

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

A Thesis by

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Student Number: 06011181419020

English Education Study Program

Language and Arts Education Department



FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

PALEMBANG

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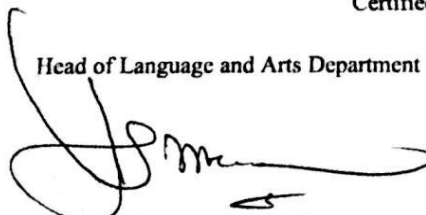
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By

Mela Maresta


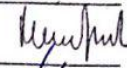
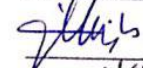
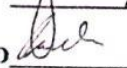
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The Undersigned,



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DEDICATIONS

This research is dedicated foremost to my parents and I. I never expected, in a million years that I would arrive at this juncture of my life.

I dedicate this research to the Allah. SWT., who against all odds, provided a place and kept me safe and healthy throughout the period of making this research.

- 1.** Special thank to my beloved parents (Edy Yazuar and Nurhasanah, S.Pd.,M.M) my brother (M. Nelson Djasuco), and my family for the love and support.
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ABSTRACT

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

Keywords: *listening, listening comprehension, listening problems*

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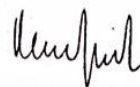
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes: (1) background, (2) the problem of the study, (3) the objective of the study, and (4) the significance of the study.

1.1 Background

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

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

Indeed, as cited in Zhang (2014, p.2472), W.M. Rivers and M.S Temperly as language teaching experts state that the highest percentage of a person's daily life in using language skill is listening (45%) while speaking is 30 %, reading is 16%, and writing is only 9%. Hamouda (2013, p. 113) asserts that listening skill in foreign language is very important because it is the key to receive language input by acquiring a language and everyone cannot disclaim it. Teaching and learning

process cannot be improved without a good understanding. Thus, a good communication will not be achieved without listening skill (Cross, 1998).

Ahmadi (2016, p.7) states about listening and listening comprehension as the following “If learners want to learn to speak, they should first learn to understand the spoken language they hear, but if learners want to communicate with native speakers, they should first learn to understand in real language situations to comprehend the main point of what native speakers are telling”. It can be concluded that both listening and listening comprehension have crucial role for both teachers and learners in order to achieve communication aims. Similarly, Zhang (2014, p.2472) points out that listening is primary skill in communication. It is not only a basic skill but also the foundation to develop other language skills. Without them, learners will never learn to communicate effectively. In order to have an effective communication, learners should understand what they have heard (Brown and Yule, 1983). It means that if they learn a text through listening, they can comprehend what the text is about. In fact, it is not easy for the students to do it. Furthermore, Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016, p.123) say that students have serious problems in listening comprehension.

Ahmadi (2016, p.8) asserts that listening comprehension is a special process of understanding what people say. Indeed, the goal of listening comprehension is understanding the spoken language at normal speed automatically (Chastain, 1971). Rost (2012) and Hamouda (2013) state that listening comprehension occurs when listeners are involved in constructing meaning because they defined listening comprehension as an interactive process. People comprehend what they hear through sound discrimination, background knowledge, grammatical structures, stress, and intonation, and the other linguistic or non-linguistic clues. Similarly, Nadig (2013) explains listening comprehension as complicated processes in making meaning of oral input and understanding it. The processes are knowing speech sounds, comprehending the meaning of individual words, and understanding the syntax of sentences. Moreover, Lotfi (2012, p.509) explains that listening comprehension is a complex process that requires learners to

analyze native's message by collecting information from some sources, such as phonetic, phonological, prosodic, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. Due to the complexities above, learners face difficulties and feel fail in listening comprehension.

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

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

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

In other case, Goh (2000, p.6) found out that the students quickly forgot the words. Even though the students were familiar with some words they listened, it will not last as there will still next part of listening which they should focus on. Indeed, Hamouda (2013, p.115) found that students could not keep their concentration for a long time. The same problem has also been observed in many countries (Buck, 2001). One of the fourth semester students majoring in English

of Sriwijaya University said that listening comprehension needed a very good concentration. In his point of view, there was a possibility if student who is good at listening comprehension, his or her concentration will be good too. However, other two students had the same opinion in mentioning that the problem in listening comprehension for them was they did not know much about the idiom which appeared when listening to the talk. Hence, it is really hard for them to comprehend what the speaker means. Their opinion is proved by Chang, Chang, and Kuo (1995) which discovered one of five students' problems in listening comprehension was idiomatic expressions.

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

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

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

comprehension, the writer believes that the result will be different and show a new discovery.

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

1.2 The Problems of the Study

The problems of the study were formed in these following questions:

1. What were the 4th semester of English students' at Sriwijaya University perception on listening skill?
2. What listening comprehension problems did the 4th semester of English students at Sriwijaya University encounter when listening to English?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems above, the objectives of the study were:

1. To find out the perception of the 4th semester of English students at Sriwijaya University on listening skill.
2. To find out kinds of listening comprehension problems encountered by the 4th semester of English students at Sriwijaya University.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

This writer expected this research can give some information about the perception of the students on listening skill and what the listening comprehension problems were which encountered by the 4th semester of English students at Sriwijaya University. The result of this research hopefully will give the useful and meaningful for both teacher and students. Moreover, teacher will be more aware of the problems that will occur later so that he or she know how to overcome them and students can improve their ability in listening comprehension. Therefore, the writer also hopes that this research will give more knowledge and precious information as the source for further study.

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