for academic success. In comparison, 52.97% recognized that the listening test strategies helped them improve their understanding and performance. This shows that, despite the challenges, students recognize the critical value of listening skills in achieving their educational and career goals. Students also showed good acceptance of efforts to improve the learning of listening skills. 50.93% agreed with the recommendation to develop listening skills within Universitas Advent Indonesia. This signifies strong support for initiatives and programs to improve their listening skills. Furthermore, the strong awareness and acceptance of challenges and practical learning strategies demonstrate students' commitment to developing their listening skills. Thus, addressing these challenges and strengthening programs that support the development of listening skills can significantly improve the quality of

education and career preparation of Universitas Advent Indonesia students.

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