

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. Listening

Studying English is not only about studying how it is written or how it is spoken, but also having to know how it sounds. Catching the meaning or the idea of the words, sentence, or even the speech is one of the ways in understanding the sound of English words. It can help learners to be easier to understand someone's speech and also to give reaction and response to the speaker. In this case, to communicate well with someone using English is possible.

According to Thomlison's (1984) cited in Arafat Hamouda (2013), listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This process involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, the speaker's grammar and vocabulary, and comprehension of meaning. An able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously. Pourhossein Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) cited in Ahmadi Seyedeh Masoumeh (2016) stated that listening includes listening for thoughts, feelings, and intentions and this needs active involvement, effort, and practice. Janusik (2002) also points out listening as the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and nonverbal messages.

So, listening is the ability of understanding someone's speech, including grammar, vocabulary, grammar, and also the meaning. Not only understanding, but listening also an ability to respond to the speech of the speaker.

B. Listening Comprehension

There are different definitions of listening comprehension. Based on Rost (2002) Listening comprehension is regarded as a complex, interactive process in which listeners are involved in a dynamic construction of meaning. Listeners understand the oral input from sound discrimination, prior knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structures, stress and intonation, as well as other use linguistic, paralinguistic, or even non-linguistic clues in contextual utterance. Besides, according to Hamouda (2013) cited in Ahmadi, Seyedeh Masoumeh (2016) listening comprehension refers to the understanding of what the listener has heard and it is his/her ability to repeat the text despite the fact the listener may repeat the sounds without real comprehension.

Based on the definition above, Listening comprehension is considered as an interactive and complex process in which the listener can understand the meaning of the conversation rather than just repeating or writing it.

C. Components of Listening Comprehension

There are several components that influence listening comprehension. These components are important aspects and must be mastered by students in listening comprehension. According to Chastain (1988) cited in Ahmadi,

Seyedeh Masoumeh (2016) Listening comprehension is divided into four components.

1. Ability to differentiate all sounds, intention patterns, and voice qualities in the second language and to distinguish between them and the same sounds in the native language.
2. The understanding of the whole message uttered by a speaker.

Rivers (1981) said that the understanding of spoken messages depends on comprehension of semantic meaning, moving from what one comprehends in the sound sequence with respect to the knowledge of syntax only when the meaning is not understandable.

3. The ability to hold that message in one's auditory memory until it can be processed

There are some steps of this ability. The first step is to establish the context. Real language happens within a communicative framework and the listener should know the framework to recreate the speaker's message. The second step is to activate related background knowledge and use it to predict the ideas the message may have. The third step is to anticipate the general content of the message. Skilled listening requires that the listener look ahead in anticipation of what is coming. They are checking the received material as opposed to trying to make an unexpected and immediate interpretation (Kaspar, 1984) cited in Ahmadi, Seyedeh Masoumeh (2016).

4. The ability to sample the important meaning carrying components of the material

Listeners should expend more energy to understand material about unfamiliar topics and they rely more on linguistic clues to make up for their lack of background knowledge. The last step is to use the samples to confirm or reject the formerly made anticipations. When the samples are in line with listeners' anticipations, they accept them as being correct. When the samples do not comply with their anticipations, they should reconsider either their anticipation or the material as they look for making the message meaningful (Kaspar, 1984) cited in Ahmadi, Seyedeh Masoumeh (2016).

D. Listening Problems

Listening difficulties are internal and external characteristics that interrupt text understanding directly related to cognitive. Hamouda (2013) stated that factors causing students' listening comprehension problems were categorized into different sources including problems related to the listening text, listening problems related to task and activities, listeners problems related to the listeners and lecturer's teaching methodology. According to Goh (2000) cited in Arafat Hamouda (2013), listening difficulties are defined as the internal and external characteristics that might interrupt text understanding and real-life processing problems directly related to cognitive procedures that take place at various stages of listening comprehension.

The difficulties faced by the student would interrupt during the process of listening comprehension especially those who learn English as foreign language in non-native setting. A major problem students have, in contrast to students studying English is that they have little or no experience in “real” listening to fall back on, no memory of past learning or social experiences. The fact that they lived in non-English speaking country was a major factor to their listening problems.

Anderson and Lynch (2003) cited in Juan Wu Xiao (2013) discuss prerequisite skills for listening that may pose problems for listeners deficient in these areas. The first of the three prerequisite skills which they describe is “the ability to recognize the topic of conversation from the native speaker’s initial remarks”.

This is a top-down, cognitive process that involves reviewing, comprehension, and memory, which according to Bacon (1992) cited in Juan Wu Xiao (2013), is an ingredient of monitoring, the most prevalent met by cognitive listening strategy. The second of the important skills that Anderson and Lynch (2003) mention is the listener’s ability to make predictions about likely developments of the topic to which he will have to respond. This further illustrates the simultaneous, intertwined nature of the use of all these skills, and how they are likely to occur at any point during the listening process. The third

skill of prime importance is the ability to recognize and signal when he has not understood enough of the input to make a prediction or a response. These explicit signals are crucial, as they usually elicit a repetition or reformulation by the native speaker, and so give the listener another chance to make a relevant response.

Brindley and Slatyer (2002) cited in Juan Wu Xiao (2013) have similar research identified still other problems. Among these are: The nature of input: speech rate, length of passage, syntactic complexity, vocabulary, discourse, noise level, accent, register, propositional density, amount of redundancy, etc. The nature of the assessment task: amount of context provided, clarity of instructions, response format, availability of question preview, etc.; and the individual listener factors: memory, interest, background knowledge, motivation, etc.

Furthermore, Underwood (1989) defines there are five major problems of listening comprehension. The first problem is a lack of control over the speed of the speaker, and the fact that the listener cannot control the speed of the speaker. Many English language learners believe that the greatest difficulty with listening comprehension is that the listeners cannot control the speed of the speaker. It is impossible for the listeners to control the speed of speech from

an uncontrolled source. For example, if the listener is listening to a radio broadcast, they cannot ask for a slower speed.

The second problem is the inability to have things repeated. The inability to have things repeated is something the listeners must face when exposed to an uncontrolled source. Listeners are not always in the position to have the speakers repeat their speech. For example, if they are listening to the radio or watching television, they are unable to ask for repetition.

The third problem is the limited vocabulary of the listeners. This is one of the most significant problems with listening. When listening to speech from an uncontrollable source, the listeners may be distracted by a word that they are unfamiliar with. A listener needs to understand the vocabulary in order to comprehend what they are listening to. For example, if the speaker chooses words which the listeners do not know, it will be difficult for them to understand what they are hearing. Encountering unknown words may cause listeners to stop and think about the meaning of the word and miss the next part of the speech.

A failure to recognize signals is the fourth problem of listening. These signals can make the listener confused about what they are hearing. For example, if we are giving directions, we need to use sequencing words to put our information in order by using words like first, second, and third. If the

listeners do not know these signals, it will be difficult for them to follow the directions. These signals indicate that the speaker is moving from one phase to another, giving examples, or repeating a point. The listener may notice some markers like “secondly, or then,” or react to the body language, gestures, or changes in the speaker’s intonation.

The fifth problem is interpretation. This problem is found with listeners who lack the requisite background knowledge to understand the context of what they are hearing. An example of this is if Indonesian students, who are unfamiliar with the context of snow, hear the sentence ‘The snow was so bad that there was nobody in the school.’ This might be difficult for Indonesian students to interpret correctly if they have never experienced snow. In other words, communication is easier if the listener has some relevant knowledge.

From this theory, the writer will use Underwood’s theory which stated that there are five major problems of listening. The writer will use it in the questionnaire and interview to find whether the students meet some of those problems in listening class or not.

E. Previous Studies

As the consideration to the researcher to conduct the research, it is important to know the previous relevant studies conducted by other researchers. Abidin (2013) in his research entitled English Listening Comprehension

Problems of Students from China Learning English in Malaysia. The research used a qualitative method to collect data from three Chinese students taking English Listening Comprehension (ELC) in University Science Malaysian (USM). This study is a research report related to the problems encountered by China's students in ELC learning. The interview was conducted to investigate students' perspective through the main question concerning the problems of the Chinese students in their ELC self-learning process, in three steps, which include the pre-listening, while listening and post-listening. Findings from this study indicate that the main problem faced by the Chinese students is the lack of prior knowledge in English vocabulary, and this inhibits their understanding in the listening process. Moreover, the differences in the accent of the native speakers prohibit the proper understanding of the listening content, the short span of concentration, and the learning habits of Chinese students were discussed as the problems of the ELC learning.

Anadapong (2011) mentioned in his research entitled A Study of English Listening Problems and Listening Proficiency of Business at Bangkok University. This study was conducted with thirty of Business students at Bangkok University with the aim of investigating their English listening problem and listening proficiency. Questionnaire, IELTS test, and Interview were used in this study using tools to collect data. As a result, the data was analyzed by using SPSS. The result of the study revealed that students' main

reason causing listening problems for the students is the listening text. However, the factors that mostly caused listening problems were lack of practicing listening skill and lack of exposure to different kinds of listening materials.

Both of the studies are a good consideration for the writer to conduct this research. Learning from the studies, the writer understood that not all of the students were facing the same problems, but there still are problems in listening which have to be found by both teacher and students. Moreover, the techniques used in both studies were also different, which the writer will also use another different technique.

F. Basic Assumption

In listening comprehension, there are many difficulties faced by the students. Especially to catch the meaning or the main idea of someone's speech or even to catch the words which are said by someone. Listening comprehension is not an easy activity, there will always be problems to understand well about what people say or what the main idea of someone's speech is.

Therefore, the researcher assumes that there will be known several problems in listening comprehension experienced by students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto.