

Assessing Factors Affecting Students' Motivation Towards Listening Skill: The Case of First-Year English Language and Literature Students at Wolkite University

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to assess the factors affecting first-year English Language and Literature students' motivation towards developing listening skills at Wolkite University. Since listening is a fundamental language skill that supports effective communication and academic success, identifying the challenges that hinder students' motivation is essential for improving English language instruction.

A descriptive research design was employed to investigate the problem. Data were collected from first-year English Language and Literature students and their listening course instructor using questionnaires and structured interviews. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using frequencies and percentages, while the qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed thematically.

The findings revealed that students' motivation and performance in listening were influenced by several interrelated factors. The major challenges identified included limited interest in listening activities, difficulties in understanding speakers' pronunciation, inadequate vocabulary knowledge, insufficient opportunities for listening practice, and poor background knowledge related to listening comprehension. The study also indicated that inadequate instructional resources and limited exposure to authentic English listening materials further constrained students' development of listening skills.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that English language instructors employ more engaging and learner-centered listening activities, provide regular opportunities for authentic listening practice, and explicitly teach listening strategies and vocabulary. Furthermore, the university should improve the availability of language-learning resources, including audio-visual materials and language laboratory facilities, to enhance students' listening competence and motivation. Addressing these challenges is expected to improve students' academic achievement, communicative competence, and overall English language proficiency.

1.1 Background of the Study

English has become one of the most widely used international languages, serving as the primary medium of communication in diplomacy, international trade, scientific research, technology, education, banking, tourism, and global media. As a global lingua franca, proficiency in English is increasingly essential for academic success, professional development, and international communication.

In Ethiopia, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) and serves as the medium of instruction in secondary schools, colleges, and universities. Consequently, university students are expected to develop competence in the four fundamental language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these language skills, listening is considered the foundation upon which the other language skills are built, as it facilitates language acquisition, comprehension, and effective communication.

Listening is more than simply hearing spoken language. It is an active and purposeful cognitive process that involves recognizing sounds, interpreting pronunciation, understanding grammatical structures and vocabulary, and constructing meaning from spoken messages (Howatt & Dakin, 2004). Effective listening enables learners to comprehend lectures, participate in classroom discussions, follow instructions, and communicate successfully in academic and social contexts.

Within educational settings, listening plays a particularly important role because students spend a substantial proportion of classroom time receiving information through oral instruction. Therefore, learners who possess strong listening skills are more likely to understand course content, engage actively in classroom activities, and achieve better academic performance.

Despite its importance, listening remains one of the most challenging language skills for learners of English as a foreign language. Numerous studies have identified various factors that hinder listening comprehension. According to Yan (2006), listening performance is influenced by linguistic, psychological, cultural, and non-linguistic factors. Likewise, Brown and Yule (1983) argue

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that learners' listening proficiency is affected by factors related to the listener, the speaker, and the nature of the spoken message. Furthermore, Wolvin and Coakley (2006) emphasize that effective listening contributes significantly to successful communication in personal, academic, and professional contexts.

Although listening is an essential component of English language learning, many university students continue to experience difficulties in understanding spoken English. These challenges may reduce learners' motivation to participate in listening activities and consequently limit their language development. Therefore, investigating the factors that influence students' motivation toward listening skills is important for improving English language instruction.

Accordingly, this study aimed to assess the factors affecting first-year English Language and Literature students' motivation toward listening skills at Wolkite University.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Listening comprehension is widely recognized as a fundamental language skill that supports effective communication and academic achievement. It enables learners to understand classroom instruction, participate actively in discussions, and acquire language naturally. Researchers have consistently acknowledged that listening plays a vital role in students' academic success (Vans, 2009). Despite its significance, listening instruction has historically received less attention than other language skills. Richards (2002) notes that traditional language teaching methods emphasized productive skills, particularly speaking and writing, while the relationship between receptive skills and overall language development was not adequately recognized. Consequently, many learners of English continue to experience considerable challenges in developing effective listening skills.

Observations at Wolkite University indicate that many first-year English Language and Literature students encounter difficulties in understanding spoken English during classroom instruction. Students often struggle to follow lectures, comprehend different pronunciations and accents, interpret spoken messages accurately, and express their ideas confidently during classroom interactions. These challenges appear to reduce students' participation in listening activities and negatively affect their language learning process. Several factors may contribute to these difficulties, including limited vocabulary knowledge, inadequate listening practice, low motivation, unfamiliar pronunciation, insufficient exposure to authentic English input, and inadequate instructional resources. Unless these challenges are properly identified and addressed, students' listening competence and overall English language proficiency may remain below the expected level.

Although previous studies have investigated listening comprehension in English language learning, limited attention has been given to factors influencing students' motivation toward listening skills within the context of Wolkite University. Therefore, this study was undertaken to identify the major factors affecting first-year English Language and Literature students' motivation toward listening skills and to suggest possible strategies for improving listening instruction and students' learning outcomes.

1.3 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the major factors affecting first-year English Language and Literature students' motivation toward listening skills at Wolkite University?
2. What instructional methods do English language teachers use to teach listening skills?
3. What strategies can be employed to improve students' listening skills and motivation toward listening activities?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study specifically intends to:

1. Identify the factors affecting first-year English Language and Literature students' motivation toward listening skills at Wolkite University.
2. Examine the instructional methods employed by English language teachers in teaching listening skills.
3. Identify possible strategies for improving students' listening skills and motivation toward listening activities.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to benefit several stakeholders.

First, the study will help first-year English Language and Literature students understand the factors that hinder the development of their listening skills and encourage them to adopt more effective learning strategies.

Second, the findings will provide English language instructors with valuable information about the challenges students encounter during listening instruction. This understanding may assist teachers in adopting more effective teaching approaches and learner-centered instructional strategies.

Third, the study may provide useful information for the English Language Department and university administrators regarding the need to improve instructional resources, including language laboratories, audio-visual materials, and other facilities that support listening instruction.

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Furthermore, the study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on English language teaching and learning, particularly in the area of listening comprehension. It may also serve as a reference for future researchers interested in investigating listening skills, learner motivation, and English language instruction in Ethiopian higher education institutions.

As noted by Kumar and Laskar (2001), listening is the language skill most frequently used in classroom communication. Therefore, improving students' listening competence has the potential to enhance learning across different academic disciplines where English serves as the medium of instruction.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

This study was delimited to assessing the factors affecting motivation toward listening skills among first-year English Language and Literature students at Wolkite University. Although similar challenges may exist in other universities and among students from different academic disciplines, the study focused exclusively on first-year English major students at Wolkite University.

The study was further limited to examining students' perceptions of listening-related challenges, teachers' instructional methods, and possible strategies for improving listening skills. The delimitation was necessary because of limitations in time, financial resources, and the manageable size of the target population.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

During the study, the researcher encountered several limitations that may have influenced the scope of the investigation. One of the major constraints was limited time, which restricted the amount of data that could be collected and analyzed. Financial limitations also constrained the implementation of the study.

Additionally, limited access to computer facilities and other research resources created challenges during data processing and report preparation. To minimize these constraints, the researcher made efficient use of available time, including weekends, and utilized computer facilities provided by the university whenever they were accessible.

Despite these limitations, every effort was made to collect reliable data and ensure that the findings accurately reflected the experiences of the study participants.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Concept of Listening Skills

Listening is one of the four fundamental language skills and serves as the foundation for effective communication and language acquisition. Unlike hearing, which is a passive physiological process, listening is an active cognitive activity that requires learners to attend to spoken language, interpret meaning, and respond appropriately.

Different scholars have defined listening from various perspectives. According to Allwright and Bailey (1991), listening is the process of paying careful attention and constructing meaning from spoken language. Similarly, Andrews and Coakley (1995) describe listening as a complex process that enables individuals to understand, interpret, or selectively ignore spoken messages depending on the context of communication.

Comp (1998) considers listening to an integral component of the communication process because it requires careful attention to spoken information. Likewise, Lucas (1998) defines listening as the process of paying close attention to spoken language and constructing meaningful interpretations from what is heard. Scott (2000) further explains that listening involves receiving, attending to, interpreting, and assigning meaning to verbal, visual, and non-verbal stimuli during communication.

These definitions suggest that listening is an active, purposeful, and interpretive process that requires learners to integrate linguistic knowledge, background knowledge, and cognitive strategies to comprehend spoken messages effectively.

2.2 Purpose of Listening Skills

People listen for different purposes depending on their communicative needs and learning objectives. Listening may be intended to obtain information, acquire knowledge, evaluate ideas, solve problems, appreciate entertainment, or establish interpersonal relationships.

In educational settings, listening enables students to understand classroom instruction, follow lectures, participate in discussions, improve pronunciation, develop vocabulary, and take effective notes. Kumar and Laskar (2001) argue that effective listening allows learners not only to understand spoken information but also to retain, analyze, evaluate, and apply knowledge while developing meaningful interpersonal relationships.

Therefore, listening plays a vital role in promoting academic achievement and successful communication.

2.3 Types of Listening

According to Wolvin and Coakley (1998), learners become more effective listeners when they understand that listening serves different communicative purposes. The authors classify listening into four major types: informational listening, critical listening, creative listening, and empathetic listening.

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2.3.1 Informational Listening

Informational listening refers to listening for the primary purpose of acquiring knowledge or understanding new information. It commonly occurs during lectures, classroom instruction, seminars, and presentations.

This type of listening requires learners to concentrate carefully on the speaker's message without immediately evaluating or criticizing the information presented. Effective informational listening often involves note-taking, identifying key ideas, and organizing information for later use (Wolvin & Coakley, 1998).

2.3.2 Critical Listening

Critical listening involves analyzing and evaluating spoken information before accepting or rejecting it. Unlike informational listening, it requires listeners to assess the credibility of evidence, identify arguments, detect inconsistencies, and make informed judgments.

According to Wolvin and Coakley (1998), critical listeners actively question the speaker's ideas by considering issues such as the validity of arguments, supporting evidence, and consistency with existing knowledge. Consequently, critical listening contributes to informed decision-making and critical thinking.

2.3.3 Creative Listening

Creative listening refers to the use of imagination and personal interpretation when processing spoken messages. Listeners integrate the information they hear with their prior experiences and creativity to generate new ideas, solve problems, or visualize concepts (Wolvin & Coakley, 1998).

This type of listening encourages innovation, reflective thinking, and deeper understanding of spoken communication.

2.3.4 Empathetic Listening

Empathetic listening involves understanding the emotions, feelings, and perspectives of the speaker. Rather than focusing solely on information, listeners seek to appreciate the speaker's emotional experiences and viewpoints.

According to Wolvin and Coakley (1998), empathetic listening strengthens interpersonal relationships because it requires patience, compassion, and genuine concern for others. Unlike sympathy, empathy involves understanding another person's feelings from their perspective rather than merely expressing pity.

2.4 Listening Strategies

Listening strategies are deliberate techniques that learners employ to facilitate comprehension and improve listening performance. These strategies enable learners to process spoken language efficiently by combining linguistic knowledge with background knowledge.

Mohan (2003) identifies two major categories of listening strategies: top-down processing and bottom-up processing.

2.4.1 Top-Down Strategy

Top-down processing involves using prior knowledge, personal experiences, contextual information, and background knowledge to interpret spoken language.

Listeners predict meaning by considering the topic, context, speaker, and purpose of communication before processing individual words. This strategy emphasizes identifying the main idea, making predictions, drawing inferences, and summarizing information (Mohan, 2003).

Top-down processing is particularly effective when learners possess sufficient background knowledge about the subject being discussed.

2.4.2 Bottom-Up Strategy

Bottom-up processing focuses on decoding linguistic information from smaller language units to larger units of meaning. Learners identify sounds, recognize words, analyze grammatical structures, and combine these elements to construct meaning.

According to Mohan (2003), this strategy requires learners to rely primarily on vocabulary knowledge, pronunciation, grammar, and sentence structure. Bottom-up processing is especially useful when listening for specific details or unfamiliar information.

Effective listening generally requires learners to integrate both top-down and bottom-up processing strategies.

2.5 Stages of Listening

Listening comprehension occurs through a sequence of cognitive processes. Bhardwaj (2009) identifies four major stages involved in effective listening.

2.5.1 Sensing

Sensing refers to the initial stage of hearing spoken language. At this stage, listeners recognize speech sounds, identify word boundaries, and perceive phonological features of spoken language.

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2.5.2 Decoding

Decoding involves converting spoken sounds into meaningful linguistic information. During this stage, listeners interpret vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, intonation, stress patterns, pauses, and other language features to understand the intended message.

2.5.3 Evaluating

Evaluation involves analyzing and interpreting the received message. Listeners distinguish facts from opinions, identify relevant information, assess the credibility of ideas, and draw logical conclusions based on the speaker's message.

2.5.4 Responding

Responding is the final stage of listening in which listeners provide verbal or non-verbal feedback to demonstrate understanding. Appropriate responses allow speakers to determine whether communication has been successful and whether clarification is needed.

2.6 Factors Affecting Listening Skills

Listening comprehension is influenced by numerous linguistic, psychological, environmental, and contextual factors. Understanding these factors is essential for improving learners' listening performance.

According to Yan (2006), listening difficulties may arise from linguistic factors, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and speech rate, as well as non-linguistic factors, including psychological, cultural, and environmental influences. Brown and Yule (1983) categorize these influences into three major groups: factors related to the listener, the speaker, and the spoken message.

2.6.1 Listener-Related Factors

The listener plays a central role in successful listening comprehension. Factors such as limited vocabulary knowledge, lack of background knowledge, poor concentration, low motivation, anxiety, and negative attitudes may reduce listening performance.

Brown and Yule (1983) argue that unfamiliarity with the topic and disagreement with the speaker's viewpoint may further hinder comprehension.

2.6.2 Speaker-Related Factors

Characteristics of the speaker also influence listening comprehension. These include pronunciation, accent, speech rate, clarity of articulation, fluency, voice quality, and the use of unfamiliar vocabulary.

Brown and Yule (1983) note that rapid speech, unclear pronunciation, excessive hesitation, and complex language structures often make comprehension more difficult for second-language learners.

2.6.3 Message-Related Factors

The nature of the spoken message significantly affects comprehension. Familiar topics are generally easier to understand than unfamiliar ones because listeners can relate new information to existing knowledge.

Brown and Yule (1983) emphasize that message complexity, organization, length, vocabulary level, and conceptual difficulty all influence listening comprehension.

2.7 Poor Listening Habits

Ineffective listening habits frequently reduce communication effectiveness. Robertson (1994) identifies several common listening behaviors that hinder comprehension.

These include lack of interest in the topic, focusing more on the speaker than the message, interrupting the speaker, concentrating excessively on minor details while ignoring the overall message, and displaying body language that signals disinterest or inattention. Such behaviors prevent listeners from processing information accurately and limit meaningful communication.

2.8 Effective Listening Habits

Effective listeners adopt positive habits that enhance comprehension and communication. Andrews and Coakley (1995) identify two important listening habits.

The first is **setting a clear purpose for listening**, which helps learners maintain concentration and identify relevant information. The second is **active participation**, whereby listeners remain mentally engaged, pay close attention, ask relevant questions, and take organized notes during communication.

Developing these habits contributes significantly to improved listening performance.

2.9 Motivation in Language Learning

Motivation is one of the most influential factors affecting language learning success. It determines learners' willingness to participate in learning activities, persist when facing challenges, and achieve learning goals.

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Harmer (1991) distinguishes between **intrinsic motivation** and **extrinsic motivation**. Intrinsic motivation originates from learners' internal interest and enjoyment of learning itself. Learners who are intrinsically motivated participate in learning activities because they find them personally meaningful and satisfying.

Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, arises from external rewards or pressures such as grades, praise, certificates, or avoiding punishment. Although both forms of motivation contribute to learning, intrinsic motivation is generally associated with deeper engagement and long-term language development.

2.10 Improving Listening Skills

Developing effective listening skills requires continuous practice and appropriate instructional support. Educational institutions, teachers, and learners all have important responsibilities in promoting listening competence.

Mohan and Singh (2003) suggest that learners can improve their listening skills by developing the following practices:

- Demonstrating a genuine desire to listen.
- Minimizing distractions during listening activities.
- Maintaining concentration on the speaker's message.
- Developing effective note-taking skills.
- Engaging regularly with authentic English listening materials.

Similarly, Lucas (1998) recommends that learners critically evaluate their own listening habits, recognize personal weaknesses, avoid distractions, and practice active listening consistently. Teachers should also provide learners with meaningful listening tasks, constructive feedback, and sufficient opportunities to engage with authentic spoken English.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that listening comprehension is a multidimensional process influenced by cognitive, linguistic, motivational, and instructional factors. Consequently, improving students' listening skills requires coordinated efforts from learners, teachers, and educational institutions.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a **descriptive research design** to investigate the factors affecting first-year English Language and Literature students' motivation toward listening skills at Wolkite University. A descriptive research design is appropriate because it enables researchers to systematically describe, analyze, and interpret the characteristics of a phenomenon without manipulating any variables.

The design was selected to obtain detailed information regarding students' perceptions of the factors influencing their listening skills, the instructional methods employed by teachers, and possible strategies for improving listening instruction. By using this approach, the researcher was able to describe the existing situation and present the findings objectively.

3.2 Participants of the Study

The participants of this study consisted of first-year English Language and Literature students enrolled at Wolkite University during the 2016 Ethiopian Calendar (E.C.) academic year. In addition, the English language instructor responsible for teaching the listening skills course participated in the study.

The students served as the primary source of information regarding the challenges affecting their motivation toward listening skills, while the instructor provided professional insights into the teaching methods, classroom practices, and difficulties encountered during listening instruction.

3.3 Sampling Techniques

The researcher employed a **comprehensive (census) sampling technique** to select the student participants. This technique was considered appropriate because the target population was relatively small and manageable. Consequently, all twenty-three (23) first-year English Language and Literature students were included in the study, ensuring equal opportunity for participation and eliminating sampling bias within the target group.

In addition, **purposive sampling** was used to select the instructor for the interview. The teacher was deliberately chosen because he/she was directly responsible for teaching the listening skills course and possessed relevant experience and knowledge regarding students' listening performance and classroom challenges.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

To obtain comprehensive data, the researcher employed two data collection instruments: a questionnaire and a structured interview. The use of multiple instruments enabled the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative information and to triangulate the findings for greater credibility.

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3.4.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire served as the primary instrument for collecting data from the student participants. It was designed to gather information about students' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes regarding factors affecting their listening skills.

The questionnaire consisted of both **closed-ended** and **open-ended** questions. Specifically, it included **nine closed-ended questions** and **three open-ended questions**. The closed-ended questions generated quantitative data that could be summarized using frequencies and percentages, while the open-ended questions allowed students to express their opinions, experiences, and suggestions in their own words, thereby providing richer qualitative information.

3.4.2 Interview

A structured interview was conducted with the English language instructor responsible for teaching the listening skills course. The purpose of the interview was to obtain in-depth information regarding the instructional approaches used in teaching listening, the challenges experienced by students, and possible strategies for improving listening instruction.

The interview also served to validate and complement the information obtained through the student questionnaire, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the study findings.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher prepared the questionnaire and interview guide based on the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was then administered to all first-year English Language and Literature students included in the study, while the structured interview was conducted with the selected instructor.

After collecting all the required data, the researcher carefully organized, coded, and prepared the responses for analysis. Appropriate procedures were followed to ensure that the collected information accurately reflected the participants' responses.

3.6 Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected through questionnaires and interviews were analyzed using both **quantitative** and **qualitative** methods.

The quantitative data obtained from the closed-ended questionnaire items were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically **frequencies and percentages**, and the results were presented in tables to facilitate interpretation.

The qualitative data collected through the open-ended questionnaire items and the teacher interview were organized according to major themes corresponding to the research questions. These data were then analyzed descriptively to provide detailed explanations and support the quantitative findings.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data enabled the researcher to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting students' motivation toward listening skills at Wolkite University.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through questionnaires administered to first-year English Language and Literature students and structured interviews conducted with the listening skills instructor. The findings are organized according to the research questions and the objectives of the study.

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Students' Questionnaire Responses

4.1.1 Major Factors Affecting Students' Listening Skills

Table 4.1 Students' Responses on the Major Factors Affecting Listening Skills

Item	Response	Frequency (n=23)	Percentage
Lack of practice	8	35%	
Lack of interest	1	4%	
Lack of vocabulary knowledge	4	17%	
Speakers' pronunciation	10	43%	
Total	23	100%	

As presented in Table 4.1, the largest proportion of respondents (43%) identified **speakers' pronunciation** as the most significant factor affecting their listening skills. This was followed by **lack of practice**, reported by 35% of the respondents. In addition, 17% indicated that limited vocabulary knowledge hindered their listening comprehension, whereas only 4% considered lack of interest to be the primary challenge.

The findings suggest that pronunciation is perceived as the most influential factor affecting students' listening comprehension. This indicates that difficulties in understanding different pronunciations and accents substantially limit learners' ability to comprehend spoken English. Although lack of interest was identified by only a few respondents, limited practice and insufficient vocabulary also emerged as important barriers to effective listening.

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Table 4.2 Students' Responses on the Effect of Pronunciation on Listening Skills

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	19	83%
	No	4	17%
	Total	23	100%

Table 4.2 shows that the overwhelming majority of respondents (83%) agreed that speakers' pronunciation significantly affects their listening skills, whereas only 17% disagreed.

This finding reinforces the results presented in Table 4.1 and suggests that pronunciation is one of the major obstacles preventing students from understanding spoken English effectively. Therefore, improving students' exposure to different English accents and pronunciation patterns may contribute to better listening comprehension.

Table 4.3 Students' Participation in Listening Activities

Level of Participation	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	6	26%
High	4	17%
Low	11	48%
Very Low	2	9%
Total	23	100%

The results presented in Table 4.3 indicate that nearly half of the respondents (48%) reported a **low level of participation** in listening activities. Only 26% indicated very high participation, while 17% and 9% reported high and very low participation, respectively. These findings demonstrate that students' participation in listening activities is generally low. Limited classroom participation may reduce opportunities for practicing listening skills and consequently hinder language development.

Table 4.4 Students' Interest in Learning Listening Skills

Level of Interest	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	3	13%
High	8	35%
Low	10	43%
Very Low	2	9%
Total	23	100%

As shown in Table 4.4, the largest proportion of respondents (43%) reported having a **low level of interest** in learning listening skills. Although 35% indicated a high level of interest, only 13% reported very high interest, while 9% expressed very low interest. These findings suggest that many students demonstrate relatively low motivation toward listening activities, which may negatively influence their engagement and academic performance.

4.1.2 Teachers' Methods of Teaching Listening Skills

Table 4.5 Students' Responses on Teacher Motivation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	78%
No	5	22%
Total	23	100%

Table 4.5 indicates that 78% of the respondents believed that their teacher motivated them to improve their listening skills, whereas 22% reported receiving little or no motivational support.

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The findings suggest that the instructor generally encourages students to participate in listening activities. According to Harmer (1991), learner motivation is an essential component of successful language instruction. Therefore, continued motivational support is likely to enhance students' engagement in listening tasks.

Table 4.6 Students' Responses on Classroom Listening Activities

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	16	70%
No	7	30%
Total	23	100%

Table 4.6 shows that 70% of the respondents stated that their teacher regularly provided listening activities during classroom instruction, while 30% indicated otherwise.

This finding suggests that listening activities are incorporated into classroom instruction; however, additional practice opportunities may still be needed to improve students' listening competence.

4.1.3 Strategies for Improving Listening Skills

Table 4.7 Students' Practice of Listening Skills

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	74%
No	6	26%
Total	23	100%

As shown in Table 4.7, approximately three-quarters (74%) of the respondents reported that they actively practiced developing their listening skills, whereas 26% indicated that they did not.

Although most students reported engaging in listening practice, the findings from previous sections suggest that the amount or quality of practice may still be insufficient to overcome their listening difficulties.

Table 4.8 Students' Activities During Listening Lessons

Activity	Frequency	Percentage
Listen carefully	12	52%
Think about the topic	2	9%
Take notes	5	22%
Evaluate the message	4	17%
Total	23	100%

Table 4.8 indicates that the majority of respondents (52%) reported listening carefully during classroom instruction. Twenty-two percent took notes while listening, 17% evaluated the speaker's message, and only 9% focused on reflecting on the topic being discussed.

These findings suggest that most students demonstrate positive listening behavior during classroom instruction by paying close attention to their teachers.

Table 4.9 Students' Exposure to English Broadcast Media

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	14	61%
Yes	9	39%
Total	23	100%

Table 4.9 reveals that 61% of the respondents did not regularly listen to English-language broadcast media such as television or radio, while only 39% reported doing so.

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This finding suggests that limited exposure to authentic English listening materials outside the classroom may contribute to students' listening difficulties.

4.2 Analysis of Open-Ended Questionnaire Responses

The qualitative responses obtained from the open-ended questionnaire items were analyzed thematically.

Regarding the first question concerning the factors affecting listening skills, most students identified **speakers' pronunciation**, **limited vocabulary knowledge**, and the **lack of language laboratory facilities** as the major challenges.

When asked about strategies they use to improve their listening skills, the majority of respondents reported that they practice listening regularly, listen to English-language television and radio programs, read English materials related to listening activities, and make use of available language laboratory facilities whenever possible.

With respect to classroom listening activities, students indicated that teachers commonly use reading passages, video recordings, and listening comprehension exercises during instruction.

Overall, the qualitative findings support the quantitative results by highlighting pronunciation difficulties, inadequate instructional resources, and limited practice opportunities as major barriers to effective listening.

4.3 Analysis of Teacher Interview

The structured interview conducted with the listening course instructor provided additional insights into students' listening difficulties.

Regarding the major challenges encountered during listening instruction, the teacher identified several factors, including students' lack of attention during listening activities, low interest in the listening course, inadequate listening practice, limited vocabulary knowledge, and the rapid speed of audio and video materials.

When asked how students' attention is maintained during classroom instruction, the teacher explained that students are monitored continuously through classroom observation, listening activities, quizzes, and interactive learning tasks.

Concerning the preparation of listening activities, the instructor reported that listening tasks are prepared regularly and integrated into classroom instruction to improve students' listening competence.

Finally, the teacher suggested several strategies for improving students' listening skills. These include encouraging students to participate actively in listening activities, expanding their vocabulary, increasing exposure to English-language media such as television and radio, providing more listening assignments, using interesting and engaging classroom materials, fostering positive attitudes toward listening, and improving language laboratory facilities.

Overall, the interview findings corroborate the questionnaire results and indicate that students' listening difficulties arise from a combination of learner-related, instructional, and institutional factors. Addressing these challenges through improved teaching practices, increased learner engagement, and enhanced instructional resources is likely to improve students' motivation and listening proficiency.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to assess the factors affecting first-year English Language and Literature students' motivation toward listening skills at Wolkite University. To achieve this objective, data were collected from students through questionnaires and from the listening course instructor through a structured interview.

The findings revealed that students' listening motivation and performance are influenced by several interrelated factors. Among these, speakers' pronunciation emerged as the most significant challenge, followed by inadequate listening practice, limited vocabulary knowledge, and insufficient instructional resources. Although lack of interest was reported by relatively few respondents as the principal obstacle, the overall findings indicated that many students demonstrated low levels of participation and motivation in listening activities.

The study further revealed that despite teachers' efforts to motivate students and provide classroom listening activities, many learners had limited opportunities to practice listening both inside and outside the classroom. In particular, the absence of adequate language laboratory facilities and limited exposure to authentic English listening materials reduced students' opportunities to develop effective listening skills.

The questionnaire findings also indicated that students generally demonstrated positive classroom listening behaviors, such as listening attentively and taking notes during lessons. Similarly, the interview data showed that the instructor regularly employed listening activities and attempted to maintain students' attention through classroom interaction and continuous assessment.

Overall, the study concludes that students' listening difficulties are not caused by a single factor but rather by a combination of learner-related, instructional, and institutional factors. Addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts from students, teachers, and the university to create an effective environment for developing listening skills.

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5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve students' motivation toward listening skills and enhance the quality of listening instruction at Wolkite University.

Recommendations for the University

- The university should provide adequate instructional resources that support listening instruction, particularly well-equipped language laboratories, audio-visual facilities, and authentic English listening materials.
- The university should strengthen its support for English language teaching by ensuring that classrooms have appropriate technological resources to facilitate effective listening practice.

Recommendations for English Language Teachers

- English language instructors should employ learner-centered teaching methods that actively engage students in listening activities and encourage meaningful classroom participation.
- Teachers should provide students with frequent opportunities to practice listening through authentic materials such as recorded conversations, podcasts, news broadcasts, documentaries, and educational videos.
- Instructors should explicitly teach listening strategies, including notetaking, prediction, identifying main ideas, and inferencing, to improve students' listening comprehension.
- Teachers should continuously motivate students by creating supportive classroom environments, providing constructive feedback, and selecting interesting and relevant listening materials that sustain learners' attention.
- English teachers should regularly share professional experiences and collaborate to identify effective instructional strategies for addressing students' listening difficulties.

Recommendations for Students

- Students should actively participate in classroom listening activities and make consistent efforts to improve their listening skills through regular practice.
- Learners should increase their exposure to authentic English by listening to television programs, radio broadcasts, podcasts, speeches, and other English-language media outside the classroom.
- Students should expand their vocabulary and develop effective listening habits such as active concentration, note-taking, and critical listening to enhance comprehension.

Recommendations for Future Researchers

- Future studies should investigate factors affecting listening skills using larger samples drawn from multiple universities to improve the generalizability of the findings.
- Researchers are also encouraged to examine the effectiveness of different listening instructional strategies and technological interventions in improving English language learners' listening competence.

In conclusion, improving students' listening motivation and proficiency requires the combined efforts of educational institutions, instructors, and learners. By addressing the instructional, linguistic, and institutional challenges identified in this study, universities can create more effective English language learning environments and enhance students' overall communicative competence and academic success.

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