

AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOURTH-YEAR STUDENTS' LISTENING ABILITY IN UNDERSTANDING SHORT EXPRESSIONS IN DIALOGUE AT THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF UNIVERSITAS BUNG HATTA

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to evaluate the listening ability of fourth-year students at Bung Hatta University in comprehending short expressions, specifically focusing on agreement, suggestion, and negation. The methodology involved assessing students' comprehension through dialogue interactions and analyzing their responses to short expression prompts. The findings of the study revealed varying levels of proficiency among the students. Agreement expressions were most accurately understood, with 79% demonstrating excellent proficiency, 21% exhibiting good proficiency, and none showing moderate or low proficiency. However, suggestion expressions posed challenges, with only 46% displaying excellent proficiency, 50% exhibiting good proficiency, and 4% demonstrating moderate proficiency. Meanwhile, negative expressions showed better stability, with 64% demonstrating excellent proficiency, 29% exhibiting good proficiency, and 7% demonstrating moderate proficiency. In conclusion, while fourth-year students exhibited commendable proficiency in understanding short expressions, particularly in agreement expressions, challenges were evident in comprehending suggestion expressions. Targeted interventions are recommended to enhance proficiency in this area. Additionally, students are encouraged to engage in regular listening practice sessions and expand their vocabulary. Future research endeavors should focus on addressing vocabulary-related challenges and exploring additional complexities in auditory comprehension, especially concerning various expressions.

Keywords: *Listening, Short Expressions, Dialogue*

INTRODUCTION

Listening plays a vital role in human communication, yet mastering listening skills, especially in English, presents significant challenges. Sitohang & Siregar (2015) outlined common obstacles faced by students, such as difficulty retaining information, recognizing familiar words, and grasping intended meanings. Moreover, learners struggle to create mental representations of what they hear, exacerbated by inaccurate hearing. Consequently, teaching various expressions becomes integral to listening

instruction, facilitating comprehension in both conversational and monologue settings. Nur (2006) identified a myriad of expressions crucial for effective communication, ranging from apologies to agreements. In this study, researchers focus on short expressions, specifically expressions of agreement, disagreement, suggestion, and negatives.

Understanding short expressions necessitates comprehensive listening skills, as

listeners must grasp the entirety of conversations. Short expressions in English follow a formulated form, described by Cahyaningtyas (2018) as integral in thinking, planning, and developing ideas. Expressions of agreement affirm or support statements, ideas, or propositions, fostering positive communication and shared understanding. Expressions of suggestion propose ideas, offer advice, or provide solutions, aiming to present recommendations for consideration. Conversely, expressions of negatives deny or reject statements or ideas, often conveying disagreement or dissatisfaction.

Despite the importance of listening skills, research by Fatimatuzzahra (2021) and Ningrum (2022) revealed pervasive listening comprehension issues among students at Bung Hatta University. Additionally, Ummah (2012) highlighted challenges related to vocabulary acquisition and unfamiliar accents and dialects. Moreover, Yuniarsih & Yulianti (2019) identified difficulties stemming from English not being the native language, differences in pronunciation, and the use of idioms and slang.

Grounded in these challenges, the researcher aims to investigate fourth-year students' listening proficiency in understanding short expressions within dialogues at Bung Hatta University. The formulated research questions are as follows: How is the fourth-year students' listening ability in understanding expressions of agreement in dialogue?, How is the fourth-year students' listening ability in understanding expressions of suggestion in dialogue?, How is the fourth-year students' listening ability in understanding expressions of negatives in dialogue?

This research contributes to students' awareness of their listening abilities and provides insights for further research endeavors. Specifically, the study aims to describe students' listening abilities and offers potential strategies

for improvement. Additionally, it enhances the researcher's knowledge in conducting research and may serve as a reference for future investigations.

METHOD

The research adopted a descriptive method to analyze the fourth-year students' listening ability in understanding agreement expressions in dialogue at the English Department of Bung Hatta University. This method focused on collecting data to depict the current status of the subject without manipulation, as Gay (1987) outlined. In this context, the research aimed to provide factual information about the students' listening skills regarding agreement expressions.

For the study's population, all fourth-year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University, totaling 28 individuals, were considered. Following Sugiyono's (2017) recommendation for total sampling, the research included all students to ensure a comprehensive representation of the population.

Data collection utilized a multiple-choice listening test to assess students' comprehension of agreement, suggestion, and negation expressions. Brown (2010) noted the popularity of multiple-choice tests for their ease of administration and scoring. The test aimed to answer three research questions related to students' listening abilities in understanding various expression types within dialogue contexts.

The test consisted of 27 questions, focusing on agreement, suggestion, and negation expressions. Reliability was determined using the test-retest method, with a correlation coefficient of 0.56 indicating reliability, as per Arikunto (2012). Data analysis involved converting scores into mastery levels based on Bung Hatta University's criteria and classifying students' abilities accordingly. The results were presented

as percentages of students categorized into different proficiency levels.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on analysis result, in the first test the researcher found the lowest score of the students was only 7 and the highest score was 89. And in the re-test, the researcher found the lowest score of the students was 70 and the highest score was 100. More than (71%) of the students had low ability in answering the test.

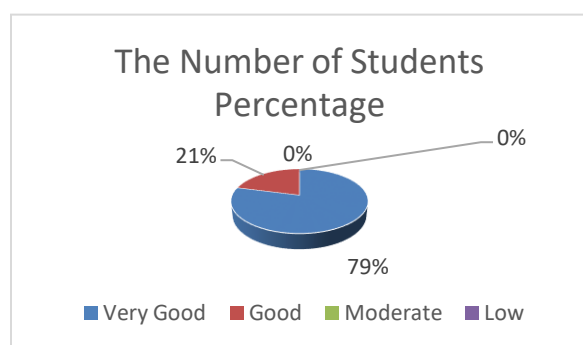


Chart 1. The Fourth-Year Students' Listening Ability in Understanding Agreement Expressions in Dialogue at English Department of Universitas Bung Hatta

Based on the Bung Hatta University criteria, the highest converted score got by a student was 80 and the lowest converted score was 0. Agreement Expression is the most answered correctly by the students. After the researcher analyzed the students' answers, the researcher found that there were many students who had very good ability in answering agreement expression.

It was supported by the fact that there were 22 (79%) students had very good ability, 6 (21%) student had good ability, 0 (0%) students had moderate ability, and 0 (0%) had low ability. In this part, students got high scores because the agreements had simple words that were easy to understand. The straightforward vocabulary made it easier for the students to grasp, leading to their success in the session.

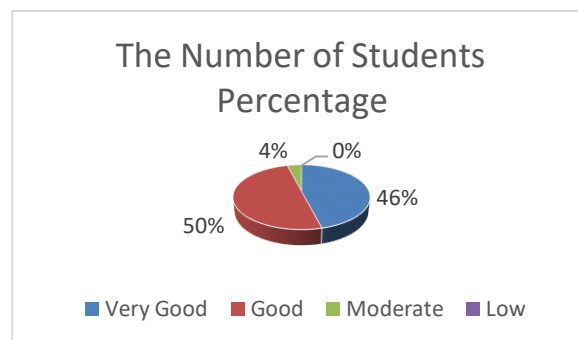


Chart 2. The Fourth-Year Students' Listening Ability in Understanding Suggestions Expressions in Dialogue at English Department of Universitas Bung Hatta

Among three aspects of this research (Agreement, suggestion, and negatives), Suggestion expression is the most answered incorrectly by the students. It was supported by the fact that only 13 (46%) students had very good ability, 14 (50%) student had good ability, 1 (4%) students had moderate ability, and 0 (0%) had low ability. Based on data analysis, researchers found that students' ability to answer listening suggestion expression questions was good. Based on the test question specifications in chapter III, the most common wrong answer made by students is number 5 suggestion expression.^[8]

The correct answer to number 5 Part II is choice **A** (Putting up shelves). However, many students chose option **D**. From question number 5 above, researchers realized that as many as 9 (33%) of students were not familiar with difficult words such as shelves and rearranging. In other words, they get stuck and choose the wrong answer.

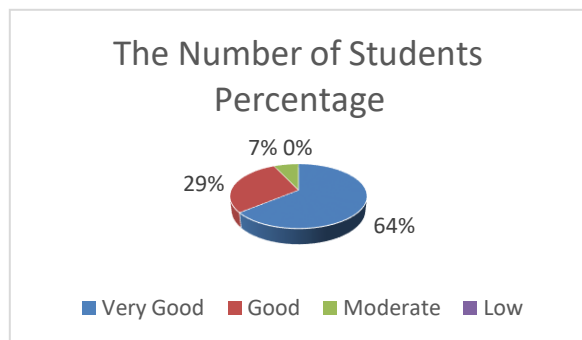


Chart 3. The Fourth-Year Students' Listening Ability in Understanding Negatives Expressions in Dialogue at English Department of Universitas Bung Hatta

Based on data analysis, negative expressions are the most stable scores that can be answered by students with a percentage of 64% out of 100%. It was supported by the fact that only 18 (64%) students had very good ability, 8 (29%) student had good ability, 2 (7%) students had moderate ability, and 0 (0%) had low ability^[9].

Based on the test question specifications in chapter III, there are still quite a few students who choose the wrong answer to questions number 5 and 8. The correct answer to number 5 is choice **D** (Give the plants a limited amount of water), researchers realized that as many as 6 (22%) of students were lost focus on this issue because the speaker audio was a bit too fast. The correct answer to number 8 is option **A** (The project will take all their effort), researchers realized that as many as 6 (22%) of students were not being able to read dialogue situations so that students are confused about what the speaker is talking about.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings from the data analysis, it can be concluded that fourth-year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University possess a commendable proficiency in comprehending short expressions within dialogue contexts. The majority of students demonstrated high abilities, with none

falling into the category of very low ability. Specifically, 90% of the students displayed very good listening skills, indicating a strong grasp of short expressions in dialogue. Moreover, students exhibited notable proficiency in understanding agreement, suggestion, and negative expressions, with significant percentages demonstrating very good abilities in each category. These findings underscore the overall effectiveness of the English Department's curriculum in developing students' listening skills.

In light of these conclusions, several recommendations can be proposed. Firstly, students are encouraged to engage in regular practice to further enhance their listening abilities. Additionally, efforts should be made to expand students' English vocabulary, as vocabulary deficiency can hinder overall English proficiency. For future research endeavors, it is suggested to explore students' vocabulary-related challenges in listening comprehension further. Moreover, investigating additional difficulties encountered by students during listening tests, particularly concerning expressions, would provide valuable insights for enhancing English language teaching methodologies and curriculum development in similar contexts.

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