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Listening as a Second Language Listening Comprehension

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to define Listening as Second Language Listening Comprehension. The author chose the English Language Education Program, semester 1 of the North Sumatra State Islamic University, class TBI 4 with a total of 7 students out of a total of 30 students. Data collection through questionnaire surveys. The seven sample students were asked questions about listening comprehension, what materials can help them improve their language skills, such as music, then factors that influence whether they receive listening comprehension quickly or slowly, such as age, gender and learning style. The results of the research and analysis show that the seven students who answered the questionnaire had different understandings regarding listening comprehension, however, as explained by Mehrpour and Motlagh (2015), there are factors that influence the speed of understanding a second language, in the form of age, learning style and gender.

Keywords: Listening, Second Language, Listening Comprehension

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INTRODUCTION

People need communication when they want to say something and transmit information. Speakers use communication when they are going to inform someone about something. Speakers apply language according to their own goals. So speakers should be both listeners and speakers at the same time for effective communication.

Many people have used English to support their life goals since it has become an international language for communication around the world (Sari & Aminatun, 2021). To master the English language as a second language, both teachers and learners face numerous difficulties. This resulted in more research and the development of new teaching strategies to improve English Language Learners (ELL's) language proficiency and competencies (De Brito, 2015). Arabi Zanjani and Izadpanah (2016) emphasize that learners are expected to have necessary skills such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking to be regarded as language learners. These four skills are intertwined and can hardly be used separately. While all skills are crucial, a few studies accentuate listening as the most important skill compared to others.

It is nearly impossible to omit listening in an English language lesson for its role in communication, despite it being the least concerned skill (Yavuz & Celik, 2017). When communicating, listening takes up 40–50% of the total time. Meanwhile, speaking, reading, and writing take up 25–30%, 11–16%, and 9%, respectively (Yildirim&Yildirim,2016). Apart from that, the most important aspect is that when one begins to learn a language, he or she should first listen to understand the spoken language (Ahmadi, 2016).

Hamouda (2013) said that listening skills are very important in acquiring understandable input. Learning does not occur if there is no input. Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart (2014) defined listening comprehension as one's ability to recognize another through sense and aural organs and allocate a meaning to the message to understand it. Listening helps us understand the world around us and is one of the necessary elements in creating successful communication. Jafari and Hashim (2015) emphasized that listening is a channel for comprehensible input, and more than 50 percent of the time learners spend learning a foreign language is devoted to listening.

Similar to reading, writing, and speaking, listening is an intricate process best developed through constant practice. It is an essential skill that provides the foundation for effective

communication and career success. It enhances the ability to learn and adapt new information, knowledge, and skills (Liubinienė, 2009). Listening skills consist of several main elements. They are distinguishing sounds, word recognition and understanding, identifying grammatical groupings, identifying significant phrases and utterances, associating linguistic non-linguistic and paralinguistic cues, predicting and confirming leanings using background knowledge, and recalling important details (Tyagi, 2013). Therefore, good use of teaching listening strategies is needed to maximize the learning of listening. Hashim, Yunus, & Hashim (2018) advocate that teaching students about learning strategies will help them improve as better language learners.

Hamouda (2013) defined listening comprehension as an interactive process in which listeners are involved in constructing meaning. Listeners comprehend the oral input through sound discrimination, previous knowledge, grammatical structures, stress and intonation, and other linguistic or non-linguistic clues. According to Nadig (2013), listening comprehension refers to the various processes of understanding and making sense of spoken language. These involve knowing speech sounds, comprehending the meaning of individual words, and understanding the syntax of sentences.

Mejila et al. (2014), on the other hand, classify listening strategies based on the learner's input process. The first strategy is a top-down strategy (listener-based), and the second strategy is a bottom-up strategy (text-based). Both language learners and teachers may prefer some strategies over others. This raises concerns about identifying the most and least efficient listening strategies. used in teaching listening skills (Mahmoud Ghoneim, 2013). These strategies need to be implemented and taught to enable language learners to deal with incoming speech, especially when their understanding is incomplete (Yukseki, 2003).

Pourhosein and Narje (2016), wrote *Learners' Listening Comprehension Difficulties in English Language Learning: A Literature Review*, it defines key terms like listening and listening comprehension. It examines common listening comprehension strategies classified as cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective. The paper then discusses major problems learners face, such as unfamiliar accents, vocabulary, length and speed of listening passages. It outlines suggestions for improving listening comprehension like preparing learners with background knowledge and teaching strategies. Previous research finding on the relationship between strategy use and listening performance is also summarized.

Hon Sin Hong (2016), wrote *The Effects of Listening Comprehension on ESL Learners' English Language Proficiency*. This study examined the effects of listening comprehension on the English language proficiency of 26 Malaysian secondary school students. The students participated in 4 weeks of listening activities and completed pre- and post-tests of listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills based on IELTS tests. Statistical analysis found that listening comprehension significantly improved the students' performance in listening, reading, and writing but not speaking. However, speaking skills showed the highest correlation between pre- and post-tests. Classroom observations suggested that while students struggled initially with understanding continuous aural English, listening practice helped build confidence. The study concluded that listening comprehension is important for developing English proficiency and should be prioritized, especially for skills like speaking that students find most challenging. Therefore, this research aims to find out the strategies used in teaching listening skills to second language learners.

METHOD

In this research a qualitative approach is used, because problems related to humans basically depend on observation. According to Moleong (2007; 6) that: Qualitative Research is research that intends to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perception, motivation, actions and so on holistically and through descriptions in the form of words and language. This research was conducted with the research population being first year students majoring in English at the North Sumatra State Islamic University, and the sample was TBI 4 class, namely seven students out of thirty total students from TBI 4 class. Will use a questionnaire instrument as a research analysis tool. The formulation of questions from the questionnaire that has been distributed is:

1. Does listening to music in a second language help us understand it?
2. Can studying with native speakers (people who are already fluent in a second language) make us understand it more quickly?
3. Does age affect how quickly we can pick up a second language?
4. Explain why age affects the speed of understanding a second language.
5. What applications do you often use to help you understand a second language more quickly?

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Farrell and Reandya (2011) outline several causes that hinder listening comprehension:

- a. Speech is fast: Speech rate is correlated with comprehension success. A faster speech rate may result in a decrease in listening comprehension.
- b. Variation of speech: Speakers may drop, modify, add sounds or undergo radical phonological changes when speaking. This makes it difficult for listeners to recognize some words.
- c. Blurry word boundaries: Words tend to blend with surrounding words making it incomprehensible for some listeners.
- d. A struggle in processing speech in real-time: Listeners have little control over what the speaker is saying and the speed at which the speaker conveys his other message

Mehrpour and Motlagh (2015) investigated how motivation and attitude affect English language learning, learning style, and gender. In this discussion, students' perspectives regarding the question of listening as second language listening. about how age, learning style and gender influence the speed of understanding a second language. The results of the questionnaire in tables below:

Does listening to music in a second language help us understand it?		
Very helpful	Help	Not helpful
57,1%	42,9%	0%

From the table above there were 57,1% of students think that listening to music in a second language very help us understand it, four from seven student chose very helpful. and there were 42,9% of student think that listening to music in a second language help us understand it, three from seven student chose helpful.

Can studying with native speakers (people who are already fluent in a second language) make us understand it more quickly?		
Very Quickly	Quickly	Not Quickly
0%	100%	0%

From the table above 100% or all students choose that studying with native speakers makes us quickly understand English as a second language

Does age affect how quickly we can pick up a second language?		
very affecting	affecting	Not affecting
14,3%	85,7%	0%

From the table above there were 85,7% of students think that age affects how quickly we can understand a second language, six from seven student chose very affecting. and there were 14,3% of student think that age affects how quickly we can understand a second language, one from seven student chose affecting.

Explain why age affects the speed of understanding a second language.	
1.	Because language is a communication tool, And building communication from childhood using our mother tongue really influences the dominant language we use. Learning a language as a child certainly feels more natural, whereas learning it as a teenager or adult requires more effort. However, as teenagers or adults, we as foreign language learners can also maximize learning with various methods that can be adapted to ourselves to ultimately improve our English language skills.
2.	Because the faster we learn, the more we will understand.
3.	Because the younger a person is, the easier it is for his brain to absorb all the new information.
4.	Age has an influence on understanding a second language, because it is possible that when people who are old and want to learn a second language are very slow in understanding, it is influenced by their already slow thinking abilities.
5.	Yes, because it affects the people around you.
6.	Memory has weakened.
7.	If you enter old age, learning will become increasingly difficult.

From the table above, each student has his own opinion responding to the reasons why age influences the speed of understanding a second language, but it can be concluded that why age influences the speed of understanding a second language is because age determines memory strength and learning motivation.

What applications do you often use to help you understand a second language more quickly?	
1.	Youtube, Duolingo, Spotify.
2.	Youtube.
3.	Youtube.
4.	Duolingo.
5.	Youtube.
6.	Google translate.
7.	Spotify.

From the table above the applications usually used on Youtube. YouTube is the most popular video-publishing and sharing platform in the world. It does not only offer millions of movie, music, talk shows, sport, news, travel, and personal videos, but also a multitude of educational videos. YouTube is used by people of all ages and for an unlimited number of purposes including language learning. It offers teachers and students learning resources for developing a variety of language skills and instant access to authentic language in a wide variety of contexts (Wang & Chen, 2020). YouTube is one of the significant internet-based resources for language learning. YouTube is a famous site that allows the users to upload videos, to share videos with other users, and to comment on the videos posted. The site attracts millions of users every month. Also, YouTube is available in more than sixty language and many countries in the world (Silviyanti, 2014).

YouTube application can be found in many smart phones as well. The most prominent feature of YouTube is that it contains many videos on different subjects and in many languages. In a search box, the users can write the name of the video they need to watch and it will run on directly. Such videos are very important in the educational field. By using these videos, the language instructors can design lessons for their learners and give meaningful activities in language classes. For example, there are conversation activities such as “move trailer” and “voiceover” that can be employed to practice speaking and listening (Watkins & Wilkins, 2011, p. 115).

Wagner (2007) argued that YouTube-based materials allow the learners to master pronunciation, sound discrimination, and comprehending what is being said to them through the graphical and illustration means used in the videos.

Numerous previous studies have been conducted by researchers investigating student's perceptions of using YouTube for learning English. For example, Islamiah (2021) examined the perceptions of 9th-grade students at MTs MA'ARIF NU 01 Kroya regarding the use of YouTube as a

learning medium for speaking. In another study, Damayanti (2022) investigated the perceptions of students using YouTube as a medium for learning English as a foreign language, while Harlinda (2019) explored similar perceptions. Building on this research, Islamiah (2021) investigated the perceptions of students in using YouTube to learn English. Barrs (2012) reported that YouTube plays a role in the cross-cultural knowledge since users from different cultures can upload videos. Also, Snelson and Perkins (2009) reports that the videos enhance motivation in L2 learning and the learners can exchange videos in a tension free environment. YouTube videos assist the learners to comment, share, express, speak, and think in a positive environment without the restrictions of the conventional classes in which the teacher is the only speaker in the class (Alhamami, 2013).

Does gender affect the speed of understanding a second language?	
Yes	No
28,6%	71,4%

From the table above, 28,6% chose that gender influences the speed of understanding a second language and 71,4% chose not.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to explicitly delineate the concept of Listening in the context of Second Language Listening Comprehension. The focal point of investigation is the English Language Education Program, specifically targeting semester 1 students at North Sumatra State Islamic University, specifically those enrolled in class TBI 4, comprising a subset of 7 students chosen from a total cohort of 30. The methodology employed for data collection involved the administration of questionnaire surveys.

The participants, representing the sample group, were queried on various aspects related to listening comprehension. Interrogations included inquiries about the materials they believe can enhance their language proficiency, with a particular emphasis on mediums such as music. Additionally, the survey probed into factors influencing the pace of their listening comprehension, encompassing variables like age, gender, and learning style.

Upon conducting the research and subsequent analysis, it became evident that the seven respondents exhibited diverse perspectives concerning listening comprehension. Notably, the findings align with the assertions made by Mehrpour and Motlagh (2015), emphasizing that there are discernible factors that exert an impact on the swiftness with which individuals comprehend a second language. These factors, as identified in the research, manifest in the form of age, learning style, and gender.

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