Difficulties in Listening Comprehension Encountered by Students of English Department University of Muhammadiyah Malang

Abstract

This study describes the difficulties in listening comprehension encountered by the first-year students of English Department. This study employs descriptive qualitative method. Questionnaires with close and open-ended questions are used as the research instrument. The object of this study was 42 students of English Department who finished their first semester.

The study revealed that several problems occurred in the teaching and learning of listening. The problems were related to listeners’ performance, listening materials, students’ physical limits, and supporting equipment. Based on the data obtained, the major problem faced by the students were related to listening materials and students’ performance. Different phonological system, which dealt with the materials, and guessing unknown words seemed to affect their listening comprehension.

The study also found out that students applied several strategies to develop their listening mastery. Most of them (78.6%) conducted independent study outside the class. Most of them prefer listening to English songs and watching English movies. Some loved to listen to news and watching YouTube videos.
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CHAPTER I

This study aims at investigating students’ listening difficulties encountered by English Department students of University of Muhammadiyah Malang. To that end, this chapter presents background of the study, statement of the problems, objective of the study, theoretical framework, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

It is expected that EFL learners must master four language skills: writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills. One of the important yet has not received priority in language teaching is listening (Richards and Renandya, 2002). Even though listening plays an essential role, students only listen to repeat and develop a better pronunciation (Vandergrift, 2011). It seems that listening is placed before speaking (Vandergrift, 1999). To start the consideration on the important role of listening, in early 70’s some scholars brought attention to the role of listening as a tool for understanding and a key factor in facilitating language learning. Listening has appeared as a vital element in the process of second language acquisition (Feyten, 1991, as cited in Vandergrift, 2011).

Moreover, Vandergrift (1999) also mentions that the primary purposes of human listening are information-gathering and pleasure, though there are other reasons, such as empathy, assessment and criticism. According to Wilson (2009), listening involves the decoding of the messages, which takes place over time. It is different from reading, which involves the decoding of the message and it takes place over space—pages, signs, the backs of envelopes. Most spoken information is not recorded and has no permanent record. It is based on spontaneous performance that usually disappears from the memory within seconds.

The facts say that listening is considered as the most difficult skill to learn. Wilson (2009) describes the difficulties into four general categories: characteristics of the message, the delivery, the listener and the environment. Characteristics of the message relate to the listeners in recognizing the speech. For example, ‘slip of the ear—simple mishearing in ‘merger and acquisitions’ are
heard ‘murders and executions’—may contribute to the understanding of the text. Other difficulties consist of unknown words, lexical density (short spaces of time between content words, forcing listener to concentrate harder), and complex grammatical structures.

In this case, based on the study conducted on 2014, the ‘slip of the ear’ may be faced by the students of Muhammadiyah University of Malang in listening activity. For example, the word ethical may be heard as article, or optical. The students also find difficulties in recognizing unknown words. The phrase neurological problems seems to be unfamiliar to them. Some students also write just each time or eighteen times for the phrase since ancient times. It may be caused by the short spaces between the words that make the students think harder to recognize the words (Prastiyowati, 2014).

Furthermore, students of Muhammadiyah University of Malang face some problems related to listening comprehension. Most of the students said that listening is the most difficult skill to master (53%). However, they said that they had strong motivation to improve their listening achievement (62%). They also mentioned that the difference of phonological system between English and Indonesian hinder their listening comprehension (50%). The adequate background of knowledge is believed to be an important aspect to support their listening comprehension (38%).

In terms of students’ obstacles in listening skills, the result of a preliminary study on the use of Podcasts in improving students’ listening comprehension shows that the students find difficulties in certain substance. It is revealed that the students have problems in identifying key words, recognizing vocabulary, discriminating among distinctive sounds, inferring meaning using real knowledge, and guessing meaning from context. In recognizing vocabulary, for example, all of the students cannot give the correct answer related to recognizing vocabulary. More clearly, related to detecting key words, 62% of the students give the correct answer. In discriminating among distinctive sounds, 61% of the students can give the correct answer. In identifying vocabulary, only 37% of the students can give the correct answer. Regarding the use of real-life knowledge and guess the meaning from context, the percentage of correct
answer were 90% and 92%. It can be said that the students’ main problem is students’ lack of vocabulary. However, regarding the average result of the test, it is supposed that the more practical process in listening activity is needed. Since the students’ vocabulary seems to obstruct students in recognizing the text, it is necessary for the teacher to present the activity that can help students to overcome the obstacle (Prastiyowati, 2014).

Listening is taught in the first four semesters in Muhammadiyah University of Malang (English Department’s Syllabus, 2011). It starts from Listening 1 in the first semester, followed by Listening 2, Listening 3 and Listening 4 in the next semester. Each course provides various types of English discourse, based on the level of students’ competence.

The teaching of listening is carried out in sixteen times in a semester. It means that the course is conducted once a week, held in a language laboratory. The materials are provided from the books available. The course employs the activity of listening to the text. Teacher assists the students to learn the messages, detail information, and gives questions related to the topic. Home works are sometimes given to the students in order to give them more practice outside the class.

Considering the above description, the investigation on students’ difficulties in listening comprehension will give beneficial contribution to the development of teaching and learning process.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

With reference to the background of the study, the research problem is formulated as follows:

1. What are the problems in listening comprehension encountered by students of English Department at University of Muhammadiyah Malang?

2. What strategies are used to help students of English Department at University of Muhammadiyah Malang to succeed in listening comprehension?
1.3 Objective of the Study

In line with the research problem above, the objectives of the study are:

1. To describe the problems in listening comprehension encountered by students of English Department at University of Muhammadiyah Malang
2. To describe the strategies used to help students of English Department at University of Muhammadiyah Malang to succeed in listening comprehension.

1.4 Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid misinterpretation, the following terms are clarified in this research study:

*Listening comprehension:* the ability of students to understand of the implication and explicit meanings of words and sentences of spoken language. The course is delivered in the third semester of academic year 2013/2014.
CHAPTER II
Review of Related Literature

Regarding the importance of listening, several theoretical frameworks are applied in this study. They are the definition of listening, the element of listening, the listening strategies, the listening process, and the stage of listening. Each of them is elaborated as follows:

2.1 Definition of Listening

Listening is more than simply hearing words. Listening includes an active process by which students receive, construct meaning from, and respond to spoken and or nonverbal messages (Emmert, 1994 as quoted in Gilakjani, 2011). Listening, in other words, is extremely an active process, but the activity happens in the mind. Listeners guess, predict, infer, criticize and, above all, interpret (Wilson, 2009). Listening seems an important part of the communication process and should not be separated from the other language arts.

According to Howatt and Dakin (as cited in Saricoban, 1999), listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This process involves understanding a speaker’s accent or pronunciation, speaker’s grammar and vocabulary, and comprehension of meaning. An able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously (Islam, 2012). Listening can be defined as the activity of paying attention to the spoken language of native speakers. The listener constructs meanings by using cues from contextual information and from existing knowledge (Underwood, 1989, O’Malley; Chamot and Kupper, 1989, and Mendelsohn, 1994, as cited in Islam, 2012).

Listening is considered very important in communicating with others. Miller (2003 as cited in Kavaliauskienė, 2008) mentions that more than forty percent of our daily communication is spent on listening, thirty-five percent on speaking, about sixteen percent on reading, and only nine percent on writing. It can be said that listening is the most essential.

Rost (as cited in Vandergrift, 2011) has defined listening as a process of receiving what the speaker actually says, constructing and representing meaning,
negotiating meaning with the speaker and responding, and creating meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy. To listen well, listeners must have the ability to decode the message, the ability to apply a variety of strategies and interactive processes to make meaning, and the ability to respond to what is said in a variety of ways, depending on the purpose of the communication. Listening involves listening for thoughts, feelings, and intentions. Doing so requires active involvement, effort and practice (Shen, Guizhou, Wichura, Kiattichai, 2007, as cited in Gilakjani, 2011). To sum up, it is widely admitted that listening comprehension is not merely the process of a unidirectional receiving of audible symbols, but an interactive process (Brown, 2007).

In conclusion, listening is a process of identifying and understanding what the speakers say, which includes understanding a speaker’s pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.

2.2 Elements of Listening

The two elements of listening, macro and micro skills cannot be separated. Macro skills are easier to understand since it simply means understanding of what being said. However, micro skills are little more complicated to understand, as it not only about understanding as a whole, but we have to consider things like choice of vocabulary, intonation, attitude, deeper meanings and a whole lot more. Below are the description of macro and micro skills that are involved in a general conversation and academic speech (Richards, 1983, cited in Jansen, 1998).

In addition, Brown (2004) proposes the micro-skills involved in understanding what someone says to us. The listener has to: retain chunks of language in a short-term memory, discriminate among the distinctive sounds in the new language, recognize stress and rhythm patterns, tone patterns, intonational contours, recognize reduced forms of words, distinguish word boundaries, recognize typical word-order patterns, recognize vocabulary, detect key words, such as those identifying topics and ideas, guess meaning from context, and detect sentence constituents such as subject, verb, object, prepositions, and the like.
Moreover, Brown (2007) mentions that the macro-skills for conversational discourse are the following: recognize cohesive devices in spoken discourse, recognize the communicative functions of utterances, according to situations, participants, and goals, infer situation, participants, goals using real-world knowledge, distinguish between literal and implied meanings, develop and use a battery of listening strategies, such as detecting key words, and guessing the meaning of words from context.

In sum, the macro and micro skills in listening are very essential in performing listening comprehension. Those elements of listening are useful in specifying the objectives for the learning.

2.3 Listening Strategies

Appropriate strategies are needed to reach the expected goal, especially in listening comprehension. In this case, strategies can be perceived as conscious, action which is conducted on purpose to improve learning and allow the learners to use information more effectively (Oxford, Chamot, and O'Malley, as cited in Wilson, 2009), are categorized into three groups: cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies. Cognitive strategies are those that we use in order to complete an immediate task. For instance, a student may find out the topic before listening to predict contents. Metacognitive strategies are related to learning in general and often have long-term benefits. For example, students might choose to tune in BBC recording once a week as a strategy to improve their listening. Socio-affective strategies are concerned with the learners’ interaction with other speakers and their attitude towards learning. For example, students may choose to rehearse a telephone conversation in L2 with another student in order to develop confidence.

In short, good listeners may use many strategies at the same time and in accordance with the task at hand. They may listen regularly to a radio broadcast (metacognitive), take notes on the key points (cognitive) and then meet fellow students in the café and tell them all about what they just listened to (socio-affective).
2.4 Listening Process

In accordance with the listening process, it involves two views of listening: bottom-up and top-down. According to Anderson and Lynch (as cited in Cahyono and Widiati, 2012), the bottom-up view observes “listener as tape recorders”, whereas top-down view analyzes “listeners as model builders”. Bottom-up view suggests that listeners take in and store oral messages in much the same way as a tape-recorder, whereas top-down view recognizes the more active role. In this case, the listeners construct an interpretation of oral messages.

Moreover, Nunan (as cited in Cahyono and Widiati, 2012) explained that the bottom-up refers to the idea that listeners part “the stream of speech into its constituent sounds, link this together to form words, chain the words together to form clauses and sentences, and so on”. This process assumes that listening is a process of decoding the sounds in a linear fashion, from the smallest meaningful units to complex texts. Bottom-up techniques typically focuses on sounds, words, intonation, grammatical structures, and other components of spoken language (Brown, 2007). Bottom-up techniques refer to the use of linguistic knowledge to understand the meaning of the message. Learners build meaning from lower level sounds to words to grammatical relationships to lexical meanings in order to arrive at the final message. In opposite, the top-down view allows listeners to bring prior knowledge from outside the text to the task of interpreting and comprehending the text itself. Prior knowledge can be knowledge of the topic, the listening context, the text-type, the culture or other information stored in long-term memory as schemata—typical sequences or common situations around which world knowledge is organized (Vandergrift, 2007). This analysis involves an important point that “meaning does not reside exclusively within the words” on the oral messages. In this case, Brown (2007) proposed the importance of students’ prior knowledge to facilitate their listening comprehension.

The best way in listening works is not purely bottom-up, or top-down. Successful listeners seem to be those who can utilize both bottom-up and top-down knowledge, combining the knowledge “outside the head” and “inside the head”. It means that other factors such as students’ prior knowledge, vocabulary
and grammar competency may contribute to students listening proficiency. The idea that both processes should be applied in listening is supported by Wilson (2009) and Vandergrift (2011) who mention that it is known as the interactive model. Listeners use both prior knowledge and linguistic knowledge to comprehend the message.

2.5 **Stages of Listening**

Listening activities are usually subcategorized as pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities (Wilson, 2009). Pre-listening activities, which precede the listening passage, should prepare the students for the comprehension task by activating students’ vocabulary and background knowledge or by providing the students with the information needed to understand the content of the listening text (Thanajaro, 2000). In this step, the students are helped to prepare what they are going to hear by activating their schemata (Wilson, 2009). The activities involving brainstorming vocabulary, reviewing areas of grammar, or discussing the topic of the listening text. Two simple aims for the pre-listening period are to provide sufficient context to match what would be available in real life and to create motivation of the learners to what they will hear (Field quoted in Richard and Renandya, 2002).

While-listening should help the students develop the skill of extracting meaning from the speech stream. Students interpret the speakers’ message, verify and revise their predictions. Teachers may ask students to note down key words to work out the main idea of the text (Karakas, as cited in Gilakjani, 2011). Students may listen a second time, either in order to check or to answer more detailed questions. In this case, for teaching purposes, multiple opportunities to hear the input may reduce students’ anxiety. It means that they can listen to the passage considered difficult. There are a number of other factors concerning the passage that come into play: difficulty, length, the pedagogical focus and the potential for boredom. If the focus is on close language analysis, it might be repeated several times, whereas if the focus is on listening for gist, it won’t be (Wilson, 2009).
Post-listening activities, following the listening passage, consist of extensions and developments of the listening task. It may highlight on cultural themes and other aspects related to the materials. In addition, Wilson (2009) mentions that in this stage, discussion on difficulties such as unknown vocabulary, and responds to the content of the passage, are performed, usually orally.

2.6 Factors that Make Listening Difficult

Yagang (as cited in Hien, 2015) mentions that the problem in listening was accompanied with the four following factors: the message, the speaker, the listener and the physical setting. Moreover, a numbers of research have been conducted to pick out the problem in listening. The problems were believed to cause by the speech rate vocabulary and pronunciation (Higgins, 1995; as quoted in Idrissova, Smagulova, and Tussupbekova, 2015). Related to the difficulties of listening performances, the following eight characteristics need to be considered (adapted from Richards, 1983; Ur, 1984; Dunkel, 1991; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005, as cited in Brown, 2007):

1. Clustering: attending to appropriate “chunks” of language—phrases, clauses, constituents
2. Redundancy: recognizing the kinds of repetitions rephrasing, elaborations, and insertions that unrehearsed spoken language often contains, and benefiting from that recognition
3. Reduced forms: understanding the reduced forms that may not have been a part of an English learner’s past learning experiences in classes where only formal “textbook” language has been presented
4. Performance variables: being able to “weed out” hesitations, false starts, pauses, and corrections in natural speech
5. Colloquial language: comprehending idioms, slang, reduced forms, shared cultural knowledge
6. Rate of delivery: keeping up with the speed of delivery, processing automatically as the speaker continues
7. Stress, rhythm, and intonation: correctly understanding prosodic elements of spoken language, which is almost much more difficult than understanding the smaller phonological bits and pieces.

8. Interaction: managing the interactive flow of language from listening to speaking to listening, etc.
CHAPTER III
Research Method

This chapter deals with the research method implemented in this study. It involves research design, population and sample, research instrument, data collection as well as data analysis.

3.1 Research Design
In terms of research design, this study employs descriptive qualitative research design. In this research, the researcher used qualitative research design. Hancock (1998) explains that qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. In this research, the social phenomena was the grammatical errors made by eight-grade students of SMP Negeri 11 Malang in writing descriptive text.

This design was employed in order to get information about students’ problems encountered in Listening subject. Moreover, it is also intended to explore students’ strategies used in Listening comprehension.

3.2 Population and Sample
Responding to this research, the researcher needs a group of participant as the target population of the study. According to Arikunto (2002: 108), “A population is defined as all members of research subjects”. In other words, population is the students that will be investigated in this study. The population of this research was the freshmen of English Department academic year 2015/2016 which consists of 275 students, which are divided into 10 classes.

Ary et al. (2010) state that sample is a portion of a population. It means that sample is smaller than population. In selecting sample, the researcher takes
10% - 15% of the total population. According to Arikunto (2002), if the total population is more than 100 participants, the sample can be taken between 10% - 15% or 20% - 25% from the total of population. Moreover, in selecting the sample, the researcher used simple random sampling. According to Ary et al. (2010), the characteristic of simple random sampling is that all members of population have an equal and independent chance of being included in the random sample. Therefore, the researcher took Class B and Class F class which consists of 42 students as the sample of the research.

The questionnaires were given at nearly the end of the semester, before they conduct their Final Examination. At the period, they have conducted Listening 1. In this stage they have recognize their difficulties, needs, achievement and so on related to listening activities.

3.3 Research Instrument

According to Ary et al. (2010), there are some methods of instrument commonly used to guide and help the researcher to generate the data such as observation, interview, and document analysis. In addition, questionnaires as the research instrument were applied. Consisting of questions to be answered or statements to be responded by respondents, questionnaire is used to gather the opinion from respondents (Best, J.W., Khan, J.V., 2003, as cited in Latief, 2012). The scope of questions in preliminary study includes listening in general, problems in listening, students’ opinion about listening class, and students’ strategy in listening activity.

Questionnaire contains of closed and open-ended questions. The idea for combining of both responses is that it is easier to gather and analyze and the
responses to the later will provide more flexibility so that respondent can give more accurate answer.

The questions were about student’s’ listening strategies, and problems which may occur during the process of teaching and learning. The problems involve the students’ performance, listening materials, students’ physical limits, and supporting equipment. Related to students’ learning strategy, seven questions were proposed. They were in the form of close and open-ended questions. Dealt with listening problems, eighteen questions, which were in the form of close questions, were given.

3.4 Data Collection

This section explains all of operations that are related to get information to answer the statement problems. The steps of collecting the data in this study are as follows:

1. The researcher explained about the questionnaires to the students. The researcher explains the items clearly to avoid misunderstanding.
2. The researcher gave instruction to the students to fill out the questionnaires.
3. The researcher collected the students’ questionnaires.

3.5 Data Analysis

The next step after the researcher collects the data is analyzing the data. There are some steps in analyzing the data. They are presented as follows:

1. Reading and identifying the questionnaires that had been answered.
2. Classifying the result of the questions based on the Blueprint of questions
3. Composing tables to classify students’ problems and strategies used based on the questionnaires.

4. Calculating the result taken from the students’ answer based on the tables.

5. Drawing conclusion based on the data analysis.
CHAPTER IV

Findings and Discussions

This chapter deals with the findings and discussion of the findings in the difficulties in listening comprehension. The findings of the study are presented based on students’ questionnaires. This step illustrates the description of students’ problems and strategies they used to overcome those problems. The result were based on the questionnaire given at February 25th, 2016, in the end of the first semester. The participants were forty two freshmen. The detail of the description is presented in the following parts.

4.1 Findings

Related to the first item of questionnaire, the students were asked about their proficiency in listening comprehension. In this case, 42.9% (18 students) answered that they have never failed in listening test. There were 30.9% (thirteen students) who have one-time failed the listening test. Moreover, only 4.8% (two students) who have more than three-times failed in listening test. The students were considered successful in listening test if they pass the minimum criterion, 50 points out of 100 points in their listening score. It can be summarized that most of the students were successfully participate in listening test throughout the semester.
The next questions are dealt with students’ opinion in listening subject. In this section, students gave their opinion whether or not listening is difficult to them. In this case, 21.4% (nine students) thought that listening is a difficult subject. Furthermore, thirty-three students (78.6%) considered that listening is not a difficult subject. Related to students’ interest, 81% (thirty-four students) mentioned that listening is an interesting subject. However, eight students (19%) thought that listening made them bored. The similar results were obtained from the question about students’ excitement in listening. Thirty-six students (85.7%) answered that they found excitement in listening. Five students (11.0%) said the opposite. The results can be illustrated in the following table.

Table 4.1   Students’ Opinion in Listening Subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you think that Listening is difficult?</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do you think that Listening is boring and</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>uninteresting?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Do you think that Listening is exciting?</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be assumed that students showed positive response toward listening in general. They found enjoyment in listening activities and thought that it was not a complicated subject to deal with.
The next three questions were about students’ learning style. It dealt with how students organize independent study and activities they do before having Listening activity in the class. In addition, most of the respondents, 61.9% (twenty-six students) mentioned that they sometimes do self-study. Six students (16.7%) said that they frequently do self-study outside the class. There were only two students (4.7%) who never do self-study. The result was described in the following table.

Table 4.2  Students’ Frequency in Conducting Self-Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To sum up, there were major differences between the students who conducted independent study and those who did not (78.6% and 21.5% respectively).

In terms of the way students conducting independent study, most of the students (78.6%) listen to English songs. The next option was listening and watching English movies. Four students (9.5%) prefer listening to English news. None of them listen to tape or disk. Moreover, some students wrote that they read English novel, speak with foreigner using WA Voice Note, and listening YouTube video tutorials.

Related to the activities before listening, major activity conducted by the students was reading the task instruction in English (47.2%). This
activity could promote students’ awareness to the topic that will be listened. Fifteen students (32.7%) said they did nothing before having listening activity. They just wait what will instructed by the teacher or listen to the text that will be played. The next activity done was going through questions (34.3%). By skimming the questions, they can guess what matter that will be discussed. Other activities were guessing the context of the listening (28.2%) and asking about new words (23.4%). These activities combined both bottom-up and to-down process in listening. Bottom-up refers to the use of linguistic knowledge while top-down refers to the use of outside knowledge to interpret and comprehend the text (Cahyono and Widiati, 2012).

The last questions asked about students’ problems in listening. This part covered eighteen items. They involved the problems related to listeners, listening materials, students’ physical limits, and supporting equipment. The results can be elaborated in the following section.

1. Problems Related to Listeners

The result of the questionnaires showed that 21.4% of the students always faced the difficulty in making prediction about the text that was going to be learned. Six students (14.3%) said that they often found difficulty in making prediction. However, 47.6% and 14.3% mentioned that they sometimes and never found difficulty in making prediction respectively.
The next problem was about unknown words. Twenty-three students (54.8%) said that they had problems in guessing unknown words. Only one student (2.4%) did not find obstacle and other eighteen students (42.8%) sometime found the difficulty.

In this case unfamiliar topics slightly contributed to students’ listening comprehensions. Thirty students (71.4%) stated that they scarcely found difficulty in recognizing familiar topics. It meant that the topics given were usually nothing really new to them. At least they have identified the material that will be learned. However, 17.9% still found problems in recognizing the topics.

The subsequent problems was lacking background knowledge. Similar to the previous one, thirty students (71.4%) reported that they did not find obstacles in listening to the text. Only small part of the students (28.6%) admitted that they had problems dealt with their background knowledge.

The last, students said that they did not find meaningful problems related to recognizing the main point of the text (61.9%). The rest, (38.1%) mentioned that they often see that finding the main point was a confusing subject. The complete result can be described in Table 4.3.
All in all, the result indicated that in general, students did not find meaningful obstacles in terms of their learning style. Most of them can predict unknown words that less familiar to them. Concerning with prior knowledge, they have enough knowledge that can maintain their listening comprehension. Another reason was that in Listening 1, students were exposed to somewhat modest audio texts. Generally, the text given are in the form of short dialogue or monologue with mostly familiar vocabulary.

2. Problems Related to Listening Materials

Concerning with listening materials, some issues were covered. They were about different phonological system, speed of speech, linking words, authentic materials, ungrammatical sentences, different accents, and colloquial words. The first, different phonological system contributed greatly to students’ listening mastery. It was proven that more than a half of the class (50.5%) reported that this matter effected their
comprehension. Six students (14.3%) and 15 students (35.7%) said that they never and rarely had problems with this topic correspondingly.

Other six problems seemed not hinder students listening comprehension. It was shown by the result that greater number of the students stated that they did not feel puzzled in understanding the text. Related to speed of speech, 40.9% of the students mentioned that they frequently had problems with. The greater number, 57.1% felt that they had no significant concern with this topic. Furthermore, concerning with linking words, only 14.3% mentioned that this subject greatly become their focus in listening. The higher number, 85.7% found no difficulties in understanding the spoken text.

The use of authentic materials in listening comprehension did not hinder students’ ability in comprehending the text. It was shown by students’ response in terms of the use of authentic materials in the classroom. In addition, 76.8% showed that they had no problems with this matter. Only 4.8% felt that this kind of material always obstruct their comprehension.

The next subject was about ungrammatical sentences. Regarding this matter, the majority of the students (82.3%) seemed had no difficulties. In Listening 1, the texts were short and simple, so it can be easily learned. The sentence structure tended to be simple and easy. The similar result were also shown in the use of different accents, colloquial
words, and long listening text. More than half of the students (64.3%, 66.7%, and 71.4%) said that they did not face obstacle related to these topics. Only small part of the students, 35.7%, 30.9%, and 26.2% mentioned that they paid much attention in adapting to text with different accents and colloquial words respectively. The result of this problem was elaborated in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Different phonetic systems</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Speed of speech</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Linking words</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Authentic materials</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ungrammatical sentences</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Different accent</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Colloquial words</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Long listening text</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Problems Related to Students’ Physical Problems

The problems in listening comprehension might be caused by student’s physical limits, fatigue and hesitation for example. However, the result of the study reported that these factors did not significantly affect students’ listening ability. Only small part of the respondents mentioned that they felt tired (23.8%) and hesitation (35.7%). Meanwhile, majority
of the students did not feel fatigue (76.2%) and reluctance (64.3%). The
detailed result were illustrated in the table below.

Table 4.5  Students’ Problem Related to Physical Limits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hesitation</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Students’ Problems Related to Supporting Equipment

The last problems derived from equipment that support the activity
of listening comprehension. The problems in equipment related to noises,
poor tape quality, and poor equipment. Nonetheless, based on the study,
these factors did not contribute considerably to students’ listening activity.
In this case, most of the students had no profound troubles concerning to
the equipment. The study showed that 61.2%, 78.6%, and 90.5% did not
recognize any trouble in terms of noises, poor tape quality, and poor
equipment correspondingly. The result were described in the following
table.

Table 4.6  Problems Related to Supporting Equipment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Noises</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Poor tape quality</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Poor equipment</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 Discussions

In regard to answer the research questions, this section describes the problems encountered by the students and strategies applied by the students to develop their listening ability. The problems were categorized into several topics, such as problems related to students’ performance, listening materials, students’ physical limits, and supporting equipment. First, related to students’ performance, it closely related to macro and micro skills that becomes essential element in listening comprehension. Micro skills comprises of retain chunks of language in a short-term memory, discriminate among the distinctive sounds in the new language, recognize stress and rhythm patterns, tone patterns, intonational contours, recognize reduced forms of words, distinguish word boundaries, recognize typical word-order patterns, recognize vocabulary, detect key words, such as those identifying topics and ideas, guess meaning from context, and detect sentence constituents such as subject, verb, object, prepositions, and the like (Brown: 2007)

In this study, more than half of the total respondents said that they found difficulty in guessing unknown words. It refers to micro skills that must be mastered by the learners. In this case, the students have to be able to recognize vocabulary to support their listening mastery. Other elements of listening seems not contribute greatly to students’ problems. Since this investigation was conducted in the early stage of Listening
offered in this school, the topic and the complexity of the text seems not too complicated. In later stage of Listening subject (Listening 2, 3 and 4), students may encountered different level of difficulty of text that will be presented.

Second, in terms of listening materials, different phonological system and speed of speech contributed greatly to students’ listening mastery. As suggested by Rost (as quoted in Vandergrift, 2011), listening involves a process of receiving what speaker says. Listeners must be able to decode the messages to respond to what is said. In this case, the materials, or the message contains several topics, which some of them become obstacles in students’ listening comprehension.

Third, students’ physical limits do not contribute greatly in students’ problems. Vast majority of the students feel neither fatigue nor hesitated during the listening process. In Listening 1, the texts presented generally are the simple one. Since it is the beginning step of listening, the texts are short and easy. The longer texts are given in Listening class in the next semesters.

The last, related to supporting equipment, only small number of students faced the trouble related to the equipment. The result of this investigation reported that the equipment used in the listening process were good. In addition, the teaching and learning process were held in a language laboratory with computerized equipment. In old-fashioned
laboratory equipment, teacher used tape or cassettes that tend to have troubles during the process of learning. The device were easily worn out and it disturbed the learning process. Along with the advance of the current technology, people use digital media to make easy in every aspect of life.

In terms of students’ strategy to develop their listening skill, most of them conducted independent study. They frequently used songs to improve their listening skill. The next activities are watching English movies. Some of them listen to English news and some listening to YouTube tutorials.

In this case, students may have more than one method in doing self-study. Listening to English song was one of popular way to learn. The youth tend to love music that can be freely downloaded from the Internet. Furthermore, it was obvious that songs is a kind of interesting media that bring joyful learning. The similar result on the way of independent learning was watching English movies. Same as songs, movies are considered a popular media to improve students’ language competence.

Not only developing listening skill, students also can develop their mastery on vocabulary, speaking, as well as writing if they paid careful attention to the language features, not to mention the fun itself. There were only few students who were interested in listening to English news. Unlike the two other media, songs and movies, news seemed to be less attractive. It may
only be in the form of audio, sometimes it was equipped with text. Some Podcasts provided this kind of news for teaching and learning materials that can be free-downloaded from the Internet. The study reported that no respondents used tape or disc for their independent listening. Living in this digital era made this last media seemed to be left behind. Even, the laboratory in which the teaching and learning listening conducted did not support the old method. Tapes or cassettes were no longer used.

The technology today enable people to access their independent learning strategy based on their needs. Regarding the students’ enthusiasm in accessing various online media to improve their ability was a satisfying matter. The findings were in line with what had mentioned by Oxford, Chamot, and O’Malley (as cited in Wilson, 2009) that learners may use more than one strategies to develop their ability.
CHAPTER V
Conclusions and Suggestions

This chapter comprises conclusions and suggestions based on the research findings and the discussions presented in the previous chapters. The conclusions are drawn based on the results of the study. The suggestions are addressed to English teachers, students and future researchers on listening.

5.1. Conclusions

The results of the investigation indicated that several problems occurred in the teaching and learning of listening. The problems were related to listeners’ performance, listening materials, students’ physical limits, and supporting equipment. Based on the data obtained, the major problem faced by the students were related to listening materials and students’ performance. Different phonological system, which dealt with the materials, and guessing unknown words seemed to affected their listening comprehension.

The study also found out that students applied several strategies to develop their listening mastery. Most of them (%) conducted independent study outside the class. Most of them prefer listening to English songs, watching English movies. Some loved to listen to news and having chat with native speakers or watching YouTube videos.
5.2 Suggestions

Regarding the findings of this research, some suggestions were addressed to English teachers and students. For English teacher, some considerations can be taken concerning to the result of the study. First, after knowing the students’ problems in listening comprehension, teacher could use using various materials which can contribute to the better teaching of listening. The Internet provided countless sources that can be benefited for the teaching purpose. Teacher had to be creatively construct his/ her teaching method to adjust with students’ need. Second, in terms of students’ performance, teacher needed to introduce or expose the students to various kind of texts. This would increase students’ awareness towards the linguistic features that can improve their listening ability.

For the students, it is hoped that they could widen their knowledge and listening comprehension by conducting independent learning. The availability of the online media make easy their own way of learning. Moreover, listening is an integrated skill that cannot be apart from other three skills. Their willingness to independently learn may contribute to excellent achievement.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX
Questionnaire

The following questions are related with the difficulties in listening, which aims to find out the problems that most students face when listening. I would like to obtain your honest answers based on what you feel and experience. In advance, thank you very much for your attention and cooperation.

1. Have you ever failed your listening test? (Tick out the best answer.)
   - Never
   - Once
   - Twice
   - Three times
   - More than three
2. Do you think that listening comprehension is difficult?
   - Yes
   - No
3. Do you think that listening comprehension is boring and uninteresting?
   - Yes
   - No
4. Do you think that listening comprehension is exciting?
   - Yes
   - No
5. How often do you self-study listening at home? (Tick out the best answer)
   - Never
   - Rarely
   - Sometimes
   - Often
6. How do you self-study at home? (You can tick more than one)
   - Listen to English songs
   - Listen to tapes or disks of the syllabus in university
   - Listen to news in English
   - Listen and watch English movies
   - Other (Write your answer)
7. What do you do before listening? (You can tick more than one.)
   - Go through the questions and guess what the topic is about
   - Nothing to do just ready to listen
   - Guess the content of the listening
   - Ask about the new words
   - Read the task instruction
8. How often do you encounter these following problems? (Put a tick in the appropriate column.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making prediction what the speaker talks about</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guessing unknown words while listening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfamiliar topic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking of background knowledge</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference phonological system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed of speech</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing main points</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic material</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungrammatical sentences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different accents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Colloquial words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hesitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Long listening text</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noises</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<td>---</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor tape quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The poor equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adapted from Hien (2015) and Prastiyowati (2014)*