

Listening Activity in the Life of Rural and Urban Students

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
<p>Description accepted: 31 August 2024 revised: 25 September 2024 approved: 14 October 2024</p> <p>Keywords listening; student; rural; urban; ability; differences; education</p>	<p>The gap in listening skills between students in rural and urban areas is still a problem that has not been resolved comprehensively. This study aims to identify and analyze the differences in listening skills of students living in rural and urban areas and the factors that influence these skills. The research method used was a quantitative survey with a descriptive approach, involving 125 students through propositional sampling in Bengkulu from various universities in rural and urban areas in Bengkulu Province. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews, then analysed using simple descriptive statistics. The results of the study showed that the condition of student listening activities between rural and urban areas from the average aspect was no different, in the sufficient category with an average range of 2.61-3.40 (3.32 rural; 3.36 urban). Aspects of media access, difficulty, and materials showed differences in categories in the aspect of listening materials in rural areas, namely good/supportive (3.47). Urban students tend to have difficulty listening effectively because they are exposed to too much information from various digital platforms, which reduces their concentration and understanding. Rural areas tend to listen more to local story-based content and traditional themes, which limits their exposure to global issues and modern content. Factors such as access to educational resources, social environment, and family support have been found to play an important role in shaping students' listening skills.</p>



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1. Introduction

Effective listening plays an important role in improving understanding of the information received. When someone listens well, they can filter information, interpret meaning, and evaluate the message conveyed. This is important in various situations, both in academic, professional, and everyday contexts, as stated by Wolvin and Coakley (1996), "Listening is a fundamental part of learning and understanding information; it involves receiving, interpreting, and reacting to verbal messages". Thus, listening skills can help someone to better understand learning materials or discussions.

Listening not only facilitates understanding of the material, but also helps in a more effective learning process. When students or college students listen well, they can follow the learning flow more easily, remember information better, and understand the instructions given. According to Wolvin and Coakley (1993), "Listening is a critical element in all instructional communication and is essential

for academic success". This shows that listening is a basic skill that every individual must have to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

Listening attentively can strengthen social relationships, both in the work environment and in everyday life. Listening is part of two-way communication that helps create positive relationships, because it shows that someone values and pays attention to what the other person is saying. Pearson and Nelson (2000) assert, "Effective listening helps build strong interpersonal relationships, demonstrating empathy and understanding, which are key components of positive social interactions". In other words, listening plays an important role in forming empathy, trust, and closeness between individuals.

In rural areas, listening media are usually more traditional, such as radio and live chat. Radio is often the main medium for obtaining information, news, and entertainment. According to research by Beaman (2006), "Radio remains a significant source of information for rural communities, where other forms of media may not be as accessible or trusted". Live chat or face-to-face communication is also an important form of listening, both through interactions between individuals and in community forums such as village meetings or community associations.

In the rural context, information more often comes from local communities such as village heads, community leaders, or citizen forums. Therefore, the listening process in rural areas not only functions as a means of receiving information, but also as a medium for disseminating and understanding social norms and community values. As explained by Young (2003), "The act of listening within rural communities involves a strong reliance on community leaders and local figures as credible sources of information". This more community-centered source of information makes the listening process a mechanism for maintaining social solidarity and community cohesion.

The language used in the listening process in rural areas is usually a combination of Indonesian and local dialects. Local languages are often used in informal situations, while Indonesian is used in formal contexts or in conveying information from the government. This is in accordance with the opinion of Duranti (1997) who stated that "Language choice in listening behavior is often determined by social context, with local dialects used to reinforce community identity and standard language for broader communication". The use of local languages in listening allows rural communities to better understand and internalize the information received.

Increasing internet access in rural areas enriches the variety of media used for listening. Traditional media such as radio and television are still used, but now they are supplemented with podcasts, YouTube videos, and digital applications that allow for the dissemination of information more interactively and flexibly. Research by Ross (2019) shows that "The proliferation of digital platforms in rural areas has expanded the modes of listening, allowing individuals to access content such as podcasts and video tutorials that were previously inaccessible". With this more diverse media, people can choose content that suits their interests and needs, be it education, entertainment, or other information.

With the internet, rural communities are not only limited to information

from local communities, but are also exposed to global and national themes. For example, topics such as climate change, social issues, and global pop culture trends can now be easily accessed through digital media. The results of a study by Thompson and Cupers (2020) show that "Rural communities are no longer isolated; the digital revolution has integrated them into the global information network, exposing them to a wide range of global, national, and local issues". The exposure of rural communities to these global themes also allows them to have a broader perspective and a deeper understanding of issues outside their local environment. The use of language in the listening process in rural areas is now not only limited to Indonesian and local

languages, but also extends to English and other foreign languages. Digital content such as YouTube videos, podcasts, and applications are often presented in various languages. This affects listening patterns in rural areas, where some people start using English or other foreign languages in their daily lives to understand global information. As stated by Duranti (1997), "The ability to listen and comprehend in multiple languages has become a significant skill in rural areas, allowing individuals to engage with diverse content that spans local and global perspectives". The use of multiple languages also creates new dynamics in social interaction and education in rural areas. Various problems in listening in rural areas, including limited access to technology and media. Students in rural areas often face limited access to the internet and the technological devices needed to listen to digital content. This limits their ability to obtain information from global or educational sources available online. According to Rost (2011), listening skills are highly dependent on the availability of relevant and diverse sources. If students are limited to limited local sources, their listening skills will not develop well. A study by Vandergrift & Goh (2012) showed that limited access to technology in rural areas has a negative effect on listening skills, because students are less exposed to in-depth audio and audiovisual-based learning materials.

Students in rural areas are usually less exposed to listening materials in English. This is a challenge in developing their listening skills, especially in the context of globalization where English language skills are very important. Flowerdew & Miller (2005) emphasized that exposure to multiple languages through audiovisual media helps improve students' listening skills, especially in a second language. According to research by Rahimi & Abedi (2014), students in rural areas tend to have lower English listening skills than students in urban areas due to limited access to media and foreign language education.

Students in rural areas often focus on listening topics related to local life, such as agriculture and local communities, so they are less exposed to more global topics or topics relevant to modern technological and industrial developments. Brownell (2012) stated that diverse and relevant listening topics can improve critical skills and deep understanding in listening. Limited themes can limit students' development in listening to more complex content. A study by Putri (2020) showed that students in rural areas tend to listen more to local story-based content and traditional themes, which limits their exposure to global issues and modern content. Students in urban areas often face the problem of

information overload, which is too many sources of information available through digital media. This can cause confusion and difficulty in filtering relevant and important information. Wolvin & Coakley (1996) stated that effective listening requires the ability to filter incoming information and select relevant information. When students are exposed to too much information, their focus in listening can decrease. Research by Buchanan & Tuckerman (2016) shows that students in urban areas tend to have difficulty in listening effectively due to being exposed to too much information from various digital platforms, which reduces their concentration and comprehension.

The noisy urban environment and excessive use of technology (such as social media and online entertainment) often disrupt students' focus on listening. This reduces their ability to listen well in class or in everyday life. Rost (2011) emphasized that effective listening requires a supportive environment with minimal distractions. Students who are exposed to noisy or technologically distracting environments will have difficulty focusing their attention on important information. A study by Safitri (2021) found that students in urban areas are more likely to be distracted by technology and social distractions while listening, both in class and in everyday life, which negatively impacts their comprehension. Students in urban areas are more often exposed to content in foreign languages, especially English. Although this can be an advantage, many students feel overwhelmed or have difficulty listening to foreign language content effectively. According to Flowerdew & Miller (2005), being exposed to multiple languages in listening can enrich students' skills, but it also requires more complex listening strategies. Research by Kim & Kang (2017) shows that although students in urban areas are more exposed to foreign languages, many of them have difficulty listening to multilingual content, especially if there is no adequate educational support. Based on the above problems, this study aims to identify, examine, and recommend improving students' listening skills in rural and urban areas.

2. Method

The comparative descriptive approach research is used to compare phenomena and identify differences and similarities in the listening patterns of students living in rural and urban areas. As explained by Gall and Borg (2003), the comparative descriptive approach is a method that aims to describe and analyze differences or similarities between variables observed in a particular context. This method is used when researchers want to see how certain characteristics vary between two different groups, such as groups of students from rural and urban areas. In this study, the subjects were 125 high school/vocational high school/Islamic high school students who were students at universities in Bengkulu. The subjects were selected using purposive sampling techniques, which allowed researchers to select subjects who met predetermined criteria (Sugiyono, 2012).

Data collection was carried out using questionnaires and open-ended interviews. The questionnaire was designed to measure students' perceptions and listening habits in everyday life, while interviews with open-ended questions aimed to explore students' views and experiences in more depth. As a data

analysis technique, tabulation was used to organize the questionnaire data, coding to identify themes that emerged from interview responses, and comparison to compare data between rural and urban students. The coding technique refers to Strauss and Corbin (1990), who explained that the coding process is a systematic step in grouping data based on certain categories to find patterns or relationships. After that, a comparison was carried out by comparing the tabulation and coding results from the two groups, so that differences and similarities in their listening activities could be found. The validity and reliability of the data were maintained by triangulation methods, where the results of the questionnaire and interviews were confirmed with each other to ensure consistency. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide a clear and accurate picture of the differences and similarities in the listening activities of students from rural and urban areas, so that they can make a significant contribution to the study of listening literacy in Indonesia.

3. Results and Discussions

The results of this study are the results of a questionnaire given to English and Indonesian students in semester 1 at universities in Bengkulu Province. This instrument is an instrument for listening in life with audio and audiovisual media, difficulties in listening, and listening themes that are adjusted for students from rural and urban areas. This instrument has two parts, namely closed and open questions with the following research results.

Results

Figure 1.A
Conditions of Students' Listening Activities in Rural Areas



Figure 1.B
Conditions of Students' Listening Activities in Urban Areas

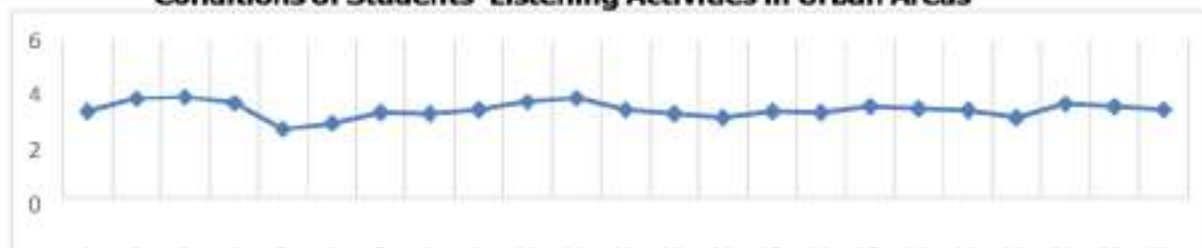


Figure 1.A. and 1.B above show that the condition of student activity in listening between rural and urban areas from the average aspect there is no difference, in the sufficient category with an average range of 2.61-3.40 (3.32 rural; 3.36 urban). Aspects of media access, difficulties, and materials there are differences in categories in the aspect of listening materials in rural areas, namely good/supportive (3.47). This shows that technological advances and good internet

access and the need for gadgets are almost every student so that between rural and urban areas there is no significant difference with the difference in the area where the student's domicile is located. There are differences between rural and urban areas in terms of media access, challenges, and materials listened to (rural areas are higher than urban areas in media access).

Figure 2. B
Listening Activities of Indonesian Language Students in Rural Areas



Figure 2. B
Listening Activities of English Language Students in Rural Areas



Figure 2.A. and Figure 2.B. that the condition of student activity in listening to rural areas, both bind and bing, there is no difference, still in the same category and urban from the average aspect there is no difference, in the sufficient category with an average range of 2.61-3.40 (3.17 bind; 3.37 bing). Aspects of media access, difficulty, and materials there are differences in categories in the aspect of rural listening materials, namely good/supportive study program bind 3.46 and bing 3.50. There is a difference between the Indonesian and English language abilities of students in rural areas seen from media access, challenges, and listening materials. (I: .46 and E 3.50).

Figure 3. A
Listening Activities of English Language Students in Urban Areas

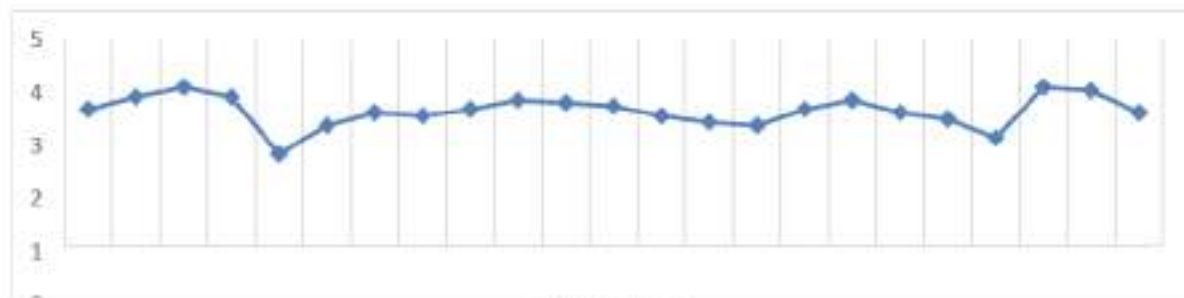


Figure 3. B
Listening Activities of Indonesian Language Students in Urban Areas

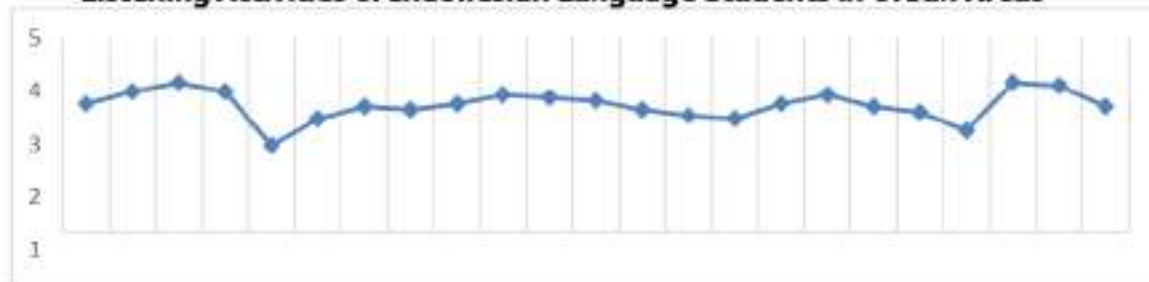


Figure 3.A and 3.B show that the condition of students' activities in listening to urban areas, both Indonesian Language Education and English Language Education students, is no different, still in the same category with an average aspect of no difference, in the sufficient category with an average range of 2.61-3.40 (3.27 bind; 3.30 bing). In the aspect of media access, difficulty, and materials, there is a difference in the category of difficulty in listening to urban areas, which is quite difficult for English Language Education students (3.50). This is because in urban areas there are many activities carried out, both academic and non-academic activities, and the urban environment is denser and busier in its activities.

Discussion

Along with the development of information technology, there has been a more even distribution of media between rural and urban areas. Currently, media such as television, radio, and the internet can be accessed by people in various regions without any significant limitations. This is supported by research conducted by Wardhaugh (2010), which states that modern communication technology is able to reach areas that were previously difficult to access, thus creating equality in access to information. This study shows that the use of media such as YouTube, podcasts, and other video platforms is now not only dominant in urban areas, but also in rural areas, especially with the increase in internet connectivity that allows equal access to visual and audiovisual content. Furthermore, Litosseliti (2010) in *Research Methods in Linguistics* also emphasized that advances in information technology have enabled audiovisual-based learning such as online tutorials and seminar recordings, which can be accessed by anyone, anytime, and anywhere. This means that, although

geographical differences between rural and urban areas still exist, access to audiovisual media is no longer a major obstacle for students in both areas. With stable network connections and increased use of digital devices such as mobile phones, students in rural areas can obtain the same information as students in urban areas, both in terms of quantity and quality of content. Brown & Yule (1983), the development of audiovisual media plays an important role in improving students' listening skills. Equal access between urban and rural students creates equal opportunities to learn through various media platforms. The phenomenon that occurs in rural areas shows that although access to media is increasingly evenly distributed, the intensity of media use for listening in rural areas tends to be higher. This is due to the limited activities outside the home experienced by most people in rural areas, so they spend more time listening to media, either in the form of radio, television, or digital media. According to research by Shukla (2013) in the Rural Communication System, rural residents use radio and television more often to obtain information and entertainment compared to urban residents who have more alternative social activities. In addition, media consumption patterns in rural areas show that they tend to prefer educational content and local information that is relevant to their social conditions. McLuhan (1964), where media acts as a human extension in obtaining information, so that students in rural areas are more dependent on digital media than those who live in urban areas.

Other empirical evidence supporting this statement comes from research by Anderson (2015) which states that in rural areas, people have a habit of listening to media more intensively because the media is the main source of information that replaces the role of limited social interaction. This shows that in rural areas, the intensity of media use for listening can be higher than in urban areas, which have wider access to social and community activities.

Although students' listening activities in rural and urban areas are quite good, the role of teachers and parents in guiding students is very important. The importance of this guidance is emphasized by Brownell (2013) in his book *Listening: Attitudes, Principles, and Skills*, which states that listeners, especially students, often do not have the ability to critically evaluate the information they receive. They tend to accept information passively without questioning the validity or relevance of the content they hear or see.

Support from parents and teachers is crucial to help students sort information and teach effective listening skills, especially in the context of digital media which often contains invalid or biased information. With proper control and direction, students can develop good media literacy skills, so that they are able to filter information that is truly useful and supports their learning process. Vygotsky (1978) in his theory of cognitive development, stated that guidance from the social environment, in this case teachers and parents, is very important in helping students develop more focused and in-depth listening skills. Listening activities at school level are often not well directed. This is due to the lack of specific guidance on how to listen properly, both in terms of methods and content that is heard or seen. According to Wolvin and Coakley (2000), one of the main factors causing the lack of direction in listening is the minimal attention

to listening skills in the formal education curriculum. The curriculum often focuses more on reading and writing skills, while listening skills are considered passive skills that can develop naturally without special educational intervention.

This is reinforced by research conducted by Devine (2005), which shows that many students at school level, both in rural and urban areas, do not have a good understanding of the importance of active listening. As a solution, it is necessary to develop a structured listening learning program, both at school and at home, by involving the active role of teachers and parents. Proper guidance can help students develop listening skills that are not only limited to understanding the information conveyed, but also developing critical and evaluative thinking skills towards the information. Wolvin & Coakley (1996) who emphasize the importance of listening education as one of the critical components of communication and must be taught systematically in schools.

4. Conclusion

After analyzing the data, it was drawn some conclusions. First, the language ideology on business signboards of linguistics landscape in Medan city refers to the identity and power. The use of language on business signboards in Medan city in Indonesian reflects the nationality. The use of language on business signboards in Medan city in English indicates the modernity and the use of traditional language identify the identity of the ethnics or culture. Then, language ideology relates to the power of a language in a region. English as the dominant language used on businesssignboards in Medan city shows its power as the dominant language even though theusage of English in signs does not serve any significant communication function.

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