



COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING LISTENING IN AN INDONESIAN ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This qualitative case study explores communication strategies used by three English lecturers in teaching listening at Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Findings reveal four key strategies: scaffolding, interactive questioning, multimodal communication, and affective support, all adapted to students' proficiency and the pesantren context. The study contributes empirically by documenting lecturer communication practices in Islamic higher education, an underexplored setting. Practically, it implies that listening instruction requires intentional communicative mediation, and teacher training should prioritize questioning techniques, scaffolding, and emotional support to enhance EFL listening pedagogy.

Keywords: Communication Strategies; Listening Instruction; EFL Learning; Pesantren-Based University

INTRODUCTION

Listening is a fundamental component of language learning because it provides learners with essential linguistic input for developing communicative competence. Among the four English language skills, listening is frequently considered one of the most complex skills because learners must process spoken language immediately while dealing with various challenges, including unfamiliar accents, reduced speech forms, limited vocabulary knowledge, and rapid delivery. In Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, listening instruction continues to require innovative pedagogical approaches because many students have limited exposure to authentic English communication outside classrooms.

In university-level English programs, lecturers have a central role in designing meaningful listening experiences. Effective listening instruction does not merely involve providing audio materials and comprehension questions; rather, it requires lecturers to

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communicate effectively, provide appropriate guidance, negotiate meaning, and create supportive classroom interactions. Lecturer communication strategies become particularly important because students' understanding of listening materials is influenced not only by the quality of input but also by how lecturers explain, clarify, motivate, and respond to students' difficulties.

Communication strategies in language classrooms refer to deliberate techniques used by teachers to facilitate understanding and maintain interaction. These strategies may include simplifying explanations, repeating important information, using examples, employing gestures, asking guiding questions, and switching between languages when necessary. In listening classrooms, these strategies function as scaffolding mechanisms that help learners move from dependence on teacher support toward independent comprehension.

Recent studies have emphasized the importance of lecturer strategies in listening instruction. Putri, Eriyanti, and Asih (2024), for example, investigated lecturers' perceptions of metacognitive strategies in teaching listening and found that lecturers considered pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities essential for developing students' awareness of their listening processes. Their study highlighted that lecturers' instructional communication influences how students regulate their comprehension strategies.

Similarly, Fachriza et al. (2025) examined listening instruction in a pesantren-based university context and reported that lecturers combined top-down and bottom-up approaches through structured classroom stages. The study demonstrated that activating students' background knowledge, providing contextual explanations, and conducting interactive follow-up activities supported listening comprehension. However, the study mainly focused on listening approaches rather than the interpersonal communication strategies used by lecturers during classroom interaction.

Herlina et al. (2021) explored listening strategies, activities, and resources used by English education lecturers. Their findings revealed that lecturers employed various classroom activities, such as question-answer sessions, storytelling, and authentic listening materials, while encouraging students to develop listening strategies. Nevertheless, less attention was given to how lecturers communicate with students when implementing these activities.

Beyond listening-specific research, studies on lecturer communication have shown that interpersonal communication significantly affects students' engagement. Ariyani et al. (2024)

found that lecturers' verbal communication, classroom interaction, and non-verbal behaviors contributed to students' confidence, motivation, and participation in EFL classrooms. The study emphasized the importance of lecturer-student relationships in supporting successful language learning.

Another relevant study by Nurhidayat, Ningsi, and Irawati (2023) examined communication strategies used by English lecturers in classroom interaction. The researchers identified achievement strategies, stalling strategies, and interactional strategies as important tools for maintaining communication. They also found that lecturers used students' first language strategically when learners experienced difficulties understanding English explanations. Although the study provided insights into classroom communication, it focused on speaking instruction rather than listening courses.

Furthermore, research on EFL instructors' beliefs about listening instruction has highlighted the importance of integrating authentic materials, feedback, technology, and interactive activities. Shago et al. (2024) reported that university instructors viewed listening as closely connected with speaking development and emphasized the importance of contextualized input and learner engagement.

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights into listening strategies and teacher practices, several gaps remain that justify the present study. First, the majority of existing research has centered on teaching techniques, learning strategies, or instructional models rather than placing lecturers' communication strategies as the central phenomenon of investigation. While studies such as those by Putri et al. (2024) and Herlina et al. (2021) examined listening activities and metacognitive approaches, they did not systematically analyze how lecturers' moment-to-moment communication choices including scaffolding, questioning, and affective support function as pedagogical tools in listening classrooms.

Second, and more critically, research exploring listening instruction within Islamic higher education, particularly pesantren-based universities, remains extremely limited. Fachriza et al. (2025) conducted one of the few studies in this context, yet their focus was on top-down and bottom-up listening approaches rather than on lecturers' interpersonal communication strategies. This leaves a significant gap in understanding how pesantren educational values, such as close mentor-mentee relationships, communal learning, and respect-based interaction, shape the way lecturers communicate during listening instruction. No previous study has specifically investigated the communication strategies of EFL lecturers in a pesantren-based university context with a primary focus on listening courses.

Third, although Nurhidayat, Ningsi, and Irawati (2023) examined communication strategies in EFL classrooms, their study was situated in speaking instruction, leaving the distinct challenges of listening classrooms where students cannot control input speed and must process meaning in real time largely unaddressed. Listening instruction demands unique communication strategies because lecturers must help students cope with rapid speech, unfamiliar accents, and limited contextual cues, which differ substantially from the communication needs in speaking or reading instruction.

This study addresses these gaps by offering three novel contributions. First, it positions lecturers' communication strategies as the primary analytical focus, providing a detailed empirical account of how scaffolding, questioning, multimodal support, and affective communication are operationalized in listening instruction. Second, it is among the first studies to investigate communication strategies specifically within a pesantren-based higher education context, thereby illuminating how institutional culture and Islamic educational values influence lecturer-student interaction in listening classrooms. Third, it responds to the call for more context-sensitive EFL research by examining a setting where academic learning intersects with religious traditions, communal values, and culturally specific patterns of teacher authority and care.

Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum represents an important context for investigating lecturer communication strategies because it combines university education with pesantren traditions. In this environment, lecturers are not only expected to deliver academic knowledge but also to establish meaningful relationships with students through culturally appropriate communication practices. Understanding how lecturers communicate during listening instruction may provide insights into effective EFL teaching practices in similar educational settings, while also contributing to the broader literature on teacher communication in culturally grounded language classrooms.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the communication strategies employed by English lecturers in teaching listening skills at Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum. Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. What communication strategies do lecturers employ when teaching listening skills at Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum?
2. How do lecturers implement these communication strategies to facilitate students' listening comprehension?

3. How does the pesantren-based educational context influence lecturers' communication practices in listening instruction?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore lecturers' communication strategies in teaching listening skills at Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to understand how lecturers construct classroom communication, respond to students' listening difficulties, and facilitate meaningful learning interactions rather than measure the effectiveness of specific instructional techniques statistically. The study was guided by an interpretive perspective, focusing on lecturers' experiences, classroom practices, and the meanings they attached to their communication strategies.

A qualitative case study approach was adopted because the research was conducted within a specific institutional context, namely an Islamic higher education institution with a pesantren-based educational background. This context provides particular cultural and pedagogical characteristics that may influence English language teaching practices, including lecturer–student communication patterns in listening instruction. The case study design enabled an in-depth, contextualized examination of communication practices as they naturally occurred in the classroom setting (Yin, 2018).

The study was conducted at Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum, an Islamic higher education institution located in East Java, Indonesia. The university integrates higher education values with pesantren traditions, where interaction between lecturers and students is influenced by academic, cultural, and religious contexts. The English Education Department offers Listening courses across multiple semesters, with class sizes ranging from 20 to 35 students per session.

The participants consisted of three English lecturers who taught Listening courses in the English Education Department. The participants were selected through purposive sampling based on several criteria: (1) actively teaching listening courses during the research period, (2) having at least three years of experience in teaching English at the university level, and (3) being willing to participate in interviews and classroom observations. Purposive sampling was chosen to ensure that participants possessed sufficient teaching experience and relevant knowledge to provide rich and meaningful data regarding their communication practices (Patton, 2015).

The selection process began by identifying all lecturers teaching Listening courses during the 2024/2025 academic year. Four lecturers met the initial eligibility criteria, and all were invited to participate. Three lecturers agreed to participate, while one declined due to scheduling constraints. The final sample of three participants was considered sufficient for a qualitative case study, as it allowed for in-depth exploration while maintaining manageable data volume for thick description (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The three participants were coded as Lecturer A, Lecturer B, and Lecturer C to maintain confidentiality. Their demographic profiles are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant Demographic Information

Participant Code	Gender	Teaching Experience (Years)	Educational Background	Listening Course Level Taught
Lecturer A	Female	7	Master's in ELT	Intermediate Listening
Lecturer B	Male	12	Master's in TESOL	Basic Listening
Lecturer C	Female	5	Master's in Applied Linguistics	Advanced Listening

Their teaching experiences provided diverse perspectives regarding the implementation of communication strategies in listening instruction across different proficiency levels. Data were collected through three complementary techniques: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Data collection was conducted over a period of eight weeks during the 2024/2025 academic semester.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the three lecturers to explore their perspectives regarding communication strategies used in listening classes. The interview protocol was developed based on a review of relevant literature on teacher communication strategies and listening pedagogy (Putri, Eriyanti, & Asih, 2024; Nurhidayat, Ningsi, & Irawati, 2023). The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions organized into four main categories: (1) lecturers' understanding of communication strategies in listening instruction; (2) specific communication techniques employed before, during, and after listening activities; (3) strategies for addressing students' comprehension difficulties; and (4) adaptation of communication approaches based on students' needs and the pesantren context. The interview protocol was piloted with one lecturer who was not part of the study sample to assess clarity and relevance, and minor revisions were made to the wording of several questions based on the pilot feedback.

Each interview lasted approximately 40–60 minutes and was conducted in Indonesian to allow participants to express their experiences more naturally. All interviews were audio-

recorded with participants' prior consent. The interviews were subsequently transcribed verbatim in Indonesian and then translated into English for analysis. To ensure accuracy, the translated transcripts were reviewed by an independent bilingual researcher who verified the equivalence of meaning between the Indonesian and English versions.

Classroom observations were conducted during listening lessons to examine actual communication practices. Each lecturer was observed in three separate classroom sessions, resulting in a total of nine observations. Each observation session lasted for the full duration of the listening class (approximately 90 minutes). Observations were scheduled on different days to capture typical teaching practices across various topics and activities.

The observations focused on lecturers' verbal strategies (such as explanation, questioning, repetition, clarification, and scaffolding), non-verbal strategies (such as gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact), and interaction patterns between lecturers and students. A structured observation protocol was developed to guide the observation process, with specific categories for recording both verbal and non-verbal communication behaviors. Field notes were taken systematically to document classroom activities, communication exchanges, and students' responses during the learning process. To minimize observer bias, the researcher adopted a non-participant observer role and positioned themselves at the back of the classroom to avoid interfering with natural classroom interaction.

Relevant teaching documents were analyzed to support and triangulate the interview and observation data. These documents included listening lesson plans (Rencana Pembelajaran Semester/RPS), teaching materials (handouts, worksheets, and presentation slides), and classroom activities designed by the lecturers. Document analysis helped identify how communication strategies were reflected in lecturers' instructional planning. A document analysis checklist was used to systematically extract information related to communication strategies embedded in the teaching documents.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the procedures proposed by Braun and Clarke (2021). The analysis involved six stages: (1) familiarizing with the data through repeated reading of interview transcripts and observation notes; (2) generating initial codes related to lecturers' communication strategies; (3) searching for potential themes; (4) reviewing and refining themes; (5) defining and naming emerging themes; and (6) producing the final interpretation of findings.

The coding process was conducted manually using a color-coding system to identify recurring patterns related to lecturers' communication practices in listening instruction. Initial

codes were generated inductively from the data, such as "pre-listening explanation," "repetition of key phrases," "encouraging student responses," and "using gestures." These codes were then grouped into broader themes, such as scaffolding communication, interactive questioning, meaning negotiation, affective support, and contextual adaptation. To enhance the reliability of coding, two researchers independently coded 30% of the data and compared their coding results, achieving an inter-coder agreement rate of 85%. Disagreements were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied four criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility was strengthened through several strategies. First, data triangulation was employed by comparing information obtained from interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis to cross-validate findings. Second, method triangulation was applied by using multiple data collection techniques to capture different dimensions of lecturers' communication practices. Third, member checking was conducted by sharing the preliminary interpretations and summary findings with the three participants via email approximately two weeks after the initial data analysis. Participants were asked to confirm whether the findings accurately represented their experiences and to provide corrections or additional clarifications. All three participants confirmed the accuracy of the interpretations, and two provided minor clarifications regarding specific classroom examples. Fourth, prolonged engagement was maintained through regular interaction with participants over the eight-week data collection period, allowing the researcher to build rapport and gain a deeper understanding of the teaching context. Fifth, peer debriefing sessions were held with two fellow researchers who were not involved in the study to discuss emerging findings and challenge potential biases in interpretation.

Transferability was addressed by providing detailed descriptions (thick description) of the research context, participants, classroom practices, and the pesantren-based educational environment. These detailed descriptions allow readers to evaluate the applicability and relevance of the findings to similar contexts. Specific information provided includes the institutional setting, student characteristics, class sizes, teaching materials used, and cultural values shaping lecturer-student interaction.

Dependability was maintained through systematic documentation of the entire research procedures, including data collection schedules, interview protocols, observation checklists,

coding schemes, and analytical decisions. An audit trail was created to record all methodological choices and their justifications, enabling external reviewers to trace the research process and assess its consistency. Additionally, an external auditor—a senior researcher with expertise in qualitative EFL research—reviewed the audit trail and confirmed that the research process was logical, transparent, and systematically documented.

Confirmability was supported by maintaining reflective notes (reflexivity journal) throughout the research process to document the researcher's assumptions, biases, and potential influences on data interpretation. The researcher acknowledged their position as an insider in the EFL teaching community, which may shape their perspectives on classroom communication practices. By consistently recording reflective thoughts and discussing them with peer debriefers, the researcher minimized bias and ensured that interpretations were grounded in the collected data rather than personal preconceptions. All raw data, including interview transcripts, observation field notes, and documents, have been securely stored and are available for verification purposes.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

The analysis of interview data, classroom observations, and teaching documents revealed several communication strategies employed by lecturers in teaching listening skills at Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum. The findings indicate that lecturers did not perceive listening instruction as merely a process of playing audio materials and testing students' comprehension. Instead, they viewed listening teaching as an interactive communication process in which lecturers actively mediated students' understanding through various verbal, non-verbal, and affective strategies.

Four major themes emerged from the data analysis: (1) scaffolding communication to facilitate listening comprehension, (2) interactive questioning and negotiation of meaning, (3) multimodal communication to support students' understanding, and (4) affective communication for building students' confidence and engagement.

Scaffolding Communication to Facilitate Listening Comprehension

The first major finding shows that lecturers frequently employed scaffolding strategies to assist students in overcoming difficulties in understanding spoken English. The lecturers recognized that listening was one of the most challenging skills for students because it requires the simultaneous processing of pronunciation, vocabulary, speed of speech, and

contextual meaning. Therefore, lecturers adjusted their communication by providing explanations before, during, and after listening activities.

Lecturer A explained that students often experienced anxiety when they encountered unfamiliar vocabulary or fast speech:

“Many students think listening is difficult because they have to understand everything immediately. I usually prepare them first by explaining the topic, introducing important vocabulary, and giving clues before they listen.” (Classroom interview, Lecturer A)

Classroom observations confirmed that the lecturer rarely started listening activities without preparation. Before playing audio materials, the lecturer introduced the topic, discussed key expressions, and activated students’ background knowledge. This pre-listening communication helped students develop expectations about the content and reduced their cognitive burden.

Similarly, Lecturer B reported using repetition and clarification strategies when students failed to understand listening materials:

“When students do not understand the recording, I do not immediately give the answer. I repeat certain parts, explain the pronunciation, and ask them to identify the important information.” (Interview, Lecturer B)

The observation data showed that repetition was not simply used as a mechanical technique but as a form of communicative support. Lecturers modified their explanations by slowing down speech, paraphrasing difficult expressions, and providing additional examples related to students’ daily experiences.

These findings demonstrate that lecturers acted as communication facilitators who adjusted their discourse according to students’ comprehension levels. The strategy reflected a learner-oriented approach in which communication was continuously adapted during the listening process.

Interactive Questioning and Negotiation of Meaning

The second theme identified was the use of questioning strategies to encourage students’ active participation and negotiate meaning. Rather than relying on one-way explanation, lecturers frequently used questions to check comprehension, stimulate interpretation, and encourage students to express their understanding.

Lecturer C stated:

“Listening is not only about getting the correct answer. I want students to explain why they choose an answer and how they understand the message.” (Interview, Lecturer C)

Observation data indicated that lecturers used different types of questions, including comprehension-check questions, prediction questions, and reflective questions. For example, before listening activities, lecturers asked students to predict the possible content of an audio text. After listening, students were encouraged to discuss their interpretations with classmates before receiving confirmation from the lecturer.

The interaction pattern showed that lecturers created opportunities for negotiation of meaning. When students provided incomplete answers, lecturers used follow-up questions rather than immediately correcting them. This approach encouraged students to clarify their thoughts and become more involved in the learning process.

One classroom observation illustrated this practice when a student misunderstood the meaning of a phrase in the listening text. Instead of directly providing the correct interpretation, Lecturer B asked:

“Why do you think the speaker used this expression? What situation can you imagine?”

The question encouraged students to reconsider the context and collaboratively construct meaning.

Multimodal Communication Strategies in Listening Instruction

The third finding highlights the importance of multimodal communication strategies. Lecturers combined verbal explanations with non-verbal cues and technological resources to improve students' understanding of listening materials.

The observations revealed that lecturers frequently used gestures, facial expressions, written keywords, and visual materials when explaining difficult concepts. These strategies were particularly useful when students encountered unfamiliar vocabulary or abstract meanings.

Lecturer A explained:

“Sometimes students cannot understand only from explanation. I use gestures, pictures, or write important words on the board because they need visual support.” (Interview, Lecturer A)

In addition to non-verbal communication, lecturers incorporated digital resources, including audio recordings, videos, and online materials. These resources enabled students to experience different accents, speaking speeds, and authentic communication contexts.

However, the lecturers emphasized that technology was used as a supporting tool rather than a replacement for teacher–student interaction. Lecturer C stated:

“The audio or video is important, but students still need guidance. Without explanation and discussion, they may only listen without really understanding.”

(Interview, Lecturer C)

The findings indicate that effective listening instruction involved the integration of multiple communication modes. Lecturers strategically combined spoken language, visual support, and digital media to accommodate different learning needs.

Affective Communication and the Creation of a Supportive Learning Environment

The fourth theme concerns lecturers’ efforts to create a psychologically supportive classroom atmosphere. The lecturers considered students’ confidence and emotional readiness as important factors influencing listening performance.

Because many students perceived listening as a difficult skill, lecturers attempted to reduce fear of making mistakes through supportive communication. They encouraged students to participate, appreciated their efforts, and avoided excessive correction that might discourage them.

Lecturer B explained:

“Some students are afraid to answer because they think their English is not good enough. I try to make them comfortable first so they are willing to practice.”

(Interview, Lecturer B)

Classroom observations showed that lecturers frequently used positive feedback expressions, such as acknowledging students’ attempts and encouraging further responses. The lecturers also created opportunities for pair discussions before whole-class interaction, allowing students to build confidence gradually.

This affective communication was particularly relevant within the pesantren-based educational environment, where respectful lecturer–student relationships are highly valued. The lecturers maintained academic authority while simultaneously developing interpersonal closeness with students.

Overall, the findings reveal that lecturers at Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum employed communication strategies that extended beyond the delivery of listening materials. Their practices involved instructional scaffolding, interactive questioning, multimodal communication, and affective support. These strategies demonstrate that listening instruction

was constructed as a dynamic communicative process in which lecturers continuously negotiated meaning with students and adapted their communication to students' academic and emotional needs.

The findings also suggest that the pesantren-based context influenced classroom communication patterns, particularly through the emphasis on respectful interaction, personal guidance, and supportive lecturer–student relationships.

Discussion

This study explored lecturers' communication strategies in teaching listening skills at Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum. The findings demonstrate that effective listening instruction involves more than the delivery of audio materials or comprehension exercises. Instead, lecturers construct listening classrooms through continuous communication processes involving scaffolding, interaction, multimodal support, and affective engagement. These findings contribute to existing research on EFL listening pedagogy by highlighting the central role of lecturers' communicative practices, particularly within a pesantren-based higher education context. The discussion below critically analyzes each finding in relation to existing theoretical frameworks and empirical studies, followed by an elaborated consideration of the implications for teacher education programs.

Scaffolding Communication as a Strategy for Supporting Listening Comprehension

The first finding revealed that lecturers employed scaffolding communication to help students overcome difficulties in listening comprehension. The lecturers prepared students before listening activities by introducing vocabulary, activating background knowledge, and providing contextual information. During listening activities, they used repetition, clarification, and simplified explanations to assist students in processing spoken input.

This finding strongly aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, particularly the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which posits that learning occurs when learners receive appropriate support from more knowledgeable others to accomplish tasks they cannot yet perform independently. In this study, lecturers functioned as the "more knowledgeable others" who provided communicative scaffolds that enabled students to comprehend listening materials beyond their current independent capabilities. The pre-listening preparation activities, such as introducing vocabulary and activating background knowledge, represent what Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) termed "contingent support"—assistance that is gradually adjusted to the learner's evolving competence.

This finding also supports previous research emphasizing that listening comprehension requires instructional support because learners often experience difficulties related to speech rate, unfamiliar vocabulary, pronunciation variation, and limited contextual understanding. A recent systematic review by Sharif et al. (2024) identified scaffolding-oriented approaches, including metacognitive preparation, task-based activities, and multimedia-supported instruction, as important strategies for improving EFL learners' listening abilities. Similarly, Putri, Eriyanti, and Asih (2024) found that lecturers considered before-, during-, and after-listening activities essential because these stages help learners become aware of their listening processes and develop greater control over comprehension.

The present study extends these findings by demonstrating that scaffolding is not only an instructional technique but also a communication strategy. In this study, lecturers did not simply provide additional exercises; they modified their classroom discourse according to students' immediate needs. For example, when students failed to understand particular expressions, lecturers adjusted their speech, repeated important segments, and provided alternative explanations. This suggests that lecturer communication functions as a form of pedagogical mediation, a concept derived from Feuerstein's (1980) mediated learning experience theory, that enables students to gradually develop listening competence through structured interaction.

Furthermore, the finding reflects the sociocultural perspective of language learning, where knowledge is constructed through interaction between teachers and learners. In the context of Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum, the close lecturer–student relationship influenced the implementation of scaffolding. The lecturers' willingness to provide personal guidance reflects characteristics commonly found in pesantren-based educational environments, where teaching is often associated with mentorship and continuous interpersonal interaction. This aligns with what Lave and Wenger (1991) describe as "legitimate peripheral participation," where learners gradually move toward fuller participation in a community of practice through guided interaction with more experienced members.

Interactive Questioning and Meaning Negotiation in Listening Instruction

The second major finding indicates that lecturers used questioning strategies to promote active participation and meaning negotiation. Rather than positioning students as passive receivers of listening information, lecturers encouraged students to explain interpretations,

justify answers, and discuss possible meanings. This finding can be critically examined through the lens of Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis, which posits that language acquisition is facilitated through negotiation of meaning when learners encounter communication breakdowns and are pushed to modify their output. In this study, lecturers' follow-up questions—such as "Why do you think the speaker used this expression?"—served as triggers for negotiation of meaning, prompting students to clarify their interpretations and engage in deeper cognitive processing.

This finding is consistent with recent studies emphasizing that listening learning becomes more effective when students are engaged in communicative activities rather than merely completing comprehension tests. Research by Herlina et al. (2021), which investigated listening strategies and resources used by English education lecturers, found that effective lecturers incorporated interactive activities such as question-and-answer sessions, storytelling, and collaborative tasks to develop students' listening abilities. Similarly, studies on task-supported listening instruction suggest that communicative tasks and reflection activities can enhance learners' involvement by encouraging them to actively process and interpret spoken input.

The present study contributes to this discussion by showing how lecturers use questions not merely for assessment purposes but as tools for negotiating meaning. The lecturers in this study frequently used follow-up questions instead of immediately providing corrections. This approach encouraged students to reconsider their interpretations and develop deeper understanding. This practice aligns with what Van Lier (1996) terms "contingent questioning," where teachers' questions are responsive to learners' previous contributions, thereby creating a coherent and meaningful dialogue that supports learning.

This finding also supports the argument that listening comprehension is an interactive process rather than a purely cognitive activity. Drawing on the socio-cognitive framework proposed by Buck (2001), listening comprehension involves both bottom-up processing (decoding sounds and words) and top-down processing (using contextual and world knowledge). Through classroom dialogue, lecturers helped students move from recognizing words to constructing meaning from contextual information. In this sense, communication strategies became essential mechanisms for transforming listening activities into socially constructed learning experiences. This aligns with Rost's (2011) assertion that listening is an active process of constructing meaning through interaction with the speaker, the text, and the listener's own background knowledge.

Multimodal Communication and the Integration of Learning Resources

The third finding highlights lecturers' use of multimodal communication strategies, including gestures, visual support, written keywords, videos, and digital resources. The lecturers recognized that listening comprehension could be enhanced when auditory input was combined with other forms of representation.

This finding can be critically analyzed through the lens of Mayer's (2009) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which posits that learners process information through dual channels, visual and auditory, and that meaningful learning occurs when these channels are integrated through appropriate instructional design. The lecturers' use of gestures, written keywords, and visual materials represents a practical application of this theory, as they provided redundant visual cues that reinforced and supplemented auditory input, thereby reducing cognitive load and freeing mental resources for deeper comprehension.

This finding aligns with recent research demonstrating the value of multimedia integration in EFL listening instruction. Sharif et al. (2024) reported that multimedia resources, including videos, podcasts, and interactive digital activities, provide learners with richer exposure to authentic language input and support comprehension development. A meta-analysis of audiovisual media in EFL listening contexts also reported positive effects of audiovisual resources because visual information can support learners in interpreting spoken messages.

However, the present study provides an additional perspective by emphasizing that technology alone does not guarantee effective listening learning. The lecturers viewed digital materials as communication support rather than a substitute for teacher interaction. Students still required lecturer explanations, contextualization, and classroom discussion to transform audiovisual input into meaningful learning. This finding aligns with Clark's (1994) argument that media are mere "vehicles" for content and that instructional methods, rather than media themselves, determine learning outcomes. In this context, the lecturers' pedagogical communication, not merely the digital materials, was the key factor in facilitating comprehension.

This finding is also consistent with recent research on lecturers' use of digital resources for extensive listening. Salsabiela, Setyarini, and Gunawan (2024) found that lecturers perceived platforms such as YouTube as beneficial because they provide authentic listening exposure, increase motivation, and expand available learning materials. However, successful

implementation depends on lecturers' ability to integrate technology with appropriate pedagogical communication.

In the context of this study, multimodal communication was particularly important because students came with different levels of English proficiency. By combining spoken explanations, visual cues, and digital materials, lecturers created multiple pathways for students to access meaning, reflecting the principle of Universal Design for Learning (CAST, 2018), which advocates for multiple means of representation to accommodate diverse learner needs.

Affective Communication and the Development of Students' Confidence

The fourth finding demonstrates that lecturers' affective communication played an important role in creating supportive listening classrooms. The lecturers deliberately reduced students' anxiety by providing encouragement, acknowledging students' efforts, and creating opportunities for gradual participation.

This finding can be critically examined through the lens of Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which posits that learners' emotional states—including anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence—can act as filters that either facilitate or impede language acquisition. In this study, lecturers' supportive communication served to lower students' affective filters, thereby enabling better processing of listening input. The lecturers' use of positive feedback expressions and opportunities for pair discussions before whole-class interaction reflects an understanding of how anxiety reduction can enhance comprehension.

This finding corresponds with recent research highlighting the relationship between teacher communication and student engagement in EFL classrooms. Ariyani et al. (2024) found that lecturers' interpersonal communication skills, including verbal encouragement and non-verbal interaction, contributed to students' motivation, confidence, and willingness to participate. The current study extends this understanding by showing that affective communication is especially significant in listening classes because listening difficulties often create feelings of frustration and insecurity among learners. When students believe that mistakes are unacceptable, they tend to avoid participation and become passive listeners. Therefore, lecturers' supportive communication functions as an emotional scaffold, a concept that extends the original scaffolding metaphor to encompass emotional support (Meyer & Turner, 2002) that encourages students to engage with challenging listening tasks.

The pesantren-based context provides an important contribution to this finding. The lecturers maintained respectful relationships with students while simultaneously encouraging

active participation. This balance between authority and interpersonal closeness reflects educational values commonly emphasized in Islamic learning environments, where the concept of *ta'dib* (holistic education encompassing moral and spiritual development) shapes pedagogical relationships (Wan Daud, 1998). Consequently, communication strategies in this setting were shaped not only by language teaching principles but also by institutional culture. This finding contributes to the growing body of literature on culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2018), demonstrating that effective teaching practices must be understood within the specific cultural and institutional contexts in which they occur.

Theoretical and Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study provide several theoretical and pedagogical implications that extend beyond the specific research context.

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this study contributes to the sociocultural framework of language learning by demonstrating that listening instruction, often perceived as a solitary cognitive activity, is in fact a socially mediated process. The study shows that the Vygotskian concepts of scaffolding and the ZPD are operationalized not only through instructional activities but also through moment-to-moment communication strategies. Furthermore, the findings extend the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996) to listening instruction by demonstrating how negotiation of meaning occurs not only in two-way conversation but also in teacher-led listening activities, where lecturers' questions and clarifications serve as meaning-negotiation triggers. This suggests that listening comprehension, like speaking, benefits from interactive negotiation processes.

Additionally, the study contributes to the theoretical understanding of teacher communication by demonstrating the interconnectedness of four communication dimensions scaffolding, interactive questioning, multimodal support, and affective communication in a way that previous studies have often treated separately. This interconnectedness suggests that effective teacher communication in listening instruction is not a set of discrete techniques but an integrated communicative competence that lecturers develop over time through experience and reflection.

Pedagogical Implications for Teacher Education Programs

The findings suggest several concrete implications for teacher education programs that extend beyond general recommendations:

First, the study demonstrates that lecturer communication should be viewed as an integral component of listening instruction rather than as an additional classroom feature. Effective listening teaching requires lecturers to continuously adjust their discourse, provide appropriate scaffolding, and negotiate meaning with students. Therefore, teacher education programs should integrate communication skills training into their EFL methodology courses, moving beyond traditional approaches that focus primarily on lesson planning and materials development. Specifically, pre-service and in-service training should include modules on (1) strategic questioning techniques—including comprehension-check, prediction, and reflective questions—and when to deploy each type based on students' immediate needs; (2) scaffolding communication, including how to adjust speech rates, paraphrase, and provide contextual clues without oversimplifying listening materials; and (3) affective communication strategies to build students' confidence and reduce listening anxiety.

Second, the findings underscore the need for practice-based professional development opportunities. The lecturers in this study developed their communication strategies through years of classroom experience and reflection. Teacher education programs should provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice communication strategies through micro-teaching sessions, simulated classroom interactions, and video-recorded peer teaching with structured feedback focusing specifically on verbal and non-verbal communication patterns. Additionally, peer observation and mentoring programs where experienced lecturers model effective communication strategies for less experienced colleagues could be established within higher education institutions.

Third, the study demonstrates the importance of preparing teachers for culturally responsive communication. The pesantren-based context significantly shaped lecturers' communication practices, indicating that teacher education programs cannot rely on universal models of effective communication. Instead, teacher education should incorporate modules on culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2018) that encourage teachers to critically reflect on how their institutional culture, students' backgrounds, and local values influence classroom interaction. In the Indonesian context, this means attending to values such as *santun* (politeness), *hormat* (respect), and *kebersamaan* (togetherness) that shape lecturer-student relationships in Islamic educational settings. Teacher education programs should also include intercultural communication training that enables future lecturers to recognize and adapt their communication strategies based on their institutional context.

Fourth, this study indicates that multimodal communication skills should be explicitly taught in teacher preparation programs. While technology integration is increasingly emphasized in teacher education, this study reveals that effective use of digital resources depends on lecturers' ability to combine them with spoken explanations, visual cues, and interactive discussion. Therefore, teacher education should focus not only on technical skills but also on how to pedagogically frame multimodal resources to maximize their benefit for listening comprehension.

Fifth, the findings suggest implications for assessment practices in teacher education. The ability to employ communication strategies effectively should be assessed as a core teaching competency. Teacher education programs could incorporate video-based assessment where pre-service teachers demonstrate their use of scaffolding, questioning, multimodal support, and affective communication in simulated or real classroom settings, with structured rubrics evaluating these specific dimensions.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights, it has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted with only three lecturers in a single institution, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study relied primarily on self-reported data through interviews and observed classroom practices, which may not fully capture the complexity of lecturers' internal decision-making processes. Third, the study did not directly measure students' listening comprehension outcomes in relation to different communication strategies, making it difficult to establish causal relationships between specific strategies and learning gains.

Future research could address these limitations by employing mixed-methods designs that combine qualitative observations with quantitative measures of listening comprehension outcomes across a larger sample of lecturers and institutions. Additionally, longitudinal studies could examine how lecturers' communication strategies develop over time and how their effectiveness varies across different student proficiency levels. Comparative studies could also investigate communication strategies in listening instruction across different educational contexts—such as public universities, private institutions, and Islamic higher education—to identify context-specific patterns and transferable principles. Finally, future research could explore students' perceptions of lecturer communication strategies to provide a

more comprehensive understanding of what constitutes effective classroom interaction from both teacher and learner perspectives.

This study confirms that lecturers' communication strategies function as a bridge between listening input and students' comprehension processes. Through scaffolding, interaction, multimodal communication, and emotional support, lecturers transform listening classrooms into collaborative learning spaces where students can gradually develop confidence and competence. The findings underscore the importance of viewing listening instruction as a socially mediated process and highlight the need for teacher education programs to explicitly train future lecturers in communication strategies that are culturally responsive and contextually grounded. By doing so, teacher educators can prepare lecturers who are not only knowledgeable about language content but also skilled in the communicative practices that make learning possible.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the communication strategies employed by English lecturers in teaching listening skills at Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum. The findings reveal that lecturers utilized four main communication strategies: scaffolding communication (pre-listening preparation, repetition, clarification, and simplified explanations), interactive questioning and meaning negotiation (comprehension-check, prediction, and reflective questions), multimodal communication (gestures, visual support, written keywords, videos, and digital resources), and affective communication (encouragement, positive feedback, and anxiety reduction). These strategies were adapted to students' linguistic abilities and the pesantren-based learning context, where close lecturer-student relationships, mentoring values, and culturally respectful interaction patterns shaped instructional practices.

The study demonstrates that effective listening instruction extends beyond the delivery of audio materials and comprehension exercises; it requires intentional communicative mediation through which lecturers scaffold understanding, negotiate meaning, provide multimodal support, and build students' confidence. The findings affirm that listening comprehension is not merely a cognitive process but a socially constructed activity that depends significantly on how lecturers communicate with students. Within the pesantren context, communication strategies were influenced by institutional values such as *ta'dib* (holistic education), *santun* (politeness), *hormat* (respect), and *kebersamaan* (togetherness), highlighting the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy in EFL teaching.

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