

ANALYSIS STUDENTS' PROBLEMS IN LEARNING LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

This research is aimed to identify students' problems of listening comprehension skill. The researcher took the third semester students as the respondents in this research. The research design used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. 15 students out of 294 students were selected as the respondents. They were given questionnaire to collect the data for this qualitative research. Questionnaire result was analyzed based on thematic analysis procedures. Questionnaire was done by given twenty assessment prepared. Based on the result of this research, the students had three major problems in learning listening comprehension, first length and speed and variety accent, second lack of vocabulary and the last is lack of concentration. From the results of these findings, the researcher suggests two strategies. First for the students, the students are expected to be able to practice and get used to hearing various accents and different speed variations. Regular vocabulary practice looking for relevant learning resources can improve students' vocabulary and the last is prioritizing listening, active involvement, and applying concentration techniques can help students overcome concentration disorders and improve students' listening comprehension. Second, for the lecturer by knowing students' problems learning listening comprehension, the lecturer can effectively support students in improving their listening skills and achieve better results for students to learning listening comprehension skills.

Keywords: Students' Problems; Listening Comprehension Skills; Improve

INTRODUCTION

Listening in any language requires focus and attention. It is a skill that some people need to work harder than others. Listening is one of skills in English that is considered difficult, but often neglected when compared to order skills namely, speaking, writing and reading skills (Richard & Renandya. (2002) state that "This is because the teachers are more likely to prioritize the teaching of speaking, writing, and reading skills". This condition aggravated by society which assumes that if someone is able to speak well, this is a reflection that the person is also able to communicate well.

Pourhosein Gilakjani and Mohammadreza Ahmadi (2011) expressed that listening has an important role in the communication process. Goss (1982) said that in listening comprehension listeners try to construct a meaning when they get the information from the listening source. One's ability to understand spoken language is one of the important factors in learning a second language in everyday life, the activity that is often done is listening.

It is widely acknowledged that there are four major basic skills of English which need to be learned and mastered by learner when it comes to learning the language. Listening is very important to learners because listening is a component of language consists of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Just as the other three skills of English, listening skill also plays a very significant role in the process of language learning indeed and has, therefore, to be mastered by its learners. In favor of this nation, Harmer (2001, p. 98) states, "Listening assists students in obtaining some pieces of information about not only grammar and vocabulary, but also pronunciation, intonation, pitch and stress from the speaker, which in turn will facilitate them to be a better listener". Hamouda (2013) said that listening skill is very important in acquiring understandable input. Learning does not occur if there will not be any input.

Steinberg (2007) and Azmi Bingol et al (2014) defined listening comprehension as one's ability to recognize another through sense, aural organs and allocate a meaning to the message to understand it. According to Moley (2001) and Rost (2001), listening is the most important skill for language learning because it can be mostly used in normal daily life and develops faster than the other language skills which indicate that it makes easy the development of the other language skills. Listening comprehension is a complex process in which listeners play an active role in discriminating between sounds, understanding vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpreting intonation and stress, and finally, making use of all the skills mentioned above, interpreting the utterance within the socio-cultural context. Vandergrift (1999), defines "Listening comprehension is a complex process in which the listener play an active role in distinguishing what is heard".

Listening skills are anything but easy to master. According to Hamouda (2013), EFL learners have crucial problems in listening comprehension because universities pay attention to grammar, reading, and vocabulary. For many EFL learners, listening is the thing they feel most frustrated with. On the one hand, they cannot control the speed of speech and they tend to have difficulties deciding sounds that do not exist in their mother tongue. According to Richards et al (2000) and Pourhosein et al (2011), listening comprehension is the process of understanding speech and it concentrates on rule of linguistics units such as phonemes, words, and grammatical structures and the of listener's anticipations, the situation and context, previous knowledge, and the subject. Reduced English sounds (lazy speech) or contractions are two examples. On the other hand, even when they hear sounds correctly, usually they have interpretation problems due to a lack of vocabulary.

It appears that many students face some difficulties when they are listening to audio. The students face some challenges, such as speed of speech and accent of the speaker. The limited and unfamiliar vocabulary also becomes a challenge that has a great deal of influence on their understanding. Moreover, the condition of the class sometimes can affect the students during listening to audio. Indeed, the difficulties of listening comprehension are not only related to the speaker's elements, but also involve the skill of the students to process the information by using basic knowledge in order to understand listening.

The researcher is desired to conduct research related to listening to third semester students at Tadulako University. The researcher found fact after interviewing several third semester students, she found out the difficulties that mostly faced by students in learning listening at Tadulako University. It was based on three factors influencing their listening; they were listening material, listener factor, and physical setting. Therefore, length and speeds, different accent of the speakers, lack of vocabulary and lack of concentration are the major problems encountered by students'.

METHOD

The research design used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. According Ruqayah (2016:1), states qualitative research is research on descriptive research and tend to use analysis. Process and meaning (subject perspective) are more highlighted in qualitative research. The purpose of this research is to analyzing students' problems of listening comprehension skill at third semester students of Tadulako University.

The researcher conducted the research at Tadulako University, Palu. The location of this research is on Jl. Soekarno Hatta, Palu, Central Sulawesi. The researcher collected the data in Tadulako University in December 2023. The subject of this research was the third semester

students of English education study program Tadulako University. There are 6 classes of the third semester that consists of 249 students, 15 of them are participant in this research subjects.

The instrument used in this research was a questionnaire in preparing the questionnaire; the researcher previously prepared a list of structured statements related to the research.

The questionnaire was adapted from Hamouda (2013) that was designed after a review of the literature. It consisted of four sections. First, about quality of recorded material consists of 5 questions, second, about length and speed and variety accent consists of 5 questions, third is lack of vocabulary consists of 5 questions, and the fourth is lack of concentration consists of 5 questions. After the data from questionnaire has been collected, the results data was analyzed and interpreted qualitative to explain the data from questionnaire.

After the researcher obtained data from the questionnaire, the data was analyzed using (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p.31) as follows; data reduction, data display and drawing and verifying conclusions. In data reduction the data were collected by conducting questionnaire to identify students' problems in listening comprehension. After getting the result of the questionnaire, the researcher reduced useless data which did not include the answer to the research question. Next data display, the researcher shows or displays the data which contain the students' problems in listening comprehension specifically and clearly. The researcher showed the results of the questionnaire into tables, and then the result was explained or elaborated qualitatively. The last is drawing and verifying conclusion, the researcher drew conclusion from the data obtained so the data can answer the research question.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

After collecting and analyzing the data from questionnaire, the researchers provide the finding as follow:

1). Quality of Recorded Material

Table 4.3 Questionnaire Result

| No | Statement | Strongly agree | Agree | disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 2 | The recorded material is free from interference or noise that interferes with understanding. | 2 | 10 | 3 | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|----|---|---|
| 5 | The recorded material has a stable and uninterrupted recording, allowing for consistent comprehension. | 13 | 1 | 1 |
|---|--|----|---|---|

The first statement on the questionnaire that was shared was about the recorder of quality material of students. The majority of respondents agree that the recorded material is free from interference or noise that interferes with understanding. It can be seen from the number of students who select the "agree" option on the questionnaire as many as 12 out of 15 students. However, there were some who disagreed (3 respondents) with this statement.

The second all of the respondents also agreed that the recorded material had a stable and uninterrupted recording, allowing for consistent understanding. It can be seen in the results of the questionnaire that has been distributed, 13 respondents chose "agree" option. There were only a few respondents who disagreed with this statement (1 respondent disagreed, 1 respondent strongly disagreed).

It can be concluded that in general, respondents tend to agree that the recorded materials is free from interference and has a stable recording for consistent understanding.

2). Length and Speed and Variety Accent of Listening

Table 1- Questionnaire Result

| No | Statement | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 6 | The length of the conversation affects my listening comprehension difficulties. | 3 | 12 | | |
| 10 | Different accents in listening affect my ability to understand conversation. | 5 | 9 | 1 | |

From the questionnaire results above, it can be seen that all of the respondents agree that the length of the conversation influences difficulties in listening comprehension, with 3 respondents "strongly agree" and 12 respondents "agree". In addition, the majority of respondents also agreed that various accents in listening affect their ability to understand conversations, with 5 respondents "strongly agree" and 9 respondents "agree", although one respondent choose "disagree" option. This suggests that conversation length and accent variation are significant factors in listening comprehension difficulties for most respondents.

3). Lack of Vocabulary

Table 2- Questionnaire Result

| No | Statement | Strongly agree | Agree | disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 12 | Understanding listening texts is difficult due to a lack of vocabulary. | 9 | 5 | 1 | |
| 15 | Difficulty following texts conversations stems from a lack of understanding of the vocabulary used. | 3 | 10 | 2 | |

From the questionnaire results above, the first statement, which received 9 “strongly agree” option and 5 select “agree” option, suggests that all of the participants find it challenging to comprehend listening texts due to their limited vocabulary.

The second statement, which received 3 strong agreements and 12 agreements, further supports this idea. It indicates that the difficulty in following text conversations stems from a lack of understanding of the vocabulary used. This suggests that the participants believed that their vocabulary is inadequate to fully comprehend the conversations they encounter. It means there are similarities in the problem of understanding the text which is caused by a lack of vocabulary. It can be concluded that the majority of respondents agree that difficulties in understanding listening texts and following conversation are caused by a lack of vocabulary. Thus, increasing vocabulary can be a focus in improving their understanding of listening texts and conversations.

4). Lack of Concentration

Table 3- Questionnaire Result

| No | Statement | Strongly agree | Agree | disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 16 | Maintaining concentration while listening to lesson material is challenging. | 4 | 11 | | |
| 17 | Thoughts or other distraction often interrupt when trying to focus on listening lessons. | 3 | 12 | | |

Based on questionnaire result above, it can be concluded that all of the respondents find it difficult to maintain concentration when listening to lesson material, it can be seen 11 respondents chose “agree” and 4 respondents chose “strongly agree” option.

The second all of the respondents also experienced thoughts or distractions when trying to focus on listening to lesson, it can be seen 12 choose “agree” and 3 choose “strongly agree” option. This shows that the challenge of maintaining concentration and avoiding distraction when listening to lessons is something that is commonly felt by most respondents.

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this research was to identify the problems faced by students when learning listening comprehension skills. As a result of analyzing the questionnaire results, the researcher found that most respondents agree that recorded material is free from interference or noise, contributing to better understanding. In addition, the respondents find the recordings to be stable and uninterrupted, facilitating consistent comprehension. This suggests a general satisfaction with the quality of the recorded content. Abdalhamid (2012) “success in listening comprehension has a lot to do with the application of many strategies, the quality of sound created, stimulation, and self-control”.

The second was about length and speed and variety accent. The variety of accents caused difficulties to students in listening comprehension since they did not have much exposure to different accents. Students experienced this kind of problem because they had gotten used to the accent of their own teacher and they were usually surprised and dismayed when they found it difficult to understand someone else's accent. Munro and Derwing (1999) stated that “too many accented speech can lead to an important reduction in comprehension”.

Hayati (2010) stated in the research she conducted that her subjects unanimously rated speed of delivery as one of the greatest obstacles to understand listening. Faster speech rates, whether computer-manipulated or naturally produced, tended to have a negative impact on the comprehension of listeners. When the speaker spoke at a rapid speed, it was difficult for them to comprehend what was being said; even if the words spoken were the ones they had familiar with. Moreover, unclear pronunciation of some speakers was also considered as a source of listening problems.

The students' has problems to maintain their focus during long lectures or audio recordings, which can affect their ability to comprehend and retain the information being presented. Distraction in the environment, such as loud conversation or other audio stimuli, can make it difficult for students to concentrate and understand what is being said. Renandya and Farrell (2010) stated “Have clear responses to the challenges of what information they know from the English speech they hear”. The students' has difficulties with unfamiliar terms or complex language, which can affect their understanding and speed of comprehension.

Next, the lack of vocabulary that students had, the listening text has many unfamiliar vocabularies for students. Students sometimes encountered unfamiliar words that forced them to stop and think about the meaning of the word, resulting in them missing the text part of the activity. This pause interrupted the flow of the speech and caused students to miss some important information. This tendency to listen and focus on each word determined word meaning and reduced comprehension (Underwood, 1989) stated that “Failure to recognize words can also stem

out of students' inability to segment the word out of connected speech". Therefore, it was important to say that in order for students to better understand the audio material, they need to know the vocabulary used in that material. Students who are familiar with the vocabulary used in listening exercises perform better than students with limited vocabulary knowledge and, as a result, achieve better results in the activity.

The lack of vocabulary can significantly affect students' listening comprehension skills. When students encounter unfamiliar words during listening activities, it can impede their ability to understand the spoken language, leading to difficulties in grasping the overall meaning of the content. Therefore, expanding and reinforcing vocabulary is essential for improving students' listening comprehension skills. Students should be exposed to the language as much as possible through various resources such as conversations, movies, or language learning materials. Regular listening practice and active engagement with the language's patterns can help students adapt to the new language and develop their listening skill.

The last problem has challenges in maintaining concentration. Lack of concentration is a common issue faced by students during listening comprehension tasks. It can be seen that the majority of the respondents express challenges in maintaining concentration while listening to lesson materials. In addition, thoughts or distractions often interrupt their focus during listening sessions. These findings underscore the importance of implementing strategies to enhance concentration and mitigate distractions in educational settings, ultimately optimizing the learning experience.

Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011), have identified lack of concentration as one of the difficulties students face in listening comprehension. They argue that students often encounter very little offensive or carry out activities related to listening in their English language learning, which can make developing concentration a challenge. This problem can be attributed to several factors, including the complexity of the listening material, the speed of the speaker, and the students' own interest and motivation.

CONCLUSION

After analysis data, the researcher concludes there are three factors caused students problems in learning listening comprehension skill. The first problem is length and speed and variety accent. Many students point out that when the speaker speaks too fast and with variety accent, it was difficult for them to understand what was being said. Native speaker with variety accent make the students confused and cannot understand what the speaker said. The second problem is was lack of vocabulary. Students were not familiar with many vocabularies. The students had difficulties to catch target words. Students could not understand what speakers

say when there are too many unfamiliar vocabularies. The students stop and think about the meaning of the word when they hear unknown word.

The last problem was lack of concentration. Students have challenges in maintaining concentration thoughts or distraction often interrupts their focus during listening sessions. Apart from the three problems that the researcher found, the quality of recorded material was not a problem faced by students. This can be seen from the general perspective; respondents tended to agree that the recorded material was free from interference and had a stable recording for consistent understanding.

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