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## INDONESIAN EFL POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARD ACCENT IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION

by

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### Abstract:

*Listening comprehension has been one of the most challenging proficiency for EFL learners in Indonesia, including for postgraduate students. In this research, the researcher aims to investigate postgraduate students' perception of accents within listening comprehension. Furthermore, this research employed a mixed method and an online open-ended questionnaire as the instrument. 33 Indonesian participants who attended Indonesian and Indian universities were willing to join the research. Moreover, the Questionnaire consisted of 11 questions that needed to be answered by the participants. In addition, the researcher analyzed the data by chart and percentage to show the difference between the participants' responses. The result revealed that 93.9% of postgraduate students were primarily familiar with the American accent rather than the British accent throughout their education. It is because most of the schools in Indonesia adopt an American accent for their English course. Furthermore, 87.9% of the participants used an American accent when speaking in English, and 63.6% sometimes had difficulty understanding Americans. Additionally, 66.7% of the participants stated that the speaker's speed was the significant problem they had in listening comprehension. However, all of the participants found that accent also had the utmost role in listening comprehension because the accent they listened to correlated to their understanding of vocabulary being spoken by the speaker in the listening comprehension audio. Thus, based on the research, Indonesian postgraduate students perceived accent as pivotal in listening comprehension. The speaker's accent on the listening comprehension audio determined how well they could do the listening comprehension test.*

**Keywords:** English Accents, EFL Postgraduate students, Listening Comprehension, Postgraduate students' Perception

Abstrak:

*Pemahaman mendengarkan telah menjadi salah satu kemahiran yang paling menantang bagi pelajar EFL di Indonesia, termasuk bagi mahasiswa pascasarjana. Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti bertujuan untuk menyelidiki persepsi mahasiswa pascasarjana tentang aksen dalam pemahaman mendengarkan. Selanjutnya, penelitian ini menggunakan metode campuran dan kuesioner terbuka online sebagai instrumen.*

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33 peserta Indonesia yang kuliah di universitas Indonesia dan India bersedia bergabung dalam penelitian. Selain itu, Kuesioner terdiri dari 11 pertanyaan yang perlu dijawab oleh para peserta. Selain itu, peneliti menganalisis data dengan grafik dan persentase untuk menunjukkan perbedaan antara tanggapan peserta. Hasilnya mengungkapkan bahwa 93,9% mahasiswa pascasarjana terutama akrab dengan aksen Amerika daripada aksen Inggris sepanjang pendidikan mereka. Itu karena sebagian besar sekolah di Indonesia mengadopsi aksen Amerika untuk kursus bahasa Inggris mereka. Selain itu, 87,9% dari peserta menggunakan aksen Amerika ketika berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris, dan 63,6% kadang-kadang mengalami kesulitan memahami orang Amerika. Selain itu, 66,7% dari peserta menyatakan bahwa kecepatan pembicara adalah masalah signifikan yang mereka miliki dalam pemahaman mendengarkan. Namun, semua peserta menemukan bahwa aksen juga memiliki peran maksimal dalam pemahaman mendengarkan karena aksen yang mereka dengarkan berkorelasi dengan pemahaman mereka tentang kosakata yang diucapkan oleh pembicara dalam audio pemahaman mendengarkan. Dengan demikian, berdasarkan penelitian, mahasiswa pascasarjana Indonesia menganggap aksen sebagai hal yang penting dalam pemahaman mendengarkan. Aksen pembicara pada audio pemahaman mendengarkan menentukan seberapa baik mereka dapat melakukan tes pemahaman mendengarkan.

*Kata kunci:* Aksen Bahasa Inggris, Mahasiswa Pascasarjana EFL, Pemahaman Mendengarkan, Persepsi Mahasiswa Pascasarjana

**Kata kunci:** Aksen Bahasa Inggris, Mahasiswa Pascasarjana EFL, Pemahaman Mendengarkan, Persepsi Mahasiswa Pascasarjana

## INTRODUCTION

Studying listening skill as a foreign language can also contribute to the growth of the students' insight on pronunciation and also vocabularies. Furthermore, listening comprehension is an intricate process in understanding a two-way conversation or spoken information that are uttered by the speakers within an audio recording (Diora & Rosa, 2020). Listening also demands the individual's understanding and also the similarities and differences in sound, judgement, and experience (Buck, 2001). Thus, students need to be familiar with accent, American and also British to familiarize themselves. When students are familiar with the accent, it will also be easier for them to understand the speaker's utterance.

Accent is one of the obstacles students' face during listening (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). For instance, when a student has learnt English with American accent and then they are faced with a listening test which has British accent, it is very likely that the student will have difficulty in understanding what the speaker talks about. It is because American and British

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have their own differences in pronunciation and also vocabularies, even though both accents are within English language. Students stated that the listener's understanding is also determined by the speaker's accent (Goh, 1999). Moreover, pronunciation, vocabulary, the speed of the speaker, accent, anxiety, inability to focus, and also the quality of the audio were the frequent problems EFL learners (Hamouda, 2013). Thus, accent is a prevalent issue among EFL learners since decades ago. EFL learners have been exposed to an listening comprehension audio that is spoken by native speaker since they were in Elementary school. However, acquiring good listening skill is still a challenge. Saharkhiz Arabani et al., (2019) explored the effect of native-speaker and non-native-speaker accent listening skill materials toward Iranian EFL learners and they stated L2 learners found non-native speaker accent improved their listening comprehension compared to the native-speaker accent. Furthermore, due to the prevalent issue with accent, a new case in which it discusses the inclusion of a variety of accents has been brought up recently. Thus, researches in the topic of accent, especially in listening comprehension are still needed to be examined

Accent is unique way in pronouncing words in a language. There are a great number of accents in the world and they are affected by the intonation of the mother tongue in the country. However, in Indonesia, there are two most popular accents which are American and British accent. But, American accent is the accent that is widely adopted in the education system. Accent is believed to have connection with how people process their information. When somebody understands the language and also the accent, there is also a high chance that the person will also discern the information. On the contrary, when the language is mixed with unfamiliar accent, a possibility of miscommunication or the complete loss of meaning might occur. In Indonesia, there are 4 main English skills that are being studied which are speaking, listening, reading and writing. In learning listening skill, most of the time students practice by listening some conversation in English and find out the answer. Most of the time, the listening practices and also the tests are spoken in American accent by the speakers within the audio. It is because TOEFL or Test of English as a Foreign Language is the most famous proficiency test in Indonesia, especially when students want to pursue higher education or scholarship in Western region. In accordance to Kang, Thomson and Moran in 2018 as cited in

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Solihah et al., (2021) when learners understand the accent of the speaker of the English test, the listening achievement score would also be higher compared to those who are not familiar with the accent of the speaker's accent.

Postgraduate students are students who have finished their bachelor's degree and currently pursuing higher education. These students are usually expected to have high comprehension in English language, including in listening skill, especially for those who take majors that use English language frequently. Most of the the time, it is measured by an official test called TOEFL test or Test of English as a Foreign Language. This test measures learners' comprehension in grammar, reading and also listening. However, learners could also measure their listening comprehension by practicing through an English audio that could be found online. Studies related to the influence of accent in listening comprehension has been analyzed by researchers throughout the world. For instance, among those researches, there is a journal article entitled "The Effects of Accent on English Listening Comprehension Freshman Students Studying Business English at Phetchabun Rajabhat University" (Phomprasert & Grace, 2020).

This research explored freshman's listening comprehension in English and the effect of the accent toward their comprehension. The participants of this research were 33 freshman students that studied English Business major at Phetchabun Rajabhat University. The research was also carried out with questionnaire as the instrument and 6 tests of listening comprehension were taken from [www.englishlistening.com](http://www.englishlistening.com), [www.learnenglishteens.com](http://www.learnenglishteens.com), [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org). These websites followed Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The data was collected by completing the six tests weekly with 3 accents, British, Australian and American. Furthermore, the audio was also repeated once. For the data analysis, the researchers separate the questionnaire into some groups in hope to find proof of accent for listening comprehension. After that, the data were inputted into Microsoft Excel to find the percentage. The result revealed that British accent was the most understood accent with 44%. Meanwhile Australian accent was 40% and American accent was 31% percent. Moreover, the learners who had prior teaching by foreigner before university achieved 8%

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higher score compared to the learners who had never been taught by foreigner. The benefit of this research, teachers could also know the influence of accent in English listening comprehension toward learners. Furthermore, there is also a research that is published in the form of journal article is entitled “The Effect of Accent on Listening Comprehension: Chinese L2 Learners’ Perceptions and Attitudes” (Zhiying, 2018). This research investigated Chinese learners using 3 different accents, American, British and Indian-English. These learners were also divided based on their English proficiency.

This study employed quantitative and qualitative method. It also included questionnaire to see the learners’ perception and attitudes toward various accents. Furthermore, out of 35 participants, 28 participants were the chosen ones to be analyzed because the rest of the participants scored too low to be compared. 11 participants were pursuing a Master’s degree in University of Melbourne while the rest of the learners pursued a Master’s degree at Chinese universities and they had never listened to Australian accent. All the learners were accustomed with British and American accent. Few accustomed with Australian accent but none of them were accustomed with Indian-English accent. IELTS test was used to discern the learners listening comprehension. Furthermore, for the qualitative method, the study used survey designed by Scales, Wennerstrom, Richard and Wu. The survey was done after the learners completed the their listening tests. The survey was consisted of multiple-choice choice and short-answer questions. The learners were also asked to rate their perception of accent by scale that indicated 1 as disagree and 4 as agree. As for the quantitative method, the researchers used SPSS version 3 for the statistical analysis. T test was also used to find the difference between the accents. The result revealed that Indian-English accent influenced the learners’ perception and low proficiency learners perceived British accent to be incomprehensible while high proficiency learners perceived British accent to be comprehensible. Furthermore, all of the participants stated that they prefer British accent. Moreover, all of learners achieved higher score on tests with British accent rather than Australian accent. But, those who lived in Australia had better attitude toward Australian accent compared to those who lived in China.

In this research, the researcher aims to investigate postgraduate students of English

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Education and Linguistics' perception toward accent in listening comprehension of English language. The novelty of this research is within the participants of the research who are Indonesian postgraduate students of English Education and Linguistics who are pursuing their Master's degree in Indonesia and India. On top of that, the research on postgraduate students' perception toward accent in English listening comprehension is scarcely, especially Indonesian Postgraduate students. Thus, the research question for this current research are as followed:

1. What accent does Indonesian postgraduate students most familiar with?
2. What is the perception of Indonesian postgraduate students toward accent in listening comprehension?
3. Does accent affect Indonesian postgraduate students test in listening comprehension?

## **METHOD**

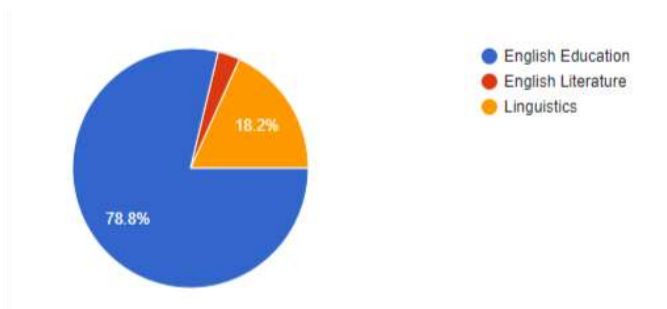
### ***Design***

This current research employed online survey study with quantitative and qualitative data because some of the acquired data were in the form of numerical (percentages) and words that are written by the participants. It traced the model of prior survey study (Turmudi & Ratini, 2022). Hence, the survey aimed to gain types of accents, perception and impact of accent toward listening comprehension.

### ***Participant***

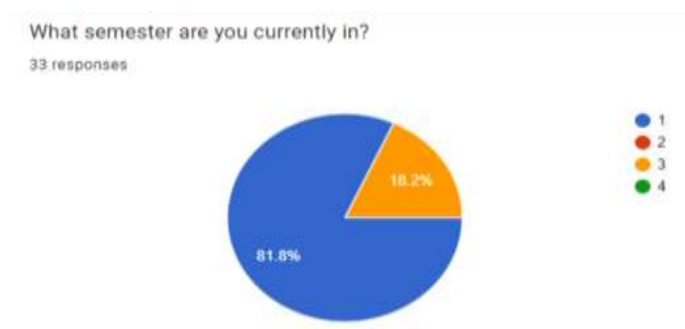
This research also consisted of 33 participants of postgraduate students who are pursuing a master's degree at various universities in Indonesia and India. The criteria in selecting the participants is that they have to be students in a postgraduate program that is related to either English education or English Literature, or Linguistics.

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*Figure 1 – The list of the major of the participants*

All participants were openly informed that their identities were confidential throughout the research. They were also allowed to use alias names or obscured names to secure their identity. Furthermore, 33 participants were all Indonesian postgraduate students with 26 (78%) students are from English Education major, 6 (18,2%) students are from Linguistics major. and 1 (3%) student from English Literature major. All participants were majoring in Master’s degree of English Education.



*Figure 2 – The semester of the participants*

The figure revealed that 81.8% of the participants or 27 participants were in their first semester; these participants were majoring in either English Education or English Literature. However, the participants who were majoring in Linguistics that was represented by the chart as 18.2% or 6 participants in total were in their third semester.

***Instrument***

The open-ended questionnaire was shared online; thus, it was easier for the participants to get involved in the research based on their own schedule anywhere they wanted since some of the Indonesian participants lived in overseas or in different region of time in Indonesia. The

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questionnaires are originally formulated by the writer. The writer formulated the questions to be as suitable as possible to answer the research questions of this research. This questionnaire consisted of 10 questions which had multiple-choices, checkboxes and paragraphs.

***Data collecting technique***

This research was conducted through open-ended questionnaire in which the questions were provided in the section for data and source of data. It is because in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic, it was beneficial to conduct the research through online. In this research, the writer employed mixed qualitative and quantitative data. The mixed data employed because some of the questions required percentage or numerical data and also paragraphs. For the quantitative data, the writer collected the data through the accumulated percentage of the answer based on the participants' responses. This percentage was automatically analyzed by the Google form system. On the other hand, for the qualitative data was specifically for the question that requires the perception of the postgraduate students in form of paragraph. Furthermore, the writer only chose the majority of the participants' responses. In addition, the selected responses to be included as samples were deemed to be well-structured responses with fair punctuation. Thus, the writer deemed it was the most suitable option to employ mixed data in this research. Furthermore, the data were collected through a series of sequences. First of all, after the questionnaire was distributed to the participants, the researcher put a time limit on the submission of the questionnaire. The time limit was 4 days. Secondly, on the fifth day, the researcher collected all the data in the questionnaire. In the last step, the researcher divided all the acquired data in Microsoft Excel based on the questions in the questionnaire. Thus, it was easier to interpret the data for the analysis technique.

***Data analysis technique***

The analysis techniques that were taken by the researcher after collecting the data were reading the participants' responses. After that, the researcher divided the percentage of each provided questions based on the questionnaire to scrutinize and also reveal the students' perception. These percentages were automatically originated from the online questionnaire. Furthermore, this online questionnaire was open-ended, thus, the researcher also provided

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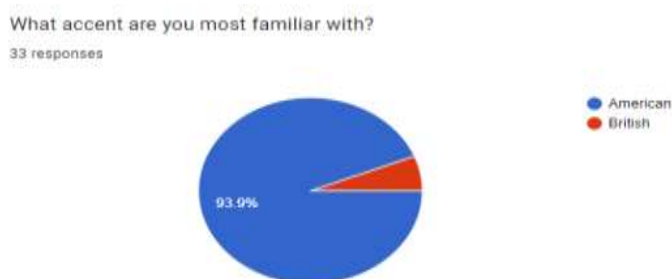
some of samples of the participants' responses to present the perception of EFL postgraduate learners regarding their listening comprehension. Thus, this current research investigated the perception of the postgraduate learners and also the difficulties they faced in listening comprehension within English language. The citation system employs offline automatic citation using Mendeley desktop with APA 7<sup>th</sup> style format (Turmudi, 2020).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### ***Accent of the Indonesian postgraduate students most familiar with***

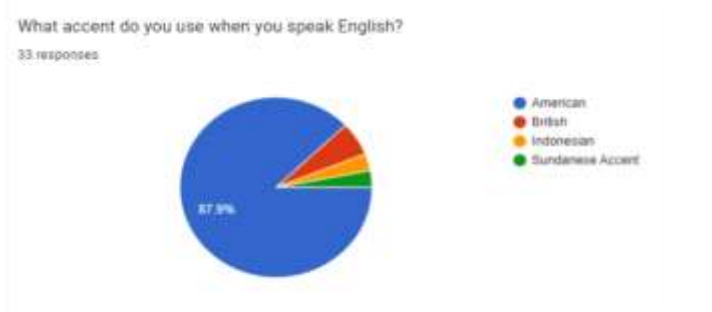
In this section, the researcher revealed the findings of the study based on the responses of the participants. All of the findings were correlated to the research questions. The participants' most familiar English accent are described below (n=33).



*Figure 3 – Postgraduate students' accent most familiar with*

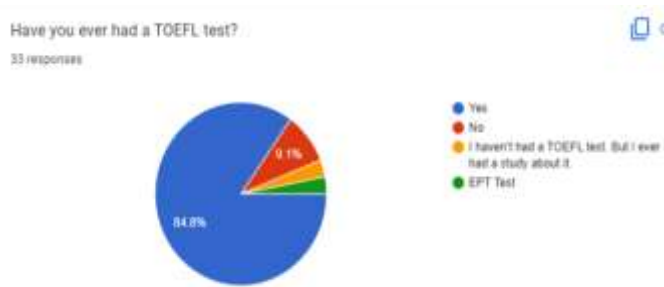
Based on the chart of the questionnaire above, 93.9% (N=31) participants were most familiar with American accent rather than British accent. Only 6.1% (N=2) participants that were most familiar with British accent rather than American accent. This supports the researcher's statement that Indonesian education system tends to lean on American accent during the teaching and learning process for English subject. Thus, it makes the learners to be mostly familiar with American accent rather than British accent. Indonesian schools rarely teach English with British accent or impart knowledge regarding the vocabularies of English-British which has distinct vocabularies when they are compared to English-American vocabularies. The participants' accents are described in the following chart (n=33).

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*Figure 4 – Participants’ accent in daily activity*

The chart above revealed that 87.9% (N=29) participants used American accent when they spoke in English. However, 6.1% (N=2) participants used British accent when they spoke in English because it was the accent he/she most familiar with. On the other hand, 3% or 1 participant stated that he/she used Sundanese accent when they spoke in English and 3% or 1 participant stated that he/she used Indonesian accent. Indonesian accent usually collaborates English language and also Indonesian language. For instance, “I’ll just eat friend noodle *lah* for my lunch this afternoon.” The word “lah” is an Indonesian language that has the function to emphasize the speaker’s statement. Indonesia is also a diverse country that has many local languages, including Sundanese. It is very possible that Sundanese people have Sundanese-English accent when they speak because their accent is also influenced by their culture.



*Figure 5 – TOEFL Test*

The questionnaire was open-ended. It means that the participants had the opportunity to write down their perception outside of what the possible answers the researcher offered in the question. The chart above revealed that 84.8% (N=28) participants have taken TOEFL.

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However, 9.1% (N=3) participants stated that they have not taken TOEFL test. On the other hand, 3% or 1 participant stated that while they have not taken an official TOEFL test, they have learnt about it, presumably in school or individual learning and 3% or 1 participant stated that they have only taken EPT (English Proficiency Test). EPT was similar to TOEFL. Most Indonesians deem that EPT is the ‘preparation test’ for TOEFL because of its similarity; but lack of official use, especially for higher educational purpose.

***The participants’ TOEFL score***

This part of the question, the researcher set the question as short answer. It was because participants might have different scores for their TOEFL. It revealed that the highest TOEFL score was 601 which was only 1 participant that could achieve it. Most of the participants got 450 until 580 for their TOEFL. However, 2 participants managed to get 550 for their TOEFL, 2 participants achieved 530, 2 participants got 500 for TOEFL and 2 participants got 480 in their TOEFL. Most of the participants did not remember the score, have not taken the score and got the score other than 480, 500, 530, and 550. Universities in Indonesian tend to ask for TOEFL score for students who aspire to major in a Master’s degree program, especially a major that is focused on English domain. However, there are also numerous universities that do not require TOEFL score; but only, an English test from the university’s program that the students choose to major into.

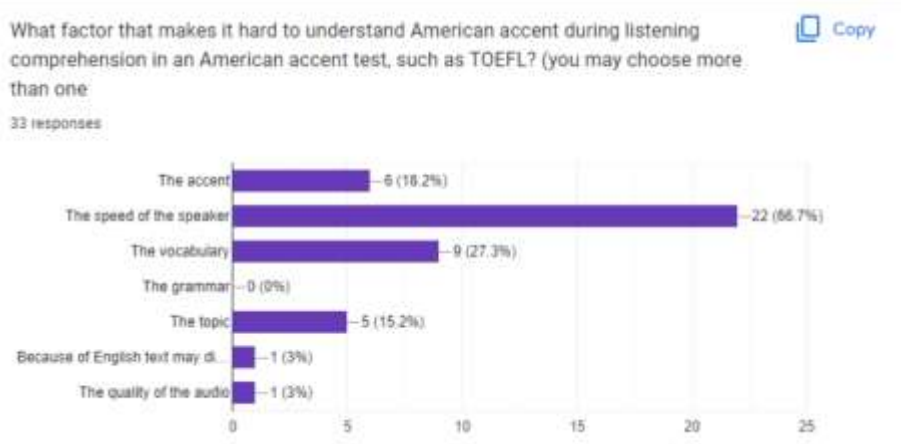


*Figure 6 Participants’ listening comprehension*

The chart of the question above revealed that 63.6% (N=21) participants stated that sometimes they found difficulty in understanding American accent in TOEFL or similar test

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that has listening comprehension with American accent, even though they had learnt English with American accent since elementary level. However, 18.2% (N=6) participants stated that they found it easy for them to understand American accent within TOEFL or similar test that has listening comprehension and 18.2% (N=6) participants found it hard to discern American accent during listening comprehension in an English test such as TOEFL or similar English test. Causes of the difficulties that participants face in listening comprehension are described in the following graphs.



*Figure 8 – Difficulties in listening comprehension*

Based on the result of the question, it revealed that 66.7% (N=22) participants had a hard time in following the pace of the speaker while listening to the speaker. This usually causes by the pace of the speaker that is too fast to be comprehended by the learners since the learners studied the language as foreign language. Furthermore, 27.3% (N=9) participants found difficulty in terms of vocabulary which means that these participants lack of the knowledge in certain vocabularies; thus, they did not know the meaning which in turn hinder them to understand the conversation or the spoken topic in the audio. 18.2% (N=6) participants stated that the American accent with the audio was hard to be discerned; thus, they could not catch the meaning of the spoken utterance. 15.2% (N=5) stated that they did not understand the topic that was talked about in the audio; thus, it made the process of doing the test to be hard. There was also 3% or 1 participant stated that he/she did not understand the terminologies that were used in the audio which also has correlation to vocabularies; but,

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terminologies tend to be linked with a specific of field of study such as in biology there will be terminologies of amoeba, photosynthesis, plankton and other terminologies. Furthermore, 3% or 1 participant stated he/she had a problem in understanding the listening comprehension because of the quality of the audio. Sometimes an audio could be difficult to be understood when the sounds of the speaker's utterance were jumbled together. It could be seen from the revelation of the research that the utmost participants' problems were the speed of the speaker, vocabulary and accent.

***The importance of accent in acquiring listening comprehension***

33 participants who joined the research willingly stated that accent had a significance role in acquiring the understanding for listening comprehension in TOEFL or similar English test that requires listening comprehension which used American accent. Some the participants stated their reasons as followed:

*“Yes, because for some people it is hard to comprehend what people said when they use unfamiliar accent. it may be confusing and it may cause a misunderstanding in communication” (Sample 1)*

*“Yes, because i am familiar with American accent and when i hear british it's a little bit hard for to understand since they pronounce differently in words.” (Sample 2)*

*“Yes, because in listening comprehension, we listen to the native speakers in which they have their own accent, so we need to -at least- be familiar with their accents (mainly AE and BE) in order to have comprehensive understanding and avoid mishearing toward what they are saying.”  
(Sample 3)*

In accordance to the participants' responses regarding the importance of accent as sampled by the samples above, it could be seen from the three samples of the participants that accent is important to be understood. It is because accent also has correlation with how the speaker's pronunciation; thus, when the learners understand the accent, it will also enable the learners to discern the words that are uttered by the speaker in the audio. Moreover, the

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second sample also supports the researcher statement regarding the Indonesian education system that usually adopts American-English accent. Thus, when the learners are faced with a test that has listening skill that uses British-English accent, they encounter obstacles in understanding some of the words because American and British accents are different when it comes to pronunciation and also some vocabularies that have the same meaning. For instance, American use 'flashlight' as the tool to brighten up dark spaces and British use 'torch' to brighten up dark spaces. The words 'flashlight' and 'torch' have the same meaning; but, they have different words. Moreover, in American-English, the word 'torch' has its own meaning that is different than the British-English 'torch'. Thus, it would be confusing and misleading for learners, if they have low comprehension in English accent when they listen to an audio that requires sufficient comprehension in listening skill. The higher the listening comprehension of the learners, the better the score will be for them.

***Discussion***

Based on the findings, figure 1 revealed that the majority of the participants were from a Master's degree of English Education program and it made up into 78.8% while the rest of the percentage was made from English Literature and Linguistics programs. Furthermore, figure 2 unveiled that 81.8% of the participants were in their first semester while the rest of them were in the third semester and in accordance to figure 3, 93.9% of the EFL learners stated that throughout their education American accent was mostly used by their teachers during the teaching and learning process since elementary level while only 6.1% of EFL learners that stated they were mostly familiar with British accent. It is also correlated with figure 4 in which 87.9% of the participants stated that they used American accent when they spoke in English while 6.1% used British accent which is also a rare accent to be used in Indonesia as EFL learners. Moreover, previous studies also stated that American accent is the most EFL learners most familiar compared to British accent in which they are not familiar at all. (Adi et al., 2022; Musdalifah, 2022). Those researchers are also correlated with the finding in this research in accordance to the result of figure 4 in which most of the participants were mostly familiar with American accent.

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According to figure 5, 84.8% of the participants have taken a TOEFL test to measure their English language competence. However, 9.1% of the participants stated that they have never taken a TOEFL test. These participants were all postgraduate students who pursue a degree in the field of English Education or Literature or Linguistics. However, there were still some participants that have not measured their knowledge. This could be inferred that some institutions did not impose their students to test English language competence. Furthermore, based on figure 6, which was a question that could only be answered with short answers, it was revealed that only 1 participant managed to score 601 in their TOEFL test. Meanwhile, most of the participants scores range from 450 – 580. This revelation of the study also revealed that postgraduate students still needed to learn more about TOEFL test, including the listening comprehension. However, Ockey et al., (2016) believed that choosing an audio for listening comprehension test in TOEFL test should also take the consideration of paying more attention to the strength of accent when listening comprehension assessment occurred. Many universities in Indonesia require their students to take TOEFL test before being accepted in their universities, especially for postgraduate students. However, some universities do not ask for TOEFL test score and only conduct a general English competence test from the universities to measure their competency.

Based on figure 7, 63.6% of the participants sometimes found difficulty in understanding listening comprehension while 18.2% stated they found it easy to understand American accent and 18.2% of the participants found American accent to be difficult to be discerned. Moreover, figure 8 revealed that the participants also stated that the significance factors that cause them to have a hard time in understanding listening comprehension in an English test were the speed of the speaker (66.7%), vocabulary (27.3%), the accent of the speaker (18.2%), and the topic of the conversation (15.2%). It is also correlated with Ramadhianti & Somba (2021) their research revealed that 64.7% students in the research found it difficult to understand the subject matter in the audio and 98.8% students stated that the speaker talked too fast and they could not catch up with the pace of the speaker whilst listening to the audio to comprehend its meaning. On top of that, Kurtuldu & Ozkan's (2022) participants in their research stated that topic was also their issue in being unable to

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understand the speaker within the audio in listening comprehension. Moreover, in some of learners' difficulties in listening comprehension are accent, the lack of vocabulary, the speed of the speaker and also the quality of the audio which is also the same problems that the participants stated as their obstacles in listening comprehension (Bingol et al., 2014). Furthermore, Izzah & Keeya's research (2019) also stated that the accent of the speaker affected the listeners, especially if they did not recognize it. On top of that, the speed of the speaker's talk, unfamiliar words, and the quality of the audio were also some of the obstacles that EFL learners' face. Dwi Lestari, (2020) investigated the topic of how to enhance learners' listening comprehension. She stated that the use of shadowing technique in listening skill improved the learners' comprehension significantly as it affect both the mental and cognitive states of the learners as they grew to be more confident and insightful. Furthermore, Park, (2022) argued that based on his research, non-verbal coping strategy in the form of self-discipline was the preferable option when L2 speakers did not understand the L1 accent. The self-discipline was through enriching one self's knowledge in adapting themselves to various accents, communicating with L1 speakers, learn more vocabularies and how to pronounce them in various accents.

In accordance to figure 9 all of the participants who were postgraduate students perceived that accent had a pivotal role in listening proficiency. They stated that accent had correlation with vocabularies and pronunciation; thus, when they were familiar with the accent, they would understand the utterance of the speaker in the audio which in turn made the test easier to be understood. This perception of the participants was in line with some previous studies. (Maryani et al., 2021; Wahab & Tanasy, 2022) believed that vocabulary and grammar also caused significant impacts in listening comprehension as these masteries are also parts of accent. Furthermore, (Bazhouni, 2020; Fitria et al., 2022) agreed that unfamiliar accent could be the major cause of learners' low listening comprehension due to the fact that accent indeed affected the learners' understanding. Furthermore, Fadhly et al., (2021); Jidong et al., (2021) also unveiled that the participants within that conducted study stated that different English accent in listening comprehension did have an immense influence toward EFL learners understanding in comprehending the speaker within the audio. On the other

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hand, Irfan et al., (2020) perceived that anxiety and self-confidence were some of the major obstacles in listening comprehension, especially in real-life context in which the L2 felt discomfort, even panic, when they had to listen to or communicate in a foreign language. Hence, understanding accent in a listening comprehension is highly important. It is because accent is also correlated with the speed of the speaker and also the vocabularies that are mentioned in the audio. Thus, when the test-takers understand what the speaker talks about, there is also a high chance that the test-takers will get high score in the test.

In accordance to the research questions of this research, postgraduate students still face obstacles in listening comprehension and they agreed that accent has a significant role in their listening comprehension. Despite having learnt English since Elementary school and pursues a high education, in this case Master's degree, these EFL learners still find listening comprehension in a test, especially TOEFL test, to be hard to be discerned. Thus, self-enrichment and also the exposure of varieties in accents in formal education would be the best solutions to overcome this issue.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### ***Conclusion***

In conclusion, based on this research, accent was the third most obstacles that Indonesian EFL postgraduate students faced in listening comprehension, preceded by the speed of the speaker and also the lack of the students' lack of vocabulary. However, the Indonesian EFL postgraduate students who majored in English Education, English Literature and Linguistics at various universities in Indonesia and India stated that they were mostly familiar with American accent during their study. Thus, the researcher concluded that it would be difficult for these learners to understand British accent or any other accent during listening English comprehension. Furthermore, the research regarding accent in listening comprehension toward doctoral students or Ph.D candidate students is scarcely. Thus, the researcher of this study suggests it could be divulged further in future research, especially because Ph.D candidates usually perceive as one of the prestigious educational positions in Indonesia.

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#### ***Limitation***

This research also has its limitation to be explored further by future researchers in the study of accent toward various listening comprehension such as American, British, Australian and Indian-English. The future researchers could also conduct observation by subjecting the participants into listening various accent in listening comprehension to be able to further explore EFL learners' proficiency in listening comprehension with various English accents.

#### ***Implication***

Analyzing accent in modern era is still a prevalent issue. It is due to the importance of listening skill and diversity. English language has numerous accents. However, the accents that frequently used in an official test are American, British and Australian. Thus, to expand the current research, future researches could conduct similar research through observation or classroom action research to explore further this topic and create more contribution to the research of listening comprehension in respect to accents.

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