

THE PROBLEMS OF INDONESIAN COLLEGE EFL LEARNERS IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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Abstrak

This study examines the most potential problems in listening to English discourse faced by Indonesian learners studying English as a foreign language at the tertiary level. The listening test is given to English language learners who have pre-intermediate and intermediate listening skills. Next, a questionnaire is given to find out thoughts, feelings, or comments regarding listening activities during the test. Finally, interviews were conducted to find out possible problems experienced in listening and their causes. The results of the analysis of qualitative data collected from the three instruments found five categories of problems in acquiring comprehension in listening, namely problems related to information processing (problems with English speakers' speed), native speakers' language content (problems due to English speakers' pronunciation being difficult to understand, use of everyday language and the use of language forms contained in it), English language skills (problems with limited vocabulary and grammar), learning habits (problems due to inconsistency in listening habits), listening disorders (difficulty concentrating) and interpretation problems (difficulty concentrating problems) problems due to student transmission to convert messages correctly when listening).

Keywords: Potential problems, listening comprehension

A. Introduction

The reality shows that by this far, listening is considered as a passive, non-demanding skill; however, on the contrary, it is an active process involving many mental functions. Firstly, we perceive language sounds. The language-sound information then has to be retained in short-term working memory, parsed, and turned into meaningful, mental representations using phonological, semantic, syntactic and pragmatic linguistic skills. This process requires numerous cognitive functions and resources including attention, mental energy, and the application of various temporary, short-term, and long-term memory reserves. Since it is frequently regarded as non demanded skill, many students consequently ignore learning it seriously. They are therefore unaware that listening requires enormous amounts of mental activity and that requires improvement for successful communication.

In teaching perspectives, for so many years, listening is found out as the most neglected skills in learning a language. David Nunan (1997) commented that listening is the “Cinderella Skill” which is overlooked by its elder sister “speaking” in second language learning. In many public schools where foreign languages are taught, language teachers more focus their attention on leading their students to expertise the productive skills like speaking and writing. Even, the two productive skills have become the knowledge standard of a foreign language mastery. This fact makes the learners make effort to develop their skills of the language output and ignore the development of their skills of the language input. Consequently, the ignored listening skill comes to be the most difficult task for the language learner, yet it is probably the most neglected skill in language teaching (Paulstone 1976). To support this phenomenon, a survey results conducted by Test Magic.com (an online TOEFL provider) conveyed that about 60% of all TOEFL test takers think

that the hardest part of the TOEFL is the Listening Section.

The fact indicates how difficult listening skill is. Therefore, listening skill needs a serious effort and attention to learn. As a positive response to it, listening skill is learnt as one of compulsory subjects in English Language department. At STAIN Parepare for example (The state college where the writer is teaching English), listening subjects are learnt for three semesters in three years. However, almost all students are still of the opinion that listening lessons are the hardest due to the difficulties to build up comprehension to authentic (the voice of Native speakers of English) listening materials. Besides, the students' weakness in listening can also be recognized from the writer's observation as supervisors of ITP-TOEFL at STAIN Parepare (from 2007 to 2010). It is disclosed that about 87% the test takers (students of STAIN Parepare who already learned over two years and passed the three listening subjects) achieved the lowest score in listening comprehension section. This research was carried out to identify potential problems of EFL learners in listening to English.

B. Literature Review Barriers To Listening Comprehension

As a listener involves in a communication with a speaker, he will receive and record aural input that demands him to identify and interpret all sounds he hears. However, converting messages when listening to English is occasionally felt very difficult for so many learners, particularly those who are listening to English as a foreign language. The difficulty in listening comes out owing to the existence of some barriers felt by the learners in gaining comprehension when listening.

When discussing about obstacles, this means that we are going to talk about difficulties or barriers that learners are facing during learning a new language. A

research report on the difficulties or barriers confronted by the EFL learners while acquiring listening comprehension has been done by Chen (2005). He identified seven types of barriers as follow:

1: Affective barriers

The affective factors that play a negative role in comprehension acquisition include anxiety, distress, frustration, and resistance.

2: Habitudinal barriers

The habitudinal barriers found were: listening for every spoken word, relying on particular language subtitles, and non-purposeful listening.

3: Information processing barriers

This type of barriers can be seen as the students can not gain comprehension when listening to English because they are unable to recognize spoken-words, unable to find the appropriate meaning of particular vocabulary items, and expressions. fail to process spoken input efficiently, have memory limitations, their attention was distracted, as well as malfunction of spoken word processing due to fatigue.

4: English proficiency barriers

Barriers related to English proficiency come out when the students have limited English vocabulary, poor grammar, and poor listening ability.

5: Strategic barriers

This type of barriers is recognized when the students forget to activate strategies while listening, have difficulty to process both language input and strategy utilization at the same time, difficulty to handle mental challenge due to the complex listening strategy, encounter practical problems while trying to put their understanding of strategies into practice, and still unable to comprehend the text after applying strategies.

6: Belief barriers

The students commonly experience belief barriers when they consider strategies as the last priority in improving listening comprehension, and believed that

other language skills such as vocabulary or grammar development are more important, they regard listening as a task to apprehend every spoken word.

7: Material barriers

The students face materials barriers when they are more interested in practicing strategies with not too difficult materials for them, they devote to learn spoken materials; they find it very difficult to cope with long sentences or texts, they feel difficult to learn authentic materials, they feel that the topic is very difficult and unreachable by their background knowledge.

Factors Influencing Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is a complex psychological process of listeners' understanding language by sense of hearing. Gou (2005) carried out an intensive research to uncover the factors influencing listening comprehension and invented three causal factors:

a. Students' psychological obstacles influence their listening capacity

Psychological factor refers to those non mental factors not directly involving cognitive process, such as students' interests, attention, learning emotions, and will power. Although these non mental factors are directly influential in the students learning processes, they play a part in promoting and controlling learning effectiveness. For example, two students listening levels might be similar, and while then the test results may be quite different. The explanation of their difference is seen to lie in their different psychological states. The cultural attitude of students is particularly influential in the way that students address their studies.

b. Grammar knowledge affects listening comprehension

Language knowledge is the foundation of learning English. If students' knowledge of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary is insufficient, it is probable that their English listening comprehension will

be negatively affected by lack of language knowledge. However, the most basic outward shell of language is pronunciation and intonation. Therefore, the first step of listening comprehension is learning how to identify and select sound signals according to pronunciation; thus pronunciation knowledge must be developed. When students' pronunciation knowledge is inadequate their capacity to discriminate will be weak and will affect listening comprehension.

c. Cultural background knowledge and thinking affect listening comprehension

Language carries knowledge and cultural information and it reflects the substantial and particular ways of thinking of that people. Thus culture is embedded in even the simplest act of language (Liddicoat, 2000), it is an inseparable part of the way in which we live our lives and the way we use language. As found by O'Malley and Chamot (1989), the effective listener was the one who was able to draw on a knowledge of the world, on personal experiences and by asking questions of themselves. Therefore, the student with no background knowledge of culture in English, American or other English speaking countries, is unlikely to understand Anglophone modes of thinking as expressed in English language. Kramsch (1993) maintains that every time we speak we perform a cultural act. Consequently, there is now, an emphasis in modern language teaching on cultural knowledge as a basis for language learning. An important requirement, then, for learning spoken English, is the acquisition of cultural knowledge.

Methodology

This research uses qualitative procedures in order to elicit common factors or patterns surrounding the difficulties or the potential problems in gaining listening comprehension. 23 students of English Department at STAIN

Parepare participate in this study. They are purposively selected according to: English proficiency levels at least pre intermediate level, Learning Period at least two years or equivalent to 4 semesters of studying period, Achievement at least pass English Skills Development Program organized by Skilled Human Resource Development Centre (PASIH) of STAIN Parepare and already received certificate of completion.

Three instruments were used to collect the required data i.e. two listening materials, a questionnaire, and a follow-up interview. The data were then analyzed with the aid of descriptive statistics by referring to the notion of Underwood (1989) on potential problems of listening i.e. Speakers' speed, No repetition, Limited vocabulary, Signal recognition failure, Misinterpretation, No concentration, Learning habits. Content Analysis procedures were also carried out to figure out potential problems in listening.

Results And Discussions

The word problem in listening of this study refers to the most possible difficulties arise in the process of gaining knowledge or skills through instructions for comprehending all others are trying to say in oral communication. The findings were derived from 293 utterances for the 23 subjects which were generated from open close questionnaire with two listening materials. The notion proposed by Underwood (1998) on listening problems was used to classify and analyze the 293 utterances and only 130 utterances can be used to explain the problems in this study. The over all results of the data analysis show that the learners of English have all potential problems as types of problems in the aspect of Underwood notion. The following table goes into all details of listening problems detection.

Table 1. Potential problems in the learners' listening comprehension

Problem Categories	Total Occurrences	Total Frequency (%)
1. Speaker's Speed	22	95,7
2. No repetition	20	87
3. Limited vocabulary	18	78,3
4. Misinterpretation	14	60,7
5. No concentration	14	60,7
7. Learning habits		
- Listening to music	16	69,6
- Watching Movie	10	43,5
- Practice communicating	3	13
- Practicing with listening exercise	2	8,7
8. Other possible problems	7	30,4
- Speaker's pronunciation	4	17,4
- Knowledge of Grammar		
Total	130 (100)	

Source: Primary data processing

a. Problems related to the speaker's speed

As for many learners of English, speakers' speed is felt to be of the greatest difficulties in gaining listening comprehension since the learners as listeners are unable to control the speed of language delivery. The data analysis shown in table 2 that 22 out of 23 respondents (about 95, 7 %) experience this problem. Most of the subjects are of the opinion that during the listening in real communication, they tend to almost miss all important information due to the native speakers' speed when speaking.

R 1)

"Native speaker kadang-kadang berbicara sangat cepat sehingga kata-kata yang diucapkan kedengarannya asing di telinga, hal ini sangat berdampak pada kualitas pemahaman kita"

(Native speakers sometimes speak too fast that makes the words they say sound unfamiliar and this contributes a great

affect on our comprehension level in listening)

R 16)

“Saya merasa kesulitan menemukan main idea dari kalimat yang diucapkan oleh native speaker karena mereka berbicara terlalu cepat”

(I find it difficult to get the main idea of the sentences spoken by the native speakers since speak too fast)

R 20)

Kalimat yang diucapkan oleh native speakers terlalu cepat membuat saya tidak memahami banyak kata-kata meskipun kata-kata tersebut saya tau kalau dituliskan, hal ini membuat konsentrasi saya buyar dan tidak mampu menangkap maksud pembicaraannya”

(Sentences spoken by the native speakers are too fast that make me unable to comprehend many words although the words are familiar to me. Consequently, I lose concentration and unable to understand what they are talking about).

From the statements above, it is obviously seen that the speakers’ rate of delivery plays a crucial role in making their speech comprehensible or not since it not only affects the learners’ comprehension but also concentration and recollection. Hence, it stands to reason to say that the faster a native speaker speaks, the more incomprehensible his sentences will be. Okazaki & Nitta (2005) claimed that listening ability typically decreases as the speed of the heard words increases, the listeners will miss approximately 50% of the words spoken at native speakers’ speed. With regard to the problems, Susan (2011) stated that speaking too quickly is more common than speaking slowly. The reasons are: 1) Level of excitement, almost all native speakers tend to speed up their speech because they don’t want to spend too much time to produce sentences due to particular situations. 2) Regions, some native speakers, however, are genuine “motormouths” who always speak rapidly

under no circumstances due to their custom and situation.

a. Problems related to the learners’ inability to get things repeated

When listening to English, the learners really need repetition. However, their inability to get English native speakers repeat what they just said generates problems to their comprehension while listening. There are 20 out of 23 respondents (87%) admitted being unable to get comprehension because no repetition occurs when they communicate with English native speakers.

R 3)

“Saya terkadang tidak mengerti inti pembicaraan mereka, karena itu saya butuh pengulangan terutama saat membicarakan tentang hal-hal di luar pengetahuan saya misalnya masalah politik atau kedokteran”
(I frequently don’t get the point of native speaker’s talk that’s why I need repetition especially as he is talking about something beyond my knowledge for example politic and medical)

R 8)

“Saya pikir, saya membutuhkan pengulangan dalam mendengar native speaker berbicara sebab mereka memiliki karakter tersendiri saat berbicara yaitu cepat, disingkat, dan bahkan menggunakan idioms”

(I think, I need repetition in listening to native speakers’ talk since they basically have typical characteristics when speaking namely; speaking too fast, using reduced forms and colloquial language)

R 10)

“Pengucapan native speaker kadang-kadang tidak jelas sehingga saya membutuhkan pengulangan”

(Native speaker uses exaggerated pronunciation which is sometimes not very not very clear to me, therefore I need repetition)

R 11)

“Kata-kata yang digunakan oleh native speaker umumnya kata-kata tingkat tinggi sehingga saya menemukan kesulitan untuk

memahami apa yang mereka katakan. Dengan pengulangan saya bisa lebih mudah mengerti kata yang diucapkan”

(Native speaker commonly uses unfamiliar vocabulary that makes me difficult to understand what he has said, repetition will facilitate me to understand the vocabulary)

From the respondents' statements above, we can identify several casual factors that make the learners need repetition to gain comprehension i.e. the content of the talk is unfamiliar, the use of colloquial language and reduced forms, the use of exaggerated pronunciation, and the use of complex vocabulary and phrasal verbs.

c. Problems caused by the listeners' limited vocabulary

In order to get comprehension in listening to English, learners of English are required to possess a large number of vocabulary. Those who do not know much English vocabulary, listening to English can be very stressful because they usually spend more time think about the meaning of the vocabulary being heard. Consequently, they miss following the information. With regard to the problem, table 1 indicates that limited knowledge of vocabulary has caused the learners' failure to get comprehension in listening to English. There are 18 subjects out of 23 (78.3%) report the case.

R7

“Keterbatasan kosa kata membuat pemahaman saya dalam menyimak kurang”
(The limited stock of vocabulary makes listening comprehension less)

R9

“saya tidak menguasai banyak kosa kata sehingga lebih banyak hal yang saya tidak mengerti dalam percakapan”
(I have no extensive vocabulary that I do not understand more things in conversation)

R16

“Beberapa kata, bisa saya pahami dalam percakapan tetapi saya lebih sering tidak mengerti maksudnya secara keseluruhan,

hal ini disebabkan karna saya memiliki kosa kata yang sangat sedikit”

(I can understand a few words in conversation with native speaker but I mostly do not understand his utterance meaning in all, this cause by fewer vocabularies that I have)

Based on the subjects' statements, it is known that when encountering an unknown word, many learner stop listening and start thinking about the meaning of the word. In more detail, a number of the respondents reported that they basically miss all words. A few words are comprehensible while more words are incomprehensible due to their limitation in vocabulary knowledge. Consequently, they lost comprehension of what they are listening in a whole (as exemplified by R 16).

d. Problem caused by learning habit.

In the effort of achieving the three aspects as mentioned above, learners train their listening comprehension by building their own learning habit. Some learners make it a habit to listen to songs (16 statements or 68%), watch videos and films in English (10 statements or 43, 5%); some prefer to communicate with friends to listen to natural speech in English (3 statements or 13 %).

Established learning habit by Listening to English songs.

It is estimated that 16 statements were found from the 23 subjects in this study reported to establish learning habit of listening by listening to song in English. Here are their statements:

R 1)

“Saya suka mendengarkan lagu-lagu berbahasa Inggris untuk meningkatkan pemahaman mendengar saya, namun sebelumnya saya mencari dulu arti kata-kata dalam lagu tersebut menggunakan google translation”

(I like to listening to English songs to develop my listening comprehension, but I first of all uncover the meaning of some

unfamiliar words in the song lyrics by using google translation)

R 4)

“Untuk mengembangkan pemahaman pendengaran saya, saya suka mendengar lagu-lagu berbahasa Inggris”

(To develop my listening comprehension, I like to practice by listening to songs in English)

Songs have become the learners’ language learning experience particularly for listening practice for three reasons: *the first*, songs provide a break from classroom routine, and that learning English through songs develops a non-threatening classroom atmosphere which enable them to learn more joyful and relaxed and to develop their language skills on the basis of the joy from listening to a song.

R 7)

“Saya kadang-kadang mendengarkan lagu-lagu berbahasa Inggris untuk meningkatkn pemahaman pendengaran saya sebab belajar dari lagu lebih santai dan menyenangkan”

(I sometimes listen to English songs to practice my listening comprehension because learning through songs is more relaxed and pleasant)

The second, songs can also present opportunities for developing automaticity for language production purpose. When the learners focus on learning language through songs, repetitive exercise of learning occurs which is able to generate automaticity in language components exposure such pronunciation, phrases, expression, grammar, etc.

R 10)

“Untuk memperbaiki pemahaman saya dalam mendengar, saya mendengar lagu barat berulang-ulang dengan melihat teks hingga saya bisa menyanyikan lagu tersebut dan memahami artinya tanpa melihat teks. Ketika saya dapat memahami lirik lagu tersebut dengan benar, maka saya merasa ada kemajuan dalam pemahaman pendengaran saya”

(To improve my comprehension in listening, I listen to English song repeatedly by looking at the lyrics until I can sing the song and understand all words in the songs without looking at the lyrics anymore. When I understand all the words in the song’ lyrics, I feel a great progress in my listening comprehension)

The third, some songs are excellence example of colloquial English, that is, the language of informal conversation.

R 21)

“Saya melatih pemahaman pendengaran saya dengan mendengar lagu barat, karena lagu barat biasanya berisi ungkapan yang digunakan oleh native speaker dalam kehidupan mereka sehari-hari sehingga saya lebih mudah mengerti kalau ada ungkapan yang sama digunakan dalam percakapan”

(I practice my listening comprehension by listening to English songs because English songs normally contain daily expression spoken by native speakers of English in their daily lives. This will make me easier to understand the same expression as the expression used in conversation)

Established learning habit by watching English movies

The data indicated that approximately 43,3% of the subjects stated that watching movie was their learning habits for listening comprehension exercise.

R 12

“Saya merasa menonton film sangat membantu saya dalam meningkatkan pemahaman pendengaran saya sebab dengan menonton film saya bisa mempelajari pengucapan yang benar, ungkapan-ungkapan baru dalam percakapan, yang sangat berpengaruh pada peningkatan bahasa Inggris yang sedang saya pelajari. Lebih lagi, menonton film sangat menyenangkan dan tidak membuat saya cepat bosan”

(I think, watching movies is very helpful in developing my listening comprehension because from the movie, I can learn proper

pronunciations of certain words, new expressions of conversation which are very influential to have progress in my English ability. Moreover, watching movie is fun and not boring)

R 13)

“menonton film barat dapat menjadi model belajar listening yang saya lakukan selama ini. Dari film kita dapat mengetahui secara langsung arti kata-kata tertentu secara alamiah. Saya biasanya menonton DVD sambil melihat subtitle bahasa Inggrisnya kemudian, saya mencatat beberapa kata yang asing bagi saya supaya saya bisa mencari dan mempelajari artinya di kamus kemudian saya mengulang lagi menonton film tersebut tanpa melihat subtitlenya dan ternyata pemahaman pendengaran saya meningkat”

In accordance with the subjects' statements, it is realized that watching movie can be used as one of the best ways for improving listening skill for English language learners due to the following the advantages:

- a. They can learn real English vocabulary, as spoken by real native speakers (R 13)
- b. They learn English words and phrases that are used in real-life situations (R 13)
- c. They can practice and improve their listening skills and comprehension skills (R 12)
- d. They learn proper pronunciation (R 12)
- e. They learn useful English language expressions and phrases for conversation (R 12)
- f. They feel that learning English is fun (R 12)

Establishing learning habit by communicating with friends

Another habit of learning in the effort of developing their listening comprehension that is to learn listening by practicing to speak English with other learners. There are

5 respondents out of 23 (23,7%) employed this habit.

R 2)

“Untuk memperoleh pemahaman menyimak yang baik, saya berbahasa Inggris dengan native speaker dimanapun saya bertemu mereka, tetapi ini sangat jarang karena mereka jarang ada disekitar kita”

(To develop my listening skills, I speak to native speakers of English wherever I meet them, but I rarely do it since few native speakers live in neighborhood)

R 19)

“Saya lebih suka bercakap secara langsung dengan teman yang bahasa Inggrisnya bagus untuk melatih pemahaman pendengaran saya sebab kalau ada kata-kata yang saya tidak mengerti bisa langsung saya tanyakan. Biasanya, kalau kata tersebut diucapkan lagi pada percakapan kami yang lain, saya sudah bisa langsung mengerti”

(I prefer to practice speaking in English with some friends of mine whose English better than me. From this, I can increase my listening comprehension, besides I can go straight to ask some unfamiliar words to my interlocutor. If the same words are used in other conversation, I can easily the words)

When some respondents of this study established learning listening by practicing speaking with native speakers of English (R 2), and some friends (R 13) in natural environment, they will be familiar to comprehend some expressions, phrasal verbs, the speakers' intonation and stress since speaking will expose those things which should be processed successfully by listening as the receptive and productive skill. That's why; we may assume that the more the learners practice speaking the more familiar them to the knowledge of language items (pronunciations, vocabulary, sentence structure etc). As the learners possess sufficient knowledge of language, they will automatically possess good listening comprehension in communication because the knowledge are

going to ease them to access the intended meaning behind the utterances spoken by the speakers. Despite the subject have carried out various established learning strategies to increase their listening comprehension such as listening to English songs, watching movies, and practicing to speak naturally, they still have problems in performing qualified listening comprehensions. The causal factors are: The first, the learning habits are not done consistently, and continuously. The learners indeed commit learning process to up grade their listening comprehension, but it is just occasionally done along with the availability of leisure time.

e. Problem caused by the failure to concentrate

The learners' inability to understand the message sent by English native speakers is also caused by concentration problem. The data of this study reveal that there are 14 respondents out of 23 (60%) stated that they find it difficult to comprehend aural inputs from the speakers due to their failure to concentrate.

R 2)

“Konsentrasi saya dalam mendengarkan kalimat di percakapan sangat ditentukan oleh suasana hati saya dan suasana di sekitar”

(My concentration in listening English is much determined by my mood and the environment)

R 5)

“Dari semula saya selalu merasa listening itu susah, sehingga ketika saya mendengar, saya benar-benar menemukan kesulitan dan tidak mampu berkonsentrasi”

(From the very start, I always think that listening comprehension is difficult. Consequently, when I am listening, I really find it difficult and unable to concentrate)

R 14)

“Konsentrasi saya sangat dipengaruhi oleh lingkungan sekitar, kalau suasana tenang saya bisa berkonsentrasi, tapi kalau suasananya rebut diluar, maka konsentrasi saya pasti buyar”

(My concentration while listening is really affected by the environment. As the situation is calm, I can concentrate. On the contrary, as the situation is noisy outside, I can not concentrate at all)

R 18)

“Saya merasa sulit berkonsentrasi pada saat listening karena kelelahan dan padatnya kegiatan kampus”

(I find it difficult to concentrate in listening because I frequently feel tired because of massive activities at campus)

R 22)

“Saya sering tidak mampu berkonsentrasi pada saat saya mendengar hal ini sangat dipengaruhi oleh kondisi psikologi dan beban pikiran”

(I am often unable to concentrate when I am listening. This is normally caused by my psychological situation and burden in mind)

From the respondents' statements, we can identify some causal factors of the students' failure to concentrate while listening i.e. external distractions such as interruption from the environment (R 2) and noisy environment (R 14); Internal distractions such as fatigue owing to many activities (R 18), negative thinking that listening is difficult (R 5), personal worries when having too many minds (R 22).

Problems related to misinterpretation

Another problem identified in relation to the learners' poor comprehension in listening is interpretation as an ability to convert the messages from the speaker into comprehensible information. Misinterpretation is found among 14 respondents (60%). This problem occurs because the speakers and the listeners do not share the intended meanings due to the different capacity of knowledge background and experiences.

R 3)

“Saya masih sering merasa kesulitan memahami native speaker saat berbicara. Terutama dalam menggunakan kata-kata yang artinya lebih dari satu, ada

kata tertentu yang mereka gunakan yang arti dasarnya saya tau tapi saya salah memahami maksudnya. Misalnya mereka mengatakan 'I made it' saya kira kalimat itu berarti saya membuatnya, tetapi ternyata artinya 'saya berhasil'

(I very often find it difficult to understand native speakers of English. Particularly, in the use of words which have more than one meanings. Some words are basically familiar to me, but I misinterpret the meanings. For example, as they say 'I made it' I thought that it means 'I create something' in fact, that means 'I succeed in doing something').

R 10)

“Kemampuan saya dalam pemahaman pendengaran sangat ditentukan oleh topik yang dibicarakan, kalau saya mempunyai pengetahuan tentang topik itu, maka saya pasti bisa mengerti. Tapi kalau saya tidak memiliki pengetahuan tentang topik yang dibicarakan, maka sulit bagi saya untuk mengerti”

(My ability to gain listening comprehension is much affected by the topic being talked about. If I have background knowledge of the topic, it is easy to understand. But, if I have no idea about the topic, it is difficult to understand).

R 23)

“Saya tau betul kelemahan saya dalam bahasa Inggris adalah grammar. Hal ini menjadi masalah saya juga dalam memahami native speaker kalau berbicara. Saya sering salah memahami maksud ucapan native speaker karena keterbatasan pengetahuan grammar saya. Saya pernah dengan seorang native speaker berkata 'I am about to go' saya mencoba menebak, mungkin artinya adalah 'saya membicarakan tempat yang akan saya kunjungi, ternyata artinya adalah 'saya baru saja akan pergi'. Jadi grammar sangat penting untuk mendapatkan pemahaman).

(I realize that the greatest weakness that I have in English is grammar, this has been a big problem to make me understand what a native English speaker is saying. I often

misinterpret what a native English speaker said due to my limited knowledge of grammar. For instance, a native English speaker once said 'I am about to go' I try to guess this probably means 'I talk about a destination I want to visit' in fact, that means 'I had an intention to go just now).

The respondents' statements obviously convey that the problem of misinterpretation during listening is caused by three major factors i.e. the listeners' limited knowledge of grammar (R 23), unfamiliarity towards the topic being discussed (R10), and insufficient cultural knowledge (R 3).

Conclusion

The result of data analysis from listening tasks and questionnaires given to the 23 students of English education department at STAIN Parepare identify several categories of problems. The categories are presented as follows:

- a. Problems of information processing
 - Obstacles pertaining to processing speed
 - Problems due to recollection
 - Problems due to words recognition
- b. Problems of native speakers' language content
 - Obstacles pertaining to the need of repetition
 - Problems due to unfamiliar talk content
 - Problems due to the use of colloquial language and reduced forms
 - Problems due to exaggerated pronunciation
- c. Problems of the students' English proficiency
 - Problems due to limited stock of vocabulary
 - Problems due to limitation in acquiring knowledge of receptive vocabulary
 - Problems due to poor grammar
- d. Problems of habitual

- Problems due to repetitiveness and consistency in learning through English songs
 - Problems due to a little time to establish good learning habit e.g. watching English movies.
 - Problems due to the absence of repetitious behavior in communication practice.
- e. Problems of distraction
 - Problems due to external distractions such as interruptions and noisy environment.
 - Problems due to internal distractions such as fatigue, negative thinking, mind burdens.
- f. Problems of misinterpretation
 - Insufficient knowledge of language skills e.g. grammar mastery
 - Problems due to unfamiliarity towards the topic being discussed.
 - Problems due to insufficient cultural knowledge of English usage.

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