

The Listening Ability of the Fifth Semester Students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University

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Abstract. The study under report is a documentary analysis. The subjects are the Academic Year 2005 students of EESP of WMSCU. The writer used the students' scores along with the test the items as her data. She used descriptive statistics in analyzing the subjects scores after grading the subjects based on their scores. Next, she classified the test items into 8 sub-skills, and analyzed the test items.

The findings of the students' scores analysis show that only 13 (25%) students got A, B+, B, C+, and C, whereas 39 (75%) students got D and E. It can be concluded that as a group the students' listening ability is poor.

Key words: listening, macro skills, and micro skills.

Introduction

Almost everybody knows that English nowadays plays an important role as a medium of international communication throughout the world. It even has become a selection criterion for higher studies and job vacancies. To this point Brumfit (1982:1) claims that "English is an international language that is the most widespread medium of international communication both because of the number and geographical spread of its speaker, and because the large number of non-native speakers who use it for part at least of their international contact." Here, in Indonesia English even has become a compulsory subject for all schools. According to curriculum 1997 (*Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan R.I.*, 1997), English is officially taught to the students starting from elementary schools up to universities. In elementary schools, English is officially taught starting from the fourth grade. But, in reality, many schools start teaching English to the first grade students. There are also some of the kindergartens have started teaching English to their students. It can be predicted that sooner or later English will be the most important foreign language that is needed in Indonesia besides of the Mandarin language.

Considering the importance of English, several universities in Surabaya and elsewhere in Indonesia offer English as a curricular subject to their students for at least one semester, and some even offer it as an English Education Department or Study Program. As a curricular subject, English is taught generally to all of the students even though they are taking a non English Medium Study Program. In an English Education Study Program henceforth (EESP), English is taught as a major to the

students. One of the universities in Surabaya that has English both as a study program and as a class subject is Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University, henceforth (WMSCU) which started the English Education Study Program of the Teachers Training and Education Faculty on September 1st, 1962 (FKIP Unika Widya Mandala 2005; 77). It is expected that all English Department graduates will become qualified English teachers. In order to reach the goal, the English Department students should have a good mastery of all English language components, namely vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation; and also all English language skills, namely listening, speaking, writing, and reading.

Allen (1980:4) states that listening is one of the four language skills that play an important role in communication. Allen's idea is also supported by Nicholas (1988; 19), who states that listening is a phase of personal communication that gets close to the core of a human being to seek a basis for understanding. What Nicholas means here is that every human being needs to listen first in order to understand what is being addressed to him or her. People would not be able to produce any responses to what the speaker says if they do not understand the meaning of the message. Underwood (1989:1) also points out that to listen successfully to spoken language, we need to be able to work out what the speakers mean when they use particular words in particular ways on particular occasions and not simply to understand the words themselves.

Due to the importance of listening, the English Department of WMSCU includes Listening as a subject in its curriculum. This subject has six (6) credit hours and is given in two (2) semesters: Listening 1 and 2. It is expected that the English Department students will be good at listening with comprehension after taking the listening class in two (2) semesters. So far, no one at the English Department has ever studied and written a thesis about the students' listening comprehension ability yet. The theses that are found in the Widya Mandala Catholic University's library only talk about the difficulties in comprehending listening. Consequently, no one really knows to what extent the students are able to comprehend English oral texts or what their strengths and weaknesses in comprehending English oral texts are. The English Department only knows the students' listening comprehension ability from the transcript of the students' score (KHS) and so do the students. It seems that the English Department assumes that the students who get A or B are considered to be good at listening. The others who get C are considered to be sufficient in listening. Then, those who get D and E are considered failures in listening comprehension.

Experience, however, tells the writer that there is no guarantee for the students of the English Department of WMSCU who have passed listening 1 and 2 with good scores will also get the same scores when they take an International English Proficiency Tests like IELTS and TOEFL Test. Since 2001 all of the new and old students of the English Department of WMSCU have to take an English Proficiency Test, in our

case TOEFL Test, which is intended to inform the department about the level of the English mastery of each student. From the result of the test, the EESP of WMSCU will be able to help the students improve their levels of English mastery. Therefore, from the English Proficiency Test which was held by the EESP of WMSCU on Saturday, 12 August 2006, it is found that the students' total score of the listening section is lower than that of the reading section, but it is higher than their score in the grammar section (see Appendix II A). Then, the writer observed the problems that caused the students to score lower in the listening section by asking some questions informally about the materials or the skills of listening taught in the classroom to the Academic Year of 2005 students and also to the listening teachers.

From informal interview with the lectures and the students, the writer concludes that the reason why the students' scores are lower in the listening section are from the two skills of listening, macro and micro skills taught to the students in the classroom, the students learn more about the macro skills like finding out the main ideas, supporting details, or answering other comprehension questions rather than the micro skills that deals with the sounds and special English expressions. It is proved that many students have some difficulties in understanding the English oral texts because they do not understand the special expression that is uttered by the speaker. So many of them answer the questions wrongly or they do not answer it anything at all. Brown (2004; 121) states "In understanding a conversation, we have to begin from the specific parts to general parts. If we only focus on the macro skills, it means we only teach the students the general parts of a conversation." Here, the writer agrees that if the hearers do not understand what the speaker says or only get the topic of what they say, it is still hard for them to give an appropriate response.

That is why the writer tries to find out whether the skills of listening that are taught in the classroom by the listening lectures now are enough to make the students comprehend listening or needed to be improved by adding some others skill that the students really need to comprehend listening by analyzing the students' strengths and weaknesses in the listening. In doing this research, the writer used the English Proficiency Test as the measurement. In collecting the data, the writer took the students' answer sheets of the English Proficiency Test held by the English Department on Saturday, 12 August 2006. The writer believes that the English Proficiency Test is appropriate enough to find out the data and evaluate the English Proficiency of students whose native language is not English. It is expected that the result of this study might be useful as an input to improve the process of teaching - learning in listening classes. In line with the background of the study, the major problem of the research problem can be formulated as follow:

"To what extent are the English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University (WMCU) able to comprehend the English oral texts?"

Besides as stated in Chapter II, there are 8 listening sub-skills, macro and micro skills that the writer used as her parameters. Those skills are spelled out into the following minor problems:

Dealing with Micro skills:

- 1.2.1. To what extent are the students able to restate of the topic of a short conversation?
- 1.2.2. To what extent are the students able to find the correct response to a negative statement?
- 1.2.3. To what extent are the students able to understand who or what is doing the action in a passive sentence?

Dealing with Macro skills:

- 1.2.4. To what extent are the students able to find the expressions of suggestion?
- 1.2.5. To what extent are the students able to determine who the speaker is, where the dialogue takes place and when something happened?
- 1.2.6. To what extent are the students able to find the expressions of agreement?
- 1.2.7. To what extent are the students able to find the topic or the main idea of a longer conversation?
- 1.2.8. To what extent are the students able to find details based on the order of the conversation?

Research Method

The Subjects of the Study

The accessible subjects of this study are the Academic Year 2005 students of the English department of WMSCU semester five who passed Listening I and Listening II in the academic years of 2005/2006 and 2006/2007. The reason for choosing the Academic Year of 2005 students of the English department of WMSCU as the subjects of this study is due to the assumption that the students who passed Listening I and Listening II subjects could be considered as the students who were good at comprehending oral discourse.

It is proved that in *The Guideline Book of the Faculty of Teachers Training and Pedagogy for the Academic Year 2005 - 2006* (2005; 122-123, 124-125), the last level of listening that the students have to learn and pass is post - intermediate level that is taught in Listening II subject. If the students can pass this level, they are assumed to have mastered Listening skill. Since, the English Department of WMSCU assumed that the post - intermediate level in Listening II was the advanced level in comprehending listening skill, the students were not taught to listen to short conversations anymore, but they were taught to listen to a longer talk such as an announcement or a lecture.

The total number of students who passed Listening II subject in the Academic Year 2006 /2007 is 57 students. Only 52 students of these 57 students did the English Proficiency Test held by the English Department of

WMSCU on 12 August 2006. The writer only took these 52 students as her subjects.

Data of the Study

The data used in the study under report are the students' scores henceforth data 1 and the students' correct answers for each listening sub-skill henceforth data 2, when they did the English Proficiency Test conducted by the English Department of WMSCU in the academic year 2005/2006 on Saturday, 12 August 2006. The test consisted of 50 items of which 30 items are short conversations, 7 items are longer conversations, and 13 items are talks such as a lecture or an announcement. The writer used the students' scores for grading the students based on WMSCU criterion and knowing the students' extent in comprehending listening. The writer also used the correct answers for each listening test items for knowing what listening sub skills that the students mastered or did not master.

Instrument

The key instrument of the study under report is the Listening part of the English Proficiency Test held by the EESP of WMSCU on 12 August 2006. Besides, the writer acted as the data analyst during the whole study. In analyzing the data sources, especially analyzing the listening test items, the writer used the 8 sub skills that the students have learnt in the classroom as her parameters to analyze the test problem items.

Besides, in gathering the data of the study under report, the writer also made use some equipment. The first set of equipment is a cassette player along with the cassette of the dialogues in the listening test that was given to the students. They were used to transcribe the spoken dialogues so that the writer could analyze the listening test items. The second equipment was a notebook to write down the transcriptions of the spoken dialogues.

Analyzing the students' scores

In giving scores to the students, the writer used the formula as follow. In order to get the score of 100, the total correct answers have to be timed with two. Since the listening test consists of 50 numbers, the listening score in calculated follows formula, for astudents sets 25 correct answer, his score the $25 \times 2 = 50$

$$\text{Score} = \text{total of correct answers} \times 2$$

After getting the scores, the writer also counted the average or the mean score by using Descriptive Statistic Research in order to be able to know the students' extent in comprehending English oral texts. The formula is as below:

$$\text{Mean Score} = \frac{\text{Total of the scores}}{\text{Total numbers of the subject}}$$

Then the scores were categorized into standard range of grade which is used by Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University and put it into table of score and grade analysis of each student as below:

> 80	= A	(Excellent)
75 < 79	= B+	(Very Good)
66 < 74	= B	(Good)
61 < 65	= C+	(Good Enough)
55 < 60	= C	(Sufficient)
45 < 54	= D	(Poor)
< 45	= E	(Very Poor)

Findings and Discussions

The Students' Overall Listening Ability

From the mean score (**47, 77**) as stated in Appendix I (table A.1), it can be seen that the students' listening ability is **poor**. According to the standard criterion used in WMSCU, the score around (**45 < 54**) means poor. To be more specific, as presented in Table 4.2, (see page 42), there are **39 (75%)** students who **failed** with the following grades 13 (25%) students got a D and 26 (50%) students got an E according to the standard range of grade used by WMSCU. On the other hand, only **13 (25%)** students who **passed** with the following grades 1 (1.92%) student got an A, 1 (1.92%) student got a B+, 5 (9.62%) students got a B, 1 (1.92%) student got a C+, and 5 (9.62%) students got a C. Comparing the pass and fail percentage, we can say that the students' comprehension of English oral texts is **still poor**. These findings answer the major problem of the research question: "To what extent are the English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University (WMCU) able to comprehend the English oral texts?"

The Amount and Grade Summary Acquired by the Students

Grade	Total Students	Percentage
A	1 students	1.92 %
B+	1 students	1.92 %
B	5 students	9.62 %
C+	1 students	1.92 %
C	5 students	9.62 %
D	13 students	25 %
E	26 students	50 %

Here are the tables of the mean amount of students and its percentage that pass or fail for the test based on the criteria in WMSCU.

**The Mean and Percentage of the Students
who passed the Listening Test**

Grade	Amount	Percentage
A	1	1.92 %
B+	1	1.92 %
B	5	9.62 %
C+	1	1.92 %
C	5	9.62 %
Mean: 13		25%

**The Mean and Percentage of the Students
who failed in the Listening Test**

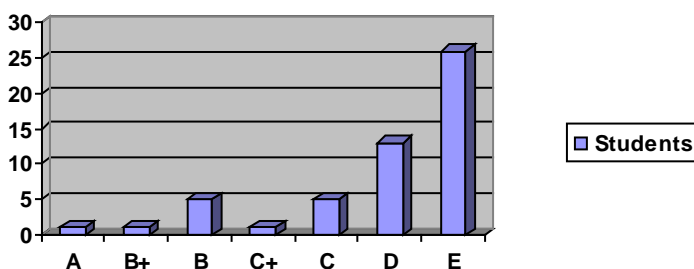
Grade	Amount	Percentage
D	13	25 %
E	26	50 %
Mean: 39		75%

Meaning of grade based on the standard range used by WMSCU:

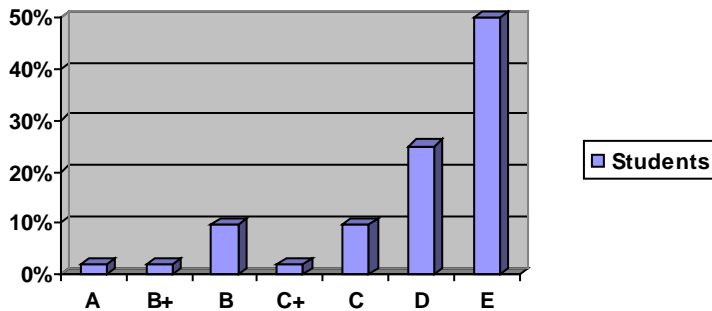
- A = excellent
- B+ = very good
- B = good
- C+ = good enough
- C = sufficient
- D = poor
- E = very poor

Next, from table, the extent to which the students are able to comprehend English oral texts can be also diagramed into two bars diagrams. The first diagram shows the students' comprehension of English oral texts based on its grade and its total students and the second diagram presents the students' comprehension of English oral texts based on its percentage and its total students:

**The Extent to which the Students Are Able to Comprehend English
Oral Texts Based on Its Grade and Total Students**



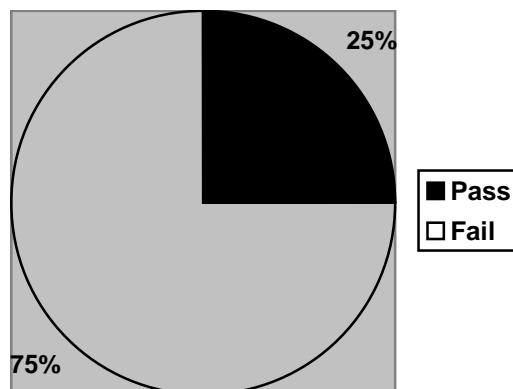
The Extent to which the Students Are Able to Comprehend English Oral Texts Based on Its Percentage and Total Students



From those two diagrams above, it can be seen that grade **E** hold the first position in the students' comprehension of the English oral texts. In other words, 26 (50%) students are very poor in comprehending English oral texts. Grade **D** hold the second position. It means that 13 (25%) students are poor in comprehending English oral texts. Grade **C** hold the **third** position. It means that 5 (9.62%) students are **poor** in comprehending English oral texts. Next, grade **B** hold the fourth position. It means that 5 (9.62%) are **good** in comprehending English oral texts. Grade **C+** hold the fifth position. It means that 1 (1.92 %) student is **good enough** in comprehending English oral texts. Grade **B+** hold the second position. It means that 1 (1.92 %) student is very good in comprehending English oral texts. Finally, grade **A** hold the seventh position. It means that 1 (1.92%) student is excellent in comprehending English oral texts.

Besides those two diagrams above, the diagram below reveals the percentage of the students who passed and failed for the test:

The Extent to which the Students Are Able to Comprehend English Oral Texts Based on Its Mean and Percentage



The diagram above shows that from 52 students, **25% (13)** students can be considered **passed** for the listening test based on the standard range of WMSCU. **75% (39)** students can be considered **failed** for the listening test.

The Students' Mastery of the Listening Sub-skills

Here, the listening sub-skills mastery of the subjects under study is seen from the total of the students who answered the test items correctly (see Table B.11, Appendix I) which is the result of the students' correct answers for each listening sub skills analysis.

From the average of the total number of students who answered the test correctly (table), there are 28 (53, 25%) are not able to master the eight listening sub-skills. In detail, the **macro skill** that **mastered the most** by the students is *the expressions of agreement* (**38 (74%)** students). For the **micro skill mastered the least** is the skill of understanding *who or what is doing the action in a passive sentence* (**14 (27%)** students).

In details, for the macro skills of understanding *who the speaker is, where and when something happened*, 28 (54%) students are able to master it, 27 (52%) students master the skill *the topic or the main idea of the conversation*, and 26 (51%) students master the skill *details based on the order of the conversation*. For the micro skills mastery, 25 (49%) students master the skill *restatement*, 19 (38%) students master the skill *expressions of suggestion*, and 15 (29%) students master the skill *negative statement*,

The Results for Listening Sub- skills Mastery

Listening Sub skills	Correct (%)		Wrong (%)	
	%	Students	%	Students
Listening Micro Skills				
1. Who or what is doing the action in a passive sentence	27%	14	73 %	38
2. Negative statement	29 %	15	71 %	37
3. Restatement	49 %	25	51 %	27
Listening Macro skills				
4. The expressions of suggestion	38 %	19	62 %	33
5. Details based on the order of the conversation	51 %	25	49 %	27
6. The topic or the main idea of the conversation	52 %	27	48 %	25
7. Who the speaker is, where, and when something happened	54 %	28	46 %	24
8. The expressions of agreement	74 %	38	26 %	14
Average (%)	46.75 %	24	53.25 %	28

As seen in Table B.3 (see appendix I), the writer finds out that the percentage of students answered wrongly is higher than those who answered correctly. Besides, these findings answer the research question number 1.2.1, which reads, "To what extent are the students able to restate of the topic of a short conversation?" There are **27 (51%)** students answered the test items **incorrectly** and **25 (49%)** students answered **correctly**. It means that the students only **25** students are **able to restate the topic of a conversation**.

Table B. 4 (see appendix I) shows the percentage of students answered wrongly is higher than those who answered correctly. This finding answers the research question number 1.2.2, which reads, "To what extent are the students able to find the correct response to a negative statement?" There are **37 (71%)** students answered these test items **wrongly** and **15 (29%)** students answered these test items **correctly**. The finding means that many of the students **are not able to find the correct response to a negative statement**.

From table B. 5 (see appendix I), it reveals **33 (62%)** students answered these test items **wrongly** and **19 (38%)** students answered these test items **correctly**. This finding answers the research question number 1.2.3, which reads, "To what extent are the students able to find the expressions of suggestion?" It means that the students **are still poor in finding the other phase to express the suggestion**.

The result showed in table B. 6 (see appendix I) answers the research question number 1.2.4, which reads, "To what extent are the students able to understand who or what is doing the action in a passive sentence?" There are **38 (73%)** student answered these test items **wrongly** and only **14 (27%)** students answered these test items **correctly**. It means that the students **are still not able to find the answer of a question which is being expressed in different grammatical forms**.

As seen in Table B. 7 (see appendix I), it answers the research question number 1.2.5, which reads, "To what extent are the students able to determine who the speaker is, where the dialogue takes place and when something happened?" There **are 28 (54%)** students answered these test items **correctly** and **46% or 24** students answered these test items **wrongly**. The finding shows that almost all of the students **master** this listening sub-skill.

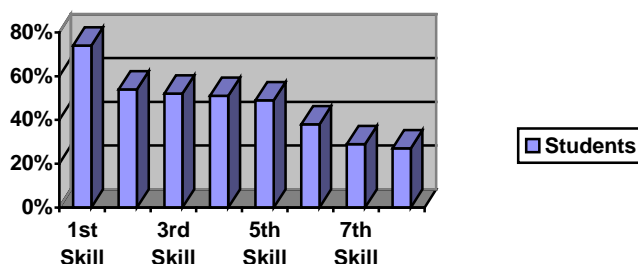
Table B. 8 (see appendix I) shows the answer for the research question number 1.2.6, which reads, "To what extent are the students able to find the expressions of agreement?" **74 % or 38** students answered these test items **correctly** and only **26 % or 14** students answered **incorrectly**.

For the research question number 1.2.7, which says, "To what extent are the students able to find the topic or the main idea of a longer conversation?" **27 (52%)** students answered these test items **correctly** and **25 (48%)** students answered these test items **wrongly** (see Table B. 9, appendix I).

The result showed in table B. 10 (see appendix I) answers the research question number “1.2.8, which says, “To what extent are the students able to find details based on the order of the conversation?” There are **26 (51%)** students answered these test items **correctly** and **24 (49%)** students answered these test items **wrongly**.

From table 4.3 above, the writer diagrammed the listening sub skills started from the sub skills that is mastered the most by the students up to the sub skills that is mastered the least by the students based on its percentage in diagram:

The Listening Sub-skill Mastery of the Students Based on Its Percentage



List on the 8 Listening Sub-skills based on the ordinal numbers:

- 1st skill = The expressions of agreement.
- 2nd skill = Who the speaker is, where, and when something happened.
- 3rd skill = The topic or the main idea of the conversation.
- 4th skill = Details based on the order of the conversation.
- 5th skill = Restatements.
- 6th skill = The expressions of suggestion.
- 7th skill = Negative statement.
- 8th skill = Who or what is doing the action in a passive sentence.

The diagram above reveals the listening sub-skill mastered the most by the students is **the expressions of agreement**. The expressions of agreement (74%) hold the first position in the subjects’ listening sub-skills mastery. **Who the speaker is, where and when something happened** (54%) hold the second position in the subjects’ listening sub-skills mastery, **the topic or the main idea of the conversation** (52%) hold the third position in the subjects’ listening sub-skills mastery, **details based on the order of the conversation** (51%) hold the fourth position in the subjects’ listening sub-skills mastery, **restatement** (49%) hold the fifth position in the subjects’ listening sub-skills mastery, **the expressions of suggestion** (38%) hold the sixth position in the subjects’ listening sub-skills mastery, **negative statements** (29%) hold the seventh

position in the subjects' listening sub-skills mastery, and the listening sub-skill mastered the least by the subjects is **who or what is doing the action in a passive sentence** (27%) mastered the least by the subjects. It is in the eighth position in the subjects' listening sub-skills mastery.

Discussion of the findings

Focusing on the findings, it can be concluded that in general the subjects under study are not able to comprehend English oral texts. Moreover, the subjects' mastery for the 8 listening sub-skills is still fair.

Discussion of the Students' Overall Listening Ability

From the findings above, it is clear that the subjects' extent in comprehending English oral texts is very poor (47,77). From 52 students who joined the English Proficiency Test held by the English Department of WMSCU on 12 August 2006, only 13 (25%) students passed for their Listening Test and 39 (75%) are failed for the test. In detail, for those who failed, there are 26 (50%) students got E and 13 (25%) students got D. For those who passed, there are 5 (9.62%) students got C, 5 (9.62%) students also got B, 1 (1.92%) student got C+, 1 (1.92%) student got B+, and also 1 (1.92%) student got A. (see tabl). These findings answer the major problem of the research question: "To what extent are the English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University (WMCU) able to comprehend the English oral texts?"

From her informal interview either with the lectures' talks and the students' talks, the writer draws a conclusion about the reason why the subjects' extent in comprehending English oral texts is very poor. The first reason is the students are not accustomed with the speed of the recorded speech.

The other reason is the students also are not used to listen to a long conversation that is only played once without any paused. It makes the students difficult in getting the point of a conversation or even they can forget what the conversation is about.

Discussion of the Students' Overall Listening Ability

As can be seen in table, the macro skill mastered the most by the students is *the expressions of agreement*. 38 (74%) students answered the test items correctly. In details, for the sub-skill *who the speaker is, where and when something happened*, 28 (54%) students are able to master it, 27 (52%) students master the skill *the topic or the main idea of the conversation*, 26 (51%) students master the skill *details based on the order of the conversation*, 25 (49%) students master the skill *restatement*, 19 (38%) students master the skill *expressions of suggestion*, 15 (29%) students master the skill *negative statement*, and the micro skill mastered the least is *who or what is doing the action in a passive sentence*. Only 14 (27%) students answered the test items correctly. It can be concluded that

from the total amount 100%, 46.75 % students master the 8 listening sub-skill and 53.25 % student do not master the listening sub skills.

From table 4.3, the biggest number of the listening sub-skill mastered the most by the students is **the expressions of agreement** (74%). **Who the speaker is, where and when something happened** (54%) hold the second position in the subjects' listening sub-skills mastery, **the topic or the main idea of the conversation** (52%) hold the third position in the subjects' listening sub-skills mastery, and **details based on the order of the conversation** (51%) hold the fourth position in the subjects' listening sub-skills mastery.

Those 4 listening sub-skills above can be concluded as macro skills since it used our prior knowledge to get the point of an oral text. To Richards (1983) as quoted by Brown (2004; 121), macro skills are skills that led on the listeners in constructing meaning based on expectations, inferences, intentions, and prior knowledge. It means that in understanding what the communication is about, we have to use our prior knowledge to make a prediction on the basis of the context of a communication. Once we know what the context of the communication is about, it will make us easier to understand the communication and give appropriate responses.

However, in table 4.3, the listening sub-skill mastered the least by the students is **who or what is doing the action in a passive sentence. Negative statements** (29%) hold the second position in the listening sub-skills mastered the least by the students. **The expressions of suggestion** (38%) hold the third position in the listening sub-skills mastered the least by the students, and **restatement** (49%) hold the fourth position in the listening sub-skills mastered the least by the students.

From the analysis that the writer did, the students have a bit difficulty dealing with the listening sub-skills that involves on such things as discriminating sounds in words (especially phonemic contrasts), noting contradictions or reduced forms, and ambiguities. The skills make us to understand a communication uttered in high speed from the language used. Besides, the subjects also have difficulties in understanding the reduced forms which the speaker utters in a dialogue. Their knowledge here are quite limited so that some of the students only chose the option that has a similar word with the dialogue that they heard.

Gillian Brown (1990:6) points out that "Students whose education has been largely couched in slowly and deliberately spoken English are often shocked to find, when they enter a context in which native speakers are talking to each other, that they have considerable difficulty in understanding what is being said." One of the main reasons for this difficulty is that speech that is primarily addressed to native speakers is replete with reduced forms with different kinds of rhythm.

In brief from those above findings and explanations, the writer draws a conclusion that before foreign students can ever begin to incorporate top-down processing skills in comprehending spoken English,

they must first be able to decode the sounds they hear and develop the many micro-skills listed earlier.

Conclusion

Summary

This study is mainly related to the theory of Listening as proposed by Rost (2002; 2) and supported by Lyman (1982; 28) and the Skills of Listening as proposed by Robert W. Norris (retrieved from exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol33/no3/p47.htm). Rost (2002; 2) states that listening means catching what the speaker says by processing what the speaker says in our mind until we get the meaning of the message. Here, Lyman (1982; 28) also points out that in getting the points of a message, we use our ears not only to receive and / or modify the sound, but we must also pay attention to the sound, to process, to understand, to interpret, to evaluate, and at last to respond to it based on our understanding of the message.

In line with Lyman's opinion, Robert W. Norris (retrieved from exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol33/no3/p47.htm) state that there are two processes that are very important in understanding what someone says to us: bottom-up and top-down processing. These two processes involve two skills of listening, macro and micro skills that should be taught step by step to the students.

The English Proficiency Test which was held by the EESP of WMSCU on Saturday, 12 August 2006 increased the writer's curiosity whether the skills of listening that are taught in the classroom by the listening lectures now are enough to make the students comprehend listening or needed to be improved by adding some others skill that the students really need and made her conducted this study under report.

As stated in chapter 1, this study intended to find out the subjects' listening mastery. Besides, the writer also focused her study on the 8 listening sub-skills mastery since the teaching listening activities followed by the subjects focus only on 8 listening sub-skills. Hence, the result of this study merely exposes the listening sub-skills that are mastered and are not mastered by the subjects under study.

The subjects of this study are the Academic Year 2005 students of the English department of WMSCU who passed Listening I and Listening II in the academic years of 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 and joined the English Proficiency test held by EESP of WMSCU on 12 August 2006. The research design of this study was descriptive-non-experimental research since it describes and uses percentages and diagrams to show the subjects extent of comprehending English oral texts. To find out the subjects' listening ability and the listening sub-skills mastery, the writer used the students' scores along with the test problem items. In analyzing the data, she counted the subjects' scores and graded the subjects, classified and analyzed the test items. Since in this study, the writer used

the students' scores and the test problems as her data, this study can also be categorized as a documentary analysis.

The findings reveal that the listening ability of the subjects of the study was **poor** (see Appendix I, table A.1.). With the total amount of the subjects who joined the test 52 subjects or 100%, there are **39 (75%)** students who **failed** with the following grades 13 (25%) students got a D and 26 (50%) students got an E according to the standard range of grade used by WMSCU. On the other hand, only **13 (25%)** students who **passed** with the following grades 1 (1.92%) student got an A, 1 (1.92%) student got a B+, 5 (9.62%) students got a B, 1 (1.92%) student got a C+, and 5 (9.62%) students got a C.

From the 8 listening sub-skills, the listening sub-skill mastered the most by the students is the expressions of agreement (74%). It holds the first position in the subjects' listening sub-skills mastery. Who the speaker is, where and when something happened (54%) hold the second position in the subjects' listening sub-skills mastery, the topic or the main idea of the conversation (52%) hold the third position, and details based on the order of the conversation (51%) hold the fourth position. Next, Restatement (49%) hold the fifth position in the subjects' listening sub-skills mastery, the expressions of suggestion (38%) hold the sixth position, negative statement (29%) hold the seventh position, and the listening sub-skill mastered the least by the subjects is who or what is doing the action in a passive sentence (27%) mastered the least by the subjects. It is in the eighth position in the subjects' listening sub-skills mastery.

Based on the findings, a conclusion can be drawn that the subjects listening ability is poor. Besides, from the 8 listening sub-skills, the subjects have a bit difficulty when they have to decide who is doing the action or what is being happened expressed in different grammatical forms. The subjects also have difficulties in understanding the reduced forms which the speaker utters in a dialogue. Gillian (1990;6) notes that "Students whose education has been largely couched in slowly and deliberately spoken English are often shocked to find, when they enter a context in which native speakers are talking to each other, that they have considerable difficulty in understanding what is being said." One of the main reasons for this difficulty is that speech that is primarily addressed to native speakers is replete with reduced forms. Here, the subjects' knowledge is quite limited so that some of the students only chose the answer that has a similar word with the dialogue that they heard.

Suggestions

Realizing that there are some limitations in this study as stated by the writer in chapter one, the findings only expose the students' extents in comprehending English oral texts. Therefore, here, the writer would like to give some suggestions that might be useful for the future research on

listening comprehension mastery and on teaching listening to the students.

Suggestion for Future Research

The writer hopes that in the future researches could be focused on solving the problems of learning listening, especially in the areas of recognizing reduced forms and a meaning expressed in different grammatical forms. In this case, a classroom action research might help to solve the problem. Thus, further researches can be conducted with deeper concentration on 17 listening sub-skills proposed Richards (1983) as quoted by Brown (2004; 121) that happen in classroom. It can be done by giving a listening test to the subjects. The test can be made by the researches themselves by comparing all the 17 listening sub-skills. Future research might also be focused on the process of teaching listening in the classroom involving observation and interviewing the students.

In doing the study under report, one of the writer's limitations is her limited background knowledge. Hence, the writer hopes that the future researches could be done by post-graduates, graduates or undergraduates who have adequate background knowledge about the matter under discussion.

Furthermore, the writer also hopes that the future researches propose some techniques, methods, and atmosphere which enable the students improving their ability in comprehending listening.

Suggestion for Teaching Listening

Most of the time, the concept of teaching listening ability is not teaching anymore, but it changes into testing. Here, some of the listening teachers are not teaching listening, but they are testing the students' mastery. Jack C. Richards (retrieved from e-flt.nus.edu.sg/v3n12006/rev_msuzuki.htm - 14k - [Cached](#)) points out that in teaching listening, the lesson should be given to the students step-by-step. The material should be graded from the easiest to the most difficult. This implies that the listening tasks progress from simple to more complex as the students obtain language proficiency.

Moreover, it is better for the listening teachers not to focus on the macro skills only, but also the micro skills. The listening materials which are given to the learners are concerned chiefly with helping learners become more adept at improving top-down skills by having them perform tasks in identifying relevant information using their prior knowledge while ignoring unnecessary details. However, foreign students of English cannot be expected to bring the same strategies to listening as native speakers do. Without an adequate grasp of how to decode a stream of sounds into segments of words, phrases, and sentences, it is impossible for students to bring into play such strategies as inferring, predicting, and using knowledge of the topic, speakers, context, etc. to understand a speaker's message.

It is hoped that the listening teachers no longer pay attention only on teaching the macro skills, but they also teach the micro skills so that their students are able to make the transition from applying only bottom-up processing skills to including both bottom-up and top-down processing skills in getting the point of an oral text. The learners should be guided from lower- to higher-level listening skills. Based on the result of her study, the writer suggests the listening teachers in teaching micro skills, they should concern in the area of raising students' consciousness of stress patterns and reduced forms, and giving plenty of practice in recognizing these forms.

The teachers can also improve their teaching by creatively design techniques, methods and atmosphere that will decrease the learners' boredom and increase the learners' curiosity. As the first step, teachers can try to give a live speech to their students to avoid boredom in their teaching - learning class. To heighten students' motivation and concentration, teachers can give visual materials through pictures, movies, diagrams (such as family trees, maps, plans, and so on), or acting done by the teachers in the classroom rather than the students having to listen to a spoken material that is heard blind without any visuals..

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