Students’ Inability on Listening Skill Pertaining to the Material at English Department of Bukittinggi State Islamic Institute

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Abstract. Listening plays an important role in educational realm, specifically at language department. Listening happens when students listen to lectures, discussions, or any recordings. Listening here is not merely listening to sounds produced by someone, but it is a process to understanding any discourse or spoken text. Ideally, students at English Department should have the ability to understand the spoken text well. Nevertheless, most of them who learn English as foreign language are often unable to comprehend the text in listening classes well which may be caused by several factors. It also happens at Bukittinggi State Islamic Institute (IAIN Bukittinggi). It was revealed through a research that has been conducted at the English Department. The data were gotten through questionnaire which was adopted from Hamouda’s. In this article, the writer is going to discuss students’ inability in listening skill pertaining to the material at English Department of IAIN Bukittinggi.

Keywords: inability, listening, material

1. Introduction
Listening is an activity people mostly do in daily life. It is done for many reasons. Generally, it can be done for seeking information like listening to news programmes, for getting entertainment like listening to the music. Academically, it is done when attending courses. Hedge (Hedge, 2000) divides Listening into two types, that is participatory and non-participatory. The participatory is also of two types, that is interactional which is for social purposes and transactional which is for exchanging information. However, it is impossible to divide listening neatly into the two types -interactional and transactional-like a conversation between customer and a shopkeeper who are members of the same community and old acquaintances could move between one purpose and the other one; they could move between transactional to interactional. Halliday as discussed by Morley in Celce-Murcia (Morley, 2001) used the term ideational instead of the interactional and interpersonal instead of the transactional. So, people listen for different purposes.

Listening is not a passive activity as it seems. Otherwise, it is an active one. It is in line with Rubin as cited by Bilokcuoglu (Hasan, 2014) who says that listening is an active process in which information is selected and interpreted by a listener via auditory and visual clues so that what the speakers are trying to express is defined. It is so called since there is activity in the brain in order that someone gets the message that is intended by the speaker. It is the Wernicke’s area which is responsible for
understanding the speech sounds (Martin, Mikutta, Knight, & Pasley, 2016). Specifically, Ardila and Roselli (Ardila, Bernal, & Roselli, 2016) says that the Wernicke’s area which is located in the left hemisphere corresponds to the language auditory processing. Thus, it is clear that listening is an active process. In language classrooms where the language is as foreign language, most of the students are often unable to get comprehension. The inability may be caused by several factors. The factors, according to Hamouda (Hamouda, 2013) may be the material, linguistic features, concentration, psychological characteristics, listener themselves, and speaker(s). Hedge (Hedge, 2000) uses the term ‘uncertainties’ for these which are categorized as speech sounds and pattern, language and syntax, recognition of content, and uncertainty caused by environmental noise and disturbance which create gaps in the message. In this article, the writer is going to discuss the inability of the students at English Department of Bukittinggi State Islamic Institute (IAIN Bukittinggi) pertaining to the material in listening classes.

2. Literature Review
Listening is defined by Lundsén as cited by Bilokcuoglu (Hasan, 2014) as the skill by which spoken language is converted to meaning in the mind. Bilokcuoglu also cited Underwood who defines Listening as the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear. From these two definitions, it can be seen that in listening people try to get the meaning of what being said by the speaker. Listening in language classrooms is identical with listening comprehension. It is in line with Richards (Richards, 2008) who says that listening and listening comprehension are synonymous in most methodology manuals. It is because the final goal is to get comprehension of what is heard. The process of getting comprehension can be viewed from two perspectives, either from a top-down processing or bottom-up processing (Richards & Renandya, 2002). In the top-down processing, listeners use their prior knowledge of the context and situation to make sense of the incoming sounds. Meanwhile, in the bottom-up processing, the listeners decode the sounds starting from the phonemes to the complete text (Richards & Renandya, 2002), (Brown, 2006), (Buck, 2001).

Listening is done for different purposes. Gilakjani and Ahmadi as cited by Ahmadi (Ahmadi, 2016) say that listening includes listening for thoughts, feelings, and intentions. However, broadly, it may be done for getting information or merely for getting entertainment. In classrooms, it is done mostly for getting information. Nevertheless, it is impossible to get information without comprehending the message sent by the speaker. To get comprehension of what is heard when listening in a foreign language is often difficult for most students. There are many factors that make someone encounters difficulties in listening classes. Those factors have been discussed by some experts. Gilakjani (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016) discusses five factors - which have also been discussed by Bingol and Mart (Bingol & Mart, 2014) - which can be source of difficulties in listening comprehension. Those are the quality of recorded material, cultural differences, accent, unfamiliar vocabulary, and length and speed of the listening. Bingol has also discussed two other factors other than the five factors, that is physical condition and lack of concentration. Hamouda as cited by Darti and Asmawati (Asmawati & Darti, 2017) says that source of students’ listening comprehension problems are the text, task and activity, listeners, and teacher’s methodology. Based on the source of problems discussed by the experts, it can be seen that there are so many factors that can affect students’ comprehension when listening. A teacher needs to recognize his students’ difficulties in order to make teaching and learning achieve the instructional goals.

3. Methodology
The research was a descriptive quantitative one. Gay and Airasian (Gay & Airasian, 2000) state that a descriptive research is used to determine and describe the way things are. Meanwhile, a quantitative research is defined by Gay as the collection and analysis of numerical data to describe, explain, predict, or control phenomena of interest (Gay, Mills, Geoffrey, & Airasian, 2012). The research was to find out students’ problems in comprehending the spoken text in Listening classes. The population was all of the fourth semester students who had taken three Listening classes: Listening 1, Listening 2, and Listening
3 at English Department of IAIN Bukittinggi. The sample was taken randomly by using simple random sampling. There were 25 students as the sample in which students of each class were taken 15 percent.

A questionnaire was used as the instrument to get the data. It was adapted from Hamouda’s instrument (Hamouda, 2013). There were eight statements students needed to respond related to the material in listening classes. Students were asked to respond to one of the four options: Never (N), Seldom (S), Often (O) and Always (A). Among the four options, only option often and always chosen were regarded as the data. Then, the data gotten were tallied and calculated in percentage.

4. Findings and Discussions

Findings

This article is to discuss about students’ inability in listening pertaining to the material in Listening classes. There were eight statements students had to respond. The first statement is “I find it difficult to understand listening texts in which there are too many unfamiliar words including jargon and idioms”. The second one is “Complex grammatical structures interfered with my listening comprehension”. The third is “Long spoken text interfered with my listening comprehension”. The fourth is “I find it difficult to interpret the meaning of a long spoken text”. The fifth is “I feel fatigue and distracted when I listen to a long spoken text”. The sixth is “I find it difficult to understand listening texts when the topic is unfamiliar”. The next is “I find it difficult to understand every single word of incoming speech”. And, the last one is “I find the listening passage difficult to understand”.

Based on the data, it was found that over 50 percent of the students found difficulties on each statement in every class, except for the seventh statement in Listening 1 which was below 50 percent. It was the statement related to understanding every single word of incoming speech. It was exactly 40 percent. The highest percentage was on the statement related to interpreting the meaning of a long spoken text in Listening 3. It was exactly 88 percent. It can be seen in the next table.

| Table 1. Percentage of Students Difficulty in Listening Classes Pertaining to The Material |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| Statement                                      |
|                                               |
| I find it difficult to understand listening    |
| texts in which there are too many unfamiliar  |
| words including jargon and idioms.             |
|                                               |
| Complex grammatical structures interfered with |
| my listening comprehension.                    |
|                                               |
| Long spoken text interfered with my listening  |
| comprehension.                                |
|                                               |
| I find it difficult to interpret the meaning   |
| of a long spoken text.                         |
|                                               |
| I feel fatigue and distracted when I listen to |
| a long spoken text.                            |
|                                               |
| I find it difficult to understand listening    |
| texts when the topic is unfamiliar.            |
|                                               |
| I find it difficult to understand every single |
| word of incoming speech.                       |
|                                               |
| I find the listening passage difficult to      |
| understand.                                   |
|                                               |
| Listening 1                                   |
|                                               |
| 80 %                                          |
|                                               |
| 84 %                                          |
|                                               |
| 72%                                           |
|                                               |
| Listening 2                                   |
|                                               |
| 56 %                                          |
|                                               |
| 56 %                                          |
|                                               |
| 56%                                           |
|                                               |
| Listening 3                                   |
|                                               |
| 52%                                           |
|                                               |
| 56%                                           |
|                                               |
| 64%                                           |
|                                               |
| I find it difficult to understand listening    |
| texts in which there are too many unfamiliar  |
| words including jargon and idioms.             |
|                                               |
| Complex grammatical structures interfered with |
| my listening comprehension.                    |
|                                               |
| Long spoken text interfered with my listening  |
| comprehension.                                |
|                                               |
| I find it difficult to interpret the meaning   |
| of a long spoken text.                         |
|                                               |
| I feel fatigue and distracted when I listen to |
| a long spoken text.                            |
|                                               |
| I find it difficult to understand listening    |
| texts when the topic is unfamiliar.            |
|                                               |
| I find it difficult to understand every single |
| word of incoming speech.                       |
|                                               |
| I find the listening passage difficult to      |
| understand.                                   |
|                                               |
| Listening 1                                   |
|                                               |
| 80%                                           |
|                                               |
| 72%                                           |
|                                               |
| Listening 2                                   |
|                                               |
| 64%                                           |
|                                               |
| 72%                                           |
|                                               |
| Listening 3                                   |
|                                               |
| 52%                                           |
|                                               |
| 80%                                           |
For the first statement which was about too many unfamiliar words including jargon and idioms that caused students unable to understand the text, it was found that successively 80 percent, 84 percent and 72 percent of the students experienced problems in Listening 1, Listening 2 and Listening 3. Therefore, it can be said that on average 79 percent of the students were unable to comprehend the listening material because of too many unfamiliar words found in the text. For the second one which was about interference of complex grammatical structures with listening comprehension, it was found that 56 percent, 56 percent and 56 percent of the students experienced problems in Listening 1, Listening 2, and Listening 3. It is clear that on average 56 percent of the students were unable to comprehend the text because of the complexity of the grammatical structure of the text. For the next one which was about interference of the length of the text with listening comprehension, it was found that successively 52 percent, 56 percent and 64 percent of the students experienced problems in Listening 1, Listening 2, and Listening 3. It means that on average 57.33 percent of the students were unable to comprehend the text because of the length of the spoken text. The next one which was about difficulties to interpreting the meaning of a long spoken text, it was found that successively 64 percent, 76 percent and 88 percent of the students experienced problems in Listening 1, Listening 2, and Listening 3. Therefore, it can be said that on average 76 percent of the students experienced problems in comprehending the text because they fail to interpret the meaning of the long text. The fifth statement which was about feeling fatigue and distracted when listening to a long spoken text, it was found that successively 52 percent, 68 percent and 72 percent of the students experienced problems for Listening 1, Listening 2, and Listening 3. Thus, it can be said that on average 64 percent of the students were unable to comprehend the text because they feel fatigue and distracted when listening to a long text. The next one which was about difficulties to understanding the text when the topics is unfamiliar, it was found that successively 64 percent, 72 percent and 80 percent of the students experienced problems in Listening 1, Listening 2, and Listening 3. Therefore, on average, 72 percent of the students were unable to comprehend the text because topic was unfamiliar to them. The next one which was about difficulty to understanding every single word of incoming speech, it was found that successively 40 percent, 56 percent and 52 percent of the students experienced problems in Listening 1, Listening 2 and Listening 3. It means that 49.33 percent of the students were unable to comprehend the text because of the difficulty in identifying every single words of the incoming speech. And for the last one which was about difficulty to understanding the listening passage, it was found that successively 56 percent, 56 percent, and 68 percent of the students experienced problems in Listening 1, Listening 2, and Listening 3. Therefore, on average 60 percent of the students were unable to understand the passage. It was found that successively for the first statement up to the last statement, students’ difficulties in Listening classes can be put into percentage: 78.67 percent, 56 percent, 57.33 percent, 76 percent, 64 percent, 72 percent, 49.33 percent, and 60 percent. When the data is grouped per class, it was found that 58 percent, 65.5 percent, and 69 percent of the students were difficult in comprehending the material for successively Listening 1, Listening 2, and Listening 3. It can be seen in the next table.

| Class | Listening 1 | Listening 2 | Listening 3 |
|-------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Percentage | 58% | 65.5% | 69% |

Based on the percentage in TABEL 2, it can be calculated that the average percentage for the three classes is 64.17 percent. Therefore, it can be stated that 64.17 percent of the students find difficulties in comprehending listening material in Listening classes.

5. Conclusion

Based on the data which were collected through questionnaire, it was found that more than half of the students were unable to comprehending the material of the Listening classes. In Listening 1, it was found that 58 percent of the students were unable to comprehend the text well. In Listening 2, it was found that 65.5 percent of the students were unable to comprehend the text well. Meanwhile, in Listening 3, it was found that 69 percent of the students were unable to comprehend the text well. It can
be seen that the percentage was getting higher from Listening 1 to Listening 2, and it got higher in Listening 3. It may be caused by the level of difficulty of materials given which were also getting more difficult from Listening 1 to Listening 2, and getting more difficult in Listening 3. Overall, it was found that the percentage of the students who were unable to comprehend the material in Listening classes was 64.17 percent. Based on this fact, it is urgent that the lecturer find a solution to resolve this problem. It can be by implementing new technique, strategy, method, or model of teaching.

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