



Preservice English Students' Difficulties in Dealing with Listening Section of TOEFL

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Abstrak

Karena kemampuan bahasa Inggris orang Indonesia cukup rendah, sebagian besar universitas dan instansi pemerintah di Indonesia mewajibkan tes bahasa Inggris seperti TOEFL untuk mengukur kemampuan bahasa Inggris. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apa saja faktor kesulitan yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa bahasa Inggris dalam menghadapi bagian listening dalam TOEFL. Penelitian dengan metode campuran ini melibatkan 38 mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris dari angkatan 2021, Universitas Riau. Data dikumpulkan dari satu set kuesioner yang didistribusikan secara online dan untuk memperkuat hasil penelitian, dilakukan wawancara. Temuan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa faktor kesulitan yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa program studi bahasa Inggris dalam bagian listening pada TOEFL adalah faktor masalah materi, hal ini dibuktikan dengan rata-rata yang diperoleh dari hasil kuesioner sebesar 3,713. Selain itu, tingkat kesulitan dari masing-masing faktor dikategorikan tinggi. Kesimpulannya, mahasiswa Program Studi Bahasa Inggris mengalami kesulitan dalam menghadapi TOEFL bagian *listening*.

Kata Kunci: Analisis, Kesulitan Mendengar, TOEFL.

Abstract

Since Indonesians' English proficiency is quite low, most universities and government agencies in Indonesia require English tests such as TOEFL to measure English proficiency. The aim of this research is to determine what are the difficulty factors faced by English students in dealing with the listening section of the TOEFL. This mixed-methods research involved 38 English students from the class of 2021, Riau University. Data was collected from a set of questionnaires distributed online and to strengthen the results of the research, interviews were conducted. The findings of this research show that the difficulty factor encountered by English study program students in the listening section of the TOEFL is the material problem factor, this is evidenced by the average obtained from the questionnaire results of 3.713. In addition, the level of difficulty of each factor is categorized as high. In conclusion, students of the English Study Program have difficulty in dealing with the TOEFL listening section.

Keywords: Analysis, Listening Difficulties, TOEFL.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a crucial medium for communicating with people and conveying our ideas and thoughts. According to Rai (2010) communication plays an important role in developing healthy relationships. In this era, people around the world have become a global village and communicate with each other in a common language, English. Rao (2019) stated that English, which is the world's most generally communicated in language, happens in all Global exchange, strategy, mass diversion, global broadcast communications, logical distributions, and distributing papers and different books. Moreover, due to its status as the first language spoken worldwide, English is viewed as the primary worldwide most widely used language. Since English is the international language of communication, it is a widely used and influential language in the world and its significance cannot be underestimated. It is fundamental to have an essential comprehension of language abilities to master English. Hibatullah (2019) pointed out that English might be used for academic purposes in non-English speaking countries, specifically in learning English.

The first law to specifically address education in Indonesia was Law No. 2 of 1989, which established the National Education System. This law became the basis for English language education in Indonesia. UU No. 2, 1989 stated English became the first foreign language taught in schools. It is shown that for a long time Indonesia has been considering the importance of English, so English is one of the obligatory subjects at school. However, the fact that although English has been studied from primary education to university level, English is still one of the subjects that is difficult for Indonesians to learn, so English is still categorized as a foreign language (Widiastuti et al., 2021).

Since Indonesians' proficiency in English is quite low and English is considered as a foreign language, most universities and government agencies in Indonesia require English tests as an administrative requirement. This is not unreasonable; it is an effort by the government, especially at the upper education level, to have high proficiency in English. To achieve this goal, most of the universities rely on standardized tests such as TOEFL to measure English language proficiency. TOEFL is a test for people whose native language is not English to assess their English language proficiency. Brown (2005) stated that the TOEFL's purpose as a language proficiency test is to evaluate the general knowledge and abilities that are frequently necessary as entrance requirements for a set of institutions that are comparable. Additionally, Scholarship selection committees of governments, universities, and organizations like Fulbright, the Agency for International Development, AMIDEAST, and the Latin American scholarship Programs have used TOEFL as a standard for evaluating candidates' English proficiency (Sharpe, 2004). Since the goal of language is to communicate, English proficiency of non-native speakers is assessed using TOEFL communication skills, particularly in academic purposes (Alek et al., 2019). Moreover, this test is required not only for university registration but also for scholarship registration, licensing management, and employment in government agencies (Yuniarti & Pratiwi, 2022).

In Universitas Riau, TOEFL is not only a measure of students' English language skills but also one of the graduation requirements. According to decree of the Rector of Universitas Riau No. 63/H19/AK/2009 section 44 (3) concerning final examinations and making diplomas at Universitas Riau; d. have English language skills that are equivalent to those who must score at least 450 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) released by UPT Bahasa UNRI or English language education institutions recognized by UNRI. Meanwhile, for the English study program, the minimum score is 500 (five hundred). In other words, students must be able to reach these standards to prove their certified English proficiency in order to be considered eligible to graduate. Students who score under the minimum standard on the TOEFL must retake the test. According to the researcher's interview, most English study program students take more than 2 times to pass TOEFL. Meanwhile, they had learned English for about the fourth semester. Moreover, most of the problems they faced when taking TOEFL were in the listening section. It is intriguing to investigate the

phenomenon of students in the English study program who have seriously chosen English as their major, who have more experience with English, and have high expectations for a good command of English still have difficulties in listening, which is one of the essential skills for understanding language and knowledge.

Based on the problem, this research focuses on examining listening difficulties. Listening as a part of the communication process is still difficult for some college students, particularly English study program students. Rahmawati & Br Sianturi (2021) stated that listening can be defined as the activity of listening attentively and paying attention to verbal symbols so that we can perceive and properly understand the information being conveyed. Students must simultaneously think and listen with attention and accuracy. It's not simple to do. A few understudies have been learning English for quite a while, yet they can't listen cautiously. There are undoubtedly a number of variables that impact difficulty in listening. Since listening is an on-going process in which numerous factors interact; many students struggle to comprehend oral instruction and are unaware of the reasons for this. To answer queries on listening comprehension students must be able to comprehend the accent, tone, difference in sound, idioms, phrases used in conversation, groupings of words, verb phrases, inferred information (knowledge that is not explicitly expressed), comparisons, and the meaning of the discussion in order to communicate effectively(Fitria, 2021). In addition Hibatullah (2019) stated that the most significant problem with listening includes concentration difficulty during the listening process due to anxiety, inability to listen due to poor recording audio, speech speed and accent, and limited vocabulary. Additionally, they have trouble understanding what native speakers are saying since they lack vocabulary and think that they speak too quickly.

According to the description above, the researcher is interested in investigating those problems. Then, the researcher decides the title of the research as "*Preservice English Students' Difficulties in Dealing with Listening Section of TOEFL*" because it is considered very essential in the process of learning English as well as to enrich the students' knowledge about listening especially in TOEFL. The following is a formulation of the problem that is based on the background of the research: What are the factors of difficulties encountered by English students' in dealing with listening section of TOEFL. To answer the formulation, this research objective was: to identify the factor of difficulties encountered by English students' in dealing with listening section of TOEFL.

Based on the research above, it is found that there are similarities and differences between previous research such as Fitariana & Rohim (2021), Fitria (2021), Asmawati et al., (2022), Rina & Tiarina (2021), Silviyanti et al., (2020) and the researcher will conduct. The similarities that are obtained focus on listening comprehension difficulties in TOEFL. However there are some differences between the previous studies and the research that the researcher will conduct. Most previous studies conducted qualitative methods as the research instrument to obtain the data. Meanwhile the researcher will conduct mix-methods as the research design with questionnaire and interview as the instrument to obtain the data. Another difference is the population of the research. In this research, the researcher chose the English study program students batch 2021 of Universitas Riau. Then the last difference is the place of the research. This research will be conducted at the English Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Riau. Particularly on Jalan H.R Soebrantas, Kampus Bina Widya, Simpang Baru, Pekanbaru.

METHOD

A mix-method research was used as the design of this research. According to Creswell (2014) mixed-methods research can be used for qualitative and quantitative approaches to study behavioural, social, and health issues, collecting and analysing rigorous quantitative and qualitative data. This research was conducted from April to November 2023 at English Study Program of Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Universitas Riau, Pekanbaru. The purpose of this research was to identify the factor of difficulties encountered

by English students' in dealing with listening section of TOEFL. The data obtained were questionnaire and interview.

The fourth-semester students of English Study Program batch 2021 in 2022/2023 academic year were chosen as the research population consisting of 117 students. Due to the large number of the populations, a cluster random sampling technique was conducted to choose the sample of this research. Cluster random sampling is a technique used when we are limited by the absence of a sampling frame (a list of names of all members of the population), but we have complete data about the group (Priyono, 2008). The students of class 4A of the English Study Program Students Universitas Riau batch 2021 was chose as the research sample.

This research was conducted through the questionnaire and interview as the research instruments. The questionnaire was adapted from a previous study by Diora & Rosa (2020) consisting of 30 items; statements of each question were designed to elicit participants' agreement and disagreement. Meanwhile, the interview was conducted in the form of an unstructured interview; only outlines of the problems that will be asked during the interview are used as guidelines. Prior to the questionnaire and interview being shared to the students, both were tested for validity and reliability to produce valid and reliable instruments. The SPSS application version 25 for windows was used to analyse the survey's data. In addition, to interpret the data, the researcher utilized a 5-point Likert Scale and each scale had descriptive interpretation. Descriptive interpretation can be visible underneath:

Table 1. Description interpreting of the Data

Range Score	Description
4.5 - 5	Very High
3.5 – 4.49	High
2.5 – 3.49	Moderate
1.5 – 2.49	Low
0.5 – 1.49	Very Low

(Santiago & Somera, 2010)

Meanwhile, to get the results of the interview, Miles & Huberman (1994) model was used by the researcher to analyse the data that is done intelligently and consistently until finishing, so the data is immersed (Sugiyono, 2013). Data analysis activities include: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher explains the findings of the research that has been conducted to find out the difficulties encountered by English students in dealing with listening section of TOEFL.

Research Findings

Questionnaire Finding

Table 2. the Descriptive Statistic of the Listening Material Indicator

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Listening Material Q1	38	2	5	3.76	1.025
Listening Material Q2	38	1	5	3.71	1.063
Listening Material Q3	38	1	5	3.63	1.282
Listening Material Q4	38	1	5	3.50	1.261

Listening Material Q5	38	1	5	3.58	1.178
Listening Material Q6	38	1	5	3.74	1.267
Listening Material Q7	38	1	5	4.16	0.973
Listening Material Q8	38	1	5	3.61	1.198
Listening Material Q9	38	1	5	3.84	1.128
Listening Material Q10	38	1	5	3.61	1.028
Valid N (listwise)					

As shown in table 2, item number 7 has the highest mean score on the listening material indicator (4.16), showed that students have a struggle to understand the unfamiliar topic because the topic is not common and they have a high level of understanding. Meanwhile, the lowest average found in item number 4 with average (3.50), however, it still indicated that students had faced some difficulty in digesting long conversations because there was too much narration to understand. Therefore, it can be summarized that most students agreed that the indicator of listening material is in the level 'hard' to do.

Table 3. the Descriptive Statistic of the Listener Indicator

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Listener Q11	38	1	5	3.42	1.200
Listener Q12	38	1	5	3.92	1.100
Listener Q13	38	1	5	3.34	0.938
Listener Q14	38	1	5	3.68	0.989
Listener Q15	38	1	5	3.76	1.076
Listener Q16	38	2	5	3.82	0.982
Listener Q17	38	1	5	3.53	1.133
Listener Q18	38	1	5	3.37	1.172
Listener Q19	38	1	5	3.50	1.247
Listener Q20	38	1	5	3.37	1.149
	38				

As can be seen on table 3, the highest mean score on the listeners' indicator is item number 12 (3.92) and the lowest one is item number 13 (3.34). Basically, the listeners' problem is a problem that occurs because of the students' self. It can be seen that students become neurotic and anxious when they fail to comprehend the conversation.

Table 4. the Descriptive Statistic of the Speaker and Physical Setting Indicator

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Physical Setting Q21	38	1	5	3.84	1.242
Physical Setting Q22	38	1	5	3.32	0.933
Physical Setting Q23	38	1	5	3.34	1.236
Physical Setting Q24	38	1	5	3.79	0.935
Physical Setting Q25	38	1	5	4.08	1.075

Physical Setting Q26	38	1	5	3.16	1.103
Physical Setting Q27	38	1	5	3.87	1.070
Physical Setting Q28	38	1	5	4.00	1.040
Physical Setting Q29	38	1	5	3.76	0.913
Physical Setting Q30	38	1	5	3.95	0.928
Valid N (listwise)	38				

Table 4 exhibits that the highest mean score in speaker and physical setting is the statement of item 25 (4.08) while the least is the item 26 (3.16). Therefore, it can be seen that students face difficulties when the speaker delivers the conversation/monologue in a fast-paced situation. That means the student struggles to keep up with the speed of the speaker.

Table 5. The Recapitulation Findings of all Indicators

No	Indicator	Mean score
1	Difficulties related to listening material	3.713
2	Difficulties related to the listener	3.571
3	Difficulties related to speaker and physical setting	3.711
	Mean	3.665

Based on Table 5, the total average of all the indicator scores is 3.67. This is resulting in a percentage score of 73.4%. Based on the classification of (Santiago & Somera, 2010), this mean score is categorized in the range of 'High'. Thus, the researcher inferred that the difficulty of listening section in TOEFL among English study program students is high range. In other words, English study program students batch 2021 especially in A class faced the most difficulties in the listening material factor as shown by an average of 3.173.

Interview Finding

In this section, to discover more about students' difficulties in the listening section of TOEFL, the researcher conducted an interview with seven of English study program students' batch 2021 especially in A class. In doing the interview, the researcher prepares about five questions related to the topic of the research which must be answered by the students. After carrying out the interview, the researcher identified some difficulties that the interviewers faced, especially in the listening section of TOEFL.

Listening Material Problems

Listening material is a challenging matter for the students; most of the material given is unfamiliar with complex grammatical structure. The listening material problems were complex grammatical structure, new words, and long-spoken text (Asmawati et al., 2022). In addition, there are various topics that are quite challenging and an advanced level of English is used. So the students will have difficulty when interpreting the topic. This statement is supported by subject 1 and subject 7 as follow:

Subject 1: "I think it's hard for me to comprehend the various topics. Besides that, the grammatical structure when listening section is more complex and harder, just like in another level of hard I guess"

Subject 7: "Sometimes, I don't get anything, because at the same time we need to understand the various topics we never heard before and the structure of sentences".

Related to the grammatical structure of listening in TOEFL, all subjects believed that the use of grammatical structures on the listening section of TOEFL was at a high level. In addition, the subjects also mentioned that the variety of topics was one of the obstacles for them. They agreed that there are a lot of unfamiliar topics in the listening section of TOEFL. They can easily understand some topics that relate to them such as daily activities, but there are many difficult topics such as science, engineering, medical and more. In conclusion, the topic of the listening section of TOEFL is varied and the structure of words is complicated.

In addition to the variety of topics, there is also a lot of unfamiliar vocabulary and the usage of idioms and jargon in the conversations were proved by the statements of subject 3 and subject 6 as follows:

Subject 3: "sometimes there are a lot of jargons or idioms which make me confused and there are also new words I just heard at the first at TOEFL"

Subject 6: "yes the material uses the words I rarely heard in daily conversation or in the class. I certainly have difficulty in answering the question which used unfamiliar vocabulary"

The interview findings showed that the subjects faced a lot of difficulty in dealing with unfamiliar words. In listening to the TOEFL new words are ordinarily seen which make the test-takers face trouble to answer the TOEFL test question (Fitariana & Rohim, 2021). When they try to understand all the speaker's speech, but they end up with words they don't recognise, they will easily lose concentration. In conclusion, it was found there is low frequency of word usage in listening material of TOEFL.

In line with the listening material problems, the length of the conversation text is also a significant obstacle for test takers. The length of the conversation text has complicated English sentence structures, so they will have difficulty in listening to each word and tend to forget easily. All subjects agreed that long spoken texts put a certain burden on them. The statement is supported by subject 5 and subject 7 as follows:

Subject 5: "I find it very difficult to deal with long conversations. Since I have to listen seriously from the beginning of the conversation, of course there will be many words that I don't know; I will be confused and overwhelmed at the same time"

Subject 7: "To be honest, I have a short term memory, I will easily forget what I heard, especially if it was a long conversation. So it's quite confusing when I have to listen to a long conversation."

The statements of subject 5 and subject 7 showed that long spoken text being a problem in the listening section. The student's memory level plays an important role while listening to long passages and remembering all the information (Asmawati et al., 2022). This means that it is not easy to listen to a long conversation and have to interpret every word heard to answer questions. In conclusion, the length of speech has become one of the obstacle encountered by students.

Listener Problems

The listening section in TOEFL requires students to have good listening skills in order to be able to easily answer each question. However, students frequently encounter problems that originate from themselves. According to Asmawati et al., (2022) problems involved in listener factors are anxiety, loss of focus, having a lack of English vocabulary, and rarely practicing TOEFL.

The interview finding showed that 6 from 7 subjects faced difficulties in terms of their listening skills. Since there is a certain score that they have to achieve, especially the TOEFL score that they have to achieve is higher than other majors. In addition, they feel unsure whether they can achieve their goal score. The students stated as follows:

Students 3: "Even though I have attended listening classes, I still feel nervous when listening to the listening section in TOEFL, there is a feeling of worry that I am not able to answer".

Students 4: "when I was unsure of what I was hearing I would easily lose concentration and worry about getting a bad grade".

When students start to feel nervous when trying to answer a question, they will lose their concentration. Worrying about poor results will make students depressed and unable to focus properly. This worry can become a bad suggestion, so they may get poor grades as they imagine. It was considered important to maintain concentration in listening due to the time constraints of the listening section (Lengkoan et al., 2022). In conclusion, they feel anxiety and insecure before taking the test.

Moreover, another personal problem that makes students easily lose focus is getting stuck on the vocabulary. Since vocabulary is one of the essential aspects of English. All interview subjects agreed that vocabulary is one of the determinants of their success in answering questions. However, in the listening section of TOEFL they are often easily distracted by vocabulary. Sometimes, they may know the vocabulary but they are trying to remember it so it will break their concentration. This statement is supported by the subject 1 and subject 6 as follows:

Subject 1: "I believe I have a good vocabulary skill, but during the listening section of TOEFL I get easily distracted when I hear unfamiliar words and try to think about it, but that makes me lose focus".

Subject 6: "I don't know if it's just me who feels that the vocabulary used during the listening section of TOEFL is not commonly used vocabulary. It makes me think harder about it".

Based on the statements of these subjects, the limits of vocabulary mastery become an essential problem for them when answering the question. Hamouda (2003) stated that many students pause to listen and contemplate the meaning of an unfamiliar word.. This interrupts the conversation flow, so students might lose some important information. In conclusion, there is a lack of vocabulary mastery by the students.

Studying before an exam is one of the common things that students do. As well as to face TOEFL, a number of preparations must be made to ensure that the test runs well. There are many TOEFL predictions on the internet that are easy to access. However, 4 out of 7 subjects admitted that they did not re-learn about TOEFL material when taking the test. They relied on their abilities and strong feelings. As follow the statements of subject 2 and subject 5:

Subject 2: "Honestly I don't study before the test; I think my knowledge when studying in class is enough to face the test. And if I can't answer I just rely on my feeling".

Subject 5: "I rarely practice, I always rely on my feelings when answering, and I just need to trust myself and have confidence about it".

The answers of these subjects indicated that they do not practice more to face TOEFL. Although they realize that the use of language, sentence structure, vocabulary, and accent in the listening section of TOEFL is different in their social life. When they realize that, they should know that it is beneficial for them to practice before facing the test. In conclusion, as English study program students, they thought TOEFL is too easy to answer.

Speakers/Physical Setting Problems

The situation around when the test takes place has a significant influence on the success of students' tests. Things like the environment, internet connection, audio, and the way the speaker delivered were all things that made it difficult to get distracted. Many students are interrupted with commotion regardless of how much they try to focus while listening (Asmawati et al., 2022).

According to the interview results, all of the subjects agreed that the speaker and physical setting problems are very annoying. They need to be at a serious level of focus in order to answer the questions. The majority of them stated that the test's interruptions made it difficult for them to concentrate on listening to the tape; the following statements were made by students:

Subject 6: "When the location is not conducive, like if there is noise around me, it is so annoying. I will easily lose focus for it"

Subject 7: "The conditions around must be calm and comfortable so that I can concentrate. But I do the test at home, and my home conditions are not adequate, it will interfere with my concentration and mood in answering questions"

Another problem related to the physical setting which is stated by the subjects is unclear sound of the audio. The quality of the audio played greatly affects hearing. Other sounds arising from audio interference have a poor impact on the listening process. The majority of interviewers mentioned they get distracted if the sound from audio is not clear. As the stated of subject 2 and subject 4 below:

Subject 2: "Yes, when the audio is interrupted it contributes to loss of my hearing".

Subject 4: "Sometimes when there is audio interference, a few words that are not clearly audible will take away my concentration from thinking about it".

The answer indicated that the quality of audio must be improved so that students are able to listen well. Hamouda (2003) stated that tapes may be recorded when there is ambient noise or tapes are used for a long time, resulting in quality being worn out. In conclusion, the unclear sound of audio distracts students' concentration.

Discussion

In this section, the researcher discussed the research findings and related them to the previous studies. Firstly for the indicator of listening material, the score of mean with 3.713 (74.2%) which indicated the listening material became the most difficult factor among two others. In other words, the students agreed that listening material is challenging and the hardest factor when doing the listening section of TOEFL. Then it is discovered with the range of 'high'. Based on the interview, this factor is categorized high due to the statement of the interviewer. They stated in terms of listening material, the difficulties are in the complex grammatical structure, unfamiliar words and long-text conversation. In short, students need to prepare their knowledge related to listening material by studying from TOEFL prediction in order to get an overview of the listening section material. Thus, they will get good results in TOEFL, especially in the listening section.

This finding is in line with the previous study by Asmawati et al., (2022) entitled *An Analysis of Students' Problems in The Listening Section of TOEFL in English Education Department of UIN Alaudin Makassar*. She also found that there are three factors of difficulties faced by students in the listening section of the TOEFL. The first factor is about the material, the next factor is about the listener's personal ability and the last factor is about the environmental situation. In line with that, Fitariana & Rohim (2021) discovered several factors of difficulties faced by students in the listening section of TOEFL in her research, such as limited vocabulary, lack of focus, speed of the speaker and unfamiliar topics of listening. It can be seen that previous studies support this research and indicate that students faced difficulties in dealing with listening section of the TOEFL because of these factors.

Secondly, for the listeners' problem factor, item 12 got the highest value with total agreement (71%) that indicated students got anxiety when facing the listening section of TOEFL. It was then found that the total mean score of listeners' problem factor is 3.571, which is in range of 'high' classification. According to the interview, the students expressed that the feeling of anxiety, lack of vocabulary and rarely practice for listening are the difficulties they faced in the listening section. Thus, English study program students agreed that they faced problems with their listening ability. Lengkoan et al., (2022) stated test takers find it challenging to focus their attention on what the speaker said, feel stressed and lose confidence during the test. Therefore, students should improve their listening ability by starting to familiarize themselves with listening practices from everyday life, so they will feel more confident when facing the listening section of TOEFL.

Lastly, for the speaker's/physical setting factor the highest score is gained on the item 25, which included a statement about the speed of speaker when delivering speech. Around 76.3% students agreed with this statement which indicated the way the speaker speaks on listening overwhelmed the students and made it difficult to listen. Also, the overall mean score of factor is 3.711, categorized as 'high'. As a result of the

interview, the students stated that the noises around, unclear audio and the way the speaker delivers the speech are the difficulties they faced in dealing with the listening section of TOEFL. Thus, to minimize these problems, students who want to take the test should prepare everything well, for example, choosing a place that is conducive, and using earphones to reduce noises.

Different from this research, a study by Rina & Tiarina (2021) entitled *An Analysis of English Department Students' Difficulties in Answering TOEFL Test of Listening Comprehension* found that the participants in the research did not agree that they had trouble answering the listening section of the TOEFL. In any case, they concurred that absence of vocabulary, absence of focus, length and speed of listening and state of being were factors experienced during the process in answering TOEFL, although they did not experience them directly.

CONCLUSION

After carrying out the research, there are some conclusions that can be reached by the researcher. There are three factors of the difficulties encountered by the students in dealing with TOEFL. The first was a listening material problem including complex grammatical structure, new words/unfamiliar words, and long-spoken text. The second was listeners' problems which included the feeling of anxiety, loss of focus, having a lack of vocabulary mastery, and rarely practicing the TOEFL. And the last problem is physical setting problems such as the noises around, unclear audio or the low quality of the audio. In addition, the difficulty of each factor is categorized 'high'. In other words, students still struggle with difficulties when they have to answer the listening section of TOEFL. In conclusion, to address the research questions, the factor of difficulties encountered by English study program students' in dealing with listening section of TOEFL is the factor of material problems. In addition, the interview results showed most of the students agreed that the material problem was the most difficult factor for them. This is due to the complexity of the grammar structure and the variety of topics in TOEFL.

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