

CHAPTER II THEORY REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Listening Comprehension

Listening is an activity of receiving transfer of impression, thoughts, images, attitudes and emotions from the speaker. Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016:124) defined that listening is the process of receiving what the speaker is saying, creating and demonstrating meaning, negotiating meaning with the speaker and responding, and creating meaning through participation, creativity and empathy. Similarly, Rost & Brown (2022:3) stated that listening is the process involves taking in spoken language, paying attention to it carefully and purposefully, recognizing it, and interpreting it in light of prior encounters and anticipated outcomes.

In other hand, Elfi (2015:194) defined that listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying, and involves understanding a speakers' accent or pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and grasping the meaning. Thus, listening is a form of attention to listen to the speaker and understand the speaker so that the listener can obtain the information and be able to understand what the speaker said. Wahyuni & Inayati (2022:161) stated that listening is a receptive skill that plays crucial role in English learning because it is a basic mode of conversation found in both direct and indirect conversations. Meanwhile, Susilowati et al., (2020:131) stated that

listening can be a category not only receptive skill but also for the development of verbal language proficiency.

Comprehension is the power of understanding deeply. After the auditory signals are identified and recognized by the brain, they are assigned meaning. For example, when the listener hears the utterance “Would you like to come to my party tomorrow?” it means that he/she determines that it is an invitation. According to Vandergrift (1999:168) listening comprehension is a complex active process which the listener must distinguish between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what is gathered in all of the above, and interpret it within both the immediate and wider sociocultural context of speech. Likewise, Fang (2008:21) stated that listening comprehension entails motivating listeners to focus on an active process of listening for meanings while utilizing both linguistic and non-linguistic cues. Additionally, students should be aware that not all hints are equally significant.

From the definition above, it can be concluded that listening comprehension is a process of receiving ideas and information deeply by the listener from the speaker.

2.2 Process of Listening

Foreign language learners as well as their teachers believe that listening is a difficult skill to master. That is because of different processes such as

cognitive, affective, social, and physiological processes which are involved in listening comprehension. Tyagi (2013:1-2) stated that the process of listening occur in five stages which are hearing, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding.

1. *Hearing*, refers to the response caused by the stimulation of the senses by sound waves receptors in the ear; it is a physiological response; hearing is the perception of sound waves; you have to hear to hear, but you don't have to hear to hear.
2. *Understanding*, in this step helps to understand the symbols we see and hear, we must analyze the meaning of perceptual stimuli; symbolic stimuli are not only words but also sounds such as applause... and sights such as a blue uniform... also have symbolic meaning; the meanings assigned to these symbols are a function of our prior associations and context where the symbols appear.
3. *Remembering*, it is an important listening process because it means the individual not only receives and interprets a piece of information, but adds it to the memory bank of the mind.
4. *Evaluating*, only active listeners can participate in this listening process. During this stage, the listener is actively weighing the evidence, separating fact from opinion, and determining whether the message is biased or biased. Effective listeners take care not to start this activity too quickly; starting this stage of the process before the message is complete

requires us to stop listening and pay attention to the incoming message - as a result, the listening process stalls

5. *Responding*, this process requires the recipient to complete the process verbally and/or non-verbal feedback; since the speaker has no other way to determine whether the message has been received, this stage becomes the only obvious method the sender can use to determine how successfully the message was delivered.

In Addition, Nation & Newton (2008:40) stated that two distinct kinds of processes are involved in listening are referred to as “bottom-up” and “top-down” processing.

1. Bottom-up process

It is the process listeners use to piece together the message piece by piece from speech and from part to whole. Nation & Newton (2008:40) stated that bottom-up processing involves understanding and decoding the flow of speech at ever greater levels starting with phonetic, phonemic, syllable, lexical, semantic, syntactic, pragmatic, propositional, and interpretive hearing.

2. Top-down process

In this process the listeners are more concerned with background knowledge by obtaining meaning and interpreting texts or messages. In contrast to the bottom-up process, the top-down process moves from meaning to language. Nation & Newton (2008:40) stated that top-down process involves listeners using what they know about the context of the

communication to predict what the message will contain, and using parts of the message to confirm, correct, or add to it.

Berne (2004:528) stated that learners rate top-down strategies more quickly for listening comprehension and bottom-up strategies less quickly, although they remain important. On the other hand, it appears that students find it easier to access bottom-up strategies than top-down strategy, so this finding suggests that there seems to be a gap between respondents knowing what strategy they should use and their ability to use that strategy effectively.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher conclude that listening process divided into “bottom-up process” where the process is from language to meaning and “top-down process” where the process is from meaning to language.

2.3 Types of Listening

Listening has several types. Rost & Brown (2022:183-200) divided listening into six types as follows.

1. Intensive listening

Intensive listening is defined as listening closely to a text in order to decode the input for analysis purposes. Rost & Brown (2022:184) said that listening closely refers for precise sounds, phrases, words, grammatical and pragmatic units. Intensive listening focused on phonology, syntax, and lexis.

2. Selective listening

Selective listening is a term that often used to mean attending to only what you want to hear and tuning out everything else. Rost & Brown (2022:187) stated that selective listening as used in language teaching is listening with a predetermined goal in mind, frequently to gather specific information to complete a task.

3. Interactive listening

According to Rost & Brown (2022:190) interactive listening refers to the type of conversational interaction which the listener takes a leading role in understanding, through providing feedback, asking questions, and supporting the speaker. In this collaborative conversation students interact with each other or with native speaker.

4. Extensive listening

Extensive listening refers to listening for long periods of time in the target language with the intention of understanding and learning the content. Brown (2016:77) stated that extensive listening aims to develop global understanding of spoken language. However, Maftoon et al., (2016:77) stated that extensive listening as meaning focused listening activities for an extended period of time. It means that the learners are expected to reach full comprehension during extensive listening by listening to lengthy lecturer, conversations, and broadcasts.

5. Responsive listening

Responsive listening refers to a type of listening practice that the listener's response is the aim of the activity. Rost & Brown (2022:198) said that in this type of activity the listener's response is affective that expressing an opinion or point of view rather than informational giving back facts based on what was heard.

6. Autonomous listening

Autonomous listening refers to a self-directed listening activity which the learners choose what to listen to, seek feedback on their understanding, respond in the way they choose, and monitor their own progress. Autonomous listening is independent listening, without direct guidance of an instructor (Rost & Brown, 2022:200).

From the explanation above, the researcher concluded that the types of listening which are considered useful for language learning and acquisition divided into six types; intensive listening, selective listening, interactive listening, extensive listening, responsive listening, and autonomous listening.

2.4 The Role of Listening in Language Acquisition

Listening plays an important role in people's daily lives. One of the four fundamental abilities in learning a language, listening has a significant role to play in education. Renukadevi (2014:59) stated that while reading, speaking, and writing are all crucial for the development of language

proficiency, listening is the main factor in language acquisition. Mendelsohn in Thi Hue (2019:268) stated that listening plays an important role in communication and he said that listening accounts for 40-50% of the total communication time; speaking, 25-30%; reading, 11-16%; and writing, approximately 9%.

In addition, Kumar & Shankar (2021:312) explained that listening has a significant influence on developing speaking. The two skills complement each other. Listening precedes speaking skill and is completely impossible without each other. Listening is as important as speaking skill because people cannot communicate face to face unless these two types of skills are developed together. Listening is also important for learning purposes, through listening students receive information and gain insight.

Additionally, Tyagi (2013:5) mentioned some of good listening can increase employee productivity. The ability to listen attentively enables a person to:

1. Understand the task better and find out what is expected of him
2. Build relationships with colleagues, supervisors and clients
3. Expressed support
4. Work better in a team-based environment
5. Solving problems with clients, colleagues and supervisors
6. Answer the questions
7. Seek out the underlying meaning of what others are saying

Based on the explanations mentioned above, the researcher concluded that listening has an important place in learning because it is one of the four main skills beside reading, writing, and speaking in language acquisition.

2.5 Listening Difficulties

As we know that listening is a difficult skill for language learners to master, because the learners learn it consciously. Thus, there must be difficulties experienced by students. Yagang (1994:248) indicates the source of listening difficulties mainly came from four aspects namely the message to be heard, the speaker, the listener, and the physical setting.

1. The message content

Many learners find it more difficult to listen to a recorded message than to read the same message on a piece of paper, because the listening part hits the ear in an instant, whereas reading material can be read as many times as the reader likes. Messages on radio or tape recordings cannot be listened to in slower speeds. Even in conversation it is impossible to ask the speaker to repeat something as many times as the listener wants (Yagang, 1994:248-249).

2. The speaker

The speaker is the main part of the material that facilitates students' listening. Several problems were experienced by students related to the speakers' listening comprehension. It is difficult for

students as foreign language learners to easily get messages to speakers, because students cannot control the speed and duration of the speakers' speech (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016:127).

Especially when the speaker speaks too fast with unclear pronunciation so listener cannot catch the words, the listeners get distracted and unable to continue to process the information. Furthermore, variety of speakers' accents is the difficulty for the listeners. Juan & Abidin (2013:388) stated that different speakers use different accents, which sometimes the listeners do not easily understand.

3. The listener

Foreign language learners are not sufficiently conversant with English clichés and collocations to anticipate the absence of certain words or phrases. For example, it is expected to be aware that *redness* frequently collocation with the cheeks or to guess the final word, such as anger, when hearing the expression he is making when flying to great heights. Physical and psychological conditions may interfere with how listening material is perceived and interpreted. For extended periods of time, students find it difficult to focus on deciphering strange sounds, words, and sentences (Yagang, 1994:250).

Besides, Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016:127) stated that learner's difficulty with listening comprehension can also be exacerbated by other factors like a limited vocabulary, and poor grammar. However, Saraswaty (2018:141) indicated that the most common listening problem

is the listener quickly forgets what the speaker said, and the biggest difficulty in listening to students is forgetting the meaning of words. Field in Nation & Newton (2008:42) said that there are three speech phenomena make difficult for language learners as follows.

a. Reduced Forms (*Contractions, Weak Forms and Chunks*)

E.g. *I've lived in Kotabumi for 24 years.*

Fifty one high frequency function words in English contain weak forms.

E.g., been → bin, his → z, and → ənd, nd, n

Chunks → *how are you going?*

b. Assimilation and Elision

Typically affects the beginnings and ends of words

E.g. [g] or a glottal stop before [k, g], e.g., *good cause* → *goog cause*

c. Resyllabification

E.g. *went in* → *wen tin*

Made out → *may dout*

(Can't) help it → *hel pit*

4. The physical setting

Environmental noise is a serious problem in listening comprehension. Yagang (1994:250) stated that noise, including background noise on recordings and environment noise, can distract listeners from the content of the part being heard. Not seeing the

speakers' body language and facial expressions makes it more difficult for the listener to understand the speaker's intent. Unclear sound produced from poor quality equipment can also interfere with the listeners' comprehension.

In addition, Bingol et al., (2014:27-28) stated that there are five factors that affect learners in the process of listening comprehension and aims to realize the problem and try to solve it as follows.

1. Quality of Recorded Material

Bingol et al., (2014:27) stated that the quality of recorded material can affect students' listening comprehension. In this problem can give impact to the students' comprehension in listening, for example the lecturers uses some recorded materials that do not have high quality, so the lecturers must use high quality of recorded material in order to the students' listening comprehension is more optimal.

2. Cultural Differences

The cultural knowledge of the language that affects how well students understand should be known to them. The students may have serious comprehension issues if the listening task uses materials from a completely different cultural background. The lecturers must provide background information about the listening exercises in advance (Bingol et al., 2014:28).

3. Accent

According to Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016:127) the accent of the speaker was cited by 66% of students as one of the most important elements influencing listener's comprehension. Unfamiliar accent can give serious problems and effect for the students in listening comprehension for example, for the first time students hear American English accent, but in their listening comprehension class they only hear British accent.

Learners tend to be used to the teacher's accent or to the standard variety of English language they heard, so that learners found it difficult to understand speakers with different accents. It means that, this problem will necessarily interfere with the whole listening process of understanding and at the same time a foreign accent makes understanding impossible to the listeners. The example of accents as follows.

1) The word *potato*:

-In British English it is pronounced **po-tayh-to** [pə'teɪtəʊ]

-In American English it is pronounced **po-tay-to** [pə'teɪ,tou]

2) The word *laughter*:

-In British English it is pronounced **la-fte** ['lɑ:ftə]

-In American English it is pronounced **la-fter** ['læftər]

3) The word *banana*:

- In British English it is pronounced **be-na-na** [bə' nɑ:nə]

- In American English it is pronounced **be-nah-na** [bə' nænə]

4. Unfamiliar Vocabulary

When listening to text containing those familiar words it will be very easy for students to understand it. Many words have more than one meaning and if the students are not used correctly in the appropriate context, the students will be confused. For example, if students know the meaning of the words it can arouse their interest and motivation and can have a positive impact on students' listening comprehension skill (Bingol et al., 2014:28).

5. Length and Speed of Listening

Speed can make the listening comprehension part difficult. If the speaker speaks too fast, students may have serious problems to understanding the words. In this situation, the listeners cannot control the speed of the speakers and this is can create problems with students' listening comprehension.

As a summary, the researcher categorized the students' listening difficulties that indicates the sources of listening difficulties mainly came from four aspects; the message, the speaker, the listener, and the physical setting.

2.6 Factors Affecting Students' Listening Comprehension

Xuyen (2018:292) indicated that most of listening comprehension problems that can affect students' listening comprehension related to the listening materials, the linguistic features, the speakers from the listening material, the listener, the physical setting, and the concentration of the listener.

1. Listening Materials

Many learners find it more difficult to listen to a recorded message than to read the same message on a piece of paper, because the listening part hits the ear in an instant, whereas reading material can be reads as many times as the reader likes. Messages on radio or tape recordings cannot be listened to in slower speeds. Even in conversation it is impossible to ask the speaker to repeat something as many times as the listener wants (Yagang, 1994:248-249).

2. Linguistic Features

Linguistic features are certain conditions which delimit how languages function. For example, these features can be certain sounds. When the sounds are combined together, their different features produce entire words, the basis for language. Linguistic features in listening are speakers' accent or pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and grasping the meaning.

3. The Speaker from the Listening Material

The speaker is a part of material that facilitates the students to listen. Some problems occur related to the speaker in listening

comprehension. Underwood in Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016:127) stated that listener mostly cannot control the speed of speech or the listener cannot control quickly the speakers talk. It is hard for students as the foreign language learner to easily get the message or listen to the speaker.

4. The Listener

Foreign language learners are not sufficiently conversant with English clichés and collocations to anticipate the absence of certain words or phrases. For extended periods of time, students find it difficult to focus on deciphering strange sounds, words, and sentences (Yagang, 1994:250). Therefore, the students cannot catch or forget what the speakers in audio are talking about. Some students also feel difficult to identify some information or miss the specific information in the listening text, it causes the students are fail to understand the content of the audio. Another problem also from themselves internally such as less in motivation to learn listening.

5. The Physical Setting

Environmental noise is a serious problem in listening comprehension. Yagang (1994:250) stated that noise, including background noise on recordings and environment noise, can distract listeners from the content of the part being heard. Unclear sound produced from poor quality equipment can also interfere with the listeners' comprehension.

6. The Concentration of the Listener

It could be difficult for learners to concentrate in a process of learning foreign language. Failure to concentrate will make students missing some of the content which will affect their understanding of the material eventually. During listening process students need to be attentive due to the very restricted time to process and understand the component of newly introduced information (Hamouda, 2013:129).

As concentrate one of the parts in psychological process, it is relatively complex in listening comprehension process. It is tiring for students to concentrate on interpreting unfamiliar sounds, words, and sentence for long periods (Yagang, 1994:3).

In addition, Xuan & Simanjuntak (2017:02) stated that several factors that are thought to influence students' listening comprehension abilities:

1. Limitation of Vocabulary

The limited and unfamiliar vocabulary also becomes a challenge that has a great deal of influence on their understanding. Abbas & Ahmadi (2011:98) stated that there are times listeners encounter unknown word which may cause them to stop and think about the meaning of the word which cause them to miss the next part of the speech.

2. Teaching Strategy

It is important for teachers to give appropriate ways of teaching listening to their students in order to achieve the goal in learning process.

3. Limitation of Materials and Equipment

Students may encounter confusion if the materials are lengthy, too abstract, and poorly organized. Other than that if listening equipment is not complete then students might not be able to have variety of activities.

4. Students' Listening Anxiety

Anxiety gives huge impact while learning English as a foreign language. It is considered as a problematic nature of listening in which teachers feel incredibly difficult to teach students with anxiety.

5. Exposure towards American English and Culture

Every country has different customs and culture. English is not only a language course that provides basic knowledge but it is also a course to enhance students' capacity to broaden their horizons and learn about different culture in the world.

Based on the explanations above, the researcher will analyze factors affecting students' listening comprehension which are; the listening materials, the linguistic features, the speakers from the listening material, the listener, the physical setting, and the concentration of the listener.

2.7 Previous of Related Research

Previous researchers have revealed the factors affecting listening comprehension. First, Reza et al., (2019) found in their research entitled *Factors Affecting Listening Comprehension*. This research used a descriptive quantitative

involving twenty students. The researcher used questionnaire which consisted of 43 questions to collect data. The result of this study revealed that the most dominant factor affecting students' listening comprehension skill was physical setting factor, 32% followed by failure to concentrate factor (23%), content of Listening text factor (20%), Psychological characteristic factor (19%), speaker factor (14%), listener factor (10%), and linguistics feature (9%) lastly. From this research, it can be concluded that physical setting factor is the most dominant factor affecting students' listening comprehension skill.

Second, Xuan & Simanjuntak (2017) mentioned in their research entitled *Students' Perspective of Factors Affecting Listening Comprehension Ability*. The subjects of this research were eight graders from three different schools. This study used descriptive correlation research design. The main instrument in this research is a self-designed questionnaire which underwent Pilot Study to find its validity and reliability. This research explores several factors that affect students' listening comprehension ability; which are: Limitation of Vocabulary, Teaching Strategy, Limitation of Materials and Equipment, Student's Listening Anxiety, Exposure towards American English and culture. The main purpose of this research is to determine which factor that significantly affects students' listening comprehension ability. The results showed that the most dominant factor that affects listening comprehension ability is Limitation of Listening Materials and Equipment.

Third, Xuyen (2018) mentioned in his research entitled *Factors Affecting English Listening Comprehension: Perceptions of English-Major Students at*

Hufi. The participants of this study are 150 English major students. The study was carried out with quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The data collected by questionnaire and a focus-group interview. The results showed that the factors related to linguistic features of the listening materials have the highest mean score (3.82), followed closely by the problems related to listening texts (3.81). The mean scores of the factors related to speakers and listeners are nearly the same at 3.74 and 3.73 respectively. The mean score of the difficulties arising from listeners' failure to concentrate stand at 3.66, and the lowest mean score is of the factors related to physical setting (3.44).

In summary, different students have identified different factors affecting listening comprehension. However, a large number of researchers indicate that most of listening comprehension problems related to the listening materials, the linguistic features, the speaker from the listening material, the listener, the psychological characteristics and the concentration of the listener.