

Students' Problems in Listening Comprehension at Fourth Semester of English Education Study Program Peradaban University

Dede Nurdiawati*¹⁾

¹⁾Peradaban University – Bumiayu Brebes

*²⁾Corresponding author: Email: dedenurdiawati7@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to obtain descriptive information about the problems and problem solving in learning listening comprehension. The researcher uses descriptive qualitative research and investigates the students' problems in listening comprehension at the fourth semester and the steps to overcome their problems. There are 23 students at the fourth semester of English Education Study Program Peradaban University in the academic year 2018/2019 as the sample. In collecting the data, the researcher uses questionnaire and interview as the instruments. The researcher finds the most problems faced by the fourth students are lack of concentration, native speaker speaking speed, unfamiliar words, and lack of effort to understand each word. The solution offered to solve those problems are focus and concentrate while listening class, concentrate on what is heard, and write things that are important when listening to material spoken by native speaker; find the meanings of unfamiliar words, look at the dictionary to find out difficult words, check words that are not clearly heard in dictionary, memorize vocabulary, and read English text and listen to English audio; and familiarize the students with the rules of pronunciation in order to help them hear the different forms of rapid natural speech and ask them to imitate native speakers' pronunciation. It concludes that learning information about the problems and problem solving at the fourth semester are because of the fact that their learning outcomes are still far from being standard. Therefore, problem solving in listening comprehension learning is expected to minimize the problems faced by students of the fourth semester of English Education Study Program Peradaban University in learning process so that they get satisfying learning outcomes.

Keywords: Listening Problem, Students' Problem, Listening Comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Learning English is very important; we can see this progress in education in our country today. It is complex because English consists of four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. In fact, many students still cannot understand words especially in listening skill. It means that listening skills in their English skills are still lacking. The same thing happens when

they study listening comprehension in this fourth semester. Many efforts have been made by the lecturer in listening comprehension when the teaching and learning process takes place to make the students easy to learn this course, but the results still have no significant changes in the learning process of listening with understanding.

There are so many factors that make the students difficult when learning to understand listening in English, for example: material is too fast to be heard, so they forget what they have heard, do not recognize the meaning of words in English that are spoken or heard because of the limitation of their English vocabulary, do not concentrate on the material, do not understand commands that are explained verbally, be lazy in learning or have lack motivation to learn to listen, and many other problems. These problems make it difficult for them to learn listening comprehension. Thus, when they attend listening comprehension class, it seems like they are afraid and lazy to learn the course, even though the listening comprehension course is one part of English skills that must be possessed by every student majoring in English, especially for the fourth students of the English Education Study Program in Peradaban University.

Learning listening comprehension is not easy, but in general most of the students ignore it. This is fact that still occurs from year to year in the field of English education, especially for students. Difficulties in learning listening comprehension faced by students are certainly influenced by many factors. In addition, the student learning styles are also very decisive in the success of learning. However, some of the problems are faced by students in learning listening comprehension; there must be the appropriate solution to overcome those problems. Therefore, the problem in learning listening comprehension faced by students is a huge concern for the researcher as a lecturer of listening comprehension.

The researcher feels responsible and challenged to know the real problems faced by the students of English Education Study Program at Peradaban University in learning listening comprehension. This situation encourages the researcher to conduct research entitled “Students’ Problems in listening comprehension at Fourth Semester of English Education Study Program Peradaban University”, so that the researcher knows the real condition of learning listening comprehension which has become a major problem for students in mastering English language skills, especially in English listening comprehension skill. Related to the background of the above problems, the researcher formulates the main problems from the results of this study, which are “What problems are faced by the fourth students of English Education Study Program

Peradaban University in listening comprehension?” and “What are the steps to overcome their problems?” The purpose of this research is to obtain descriptive information about the problems and problem solving in learning listening comprehension.

The results of this study can at least provide several benefits. First, this study can find out the learning strategy of proper listening comprehension and can be used as the feedback in the learning process, so they are more active and enthusiastic in learning listening comprehension. Second, the lecturer of listening comprehension can obtain a general description of the learning methods and techniques that are appropriate for the students and the results are expected to be input for selecting the appropriate materials in learning and can facilitate students in the learning process. Third, this research is expected to produce quality graduates who have English language skills and can face increasingly sophisticated and broad-based information.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Listening

Listening has been determined by some experts. Nunan in Hamouda (2003) defines listening as an active, purposeful process of making sense of what we hear. He also mentions that as people listen, they process not only what they hear, but also connect it to other information being heard by the listeners, they need to connect that information to other information they already know. As they find any connection between what they are listening and what they have known before, the listeners will understand about what they have listened.

Renukadevi (2004) states that listening plays a vital role as it helps the language learner to acquire pronunciation, word stress, vocabulary, and syntax and the comprehension of the messages conveyed can be based solely on tone of voice, pitch and accent; and it is only possible when we listen. Without understanding input appropriately, learning simply cannot get any improvement. In addition, without listening skill, no communication can be achieved. Listening is the process of understanding the sound that is being heard. Listeners do not only need to hear voice, but they also need to understand it, and then process the information spoken by the speaker. Listening is the most significant part of communication and activities of the learners spend in learning a foreign language is devoted to listening. Renukadevi (2014) states that people gain 45% of language competence from listening, 30% from speaking, 15% from reading, and

10% from writing. With the highest percentage of involvement in the exchange of information in effective communication, listening has to be considered a language forerunner.

Listening Comprehension

In the term of listening comprehension according to Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016), they conclude that listening comprehension is as an interactive process in which listeners are also involved in constructing meaning. Listeners listen to comprehend the oral input through sound discrimination, previous knowledge, grammatical structure, stress and intonation, and the other linguistic or non-linguistic clues. In the process of listening, listeners need to comprehend the information they have listened in order to understand the meaning of that information and understand the oral message (that have been caught in listening process needs to be understood and comprehended so the message will be meaningful information). The aim of listening comprehension understands the native conversation at normal rate in a spontaneous condition. It is a rational phenomenon listeners try to establish a meaning when they obtain the information from the source of listening.

Problems in Listening Comprehension

Hamouda (2013) mentions several factors that can cause students listening comprehension problems, such as: problem related to the listening materials, basic linguistic problems perceived by learners, listening problems caused by the failure to concentrate, listening problems related to psychological characteristics, the listener, the speaker, and problems pertaining to physical settings. The main reasons why the students find it difficult are lack of effort to understand each and every word while listening, failure or laziness to build up their vocabulary, listeners' problems with different pronunciation, accents as they stick to one particular articulation, listener's concentration power or listening stamina, distraction by the physical setting or the environment (Renukadevi, 2014). The potential problems in language learning are quality or recorded material, cultural differences, accent, unfamiliar vocabulary, length and speed of the listening, physical conditions, and lack of concentration, (Bingol, 2014).

Previous Studies

Different studies about the problems in listening have been carried out by Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016), entitled "*Learners' Listening Comprehension Difficulties in English Language Learning*". The research result finds the major problems faced by the students in listening comprehension: quality of recorded materials (some recorded materials that do not have high quality), cultural differences (listening task involves completely different cultural materials then the students may have critical problems in its comprehension), accent (an unfamiliar accent makes comprehension impossible for the listeners), unfamiliar vocabulary (the unfamiliar words would be very hard for the students), length and speed of listening (difficult for lower students to listen more than three minutes long and complete the listening task).

From Nowrouzi, etc. (2015), entitled "*Iranian EFL Students' Listening Comprehension Problems*", the research result categorizes listening comprehension problems into three cognitive stages of perception, parsing, and utilization. First, in perception problems, the learners have reported experiencing moderate or high levels of listening problems in all areas of perception: concentration, sounds (fast speech rate that leads to missing the beginning of the text, knowing the meaning of a word when seeing it, and too many sounds) and in words (not hearing clear words), mistaking words for each other, too many unfamiliar words, missing the next parts while thinking about the earlier section), and not remembering the meaning of familiar words. Second, in parsing problems, the learners imply moderate to high levels of difficulty regarding the parsing problems, including topic unfamiliarity, sentential level problems, and too much information to process except a lower level of problem in understanding the meaning of sentences. Third, utilization problems, the learners have lower levels of problem in getting the main ideas, the intended message, and the other of ideas, but high levels in getting the details, the supporting ideas, and the relationship among them.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study expects to analyse the students' problems in listening comprehension class. The researcher uses descriptive qualitative research and investigates the students' problems in listening comprehension at the fourth semester of English Education Study Program Peradaban University and the steps to overcome their problems. There are 23 students at the fourth semester of English Education Study Program Peradaban University in the academic year 2018/2019 as

the sample. In collecting the data, the researcher uses questionnaire and interview as the instruments. The questionnaire is distributed to the students to be filled. The researcher prepares the list of questions before interviewing the students as the respondents. After that, the researcher analyses the result for each indicators and elaborates her analysis to this result. Possible explanation for certain answers is explored by identifying the participants' additional answers in interview.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Learning listening comprehension is not easy because students are required to understand the spoken language (Oral English) by native speakers. Listening is one of the four English skills that must be possessed by students of English as a second language. However, most of many students ignore the skill and are less interested in learning this course. Problems in learning English are still being the main focus for educators in various educational institutions from basic to higher education. There are still many students who have problems in learning as happened in English Education Study Program Peradaban University fourth semester students. Problems in learning listening comprehension are the main problems that have not been realized until now. Based on the results of the questionnaire collected by researcher in this research, it finds several problems that hindered students' success in learning listening comprehension.

Students' Problems in Listening Comprehension

The findings of the students' problems in listening comprehension (questionnaire result) are represented by the table below:

No	Students Problems in Listening Comprehension	Numbers	Percentage
1	The students do not understand listening material.	20	86.96%
2	The students cannot concentrate when listening.	21	91.30%
3	The students have limited word meanings.	22	95.65%
4	The voice that is played is not clear.	19	82.60%
5	Native Speakers speak too fast.	22	95.65%
6	The students are not lazy in learning listening.	23	100%
7	The students have motivation in learning listening.	20	86.96%
8	The students do not know the contents of the listening.	15	65.22%
9	The students find many words that are not familiar.	22	95.65%
10	The students often get technical errors when I learn listening.	15	65.22%
11	The listening classroom (language laboratory) is	22	95.65%

	comfortable.		
12	The students love learning listening.	21	91.30%
13	The students cannot catch the word that is played.	20	86.96%
14	The students cannot draw conclusions or interpret the listening material that they are listening to.	23	100%
15	The students listen to the material more than once.	22	95.65%

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the fourth semester students of English Education Study Program Peradaban University enjoy learning listening: 91.30% of students are very enthusiastic, there are 100% of students who are not lazy in learning listening, and there are 86.96% of students who have motivation in learning listening. On the contrary, they still have some problems in listening comprehension. *First*, problem related to the listening materials, there are 86.96% of students who still do not understand listening material. *Second*, problems pertaining to physical settings, there are 65.22% students who agree that they often get technical errors when they learn listening, but there are 95.65% students who say that the classroom of listening class (language laboratory) is comfortable. *Third*, the lack of effort to understand each and every word while listening and failure or laziness to build up their vocabulary, there are 95.65% of students who have limited word meanings, 65.22% of students do not know the contents of the listening, 86.96% of students cannot catch the word that is played, 100% of students cannot draw conclusions or interpret the listening material that they are listening to. *Fourth*, the problem in quality or recorded material, there are 82.60% of students who agree that the voice that is played is not clear. *Fifth*, the problem in unfamiliar vocabulary, there are 95.65% of students who find many words that are not familiar to them. *Sixth*, the problem in length and speed of the listening, there are 95.65% of students who agree that native speaker is too fast. *Seventh*, the problems in lack of concentration, there are 91.30% of students who cannot concentrate when listening and 95.65% of the students listen to the material more than once.

Based on the interview results with students, the researcher finds three points of common problems faced by the fourth students of English Education Study Program Peradaban University. They are lack of concentration, the speaker and unfamiliar vocabulary. First, lack of concentration, lots of students feel not concentrated when listening to the words or sentences spoken by the native speaker. On average, they mention that concentration in learning listening comprehension is very important because the listening subject matter is all related to human hearing aids. If from the beginning students have not concentrated on the material to be listened

to, the students will have difficulty understanding to the material discussed. There are four students who are interviewed by the researcher have the same problems in having less concentration. One of students (VA) says *“I have the problem in concentration; I cannot focus when the lecturer gives me listening material.”* Student (AA) says *“In my opinion, the concentration in listening is a number one problem among the other problems. If we do not concentrate when listening to material played on a cassette or LCD monitor by a lecturer, then do not expect us to understand the western conversation, start learning with concentration so that everything is easy for us.”*

Second, the speakers, this problem that usually become obstacles for students in learning comprehensions are native speakers' talks which are considered too fast for them. The level of understanding of students is very varied from one another. The students whose level of understanding is low are very difficult and even confused to understand the expressions of sentences spoken by the native speaker. This is a big problem for them in learning listening comprehension. However, if students have a high level of understanding in listening, they will easily understand the expressions spoken by the native speaker. The researcher gives some examples from some students who have difficulty in learning listening comprehension. Thirteen students say that the speakers speak too fast. Student (WAS) says *“The material that delivered by the native speaker is too fast, so I cannot understand what is being said.”* Students (RO, AA, KM, and JPS) also have the same opinion that the speaker speaks too fast. Student (RP) says *“Problem in learning listening is very much, but the most confusing thing for me is listening to conversation from strangers who speak so fast. So that I do not understand what the speaker said.”*

Third, unfamiliar problems, most of students also faced problems with the limited meaning of the new English vocabulary in learning listening comprehension. In this case, it seems that students must understand every meaning of the word spoken by the native speaker. Students assume that everything said by the native speaker contains important information, though efforts to understand everything often result in ineffective understanding, confusion, and failure. The researcher gives an example of students who have problems with it. All of students (twenty-three) at fourth semester have less vocabulary. Student (HPD)) says *“I have less vocabulary, so I cannot understand what the speaker says.”* Student (BSW) says *“I often find vocabulary that is not familiar to me”*. Student (HN) says *“I do not understand the meaning; my*

vocabulary is limit, Ma'am. It is difficult to understand.” Student (VM) says “I have lack of vocabulary knowledge; it is hard”, student (DP) says “I have lack of new vocabulary, it is difficult to grasp the meaning of the words in Bahasa and difficult to interpret”, and student (AA) says “There are so many unfamiliar words found, I cannot understand them.” And student (NK) says “Usually the main problem for me in learning this does not know the meaning of English vocabulary spoken by the speaker so I am confused to understand the words that are spoken.”

The researcher concludes the most problems faced by the fourth students from the questionnaire and interview result above are lack of concentration, native speaker speaking speed, unfamiliar words, and lack of effort to understand each word.

The Solution of Students' Listening Comprehension Problems

There are some suggestions that are beneficial to students to overcome some of the listening comprehension problems for both lecturer and students. First, based on the results of the research obtained by the researcher from the field, the steps for problem solving in learning listening comprehension used by the lecturer that lecturer should design listening task that arouse students' interest and help them improve listening skills and strategies, provide students with different types of input (like lectures, radio news, films, TV plays, announcements, everyday conversation, monologue and interviews), familiarize the students with the rulers of pronunciation in order to help them hear the different forms of rapid natural speech and ask them to imitate native speakers' pronunciation, and help the students to be familiar with the accent of different native speakers. Due to the fact that native speakers have specific accents, it is necessary for students to recognize the differences between American and British accents.

The lecturer should provide background knowledge and linguistic knowledge to their students while listening to different listening materials, give their students the necessary feedback on their performance because it can promote their error correction and increase their motivation, and help them to develop their confidence in listening exercises, and help their students to develop the necessary skills of listening comprehension like listening for understanding particular information, listening for the main ideas, explanation and inference, listening for intended meaning through providing different tasks and activities at different levels.

The lecturer can also use body language such as pointing and facial expressions to reinforce oral messages and encourage the students in developing listening strategies. Predicting,

asking for clarification, and using non-verbal cues are some examples of these strategies that improve learners' listening comprehension ability, train in speaking skills. Listening is related to good pronunciation; therefore, the lecturer should have good and acceptable pronunciation which can help learners to become better listeners, and ask their learners to always listen to music, documentaries, and news on the radio and television, talk to native speakers face or on the internet so that they can create and reinforce a good habit of listening.

Second, based on the results of the research obtained by the researcher from the field, the students should practice listening (such as watching English video, listen to English audio and music, English film, songs, speech and monologue), find the meanings of unfamiliar words, look at the dictionary to find out difficult words and find meaning, checking words that are not clearly heard in the Oxford English dictionary, memorize vocabulary, and read English text and listen to English audio.

The students should increase many vocabularies to enhance their knowledge, focus and concentrate in listening class. Need to improve concentration, do not hesitate to ask the listening lecturer to be told again about material that is not yet clearly studied, concentrate on what is heard, and write things that are important when listening to material spoken native speaker.

They should learn more about the vocabulary in English vocabulary, learn more about English pronunciation and the style of language in English styles, guess or estimate words or sentences that are not clearly heard contextually, sharing with friends who are near us about words or sentences that are passed or not clear, always get used to listening to English conversation from native speakers (for example listening to foreign songs, BBC London radio broadcasts, English-language TV channels, and English movies) and borrow a cassette or CD to the listening lecturers who have been played in class to be played back on another occasion.

The solution offers to solve those most problems faced by the students are focus and concentrate while listening class, concentrate on what is heard, and write things that are important when listening to material spoken native speaker; find the meanings of unfamiliar words, look at the dictionary to find out difficult words, check words that are not clearly heard in dictionary, memorize vocabulary, and read English text and listen to English audio; and familiarize the students with the rulers of pronunciation in order to help them hear the different forms of rapid natural speech and ask them to imitate native speakers' pronunciation.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the research and discussion that have been obtained by the researcher, the most problems faced by the fourth students are lack of concentration, native speaker speaking speed, unfamiliar words, and lack of effort to understand each and every words. It can be concluded that in listening comprehension learning for students, lecturer should use appropriate teaching techniques at each meeting. These problems are influenced by some factors. By knowing the factors that prevent students from learning listening comprehension, it will make it easier for listening lecturer to achieve the success of the learning process.

There are several good things to be considered by the listening comprehension, namely: the students should focus and concentrate while listening class, concentrate on what is heard, and write things that are important when listening to material spoken native speaker; find the meanings of unfamiliar words, look at the dictionary to find out difficult words, check words that are not clearly heard in dictionary, memorize vocabulary, and read English text and listen to English audio; and familiarize the students with the rulers of pronunciation in order to help them hear the different forms of rapid natural speech and ask them to imitate native speakers' pronunciation. Meanwhile, lecturer of listening comprehension must be more creative in delivering the material to be discussed, the application of more functional techniques will support the learning process, and the learning process of listening comprehension does not always use a laboratory, sometimes creating a new environment outside the room or laboratory so that the students do not feel bored in receiving lecturer material. Before the learning process begins, it would be nice if the lecturer checks first all the equipment or media that will be used and rewarding and reinforcing is very important to motivate students to study. Learning listening comprehension is not always done in the campus but can also be done outside the campus, such as getting used to listening to information that uses English, culture of shame in asking when the learning process of listening comprehension takes places must be minimized, learning listening comprehension requires special concentration to be able to understand the phrases spoken by native speakers, dependence on others is very detrimental to students, and students do not need to interpret word for word in conversations spoken by native speakers but rather understand contextually.

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