

AN INVESTIGATION OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY THE 4TH SEMESTER OF ENGLISH STUDENTS AT SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The objectives of this study were to find out: (1) the perception of the 4th semester of English students at Sriwijaya University on listening skill, (2) kinds of listening comprehension problems encountered by the 4th semester of English students at Sriwijaya University. The samples of this study were from English students at Sriwijaya University who were in academic year 2016 and now they are in the 4th semester. They consisted of 38 Indralaya students and 35 Palembang students. The writer used descriptive research design to collect the data. The data were collected by giving a questionnaire and an interview. The result showed that: (1) they were aware of the importance of listening comprehension. Although listening was difficult for them yet, they perceived that it was really important and really needed for daily life, (2) the problems they faced in listening comprehension were limited English vocabulary, unfamiliar words, slang expressions, inability to apply strategies, lack of linguistic knowledge, rate of speech too fast to comprehend, length of the spoken text, speed rate, unclear pronunciation, unclear sound of the tape (poor equipment), variety of accents, lack of concentration.

Keywords: listening, listening comprehension, listening problems

INTRODUCTION

At the present time, English is a worldwide language. Gervacio (2013, p.10) says that a great number of people in this world use English. Crystal (1997) asserts that there are about 570 million people in the world who use English as their native language or second language. He explains that between 320-380 million people are native speakers of English, from 150 to 300 million people are second language speakers of English, and from 100 to 1.000 million people are learners of English as a foreign language. According to Gervacio (2013, p.10), English is the main requirement to have a better education, great job opportunities, and bright future. It can be the reason why there is a large number of English Foreign Language (EFL) learners. English has been taught as an EFL (English as Foreign Language) and ESL (English as Second Language) in several countries in the world. As well as English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesia.

In learning English, beside speaking, reading, and writing, listening is also one of the four skills. As English students, we have to master all in order to be able to use English as a means of communication. Likewise, Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011, p.783) state that listening, speaking, reading, writing are the four main areas of communication, and the most important of them is listening.

Indeed, as cited in Zhang (2014, p.2472), W.M. Rivers and M.S Temperly as language teaching experts state that the highest percentage of a person's daily life in using language skill is listening (45%) while speaking is 30 %, reading is 16%, and

writing is only 9%. Hamouda (2013, p. 113) asserts that listening skill in foreign language is very important because it is the key to receive language input by acquiring a language and everyone cannot disclaim it. Teaching and learning process cannot be improved without a good understanding. Thus, a good communication will not be achieved without listening skill (Cross, 1998).

Ahmadi (2016, p.7) states about listening and listening comprehension as the following “If learners want to learn to speak, they should first learn to understand the spoken language they hear, but if learners want to communicate with native speakers, they should first learn to understand in real language situations to comprehend the main point of what native speakers are telling”.

It can be concluded that both listening and listening comprehension have crucial role for both teachers and learners in order to achieve communication aims. Similarly, Zhang (2014, p.2472) points out that listening is primary skill in communication. It is not only a basic skill but also the foundation to develop other language skills. Without them, learners will never learn to communicate effectively. In order to have an effective communication, learners should understand what they have heard (Brown and Yule, 1983). It means that if they learn a text through listening, they can comprehend what the text is about. In fact, it is not easy for the students to do it. Furthermore, Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016, p.123) say that students have serious problems in listening comprehension.

Ahmadi (2016, p.8) asserts that listening comprehension is a special process of understanding what people say. Indeed, the goal of listening comprehension is understanding the spoken language at normal speed automatically (Chastain, 1971). Rost (2012) and Hamouda (2013) state that listening comprehension occurs when listeners are involved in constructing meaning because they defined listening comprehension as an interactive process. People comprehend what they hear through sound discrimination, background knowledge, grammatical structures, stress, and intonation, and the other linguistic or non-linguistic clues. Similarly, Nadig (2013) explains listening comprehension as complicated processes in making meaning of oral input and understanding it. The processes are knowing speech sounds, comprehending the meaning of individual words, and understanding the syntax of sentences. Moreover, Lotfi (2012, p.509) explains that listening comprehension is a complex process that requires learners to analyze native's message by collecting information from some sources, such as phonetic, phonological, prosodic, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. Due to the complexities above, learners face difficulties and feel fail in listening comprehension.

According to a survey by Shanghai Foreign Language University (2001) as cited in Zhang (2014, p.2472), among 1457 students were investigated, only 4,40% understand English News in normal speed, 4,74% understand VOA Special News, 12,30% understand native daily conversation, and 52,60% understand their teachers' speech, and 27,30% understand a bit daily English. In addition, some experts found that almost 50% students notice listening comprehension as the most difficult skill in language learning especially when facing an examination.

Zhang has also distributed a questionnaire into 32 bilingual students who had problems in learning English and the result showed that 24 students of this group stated that listening is hard for them and they had problems in listening. It means that not only

college students from non English majors but also English majoring students have problems in listening comprehension.

For ESL/EFL learners, listening comprehension is the thing they feel most frustrated with. Wei (2014, p.2) as an English teacher in Taiwan in her web states that students' problem in listening comprehension is in the speed of native speaker which they cannot control. Likewise, Hamouda (2013, p.115) found that students performed poorly in listening comprehension course due to they failed in comprehending what native speaker says at normal speed. Therefore, it is hard for them to guess every words that is totally different from their mother tongue.

In other case, Goh (2000, p.6) found out that the students quickly forgot the words. Even though the students were familiar with some words they listened, yet it will not last as there will still next part of listening which they should focus on. Indeed, Hamouda (2013, p.115) found that students could not keep their concentration for a long time. The same problem has also been observed in many countries (Buck, 2001). One of the fourth semester students majoring in English of Sriwijaya University said that listening comprehension needed a very good concentration. In his point of view, there was a possibility if student who is good at listening comprehension, his or her concentration will be good too. However, other two students had the same opinion in mentioning that the problem in listening comprehension for them was they did not know much about the idiom which appeared when listening to the talk. Hence, it is really hard for them to comprehend what the speaker means. Their opinion is proved by Chang, Chang, and Kuo (1995) which discovered one of five students' problems in listening comprehension was idiomatic expressions.

Mendelsohn (1995) points out that in spite of the importance of the listening skill in foreign language learning, he believes that listening comprehension is not totally taught in the class. Hamouda (2013, p.114) asserts that most teachers consider it is as easy as reading and believe that it will develop naturally during the process of teaching and learning. In classrooms, teachers test the student listening not to teach listening. Meanwhile, students just learn listening, not listening comprehension.

In fact, almost all the 4th semester of English students at Sriwijaya University admitted that the most difficult skill is listening. Although they have taken the courses of IEC listening in semester one, listening comprehension I in semester two, and listening comprehension II in semester three but the result showed that there was some students who did not satisfy of the score they got. Indeed, there is still few students got C in listening comprehension.

Azmi, Celik, Yidliz, and Mart (2014, p.3) in their research found that listening comprehension problems encountered by ESL were quality of recorded material, cultural differences, accent, unfamiliar discoveries, length and speed of the listening, physical conditions, and lack of concentration. Furthermore, Hamouda (2013, p.151) found that various kinds problems of listening comprehension such as unfamiliar words, the length of the spoken text, speed rate, a variety of accents, lack of concentration and pronunciation. Although there has been many researches which aims to find English students' problems in listening comprehension yet, the writer believes that the result will be different and show a new discovery.

In line with the explanation above, the writer was interested to conduct the descriptive study entitled as **“An Investigation of Listening Comprehension Problems**

Encountered by the 4th Semester of English Students at Sriwijaya University". The writer used questionnaire and interview to collect the data. One of the sections in the questionnaires was about micro skill. There were 5 aspects of micro skills by Brown (2007) which the writer used in finding listening comprehension problems of the students from micro skills: recognizing reduced forms, detecting keywords, grasping speech containing pauses, errors, and corrections, grasping speech at different rates, and recognizing grammatical structures. In addition, the mastery of micro skill components is important to construct students' listening skill in order to avoid misunderstanding in listening comprehension. Next, the writer used quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. While the data obtained through questionnaire was organized and analyzed qualitatively in order to get information about the difficulties and problems which the 4th semester of English students at Sriwijaya University encounter in listening comprehension, the data obtained from the interview was analyzed qualitatively in order to give students a chance to speak up whether there were any other listening comprehension difficulties or not and to make the data more valid.

RESEARCH METHOD

A descriptive research method was applied in this research to investigate listening comprehension problems encountered by the 4th semester of English students at Sriwijaya University.

The sample of this study was the 4th semester of English students at Sriwijaya University. They consisted of seventy three students in academic year 2016 and now they are the 4th semester of English students. They consisted of 38 Indralaya students and 35 Palembang students. The total female samples were sixty two and the total male samples were eleven.

The writer used two kinds of instruments to collect the data. The first instrument was a questionnaire about students' perception on listening skill and listening comprehension problems. It was an adapted questionnaire from Hamouda (2013). This questionnaire consisted of four sections. First section comprised of five questions about the participants' personal information such as: gender, age, and mother tongue. Second section comprised of one question about how students' compare their ability in listening with the three other skills and how students' rate their listening proficiency (2 items). Third section dealt with students' perception to the importance of the listening skill (6 items). Finally, fourth section dealt with the listening problems which students encounter according to seven perceptions; listening material (4 items), micro skills and linguistic aspects (9 items), lack of concentration (3 items), speaker (2 items), listener (5 items), psychological category (4 items) and physical setting (3items). The second instrument which was used to complete the data in this research is interview. Furthermore, Jamshed (2014, p. 87) states that interview is an instrument which is used the most in collecting the data for qualitative research. The type of semi-structured interview was used in this research. Semi-structured interview has lightly structured yet, the writer will get the information in depth interview (Jamshed, 2014, p.87).

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, Hamouda had given it to four experienced teachers (Dr. Zidan Jassim, Dr. Fahad Al Jumah, Dr. Abdlay, and Dr. Nour AlDin) who have taught English listening in the same University where his research conducted in order to examine the structure, logical flow of the questionnaire, the

wording, clarity, length, and the order of the questions. Then, he made some modifications based on the experts' comments. Next, the writer has also given it to two lecturers who are master in listening (Dra. Rita Hayati, M.A. and Dr. Rita Inderawati, M.Pd). Hence, items with semantic ambiguity has been clarified and items recommended by the lecturers has been added.

For the reliability of this qualitative descriptive study, it must be subjective and reflective because the researcher also serves as the instrument. Then, it must be objective since the data later will be analyzed carefully, arranged, categorized systematically, and interpreted by the experience without prejudice.

To achieve the aims of the study, the data was analyzed quantitative and qualitative methods. For the questionnaire, each items were calculated to get the percentage based on Sugiyono's (2012, p.95) following formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100 \%$$

P = Number of percentage

F = Frequency of item

N = Number of whole sample

Last, the percentage of each items was analyzed qualitatively by explaining the result of each indicators in one item. Then, the writer interpreted the percentage result of each items one by one. For the interview, all students' answer were analyzed and transcribed.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STUDY

Findings from Questionnaire

The findings include the result of questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire was given to all the 4th semester of English students at Sriwijaya University while the interview was given to 10 samples.

Table 1. Part II How Students' Compare Their Ability in Listening with the Three Other Skills and How Students' Rate Their Listening Proficiency

Question 1: How do you rate your skills in English?

	Statement	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
1	Reading	75.3	15.1	9.6	
2	Writing	12.3	60.3	20.5	6.8
3	Speaking	5.5	28.8	34.2	31.5
4	Listening	1.4	4.1	17.8	76.7

In the second section of the questionnaire, the students were asked to rate their skills in English. It is no wonder that students were more skilled in reading (75.3%) because the fact was most of them rated their reading skill were excellent. However, they rated their writing skill as good (60.3%), speaking skill as average (34.2%), and listening

skill as poor (76.7%). It was not surprisingly that students have problems in listening comprehension.

Question 2: How do you rate your English listening ability when compared to others in class?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
How do you rate your English listening ability when compared to others in class?	2.7	20.5	47.9	28.8

Next, when students were asked about their listening ability if it was compared with the three other skills, most of them stated their listening as average (47.9%) and only (2.7%) stated as excellent.

Table 2. Part III Students' Perception to the Importance of Listening Skill

No.	Statements	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I am more aware of the perceived importance of English listening skill.		43.8	30.1	26
2	I find that listening comprehension is difficult.	2.7	28.8	64.4	4.1
3	I find that listening comprehension is boring and not interesting.	1.4	49.3	39.7	9.6
4	I find that listening comprehension is exciting.	27.4	47.9	19.2	5.5
5	I receive sufficient training in English listening comprehension during school.	46.6	21.9	20.5	11
6	I never heard about listening strategy.	57.5	28.8	13.7	

As you can see in table 2, there were 6 statements about students' perception to the importance of listening skill. Their answers were various.

a. Statement 1: The Awareness of the importance of Listening Skill

The result showed that (43.8%) students sometime aware of the importance of listening skill and there was (26%) students always aware of the importance of listening skill.

b. Statement 2: Listening Comprehension is Difficult

Most of the students stated that they often found if listening comprehension difficult (64.4%) and there was only (2.7%) they never found listening comprehension was difficult.

c. Statement 3: Listening Comprehension is Boring

Students sometime feel listening comprehension was boring and not interesting (49.3%). Some of them were also often feel it was boring and not interesting (39.7%) and there was only (1.4%) students stated that never got boring of this skill.

d. Statement 4: Listening Comprehension is Exciting

Students who stated that listening comprehension is never exciting was quite much (27.4%) yet, the most choice was listening comprehension is sometime exciting (47.9%).

e. Statement 5: Receive Sufficient Listening Comprehension Course during School

It was so surpsingly that the biggest score of this statement was students never (46.6%) receive sufficient listening course during school. Only few students chose they always (11%) receive sufficient listening comprehension course during school.

f. Statement 6: Listening Strategy

Sadly, almost all students never (57.5%) heard about listening strategy, only few students often (13.7%) heard about listening strategy, and there was no one who chose.

Part IV Listening Problems

Table 3. Listening Problems Related to the Content of the Listening Skill

No.	Statements	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
7	I find it difficult to understand listening texts in which there are too many unfamiliar words including jargon and idioms.	1.4	24.7	52.1	21.9
8	Complex grammatical structures interfere with my listening comprehension.	4.1	24.7	56.2	21.9
9	I find it difficult to interpret the meaning of a long spoken text.	4.1	24.7	61.6	15.1
10	I use my experience and background knowledge of the topic to understand the spoken text.		34.2	28.8	37

a. Statement 7: Problems Related to Unfamiliar Words & Idioms

The result showed that as much 74% students chose often and always find it difficult to understand listening texts in which there are too many unfamiliar words including jargon and idioms. It means that it can be one of student problems in listening comprehension.

b. Statement 8: Problems Related to Complex Grammatical Structures

Complex grammatical structures interfere students' listening comprehension was agreed by the students because it showed that 78.1% they chose often and always.

c. Statement 9: Problems Related to Long Spoken Text

There were (61.6%) students who answered often and (15.1%) who answered always find it difficult to interpret the meaning of a long spoken text. There was only (4.1%) students who answered never find the difficulties of this problem.

d. Statement 10: Problems Related to Background Knowledge

The result showed that students always (37%) use their experience and background knowledge of the topic to understand the spoken text while there was no one chose never. It means that they really rely on their background knowledge due to it can help them to pass listening comprehension.

Table 4. Listening Problems Related to Micro Skills and Linguistic Features

No.	Statements	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
11	I find it difficult to understand reduced forms.	6.8	64.4	23.3	5.5
12	I find the pronunciation familiar but cannot recognize the words.	15.1	45.2	37	2.7
13	I do not often pay attention to intonation of the speaker.	38.4	39.7	20.5	1.4
14	I find it difficult to recognize the signals which indicate that speaker is moving from one point to another.	8.2	58.9	27.4	5.5
15	I find it difficult to infer the meaning of an unknown word while listening.	2.7	63	30.1	4.1
16	When encountering an unknown word, I stop listening and think about the meaning of the word.	23.3	30.1	34.2	12.3
17	I find it difficult in grasping meaning if it contains pauses, errors, and corrections.	5.5	58.9	28.8	6.8
18	I find it difficult in grasping meaning if the speech I heard is at different rates of delivery.	2.7	67.1	26	4.1
19	I find it difficult in recognizing grammatical structures while listening.	8.2	54.8	32.9	4.1

a. Statement 11: Problems Related to Reduced Forms

Students' answer of this statement were vary. They sometime (64.4%) had a problem in reduced forms and few students answered never (6.8%) had problems related to reduced forms.

b. Statement 12: Problems Related to Cannot Recognize the Word

This statement also had a various answer. Students's answer were never (6.8%), sometimes (64.4%), often (23.3%), and never (5.5%). The biggest was sometime which means they sometime had problem in recognizing the word and sometime do not.

c. Statement 13: Problems Related to Intonation of the Speaker

The result of this statement was they never (39.7) do not often pay attention to intonation of the speaker. The rest were sometime (38.4%), often (20.5%), and never (1.4%) which means that they had no problem related to intonation of the speaker.

d. Statement 14: Problems Related to Code Whose Speaker Is Moving

The statement was "I find it difficult to recognize the signals which indicate that speaker is moving from one point to another" or in other word whether or not the students find it difficult to catch the code/signal whose speaker is always move to different part. The result showed that they chose never (8.2%), sometime (27.4%), often (58.9%), and never (5.5%). Hence, it showed that most of them got difficulty as what this statement stated.

e. Statement 15: Problems Related to Unknown Word While Listening

The result of this statement were never (2.7%), sometime (63%), often (30.1%), and never (4.1%). Students sometime had difficulties to infer the meaning of an unknown word while listening. Sometime means that they were not always had problem but also not always had no problem.

f. Statement 16: Problems Related to the Concentration

The statement “when encountering an unknown word, I stop listening and think about the meaning of the word” had various result from students. Their answered were never (23.3%), sometime (30.1%), often (34.2%), and always (12.3%). Therefore, the most answer was they often faced this problem.

g. Statement 17: Problems Related to Grasping Meaning Which Contains Pauses and Errors

The result of this statement was most of them clearly had problem in listening comprehension related to grasping meaning which contains pauses and errors because the answers were never (5.5%), sometime (28.8%), often (58.9%), and never (6.8%).

h. Statement 18: Problems Related to Grasping Meaning with Different Rates of Delivery

The result showed that most students chose sometime (67.1%) while the rest were never (2.7%), often (26%), and always (4.1%). It can be concluded that students also got problem in grasping meaning if the speech they heard was at different rates of delivery.

i. Statement 19: Problems Related to Recognizing Grammatical Structures

It showed that most student’s answer was still sometime (54.8%) and followed by often (32.9%), never (8.2%), and always (4.1%). Hence, it also can be said that they had difficulties in recognizing grammatical structures while listening.

Table 5. Listening Problems Caused by Failure to Concentrate

No.	Statements	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
20	I lose focus on the talk when I have got an expected answer in my mind.	15.1	47.9	27.4	9.6
21	I lose my concentration if the recording is in a poor quality.	1.4	27.4	32.9	38.4
22	I lose my concentration when I think about the meaning of new words.	9.6	6.8	46.6	37

a. Statement 20: Problems Related to Expected Answer in Mind

The statement was “I lose focus on the talk when I have got an expected answer in my mind” which had vary response from the students. They chose never (15.1%), sometimes (47.9%), often (27.4%), and always (9.6%). It showed that they did not have serious problem on this statement.

b. Statement 21: Problems Related to Losing Concentration Caused by Poor Quality Recording

The result showed that students faced this problem due to the biggest answer was always (38.4%) and often (32.9)%. It means that almost all of them lose their concentration if the recording is in a poor quality.

c. Statement 22: Problems Related to Losing Concentration When Thinking of New Word

The total percentage of always and often were 83.6% which means that students always lose their concentration when thinking about the meaning of new words. Hence, only few students never (9.6%) and sometime (6.8%) who had no problem on this statement.

Table 6. Listening Problems Related to Psychological Characteristics

No.	Statements	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
23	I find it difficult to understand the spoken text which is not of interest to me.	16.4	21.9	58.9	2.7
24	If I do not arrive at total comprehension of an oral text, I feel disappointed.	6.8	28.8	37	27.4

a. Statement 23: Problems Related to Pertaining to Anxiety

Very high percentages of students (61.6%) reach an agreement that they always feel nervous and worried when they do not understand the spoken text. Only 16.4% claim they never experience panic when they fail to understand the spoken text. These figures point out that this factor creates psychological problems for learners.

b. Statement 24: Problems Pertaining to the Students' Inability of Understanding

A Listening Text

There were also high percentages for this statement, students chose often and always as much (64.4%) while only few of them never (6.8%) feel disappointed if they do not arrive at total comprehension of an oral text. It can be concluded that some of them had a good perception to the importance of listening comprehension.

Table 7. Listening Problems Related to the Listener

No.	Statements	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
25	I find it difficult to get a general understanding of the spoken text from the first listening.	8.2	27.4	57.5	6.8
26	At the time of listening I find it difficult to predict what would come next.	1.4	69.9	26	2.7
27	I find it difficult to quickly remember words or phrases I have just heard.	6.8	8.2	30.1	54.8
28	I find it difficult when listening to English without transcripts.	13.7	54.8	16.4	15.1
29	I found it difficult to recognize the words I know because of the way they are pronounced.	4.1	69.9	21.9	4.1

a. Statement 25: Problems Related to the Difficulty of Getting a General Understanding of the Spoken Text

The total percentage of students who chose often (57.5%) and always (6.8%) were 64.3% while they who chose never (8.2%) only. It can be concluded that most of them did not get the idea of the spoken text from the first listening due to their own self.

b. Statement 26: Problems Related to the Difficulty of Predicting What Would Come Next

The highest percentage of this statement was sometime (69.9%) and the rest were never (1.4%), often (26%), and always (2.7%). They sometime difficult to predict what would come next which means that they also could faced this problem as much as they listen.

c. Statement 27: Problems Related to the Difficulty to Quickly Remember Words

There were also high percentage from the students who chose often (30.1%) and always (54.8%) for this statement. It was clearly showed that out of 84.9% they failed in comprehending listening because the words or the phrases they just remember did not long lasting in their memory.

d. Statement 28: Problems Related to the Difficulty When Listening to English Without Transcripts

The result of this statement were never (13.7%), sometime (54.8%), often (16.4%), and always (15.1%). Students of English majoring are always listening without transcript so that is why it could be the reason they did not have quite problem when listening to English without transcripts.

e. Statement 29: Problems Related to the Difficulty of Recognizing the Words Due To Their Accent

The result showed that some of the students still chose sometime (69.9%) for this statement. They who never (4.1%) get the difficulty of recognizing the words they already know since the way they are pronounced was only few. It has become a common thing for English students listening to the native speaker whose accent were do much different from Indonesian.

Table 8. Listening Problems Related to the Speaker

No.	Statements	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
30	I find it difficult to understand the natural speech which is full of hesitation and pauses.	9.6	67.1	17.8	5.5
31	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly.	2.7	43.8	47.9	5.5
32	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak too fast.	2.7	35.6	50.7	11
33	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak with variety of accents.	5.5	39.7	43.8	11

a. Statement 30: Problems Related to the Difficulty of Understanding the Natural Speech Which Is Full of Hesitation and Pauses

It showed that some students chose sometime (67.1%) for this statement which means that it is not really become a problem for them. It also showed that they who always (5.5%) face this problem only in low percentage.

b. Statement 31: Problems Related to the Difficulty of Understanding the Meaning of Words Which Are Not Pronounced Clearly

The result between sometime (43.8%) and often (47.9%) were not quite different. So do the result of never (2.7%) and always (5.5%). For this statement, the highest percentage students chose was often (47.9%) which means that some of them got difficulty in understanding the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly and half of them who chose sometime (43.8%) was also sometime face this problem.

c. Statement 32: Problems Related to the Difficulty of Understanding Well When Speakers Speak Too Fast

The highest percentage of this statement was often (50.7%) with always was (11%). Hence, the total students who faced this problem were quite much. It was clear that they got difficulty in understanding well when speakers speak too fast.

d. Statement 33: Problems Related to the Difficulty of Understanding Well When Speakers Speak With Variety of Accents

Eventhough the students were the 4th semester of English students it was still possible that they faced problem when listening to English with variety of accents. The result showed that only a few students who never (5.5%) experienced this problem and they who often were 43.8%.

Table 9. Listening Problems Related to the Physical Setting

No.	Statements	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
34	It is difficult for me to concentrate with noises around.	1.4	19.2	37	42.5
35	Unclear sounds resulting from a poor-quality CD-player interfere with my listening comprehension.		34.2	26	39.7
36	Unclear sounds resulting from poor equipment interfere with my listening comprehension.	1.4	28.8	46.6	23.3

a. Statement 34: Problems Related to Concentrate with Noises Around

The highest percentage of this statement was always (42.5%). It was not surprisingly that most students always cannot concentrate with noises around. The total percentage who never face this problem only 1.4% out of 100%. It can be said it would be the main reason students fail in listening comprehension.

b. Statement 35: Problems Related to Unclear Sounds from Poor Quality CD-Player

The total percentage of students who agree with this statement was 65.7% and there was no one who chose never (0%). Therefore, it was clear that unclear sounds resulting from a poor-quality CD-player interfere with their listening comprehension due to the almost all of them agree with this statement.

c. Statement 36: Problems Related to Unclear Sounds from Poor Equipment

This statement was not quite different with the statement before. The result showed that students agree as much 69.9%. It means that poor equipment affects their listening comprehension.

Findings from Interview

As already discussed in the methodology above, interviews were carried out with 10 students, who gave additional evidence of the listening comprehension problems. To present various views regarding different topics from interviewed students, the data were presented respectively under each question in the following section.

Question 1: How Did You Rate Your English Listening Skill?

The first question of the interview was asking the students about their ability in listening skill. Actually, their answers were vary yet, from 9 out of 10 stated they listening skill ability were below average. There was only one student who felt that his listening skill was good.

“My english skill in listening was not that excellent, I could categorize it on average level because I thought my listening skill was not really good.” (Interviewee 1)

“I rated my listening skill on the third place if it was compared with the three skills because I thought that I was not really good.” (Interviewee 2)

“I thought my english listening skill was under the three other skills (reading, speaking, writing) because I thought it was the hardest skill and I thought I should practice more.” (Interviewee 3)

“I thought my listening skill if it was scored it would be 7 out of 10. It means that my listening skill was sometime good sometime bad.” (Interviewee 4)

“Basically, I thought I did well in my listening skill because I had lot of training, my teacher supported me, and I took some English courses out there.” (Interviewee 6)

“My ability in listening was so far from good. Lack of listening skill made me difficult to understand it.” (Interview 8)

Question 2: What Was Your Perception to the Importance on Listening Comprehension?

The next question was about students' perception to the importance on listening comprehension. It was surprisingly that their answers were very vary and it made the writer hard to summarize. Overall, they stated that listening comprehension was really important.

“It was very important for us as the student because it was really needed to pass the test like TOEFL/ SULIET test and also it had a standard score.” (Interviewee 1)

“Although I had put my listening skill on the third place but, listening comprehension was really important because it was one of the biggest thing that could show or tell how good we were in English. So, by mastering listening comprehension, people could see how good we were in listening.” (Interviewee 2)

“Of course we knew that from listening.. While we were speaking with someone, we needed to listen. So, it was one the important thing why we must studied listening. Second, it was very useful because if it could practice the way we thought. Like we had to think fast to comprehend what people said.” (Interviewee 4)

“I think it was important to learn because first, in this era demand you to able to speak English. But, if you could not listen well how could you response of what people say.” (Interviewee 5)

“It was really important because it was the main skill in English in order for you to master it. So, if you just ignore it, it would effect you really really bad. Furthermore, if you did not practice listening from now it could had a bad effect to your future. In short, listening comprehension was really needed for daily life.” (Interviewee 6)

“In my opinion, it was very important because in this era we had to master English language because in fact, the information in this world maybe around 50% was stated or spoken in English language.” (Interviewee 7)

“We must learned it because we would become the next future teacher later. Hence, it was important for us to learn it.” (Interviewee 9)

Question 3: What Were the Problems that Affect Your Listening Comprehension?

The last but not least was about the problems which affected students' listening comprehension. The most common answers were lack of vocabulary, the accents of native speaker, native speaker spoke too fast, unfamiliar word, and unclear sound or poor equipment. The rests are new word, not clear pronunciation, some accents, concentration management, and long spoken text / conversation. An interviewee 9 said that sometime what she heard was different from what native said while an interviewee 10 stated that listening could not be learned just like structure, reading, writing, and so on. Furthermore, listening was also a skill which depended on our ability, our mood, and our concentration.

“The problem were: lack of vocabulary that caused me could not get the point. For example: when we had to listen the story by audio, I almost get the point but because one word which I did not know the meaning so it made me confused.” (Interviewee 1)

“The most problem was the speaker because it spoke too fast and I could not hear the pronunciation clearly so I did not get the idea about the text. If there were questions I could not answer it because I did not understand what speaker said. Other problem was new word that I never listen before and it made me confuse to understand. Last, it was about speaker from the radio (poor equipment) because sometimes it was not so clear and too slow.” (Interviewee 3)

“First, pronunciation was not clear enough. Second, some accents (Canadian, British, American, Australian) they had the same words but the accents were different. Third, the audio was not clear enough. Actually, people would found unfamiliar word but we could overlook this problem by making inferences.” (Interviewee 5)

“First was focus because we had to adapt with the condition first. Second was unclear audio. For example when we had a SULIET test, the audio was really really bad. About the vocabulary.. if we did not know the meaning, the tip from me was you should just guessing.” (Interviewee 6)

“First was long spoken conversation / text. Second was the quality of the sound from the audio. Third was difficult vocabulary. So, those were the problems I faced that made it difficult.” (Interviewee 7)

“There were a lot of problems. First, English language was difficult. Second, the accents were also hard (British and American). Third, there were a lot of vocabularies which I did not know. Fourth, the speaker spoke too fast.” (Interviewee 8)

“First was vocabulary. Second was native speaker that speak too fast and when we had to understand what they said it was really hard for me. The last, sometime the problem was what I heard was actually different from what speaker said. Hence, it made me fail. Native speaker was also spoke just like gargling and if we had lack of vocabularies it would took effect to everything.” (Interviewee 9)

“Honestly, I did not have much vocabularies on my mind which made me confuse and always fail when listening to English. So, it was hard for me to catch the meaning or grasping the meaning of what they said. In my opinion, listening cannot be practiced just like structure, reading, or writing class. For example: when we had structure test for tomorrow, tonight we could study first but listening cannot. Listening was also skill which depended on our ability, our mood, and our concentration.” (Interviewee 10)

INTERPRETATION OF THE STUDY

Based on the findings of this study, several points need to be explained in order to strengthen the values of the study and elaborate the answer of the research problems formulated.

RQ 1: What were the 4th semester of English students' at Sriwijaya University perception on listening skill?

The 4th semester of English students at Sriwijaya University perceived that listening was important. It was proved by their answers from the interview. Although they answered it with variety reasons yet, all the interviewee stated that listening comprehension was really important. Then, 68.5% out of 100% agreed that listening comprehension was difficult. There was almost 75% students who chose sometime when asked about listening comprehension was boring and not interesting from the questionnaire. However, there was only few of them (5.5%) who chose agreed that listening comprehension was exciting. Next, half of them did not receive sufficient training in English listening comprehension during school. Last, almost all of them 86.3% out of 100% stated that they never heard about listening strategy. This finding was supported by Brenman (1998) which states that only the students who has reached a certain level only will use a given strategy. Furthermore, Hamouda (2013) asserts that because of the students do not know much about listening strategies, it is better for the teacher to teach them an appropriate strategies. Tu sum up, all of them perceived that listening comprehension was very important although it was the hardest skill for them. It is in line with Ismail (2014) that a concept of the students are aware of the importance on listening skill eventhough it is difficult. Hamouda (2013) adds that the reason is maybe due to they do not receive sufficient training of listening comprehension in their school.

RQ 2: What listening comprehension problems did the 4th semester of English students at Sriwijaya University encounter when listening to English?

Listening comprehension problems which encountered by the 4th semester of English students at Sriwijaya University when listening to English were limited English vocabulary, unfamiliar words, slang expressions, inability to apply strategies, lack of

linguistic knowledge, rate of speech too fast to comprehend, length of the spoken text, speed rate, unclear pronunciation, unclear sound of the tape (poor equipment), a variety of accents, lack of concentration and pronunciation. Yet, the most common answers were limited English vocabulary, variety of accents, rate of speech too fast to comprehend, concentration management, and unclear sound of the tape (poor equipment).

First was the lack of vocabulary they knew. Almost all the students that had been interviewed said that if their English vocabulary was limited. There was only two students who could overcome this problem by guessing or making inference. However, this caused a failure to comprehend of what they listened due to they did not know much about the vocabulary. This finding coincides with Butt (2010) who reported that the major problem hindering listening comprehension was that the students' vocabulary was too limited to understand the message.

Second was the variety of accents such as Canadian, Australian, British, and American which made them more difficult to understand what they heard. Beside, they do not have much time to exposure to different accents. A study done by Hamouda (2013) was also found that students got difficulty of learning different accents due to what they heard was their teacher's voice. Therefore, they got surprised when listening to native speaker.

Third was the length of spoken text which made them difficult to comprehend. This problem was also stated by all of them. This is in line with Ur (1984) who found that the length of spoken text could distract their concentration which would made they difficult to comprehend what they heard.

Forth was the difficulty to concentrate when listening to the speaker. Some of them explained that it was sometime hard for them to have stabil concentration. Hamouda (2013) found that failure to concentrate when listening made them missed some words they had heard. It can be concluded that by missing some words would be affected to their listening comprehending.

Last was a bad quality of tape recorder (poor equipment) which they said as the main problem in comprehending listening. In fact, unclear sound produced by tape recorder or others distract their understanding and comprehending. This is in line with Hamouda (2013) who stated unclear sound produced by poor equipment interfered students' comprehending in listening.

CONCLUSION

The aims of this study was to find the perception of the 4th semester of English students at Sriwijaya University on listening skill and to find the problems they encountered when comprehending listening. Hence, it is arrived at point that they admitted if listening skill was the hardest skill and they rated their listening skill below average.

There were two conclusions made by the writer, according to the findings and interpretations. First, they were aware of the importance of listening comprehension. Although listening was difficult for them yet, they perceived that it was really important and really needed for daily life. Such as if they wanted to have a TOEFL test, they should have a good comprehending in listening. Then, it could develop the three other skills since it was one of the main skill to have a good communication. Second, there were many various problems they faced in listening comprehension. They were limited English

vocabulary, unfamiliar words, slang expressions, inability to apply strategies, lack of linguistic knowledge, rate of speech too fast to comprehend, length of the spoken text, speed rate, unclear pronunciation, unclear sound of the tape (poor equipment), variety of accents, lack of concentration.

SUGGESTION

Based on the findings of the study, the writer would like to give several suggestions for teachers of English as a foreign language, for students, and for future researchers. First, teachers should aware to the problems in listening comprehension faced by their students. So that the teachers know how to overcome these problems. For example by teaching them the appropriate strategy in listening comprehension. Then, the teachers maybe could give the students different atmosphere when teaching them listening which will make them excited in listening. Second, by knowing the problems the writer really hope that the students could improve their listening comprehension. It will be easier if the students know how to deal with the problems their face. Third, there are so many limitations on this study. Therefore, the writer hopes that for future researchers could investigate in big samples for questionnaire and interview with some questions. Next, it is also better to add the solution how to deal with students' listening comprehension problems.

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