

Contextualizing Top-Down And Bottom-Up Approaches In Teaching Academic Listening At A Pesantren-Based University

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ABSTRACT

Listening is one of the essential skills in learning English. A person cannot speak or express their opinions without first listening. This research aims to identify the strategies used by lecturers in teaching listening and how these strategies are implemented. Specifically, this study investigates the application of top-down and bottom-up listening strategies. Top-down listening involves using prior knowledge, context, and background information to understand spoken language, while bottom-up listening focuses on decoding sounds, words, and grammatical structures to derive meaning. Understanding how lecturers incorporate these approaches can provide insights into effective listening instruction. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method using several instruments, including interviews and documentation. The participants in this study were students from the Department of English Language Education program at Darussalam Gontor University. The findings reveal that the lecturer employs an integrated three-stage approach—pre-, while-, and post-listening—while considering student factors. Pre-listening activates prior knowledge and top-down processing, while-listening combines top-down and bottom-up strategies, and post-listening enhances comprehension through interactive activities. Student motivation, interest, and participation play a crucial role in improving listening comprehension. These insights highlight the importance of a structured approach and learner engagement in teaching listening skills effectively.

Keywords: Teaching Listening; Bottom-up; Top-down;

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Introduction

Listening is the process of actively paying attention to spoken symbols, fully comprehending, appreciating, and interpreting them to obtain information, grasp the message or content, and understand the meaning of the communication conveyed by the speaker through speech or spoken language (Brown, 2007). listening involves grasping the meaning and supporting aspects of spoken information and considering the speaker's feelings, objectives, and ideas when delivering the message (Alam, 2023). Active and attentive listening can enhance relationships, trust, and understanding, both personally and professionally. Like in identifying sound meaning, it is processed through the cognitive skill of listening. someone who listens to someone's talk should distinguish the types of speech delivered and catch its message. Moreover, listening critically requires someone to react and respond appropriately depending on the discourse delivered. (Leonita, 2022). It can be concluded that listening involves actively processing sounds to understand their meaning, and this understanding is crucial for compelling listening.

In learning activities, listening is more than just hearing. This is an active process of constructing meaning from the sounds that listener hear (Wahyuni, 2023). In addition, active listening, which involves focusing on the speaker, can be understood by taking notes, and asking questions, also improves understanding and memory of the material. Listening is an active process by which students receive, construct meaning from, and respond to spoken and nonverbal messages. As such, it forms an integral part of the communication process and should not be separated from the other language arts (Utomo & Sulistyowati, 2022). listening is the linchpin connecting information intake to the production of complex understanding, thus playing a critical role in attaining educational goals (Fussalam, 2019). Considering this statement, listening is essential for effective communication in school and work.

For several reasons, listening is also pivotal aspect in learning a second language. First and foremost, listening is essential to give youngsters intelligible input. Second, the listener needs to interact with the speaker to comprehend them. Thirdly, students exhibit increased curiosity in examining novel linguistic forms due to listening exercises. Thus, listening is notable for its function as a receptive talent in language learning and its necessity as a tool for advancing spoken language abilities (Pratiwi & Andriyanti, 2019). listening also intently and attempting to interpret what the listener hear. That is most kids, teens, and adults' primary source of concepts, values, viewpoints, and knowledge (Fayzullayeva, 2023). It is an action for people take to enhance their language comprehension and learning process. These tactics allow EFL students to absorb, store, understand, and apply spoken input (Al-Ghazo, 2023). Good listening skills are necessary for receiving messages effectively, focusing on what others are saying and engaging in a psychological dialogue with the speaker to gain comprehension. It was because that understanding the information is the part of aim of the entire listening process so that the teachers can support pupils actively listen to speakers of second languages to gain the target in learning second language by using intensive listening for academic issue.

Listening comprehension assumed significantly enhances students' academic achievement. These statements apply entirely to university students expected to possess strong academic skills and have a strong foundation in academic subjects. Listening for academic purposes is designed to help English language learners understand academic lectures and improve their academic performance. (Fachriza, 2024). University students are exposed to various academic subjects and must understand general and specific discussions in multiple fields. English courses at the university level are designed to help students comprehend academic concepts. Chou in Fachriza emphasized that listening for academic purposes involves understanding all aspects of classroom material. This enables EFL learners to identify the main ideas in audio recordings. Moreover, the listening skills necessary for academic fields apply to all courses (Fachriza & Mafruudloh, 2022). It was because that listening also key factors to provide the linguistic input necessary for language learning and development for academic purposes. By actively listening to lectures, discussions, and other scholarly materials, students can optimize their understanding of complex concepts, develop critical thinking skills, and elevate

their ability to participate effectively in academic discourse. In the other hands, This is challenges for EFL students. Like noise, accents, and rapid speech can hinder listening comprehension. In addition, cultural differences and prior knowledge can influence a student's ability to understand and interpret spoken language (SINTA, 2024). This is also interpreting the meaning of the spoken message to get information from the speaker. Then, the listener gives the speaker feedback or a response (Musfirah, 2019). Furthermore, effective listening enables students to grasp complex ideas and concepts presented in lectures, discussions, and other academic materials. It requires students to actively engage with the spoken language and make connections between different pieces of information. This aimed to comprehend spoken language through pacing, encoding units, and factual pacing. we can leverage our prior knowledge to aid students in making sense of what they hear (Tabieh, 2021). Learners can digest information and comprehend it to a reasonable degree when they are exposed to enough auditory input (Gonulal, 2020). While listening can present challenges, students can significantly enhance their academic performance by addressing them and developing effective listening strategies in teaching activities.

Teaching listening skills is indispensible in language learning as it supports better comprehension of spoken communication. **Top-down** and **bottom-up** approaches are two main strategies used in listening instruction to help students understand spoken texts more effectively. The **top-down** approach focuses on utilizing background knowledge, context, and expectations to interpret the message being heard. Students rely on their prior experiences, cultural schemas, and general understanding of communicative situations to process the information they hear (Benavides Vargas, 2023). Conversely, the **bottom-up** approach emphasizes sequential information processing, starting from the smallest units such as phonemes, words, and grammatical structures, to form a broader understanding. In this approach, students must be able to recognize sounds, distinguish words, understand sentence structures, and connect linguistic elements to grasp the overall meaning. In other words, the bottom-up approach works from a micro to a macro level, ensuring that students comprehend essential details before building a complete understanding (Zairjanovich, 2024).

These two approaches complement each other in listening instruction. Relying solely on the top-down approach may cause difficulties for students when encountering unfamiliar words or phrases. On the other hand, the bottom-up approach alone is insufficient because deep comprehension of a text depends not only on individual words but also on context. Therefore, effective listening instruction should integrate both approaches to help students better understand spoken conversations. (Ristika, 2024). In teaching practice, educators can use various techniques that support both top-down and bottom-up approaches. For example, before listening, students can be given a general overview of the topic to activate their thinking schema (top-down). Then, during listening activities, they can be asked to identify key words and understand sentence structures (bottom-up). By applying these two strategies in a balanced manner, students will be better prepared to engage in real-world spoken communication (Manihuruk & Sidabutar, 2022b).

Top-down processing involves drawing on prior knowledge and experiences to interpret meaning, as familiarity with certain topics and situations helps in comprehension. Individuals possess extensive knowledge of various topics and concepts, along with their meanings and connections to other ideas. By applying this prior knowledge to specific statements on a given topic, listeners can often comprehend spoken language through a top-down process (Faizal Ade Saputra, 2023). Students were able to share their perspectives based on prior knowledge, which enhanced their comprehension. Additionally, teachers could provide students with detailed knowledge of the learning topic, further supporting their understanding and engagement in listening activities (Mado, 2024). Moreover, incorporating Top-Down techniques, such as predicting content from context and activating students' background knowledge, could enhance students' listening comprehension and engagement in learning (Putri, 2020).

In contrast, bottom-up processing relies on recognizing sounds, word meanings, and discourse markers such as first, then, and after that to construct understanding step by step. Both processing skills are essential for effective listening (Brown, 2007). Learners scan the input for familiar words and use grammatical knowledge to establish relationships between sentence elements. To effectively process texts using a bottom-up

approach, students must have a broad vocabulary and a strong grasp of sentence structure (Zairjanovich, 2024). Bottom-up and Top-down techniques in teaching listening comprehension and the factors influencing their implementation. This research involved three English teachers using total sampling. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation. The findings indicated that the application of these techniques in teaching listening comprehension was categorized as sufficient, with 58% of the observed instances reflecting their use. The study highlights the need for further improvements to enhance the effectiveness of listening instruction (Utami, 2024). An essential principle in teaching listening is that listening courses should actively incorporate students' prior knowledge to enhance their comprehension skills. To elucidate this concept, this section explores key notions from the cognitive perspective of language learning, including schema, scripts, and top-down/bottom-up processing. This section also considers the similarities and differences between listening and reading, and then looks specifically at why the activation of prior knowledge is perhaps even more important in listening than in reading comprehension. Finally, there is a concrete example of activating prior knowledge in listening materials. (Komila, 2024).

A conducive learning environment can be fostered through supportive study partners and encouragement from teachers. Their listening skills are often well-developed through activities such as attending lectures and conducting studies in English. (Rahim & Hermawan, 2024). This approach also enables students to become accustomed to hearing and understanding English in various situations within *pesantren* life, such as listening to sermons, religious studies (*kajian*), or group discussions conducted in English. As a result, students can enhance their ability to comprehend and respond to information effectively. (Umam, 2023). English listening learning in *pesantren* is also enhanced through various activities outside the classroom by inviting foreign guests or speakers from abroad, and utilizing audiovisual media such as English-language films or videos that align with Islamic values and suit students' language proficiency levels. Additionally, students can listen to podcasts or audiobooks on topics that interest them. Another effective strategy is creating podcasts or short videos, allowing students to produce content in English and then review and analyze their recordings, either individually or in groups. (Al-Baekani & Pahlevi, 2018).

In line with this, EFL learners at Darussalam Gontor University exhibit several distinct characteristics. They are accustomed to applying self-directed learning strategies across all their academic subjects. Moreover, these students are assumed to possess substantial prior knowledge, which can significantly aid their learning. Additionally, this institution is renowned for its well-organized and effective learning environment conducive to language proficiency. The daily activity use of Arabic and English language within the *Pesantren*-based University setting is believed to foster students' language skills. This immersive linguistic environment profoundly impacts students' motivation, inspiring them to learn English with tremendous enthusiasm. Furthermore, the dormitory-based lifestyle of students at Darussalam Gontor University intensifies their English language learning experience. The mandatory use of English in daily communication provides ample opportunities for students to practice and improve their language skills. (Fachriza, 2023)

In addition, the implementation of listening learning is one of the skills at *Pesantren* University; not only listening learning in class but also the *Pesantren* dormitory environment, students are accustomed to listening to conversations or words in English as a mandatory language, such as announcements, English songs every afternoon, gatherings with lecturers on campus, studies, language classes, and conversations that are usually explicitly played on Fridays. Students must understand idioms, conversational phrases, verb or phrase groups, implied information, comparisons, and the overall meaning of the discussion. The urgency of developing robust listening skills is paramount for English language learners, especially at the university level. (Fachriza, 2022). By exploring effective learning strategies, teaching listening is essential to boost listening comprehension (Windamayanti, 2022). Beyond academics, this research had practical benefits, rising students' confidence in spoken communication in both academic and social settings. Enhanced listening skills led to higher language proficiency, making this study highly relevant for real-world language learning.

Thus, this study aims to investigate and analyze the implementation of top-down and bottom-up approaches among English language learners at Darussalam Gontor University, a *Pesantren*-based institution. Although students receive informal exposure to English outside the classroom, they often struggle to comprehend everyday conversations in audio recordings. This poses a challenge for lecturers in delivering effective listening materials to help students successfully answer listening comprehension questions. By investigating this issue, the study aims to contribute to the field of EFL education by identifying challenges, evaluating current practices, and proposing improvements to enhance students' listening comprehension abilities in academic contexts.

Method

The research employed descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative and descriptive research are occasionally used interchangeably, this research presents an event and its features using straightforward, naturalistic data without the need for manipulation or adjustment of factors (Creswell, 2021). This research aimed to investigate the natural conditions of an object, where the researcher acts as the key instrument (Sugiyono, 2013). This research was conducted at the University of Darussalam Gontor which implement *pesantren*-based university known for integrating Islamic values with modern education.

This study conducted interview, observation and documentation as technique of collecting data. It involved 28 students as respondents achieve data saturation. The study are afforded the flexibility to select and employ a variety of data collection methods, such as in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, which can be tailored to the specific context and requirements of the study (Silverman, 2024). This flexibility allows researchers to adapt to changes that occur during the research, whether in data collection, analysis, or interpretation, depending on the evolving situations and needs.

In the other hands, The documentation in this research serves as crucial authentic evidence that the researcher has systematically analyzed data from the results of

interviews transcript from the third semester students of the Department of English Education at Darussalam Gontor University. These include the grades of students' achievements in academic listening lessons during the semester, not only provide a detailed record of the research process but also strength the quality of the data obtained.

Data Reduction was implemented for data analysis. It involves summarizing, selecting key information, and identifying patterns to clarify the implementation and effectiveness of top-down and bottom-up approaches in teaching listening skills to third-semester students at the University of Darussalam Gontor. At this stage, the researcher classifies key insights into classroom practices and student comprehension. The identified challenges are then categorized using descriptive analysis, providing a deeper understanding of their root causes while considering both academic and emotional contexts.

Moreover, Data presented through short descriptions to illustrate student comprehension. This structured presentation helps identify key insights, evaluate trends, and guide further analysis. While various formats are available, this study will primarily use narrative text for a detailed explanation. In addition, data conclusion involves interpreting and analyzing findings on the implementation and effectiveness of top-down and bottom-up approaches in teaching listening skills to third-semester students at the University of Darussalam Gontor. This includes synthesizing interview and documentation data, linking them to relevant theories, and verifying through rechecking to ensure accuracy and reliability in understanding their classroom application and impact on students' listening comprehension.

The researcher asked that there be many ways to ensure that the data obtained does not change (Creswell, 2021) In this study, the triangulation process was also carried out by combining two data collection methods, namely interviews and documentation, to ensure the validity and accuracy of the findings related to the implementation of top-down and bottom-up approaches in teaching listening skills. Additionally, data validation was also conducted with listening lecturer to understand the teaching methods applied, the strategies used to develop students' listening skills, the factors influencing the

effectiveness of these approaches, and how students' learning outcomes are evaluated. Meanwhile, the collected documentation includes students' listening assignments or exam results, as well as interview recordings as additional evidence and students' reflective notes on their experiences in learning listening through these approaches. By checking data from student and lecturer interviews with learning documents, this study ensures information alignment, enhances the validity of research findings, reduces bias, and provides a more accurate depiction of the implementation and effectiveness of top-down and bottom-up approaches in teaching listening skills. Member checking is hidden in the researcher's opportunity to examine and approve specific perspectives by clarifying the fact data that the researcher provides. Member checking requires proofreaders to elaborate and edit to eliminate and explain what the researcher has explained. (Candela, 2019) After collecting the interview data from the students, the researcher submitted the transcript to the supervisor for review to determine whether any statements required revision or addition.

FINDINGS

It was found that the implementation of top-down and bottom-up approaches in teaching listening skills on third-semester students of the English Department at the University of Darussalam Gontor including pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening. The findings indicate that both top-down and bottom-up approaches are utilized to enhance students' comprehension. These approaches are applied through various strategies, such as *activating background knowledge*, *focusing on linguistic details*, and *integrating listening activities with other skills*.

Pre listening: Lecture employed a variety of pre-listening strategies, primarily focusing on top-down processing and prior knowledge activation. These methods included providing contextual information such as titles, brief summaries, or questions, setting learning objectives like identifying main ideas, understanding specific details, or recognizing speaker attitudes, fostering the activation of prior knowledge through discussions, brainstorming, or reading related materials; and providing previews of key vocabulary through definitions, examples, or visual aids.

While listening: lecture employed an approach that combines both top-down and bottom-up strategies. The top-down approach helps learners build a strong conceptual framework by connecting new information to their prior knowledge, while the bottom-up approach equips them with the skills to analyze language structure in depth. By integrating these two methods, the learning process becomes more effective.

Post listening: In the post-listening stage, lectures utilize interactive listening, a strategy designed to deepen students' comprehension of the material they have listened to. By fostering an interactive learning environment, lectures encourage students to think critically, analyze information, and connect the material to their personal experiences. Activities such as open discussions, comparisons to real-life situations, and analysis of different perspectives not only help students understand the meaning of the text more deeply but also develop their communication and critical thinking skills. Additionally, by engaging students in discussions, through meaningful interactions, students become not only passive recipients of information but also active participants in the learning process. Thus, students' listening skills can be significantly enhanced, enriching their learning experience.

Moreover, it revealed that several factors that affects students' academic listening skills are based on *students' motivation, students' interest, and students' participation* in academic listening instruction varied across the pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening phases. The implementation of these phases also established students' engagement levels, with both top-down and bottom-up approaches playing a role in shaping their motivation and active participation.

Discussion

According to 28 participants, the interview results indicated lecturer implemented a top-down approach in the pre-listening phase, primarily through open-ended questions that encouraged students to connect the material to their personal experiences. A combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches during listening, through activities

such as gap-filling and inferencing, enabled students to comprehend the text comprehensively. In the post-listening phase, interview results indicated that teacher employed an interactive listening approach through group discussions on topics relevant to everyday life, which fostered active participation and idea sharing among students. Research findings indicate that teachers have effectively utilized a top-down approach in the pre-listening phase, activating students' prior knowledge. The use of media such as Power Point, loudspeakers, audio recordings, and short dialogues also supports the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, this was shown from several interview results below:

"Usually, the lecture gives a brief overview. For example, if the topic is about a library, conversations in a library, the lecture would kind of give us vocabulary or anything related to what's in a library." (S2)

Moreover, providing a clear picture by lecturer effective for facilitating students' listening comprehension. The student highlights how the lecture proactively provides context before starting a listening activity. By giving a "**brief overview**" or "**providing vocabulary**" related to the topic, the lecture has helped students to build schema, predict the content of the material, and focus their attention. The statement highlights the importance of teacher guidance in facilitating effective listening comprehension. By providing contextual information and relevant vocabulary, the teacher creates a supportive learning environment that enables students to actively engage with the listening material and improve their understanding.

Besides, While student 2 suggests that lectures typically provide a foundational overview, here student 17 highlights the importance of proactive student engagement, often involving independent research before the learning.

"It usually depends on the lecturer or teacher and the material they provide. Usually, they would have given us the title beforehand, so we would search on YouTube for related material to what we'll be listening to." (S17)

Student 17's response demonstrates a good understanding of the importance of preparation before listening. This student realizes that the teacher provides initial cues,

such as titles or topics, which are very helpful in preparing themselves. Moreover, the teacher is also proactive in instructing students to seek additional information from other sources, such as YouTube, to enrich their understanding. In other words, students can develop an awareness that success in understanding listening material does not only depend on listening in class, but also on the preparation done beforehand. The statement underscores the significance of pre-listening preparation in effective listening comprehension. By providing initial cues and encouraging students to seek additional information, the teacher empowers students to actively engage with the listening material and enhance their understanding.

For instance, when listening to a conversation, students can predict the topic based on the title or visual context (top-down), and then focus on keywords, sentence structure, and intonation to grasp the meaning in more detail (bottom-up). This integrated approach enables learners to not only comprehend the main message but also appreciate the nuances of the language used. Consequently, students' listening skills can be significantly enhanced. Moreover this was evident from several interview results summarized by the researcher below:

“Lecture presented us with a listening comprehension. Subsequently, we were prompted to synthesize the information we had gleaned from the auditory materials and to evaluate our understanding of the concepts presented.”(S5)

Based on the information provided, the listening task given by lecture is a top-down method applied in this task, where students are asked to use their background knowledge to understand the material heard, in developing higher-order thinking skills. Effective effort to develop a variety of essential skills in students. By asking students to make inferences after listening to the material, this assignment not only measures students' understanding of the teaching material, but also trains them to think critically, analyze information, and communicate their ideas effectively. The listening task effectively employs a top-down approach to enhance students' critical thinking and analytical skills. By providing contextual clues and encouraging inference-making, the task promotes active engagement with the material and fosters deeper understanding. While from student 5 response, the method prioritized immediate comprehension and

evaluation, and here student16 approach involved a more gradual process of listening, summarizing, and discussing. Both methods shared the common goal of enhancing listening comprehension through active engagement with the audio material.

“Usually, we were asked to write a summary based on the audio we listened to. After writing the summaries, we were required to read them aloud one by one. Subsequently, lecture would facilitate a discussion and we would listen to the audio again, paying close attention to individual sentences and writing down key words.” (S16)

The approach employed by lecture represents an effective learning strategy to enhance students' abilities in comprehending, analyzing, and critically evaluating information. By applying both top-down and bottom-up approaches in the listening process, students were encouraged to utilize their prior knowledge while simultaneously analyzing specific details within the audio material. These activities not only measures students' passive understanding but also motivates them to actively engage in the learning process, students are not only able to comprehend the overall meaning of the audio material but also analyze specific details such as keywords and sentence structure. The lecture's approach effectively combines top-down and bottom-up listening strategies to foster active learning and critical thinking. By integrating background knowledge with detailed analysis, students are able to both comprehend the overall meaning and extract specific information from the audio material, leading to a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

The approach in post-listening activities involves implementing interactive listening through discussions and question-and-answer sessions. Students are not only required to passively understand the material but are also encouraged to interact with it by exchanging ideas and asking questions.

“It will be more like a discussion rather than a presentation. After listening to the audio, we usually engage in a conversation with the lecturer. The focus is on our individual interpretations and understandings of the audio. We share our thoughts on specific sentences, phrases, or the overall conversation. It's like a one-on-one discussion.” (S8)

This enables students to construct a deeper and more critical understanding of the information presented. The passage suggests that post-listening activities should involve

engaging students in discussions and question-answer sessions, encouraging active participation, idea exchange, and critical thinking. This approach promotes a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the listened material. Although student 8 description is more personal and in-depth discussions, and here student 16 portrays a more collaborative classroom atmosphere. Both approaches complement each other, demonstrating the flexibility of the learning process.

“Our lecture encourages us to share our different opinions and perspectives on the listening topic. We have discussions where we can talk about these ideas together.” (S16)

The analysis of the interview responses of student 16 indicates that the lecture’s approach in enhancing listening comprehension through interactive listening and discussion methods has been highly effective. By fostering a collaborative and interactive learning environment, students are not only passive recipients of information but are actively engaged in discussions. This enables them to share perspectives, analyze information, and construct a more comprehensive understanding of the material. This approach not only improves content comprehension but also develops *students’ critical thinking, communication, and self-confidence skills*. The interactive discussion methodology employed in the lecture was highly effective in facilitating student learning. By actively engaging students in discussion, the lecture fostered a collaborative learning environment that deepened students’ understanding of the material.

These current findings were similar to research entitled “Analyzing Effective Strategies for Teaching Listening Skills to EFL Students.” For teachers at SMA Negeri I Paleleh, the findings of this research indicate that the implementation of top-down strategies helped students to improve their listening skills because learners found the enjoyable strategies and were able to share their perspectives based on their prior knowledge of the topic. In addition, teachers were able to provide students with detailed knowledge about the learning topic (Mado, 2024). The journal article provides valuable insights into effective listening comprehension strategies. The findings align with the experiences of the 28 participants, particularly regarding the use of top-down and bottom-up approaches. Both the research and participant feedback highlight the significance of activating prior knowledge through pre-listening activities. Teachers can

encourage students to connect the listening material to their personal experiences, enhancing their comprehension and engagement.

Zuhri (2024) also stated that by implementing Top-Down and Bottom-Up approaches, it impacted student engagement, with responses mainly directed towards teacher questions. Both sources acknowledge that these approaches are utilized by the teachers in their instruction. In essence, both the initial study and the interview data converge on the point that these two approaches are integral components of the teachers' instructional practices. While the initial study might have missed certain nuances of these approaches and their implementation, the core observation regarding the use of Top-Down and Bottom-Up approaches remains consistent across both sources.

Furthermore, these current findings were also similar to research entitled "An Analysis of Teachers' Listening Teaching Strategy" This study investigated the listening teaching strategies of two English teachers at SMPN 2 Cibinong using descriptive qualitative methods. Observations and interviews revealed both teachers employed a bottom-up approach, primarily using the Audio-Lingual Method and task-based learning. (Putri, 2020) The journal article and the findings from 28 participants acknowledge the use of top-down and bottom-up approaches in teaching listening. However, there are key differences in their emphasis. The journal article focuses on specific methods employed by the teachers, such as the Audio-Lingual Method and Task-Based Learning, and primarily highlights the use of a bottom-up approach. In contrast, the participant data reveals a more balanced use of top-down and bottom-up approaches during the listening phase, emphasizing the importance of integrating both strategies for effective comprehension.

Additionally, the researcher found that *students' motivation* as a significant factor influencing listening comprehension skills. Students who exhibited intrinsic motivation towards learning English and improving their listening abilities showed greater engagement in listening activities and a higher level of comprehension. Further explanation of these problems was obtained through interviews with third-semester English Language Education students at the University of Darussalam Gontor in the 2024/2025 academic year. This was demonstrated in several interview results summarized by the researcher below:

"I am motivated to improve my listening skills because I want to be able to communicate confidently with people from different cultures. I am afraid that my current level of listening comprehension might limit my interactions with foreigners." (S3)

Student 3's answer reveals that the main drive for enhancing the listening abilities is a sense of wanting to keep up with their peers. The student feels a push to work harder because she believes that falling behind the classmates. While this motivation is rooted in comparison, it is also deeply personal, driven by an intrinsic desire for self-improvement. The statement effectively highlights the underlying factors that motivate student 3 to improve their listening skills. By understanding these motivations, it is possible to tailor learning strategies to further enhance their language learning journey. Whereas S3's response suggests an underlying emotional motivation, perhaps stemming from feelings of inadequacy, here student 10's response is more rational and goal-oriented, emphasizing the instrumental value of language skill.

"Perhaps sometimes, the motivation stems from feeling inadequate compared to other peers. I feel like I need to catch up because everyone else seems to be learning a lot." (S10)

Student 10's answer reveals that the main drive for enhancing the listening abilities is a sense of wanting to keep up with their peers. The student feels a push to work harder because she believes that falling behind the classmates. While this motivation is rooted in comparison, it is also deeply personal, driven by an intrinsic desire for self-improvement. The statement effectively highlights the underlying factors that motivate student 10 to improve their listening skills. By understanding these motivations, it is possible to tailor learning strategies to further enhance their language learning journey.

The researcher found that *students' interest* was a factor in the effective implementation of teaching academic listening. Students who showed a strong interest in learning English and enhancing their listening abilities demonstrated greater engagement in listening activities and a higher level of comprehension. Further explanation of these aspects was obtained through interviews with third-semester English Language Education students at the University of Darussalam Gontor in the 2024/2025 academic year. This was demonstrated in several interview results below:

"For the Listening course in the third semester, we studied with the lecture, who strongly emphasized discipline. In every session, we consistently practiced. This was my first experience

with a listening class that involved direct practice, and it motivated me to keep striving and getting accustomed to this skill.” (S9)

Student 9's answer reveals that in the third semester listening course, each class session was filled with consistent practice. This first experience with a listening class involving direct practice motivated the student to keep trying and adapting. As a result, the student's ability to understand spoken English improved, fostering confidence and awareness of the importance of regular practice. The student learned to identify accents, understand nuances of language, and take important notes. This was very helpful to the student in other courses and in everyday life. In essence, S9 focuses on the how consistent practice and the what kind of skill acquisition of learning, while S10 focuses on the enjoyment and interest and the engagement of learning.

“It is enjoyable. It is like learning in a different way, therefore it is interesting. Usually, we are taught something, and then we understand. If everything were done using audio, it would be much more engaging.” (S10)

Student 10's respond reveals Innovative learning methods offer their own appeal to students. This unconventional approach is able to arouse curiosity and learning motivation. Students feel more actively involved in the learning process because they not only receive information passively, but are also invited to participate and interact with the learning material. Engaging learning methods are usually designed to cater to various student learning styles. By using varied methods, teachers can accommodate these different learning needs, so that students feel more comfortable and motivated to learn.

Students' active participation in listening activities emerged as a part of finding in the researcher's study on the implementation of listening comprehension strategies. The research indicated that student who actively engaged with the material, demonstrating a willingness to contribute and interact, exhibited higher levels of comprehension. Further explanation of these aspects was obtained through interviews with third-semester English Language Education students at the University of Darussalam Gontor in the 2024/2025 academic year. This was demonstrated in several interview results summarized by the researcher below:

"It was quite enjoyable, and I gained a great deal of knowledge, especially since the listening material we used came from sources like TOEFL or IELTS materials, which are directly relevant to our academic studies." (S17)

Student 17's respond reveals a positive affective response to the learning experience, as indicated by the phrase "quite enjoyable," suggesting engagement and motivation, key components of active student participation. The connection between enjoyment, knowledge gain, and the source of the materials highlights the crucial role of perceived relevance to academic goals in both enjoyment and perceived learning gains. This perceived relevance likely contributed to increased student participation in class activities, as students felt the material was valuable to their academic success. Furthermore, the enjoyment derived from the activities likely fostered a more positive classroom environment, encouraging students to actively participate in discussions and other learning tasks. While student 17 leans more towards the affective domain feelings and attitudes, highlighting enjoyment. Here student 18 leans more towards the cognitive domain thinking and learning, focusing on knowledge acquisition and metacognitive awareness.

"I was able to learn some new vocabulary, although I haven't fully grasped everything yet. There are still some gaps in my understanding, and I need to continue learning. If there's something I don't understand, I need to ask questions." (S18)

Student's 18's interview response reflects a strong metacognitive awareness, where the student actively reflects on their own learning process. The acknowledgment of acquiring new vocabulary, despite it not being perfect, demonstrates cognitive engagement with the material. Furthermore, the identification of gaps in understanding and the need for continued learning underscores a proactive attitude towards self-improvement. Importantly, the statement about the need to ask questions if something is not understood (S18) indicates an intention to participate actively in the future. While this participation may not be immediately visible in classroom interactions, metacognitive awareness and the desire to seek clarification are important indicators of student engagement in their own learning, which can ultimately contribute to more active participation in class

According to 28 participants, the interview results was found that students' motivation, interest, and participation in academic listening instruction varied across the pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening phases. Specifically, in the pre-listening phase, the teacher's use of a top-down approach, primarily through open-ended questions connecting the material to students' personal experiences, fostered initial student interest and motivation. During the while-listening phase, the combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches, employing activities like gap-filling and inferencing, maintained student engagement and facilitated comprehension, which likely contributed to continued motivation and participation.

Finally, the interactive listening approach in the post-listening phase, using group discussions on relevant everyday topics, further stimulated student participation and encouraged active sharing of ideas, thus boosting both interest and motivation in the listening activity. The use of media such as PowerPoint, loudspeakers, audio recordings, and short dialogues supported the teaching and learning process across all phases, likely contributing to the variations observed in student motivation, interest, and participation.

Furthermore, these current findings were also similar to research which determined the factors that motivate second-semester English Language Education learn listening. The findings indicate that a majority of students possess intrinsic motivation, meaning that their motivation originates from within themselves, such as a desire to learn. (Nurjannah, 2024) Through the analysis of interview transcripts these studies conclude that students with high levels of intrinsic motivation, such as a desire to learn and improve their English language skills, tend to be more engaged in listening activities and achieve higher levels of comprehension. This indicates that intrinsic motivation is a key factor in the success of English language learning, particularly in listening comprehension.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the implementation of top-down and bottom-up approaches in teaching academic listening skills to third-semester students at the University of Darussalam Gontor follows a structured three-stage process: pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening. In the pre-listening phase, instructors activate students' background knowledge and introduce key vocabulary, facilitating top-down

processing. During while-listening activities, both approaches are integrated to enhance comprehension, with students focusing on details (bottom-up) while also interpreting meaning based on context (top-down). The post-listening stage reinforces understanding through discussions and reflective exercises.

Regarding effectiveness, the findings indicate that the combination of both approaches significantly improves students' listening comprehension. The top-down approach aids in understanding context and predicting meaning, while the bottom-up approach strengthens decoding skills and linguistic accuracy. Moreover, student engagement and motivation play crucial roles in enhancing listening proficiency. The integration of interactive activities in post-listening sessions further supports comprehension and retention. Thus, the study highlights that a balanced application of top-down and bottom-up strategies, tailored to students' needs, contributes to more effective listening instruction.

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