

## Need Analysis for Listening Skill Development for Undergraduate Students

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**Abstract:** *Innovation in teaching listening is urgently needed. This study resulted the questionnaire survey of students' needs of listening subject. These results were compared to the students' mid-term results and Basic Listening learning outcomes. The survey was completed by 100 first-year English Education students. The analysis and comparison were objected to find out the answers of these questions: what barriers obstructed the progress of the students' listening skill? And what were the students' listening skills needs? The study found that there is an interstice between students' needs and the learning got in relating to listening comprehension. Hence, this study expected that the its findings can help to grant preferable understanding of the students' needs and developing the curriculum properly.*

**Keywords:** *curriculum; listening; need-analysis; objectives; students'-needs*

## INTRODUCTION

What the students' needs are essential and they have become the centre of any curriculum design in which certainly need analysis should be conducted in detail. According to Flowerdew (2013) needs analysis, carried out to establish the "what" and the "how" of a course, is the first stage in ESP course development. Because of that reason need analysis is the crucial element to be considered in designing a program including the four basic skills of language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Each skill is important even though the in acquiring those skills depend on the acquisition of every person. On the other hand, a skill acquired will need the acquisition of other skills. Listening is thought about the cornerstone becoming the base of all skills. Furthermore, listening skill is considered essential in foreign language

acquisition because globalism era is increasing rigorously and mass media become forums for communication using English based on Ishler and Mitchell's statement in 2010.

On the other side, Leila (2012) states that:

*"Listening can be the least explicit of the four skills but it becomes the most difficult skill to learn language. It is proved that children learn to listen and respond to language before they learn to speak. When children learn to read, they still need to listen to get knowledge and information how to follow the directions. While studying in the classroom, students are listening carefully and focusing to their lecturers and discussions so that they understand and retain the information for later recall. In fact, teaching listening can be difficult for both teachers and students. Students who are good in speaking and reading may have problems*

*in listening with regular-speed conversation. For an English learner listening is confusing commonly.”*

Facilitating the second language acquisition is approved since it is considered important, especially when there is a difficulty in teaching listening. It is well known that a child should listen before he/she is able to speak, as well as students should listen before they speak or read. Even though students acquire such skills, they should do listening since it can help them to ease their thought and materials they read. In the line with this Krashen in Al-Thiyabi (2012) mentions that students are improving and exploring their competence of language by way of listening enthusiastically and processing it.

It is clear that listening skill is important. However, need analysis of listening skill done comprehensively must be conducted in English Foreign/Second Language context. So that, the efficient listening skill program can be designed.

At IKIP Budi Utomo, the description is clear enough but needs some improvements about whether or not the gap is available between students' listening skill need and listening materials they got in the classroom. Nevertheless, it can be seen that the students lack of listening skills and can be recognized from their final examination results and proficiency level. In fact, the materials students learn about listening skills at IKIP Budi Utomo is enough to ensure their listening proficiency but still needs to be improved. Furthermore, they less understand the verbal expression, class discussion, and lecturer's instructions. What they face has been recognized in their constant demand to interpret the instructions also explanations in Indonesian language. Therefore, some students have low grade of outcomes, low proficiency levels, and the constant demand for translation becoming real problems that exist at English Education Department of

IKIP Budi Utomo with our language learning development especially in listening skill program.

For those reasons, the focus of this study was in listening skill regarding to the importance and students' effort in studying. The researchers wanted to manage need analysis for English Foreign Language listening skill at English Education Department of IKIP Budi Utomo to find out the students' needs and compare to the English Education Department's objectives to solve whether any gap existed requires to be shut down. The objective of this study was to reveal the students' needs to have better understanding in listening learning program. Furthermore, this study was expected to give contribution in modification and development of the curriculum to match the students' needs to have better skill level.

## **METHOD**

This study is a descriptive study. It used both quantitative and qualitative method because the data used are from questionnaire. Then the researchers analyzed the result of students' middle and final examination and also the listening subjects' objectives. The questionnaire completed by the students at two different levels at English Education Department of IKIP Budi Utomo to reveal the different needs. After that the data collection were gathered from the results of the questionnaires, and then they had statistical analysis to reveal what the students face in studying listening especially the problems or difficulties. It is important to realize the students' perspective in consider the content of the course subject because they are a part of important things of educational program. Furthermore, the document analysis which includes the copy of student examination results and listening course objectives from two levels was used to compare with the survey results.

The researchers realized that the best design for this study was qualitative and quantitative since survey was used to collect information from the population sample for scientific purposes and data analysis was to analyze the students' listening examination results and listening course objectives. This mixed research method based on Cresswell in Al-Thiyabi (2014) is a procedure to collect both qualitative and quantitative data in one study, and to analyze and report the data it is used the priority and sequence of information. The researchers used triangulation using more than one instrument in order to check the credibility. It is because this study used two different tools namely questionnaire and document analysis enclosing the copy of student examination results and listening course objectives.

The researchers adopted the questionnaire developed by Richard (2001) which had been used in Need Analysis for English Foreign Language at the ILTL, Auckland University. The questionnaire aimed to find out the students' beliefs, opinions, and attitude to listening skill in the language program under developed.

The questionnaire was prepared by the researchers in the form of *Google Form* since it is easy to use and has accurate analysis results. The researchers set it into two sheets. The first sheet is about getting the information about the respondents including name, student registered number, year/level, etc. The second sheet is divided into two parts, namely, the problems faced by students in common and the reasons following the difficulty in understanding the listening materials. Additionally, the data analysis of documents had been done by analyzed the copy of students' listening examination results of middle test and the average score of quizzes results during semester in listening course. The analysis of the results and objectives were compared with the results of the questionnaire.

The participants of the questionnaire were the first and second-year students of English Education Department at IKIP Budi Utomo. The strategy used to select the respondents was convenience sampling because the first and second-year students were used as the sample and it was not possible to access all of the population (Fred and Perry, 2005). The sample included 100 students, 50 students are from the first-year students and the other 50 are the second-year.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The information as the results of the questionnaire is presented in the form of figure so that it can visually and clearly be seen. The data analysis had been split in two classifications according to the dissection of questions in the questionnaire.

#### *The Problems often Faced by the Students*

As long as the problems that students often face are related, the results of the first category show that most students usually find it difficult to understand the listening course (35%) as shown in Diagram 1. Besides, 25% of students never experience difficulties. There are 24% of students sometimes find it difficult and 13% of students always. While 3% of students have no answer. It means that most of the students experience difficulty in understanding the listening course material.

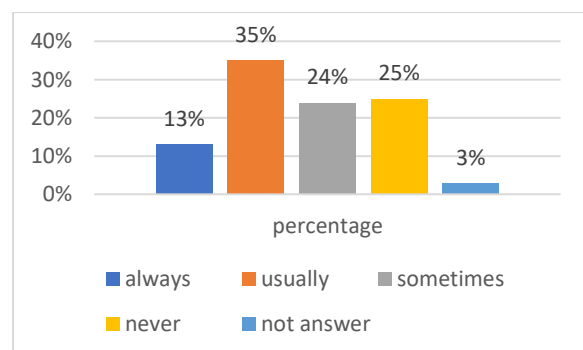


Diagram 1. Students Find Difficulties to Understand the Listening Course

This this an indication of the problems existing in the language program.

The first problem results in Diagram 2 indicate that the students need supports since it is proved that more than half of students have asked the lecturer to get clear explanation of the material taught, on the other hand, 14% of students represent that they do not need a material clarification.

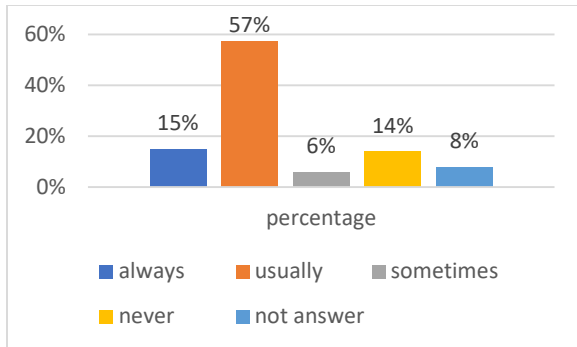


Diagram 2. Students Need a Material Clarification

Based on Diagram 3, the second problems faced by the students is experiencing hardship to understand long descriptions in English especially in listening. As many as 44% of the students often find it difficult to understand long description of material. The percentage drops in representing students who do not experience such difficulties. The percentages mentioned above reveals that students undergo vastly with listening skills.

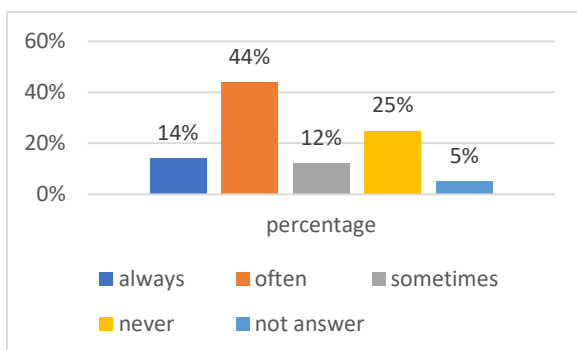


Diagram 3. Students Find Difficulties in Understanding Long Description of Material

Diagram 4 reveals the third problems faced by the students. There are 40% of students often find difficult in accepting informal language. Besides that, 30% of students never find such difficulties. Furthermore, 10% of students find it difficult such problem always and 8% of students sometimes find difficulties. It is obvious that 50% of students are trying to get understanding the informal language.

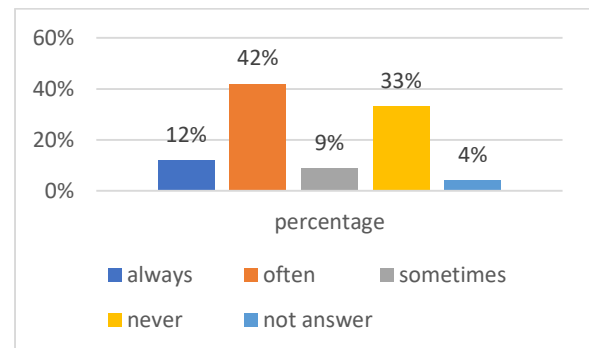


Diagram 4. Students Try to Get Understanding the Informal Language

The questionnaire results of the fourth problem faced by the students were taking good notes. Based on Diagram 5, 45% of students often encounter problems in taking good notes, 43% of students do not have that problem, and 7% of students always face problems in taking good notes. These results show that there are more than half of students find in difficult to take good notes whether this leads to a serious problem.

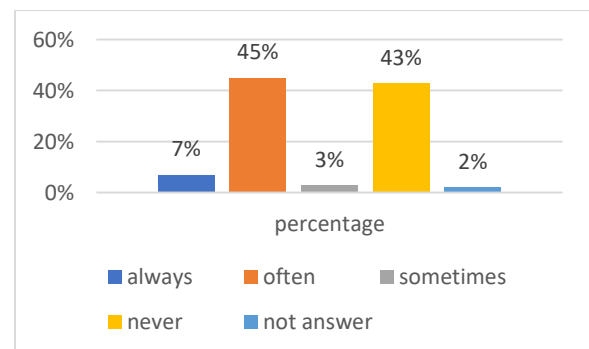


Diagram 5. Students Face Problems in Taking Good Notes

Based on Diagram 6 it is illustrated about the fifth difficulty in understanding the topic being discussed. 31% of students often face problems in understanding the topic being discussed, 24% of students always find it difficult, and 8% of students sometimes face such a difficulty. While, 32% of students do not experience in understanding the topic being discussed. These percentages illustrate that around 60% of students experience such a difficulty. In the other words, the students have lack of listening skill.

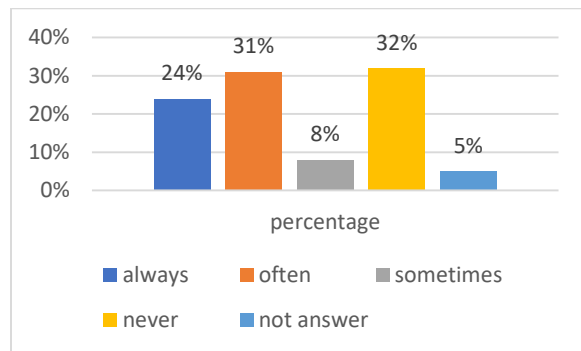


Diagram 6. Students Have Difficulty in Understanding the Topic being Discussed

### *The Reasons Why the Students Find Difficulties in Listening Lectures*

There must be some reasons why students have problems in understanding both the lecturers and their classmates. Based on the questionnaire results, the 4 main reasons have been revealed. The students as the respondents had filled the questionnaire.

Based on Diagram 7, it can be seen that speaking fast is recognized as the cause why students feel the difficulties in understanding what their interlocutors say. 45% of students often find difficulties that can be barriers their understanding, 33% of students sometimes face this problem, and 20% of students never experience this. It is clear that speaking fast is a big obstacle for students to understand the lecturers also the classmates.

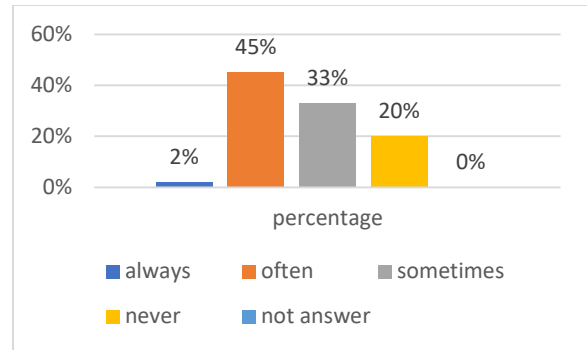


Diagram 7. They Speak Fast

Diagram 8 showed the third cause leading the students' problem about no understanding what the lecturers and other students say. 25% of students often are not able to understand the lecturers and classmates since they speak very quietly, 27% of the students sometimes are not able to understand the lecturers and classmates, and 48% of students do not experience that problem.

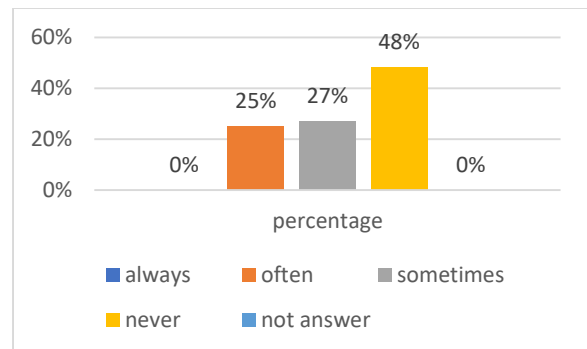


Diagram 8. They Speak Very Quietly

The fourth reason about the problem of not understanding faced by students is showed in Diagram 9. As many as 35% of students often cannot understand the lecturers and classmates since there are more than one person speaking at the same time, 26% of students sometimes experience this too, and 39% of students do not experience this reason.

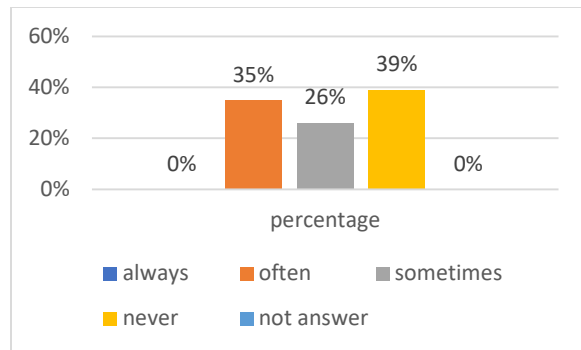


Diagram 9. There Are More Than One Person Speaking at The Same Time

Over and above that, there are other causes underlying students' difficulties in understanding the lecturers and classmates. One of the reasons is the use of new and difficult terminology whilst speaking. The second reason is the lecturers' voice being so low and quiet. The third cause is the ambiguous discussion objectives during the class. In addition, the questions given are not clear or straight. Moreover, some students mention about the unclear pronunciation of some lecturers and classmates. Long time allotment also cause obstruction causing difficulty in students' understanding. Besides, some students also need the lecturers to say again some words, sentences, or information they say to help the students' understanding but they did not do that.

## Discussion

*What are the obstacles that restrict the first and second-year students' listening skills?*

Based on the above data, there are some causes revealed that made the crucial barriers the students in studying listening skill. The causes are: speaking fast, speaking slowly, different accents and pronunciation, a group of people speaking at the same time, and using new and complex terms hindering students' understanding. This is in line with Underwood's statement in Al-Thiyabi (2014) emphasizing the seven causes of barriers towards listening comprehension which is effective.

The leading cause shows that listeners are not able to manipulate the delivery speed. Underwood in Al-Thiyabi explains that there a lot of English learners have great belief that they as listeners cannot control how fast the speakers speaks. His statement relates to the findings designating one of the leading problems of students hindering the listening skill is speaking fast. Our students suggest solving such problems so that the teacher should speak a little slower.

The second cause reveals that students cannot continuously repeat words. In learning situations this becomes a critical problem. During the class students never have the role if they can play back or not the recording or part of the recording. The lecturers decide what materials and when the students can repeat the listening section.

The third cause is the students as listeners have a limited vocabulary. To reach a higher level of development in the four basic communication skills, learners should have a basis of lexis/vocabulary that allows them to do so (Caro, 2017). The thing as the core element in having listening skill is vocabulary. Some unfamiliar words can be used by the lecturers to the students in teaching listening. Some students encounter unfamiliar words that made them distracted then think what the meaning of the words are so that they skip the next speech section. Sofyan and Mushrihah (2019) state the difficulties in students' opinion on learning difficulties in listening comprehension are problems in interpretation, the lack of vocabulary, difficulty to concentrate, confusion in similar phonemes and the speed of the speech.

The fourth cause mentions that students may experience some failures to identify signals indicating there are change from one topic point to another, providing examples or replicating the point being discussed.

The fifth cause reveals that students' contextual knowledge is low. Thus, activity

such as sharing what we know, information, and extraordinary things can make communication run easily.

The sixth cause is students as listeners may have difficulties to focus on a foreign language. Students find it easier when in speaking and listening classes there are interesting topics. However, sometimes students find listening highly tiresome even though students are very attentive because listening requires much energy to get the meaning implied.

The seventh cause shows that students can enlarge certain study habits for example insisting on understanding every word. The lecturers help students to apply these habits by motivating them to understand every word they catch by repeating and saying the words carefully, and by speaking in a slowly way and so forth. Furthermore, students tend to have anxiety if they get failures to understand a certain word or phrase and they will be deterred by that failure.

*What are the needs of English Education Department of IKIP Budi Utomo students in terms of listening skills?*

From the results of the questionnaire, students' needs have been recognized. For instance, students need to identify their English lessons. "In class, students should listen carefully and pay attention to lectures and discussions to understand and save the information to be remembered later" (Ghaderpanahi, 2012). If students cannot understand the essence of the lecture, the language learning will be hampered and in consequence it will stop and fail. Besides, the students need to know how to make effective notes and how to ask their lecturers to repeat or clarify the materials. "Researchers and educators have realized that more time is spent on listening than on any other component of communication process whereas most school instruction are available in a speaking-listening context. (Devine, 2013).

Listening is an interactive skill, not a passive. Listeners need to get clarification or repetition of certain passages to understand their meaning. Moreover, learning will not continue, nevertheless, they need to recognize long descriptions and instructions in English. Next, they need to identify the subject of the conversation. "Listening takes an important role in everyday communication and educational process" (Pourhossein & Reza, 2011). The main need is to identify the different accents and pronunciations due to the diversity of the students and lecturers' backgrounds. It has been shown that listening to a foreign speaker is effective if the listener shares it with a native speaker while it becomes difficult otherwise.

The most important students' need is to learn and use new and different vocabulary and terms. Therefore, learning new vocabulary is needed to figure out listening comprehension difficulties because they do not understand the lecturers or other students. "Vocabulary is not an end in itself. A rich vocabulary makes the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing easier to perform." (Nation, 2015). This finding also draws attention to the need to focus firmly on expanding students' vocabulary mastery to enable them to achieve lexical understanding of the input. Vocabulary is clearly important for language learning as it underpins all other language skills, can be a stepping stone to high level language use and can help the student to achieve fluency faster (Text Inspector Team, 2020). Learning a new language will not work without learning its vocabulary because it is a necessary part of any language.

*The Comparison between Students' Learning Outcomes and Listening Subjects' Objectives and Questionnaire Results*

Obtaining and analysing the results of the questionnaire are not the last step done in this study because the researchers aimed to identify the current needs of students. The

researchers also aimed to find out whether there is a gap between students' real needs and what has been taught at English Education Department of IKIP Budi Utomo regarding to the listening skill. Consequently, in order to achieve this goal, the researchers should make a comparison between the students' results and the listening subjects' objectives and the questionnaire results.

#### *Student Results VS Questionnaire Results*

After investigating the results of the questionnaire, the researchers consciously made a comparison between the results and the students' examination results to determine whether both results were correlated. In addition, the comparison aimed to find out whether students' listening comprehension problems were reflected in their examination results. The researchers purposed to see their scores because the results of the questionnaire showed that the students had great difficulty in this skill. This leads the researchers to take the mid-test results from 100 students to ensure their credibility. The researchers arranged classification towards the students' scores into three categories to ease the comparison. The categories are: students getting full scores, students getting less than full scores and above half, and students getting half of the full value and less. When the researcher checked the student results, it was found that only 15 students out of 100 got full marks. This number represents 15% of the students. On the other hand, 47 students got more or less 80 which means they got half or less of full marks. This represents 47% of students. Another 38% of students got below 50.

Therewith, the researchers randomly selected the students' results from the final examination. The researchers applied the same classification too. The researchers made classification to the students' scores into three classes to ease the comparison. The categories are: students getting full scores, students getting less than full scores and

above half, and students getting half of the full value and less. There were 100 students who had been chosen randomly. The full score for listening in this exam is 100. When the researcher analyzed the students' results, it turned out that none of them got full marks. However, 58 students got more or less 80 which indicates that they got half or less of the full score. This represents 68% of the total number of students. Another 32% of students got below 50.

The two analysis results indicated that the results of the questionnaire and student results were correlated. This result indicates that the students had been struggling hardly with listening skills. Their grades do not indicate their high proficiency level listening skill.

#### *Listening Subjects' Objectives versus Questionnaire results*

The results of the data analysis have been drawn so that the researchers strikingly made a comparison between the results and the objectives of listening subjects find out if there was a gap between the results of the questionnaire and the listening subjects' objectives; also, to find out whether the objectives met the students' listening skill needs. After checking the listening subjects' objectives of listening skills, it was found that these objectives felt to be related to the classroom activities. Neither of them provided to help students able to differ pronunciations or accent. Moreover, none of the objectives help students make effective notes or help increase their vocabulary mastery. Therewith, the objectives did not make the base activities helping to find the subject matter. This indicates a gap between the student's needs and the actual listening subjects' objectives.

As a result, the above discussion shows that the problems existing underlie mostly with the teacher and teaching materials.

#### *Recommendations*

- a. Listening classes should be improved to



- give students more opportunities to practice their listening skills.
- b. Listening comprehension subjects must have clear objectives. These objectives must meet the students' reasonable needs.
  - c. The lecturers should help students in identifying the listening strategies suitable with them.
  - d. The lecturers should help students to gain the required knowledge about pronunciation. Besides, the lecturers should focus on the several aspects including intonation, weak form, assimilation, and stress.
  - e. The lecturers should engage students to fill their spare time with listening exercises.
  - f. The lecturers should engage students to be more open about their listening problems and give recommendations to solve them.
  - g. The lecturers should use authentic materials in the class since they have positive effects on students' listening comprehension processing (Ghderpananhi, 2012).
  - h. Listening comprehension subjects should provide communicative exigence to recall that the students must have concentration. This exigence should come from the lesson itself since concentration is an essential vital factor in remembering things. Therefore, giving students writing assignments is suggested done before the listening material is given to them.
  - i. Listening comprehension subjects should emphasize the working of conscious memory. According to Gilakjani (2011) listening is receiving, receiving requires thinking, and thinking requires memory; there is no way to separate listening, thinking, remembering.
  - j. Listening comprehension subjects

- should prioritize teaching rather than testing. This is because it is better if the students know their process and progress in the class. Furthermore, the aim of checking the answers of students should be seen as feedback.
- k. The lecturers' books should consist of several sections providing information about listening theories such as strategies in studying listening, what problems may be faced by students, and how to figure out such problems.
  - l. The books and lecturers' books should provide an activity arrangement integrated with listening strategies such as pre-listening, whilst-listening, and post-listening. This recommendation indicates that this sequence of activity should be carried out at three different phases in the listening class.

## **CLOSING STATEMENT**

Needs analysis is an important and highly required step in designing and developing curriculum. This is because needs analysis is the keystone in adjusting the objectives according to the credible needs of students.

Listening skills are the essential thing in language acquisition. This skill supports the success of the other skills' mastery so that this study has an empirical analysis of the listening needs of students at English Education Department at IKIP Budi Utomo. The objective of this study was to find out the students' listening skill needs and problems and compare those needs and problems with the real objectives of listening subjects of English Education Department at IKIP Budi Utomo. This reveals whether there is a gap needs to be connected between students' credible needs and what materials taught in the listening subjects of English Education Department at IKIP Budi Utomo.

The findings indicate a gap between credible needs of students and listening subjects' objectives and materials. It was found that there are more than half of the respondents showed their serious needs to acquire a knowledge about making effective notes and asking the lecturers to repeat or clarify the materials in English. Furthermore, the students require to get long descriptions and instructions in English. Besides, they also need to understand the subject of the conversation. Therewith, the most important requirement is to learn and use new and different vocabulary and terms correlate with different areas. The very important thing to figure out the difficulties in understanding the lecturers or other students is learning new vocabularies. Nevertheless, by examining the listening subjects' objectives, it was revealed that those objectives are not able to fulfil the students' needs.

Thereto, this study shows some generic problems which students face and hinder their listening comprehension such as unrecognized pronunciation, new vocabulary, and speaking fast. Those problems are crucial and should be addressed to increase the students' listening skill level.

This study should be utilized not only to revise and develop the curriculum but also the teaching methods especially for listening skills so that the gap between curriculum and students' needs can be bridged.

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