

THE STUDENTS' PROBLEMS IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT

The research aims to investigate the students' problems in listening comprehension. The research has two statements of problems: (1) How do the fifth semester students perceive the importance of studying listening comprehension at the English Department of *Tarbiyah* and Teachers Training Faculty at Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies Banjarmasin in the academic year of 2013/2014? And (2) What problems do the fifth semester students encounter the most in listening comprehension at the English Department of *Tarbiyah* and Teachers Training Faculty at Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies Banjarmasin in the academic year of 2013/2014?

Key Words: listening, comprehension, problem

The participants of this research are 84 students of the fifth semester who were taking Listening Comprehension subject at the *Tarbiyah* and Teachers Training faculty. The researcher uses questionnaire to collect the data. To analyze the data, the researcher uses descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage. The findings of the research showed that the majority of students are aware of the importance of English listening skill. 67, 50% of the students showed their positive awareness of the listening skill. Three most common problems encountered by the students were difficulty to concentrate with noises around (83.94%), unclear sounds as a result of poor acoustic conditions of the classrooms (81.47%), and difficulty to understand fast speakers (79.76%).

Key Words: Listening, Listening Comprehension, Problems

There are four main skills in English and listening is one part of them. Listening is an important part of effective communication. The importance of listening in language learning is worth considering since when people do not listen they will never learn anything new.

The importance of listening in second and foreign language learning is summarized in Rost (1994, pp.141-142). According to Rost, listening is vital in the language classroom because it provides input for the learner. Without understanding input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin. Therefore, listening is essential not only as a receptive skill but also to the development of spoken language proficiency. Moreover, Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) explain that listening plays a significant role in the lives of people. Of the four major areas of communication skills and language development –listening, speaking, reading, and writing–the one that is the most basic is listening. It is evident that children listen and respond to language before they learn to talk. When it is time for children to learn to read, they still have to listen so that they gain knowledge and information to follow directions. In the classrooms, students have to listen carefully and attentively to lectures and class discussions in order to understand and to retain the information for later recall.

Despite the importance of listening, many students find listening to be one of the most difficult skills in English. Long and Ross (2009) state that of the four skills, listening is perhaps the most difficult for learners. Over the years researchers have attempted to define the nature of L2 learners' listening problems. Among the studies that have looked at L2 listening difficulties, few attempts have been made to probe into these difficulties from learners' perspectives (Graham, 2006). Results of these studies have shown that language learners are capable of evaluating their listening performance and articulating the difficulties they face when listening in an L2. They are aware of the factors that influence their listening performance, even though they may not be able to act upon this knowledge (Berne, 2004). This suggests that by providing opportunities for learners to express their beliefs, teachers can gain better understanding of their learners' needs to assist them in ways of dealing with some of their listening difficulties (Graham, 2006).

Brown also stated that, "second language learners need to pay special attention to such factors because they strongly influence the processing of speech, and can even block comprehension if they are not attended to. In other words, they can make the listening process difficult" (2001, p. 252).

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Listening Comprehension

Listening is a fundamental language skill. Its importance is pointed out by Hansan (2000), "listening comprehension provides the right conditions for language acquisition and development of other language skills" (p.138). Rost (2002) in Hamouda (2013) defined listening comprehension as a complex and interactive process in which listeners are involved in 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 of linguistic, paralinguistic, or even non-linguistic clues in contextual utterance.

Problems and Difficulties in Listening Comprehension

Before explaining about the problems in listening comprehension, the word problem should be defined. Goh (2000) in Hamouda (2013) defined listening problems 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.

Brown (2001, pp.252-254) explained why listening comprehension is difficult. He listed a number of characteristics of spoken language that can make the listening process difficult. There are eight characteristics of spoken language explained by Brown as follows:

1. Clustering
In spoken language, due to memory limitations and predisposition for "chunking," or clustering, people break down speech into smaller groups of words. In teaching listening comprehension, teachers need to help students to pick out manageable clusters of words.
2. Redundancy
Spoken language has a good deal of redundancy. In conversation, there are a lot of rephrasing, repetitions, and elaborations. Learners can train themselves to profit from such redundancy by first becoming aware that not every new sentence or phrase will necessary contain new information and by looking for the signals of redundancy. Learners might initially get confused by this, but with some training,

they can learn to take advantage of redundancies as well as other markers that provide more processing time.

3. Reduced Forms

Spoken language has many reduced forms. Reduction can be phonological (“Djeetyet?” for “Did you eat yet?”), morphological (contractions like “I’ll”), syntactic (elliptical forms like “When will you be back?” “Tomorrow, maybe.”), or pragmatic (phone rings in a house, child answers and yells to another room in the house, “Mom! Phone!”). These reduction pose significant difficulties, especially for classroom learners who may have initially been exposed to the full forms of the English language.

4. Performance Variables

In spoken language, excepts for planned discourse (speeches, lectures, etc.), hesitations, false starts, pauses, and corrections are common. This condition can easily interfere with comprehension in second language learners. Learners have to train themselves to listen for meaning in the midst of distracting performance variables. Everyday casual speech by native speakers also commonly contains ungrammatical forms.

5. Colloquial Language

Learners who have been exposed to standard written English and/or “textbook” language sometimes find it surprising and difficult to deal with colloquial language. Idioms, slang, reduced forms, and shared cultural knowledge are all manifested at some point in conversations. Colloquialisms appear in both monologues and dialogues.

6. Rate of Delivery

Learners need to be able to comprehend language delivered at varying rates of speed and, at times, delivered with few pauses.

7. Stress, Rhythm, and Intonation

The prosodic features of the English language are very important for comprehension. Stress and intonation are very significant. Intonation patterns are important for interpreting straightforward elements such as questions, statements, emphasis, and for understanding more subtle messages like sarcasm, endearment, insult, solicitation, praise, etc.

8. Interaction

Interaction plays a large role in listening comprehension. Conversation is especially

Subject to all the rules of interaction: negotiation, clarification, attending signals, turn-taking, and topic nomination, maintenance, and termination. So, to learn to listen is also to learn to respond and to continue a chain of listening and responding.

In addition, Ghoneim (2013) and Underwood (1989) outlined potential problems that could hinder listening comprehension. The first problem is the speed of delivery. The speed of delivery is beyond the control of listeners. The second problem, it is not always possible for learners to have words repeated. Third, the small size of the learner vocabulary frequently impedes listening comprehension. The speaker does not always use words the listener knows. Sometimes when listeners encounter a new word, they stop to figure out the meaning of that word, and they therefore, miss the next part of the speech.

Fourth, listeners may not recognize the signals that the speaker is using to move from one point to another especially if the learner is listening to radio where he can not see the facial

expressions of the speaker. Fifth, it can be very challenging for listeners to concentrate in a foreign language. It is generally known that in listening, even a slight break or a wander in attention can impede comprehension. When the topic of the listening passage is interesting, it can be easier for listeners to concentrate and follow the passage; however, students sometimes feel that listening is very challenging even when they are interested in the topic because it requires a lot of effort to figure out the meaning intended by the speaker. Sixth, the learning habits which teachers emphasize in the classroom such as the desire to understand the meaning of every word could impede the use of top down strategies in listening. Teachers want students to understand every word they encounter while listening by pronouncing and repeating words clearly and carefully, and by speaking slowly and so forth. As a result, students tend to feel worried when they fail to recognize what a particular word means. Seventh and last, comprehension problems arise when students lack contextual knowledge.

The Factors influencing the Students' Listening Comprehension

There are several factors that influence the students' listening comprehension. Brown and Yule (1983) in Nunan (1991) suggest that there are four clusters of factors which can affect the difficulty of oral language tasks. These relate to the speaker (how many there are, how quickly they speak, what types of accents they have); the listener (the role of the listener-whether a participant or eavesdropper, the level of response required, the individual interest in the subject); the content (grammar, vocabulary, information structure, background knowledge assumed); support (whether there are pictures, diagrams or other visual aids to support the text).

Nunan (1991) also quoted from Anderson and Lynch (1988) who did a series of experiments. They found that the difficulty of listening tasks was particularly influenced by the following:

1. The organization of the information (texts in which the order in which the information was presented matched its chronological sequence in real life were easier than texts in which the information was presented out of sequence).
2. The familiarity of the topic.
3. The explicitness and sufficiency of the information.
4. The type of referring expressions used
5. Whether the text described 'static' relationship (for example, geometric figures) or dynamic relationship (for example, a road accident).

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Participants

The participants in this research were 84 students of the fifth semester who were taking Listening Comprehension course at the English Department of *Tarbiyah* and Teachers Training Faculty at Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies Banjarmasin in the academic year of 2013/2014. They were chosen because of the researchers' easy access to the sample population. In fact, the total number of the fifth semester students is 106 students. There are three classes of the fifth semester; class A that consists of 38 students, class B that consists of 34 students, and class C that consists of 34 students. However, because there were only 84 questionnaires were returned back to the researcher, the questionnaires of the 84 students were analyzed.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher uses a questionnaire for the data collection. The questionnaire was adopted from two sources; Hamouda (2013) and Lotfi (2012). The researcher reduced some items in the questionnaire because of redundancy.

The aim of the questionnaire is to elicit students' self-reported problems and difficulties in listening comprehension. The questionnaire includes 10 parts. In part two through part ten of the questionnaire, the students are asked to give their responses by ticking (✓) a box representing their choice. The questionnaire is a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (Always True) to 1 (Never True). There are five different responses offered to the students; Always True (AT), Usually True (UT), Sometimes True (ST), Usually Not True (UNT), and Never True (NT).

The questionnaires were distributed during class times by the researcher herself on January 3rd 2014 for Class A, January 6th for Class C, and January 13th 2014 for Class B. However, the students were allowed to take the questionnaires back home. They were given time two to three days to return the questionnaires.

Data Analysis Procedure

After all of the data are collected and processed, the researcher analyzes the data by using descriptive quantitative method. The researcher uses descriptive statistics. These descriptive statistics such as the frequency and percentage are obtained to see the overall patterns of students' problems in listening comprehension.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The Fifth Semester Students' Perception to the Importance of Studying Listening Comprehension

Before presenting the data related to the fifth semester students' perception to the importance of studying listening comprehension, the data related to students' general self-rating to listening proficiency is presented. Table 4.1 below shows this information.

Table 4.1 Students' General Self-Rating to Listening Proficiency

Statement	N	Frequency and Percentage (%)			
		Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
How do you rate your English Listening ability?	83	3 (3.61 %)	22 (26.50 %)	56 (67.46 %)	2 (2.40 %)

Table 4.2 below illustrates the students' perception to the importance of the English Listening skill. There were four items that asked about perception.

Table 4.2 Students' Perception to the Importance of the English Listening Skill

No.	Statements	N	Frequency and Percentage (%)				
			AT	UT	ST	UNT	NT
1.	I am aware of the perceived importance of English listening skill	80	31 (38.75 %)	23 (28.75 %)	24 (30 %)	2 (2.5 %)	(0 %)
2.	I find that listening	84	2	20	50	11	1

	comprehension is difficult		(2.38 %)	(23.80 %)	(59.52 %)	(13.09%)	(1.19%)
3.	I find that listening comprehension is boring and not interesting	84	0 %	5 (5.95 %)	23 (27.38 %)	33 (39.28%)	23 (27.38%)
4.	I find that listening comprehension is exciting	83	8 (9.63 %)	37 (44.57 %)	36 (43.37 %)	2 (2.40 %)	0 %

The Fifth Semester Students' Problems in Listening Comprehension

Parts three through ten asked the students about their problems they face in listening comprehension. They are 70 items. Part three asked the students about their problems related to the process of listening. This part consists of 13 items. The items of the questionnaire were examined in terms of their frequency of selection and percentage so as to determine the extent to which the participants encounter the problem in listening comprehension. To provide a more succinct and comprehensible pattern of the participants' answers to the questionnaire, the first two alternatives ('always true' and 'usually true') were combined and the last two ('usually not true' and 'never true') were also combined. The first two alternatives were combined to show that the difficulty in listening comprehension is high, and the last two were combined to show that the difficulty in listening comprehension is low. Table 4.3 below presents the students' responses.

Table 4.3 Students' Problems Related to the Process of Listening

No.	Statements	N	Frequency and Percentage (%)				
			AT	UT	ST	UNT	NT
1.	It is difficult for me to understand the listening text if the teacher does not pre teach some vocabulary words.	84	12 (14.28 %)	43 (51.19 %)	19 (22.61 %)	9 (10.71 %)	1 (1.19 %)
2.	It is difficult for me to understand the listening text if the teacher does not give warming up activities.	84	7 (8.33 %)	35 (41.66 %)	28 (33.33 %)	12 (14.28 %)	2 (2.38 %)
3.	Before listening, it is difficult for me to predict from the visuals that the teacher shows what I will hear.	84	2 (2.38 %)	26 (30.95 %)	34 (40.47 %)	18 (21.42 %)	4 (4.76 %)
4.	It is difficult for me to relate what I hear with something from an earlier part of the listening text.	84	3 (3.57 %)	21 (25 %)	46 (54.76 %)	10 (11.90 %)	4 (4.76 %)
5.	During listening, I have difficulty checking whether I correctly understand the meaning of the whole chunks of the listening text.	84	8 (9.52 %)	28 (33.33 %)	35 (41.66 %)	11 (13.09 %)	2 (2.38 %)

6.	I have difficulty with finding out what the main purpose of the listening task I am going to do is.	84	9 (10.71 %)	19 (22.61 %)	32 (38.09 %)	20 (23.80 %)	4 (4.76 %)
7.	When I listen to texts in English, I experience difficulty with listening for the main idea of the text.	84	13 (15.47 %)	27 (32.14 %)	32 (38.09 %)	10 (11.90 %)	1 (1.19 %)
8.	I find it challenging to focus on the text when I have trouble understanding.	84	20 (23.80 %)	28 (33.33 %)	30 (35.71 %)	5 (5.95 %)	1 (1.19 %)
9.	While listening, I find it difficult to guess the meaning of unknown words by linking them to known words.	83	15 (18.07 %)	22 (26.50 %)	35 (42.16 %)	10 (12.04 %)	1 (1.20 %)
10.	I find it difficult to make a mental summary of information gained through listening.	84	7 (8.33 %)	25 (29.76 %)	42 (50 %)	9 (10.71 %)	1 (1.19 %)
11.	While listening, I have difficulty to check my understanding of the text based on what I already know about the topic.	84	6 (7.14 %)	16 (19.04 %)	39 (46.42 %)	21 (25 %)	2 (2.38 %)
12.	I find it difficult to use the context to guess those parts of a listening text that I cannot hear clearly.	83	19 (22.89 %)	29 (34.93 %)	25 (30.12 %)	10 (12.04 %)	0 %
13.	After listening, I find it difficult to evaluate the overall accuracy of my comprehension.	84	7 (8.33 %)	25 (29.76 %)	30 (35.71 %)	20 (23.80 %)	2 (2.38 %)

The fourth part of the questionnaire includes items that ask about the students' problems related to the content of the listening text. There are 10 items in the fourth part. Table 4.4 below shows the frequency and percentage of the students' problems.

Table 4.4 Students' Problems related to the Content of the Listening Text

No.	Statements	N	Frequency and Percentage (%)				
			AT	UT	ST	UNT	NT
14.	I find it difficult to understand listening texts in which there are too many unfamiliar words including jargon and idioms.	84	34 (40.47%)	32 (38.09%)	15 (17.85%)	2 (2.38%)	1 (1.19%)
15.	I find it difficult to understand listening texts which have difficult grammatical structures.	83	16 (19.27%)	30 (36.14%)	21 (25.30%)	16 (19.27%)	0 %
16.	Long spoken text interfered	82	10	37	30	4	1

	with my listening comprehension.		(12.19%)	(45.12%)	(36.58%)	(4.87%)	(1.21%)
17.	I find it difficult to interpret the meaning of a long spoken text.	83	14 (16.86%)	31 (37.34%)	33 (39.75%)	4 (4.81%)	1 (1.20%)
18.	I find it difficult to remember the meaning of a long listening text	84	15 (17.85%)	28 (33.33%)	35 (41.66%)	5 (5.95%)	1 (1.19%)
19.	I feel fatigue and distracted when I listen to a long spoken text.	82	13 (15.85%)	34 (41.46%)	23 (28.04%)	11 (13.41%)	1 (1.21%)
20.	I find it difficult to understand listening texts when the topic is unfamiliar.	84	16 (19.04%)	34 (40.47%)	28 (33.33%)	5 (5.95%)	1 (1.19%)
21.	I use my experience and background knowledge of the topic to understand the spoken text.	82	27 (32.92%)	22 (26.82%)	28 (34.14%)	3 (3.65%)	2 (2.43%)
22.	I find it difficult to understand every single word of incoming speech.	83	6 (7.22%)	17 (20.48%)	42 (50.60%)	17 (20.48%)	1 (1.20%)
23.	I find the listening passage difficult to understand.	84	3 (3.57%)	21 (25%)	39 (46.42%)	19 (22.61%)	2 (2.38%)

The fifth part of the questionnaire was about the students' problems related to the linguistic features. There are 9 items in the fifth part. The linguistic features include the use of colloquial language and slang, reduced forms, unknown pronunciation, stress and intonation, etc. The 9 items are shown in table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Students' Listening Problems Related to Linguistic Features

No.	Statements	N	Frequency and Percentage (%)				
			AT	UT	ST	UNT	NT
24.	I find it surprising and difficult to deal with colloquial language and slang.	83	9 (10.84%)	30 (36.14%)	36 (43.37%)	8 (9.63%)	0%
25.	I find it difficult to understand reduced forms (for example the sentence: <i>he is going to live here</i> is reduced to <i>he's gonna live here</i>).	83	14 (16.86%)	24 (28.91%)	29 (34.93%)	11 (13.25%)	5 (6.02%)
26.	I find the pronunciation	84	12	21	35	14	2

	familiar but cannot recognize the words.		(14.28%)	(25%)	(41.66%)	(16.66%)	(2.38%)
27.	I do not often pay attention to intonation of the speaker.	84	2 (2.38%)	20 (23.80%)	24 (28.57%)	27 (32.14%)	11 (13.09%)
28.	Unfamiliar stress and intonation patterns of English interfere with my listening comprehension.	84	6 (7.14%)	29 (34.52%)	33 (39.28%)	14 (16.66%)	2 (2.38%)
29.	I find it difficult to recognize the signals which indicate that the speaker is moving from one point to another.	84	6 (7.14%)	24 (28.57%)	39 (46.42%)	12 (14.28%)	3 (3.57%)
30.	When encountering an unknown word, I stop listening and think about the meaning of the word.	83	12 (14.45%)	24 (28.91%)	32 (38.55%)	9 (10.84%)	6 (7.22%)
31.	I find it difficult to infer the meaning of an unknown word while listening.	83	9 (10.84%)	39 (46.98%)	28 (33.73%)	7 (8.43%)	0%
32.	I find it difficult to follow the sequence of the spoken text when the sentences are too long and complex.	83	22 (26.50%)	30 (36.14%)	27 (32.53%)	4 (4.81%)	0%

The sixth part of the questionnaire includes 8 items that are related to the students' problems caused by the students' failure to concentrate. The items, frequencies and percentages of the items are shown in the following table.

Table 4.6 Problems Caused by the Failure to Concentrate

No.	Statements	N	Frequency and Percentage (%)				
			AT	UT	ST	UNT	NT
33.	I find it difficult to really concentrate on listening.	84	6 (7.14%)	16 (19.04%)	38 (45.23%)	21 (25%)	3 (3.57%)
34.	I lose the flow of the spoken text because I concentrate very hard on understanding every word or phrase I hear.	84	9 (10.71%)	25 (29.76%)	28 (33.33%)	21 (25%)	1 (1.19%)
35.	I lose focus of the talk when I have got an expected answer in my mind.	84	12 (14.28%)	25 (29.76%)	31 (36.90%)	16 (19.04%)	0%
36.	I am unable to concentrate because I	83	11 (13.25%)	28 (33.73%)	29 (34.93%)	11 (13.25%)	4 (4.81%)

	search for the answers, and I listen to the dialogue/text at the same time.						
37.	I lose my concentration when the text is too long.	84	12 (14.28%)	20 (23.80%)	42 (50%)	8 (9.52%)	2 (2.38%)
38.	I lose my concentration when I think about the meaning of new words.	83	11 (13.25%)	32 (38.55%)	28 (33.73%)	11 (13.25%)	1 (1.20%)
39.	I lose my concentration if the recording is in a poor quality.	83	39 (46.98%)	24 (28.91%)	16 (19.27%)	3 (3.61%)	1 (1.20%)
40.	I lose my concentration when I think of another question.	83	15 (18.07%)	27 (32.53%)	26 (31.32%)	12 (14.45%)	3 (3.61%)

The seventh part of the questionnaire questioned the students about the students' problems related to psychological characteristics. This part consists of 6 items. Table 4.7 shows the information related to psychological characteristics.

Table 4.7 Students' Perceptions of Listening Problems Related to Psychological Characteristics

No.	Statements	N	Frequency and Percentage (%)				
			AT	UT	ST	UNT	NT
41.	I feel nervous and worried when I do not understand the spoken text.	84	23 (27.38%)	25 (29.76%)	28 (33.33%)	5 (5.95%)	3 (3.57%)
42.	I find it difficult to understand the spoken text which is not of interest to me.	84	5 (5.95%)	21 (25%)	34 (40.47%)	19 (22.61%)	5 (5.95%)
43.	I stop listening when I have problems in understanding a listening text.	84	1 (1.19%)	17 (20.23%)	30 (35.71%)	23 (27.38%)	13 (15.47%)
44.	If I do not arrive at a total comprehension of an oral text, I feel disappointed.	84	12 (14.28%)	30 (35.71%)	30 (35.71%)	7 (8.33%)	5 (5.95%)
45.	Before doing listening comprehension tasks, I fear that I cannot understand what I will	84	8 (9.52%)	25 (29.76%)	26 (30.95%)	17 (20.23%)	8 (9.52%)

	hear.						
46.	I find it difficult to reduce my anxiety before doing the listening task.	84	5 (5.95%)	16 (19.04%)	41 (48.80%)	14 (16.66%)	8 (9.52%)

The eighth part of the questionnaire is about the students' problems related to the listener and tasks. It consists of 12 items. The items related to the listener ad tasks, frequencies and percentages are shown in table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8 Listening Problems Related to the Listener and Tasks

No.	Statements	N	Frequency and Percentage (%)				
			AT	UT	ST	UNT	NT
47.	I find it difficult to get a general understanding of the spoken text from the first listening.	84	11 (13.09%)	22 (26.19%)	38 (45.23%)	10 (11.90%)	3 (3.57%)
48.	At the time of listening I found it difficult to predict what would come next.	84	5 (5.95%)	30 (35.71%)	36 (42.85%)	9 (10.71%)	4 (4.76%)
49.	I find it difficult to quickly remember words or phrases I have just heard.	84	17 (20.23%)	28 (33.33%)	20 (23.80%)	18 (21.42%)	1 (1.19%)
50.	During listening, although some words sound familiar, it is difficult for me to recall their meaning immediately.	84	3 (3.57%)	20 (23.80%)	42 (50%)	16 (19.04%)	3 (3.57%)
51.	When I hear the new words, I forget the content which was mentioned before.	84	4 (4.76%)	21 (25%)	40 (47.61%)	13 (15.47%)	6 (7.14%)
52.	I found it difficult to recognize the words I know because of the way they are pronounced.	84	8 (9.52%)	26 (30.95%)	34 (40.47%)	15 (17.85%)	1 (1.19%)
53.	There were words that I would normally understand in writing, but when I heard them in a stream of speech, I found it difficult to tell where one word finishes and another begins.	84	8 (9.52%)	28 (33.33%)	38 (45.23%)	9 (10.71%)	1 (1.19%)
54.	I find it difficult when listening to English	84	8 (9.52%)	29 (34.52%)	31 (36.90%)	13 (15.47%)	3 (3.57%)

	without transcripts.						
55.	I find it difficult to answer Wh-questions in a listening task.	84	11 (13.09%)	18 (21.42%)	40 (47.61%)	13 (15.47%)	2 (2.38%)
56.	I find it difficult to answer questions which require other than a short answer (e.g. why or how questions).	83	9 (10.84%)	26 (31.32%)	35 (42.16%)	11 (13.25%)	2 (2.40%)
57.	I find it difficult to do listening tasks, such as filling a grid for which I need to draw on specific information from the text.	84	4 (4.76%)	25 (29.76%)	41 (48.80%)	11 (13.09%)	3 (3.57%)
58.	I find it difficult to do listening tasks for which I need to combine information to make generalization while listening to the text.	84	9 (10.71%)	30 (35.71%)	34 (40.47%)	10 (11.90%)	1 (1.19%)

The ninth part of the questionnaire includes items about the listening problems related to the speaker. They are 8 items in the ninth part.

The last part of the questionnaire is related to the problems pertaining to physical settings. It consists of 4 items.

Table 4.9 Listening Problems Related to the Speaker

No.	Statements	N	Frequency and Percentage (%)				
			AT	UT	ST	UNT	NT
59.	I find it difficult to understand the natural speech which is full of hesitation and pauses.	83	5 (6.02%)	28 (33.73%)	37 (44.57%)	12 (14.45%)	1 (1.20%)
60.	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly.	84	22 (26.19%)	38 (45.23%)	18 (21.42%)	4 (4.76%)	2 (2.38%)
61.	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of the spoken text without seeing the speaker's body language.	84	4 (4.76%)	17 (20.23%)	31 (36.90%)	27 (32.14%)	5 (5.95%)
62.	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak with a variety of accents.	84	13 (15.47%)	25 (29.76%)	33 (39.28%)	13 (15.47%)	0%
63.	I have difficulty	84	20	22	30	12	

	understanding speakers with unfamiliar accents.		(23.80%)	(26.19%)	(35.71%)	(14.28%)	0%
64.	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak too fast.	84	42 (50%)	25 (29.76%)	11 (13.09%)	5 (5.95%)	1 (1.19%)
65.	I find it difficult to understand the recorded material if I am unable to get things repeated.	84	19 (22.61%)	31 (36.90%)	31 (36.90%)	2 (2.38%)	1 (1.19%)
66.	I find it difficult to understand the listening text when the speaker does not pause long enough.	84	13 (15.47%)	37 (44.04%)	20 (23.80%)	10 (11.90%)	4 (4.76%)

The last part of the questionnaire is related to the problems pertaining to physical settings. It consists of 4 items. This will be summarized in table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10 Problems Pertaining to Physical Settings

No.	Statements	N	Frequency and Percentage (%)				
			AT	UT	ST	UNT	NT
67.	It is difficult for me to concentrate with noises around	81	44 (54.32%)	24 (29.62%)	11 (13.58%)	2 (2.46%)	0%
68.	Unclear sounds resulting from a poor-quality CD-player interfere with my listening comprehension.	81	40 (49.38%)	21 (25.92%)	16 (19.75%)	4 (4.93%)	0%
69.	Unclear sounds resulting from poor equipment (such as headset) interfere with my listening comprehension.	81	50 (61.72%)	8 (9.87%)	15 (18.51%)	8 (9.87%)	0%
70.	Unclear sounds resulting from poor acoustic conditions of the classroom interfere with my listening comprehension.	81	38 (46.91%)	28 (34.56%)	10 (12.34%)	5 (6.17%)	0%

Then the researcher identified 10 highest percentages of difficulties faced by the students. As stated before, the two alternatives 'always true' and 'usually true' are combined to come up with the high frequency and percentage of problems. The result is shown in table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11 Ten Most Common Problems Encountered by the Fifth Semester Students

Item no.	Statements	Frequency	Percentage
67	It is difficult for me to concentrate with noises around	68	83.94%
70	Unclear sounds resulting from poor acoustic conditions of the classroom interfere with my listening comprehension	66	81.47%

64	I find it difficult to understand well when speakers speak too fast	67	79.76%
14	I find it difficult to understand listening texts in which there are too many unfamiliar words including jargon and idioms	66	78.56%
39	I lose my concentration if the recording is in poor quality	63	75.89%
68	Unclear sounds resulting from a poor-quality CD-player interfere with my listening comprehension	61	75.30%
69	Unclear sounds resulting from poor equipment (such as headset) interfere with my listening comprehension	58	71.59%
60	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly	60	71.42%
1	It is difficult for me to understand the listening text if the teacher does not pre teach some vocabulary words	55	65.47%
32	I find it difficult to follow the sequence of the spoken text when the sentences are too long and complex	52	62.64%

Discussion

In the first item of the questionnaire, the students were asked to rate their proficiency levels in listening skills. The finding shows that the students have self confidence to rate themselves not as poor but as good and average listeners.

In relation with students' perception to the importance of the English listening skills, the result showed that the majority of students are aware of the importance of English listening skill. The researcher thinks that these findings are in line with their self-rating to listening proficiency. Because of the students' positive awareness of the importance of the listening skills, they try hard to improve their listening ability. The fifth semester students found themselves good and excellent listeners. Although the majority of the students evaluated themselves as average learners, they still think that listening is an important skill. Listening skill is an exciting and interesting skill for them.

The other parts of the questionnaire asked about the problems encountered by the fifth semester students of English Department. Generally, the finding shows that the fifth semester students encounter various kinds of problems and difficulties. The third part of the questionnaire asked the students about their problems related to the process of listening. In the third part, the most common problem was related to the difficulty to understand the listening text if the teacher does not pre teach some vocabularies. There were 65.47% of the students who reported that difficulty. This means that one of the successful techniques in teaching listening that helps students become good listeners is to provide the new vocabularies or unfamiliar words that the students will hear in the listening texts. The pre teaching of new words might help decrease the difficulties face by the learners. Furthermore,

most of the students (57.82%) find it difficult to use the context to guess the parts of listening text that they cannot hear clearly. This means that the teacher should provide the students with activities to practice guessing from context.

The fourth part of the questionnaire asked the students about their problems related to the content of the listening text. In this part, the most common problem was related to the difficulty to understand listening texts in which there are too many unfamiliar words including jargon and idioms. A great number of students (78.56%) reported that they have this difficulty. This means that the students have the problem of limited vocabulary. This finding coincides with many other researchers who conducted similar research about the students' difficulties in listening comprehension. Muhammad Naeem Butt (2010) reported that the major problem hindering listening comprehension was that the students' vocabulary was too limited to understand the message. The data also proves the theory realized by Underwood (1989) that lack of vocabulary is a big obstacle to most students in listening comprehension.

The students have difficulty to understand listening texts with unfamiliar topics. They also have difficulty interpreting and remembering the meaning of long listening texts. They feel fatigue and distracted when they listen to long listening texts. The students also have difficulty to understand listening texts which have difficult grammatical structures. This is in line with Hamouda (2013) who stated that "the material itself may be the main source of listening comprehension problems. In particular, unfamiliar words, difficult grammatical structures, and the length of the spoken text may present students with listening problems." Vogely's study (1995) also shows that the difficulty in listening comprehension is partly due to the structural component of the text. In relation with the length of the spoken texts, Hamouda's study (2013) also reveals shows that the length of the text can be one major factor that negatively affects the listeners' listening comprehension. The result of the current study confirms Ur's assertion (1984) which justifies that the problem in listening comprehension is partly because of the length of the listening texts which bore the learners and distract their concentration.

The above findings suggest that the teacher should give warming up activities to introduce not only the new words but also the topics of the listening texts. Warming up activities are useful to help students to get the general ideas of the topics discussed in the listening texts. The teacher also can introduce the grammatical structures that are in the listening texts. In relation with long texts, the teacher should find shorter texts that are also appropriate with the students' level.

The fifth part of the questionnaire is about the students' problems related to linguistic features. There are 9 items in the fifth part. Linguistic features are related to the use of colloquial and slang expressions, reduced forms, stress and intonation, use of signal words, and the use of long and complex sentences. Among the nine items, the most common problem was related to the difficulty to follow the sequence of the spoken text when the sentences are too long and complex (62.64%). This finding reminds the English teachers not to use very long and complicated texts. Hamouda (2013) stated that, "The use of long and complex sentences can make it hard for non-native speakers to understand a lecture."

The next part of the questionnaire is related to the problems caused by the failure to concentrate. There are 8 items in the sixth part. Concentration is one of the factors which affect students' listening comprehension. Hamouda (2013) explained that,

During listening lessons students are required to be attentive since in a very restricted time they are required to process and understand a strand of newly introduced information. Failure to concentrate will result in the students missing some of the lecture content, which will eventually affect their understanding of the whole lecture.

Among the 8 items, the most common problem with the highest percentage (75.89%) was related to losing concentration if the recoding is in a poor quality. It seems that there are two factors that interfere with the students' listening comprehension, the first is concentration and the second is poor quality of the recoding. This might be the reason of the great number of students who have that problem.

The seventh part of the questionnaire asked about the students' perception of listening problems related to psychological characteristics. This part consists of 6 items. The psychological characteristics involve the feelings of nervousness, worry, boredom, disappointment, fear, and anxiety. Based on table 4.7, the students did not show that they have a great problem with psychological characteristics because almost all of their responses were less than 50%. There was only the first item in the seventh part that has higher percentage of problem. There were 57.14% of the students who feel nervous and worried when they do not understand the spoken text. Hamouda (2013) explained that. "In psychology, it is stated that when a person feels nervous or anxious he or she may not be concentrated. When one felt uncomfortable, his or her ability to listen is greatly reduced." He further elaborated that, "Boredom and frustration are other barriers to listening comprehension. Boredom and frustration may affect the extent to which attention is paid to listening." Hamouda continues to explain that "this occurs as a result of poor stimulation caused by disinterest in the topic, lack of motivation, and failure in the part of the teacher to present meaningful material in a stimulating manner."

The eighth part of the questionnaire asked that students to report their listening problems related to the listener and tasks. The students seem did not have great problems related to the listeners and tasks because almost all of the students responded with less than 50%. There was only one statement that the students agree with higher percentage (53.56%). It is related to the difficulty to remember words or phrases they have just heard. This means that one of the factors that may affect students' listening comprehension is memory. This finding is in line with Hamouda (2013) who stated that,

Memory, as depicted by the students, stands for 'trouble remembering the definition of the word after being taught', 'difficulty in recalling the meaning of familiar words' and 'immediately forgetting the word after being said'. Many learners tend to quickly forget what they heard after the speaker finishes talking or they may spend too much time on translating. Therefore, when they need to choose the answer, they forget what was said and end up not knowing which answer is correct.

The next part of the questionnaire is the ninth part which asked the problems related to the speakers. Many students have problems in relation to the speakers. A great number of students (79.76%) reported that they have difficulty in understanding well when the speakers speak too fast. Hamouda (2013) explained that "faster speech rates, whether computer-manipulated or naturally produced, tend to have a negative impact on the comprehension of L2 listeners." As the finding shows, the students absolutely encounter certain difficulties in listening comprehension since they lack control over the speed at which the speakers speak.

The second high problem related to the speakers is the students' difficulty to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly. According to the students' responses, there were 71.42% of the students who face that problem. This again reminds the teacher to choose listening materials that are clear and easy for the students. Other difficulties which have high percentage of frequency were related to inability to understand the recording material if it is not repeated several times, and lack of pauses (59.51%). Ur (1984) argues that learners should be exposed to the recording more than once in order to understand the discourse. Moreover, in relation with the lack of pauses, several researches on the effect of pauses revealed that pauses facilitate listening (Hamouda, 2013). Moreover, they give listeners time to take a greater quantity of notes (Dunkel, 1988).

The tenth part of the questionnaire is related to the problems related to physical settings. The most common problem was related to difficulty to concentrate with noises around (83.94%). Hamouda (2013) stated that, "if the listening task is carried out with noises around, it is for sure they will not have a good result in listening. They are distracted by the by the noise no matter how hard they try to focus on the task."

A great number of students (81.47%) also revealed that their problem comes from unclear sounds as a result of acoustic condition of the classroom. There were 75.3% of the students have problem with unclear sounds resulting from a poor quality CD-player, and 71.59% of the students who have problems with poor equipment such as poor headsets. The high frequency of percentages shows that the facilities and listening equipment interfere much with the students' listening comprehension.

Surely, it is difficult to expect the students to learn to listen better when they are exposed to so many problems. The teachers' responsibility then is to find way to encourage their students to tackle the listening tasks with positive anticipation. Especially, for students at the early levels, teachers should present some key words and structure before allowing the students to do their listening (Hamouda, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the questionnaire, the researcher has the following conclusions:

1. The majority of students are aware of the importance of English listening skill. 67, 50% of the students showed their positive awareness of the listening skill. There awareness is also shown by reporting that they find listening is not boring for them (66.66%) and they find listening exciting (54.20%).
2. The fifth semester students face various kinds of problems. The ten most frequent problems encountered by the students are:
 - a. Difficulty to concentrate with noises around (83.94%).
 - b. Unclear sounds as a result of poor acoustic conditions of the classrooms (81.47%).
 - c. Difficulty to understand fast speakers (79.76%).
 - d. Difficulty to understand listening texts with too many unfamiliar words (78.56%).
 - e. Losing concentration if the recording is in poor quality (75.89%).
 - f. Unclear sounds as a result of poor-quality CD player (75.3%)
 - g. Unclear sounds resulting from poor equipment such as headsets (71.59%).
 - h. Difficulty to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly (71.42%).
 - i. Difficulty to understand the listening text if the teacher does not pre teach vocabulary words (65.47%)

- j. Difficulty to follow the spoken text when the sentences are too long and complex (62.64%).

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