

## THE OBSTACLES AND STUDENTS' NEEDS: THE ANALYSIS IN LEARNING LISTENING FOR BEGINNER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

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### **Abstract**

*Listening is one of English skills that require attention and understanding. It uses our ears to receive sounds and our brain to convert idea into meaningful messages. It is essential for lecturers to have overall understanding on what listening is, why it becomes difficult for foreign language learners. This study aims to describe the students' needs based on the obstacles faced by students in learning literal listening. Qualitative method was used in the study. The subjects of this study were first semester students of English Department in Veteran Bangun Nusantara University of Sukoharjo. The data was taken by observation, interview, and questionnaire. The findings show that beginner students need to enrich various listening texts in different context to gain information from many kinds of genres. It was related to listening problems faced by students. Lack of vocabulary and how words pronounced and also recognizing main points become obstacles for students in listening activities. Moreover, the ways of teacher to handle those needs must be more creative in providing materials and utilizing the technology equipment.*

**Keywords:** *Literal Listening, Obstacles, Needs Analysis*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Listening is one language skill that is often used frequently in daily life. People interact to communicate with others by listening to respond other speaking. Students spend their time for getting knowledge and information through listening. Listen to talk is basic way for communication. Firstly, people must receive and understand something by listening and then it will be integrated to speaking, reading, and also writing. According to celce-murcia (2002) that listening comprehension is now regarded as a prerequisite for oral proficiency as well as an important skill in its own right. The way for teaching should not be too concern on theories, play tape recorder and continued by giving questions to the students. Understanding the context of nature listening is more essential than following the dull routine of playing recorder in listening activities. It can help students to develop listening comprehension especially for understanding oral messages or discourse. In fact that it is true that students often get difficulty to chunk longer conversation of certain context. They know them one by one but they are confused to put them together for gaining the meaning. Those problems must be recognized by teacher for determining the exact method in listening activities. According to Richard in Fauziati (2010) that approaches in teaching listening

comprehension should emphasize two complementary processes involved in listening. First is decoding the utterance by identifying words, structure, grammar and linguistic features. Second is using listeners' background knowledge as previous information which is transmitted in the message. It can be used as basis for interpreting the message and improving active information processing skill by analysing students' needs in listening activities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Howat and Dakin in Hien (2015) define Listening comprehension as the ability to comprehend the speakers' utterance by identifying what others are saying in English. The purposes are understanding native speakers communicate in natural context and spontaneous situation that involve pronunciation on speaker accent, grammar, vocabulary and pervade the meaning. Listening is a metacognition term based on instruction for understanding and interpreting what listener hear (Helgesen and Brown: 2007). In addition, Bingol stated that listening process include some features. The features cover stress, copying with redundancy and noise, predicting, understanding colloquial vocabulary, fatigue, understanding different accent, using visual and environmental clues. Those features influence the way teacher creates purposed discourse by paying more attention on listening process started by planning, exercises, listening materials and tasks. According to Buck (1978), listening comprehension is a complex process to identify both monolog and dialog what speaker said by using media such as audio cassette or VCD in English.

Listening difficulties interrupt text understanding related to cognitive aspects were categorized into internal and external characteristics based on students listening comprehension problems. Those problems cover different sources viewed from listening text, listener's problems

Anadapong (2011) in the study stated that main listening problems faced by students were understanding listening text and also lack of practicing listening skill and expounded various kinds of listening text. He conducted this research in Bangkok University for thirty Business students' to gain listening proficiency and listening problems. Moreover Yousif (2006) stated that students' obstacles that influence listening comprehension covered three aspects. It was viewed from listener factor, speaker factor, and text factors. In line with Hamouda (2013) in which there are three sources of students' problems in listening comprehension. There are listening text, listening task and activities and listening activities related to listeners and lecture's ways in teaching.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive method was used to analyse the students' needs in listening comprehension based on their obstacles in listening. A qualitative research was employed to explore learning process of listening for exploring students' needs and the researcher described it narratively. The subject of this study was first semester students as the beginners who get listening firstly in Veteran Bangun Nusantara University of

Sukoharjo. The researcher chose first semester students on grade A that have 15 students. The students of that class are categorized into passive participants in listening activities. That became the reason why researcher chose that class to describe their needs in mastering listening skill.

In this study, researcher collected data by using observation, interview, and questionnaire. The observation was conducted to know learning process in listening class that covers activities in classroom, how students respond in listening activities, and also the difficulties in listening faced by students. It was used to confirm students' response about questionnaire given. The interview was purposed to lecturer and students to gain some information deeply related to listening activities focused on students' difficulties. Researcher did unstructured interview by preparing some questions to be answered freely by respondents based on clues given. The result of questionnaire and interview were analysed.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Listening Problems Faced by Students**

Researcher conducted interview taken from questionnaire for five students. They were asked about what the difficulties faced in listening activities and listening materials. Based on the result of observation, interview, and questionnaire, it was found that listening activities for beginner level need to pay more attention for understanding listening materials and integrating them with three other skills (Speaking, reading, and writing). The students have not been able to respond actively because they have difficulties related to understanding what native speaker says. First question was related to obstacles in understanding listening recording. Students viewed that lack of vocabulary mastered and how words pronounced by native speakers in certain context of conversation make them difficult to understand the meaning.

Listening problems are very crucial things that must be solved soon because listening skills is a basic skill to develop other skills especially speaking skills. The limitation of vocabulary mastered by students becomes the key points for understanding what native speakers say. It can not be separated with how the native speakers pronounce the words integrated by certain tone and intonation. English has differences with Indonesian language viewed from pronunciation, sounds, stress, and intonation. Indonesian people pronounce such kinds of words as the written forms. However, how to pronounce and speak English is different with the written ones. We know that every sound, intonation, and stress in Indonesia language has same meaning and same context but in English form, every context and pronunciation determine certain meaning. They just understand the familiar and simple vocabulary in their daily context. It is also viewed that they often believe new vocabulary presented even though it only uses synonym form in that context. In addition, they cannot get the meaning of such word because they feel unclear with how native speaker pronounce that words. There are students who try to find the meaning by using dictionary but they become dependent on the dictionary not on understanding the context the words. Besides, some students tend to be passive participants who are just waiting for the

meaning of words coming from their lecturer. The limitation of vocabulary mastered by students make they believe that native speakers speak too fast for delivering their context. The students only understand vocabulary around their context and familiar words based on their view. Although they listened the words as the result of interpretation certain words which they mastered before.

Second question was related to obstacles in understanding listening materials. The difficulties in content materials that were unfamiliar discussion and long conversation caused problems encountered by students for answering question during listening. They could not answer the questions because they did not understand for recognizing main points become a difficulty for students. They believe that they did not know what the core of speakers' discussion. They try hard to know the meaning for each word focused word by word of listening tasks. They will miss many words for the next context and they did not understand anything. If students can not recognize the main points, failure will be an inevitable result. That is as suggested by Berman (2000) as clues to identify the main points in listening. The understanding of discourse marker can be the bridge and signal that lead to the main points. Different markers with particular expressions keep listeners catch up to turning points of the task. Besides, repetition can be used as strategy for getting main points. It makes students easy to cover the important points if the context is repeated for several times.

Native speaker spoken is indicated as the obstacle for understanding listening. Beginner students start learning a language and feel so hard on slow speed. In addition different language often have sounds that are imagined as unique and also strange sounds so takes time for our mind to hear and learn. They usually take their own written notes to help prompt them. They get used to it with time and practice eventually so it sounds normal. In fact, native speakers do not speak quickly as the students think because they are English native speaker had a lot of practiced and familiar with the English signals and markers. The way to change the words and sounds make their utterances easier and quicker to produce.

Teaching methodology applied by lecturer also influenced to students' achievement in listening comprehension. Techniques used by lecturer in listening class are classical methods. Play the recording is habitual thing for them. It tends to common ways and beginner students need to be given various and effective ways for understanding the context in listening. The strategies used in listening influence how successful of listening are. The students focus mainly on the content and sometimes consider how to listen by managing the task. Teaching listening applied by lecturer is audio segments of instructional lectures and audio messages. They are asked to repeat the exercise and interact with other on their own by learning from the content of the audio segment. Firstly, they have written down or shared these ideas, then play the audio segment, allowing the students to take notes if helpful. However, they are just passive and do not understand whole of the content just part of the context. They answer only certain words that they can get.

### **Students' needs in understanding listening**

First semester students as beginner learners were introduced the comprehension of literal listening. They learned simple conversation in different context and situation. It was designed to make the students are able to use the knowledge to understand the utterance from native speaker in daily activities by using appropriate vocabulary words, opinions of others, and use appropriate technical terms and expressions in various contextual English discourse. They faced some obstacles during listening process happen especially related to listening understanding and listening materials. Those listening problems as the key points for identifying what students need for solving their problems. The student's ability in listening cannot be improved their understanding without finding the solution and covering students' needs in listening activities. According to Hamouda (2013: 116), students need to be aware the factors that contribute to their difficulties in listening; when they understand about their own problems, they will be able to improve their listening practices. Students' needs in understanding listening based on their obstacles faced were important thing to be known for both lecturer and students. It must be identified from the early activities in listening practice by creating students' motivation. According to Bingol (2014:4), Students' motivation is one of the crucial factors that affect listening comprehension. Motivation can be built by using warming up in listening activities. Interesting topic can be chosen as the way to understand listening materials. When students find the topic of the listening text interesting, comprehending would be easier because it can support the students for improving listening skill. In addition, the utterance in listening must be designed as original environment which can help students to contextualize the listening so they are able to understand the text easier. Besides, students' preparation in listening activities is important to be paid attention. Taking note in listening become such kinds of effective strategy for understanding both of short and long conversation. Gur, T., et.al. (2013) in Musdahariah (2013) shows that Note-taking while listening positively affected listening comprehension as an informative, narrative and philosophical lectures.

Lack of vocabulary knowledge is the crucial obstacle to gain effective listening comprehension. It is important to the students to learn more vocabularies and the terminologies. Various listening texts should be given to the students for making them familiar with vocabulary in different context. They should introduce vocabulary related to the part of speech such as verbs, nouns, and adjectives, so the students do not confuse in differentiating the class of words and the function in a sentence. Students should hear any kinds of vocabulary stated in certain different genre. It would give impact for their listening development and made easy to understand what they are hearing. Moreover, *students need to identify the subject matter of a talk.* "Listening plays a significant role in daily communication and educational process" (Pourhossein &Reza, 2011:977). It was applied by students while listening take action. They need to determine and understand what they hear. It was able to help students determine and recognize what the main points in listening are. It was said that students listening comprehension got improvement when they understand the chunks of language and

ideas in phrases, patterns of speech and ideas. Their understanding of listening instead of words by avoiding translating every word from when native speakers were saying.

Identifying what the speaker means by understanding words and ideas are essential to determine meaning. It was found what the speaker said has a deeper meaning and implied meaning. Students should be able to determine the intend meaning of the speaker. It is important to the students for making a reaction of the task content for developing students' listening skill. It could cover the form of an analysis of verb forms from a script of the listening text and various vocabulary based on the genre or collocation work. Therefore, students will find dealing with the forms that express those meaning much easier.

## CONCLUSION

Listening comprehension is a crucial language skill to understand target language of speakers. It is learned by first semester students integrated with other language skills such as speaking, writing and reading. Learning listening can be able to improve speaking skill considerably for communicate meaningful and naturally. However, many students have problem in listening comprehension. In listening, students have problem in quality of recorded material, the difficulties of material itself, and unfamiliar topic. Meanwhile, lack of vocabulary and how it was pronounced, and recognizing main points related what native speaker says are students' problems as listener. From those problems, it can be identified what the students' needs in listening. Firstly, motivation and preparation are very important things that must be created in early listening process. Topic and materials are introduced by applying interesting ways by using warming up. Vocabularies related with topics were chosen by proving various kinds of genre of listening materials in different context.

Overall, listening comprehension can be mastered by students because both of lecturer and students have known what students' problems in listening and then what solution taken based on students' needs for teaching listening. The achievement in listening process based on students needs as the important factor in mastering listening comprehension.



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