

## **THE PROBLEM OF LEARNING IN ENGLISH LISTENING COMPREHENSION AT THE SECOND GRADE STUDENTS OF SMA N 8 BATANG HARI ACADEMIC YEAR 2017/2018**

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### **Abstract**

This study was intended to find out the students problem of learning English listening. The research method used qualitative method and questionnaire design. The population of this study was second grade students of SMA N 8 BATANGHARI JAMBI which consisted of 5 classes with 152 students divided into 69 men and 83 female. The researcher only took randomly 5 class XI MIA 1, 5 class XI MIA 2, 5 class XI IIS 1, 5 class IIS 2, 5 class IIS 3. The data of this research was collected by giving the questionnaire to students as the sample. The collected data were analyzed by using likert scale. After conducting the research, the researcher found that the problems in listening SMAN 8 as follows: 1) Difficult when students listen to the text just one time students need to practice their listening skills to capture text ideas, 2) listeners also need to take notes while listening to long listening texts. Students often ask to stop recording where there is a sound coming from the corridor or from another classroom. They feel more comfortable if the listening test is done in some places dedicated to listening like lab listening. Listening is one of the important skills in learning English. In addition, there are also three other components such as speaking, listening and writing. For students, it is recommended that they should improve their listening skills on time, so that students can perform tasks easily and correctly in the classroom.

**Keywords: Learning English, Listening.**

### **Introduction**

As a foreign language, English has four skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) that have to be mastered by the students. From these skills, listening is a skill that felt difficult to be mastered, because it needs more attention and concentration to comprehend the sounds (listening material). It can be said that listening is not a passive skill; the process of listening is a complex process in which many things happen simultaneously inside the mind. Besides being complex, listening is far more difficult than many people can imagine (Mee, 1990).

Listening also plays a vital role in daily lives. People listen for different

purposes such as entertainment, academic purposes or obtaining necessary information. As for foreign language learning, listening is of paramount important since it provides the language input (Rost 1994:141-142). Without understanding input appropriately, learning simply can not get any improvement. In addition, without listening skill, no communication can be achieved (Cross, 1998). As for that, language learners, especially those who learn English as a foreign language in a non-native setting, find it difficult to acquire good listening skill.

Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning (Howatt and Dakin). An able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously.

Students nowadays, often take the wrong way when listening and this leads them to the poor result. It should be noted that the learner's perception of their listening problem and strategies can affect their comprehension both positively and negatively (Wenden, 1986). Thus, in order to help students get improved with their listening skill, it is needed finding out their listening problems which cause difficulties to them.

According to Yagang (1994), the problems in listening were accompanied with the four following factors: the message, the speaker, the listener and the physical setting. Furthermore, a numbers of research have been carried out to pick out the problem in listening. The problems were believed to cause by the speech rate, vocabulary and pronunciation (Higgins, 1995). As Flowerdew & Miller (1996) assumed that the problems of the students were for the speed of delivery, new terminology and concept, difficulty in focusing and the physical environment (both background and environmental noises, and unclear sound resulting from poor quality equipment). 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 (Goh, 2000).

The researcher chose SMA N 8 Batanghari as a place of study because, the location of SMA N 8 Batanghari was located in a Pemayung village in Batanghari District and there students were listening English still in the classroom with a makeshift listening equipment using

a tape recorder. and a number of other reasons were found when researchers asked complaints from teachers who taught at SMA N 8 Batanghari. among others are. first, The students begin to learn English by the way of reading, instead of listening. Second, the materials on the tape are usually read by English speaking people. There are different accents, difficult idioms and unfamiliar language chunks in their speaking. This is another difficulty. For the students, their English teachers are usually local people. So the students may not be used to the accents of the foreign people. It is hard for them to understand native speakers. Third, when English-speaking people speak English, they usually speak at a normal speed. It is too fast for the students to follow. When listening, the students cannot choose a comfortable listening speed; they have to keep pace with the speaker's thinking process. So sometimes they have not even got the meaning of the first sentence, before the second sentence has already passed. Their results show that they have missed the whole passage. Fourth, the contents of the tape are not always familiar with the students. Some of them are not relevant to the students. The students may lack the background knowledge about foreign countries and cultures. So sometimes they cannot understand the material or they may misunderstand the meaning of it.

Mostly in Regular Class the teacher often gives them some instructions and to play the tape again, at least three times in Listening Subject. Still, at least some of students might not understand it. Then, the teacher sometimes has to stop the tape to explain the difficult or unfamiliar words and occasionally explain material sentence by sentence through the whole text. So, this is a serious problem because some students cannot understand the whole text after listening to it three times in class. Furthermore, the students might gradually lose their self-confidence. When they are

face to face with listening material, they have little confidence in their listening comprehension abilities. Therefore, they may not understand them because they have to battle the psychological suggestion that they could not understand spoken English.

### **The Importance of Listening**

Listening is a skill of critical significance in all aspects of our lives from maintaining our personal relationships, to getting our homework done, to taking notes in class, to figuring out which bus to take to the school. All of this aspect needs a particular skill called listening, therefore listening play an important role in our life. Rivers in Hasyuni (2006: 8) says that listening is a creative skill. It means we comprehend the sound falling on our ears, and take the raw material of words, arrangements of words, and the rise and fall the voice, and from this material we creative a significance.

According to Buck (2001) the Importance of listening as a language use activity, because of the potential wash-back effect onto classroom practices. Hence, if we do not test the ability to understand spoken discourse in the second or foreign language the learners need to take seriously the need to develop and improve their listening comprehension.

Field (1998) stated that listening is a strategic activity. in real life encounters, listeners succeed in extracting much less information from the speech stream than we once assumed on the basis of their performance with graded materials. They use their knowledge of the context to make intelligent guesses about the ideas which link the sometimes dislocated words which they have been able to recognize.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher concludes Listening is a skill that is important because it helps us learn and understand different things. Usually, a person who listens properly is

able to react appropriately to a particular situation or towards a particular person.

### **Factors Influencing Listening Comprehension**

According to Yagang (1994), listening comprehension most likely were accompanied with the four following factors: the message, the speaker, the listener and the physical setting. Furthermore, a numbers of research have been carried out to pick out the problem in listening. The problems were believed to cause by the speech rate, vocabulary and pronunciation. As Flowerdew & Miller (1996) assumed that the problems of the students were for the speed of delivery, new terminology and concept, difficulty in focusing and the physical environment (both background and environmental noises, and unclear sound resulting from poor quality equipment).

According to Field(1998), the essential sources of listening problems include, speaking rate, distraction, not capable recognizing words that the student's have known, new vocabulary, missing subsequent input, nervousness, sentence complexity, background knowledge, anxiety and frustration and unfamiliar pronunciation.

Each and every student reported that the mainly imperative source of their listening comprehension problem is the fast rate of speech. While the second most important source of their listening problem is distraction. If the speech rate is too fast and the students cannot catch the words, they unsurprisingly get distracted and will be unable to continue to process the information.

The last most complex problem gives further evidence that the fast speech rate, down with the other features of speech discussed above, made it hard for the students to identify the words that they actually knew. As a result, they were not able to comprehend the text.

From the explanation above, the researcher concludes that the factors influence listening comprehension circling in this category, the message, the speaker, the listener and the physical setting. While the physical setting becoming the most major issue in listening.

### **Students Problems in learning Listening**

Listening is usually a hard skill to master by the students. The first reason is that the students do not have the text in front of them to look at if they do not understand the information. A second reason is the accent and intonation of the native English speaker. In addition, each country has dialects and regional accents which can confuse the listener. All of these make listening learning a major challenge and it is no surprise that the students can find it difficult.

#### **1. Trouble with Sound**

Noise is another environmental barrier to comprehension. Interior as well as exterior class noise is an obstacle to comprehension. Noise, including both background noises on the recording and environmental noises, can take the listener's mind off the content of the listening passage. With the noise coming from corridors and other classes some students experience difficulty in listening to the teachers' voices. Because of the noise in classroom and the poorly preparation of lab, a great number of students claim that they cannot be concentrated on listening to the recording material

Ur (1996: 111), says that there are some students difficulties in learning listening: trouble with sounds, have to understand every word, can't understand fast and natural native speech, need to hear things more than once, find it difficult to keep up, and get tired.

#### **2. Have to Understand Every Word**

The second problem students have to understand every word. They do not

focus on any particular cues which help them predict what is going to be talked about. However, in every listening task, cues are provided indirectly that well-trained or experienced listener could recognize it naturally. For instance, the title of the task can help learners to guess the points coming next. In addition, prediction can be made by photos, maps, charts or anything that provided in the listening.

Underwood (1989: 17) mentions some other kinds of difficulties that are directly related to the students themselves. One of the problems which the students have established learning habits in the sense that they were encouraged to understand everything by listening carefully to teachers who probably speak slowly and clearly. Hence, when they fail to understand every word while listening, they stop listening and lose the thread, which seems to be the reason for state of panic and worrying they usually show before and during listenin

#### **3. Can't Understand Fast Natural Native Speech**

Many students point out that when the speaker speaks at a fast natural speed, it is difficult for them to comprehend what is being said, even if the words spoken are the ones they are familiar with. Underwood (1989) states that the students absolutely encounter certain difficulties in listening comprehension since they lack control over the speed at which the speakers speak. While, Flowerdew and Miller (1992) found that major difficulties encountered by the subjects include inability to keep up with the speaker's rapid delivery speed, unable to apply effective listening strategies to facilitate comprehension, and lack of concentration.

#### **4. Need to Hear Things More Than Once**

Another problem connected with listening is the fact that listeners cannot always make the speakers repeat what they

have just said. Nearly two thirds of students find it difficult to understand the recorded material if they are unable to get things repeated. This is a serious problem in learning situations.

Ur (1984) argues that learners should be exposed to the recording more than once in order to understand the discourse. Underwood (1989) Teachers decide what and when to repeat listening passages; however, it is hard for the teacher to judge whether or not the students have understood any particular section of what they have heard.

### **5. Find it difficult to Keep Up**

Students have to make sure that they do not spend much time on guessing the unfamiliar word or they will miss the speaker's next point. Berman (2000) said that, Discourse marker is considered to be the bridge that leads to the points. It is such a natural thing that the speakers often signal the main points with discourse markers.

Yagang (1994) by emphasizing a natural factor in speaking so speaker also emphasizes to signal the most significant ideas. What students should do is to pay attention to the speed and the intonation of the speaker and identify the points.

### **6. Get Tired**

"Fatigue" negatively influences a foreign language learners listening to English. In academic listening especially, the listener will feel tired trying to "understand the unfamiliar sounds, lexis and syntax for long stretches of time". According to Ross (2006), if a teacher always uses the same teaching methodology, they may become predictable and, perhaps, less interesting for their students they will easily get tiring of listening to material that does not suit them.

According to Gilakjani, A.P. (2011) Text length is one of the major problems for listeners since they tend to lose focus after concentrating too long on

the listening. The students stated that when the text is lengthy, they have difficulty remaining focused.

### **The Strategies in Learning Listening**

Listening engages not just accurately interpreting received speech but also responding correctly to the speaker. According to Field (1993), several listening strategies can be teacher-directed dictations, read-aloud and self-directed listening, discrimination, segmentation, identifying unrecognized words, anticipation, referencing, monitoring and relevant materials that are needed in listening.

Considerably, exercises for practicing listening skills are crucial in the process of language learning. As Field (1998) mentioned, many of the exercises involve dictation, a much wider-used technique in improving listening. Exercise types are discrimination which includes distinguishing minimally different words. For instance, ear training in minimal pairs and teacher dictates minimal pairs.

Next is segmentation, which contains identifying words in continuous speech. With teacher dictates sentences which include contractions, weak forms, elision, assimilation, and criticized items (e.g. 'drinka pinta milk'). Learners should write down a section of an authentic passage, as well as listen with a text, paying attention to weakly stressed items.

Another strategy is on working out the spelling of unrecognized words. These includes, the teacher dictates words in spelling groups (laugh, cough, enough). On the other hand, learners guess the spellings of difficult-to-recognize words. A further strategy is anticipation. Through working out what comes next with the teacher plays half a sentence, learners complete, or answer multiple-choice questions.

A different strategy that should be used is reference. This includes relating pronouns and what the items they refer to.

This method is process with the teacher pauses cassette after unclear referring expressions and learners say what they refer to. Teacher lists referring expressions/general nouns; learners listen for them and write down what they refer to. Adding to this, Yagang (1993) added that by practicing in liaisons and elisions in order to help students get used to the acoustic forms of rapid natural speech. It is useful to find rapidly uttered colloquial collocations and ask students to imitate native speakers' pronunciation.

The researcher concludes that, the students should be aware of different native-speaker accents. Of course, strong regional accents are not suitable for training in listening, but in spontaneous conversation native speakers do have certain accents. Moreover, the American accent is quite different from the British and Australian. Therefore, it is necessary to let students deal with different accents, especially in extensive listening.

**Research Methodology**

This design of this research is a quantitative descriptive and approach survey method . The study will be conducted in order to again the depth understanding toward the study of the problem that affecting student's English Listening ability at SMA N 8 Batang Hari. This research is closely related to the number and calculation, and this study looks for the problem of students in learning listening skills in SMA Negeri 8 Batang Hari. The research carries in SMA N 8 Batang Hari. The researcher is interested to do research in SMA N 8 Batang Hari due to the reason: First, that there is no research on Listening problem ability that has been conducted in this school. Second, student seems always getting lowest score in listening study. Third, the researcher initiate to conduct the research to identify what is the real problem faced by students in learning listening.

**Population and Sample**

The population of this research will took the students at SMA N 8 Batang Hari . this research focuses on the second grade students.

**Table 1. Population of Students Class XI in SMA N 8 BatangHari**

No.	Class	Male	Female	Total
1	MIA 1	10	18	28
2	MIA 2	8	21	29
3	IIS 1	18	15	33
4	IIS 2	15	16	31
5	IIS 3	18	13	31
<b>TOTAL</b>		69	83	152

Source : SMA N 8 BatangHari

The researcher will use the purposive sample to determine the sample. According to Sugiyono (2015: 118) the sample is part of the number and characteristics possessed by the population. Positive sampling is one of the non-random sampling techniques where the researcher determines the sampling by establishing specific characteristics that are in line with the research objectives so that it is expected to answer research problem.

**Findings**

**Result of the Questionnaire**

**Table 2. Questionnaire result of second grade students of SMA N 8 Batanghari Academic year 2017/2018**

NO	Questionnaire	Answer				
		Strongly agree	Agree	neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Difficult to listen a discordant voice by native speakers	52 %	48 %	-	-	-

2	Difficulties if the tape record has problem	44 %	52 %	4%	-	-
3	Difficult to understand well when class noisy	72 %	28 %	-	-	-
4	Unclear sounds resulting from a poor-quality CD-player interfere with my listening comprehension	52 %	32 %	16 %	-	-
5	Difficulties to get the information from the conversation	56 %	40 %	4%	-	-
6	Difficult to understanding the word without seeing the speaker body language	56 %	36 %	8%	-	-
7	Difficult to understand when the students have low vocabulary and grammar	24 %	36 %	40 %	-	-
8	i find it difficult to quickly remember word or phrase	16 %	36 %	24 %	-	24 %
9	Difficult for them to comprehend what being said	8%	40 %	48 %	4%	-

10	Difficult to understand well when speakers speak to fast	48 %	28 %	24 %	-	-
11	I have difficulty comprehending the listening text because I don't know which strategy to use while listening	52 %	12 %	8%	8%	12 %
12	Need repetitions when studies listening more than once	48 %	40 %	12 %	-	-
13	I stop listening when I have problems in understanding listening	20 %	12 %	48 %	20 %	-
14	Making prediction what the speaker talk about	16 %	24 %	52 %	8%	-
15	Difficult to listen adicoran voice by native speakers	52 %	32 %	16 %	-	-
16	Difficult when it's hard if you've missed a view words	20 %	36 %	44 %	-	-
17	Difficult to guessing the unfamiliar	68 %	28 %	4%	-	-

18	Difficult to interpret the meaning of a long listening text.	52 %	44 %	4%	-	-
19	Difficult when students not concentrated	12 %	48 %	36 %	4%	-
20	Hard to focussed due to the length of listening.	52 %	40 %	8%	-	-

**Discussion**

To identify the problems by using questionnaire, the students were asked to put their answer on questionnaire which has five options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. Problems are still classified into six different indicators and only categories strongly agree - neutral, Trouble with sound, need to hear things more than one, find it difficult to keep up, get tired

**1. Trouble with sound**

The first question is questionnaire number 1 (Difficult to listen a discordant voice by native speakers) the result show that 52% of students answer strongly agree, regarding to the questions, while others 48% students answer agree. Which means Difficult to listen a discordant voice by native speakers is a problem for students.

The second question is questionnaire number 2 (Difficulties if the tape record has problem) the result show that 42% of students answer strongly agree, 52% of students answer agree, and 4 % of students answer disagree which means students agree Difficulties if the tape record has problem is problem for students.

**2. Have to understand every word**

The fifth question is questionnaire number 5 (Difficulties to get the information from the conversation) the result show 56% students answer strongly agree, 40% students answer agree, 4% students answer neutral. Most students have problem with Difficulties to get the information from the conversation and some students fell neutral.

The sixth question is questionnaire number 6 (Difficult to understanding the word without seeing the speaker body language) the result show 56% students answer strongly agree, 36% students answer agree, 8% students answer neutral. Most students have problem with Difficult to understanding the word without seeing the speaker body language and some students fell neutral.

As seen from the questionnaire, most the students problem is have to understand every word to approach listening skill and some students feel neutral and disagree with the problem.it is very difficult have to understand every word because half of students have low vocabullary and grammar

**3. Can't understand fast natural native speech**

The ninth question is questionnaire number 9 (Difficult for them to comprehend what being said) 8% students answer strongly agree, 40% students answer agree, 48% students answer neutral, and 4 % students answer disagree, in the result the students have a problem with comprehend what being said because students can't understand fast natural native speech.

The tenth question is questionnaire number 10 (Difficult to understand well when speakers speak to fast) 48% students answer strongly agree, 28% students answer agree, and 24% students answer neutral, it's mean all of students feel

difficult because they are need focus to hear what native speak to fast.

As seen from the questionnaire, students problem with can't understand fast native speech, students should be hard to focused to listen to the voice by native speakers, need high vocabulary, and concentrated when do a listening text.

#### **4. Need to hear things more than once**

The twelfth question is questionnaire number 12 (Need repetitions when studies listening more than once) 48% students answer strongly agree, 40% students answer agree, and 12% students answer neutral, all of students need repetitions more than once to make a sure what they hear in tape record.

The thirteen question is questionnaire number 13 ( I stop listening when I have problems in understanding listening) 20% students answer strongly agree, 12% students answer agree, 48% students answer neutral, 20% students answer disagree. Students need understanding listening text and hear listening text to do the listening exercise.

Students need to hear more than once or using a repetition in order for them to understand the meaning of the text. Nearly two thirds of students find it difficult to understand the recorded material if they are unable to get things repeated. This is a serious problem in learning situations. In the classroom, the decision as to whether or not to replay a recording or a section of a recording is not in the hands of students

#### **5. Find it difficult to keep up**

The sixth teen question is questionnaire number 16 (Difficult when it's hard if you've missed a view words) 20% students answer strongly agree, 36% students agree, and 44% students answer neutral. Which means more than half of students doesn't really feel distracted while missing the words from the speakers.

The seventh teen question is questionnaire number 17 (Difficult to guessing the unfamiliar) 68% students answer strongly agree, 28% students answer agree, 4% students answer neutral. Students need to know a lot of English vocabulary to make it easier to do listening text.

The researcher concludes that, the students could pay attention to the speed and the intonation of the speaker and identify the points. Therefore, they don't missed the whole passage.

#### **6. Get tired**

The nineteenth question is questionnaire number 19 ( Difficult when students not concentrated)12% students answer strongly agree, 48% students answer agree, 36% students answer neutral, and 4% students answer disagree. Its mean all of students need to concentrated, concentration greatly affects the focus of students when working on listening text. If from the beginning the student is not concentrated with the material that will be listened to, then the student will have difficulty in understanding the material discussed.

The last question is questionnaire number 5 (hard to focused due to do length of listening) 52% students answer strongly agree, 40% students answer agree, 8% students answer neutral. It means concentrate its very need for student to focused to do length of listening.

Problems of fatigue, laziness, and not interest to learn. Fatigue, laziness, and not interest to learn Listening Comprehension as well is an obstacle for students of SMAN 8 Batanghari Jambi. Learning is said to be successful if it departs from us. Therefore, if someone is no longer interest in the material to be learned, then the results will not be maximal learning or in other words not successful.

## Conclusions

Based on the research, the researcher concludes that The Problems of learning in English listening in SMAN 8 Batanghari as follow:

1. The first problem that affects students to learn English in listening comes from the listener itself. Listeners need to practice their listening skills to capture text ideas easily because they need to ask for more than one repetition. And listeners also need to take notes while listening to long listening texts to identify the main point of listening so they can get easier information about the listening texts and also they can easily make predictions of what's to come (what speakers will be to say next) , as if now, students still rely on to understand the text of listening from word to word rather than capturing and taking notes to the main point itself, which makes them more difficult to understand the text.

2. The second problem is the physical arrangement; the students find it very difficult to deal with the listening lesson if it is related to the physical arrangement. Students often ask to stop recording where there is a sound coming from the corridor or from another classroom. They feel more comfortable if the listening test is done in some places dedicated to listening like lab listening, not in the class they are using right now. Most students do listening lessons in their own classroom using the old school speaker properties. It is good if they have their own space to learn to listen which means there is no unnecessary noise coming from corridors or other classrooms that can easily divert their concentration so they can improve their listening ability.

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