

# MULTIMODAL APPROACH IN TEACHING LISTENING IN EFL CLASSROOM OF INDONESIA: TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE AND EXPERIENCE

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## Abstrak

Penelitian ini melihat seberapa baik pembelajaran dengan berbagai cara dapat meningkatkan kemampuan mendengarkan siswa SMA N 1 Gemolong. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran, termasuk pengamatan langsung di kelas dan wawancara terstruktur dengan guru bahasa Inggris. Metode para guru dalam menggabungkan sumber daya multimedia ke dalam pelajaran mereka—seperti cuplikan audio, film, dan presentasi interaktif—dijelaskan melalui wawancara. Evaluasi waktu nyata terhadap keterlibatan siswa dan kesulitan praktis dalam mempraktikkan alat bantu tersebut dapat dilakukan melalui observasi. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa dengan menawarkan berbagai kesempatan belajar yang menarik dan menyenangkan yang mengakomodasi gaya belajar yang berbeda, komponen multimedia secara signifikan meningkatkan pemahaman menyimak siswa. Di sisi lain, kesulitan seperti bahasa baru, kecepatan bicara yang cepat, dan kendala teknis ditemukan sebagai penghalang bagi pemahaman menyimak yang efisien. Untuk menangani kompleksitas tugas menyimak, penelitian ini menekankan nilai dari pendekatan holistik terhadap instruksi menyimak yang mengintegrasikan metode kognitif dan metakognitif serta memanfaatkan teknologi multimedia. Penelitian ini memajukan pengetahuan kita tentang strategi pengajaran multimodal dan memberikan saran yang berguna bagi para pendidik untuk meningkatkan pengajaran menyimak dalam konteks yang mirip dengan kelas mereka sendiri.

***Kata kunci:** Pemahaman mendengarkan, elemen multimedia, pengajaran bahasa Inggris, pembelajaran multimodal.*

## Abstract

This study looks into how well multimodal approach can improve the listening abilities of SMA N 1 Gemolong students. Data was gathered using a mixed-methods approach, including direct classroom observations and structured interviews with English teachers. The teachers' methods for incorporating multimedia resources into their lessons—such as audio excerpts, films, and interactive presentations—were made clear by the interviews. Real-time evaluation of student engagement and the practical difficulties in putting these tools into practice were made possible by observations. The results show that by offering a variety of interesting and engaging learning opportunities that accommodate different learning styles, multimedia components considerably improve students' listening comprehension. On the other hand, difficulties like new language, rapid speech rates, and technical constraints were found to be obstacles to efficient listening comprehension. In order to handle the complexity of listening tasks, the study emphasizes the value of a holistic approach to listening instruction that integrates cognitive and metacognitive methods and makes use of multimedia technologies. This study advances our knowledge of multimodal teaching strategies and provides educators with useful suggestions for improving listening instruction in contexts that are similar to their own classrooms.

***Keywords:** Listening comprehension, multimedia elements, English language teaching, multimodal learning.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly interconnected world, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners need to develop effective listening skills to navigate a wide range of real-life situations. Traditional listening instruction has predominantly focused on auditory input, often overlooking the multimodal nature of communication. This background of study explores the rationale for implementing multimodal learning techniques in teaching listening skills to EFL learners. Drawing from current research, this discussion highlights the benefits of a multimodal approach in enhancing EFL listening proficiency.

Engagement is a critical factor in effective learning. Multimodal learning materials have been shown to captivate the attention of learners more effectively than traditional auditory-only materials. An experimental study by Mehravaran and Ahmadi (2016) revealed that EFL students exposed to multimodal learning materials demonstrated significantly higher levels of attention and participation compared to those exposed solely to audio. Incorporating visuals, gestures, and text alongside audio recordings provides students with additional cues for understanding and maintaining their interest throughout the listening activity.

Comprehension and retention are at the core of successful listening skills development. Research by Mayer and Moreno (2003) has established the concept of the multimedia principle, which suggests that presenting information in multiple formats enhances learning outcomes. When applied to the EFL classroom, this principle implies that incorporating visual and textual support in listening activities can improve students' comprehension and retention of the content. Multimodal materials enable learners to decode complex auditory input by cross-referencing with other sensory input, leading to more robust understanding and memory consolidation.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education has witnessed a significant transformation in recent years, particularly in the realm of language skills development. Listening, as a fundamental language skill, plays a crucial role in EFL classrooms. The integration of multimodal learning, which involves the use of various sensory modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements, has gained attention as a promising approach to enhance EFL listening skills. This background study explores the rationale and theoretical underpinnings of implementing multimodal learning in EFL listening classrooms. Listening skills hold paramount importance in language acquisition and communication. Competence in listening comprehension is not only vital for effective communication but also forms the basis for developing other language skills, including speaking, reading, and writing (Vandergrift,

2007). In the context of EFL, where learners may not have constant exposure to the target language, effective listening skills become a key determinant of their language proficiency.

Teaching EFL listening can be a challenging task. Learners often face difficulties in understanding rapid speech, unfamiliar accents, and complex vocabulary and syntax (Field, 2008). Furthermore, traditional listening instruction primarily relies on auditory input, neglecting the potential benefits of incorporating visual and kinesthetic elements. This one-dimensional approach may not cater to the diverse learning preferences and needs of EFL students.

Multimodal learning draws on the principles of cognitive science and educational psychology to provide a holistic learning experience that engages multiple sensory modalities (Plass et al., 2013). It is rooted in the belief that integrating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements can enhance comprehension and retention. The use of visual aids, gestures, multimedia, and interactive activities can provide a comprehensive understanding of the listening content, making it more accessible to EFL learners.

Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988) posits that learners have a limited cognitive capacity for processing information. Traditional listening instruction that relies solely on auditory input may overwhelm learners with high cognitive load. By incorporating visual aids and kinesthetic elements, multimodal learning can reduce cognitive load, enabling students to focus on comprehension rather than struggling to process auditory information. Advancements in technology have further facilitated the integration of multimodal learning in EFL classrooms. Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) tools, such as interactive multimedia software, provide opportunities to create engaging and effective multimodal listening materials. These digital resources can cater to various learning styles and preferences, making listening activities more dynamic and interactive (Chapelle, 2001).

Cultural factors can significantly impact EFL listening comprehension. Multimodal learning allows for the inclusion of culturally relevant visual and contextual cues in listening materials, making the content more relatable and meaningful for learners from diverse backgrounds (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). This approach acknowledges the importance of cultural sensitivity in EFL instruction. Motivation is a crucial factor in language learning. Multimodal learning, with its dynamic and interactive nature, has the potential to enhance learner motivation in the EFL classroom. Engaging and stimulating materials can create a positive learning environment, promoting a desire to improve listening skills (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Inclusive education is a growing priority in EFL classrooms. Multimodal learning can benefit learners with diverse needs, including those with learning disabilities or different learning styles (Bashash, 2016). By offering multiple pathways to understanding, multimodal learning supports the inclusion of all students, irrespective of their abilities. Research in the field of EFL pedagogy has provided evidence of the benefits of multimodal learning in enhancing listening skills. Studies have demonstrated that the integration of visual and kinesthetic elements in listening instruction leads to improved comprehension, retention, and overall language proficiency (Hampel & Stickler, 2005). These findings underline the potential of multimodal learning as a viable approach to address the challenges in teaching EFL listening.

## **2. METHOD**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. According to Lambert and Lambert (2012), the use of descriptive qualitative approaches is essential for novice researchers to avoid the complexities and requirements of more intricate designs such as grounded theory or phenomenology. Sandelowski (2010) highlights that the primary rationale for employing a descriptive approach is to provide straightforward descriptions of experiences and perceptions, especially in areas where little is known about the topic. A qualitative descriptive design is most appropriate as it acknowledges the subjective nature of the problem and the varied experiences of participants, presenting findings in terminology closely resembling the initial research question (Bradshaw et al., 2017).

The focus of this research is the implementation of a multimodal learning strategy in teaching listening in EFL classrooms. This involves assessing the effectiveness of incorporating diverse modes of communication, such as visual aids, audio, videos, and interactive activities, to enhance students' listening skills. The research subjects are two English teachers from SMA N 1 Gemolong: Mr. Sumardi S.Pd., M.Pd., and Siti Atik Sulastri S.Pd., M.Pd. These teachers provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how multimodal learning is implemented in teaching listening in EFL classrooms and how students engage with this instructional approach within the specific context of the school.

The study examines the effectiveness of multimedia components in improving students' listening abilities at SMA N 1 Gemolong. Primary data was gathered from interviews with English teachers, who discussed the integration of multimedia resources like audio clips, films, and interactive presentations. Observational data was collected from English classes that used multimedia, allowing for real-time evaluation of student interactions, engagement levels, and the effectiveness of multimedia tools. The integration of observational and interview data

provides a comprehensive understanding of how multimedia influences listening skill development.

The study employs multiple tools for data collection, including observation and interviews with English teachers. For observations, the researcher monitored students during English language audio or video activities in class to assess their comprehension, taking notes to document student engagement and understanding. Interviews were conducted after class activities to gather teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of multimedia tools in enhancing students' listening skills.

Data validity is ensured through the convergence of multiple data sources, such as interviews, observations, and documents. This approach helps to discover specific pieces of information from various perspectives, thereby enhancing data trustworthiness. The validity of data is crucial in qualitative research as it influences the quality of research findings. The data analysis in this descriptive qualitative research focuses on textual descriptions rather than numerical metrics. The following strategies are employed: data reduction, which involves summarizing and selecting crucial information from the large amount of data collected; display data, which involves organizing and presenting the reduced data in a concise manner; and conclusion drawing/verification, which involves deriving conclusions supported by reliable and substantial evidence. This ensures that the findings are trustworthy and grounded in the data collected.

### **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **1) RESULT**

##### **1.1 How is the implementation of multimodal learning strategies in teaching listening in SMA N 1 Gemolong?**

###### **Findings:**

- **Multimedia Integration:** Teachers effectively used audio materials, videos, and interactive platforms such as Zoom and Google Classroom. PowerPoint presentations with embedded audio or video, along with the 'English In Mind' textbook, were utilized to enhance listening lessons.
- **Student Engagement:** Students generally responded positively to the multimedia elements, finding them engaging and effective for learning. Varied approaches, including group discussions and flexible presentation styles, catered to different learning preferences.

**Discussion:**

Implementing multimodal learning strategies reveals a dynamic approach to teaching listening skills. The use of multimedia elements like audio and video in PowerPoint presentations showcases innovative teaching methodologies (Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2016), engaging students and catering to diverse learning styles (Marantika et al., 2023). The emphasis on discussions, presentations, and assignments highlights a multifaceted teaching approach, enhancing student engagement, developing communication skills, and promoting active participation (Bouchev et al., 2021; Vandergrift, 2007). The selection of multimedia elements such as MP3 audio and videos from various sources enriches the multimodal teaching of listening skills (Masinde et al., 2023), while the strategic use of textbooks aligns with curriculum standards (Cahyono & Widya, 2017). Limited use of Zoom and PowerPoint suggests a cautious approach to online platforms, while leveraging Google Forms for assignment collection demonstrates an adaptive response to remote teaching challenges (Sun, 2015). Problem-based learning is employed to foster critical thinking, and the teacher's proactive approach to gathering student feedback and evaluating methods reflects a commitment to continuous improvement (O'Halloran & Smith, 2012).

**1.2 What are the challenges of the implementation of multimodal learning strategies in teaching listening in SMA N 1 Gemolong?****Findings:**

- Challenges: Key challenges included varying student access to technology and the suitability of different media types for listening activities.

**Discussion:**

The implementation of multimodal learning strategies comes with unique challenges. One primary hurdle is the varying suitability of different media formats for students, with some preferring direct audio listening over video (Gilakjani et al., 2011; Vandergrift, 2007). Assessing students' comprehension of audio or video material is another challenge due to the nuanced nature of listening comprehension. Interactive evaluation methods, such as discussions and evaluations with students, can help overcome these obstacles (Doyle et al., 2020; Mayer & Moreno, 2003). Efforts made

by SMA N 1 Gemolong to support teachers, such as developing strategies and ensuring a comfortable learning environment, are noteworthy (Cahyono & Widya, 2017). The involvement of teachers and staff, particularly those managing language or multimedia labs, plays a crucial role in facilitating successful implementation (Marantika et al., 2023; Domínguez Romero & Maíz Arévalo, 2011). Addressing these challenges requires understanding students' preferences, using interactive assessment methods, and providing institutional support.

### **1.3 How do teachers overcome the challenges of the implementation of multimodal learning strategies in teaching listening in SMA N 1 Gemolong?**

#### **Findings:**

- Strategies to Overcome Challenges: Teachers were trained in the use of technology and multimedia applications, engaging lesson materials were created, and collaboration among teachers was fostered. Regular feedback from students was gathered, and the establishment of a multimedia lab in 2017 significantly supported the implementation.

#### **Discussion:**

Teachers at SMA N 1 Gemolong employ strategic approaches to address the challenges of multimodal learning. Training teachers in technology use and multimedia applications ensures they can leverage these resources effectively (O'Halloran & Smith, 2012). Maintaining smooth technology facilities is crucial, contributing to overcoming implementation obstacles and fostering an engaging learning environment (Bouchey et al., 2021). Creating engaging lesson materials tailored to students' needs optimizes their engagement and comprehension (Gilakjani et al., 2011). Fostering collaboration among teachers and gathering student feedback enhances teaching practices and ensures continuous improvement (Marantika et al., 2023). The establishment of a multimedia lab in 2017 has played a crucial role in overcoming implementation obstacles, providing students with access to audio-centric learning tools and contributing to a transformative learning experience (Sun, 2015).

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The research conducted at SMA N 1 Gemolong has provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, strategies, and successes in implementing multimodal methods for teaching listening skills. One of the primary challenges identified was the diversity in students' preferences and suitability with different media formats, with a notable preference for audio-based materials for focused listening tasks. This highlights the importance of catering to individual learning styles and preferences to optimize the effectiveness of teaching methods.

In response to these challenges, SMA N 1 Gemolong has implemented a series of proactive measures aimed at enhancing the multimodal teaching experience. This includes comprehensive training programs for teachers to ensure proficiency in utilizing technology and multimedia resources effectively. The school has also prioritized the maintenance and improvement of technology facilities, ensuring a seamless integration of multimedia elements into the curriculum.

A key aspect of SMA N 1 Gemolong's success lies in its commitment to creating engaging and relevant learning materials. The adoption of the "Bahasa Inggris : Life Today" textbook, endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Culture and aligned with the Merdeka curriculum, reflects the school's dedication to providing students with up-to-date and curriculum-aligned resources. This strategic choice has contributed significantly to enhancing students' learning experiences and comprehension of listening material. The establishment of the multimedia lab in 2017 has been a transformative initiative, providing students with access to advanced technological tools and resources that support their development in listening skills. This investment in infrastructure underscores the school's forward-thinking approach to education and its commitment to leveraging technology for educational excellence.

Furthermore, SMA N 1 Gemolong has fostered a culture of collaboration among teachers, encouraging the sharing of best practices, collaborative lesson planning, and ongoing professional development. Regular feedback mechanisms involving students have also been instrumental in evaluating the efficacy of teaching methods and making continuous improvements to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

In conclusion, SMA N 1 Gemolong's proactive approach, encompassing teacher training, technology integration, curriculum alignment, resource selection, infrastructure investment, collaborative practices, and student-centered feedback mechanisms, has led to the successful implementation of multimodal methods for teaching listening skills. These efforts reflect the



school's commitment to providing a high-quality, engaging, and inclusive learning environment that meets the diverse needs of its students and prepares them for academic and personal success.

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