

The Difficulties in Learning Listening: A Correlational Study Among the 3rd Semester Students of English Departement

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Abstract

The aim of this study was: to describe the level of learning problem and the teacher's strategies applied in teaching and learning process. The population is 3rd semester Sarjanawiyata University and the sample is about 26 students. The data analysis technique was quantitative including mean score, standard deviation and product moment. The main results of this study were: the students learning problem in listening could be categorized as low with the mean score 77.56. The students achievement could be categorized as "moderate" with the mean score 42.05. Concerning the correlation between the two variables it was revealed that there was a significant and positive correlation between the students' learning problem and their achievement

Keywords: Difficulties, learning listening

1. Introduction

Listening skill is an important skill that must be learnt by the English learners. Communication has an important role in the teaching and learning of English language. There must be an interaction between at least two or more persons involving a speaker and listener. The speaker expresses her or his ideas by introducing utterances, and the listener receives the messages, keeps the utterances in memory, analyzes and identifies lexical illocutionary meaning.

A teaching and learning process will be valuable if the teacher can apply a certain strategy to drive the interest and motivation of the students. In the teaching and learning process, the teacher is a facilitator who helps the students improves their language skills. The principle of the approach in the teaching of listening is that learners must learn about the stages of learning pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities

According to previous studies, Ika Septiyana (p 25: 2006), the title of her research is Correlation between Risk Taking in Listening English and English Listening Skill among the Third Semester English Department Students of Sarjanawiyata University Yogyakarta about the development of listening skill, the first researcher states that in the development of listening skill willingness is part of personality. In this case, the willingness is needed to support the success of language learning. The learners should be ready to deal with mistakes

or difficulties in listening activities. To have the willingness, inhibition of learning should be eliminated. One of the inhibitions of learning is difficulty. It is in fact impossible for everyone to know everything about a listening text. To be ready to deal with difficulties in listening activities people should have a risk-taking plan. In a listening process, someone who is ready to deal with mistakes and difficulties in learning activities are called a risk taking activity. It is related with the students' self-confidence and also their low anxiety.

The researcher is interested in finding out the students' difficulties in Listening among the English language education department and describing the level of listening difficulties of the third semester students of Sarjanawiyata University. In doing this study, the researcher administered listening tests to the students of Listening to measure their ability in getting certain scores that could be used to formulate a solution and try to give some strategies for overcoming the difficulties in Listening in getting the target language in the teaching and learning process in Listening

Based on the description, the present researcher has a great intention to conduct of Teacher's Efforts to Overcome the Students' Difficulties in Speaking Ability for Eleventh Graders at Senior High School.

2. Method

This research using correlational design and the researcher want to find out the correlation between the students' learning problems in listening and their achievements. a Pearson product moment correlation was conducted to gain information in this research. This research was conducted to understand the relationship for what exists, and then sought to uncover new facts and meaning regarding what is currently taking place (Polit, Beck, & Hungler, 2001).

2.1 Participants

The number of the third semester students who joined listening class are as in Table 1.

Table1. Number of population

Class	The Number of the Students
1 st period	33 students
2 nd period	34 students
3 rd period	34 students
Total	101 students

Repeaters	The number of the students
2001	3 students
2002	5 students
2003	20 students
2004	17 students

Total

45 students

The third semester students of Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa University included 56 students and the others were repeaters. The number of the population, the students participating in Listening was 101. In this study, the researcher took 25% of the students as the sample. So, the number of the sample was 26 students.

2.2 Data Collection

2.2.1 Instrument of Collecting Data

There were two instruments utilized in this study. They were a language test and questionnaire. The objective test was designed to collect the data about the students' problems in listening. In this case, the objective test was administered to get the students' scores to find out the students' learning problems in understanding listening materials, and the questionnaire was to collect the data to find out some alternatives to deal with the students' problems in listening.

2.2.2 Techniques for Collecting Data

The method for collecting data used by the researcher was an objective test and questionnaire.

A. Testing

The two of tests set on the second period. The objective test was to measure the ability of students and investigate the problems that found in listening comprehension materials. The result of listening comprehension test is to give information about their achievements. The students were asked to answer the test by choosing the correct answer from the alternative choices for a period of 60 minutes.

The listening test that was given to the third semester students of English language education department, UST was taken from "How to Prepare the TOEFL" by Morphy Baron. The number of the listening test items was 30 and the time allocated to complete the test was 60 minutes. The listening test consisted of statements, dialogues and short stories. The objective test scoring technique was used to score the answers of the students. The questionnaire consisted of 35 closed questions that based on consideration of the Micro-Skills of Listening. To support the accurate data of this study will apply the other way that is by interviewing data to the third semester students randomly to answer 6 open questions that have already prepared.

B. Questionnaire

The questionnaire is about the students' learning problems in listening III that used to investigate a certain alternative strategies that could use to solve the problems in the teaching of listening. The students are expected to answer the questionnaire for approximately 20 minutes. The questionnaire was based on the Micro-Skills of Listening (Brown, 2001:256) that could be used as the indicators for the questionnaire to be given to the third semester students of English language department.

2.3 Data Analysis

This study applied a quantitative approach. The techniques of data analysis were used to describe and investigate the correlation between the students' learning problems in listening and their achievements. This section consists of two kinds of techniques of data analysis, namely descriptive and inferential correlation analysis that will be discussed as follows:

2.3.1 Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis was applied to describe the students' learning problems in listening and their achievements. In this analysis, the scores of the students' listening tests and the students' learning problems questionnaire in listening were put into a table of frequency to find out their means and standard deviations

2.3.2 Inferential Analysis

The inferential correlation analysis was utilized to provide the information about the correlation between the students' learning problems in listening and their achievements to provide the alternative solutions in the teaching and learning of listening process in the classroom

3. Findings

There were thirty valid items of thirty-five tried out items in the questionnaire to obtain the data of the students' learning problems in listening. The results of the students' learning problems in listening questionnaire showed that the highest score under the scale of 100 was 94.86 and the lowest was 67.43. The mean score was 77.56 and the standard deviation was 5.96. The complete data analysis can be seen in Appendix 5. The frequency of distribution of the students' learning problems in listening is presented in the Table 2:

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

Instruments	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
The Students' Learning Problems in Listening	26	67.43	94.86	77.56	5.96
Valid N (Listwise)	26				

The highest possible score the students gained was 175 and the lowest was 35.

Table 2. The complete calculation of product moment correlation

Correlations			
		Achievements	Difficulties in Listening III
Achievements	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.393*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.047
	N	26	26
Difficulties in Listening III	Pearson Correlation	.393*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	.
	N	26	26

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4. Discussion

The results of the statistical analysis proved that there was a positive correlation between the students' learning problems in listening and their achievements. The discussion about the research variables is as follows:

4.1 The Students' Learning Problems in Listening

The factors that influenced the third semester students' learning problems in listening comprehension at English language education department of Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa University Yogyakarta in academic year 2006/2007 were listeners' condition in their hard hearing and their background knowledge including lack of vocabulary mastery, less in understanding grammatical forms, speakers' utterances including unclear pronunciation and speed of speech, unclear contents of the passages, and physical setting including uncomfortable class that obstructed the English language teaching and learning process, and the lack of facility and background noise.

Some of the students' common problems faced in the classroom were due to poor attention in class, personal problem of learners, passiveness, low motivation and laziness.

The students' learning problems in Listening can be categorized as "low" with the observed mean score was 77.56 (SD: 5.96) at the range of 70.05-93.34.

According to Byrne (1981:42) states that listening is a process of orally grasping and decoding the signs a listener directly hears. In a listening process, a listener understands and translates the message addressed to him and gets the meaning in the listeners' mind. The purpose of listening involves the process of hearing, understanding, evaluating, and responding to the message.

4.2 The Students' Achievements

Based on the listening comprehension test and questionnaire given to the students, the results of the listening objective test were unsatisfactory because the students had some problems with themselves in comprehending the recorded listening texts. The findings of the students' achievements showed that the observed mean score was 42.05 (SD: 11.39). It indicates that the students' achievements were in "moderate" level at the range of 41.67-58.32.

Just like Hornby (1989:496) defines that the term "listen" means to hear and pay attention. Therefore, listening can be said as the act of hearing in which the listener pays attention to what they are listening to. Listening is the process by which a spoken language is converted to meaning in the mind. Webster in the 3rd edition dictionary (1993) mentions the definition of listening as to pay attention to sound, to hear with thoughtful attention and to be alert in catching an expected sound.

Little Wood (1981:67) states that the active native of listener in listening activity means that the learners must be motivated by a communicative purpose. River (1983:13) says the causes of the difficulty in listening comprehension can either be linguistic or non-linguistic

factors. Linguistic factors are those related to the knowledge of a language such as phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar. Non-linguistic factors are related to the things such as physical and psychological condition of the students. An example of physical condition of the students is theirs hard in hearing and the psychological condition of the students is nervousness, tiredness, and anxiety. And the other non-linguistics factors are the quality of the tape recorder (media) and the physical restrain. The students' common problems that faced in learning of listening are poor short-term memory, poor organization skills, and poor in listening comprehension.

4. Conclusions

In communication, there are two processes involved in its action. Those are sending the message and receiving the message. The message cannot be communicated unless there is someone else who receives that message. In using a traditional technique, it will be hard for the students to understand the message from the native speaker. So, by using the various techniques they are expected to be able to make the students interested in learning. In English teaching and learning process, the message is what the speaker speaks to the receiver. In this case the students are the receivers. Listening is a particular activity to receive the sounds with ears. The English teaching and learning process in the classroom is concerned and focused on listening words, phrases, and sentences that they listen carefully.

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