

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of six parts: background of the study, problems of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Listening skills play a fundamental role in second language acquisition, serving as the foundation for effective communication and comprehensive language development.¹ In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education in Indonesia, learners often encounter persistent challenges in mastering listening comprehension. One of the primary obstacles is the limited exposure to authentic spoken English in everyday contexts. Traditional instructional materials, such as scripted dialogues or pre-recorded exercises, are frequently insufficient in representing the dynamic and unpredictable nature of real-life conversations. As a result, Indonesian EFL learners often struggle to comprehend native speakers in natural interactions, creating a significant gap between classroom learning and practical language use.

An alternative yet underutilized source of authentic listening input is race commentary, particularly from Formula One (F1) motorsport events. Race commentators deliver live narration of fast-paced and continuously evolving

¹ M. Rost, 'Areas of Research That Influence L2 Listening Instruction', in *Current Trends in the Development and Teaching of the Four Language Skills*, E. Uso-Jua (Mouton de Gruyter, 2006), pp. 47–74.

situations on the track. Their speech must be accurate, expressive, and responsive to unexpected developments, often requiring rapid shifts in tone, structure, and vocabulary. For language learners, exposure to this form of spoken discourse presents a challenging but highly engaging listening experience. Despite its pedagogical potential, race commentary has received little attention in EFL research, especially regarding its value in informal and independent learning environments. This gap indicates a timely and relevant area for further investigation.

Authentic listening materials such as podcasts, news reports, and live broadcasts have long been acknowledged as effective tools for improving listening comprehension.² Gilmore³ defines authentic materials as language resources created by and for native speakers within real communicative contexts, without the primary intention of serving instructional purposes. These materials offer learners access to the features of real-world language, including varied accents, speech rhythms, and spontaneous linguistic patterns. According to Nunan⁴, authentic materials better equip learners to engage with language as it is naturally used, promoting more meaningful and transferable learning outcomes compared to scripted instructional input.

² J. C. Richards, *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

³ A. Gilmore, 'Authentic Materials and Authenticity in Foreign Language Learning', *Language Teaching*, 40.2 (2007), 97–118 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444807004144>>.

⁴ D. Nunan, 'Listening in Language Learning', in *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 238–41.

Numerous studies support the effectiveness of authentic materials in enhancing listening instruction. Jaelani⁵ reported that learners perceived authentic materials as useful for understanding a broader range of speech patterns and real-world expressions. Abebe, Tefera, and Zeleke⁶ found that learners exposed to authentic audio materials significantly outperformed those taught with conventional methods. Similarly, Giyarta, Rais, and Wahyuni⁷ concluded that authentic spoken texts improve learners' ability to comprehend main ideas and interpret implicit meanings. In addition, Angelia and Simanjuntak⁸ observed that digital audio sources such as podcasts contribute to listening proficiency by exposing learners to different speech speeds and regional accents. Lembarek⁹ emphasized that regular interaction with spontaneous conversations enhances learners' adaptability to real-time spoken input. Furthermore, Puspitasari, Husnawati, and Yundayani¹⁰ highlighted that

⁵ A Jaelani, 'The Use of Authentic Materials in EFL Listening Classrooms: Students' Perspectives', *English Language in Focus (ELIF)*, 2.2 (2020), 139–50
<<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24853/elif.2.2.139-150>>.

⁶ S. Abebe, Y. Tefera, and T Zeleke, 'Effect of Using Authentic Audio Materials on EFL Students' Listening Comprehension: First Year Social Sciences Students at Jimma University in Focus', *Asian Journal of Business and Strategy*, 7.2 (2022)
<<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.20372/ajbs.2022.7.2.705>>.

⁷ R. A. Giyarta and S Wahyuni, 'The Use of Authentic Materials to Improve Students' Listening Skill', *Journal of English Language Education*, 7.1 (2022), 34–45
<<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32682/jele.v7i1.1843>>.

⁸ I. Angelia and D. C Simanjuntak, 'The Use of Digital Audio in Enhancing EFL Learners' Listening Proficiency', *JETAL: Journal of English Teaching & Applied Linguistics*, 4.2 (2023), 64–74
<<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36655/jetal.v4i2.1118>>.

⁹ S. S. Lembarek, 'Integrating Authentic Listening Materials to Improve the Students' Listening Skills in EFL Classes', *Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers*, 15.2 (2024)
<<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47750/jett.2024.15.02.011>>.

¹⁰ A. Puspitasari, Husnawati, and A Yundayani, 'Enhancing Intrinsic Motivation and Listening Skills through Integrating Authentic Learning Materials (ALM)', *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 12.2 (2024), 559–66 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v12i2.9761>>.

authentic materials not only develop listening competence but also increase learners' intrinsic motivation and confidence.

Although these studies provide strong evidence of the benefits of authentic input, they were predominantly conducted in formal, teacher-guided learning environments. None of the studies specifically addressed the use of race commentary as an informal, self-directed listening resource. Considering the increasing popularity of Formula One among Indonesian audiences, race commentary presents an authentic, fast-paced, and content-rich form of input that learners may engage with voluntarily. It offers exposure to technical vocabulary, real-time speech processing, and diverse English accents, all of which are vital components in preparing learners for actual communicative encounters.

Race commentary is especially valuable as a listening resource due to its unique features. Learners are required to process fast, unscripted speech without the opportunity to pause or seek clarification. This condition promotes the development of real-time comprehension strategies and auditory flexibility. In addition, the language used in commentary includes a mix of descriptive narration, analysis, and spontaneous reactions, which can expand learners' lexical range and improve their ability to follow complex spoken texts. Because race commentary is delivered by speakers from various linguistic backgrounds, it also provides exposure to a variety of Englishes, which supports learners in developing global listening competence.

This research is anchored in the theory of authentic materials in language learning. As a form of natural, fast-paced oral discourse, race commentary represents a distinctive input type that aligns with the demands of real-world communication. It is particularly suitable for learners who seek to develop listening skills in informal and autonomous contexts where traditional instructional materials may not be readily available.

To investigate this potential, the present study employs a narrative research approach that focuses on the lived experiences of learners who use race commentary as a listening tool. Narrative inquiry provides a rich framework for understanding how learners reflect, adapt, and respond to listening challenges in self-directed settings. This study aims to identify the specific listening skills that are enhanced through exposure to race commentary, the obstacles learners encounter, and the strategies they develop to manage authentic spoken input. The findings are expected to contribute to a broader understanding of how authentic, real-time materials can be integrated into informal learning practices to strengthen EFL learners' overall communicative competence.

B. Problems of the Study

Based on the background above, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do Indonesian EFL learners perceive the use of race commentary in improving their listening skills?
2. What specific listening skills do Indonesian EFL learners develop through exposure to race commentary?

3. What challenges and strategies emerge in learners' personal experiences while engaging with race commentary as authentic listening material?

C. Objectives of the Study

In line with the research problems stated, the objectives of the study are:

1. To explore how Indonesian EFL learners perceive the use of race commentary in improving their listening skills.
2. To identify the specific listening skills that learners develop through exposure to race commentary.
3. To examine the challenges encountered and the strategies employed by learners while engaging with race commentary as authentic listening material in an informal context.

D. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide significant contributions to the field of English language teaching and learning:

1. For educators: It offers insights into the potential of race commentary as an alternative authentic material for listening comprehension practice.
2. For students: It encourages the use of engaging, real-world English input that can help them develop better listening strategies and confidence.
3. For researchers: It provides a foundation for further exploration into the use of spontaneous, high-speed discourse as informal listening input in EFL contexts.

E. Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on Indonesian EFL learners who engage with Formula One race commentary as part of their listening exposure. The study does not extend to other forms of sports commentary or structured classroom listening activities. It is limited to qualitative data obtained through narrative inquiry, prioritizing learners' subjective experiences rather than quantitative measurement of listening improvement.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Race Commentary: Live verbal narration provided by commentators during motorsport events, including descriptions of racing action, technical details, and strategic insights.
2. EFL Learners: Individuals learning English as a foreign language in a context where English is not the primary language.
3. Listening Skills: The ability to comprehend spoken English, including recognizing vocabulary, sentence structure, meaning, and speaker intention.
4. Authentic Material: Real-world content not originally created for language instruction, used to expose learners to natural language use.
5. Narrative Study: A qualitative research method that focuses on collecting and interpreting individuals' personal stories to understand their experiences and perspectives.