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PENERBIT

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A STUDY OF STUDENTS' PROBLEMS IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract

The objectives of this research are : (1) to know if there are problems at the third semester students of English Department at UMU BUTON Baubau have in learning listening comprehension, and (2) to know the students' ability of the third semester of English Department at UMU BUTON Baubau in answering the oral text spoken through listening comprehension. The scope of this research was focused on "The students' problems in listening comprehension at the third semester of English Department at UMU BUTON Baubau in vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar". The design that used in this research was a descriptive qualitative design; it meant only to describe the students' problems at the third semester of English Department at UMU BUTON Baubau in listening comprehension through the oral text, and the sample that was taken in this research was 10 students. The techniques that were used in collecting the data in this research were divided into three parts; they were as follows: observation, essay tests and questionnaire. The technique that was used in analyzing the data about the students' problems in listening comprehension at the third semester of English Department at UMU BUTON Baubau, the writer used a descriptive qualitative analysis (through percentage). The result indicated that (1) the third semester students of English Education Study Program have some problems in listening comprehension after through the stages of listening tests distributed to them, and (2) there are some problems in listening comprehension faced or experienced by the third semester of English Department; they are: (a) problems on vocabularies, (b) problems on word pronunciations, (c) problems on grammars, (d) problems on vocabulary meaning, (e) problems on the lack of concentration during listening, (f) problems on the lack of listening practice, and (g) problems on the speed of the speaker's pronunciation.

Intisari

Tujuan dari penelitian ini ialah untuk (1) mengetahui apakah ada permasalahan yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa semester tiga program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris UMU BUTON Baubau dalam pembelajaran Listening, dan (2) untuk mengetahui kemampuan mahasiswa menjawab teks lisan pada listening. Ruang lingkup penelitian ini difokuskan pada "Permasalahan - permasalahan mahasiswa di semester tiga program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris UMU BUTON dalam pembelajaran listening comprehension pada pemahaman kosakata, pengucapan dan tata bahasa/gramatikal". Desain yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini ialah deskriptif kualitatif; yang mana bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan permasalahan mahasiswa semester tiga program studi Bahasa Inggris UMU BUTON Baubau dalam listening comprehension melalui teks lisan, dan sampel yang diambil dalam penelitian ini ialah 10 mahasiswa. Teknik pengumpulan data dalam penelitian ini dibagi menjadi tiga bagian; observasi, tes esai dan angket. Teknik yang digunakan dalam menganalisis data tentang permasalahan mahasiswa dalam pemahaman listening pada semester III Program studi pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di UMU BUTON Baubau, yakni analisis deskriptif kualitatif (melalui persentase). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa (1) mahasiswa semester tiga Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris memiliki beberapa permasalahan dalam pemahaman listening setelah melalui tahapan tes mendengarkan yang dibagikan kepada mereka, dan (2) ada beberapa permasalahan dalam pemahaman listening yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa semester tiga program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris, UMU BUTON diantaranya (a) masalah kosakata, (b) masalah pengucapan kata, (c) masalah tata bahasa, (d) masalah makna kosakata, (e) masalah kurangnya konsentrasi saat mendengarkan, (f) masalah pada kurangnya latihan mendengarkan, dan (g) masalah pada kecepatan pengucapan.

1. BACKGROUND

Listening comprehension is regarded theoretically as an active process in which individual concentrate on selected aspects of aural input, from meaning from passages, and associate what they hear with existing knowledge. "listening comprehension in second language is the process of receiving, focusing attention on, an assigning meaning to aural stimuli. It includes a listener, who brings prior knowledge and cognitive process to listening task, the aural text, and the interaction between the two" [1]. Furthermore, Ref. [2] said that "listening

comprehension as a process by which students actively form of mental representation of an aural text according to prior knowledge of the topic and information found within".

Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning [3].

Furthermore, Ref. [4] defined listening as "the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to the expressed (verbal and nonverbal) needs, concerns, and information offered by other human beings." Besides that, Ref. [5] wrote that listening is personal and individual, and a series of processes which begin with deciphering incoming sounds and later make meaning out of them.

An able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously.. There are lists a series of micro-skills of listening, which she calls enabling skills are as follows: (a) predicting what people are going to talk about, (b) guessing at unknown words or phrases without panicking, (c) using one's own knowledge of the subject to help one understand, (d) identifying relevant points; (e) rejecting irrelevant information, (f) retaining relevant points (note-taking, summarizing), (g) recognizing discourse markers, e.g., "Well", "Oh", another thing is; "Now", finally; etc., (g) recognizing cohesive devices, e.g., such as and which, including link words, pronouns, references, etc., (h) understanding different intonation patterns and uses of stress, etc., which give clues to meaning and social setting, and (i) understanding inferred information, e.g., speakers' attitude or intentions [6].

Although listening is now well recognized as a critical dimension in language learning, it still remains one of the least understood processes.. Special attention to listening was incorporated into international framework that is functional language and communicative approach [7]. The attention to listening in language instruction increased dramatically. Listening comprehension is now generally acknowledged as an important facet of language learning.

Until recently, listening comprehension attracted little attention in terms of both theory and practice, while the other three language skills (e.g. reading, writing and speaking) receive direct instructional attention, teacher often expects students to develop their listening skill by *osmosis* and without help [8]. In the *osmosis* approach, it is also known as the *Audio-lingual method*, it is believed that if students listen to the target

language all day, they will improve their listening comprehension skill through the experience. The fact that listening has been neglected or poorly taught may have stemmed from the belief that it is a passive skill and that exposing students to the spoken language provides adequate instruction in listening comprehension [9].

In addition, listening comprehension has focused on identifying what factors are involved in the process of listening and how variation on these factors affects the product of listening comprehension. Therefore, there are various variables should be paid attention in case listening such as speech rate, and pausing, stress and rhythmic patterning, morphological and syntactic modification, memory, text type, vocabularies should be lots.

There are some potential causes of obstacles to effective listening comprehension; they are: (a) the listeners (students) cannot control the speed of delivery, it means how quickly the speaker speaks, (b) the listeners (students) cannot always have words repeated. This is a serious problem in learning situations, (c) the listeners (students) have a limited vocabulary. The speakers may have to choose words the listeners do not know, (d) the listeners may fail to recognize the signals, which indicate the speaker is moving from one point to another, giving an example or repeating a point, and (e) the listeners may lack contextual knowledge. Sharing mutual knowledge and common context makes communication easier, (f) it can be difficult for listeners to concentrate in a foreign language. Concentration is easier when students find the topic of listening passage interesting; however, students sometimes feel listening is very tiring even if they are interested because it requires enormous amount of efforts to follow the meaning.

Students may have established certain learning habits, such as a wish to understand every word. Teachers want students to understand every word they hear by repeating and pronouncing words carefully and by speaking slowly and so on. Consequently, students tend to become worried if they fail to understand a particular word or phrase and they will be discouraged by the failure.

Furthermore, there are three reasons the researcher is interested in taking the title, they are as follows: *firstly*, the researcher saw that there are still many students having limited vocabularies so that what the lecturer spoke or read the text orally make the students do not know, *secondly*, the students sometimes cannot control or cannot concentrate with the text is spoken during the instructional activity is going

on, and *finally*, the researcher concentrates to this semester with the consideration that the students have studied listening comprehension and make sure that among of the students might have problems in listening comprehension to the oral text spoken by the lecturer.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Based on the above background, the problem statements in this research are as follows: (a) Are there any problems in listening comprehension by the third semester of English Department at UMU BUTON ?, (b). How is the students' ability in listening comprehension by the third semester students of English Department at UMU BUTON ?

3. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

The design that used in this research was a descriptive qualitative design; it meant only to describe the students' problems at the third semester of English Department at UMU BUTON in listening comprehension through the oral text.

The subjects of this research were the third semester students of English Department in UMU BUTON which consists of ten (10) students.

The instrument of this research was researcher herself which could be used in data collecting to identify the problems faced by students in listening comprehension. Then researcher also used test and questionnaire to get the data of students' problem in listening comprehension. The test was used to know the students' ability in answering the listening quiz and questionnaire used to see the factors of the students' ability in listening.

The technique used in analyzing the data about the students' problems in listening comprehension, the writer used a descriptive qualitative analysis (through percentage) by using the following formula [10]:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\% \quad (1)$$

Remarks:

P = Percentage

F = Frequency of correct answer

N = Number of sample.

To determine the problems and abilities in answering the oral text spoken in listening comprehension, the writer used the following criteria [11].

84 - 100 = high

67 - 83 = moderate

50 - 66 = low

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Finding of the Research

After collecting and identifying all of the data from the result of listening test scores about the students' problems in listening comprehension, the writer classified each of the students' problems through the tabulation. The findings which the writer found during the research were divided into three sections; they were as follows:

1. The students' problem in vocabularies
2. The students' problem in pronunciations
3. The students' problem in grammar.

The mean percentage of each of the students' problems through listening comprehension test was different from one to another section. The percentage of each of the students' problems in listening can be described in the following discussion.

4.2 The Descriptive Percentage Analysis of Students' Problems in Listening Comprehension

a. Students' Problems in Vocabularies

The descriptive percentage of students' problems in listening comprehension especially in problems with the mastery of vocabulary from the spoken text might be described in the following table.

Table 1. Students' Problems in Vocabularies

No.	Scores	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1.	50	6	60
2	75	2	20
3.	95	2	20
Total		10	100

Based on the table above, it indicated that the lowest score was 50 and the highest score was 95. For that reason, the score percentage of students' problems in listening comprehension showed that there were 7 students or 70% who had problems with the mastery of vocabularies in listening comprehension, 1 of student or 10% who had problems with the mastery of vocabularies in listening comprehension and 2 students or 20% who had problems with the mastery of vocabularies in listening comprehension. Furthermore, it was viewed from the result of listening test they have heard, the writer found that the third semester students of English Education Study Program still had problems with the mastery of vocabulary they have had after listening test spoken to them. It meant that not all the vocabularies of the speaker pronounced the students understood so that the result of the mastery of their vocabularies only spread score

interval: 50 – 66. The description of the students' problems in vocabulary can be looked at the following category table.

Table 2. The category of students' problems in vocabularies

No	Score Interval	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Category
1	84 – 100	2	20	High
2	67 – 83	1	10	Moderate
3	50 – 66	7	70	Low
Total		10	100	

The table above described the students' problems in listening comprehension, which indicated that there were 2 students or it was about 20% who obtained the score interval: 84-100 with the high category, there were 1 student or it was about 10% who obtained the score interval: 67 – 83 with the moderate category, and finally there were 7 students or it was about 70% who obtained the score interval: 50 – 66 with the low category. From such number, it can be concluded that the students who had problems with the mastery of vocabularies in listening comprehension was in *moderate* category. Furthermore, the way to measure the vocabulary test was seen through the questions with the proof that the students still had got many wrong answers from answering the questions.

b. Students' Problems in Pronunciations

The descriptive percentage of students' problems in listening comprehension especially in problems with pronunciations from the spoken text might be described in the following table.

Table 3. Students' problems in pronunciations

No.	Scores	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	50	6	60
2	75	2	20
3	87,5	2	20
Total		10	100

Based on the table above, it indicated that the lowest score was 50 and the highest score was 87.5. For that reason, the score percentage of students' problems with the pronunciation in listening comprehension showed that there were 6 students or 60% who had problems with their pronunciations in listening comprehension, 2 students or 20% who had problems with their pronunciations in listening comprehension, 6 students or 16.67% who had problems with their pronunciations in listening comprehension. Then, it was viewed from the result of listening test they have heard, the writer found that the third semester students of English Education Study

Program still had problems with their pronunciations they have heard the words after listening test spoken to them. It meant that not all the word pronunciations of the speaker pronounced the students understood so that the result of pronunciations only spread score interval: 50 – 66. The description of the students' problems in vocabulary can be looked at the following category table.

Table 4. The category of students' problems in pronunciations

No	Score Interval	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Category
1	84 - 100	2	20	High
2	67 - 83	2	20	Moderate
3	50 - 66	6	60	Low
Total		10	100	

The above table described the students' problems in listening comprehension, which indicated that there was 2 students or it was about 20% who obtained the score interval: 84 - 100 with the high category, there were 2 students or it was about 20% who obtained the score interval: 67 – 83 with the moderate category, and finally there were 6 students or it was about 60% who obtained the score interval: 50 – 66 with the low category. From such number, it can be concluded that the students who had problems with their pronunciations in listening comprehension was in *low* category. Furthermore, the way to measure the pronunciation was as follows: if the students answered the questions correctly, it meant that the students had enough hearing ability in listening test, but the proof showed that the students had low ability in listening to the pronunciation.

c. Students' Problems in Grammars

Meanwhile, the descriptive percentage of students' problems in listening comprehension especially in problems with their sentence grammar from the spoken text might be described in the following table.

Table 5. Students' Problems in Grammars

No.	Scores	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	58.33	5	50
2	66.67	3	30
3	75	2	20
Total		10	100

Based on the above table, it indicated that the lowest score was 58.33 and the highest score was 75. So, the score percentage of students' problems in listening comprehension showed that there were 5 students or 50% who had problems with their grammars in listening comprehension, 3

students or 30% who had problems with their grammars in listening comprehension, and 2 students or 20% who had problems with their grammars in listening comprehension. Furthermore, it was viewed from the result of listening test they have heard, the writer found that the third semester students still had problems with their grammars they have heard after listening test spoken to them. It meant that not all the sentence structures of the speaker pronounced the students understood so that the result of the mastery of their grammars only spread score interval: 50 – 66. The description of the students' problems in grammars can be looked at the following category table.

Table 6. The category of students' problems in grammars

No.	Score Interval	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Category
1	84 - 100	0	0	High
2	67 - 83	2	20	Moderate
3	50 - 66	8	80	Low
Total		10	100	

The above table described the students' problems in listening comprehension, which indicated that there were no student or it was about 0% who obtained the score interval: 84 - 100 with the high category, there were 2 students or it was about 20% who obtained the score interval: 67 – 83 with the moderate category, and finally there were 8 students or it was about 80% who obtained the score interval: 50 – 66 with the low category. From such number, it can be concluded that the students who had problems with their grammars in listening comprehension was in *low* category. In addition, the way to measure the students' grammar problems was as follows: if the sentence answers of students arranged correctly from their answer sheets, it meant the mastery of sentence grammar can be relied on but if the sentence answers of the students were not arranged correctly, it meant the mastery of sentence grammar cannot be relied on.

4.3. Discussion

The students' problems in listening comprehension through the listening script (listening test) were caused by some factors as described through the description of questionnaire which had been distributed to all research samples: questionnaire (1) indicated that there were 7 students or it was 70% responded strongly agreed that from the four language skills, listening skill was a very difficult skill to be understood by the listeners, 2 students or it was 20% responded agreed that from the four language skills, listening skill was a very difficult

skill to be understood by the listeners, 1 student or it was 10% responded undecided. that from the four language skills, listening skill was a very difficult skill to be understood by the listeners.

In questionnaire (2), it indicated that there were 5 students or it was 50% responded that they often underwent the difficulties in listening, 3 students or it was 30% responded that they sometimes underwent the difficulties in listening, and 2 students or it was 20% responded that they never underwent the difficulties in listening. In addition, questionnaire (3) indicated that there were 7 students or it was 70% responded strongly agreed that one of the difficulties or problems in listening was the lack of vocabularies, 3 students or it was 30% responded agreed that one of the difficulties or problems in listening was the lack of vocabularies, In questionnaire (4), it also indicated that there were 7 students or it was 70% responded very interesting with the teaching method in teaching listening, 3 students or it was 30% responded interesting with the teaching method in listening.

Furthermore, questionnaire (5) indicated that there were 7 students or it was 70% responded strongly agreed that another difficulty in listening was the lack of the word meaning, and 3 students or it was 30% responded undecided that another difficulty in listening was the lack of the word meaning. In questionnaire (6), it indicated that there were 8 students or it was 80% responded strongly agreed that the difficulty in listening comprehension was because of the lack of concentration, and 2 students or it was 20% responded agreed that the difficulty in listening comprehension was because of the lack of concentration.

In questionnaire (7), it described that there were 5 students or it was 50% responded strongly agreed that another problem in listening was the problem of grammar, and 5 students or it was 50% responded agreed that another problem in listening was the problem of grammar. Furthermore, questionnaire (8) also indicated that there were 8 students or it was 20% responded strongly agreed that the problem of grammar in listening was about the use of sentence structure, and 2 students or it was 20% responded undecided that the problem of grammar in listening was about the use of sentence structure.

Meanwhile, in questionnaire (9) also indicated that there were 6 students or it was 60% responded strongly agreed that another problem in listening which always happened was the problem of word pronunciation, 2 students or it was 20% responded agreed that another problem in listening which always happened was the problem of word pronunciation, and 2

students or it was 20% responded undecided, that another problem in listening which always happened was the problem of word pronunciation. In questionnaire (10), it indicated that there were 7 students or it was 70% responded strongly agreed that the problem which also often happened in listening was the lack of listening practice, and 3 students or it was 30% responded undecided that the problem which also often happened in listening was the lack of listening practice.

In addition, questionnaire (11) also indicated that there were 4 students or it was 40% responded strongly agreed that the other problem in listening was the lack of students' memory power, 4 students or it was 40% responded agreed that the other problem in listening was the lack of students' memory power, and 2 students or it was 20% responded undecided. In questionnaire (12) also indicated that there were 8 students or it was 80% responded strongly agreed that the problem in listening comprehension was the lack of contextual knowledge of the listeners, 2 students or it was 20% responded undecided that the problem in listening comprehension was the lack of contextual knowledge of the listeners. In questionnaire (13), it indicated that there were 8 students or it was 80% responded strongly agreed that the problem in listening comprehension was because of the speed of the speaker during speaking, and 2 students or it was 20% responded undecided that the problem in listening comprehension was because of the speed of the speaker during speaking.

Furthermore, questionnaire (14) indicated that there were 6 students or it was 60% responded strongly agreed that the problems in listening comprehension was the lack of experience in listening, 2 students or it was 20% responded agreed that the problems in listening comprehension was the lack of experience in listening, and 2 others or it was 20% responded undecided that the problems in listening comprehension was the lack of experience in listening.

Then at the last questionnaire (15), it also indicated that there were 4 students or it was 40% responded strongly agreed that the other problem in listening was because of the influence of small or big sound volume of the speaker to the listener, 4 students or it was 40% responded agreed that the other problem in listening was because of the influence of small or big sound volume of the speaker to the listener, and 2 students or it was 20% responded undecided that the other problem in listening was because of the

influence of small or big sound volume of the speaker to the listener.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the finding and discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher formulates the following conclusions:

1. The third semester students of English Education Study Program have some problems in listening comprehension derived from the stages of listening tests distributed to them.
2. There are some problems in listening comprehension faced or experienced by the third semester students of English Department; they are: (a) problems on vocabularies, (b) problems on word pronunciations, (c) problems on grammars, (d) problems on vocabulary meaning, (e) problems on the lack of concentration during listening, (f) problems on the lack of listening practice, and (g) problems on the speed of the speaker's pronunciation.

5.2 Suggestion

In connection with the conclusion above, the writer formulates the following suggestions:

1. The students of English Education Study Program at UMU BUTON are expected to do lots of listening practice, either through listening to the English news or through the other audio listening in order to be accustomed to listening experience.
2. The writer thinks that to anticipate or to decrease the students' problems in listening comprehension, the ways should be done are: (a) mastering vocabularies as many as possible, (b) always pronouncing words, (c) doing practice in listening either through the radio or television, and (d) always doing listening exercises.

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