

The Correlation Between Students' Listening Comprehension Strategy and Their TOEIC Score at State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to find out the correlation between the students' listening comprehension strategy and their TOEIC listening score. Correlational study was used as the research design in this study. The samples were 77 students of the 6th semester at English Department of Sriwijaya State Polytechnic Palembang. Listening Comprehension Strategy Questionnaire and Computer-Based Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) International Test were used as the instruments in collecting the data. The results of the study showed that most students had Good (49%) and Average (48%) Listening comprehension Strategy and most students got level 3 (the highest level) for TOEIC listening score (51%). The Pearson-Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showed that there was a negative and not significant correlation between the students' listening comprehension strategy and their TOEIC listening score.

Keywords: *Listening comprehension, Listening comprehension strategy, TOEI.*

1. BACKGROUND

Listening as one of the communicative skills in language learning has its own important role. Ahmadi states that the ability to understand the spoken language has an important role in language learning and use. Communication can be successful if the message is delivered and is understood [1]. Additionally, according to Asemota, listening also helps people approach the foreign language with more confidence and a greater expectation of success [2]. When people are able to understand the message in communication, it helps them to communicate better and it can lead to successful relationship with the people they talk to.

It is common that language learners face some barriers in learning listening. Liu, Bai, Han, and Gao state that there are some factors which can be the students' listening barriers. The first is linguistic factors (voice disturbance, grammar problem, and shortage of vocabulary) and the second is non-linguistic factors (lack of cultural background, mental barrier, and weak listening skills) [3].

Fortunately, those barriers in mastering listening skills can be solved by applying several solutions. According to Liu, Bai, Han, and Gao, the solutions that can be done are by consolidating language foundation,

emphasizing on the input of cultural background, paying attention to listening skills, and cultivating learning interest [3]. Listening skill can also be improved by practicing and having good strategy in learning it. Nation and Newton argue that learning activities can be done through listening while reading, repeated listening, interactive listening, and non-linguistic or semi-linguistic support [4]. Zhang who found out that listening strategy contributed positively to listening comprehension in his study led to the conclusion that formal strategy training should be given in English listening classroom [5]. There are also many other studies which had discussed the relationship between listening strategy and listening performance with different results [6] [7] [8] [9].

Practicing good strategy in learning listening is beneficial for English learners, including the students of English department at State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya. One of the benefits they will get is they will be able to get good score for Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) institutional test. It is an international standardized test of English language proficiency for non-native speakers which is designed to measure the everyday English skills. Passing TOEIC with satisfying score is one of the requirements of the students at State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya to graduate. Most importantly, the students of English Department

also have to pass this test in order to have good proficiency in English since they are going to be professional who use English in their work place.

This paper reports on the findings of a study conducted to find out whether the students' listening comprehension strategy had significant correlation with their TOEIC score or not of 77 of the sixth semester students at English Department of State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya. The paper starts with a review of the key literature which are related to listening comprehension strategy and Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). We then discuss the methodological procedures in collecting and analyzing the data of this study, discussing the findings, and drawing conclusions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Listening Comprehension Strategy

In listening process, we do not only hear but also comprehend the message of the utterances we hear. Gilakjani and Ahmadi state that listening comprehension is an active process in which individuals concentrate on selected aspects of aural input, form meaning from passages, and associate what they hear with existing knowledge [10].

Namaziandost, Neisi, Mahdavi-rad & Nasri mentioned that listening comprehension strategy is a variety of mental processes in giving meaning to the information we listen to [11]. The use of listening strategy is helpful to develop the listening comprehension skill required to learn and retain information.

Ho concludes listening strategies as skills or methods for listeners to directly or indirectly achieve the purpose of listening comprehension of the spoken input [12]. According to O'Malley and Chamot and also Vandergrift, the strategies used by listeners are:

- a. Metacognitive strategies. These strategies help us to think about the way we learn;
- b. Cognitive strategies are the methods that we use in solving our problems and also make use of opportunities through many reasonable ways; and
- c. Socio-affective strategies are the methods we use to work with others, to comprehend and to reduce anxiety [13] [14].

Listeners have different strategies in listening process. In listening learning process, we tend to use the strategies which are the most appropriate for us. The main purpose is to get and understand the information that we hear from the speakers and it includes the metacognitive, cognitive, and also socio-affective strategies.

2.2 Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC)

To see the performance of the students in listening comprehension, the score from TOEIC listening test was collected. Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) is an international standardized test of English language proficiency. It is designed to measure the English proficiency of non-native speakers. The test is a paper-based test and it consists of two timed sections, listening and reading section. Each section has 100 questions.

The test will take about 2.5 hours, with 45 minutes for listening section and 75 minutes for reading section. In listening section, the samples will listen to a variety of questions and short conversations recorded in English and then answer the questions. There are 4 parts in this section, the listening related to photographs, question-response, conversation, and short talks.

In reading section, the samples read a variety of materials. There are 3 parts in this reading section: incomplete sentences, error recognition or text completion, and reading comprehension.

The score for each section is 495 and the total score for all these two sections range from 400-990.

2.3 Listening Comprehension Strategy and TOEIC listening Score

Some previous studies showed that listening strategies were significantly related to listening proficiency, learning achievement, and even to TOEIC. As Taguchi reported, listening strategy use had a positive correlation with learners' listening proficiency in general [15]. Additionally, Kassem who conducted a study on Egyptian EFL college sophomores concluded that listening strategies correlated significantly with listening comprehension [16].

The related previous studies discussed above showed that the results are not conclusive and further researches are needed to be conducted.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Since this study is aimed at finding out whether or not the students' listening comprehension strategy had significant correlation towards their TOEIC score, the research design of this study was correlational study.

The procedure included the steps in which the students' listening learning strategy was identified by using listening learning strategy questionnaire. Then, the writers obtained the students' TOEIC score from the Head of English Department at State Polytechnic of

Sriwijaya. After that, the writers found out the correlation between the students' listening learning strategy and their TOEIC score by using the SPSS program. The last, the discussion and interpretation of the results were described.

3.2 Population and Samples

The population in this study were the 2nd, 4th, and 6th semester students at English Department of Sriwijaya State Polytechnic Palembang. The total population was 250 students.

There were 77 students of the sixth semester at English study program of State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya who became the samples in this study. They were chosen by using purposive sampling since they had TOEIC at the end of the semester. Besides, they also have already taken all listening courses.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Listening Comprehension Strategy Questionnaire

Listening Learning Strategy Questionnaire used in this study is adopted from Golchi [17]. It is designed to elicit strategies relevant to unidirectional listening tasks. It consists of 39 items. The items in this questionnaire discussed about the respondents' strategy in learning listening before, while, and after the listening activities.

This questionnaire uses Likert Scale with the following description:

Table 1. Description of Listening Learning Strategy Scale Value

Scale Value	Statement
1	Never
2	Seldom
3	Sometimes
4	Usually
5	Always

The score range from the questionnaire was 39-195. The students were categorized based on the score they got. The categories were as follow:

Table 2. Categories of Listening Comprehension Strategy

No.	Score Interval	Categories
1.	144-195	Good
2.	92-143	Average
3.	39-91	Poor

3.3.2 Listening Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC)

Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) score in this study is a standardized test of English language proficiency. It is designed to measure the everyday English skills of non-native English speakers.

This test is held every year for the last semester students of State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya. It is a multiple choice paper-based test. There are two sections with 100 questions in each sections and will take about 2.5 hours.

Due to the pandemic of Covid-19, the TOEIC Paper-Based Test is replaced by TOEIC Computer-Based Test (CBT) from home. The mechanism of the test was the same as the paper-based one. The difference was the samples of the study had the test from their home by using their computer or laptop and supervised remotely by the supervisors by using Zoom application.

TOEIC total scores range from 400-990 with 5 levels of proficiency. For listening test score, the minimum score is 5 and the maximum one is 495 and there are three proficiency descriptions provided. For reading test score, the minimum score is 5 and the maximum is 495. Four proficiency descriptions are provided. In this research, the data taken was only the TOEIC listening score with 3 levels of proficiency as we can see in the following table.

Table 3. Levels of Proficiency of TOEIC Listening Score

Level	Score
1	≈ 200 points
2	≈ 300 points
3	≈ 400 points

3.4 Validity and Reliability

The results of the validity test revealed that all items were valid and can be used in collecting the data. The validity of the items ranged from .410 to .811 which were smaller than the r_{table} (.361, N=30).

Additionally, the internal consistency of the questionnaire was investigated by using Cronbach's Alpha. The result of the reliability test showed that the questionnaire is reliable to use since the reliability score was .943 which was higher than .6.

3.5 Data Analysis

Firstly, the data from the listening learning strategy questionnaire were analyzed to determine the students' listening learning categories. Each item was scored by using Likert-Scale 1-5. The total score of the

questionnaire ranged from 39-195. After the data were analyzed, they were categorized based on the total score; Good, Average, and Poor Categories.

For TOEIC listening score, three proficiency descriptions are provided and they are related to CEFR levels A1 to C1; Level 1 (≈ 200 points), Level 2 (≈ 300 points), and Level 3 (≈ 400 points).

The data then were analyzed by using Person-Product Moment Correlation to find out the correlation.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The following were the mean, standard deviation, minimum score, and maximum score of the students' listening strategy and their TOEIC listening score.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Listening Strategy	77	70	179	142.34	19.834
TOEIC Listening Score	77	175	480	349.29	71.196

As we can see from the table, the minimum score for the students' listening comprehension strategy was 70, the maximum score was 179, the mean for this variable was 142.34 and the standard deviation of this variable 19.834. For the second variable, the students' TOEIC listening score, the minimum score was 175, the maximum score was 480, the mean was 349.29, and the standard deviation was 71.196.

4.2 Results of Listening Comprehension Strategy Questionnaire

Figure 1 shows that from the data of listening comprehension strategy questionnaire, there were 38 students (49%) who had Good listening comprehension strategy, 37 students (48%) who had Average listening learning strategy and 2 students (3%) who had Poor strategy.

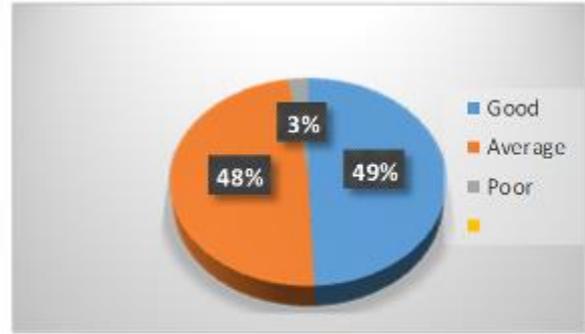


Figure 1. Results of Listening Comprehension Strategy Questionnaire

4.2 Results of TOEIC Listening Test

The results of TOEIC Listening Test presented in figure 2 shows that there were 11 students (14%) who got level 1 of TOEIC listening score, 27 students (35%) who got level 2, and 39 students (51%) who got level 3 (the highest level).

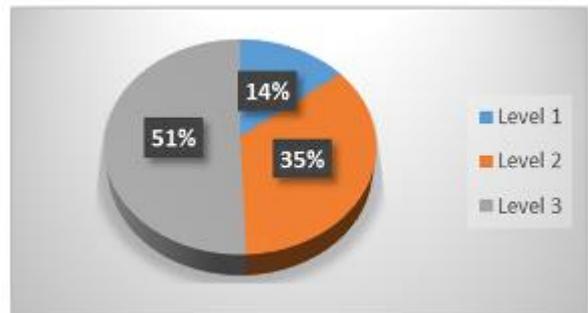


Figure 2. Results of TOEIC Listening Score

Figure 2 shows that most of the students were in Level 3 for their listening TOEIC performance.

4.3 Correlation between Students' Listening Comprehension Strategy and Their Listening TOEIC Score

Based in Pearson-Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, the result showed that the correlation coefficient or the r -obtained (-.051) was lower than the r -table (.221) and the p -value was .658 which was higher than .05.

Table 5. Correlation between Students' Listening Comprehension Strategy and Their Listening TOEIC Score

		Listening TOEIC
Listening Comprehension Strategy	Pearson Correlation	-.051
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.658
	N	77

This result showed that H_0 was accepted and H_1 was rejected. In conclusion, there was a negative and not significant correlation between the students' listening learning strategy and their listening TOEIC.

4.4 Interpretation

From the listening strategy questionnaire, we can see that most students had good (49%) and average (48%) categories. It means that they have applied suitable and correct ways in listening comprehension. Since the students were in the sixth semester, or their final year, they have learned the listening strategies in listening courses.

The TOEIC listening test also gave satisfying results. 51% of the students got Level 3, the highest level of listening score category. And there were 35% got level 2 and the rest got Level 1.

Based on the research problem, to find out the correlation between the students' listening comprehension strategy and their listening TOEIC score, Pearson-Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used. The results of the data analysis showed that there was a negative and not significant correlation between those two variables, though the result of the listening comprehension strategy questionnaire revealed that most students had good and average categories and the result of TOEIC listening test showed most students got Level 3. The problem was the students might not aware of using this strategies in answering the questions in TOEIC.

The result of this study was quite different from previous studies which most of them revealed that there was significant relationship between the listening strategy and the listening performance. On the other hand, this present research had the same result as the one conducted by Putri and Dewi [18]. The samples of their study were 56 4th semester students of English Education Study Program, University of Riau Kepulauan. In their study, they found out that there was no significant correlation between listening strategies and students' listening comprehension.

The other study conducted by Ratnaningsih also revealed that metacognitive and cognitive listening

strategies had no significant effect on the students' listening comprehension [19]. The samples of her study were 60 third –semester students in the Deck Department of Surabaya Merchant Marine Polytechnic.

5. CONCLUSION

From the results of the data analysis by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, it can be concluded that the students' listening comprehension strategy did not have significant correlation to their TOEIC listening score. It means the students who had higher frequency of using listening strategies did not necessarily had better listening skill and vice versa.

Since there was no significant correlation found in this study, further studies are better to be conducted to find out what are the other aspects which can affect the students' listening performance in general, and the students' TOEIC listening score in specific. Without ignoring the limitations in this current study, hopefully, other further studies will reveal the better results.

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