

**INVESTIGATING THE DIFFICULTIES IN LISTENING
COMPREHENSION ENCOUNTERED BY THE FIFTH SEMESTER
STUDENTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM IN
SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY**

A Thesis By

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English Education Study Program

Language and Arts Education Department



**FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY
PALEMBANG**

2020

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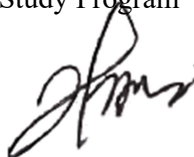
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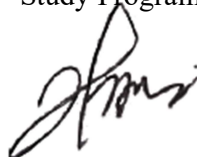
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DECLARATION

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Certified that Thesis entitled "Investigating the Difficulties in Listening Comprehension Encountered by the Fifth Semester Students of English Education Study Program in Sriwijaya University" is my own work and I did not do any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethic and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserve to face the court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Palembang, June 2020

The Undersigned,


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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

My beloved and lovely family, my mother (Rahmi Hatta), my father (Ramadani), and my brothers (Muhammad Farhan Rara Pardana, and Muhammad Haekal Ramadhan), who always there and support me. Thank you so much for being a supportive, caring, and loving family.

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Palembang, June 2020

The Writer,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dwi Raranisa', with a stylized vertical line on the left side.

Dwi Raranisa

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INVESTIGATING THE DIFFICULTIES IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION ENCOUNTERED BY THE FIFTH SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM IN SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

The study aimed to find out the listening comprehension performance, difficulties, causes of difficulties, and the association between the difficulties and causes of difficulties in listening comprehension. Descriptive method was used to investigate the difficulties and the causes. The participants of this study are 67 fifth semester students of English Education Study Program in Sriwijaya University. The data were collected using a listening comprehension test, questionnaire, and semi-structured interview. The listening comprehension test was adapted from TOEFL-like listening test and was scored by using a conventional number right (NR) scoring system. The results showed that 30% of the students were considered fair, and 70% were considered poor in listening comprehension performance. The difficulties were specified into three aspects, namely: listeners, listening materials, and physical settings and the causes were based on four aspects: linguistic knowledge, pronunciation, concentration, and environment. The data was calculated using Chi-Square Association with p-value (514.842), which is greater than the critical value (179.581). Therefore, there is a significant association between the difficulties and the factors of difficulties.

Keywords: *Listening Comprehension Performance, Listening Comprehension Difficulties, Causes of Difficulties, Significant Association.*

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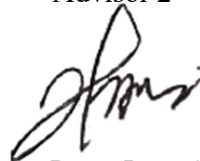
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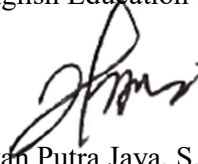
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes background, limitation, problem, objective, and significance of the study

1.1 Background of the Study

For a human being, hearing is the most valuable and substantial sense among the five human senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) to assist them in many aspects of their lives, whether in career, education, or to do a most basic task like waking up to the sound of the alarm in the morning. By hearing, humans can recognize sounds made by the surroundings, create harmony into kinds of music, and communicate with one person to another. Similarly, with Hans (2013) statement, hearing is very substantial in order to help human beings comprehend many things that happen around them and associate them with other skills in everyday life. Nevertheless, hearing and listening is a different thing. People may hear what the speaker says, but it does not mean they listen to what the speaker tries to imply. Difference Between (2011) identifies the definition of hearing as a spontaneous and impulsive action of receiving sound waves that are transferred to the ears, while listening is a procedure that is used in communication in order to determine, comprehend and interpret what other people say.

Listening has several aspects. Tyagi (2013) states that there are six aspects of listening, which are what is the definition of listening, variety of listening, value and function of listening in life, listening difficulties, and listening strategies. The definition of listening is varied. Emmert (1994), states that listening does not just distinguish words through sounds. However, it requires the listeners to participate in the process of taking, conducting interpretation from, and answering to the spoken discourse. A good listener is required to be adequate in comprehending the words and sentence structure, pronouncement, and the meaning of the spoken discourse correctly.

There are many types of listening, and listening comprehension is one of them. Thaker (2008) identifies twelve types of listening: discriminatory, comprehension, critical, biased, evaluative, appreciative, sympathetic, empathy, therapeutic, relationships, false listening, initial, selective, full, and deep listening. These types of listening have different functions. Thaker (2008) also underlines that listening comprehension or can be considered as content listening, informative listening and full listening requires listeners to have a basis in grammar and syntax that is good for understanding what the speaker is trying to say. Howatt and Dakin(1974), state that the purpose of listening comprehension is to identify and understand what other people are trying to imply related to dialect, pressure, language structure, choice of words, and their meanings.

In everyday communication, it is essential to apply comprehension listening because the inability to distinguish one word from another leads to ineffective communication. In a basic conversation, both sides need to be a good listener, so there is no room for misunderstanding. For example, the words "to pray" can be mistaken as "two prey," which has an entirely different meaning and context may lead to a different understanding. That is why a good listener needs to be able to distinguish them based on their knowledge of grammar and semantics. Morley (1972) identifies listening comprehension as the skill to discriminate auditory grammar and to comprehend, excerpt important information, memorize it, and relate it to everything that includes transforming sounds and creating meaning. EFL speakers, especially, are expected to sharpen their listening skills not only for communication purposes but also to be applied in their language learning process.

Listening comprehension is one of the essential skills yet less considered to be a priority in the English teaching and learning process. Richards and Renandya (2002) state that most English teachers disregard listening. They consider listening as a soft skill that can be obtained outside the school and not to be officially taught by the teacher. Other skill such as writing, speaking, and reading has always been the most focused skill throughout the ages. As Berne (2004) stated, "L2 listening was rarely seen as worthy of serious research or pedagogical

attention” (p.86). When it comes to listening, whether in real-life communication or the learning process, students may be good at reading, speaking, or writing, not listening.

EFL learners that are good at listening are more likely to be better at speaking skill as well, that is because they can recognize words of the other speaker right away and also be able to conduct faster respond based on what they listen previously. Goh (2006), also states that by training listening skills, the ability of speaking skills will be developed remarkably. EFL learners are required to listen to different kinds of English listening materials continuously to become adequate, considerate, and fluent communicator. It cannot be denied that by listening, learners may obtain the ability to process information through verbal communication faster. Rost (2011), states that listening to a foreign language is primarily necessary because it gives various language information and input. Through listening, much information can be obtained, such as the right way to pronounce words and to distinguish the differences of sound features.

In learning English as a foreign language, some difficulties cause the students to make mistakes. When listening to a conversation in English, the speaker's dialect, accent, and speed may be an obstacle to the listener, and there are external causes such as the volume, the listener's condition, and the listening material that are not suitable. Wilson (2009), states that there are four basic categories of listening difficulties that divided based on whom the listeners are, what are they try to say, how they deliver the message and condition of the surroundings so considering these aspects may affect the listening comprehension.

Many aspects cause difficulties in listening. The first aspect comes from the listeners. Lack of vocabulary may become an obstacle for the listener to find out the overall meaning or the main point of the spoken discourse. In the listening comprehension process, listeners often guess every word's meaning instead of focusing on the keywords. Hien (2015) states in his study that making predictions in listening is recommended for the listeners. In order to comprehend the whole context in the listening process, the listeners must be able to predict what the

speaker talks about, find the main idea, and guess the meaning of unfamiliar words correctly.

A lack of listening learning material may as well cause difficulties in listening comprehension. Jaya (2014) explains that gathering listening materials for teaching is not as effortless as gathering teaching materials for the other three skills. The amount of learning sources for listening comprehension is not abundant as the source for speaking, writing, and reading skills. The other thing that may cause a lack of listening skills in EFL students is the external element or the lack of devices for listening to listening materials and exercises. Before portable media players (such as cellphones, tablets, and mp3 player) are widely used in classrooms, most teachers use a boombox and CD player that are not entirely portable and do not produce clear sounds. Not every English learning classroom is provided with proper media players, and even though they have one, not even teachers can operate it, which leads to an inefficient listening learning process. The third possible difficulty that is encountered by the students in listening comprehension comes from the physical settings. The external problems may also be a cause of difficulties since the unnecessary disturbance, such as the noises of unclear audio, will make the students to be unfocused and lost track of the spoken discourse. In order to achieve a pleasant listening environment, the use of a soundproof room, audio with good quality, and proper media player shall be needed.

Most students of the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University still encounter many problems in listening comprehension. From the first semester, students are expected to reach a specific score in their SULIET (Sriwijaya University Language Institute Language Test) but only a few students who were able to reach the required score. The students may find difficulties in the listening test section, whether from the unclear sounds from the audio, the speed and the dialect of the speaker or from external causes such as the noises that disturb the concentration. This situation can be connected to Flowerdew and Miller's (1996) study about the difficulties that students face, including unfamiliar

concepts and vocabulary, speed of the speaker, issues in contemplating, and condition of the surroundings.

From the case of English Education Study Program students, can be seen that listening difficulties are something that cannot be regarded as an easy matter. From the result of the Sriwijaya University Language Institute Listening Test (SULIET) that the students had taken, most of them still got a considerably low performance in listening comprehension. In order to communicate adequately, learners must be able to master English skills, especially listening skill. In order to know the cause behind the learners' difficulties in listening comprehension, the teacher may as well be opened up to the possible reasons why the students find it challenging to learn the listening skill. Chen (2015) points out that listening difficulties cannot be seen as something unessential in the process of learning a second language even though the difficulties are versatile, students can still use it as a tool to create a more improved learning strategy.

Therefore, finding out the difficulties and the causes of the difficulties in listening comprehension became the purpose of this study. This study not only focuses on finding out the difficulties in listening comprehension but also to find out whether there is any significant association between the difficulties in listening comprehension and the causes. Learning about the difficulties in listening comprehension not only help the students to improve their listening skill but other skills as well because every skill in English has a connection with one another. They should overcome their difficulties and find out the causes so it cannot be a hindrance for them in the future. This study also aims to encourage further study about listening comprehension difficulties.

1.2 Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on the listening performance, the difficulties and causes of the difficulties faced by the fifth-semester students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University. The difficulties in listening comprehension are broad and varied, but this study focuses on the three aspects of difficulties which

include the learners' condition and knowledge, the listening materials and the physical settings.

1.3 Research Problems

The problems of the study are formulated into the following questions:

1. How is the listening performance of the fifth-semester students in English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University?
2. What are the difficulties in listening comprehension encountered by the fifth-semester students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University?
3. What are the causes of the difficulties in listening comprehension encountered by the fifth-semester students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University?
4. Is there any significant association between the difficulties and the causes of the difficulties in listening comprehension?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

From the research questions above, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Find out the listening performance of the fifth-semester students in English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University
2. Investigate the difficulties in listening comprehension encountered by the fifth-semester students in English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University.
3. Investigate the causes of difficulties in listening comprehension encountered by the fifth-semester students in English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University.
4. To find out whether there is any significant association between the difficulties and the causes of difficulties in listening comprehension.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is important to help the students and lecturers of English Education Study Program in Sriwijaya University to solve the problems concerning the students' listening difficulties and to bring enlightenment for both students and lecturers that listening comprehension skill is necessary in order to improve the students' English proficiency. This study also aims to encourage further study about listening comprehension difficulties to improve the students' achievement and performance in the English learning process.

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