

Investigating EFL Learners' Recognition of Conversational Implicature in Listening Test

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ABSTRACT

In arrange to progress the capacity of tuning in comprehension, it's essential for English learners to be presented with a few essential Pragmatics speculations. Grice's Conversational Implicature Hypothesis is one of the foremost imperative substance of Pragmatics . This study aims to analyse the short conversations in the listening comprehension of TOEFL test from the perspective of pragmatics. Hence, this study was done to identify EFL learners' capability in comprehending and producing implicature. Data were analysed using the theory of Conversational Maxims proposed by Grice (1975). The researcher applied a descriptive qualitative research method using survey and interviews method for data collection in EFL classroom. The participants of this research were three classes in Bali International Polytechnic consisting of 30 students. The data was collected through assigning a listening comprehension test and further interviews on Bali International Polytechnic students. The study found only few students who get the score above 80, lacking tuning in comprehension ought to mostly account for the blunders made in these questions, but through the examination, the most reason is the students' trouble in inducing the speaker's verifiable meaning. Most of the students found the difficulties in comprehending the implied meaning or conventional implicatures. There are five difficult aspects of understanding listening test namely conversational implicature knowledge, idiomatic expression, lack of vocabulary, need of concentration, and new accent. Encourage, the part of conversational impersonation in tuning in comprehension of the TOEFL test is exceptionally critical. Grice's conversational implicature can be adjusted to the instructing of tuning in by giving both speakers and understudies with a way of how specific articulation implications are passed on and decoded in particular settings of circumstance. In this way, the discoveries demonstrate that the English learners ought to ace the hypothesis of Grice's Conversational Implicature, learn how to induce implicature to direct their learning and lead in such hypotheses in tuning in comprehension.

KEYWORDS

Classical Marxist theory; lyrical poem; realism; social stratification; social theory

INTRODUCTION

English is more crucial for students to learn because it is a worldwide language that is spoken all over the world, which will help them compete on a global scale in a competitive age. To meet this difficulty, several Indonesian universities have made passing the TOEFL

exam a prerequisite for earning a bachelor's degree. According to Harmer (2007), hearing is one of the three components of the TOEFL test that is hardest to complete because native speakers' terminology is so hard to understand. However, according to Saifuddin (2006), some universities use TOEFL scores 450 or 550, depending on the major of interest and institution policy for all aspiring undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students. Sugeng (2012) asserts that assessing English proficiency is a critical first step that ought to be carried out in all Indonesian universities. Because nearly all post-secondary educational institutions worldwide employ the TOEFL, a sort of standardized test designed to assess a person's proficiency in the English language, as a prerequisite for pursuing further education.

Even proficient English speakers may struggle to comprehend a sentence when presented with listening materials. Therefore, English listening comprehension encompasses more than just vocabulary and grammatical rules; it also involves the complete understanding and use of language. Even though English speakers have modified their educational strategies and listening resources in recent years to enhance their listening comprehension, many English speakers still struggle with poor listening skills. There are still a lot of issues with listening instruction. Thus, what are the most effective ways to enhance listening comprehension skills and thus develop language application? Geoffrey Leech (1983) contends that "without an understanding of pragmatics, we cannot really understand the nature of language itself." Therefore, the first step in enhancing listening competency is to integrate the theory of pragmatics with listening comprehension.

Language usage in various circumstances is studied in pragmatics. It was not recognized as a separate field of linguistics until the 1960s and 1970s. The idea of conversational implicature has a long history as a subfield of pragmatics and is related to semiotics and the theory of deviation. However, American language philosopher Herbert Paul Grice formally proposed the notion of conversational implicature in 1967. From then on, as pragmatics gained traction, the notion of conversational implicature grew rapidly. In order to determine how Grice's theory of conversational implicature affects listening comprehension, this research aims to describe the relationship between conversational implicature and listening comprehension. Implicit meaning is a phrase used to describe the functional component of language; implicature governs how individuals understand meanings that are not represented explicitly in their language (Archer et al., 2012). As stated by Archer et al. (2012), implicature is a form of communication that extends beyond the surface structure of the utterance and emerges from the interpretations of interlocutors. For those learning a second or foreign language, comprehending implicit meanings can be very difficult. True, a variety of factors impact pupil comprehension, including cultural background, experience to a second language, suggested gender, and overall, second language skill. (Taguchi, 2012). The majority of research that have looked at this issue concur that learners' comprehension of implicature has to be strengthened.

Implicature instruction has been largely disregarded by the majority of EFL and ESL educators, Al-Hindawi & Mubarak (2014). It can be stated categorically that in EFL learning environments, learners frequently struggle to acquire and, consequently, comprehend implicature, specifically conversational implicature, because they are not exposed to or practice this type of pragmatic notion through the use of pragmatic instruments designed specifically for this purpose. And this has an effect on EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge on its own. Lestari (2019) described how textbooks are the most widely utilized tool for EFL learners in Indonesia; nevertheless, they do not depict real-world social interactions amongst native speakers. The acquisition of English pragmatics by students is hindered due to their inadequate capacity. According to Retnowaty (2017),

pragmatic proficiency in English as a foreign language (EFL) "has not been the focus in language learning," which is why this is occurring. According to Suprijadi's (2023) study, teacher-led activities in Indonesian EFL classes do not aim to improve students' pragmatic ability or provide them with opportunities for communicative practice. There are still not many research that discuss the implicature issue. Amrullah (2015)'s library research on implicature kinds offers a comprehensive description of the different types of implicature, making it one of the viewpoints. In addition, Rahayu & Safnil (2020) have conducted several studies on the impact of different implicatures on students' day-to-day lives. According to Lubis & Irmayana (2019), idiomatic language, definitions and metaphors, and conversational implicatures were among the elements that made the listening segment challenging to complete. Sucahyo (2016) conducted another study at IAIN Samarinda and discovered that students struggled to meet the TOEFL requirements, with an average score of 397, which was still considered elementary (SD). This happened since the greatest deterrent for understudies in doing the TOEFL is within the tuning in area.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the pragmatic competence level of EFL learners by assessing their ability to identify conversational implicatures that resulted from their cooperation in particular situations. Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to determine the degree to which EFL learners are able to identify the formation of conversational implicature of the various conversational maxims. The research will be conducted at Bali International Polytechnic, a notable institution in Bali that offers programs in event management, hospitality, and culinary arts. The justification for this research derives from the noted scarcity of studies focused on the comprehensive grasp and production of implicatures by EFL learners, especially in the area of listening comprehension. This notable deficiency in the existing literature highlights the essential need for this study. Therefore, this study tries explicitly to answer three research questions: 1) What are the capabilities of Balinese EFL Learners in comprehending implicature in listening comprehension of TOEFL Test? 2) What are the factors of students' difficulty in answering listening comprehension in TOEFL Test? 3) What are the significances of applying the conversational implicature in listening comprehension of TOEFL Test?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gricean Maxims

One of the most significant pragmatic theories to date is Grice's conversational implicature. As per Grice (1975), statements can acquire meaning by linking certain presumptions to a specific speech. Grice (1975) refers to the information that is implicated as "implicatures" (p. 45). The idea behind implicature theory is that speech acts as a means of transmitting meaning (Levinson, 1983). According to Grice (1975), humans utilize utterances to uphold social ties and to exchange two-sided information with one another. Therefore, it was suggested that those who have a tendency to generate and analyse talks logically should adhere to cooperative ideals. Grice (1975) asserts that cooperative communication and the usage of maxims are necessary for both the speaker and the listener to comprehend one another's meanings. If the words disregard one maxim, the recipient will not understand them. We refer to the maxims as cooperative principles. To elucidate the interpretation of conversational implicature, Grice (1975) introduced the cooperative principle and the conversational maxims. The four maxims that make up the collaboration principle are number, quality, relevance, and method. Conversational maxims are guidelines that participants in a conversation should abide by. These guidelines include providing enough information, being truthful, being pertinent, and speaking clearly and concisely. Grice (1975) put forth four conversational maxims. These are the four maxims: quality, quantity,

relation and manner. What that implicature may be is set up by the four conversational sayings. The four conversational sayings are as takes after: (1) Amount: make your commitment as instructive as is required (for the current purpose of the trade). (2) Quality: don't say what you accept to be wrong, don't say that for which you need satisfactory prove. (3) Connection: Be important. (4) Way: Dodge lack of definition of expression, dodge uncertainty, be brief (dodge pointless prolixity), be deliberate.

According to Levinson (1983), speakers should adhere to the following maxims when conversing: maximally, efficiently, logically, and collaboratively. To put it another way, they ought to talk honestly, pertinently, and coherently while providing enough details. Implicature are statements that are stated in a way that differs from their meaning. implicature is the process of drawing conclusions about an utterance's meaning based on its context, according to Bouton (1994). According to Davis (2016), implicature occurs when a speaker "means one thing by saying another. So, it can be concluded that implicature is a component of the speaker's meaning from their speech in which what is meant differs from what is expressed. Conversational implicatures rely on the utterance context, but semantic implicatures are related to sentence meaning. A form of meaning or indicating is indicated by an implicature. In common speech and literature, conversational implicatures come in a variety of forms.

Non-Observance of Maxims

People may not observe a maxim, according to Thomas (1995), if they lie on purpose or are unable to talk coherently. The following categories apply to the non-observance maxim types: a) Flouting a Maxim Mocking a maxim is when a speaker ignores a adage without the reason of deceiving or misdirecting. The addressee's look for a meaning that varies from the spoken to meaning could be sparked by the speaker. The process of creating this additional meaning is known as "flouting a maxim," and it is referred to as "conversational implicature" (Thomas, 1995). b) Violation of a Maxim According to Grice (1975), a violation occurs when a speaker intentionally violates a maxim in a conversation or fails to adhere to a maxim in order to cause the addressee to misinterpret the utterance. If a speaker violates a maxim, the listener may be misled. A person would be breaking the quality maxim, or lying, if, for instance, they claim to be someone when they are not. c) Violation of a Maxim: A violation of a maxim occurs when a speaker breaks a maxim without any intention to give any implication or mislead anyone. Stated differently, a maxim is violated when a speaker fails to express their objective (Thomas, 1995). He doesn't require any money, for example (double negative). d) Departure from a maxim Departure from a maxim occurs when a speaker does not want to cooperate in the way that the maxim requires. The speaker purposely withholds the maxim in order to adhere to the rules of the community (Thomas, 1995). For example, the priest responds:," when questioned about the statement he made in Parliament. (p 74). In order to maintain secrecy, the minister in this instance chooses not to follow the quantity maxim. He freely admits that it is impossible to follow the maxim. e) Suspending a Maxim Suspending a maxim occurs when a speaker hides the truth due to the cultural code (Thomas, 1995). It is rare that non-observance of this kind occurs. For example, in India it is saying the name of a deceased person may attract evil spirits and bring bad luck.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study applied a descriptive qualitative design. It is the collection, analysis and of the comprehensive narrative in order to gain insight related to phenomenon. The approach for this study is a descriptive qualitative approach using survey methodology. The survey

method used in this study consisted of 30 multiple choice questions in the form of questions on students' listening comprehension and ability to understand implicatures. Further interviews were also conducted with participants who had problems answering the implicature test.

Respondents

The research was conducted in Bali International Polytechnic which typically consist of 3 study programs, they are Culinary Art, Hotel Management and Event Management. The research was conducted during January and February 2024. The participants were taken purposively from the sixth semester students based on their English proficiency. The participants in this study were 30 students, they are 10 students from Culinary Art, 10 students from Hotel Management and 10 students from Event Management study program.

Instruments

There are two instruments used in this study. The first instrument was listening to comprehension test which consist of 30 short dialogue questions which consist implicature. This test was used to obtain the data on the students' listening proficiency. The short dialogue test was design to stimulate the student ability on comprehending and producing implicature. The second instrument was interviewing guide. The purpose of interviewing guide was to better understand students' English proficiency and factors affecting students' difficulty for listening test. The interview was carried out individually using Google Meeting application. The interviews were mostly carried out in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure that the students understood the question.

Procedures of Collecting the Data

To obtain the data for the study, some research procedures were taken. The first thing is having the permission from the Head of Study Program to conduct the listening test from the students. After gaining the participants, the researcher conducts the listening test. The participants need listen to the short dialogue then choose the best option related to the question. The listening test consist of 30 questions provided with multiple options. Each of the question need pragmatic competence to be able to answer it. The interviews were done on the later stage of the study via individual online interview using Google Meeting Application.

Data analysis

The data were analysed by the theory from Gricean Implicature (1975), talking about types of implicature. Listening tests can provide evidence of students' understanding. Both good and bad students perform poorly in this test. Through the categorization of the interviews and some actual listening tests, students' implicature abilities can be interpreted from a practical perspective. Analysis was also carried out by looking at similarities and differences in the test answers until categories were developed and identified.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to achieve the first aim of the study, the listening test was designed so that the students' score will show how far EFL learners are able to comprehend the conversational implicature in the TOELF test. The target sample was the sixth semesters of EFL learners of Bali International Polytechnic. The number of the learners are 30 students. The full test is presented in appendix (1). Figure (1) shows the result of students' score for the listening test.

The capabilities of EFL Learners in comprehending implicature in listening comprehension of TOEFL Test

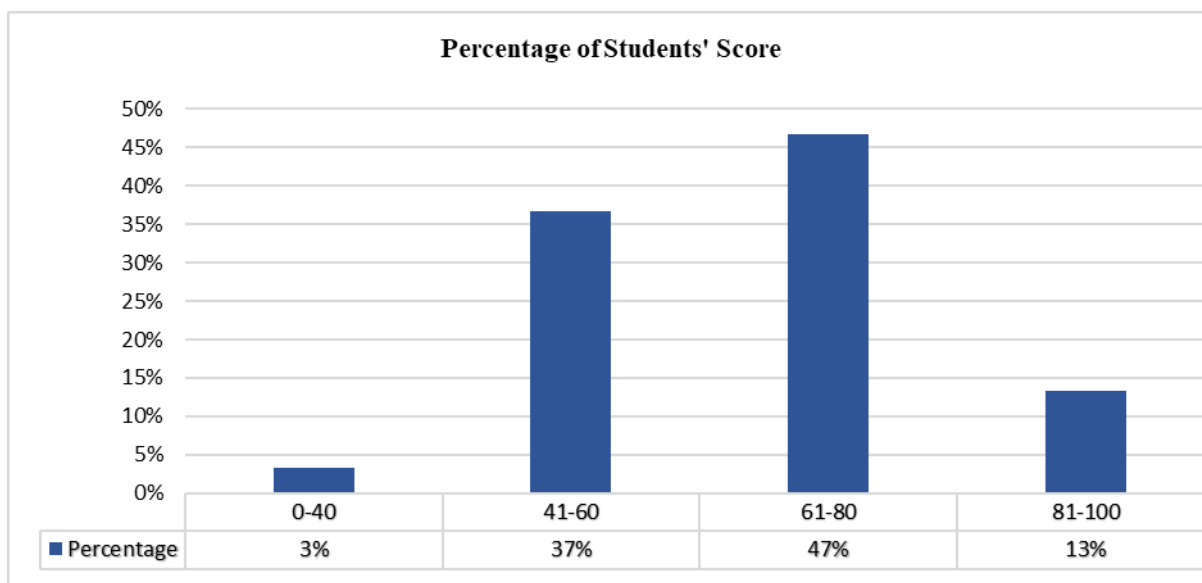


Figure 1. Students's Score for Listening Test

The result of the test showed that only few students who get the score above 80. About 30 questions, only 13% of the students get above 80, 47% of the students get over 60, 37 % students get above 40 and 3% students is below 40. From the results, we can't deny that inadequate listening comprehension should partly account for the errors made in these questions, but through the analysis, the main reason is the students' difficulty in inferring the speaker's implicit meaning. The analysis points to a critical challenge of the difficulty students face in inferring implicit meanings within spoken material. This skill is crucial for high-level comprehension as it involves understanding not just what is explicitly stated but also what is implied by the speaker. Such inferences require a deep familiarity with both the language and cultural context, often extending beyond mere vocabulary or grammar knowledge. The data underscores the need for enhanced teaching strategies that specifically target the development of students' abilities to grasp implicit meanings. This may involve more focused practice with varied and culturally diverse listening materials, explicit instruction on conversational implicatures and their common indicators, and strategies for effective contextual analysis during listening. The subsequent discussion will provide examples of TOEFL questions that necessitate an analysis of implicature, along with examples of incorrect responses typically given by students. These instances illustrate the complexities involved in understanding and interpreting implied meanings within the listening test sections.

Question number 2

Man: When do you think your apples will be ready to pick?

Woman: You can always tell whether an apple is ripe by its color.

Question: What does the woman imply about the apples?

- a. They should be picked before they're ripe.
- b. They should have been picked already.
- c. They'll get picked when they turn a certain colour.
- d. They won't be picked until next year.

In question number 2, most students choose answer (option a) because this woman answers “You can always tell whether an apple is ripe by its color.” The students had thought this woman talk about the ripe apple, but in fact, this woman flouts the maxim of manner since her answer seems not to be perspicuous. The woman's response, "You can always tell whether an apple is ripe by its color," suggests that the ripeness of the apples is determined by their color change. This implies that the appropriate time to pick the apples is when they exhibit a specific color indicative of ripeness. Her statement does not suggest that the apples should be picked before this color change occurs (option a), nor does it imply that the apples should have been picked already (option b). Furthermore, there is no indication that the picking would be delayed until the following year (option d). Thus, the most logical inference from her statement is that the apples will be picked at the moment their color indicates they are ripe, aligning with option (c). Therefore, we can infer the conversational implicature from violating the maxim of manner.

Question number 7

Woman: Is that a new pair of glasses?

Man: I'm making do with this old pair until my good ones are fixed.

Question: What does the man imply?

- a. He doesn't like his new glasses.
- b. His regular glasses are being repaired.
- c. He thinks his eyesight is improving.
- d. He's decided to buy new glasses.

In question number 7, although the words and sentences are simple, many students find it difficult to choose the correct answer, while some students choose the option (d). The correct answer should be option (b) “his regular glasses are being repaired”. The man doesn't answer directly and flouts the maxim of manner. Therefore, we need to know how to derive the implied meaning from the speaker's indirect speech. The man's statement: "I'll make do with these old shoes until my good ones are fixed." implies that his preferred or regular glasses are currently unavailable because they are being repaired. The use of "making do" suggests that the current pair is a temporary solution, indicating dissatisfaction, but does not express a dislike for new glasses. Instead, it emphasizes that he is waiting for his usual glasses to be returned to him after repairs.

Question number 12

Man: Listen Eleanor, I shouldn't have said what I said yesterday it just didn't come out right.

Woman: Well, I shouldn't have let it get to me.

Question: What is the woman doing?

- a. Complaining about the man's behaviour.
- b. Repeating an insensitive remark.
- c. Denying her involvement in an argument.
- d. Accepting the man's apology.

In question number 12, most of the students still choose the incorrect answer. Most of them choose (a) “complaining about the man's behavior”. From the dialogue the woman says “Well, I shouldn't have let it get to me”. It means the woman wouldn't not allowed what the man's doing to upset her, it means the woman already accept the man's apology. So, the correct answer is option d “Accepting the man's apology”. We can understand the conversation by knowing some idioms and the implicit meaning that the speaker tries to

convey. The woman's response, "Well, I shouldn't have let it get to me," indicates a level of personal reflection and responsibility for her reaction to the man's previous comment. By saying this, she implies that her reaction might have been more intense or affected than warranted, suggesting an acknowledgment that her response played a part in the misunderstanding or disagreement. This acknowledgment typically signifies acceptance in conversational exchanges, especially following an apology or an expression of regret like the man's statement. Her use of "shouldn't" reflects on what she considers to have been a better reaction, showing her agreement to move past the issue without further conflict. Thus, she is not just passively hearing the man's apology but actively engaging in the resolution by admitting her role in the escalation. This kind of mutual recognition of faults is a common way to accept an apology and to signify the end of a conflict, aligning with option (d).

Question number 19

Man: How do I get to the Museum Café

Woman: I left my map at the information desk.

Question: What does the woman mean?

- a. She doesn't know the way.
- b. The map is at the information desk.
- c. The man should get the map at information desk.
- d. The café isn't marked on the map.

In question number 19, the man asks how to get to the Museum Café, but the woman's answer doesn't state directly, it makes many students still find it difficult to choose the correct answer, some of them choose to answer option (b). The correct answer should be option (c) "The man should get the map at information desk.". The woman's response, "I left my map at the information desk," serves as a hint rather than a direct answer to the man's question about how to find the Museum Café. This response implies a solution she is suggesting that the man can find the needed directions by using the map that she left at the information desk. This is typical of conversational implicature, where the meaning intended by the speaker is not explicitly stated but is inferred from the context. The woman flouts the maxim of manner, that she left the map at information desk, so she indirectly asks the man to take it. Thus, we should know how to infer the speaker's implicit meaning from her indirect language

Question number 20

Woman: I'd be glad to drop you off downtown on my way home.

Man: Well, if you're sure it's not out of your way.

Question: What does the man mean?

- a. He'd like to get a ride from the woman.
- b. He lives very near the woman.
- c. He doesn't want to go downtown.
- d. He thinks the woman is going the wrong way.

In question number 20, most of the students choose option (d). The correct answer is option (a). The man's response, "Well, if you're sure it's not out of your way," indicates a conditional acceptance of the woman's offer to give him a ride. This conditional acceptance is based on the principle that accepting the ride should not cause any inconvenience to the woman. His statement implies that he is indeed interested in getting a ride, as long as it

does not divert the woman from her intended route. This shows his willingness to accept the help offered but only under the condition that it is convenient for the woman, demonstrating consideration for her plans. His use of "if you're sure" is a polite form of ensuring that his acceptance of the ride does not cause any disruption to her schedule, which aligns with option (a). He is essentially accepting the ride, provided it aligns with her current travel plans, making this the best choice based on his implied meaning. In summary, the man's use of implicature and the flouting of the Maxim of Relevance subtly conveys his conditional acceptance of the offer, hinging on the assurance that it will not deviate the woman from her intended path. This showcases a polite and socially aware use of language, typical in everyday conversational exchanges.

Question number 22

Woman: I can't seem to shake this cold.

Man: Sometimes the only thing that helps is taking it easy.

Question: What does the man mean?

- a. The woman should avoid getting cold.
- b. It's easy to get sick in cold weather.
- c. The woman should get more rest.
- d. Dressing warmly can prevent illness.

In question number 22, most students choose answer option (b) because this man answers "Sometimes the only thing that help is taking it easy". The students had thought that is easy to get sick in cold weather, but in fact, this man flouts the maxim of manner since his answer seems not to be perspicuous. The correct answer is option (c); therefore, we can know the meaning by understanding the conversational implicature. The man's response, "Sometimes the only thing that helps is taking it easy," suggests that the most effective remedy in some situations, like enduring a cold, is to rest and not exert oneself too much. This advice is directly tied to the common understanding that rest is crucial for recovery from illnesses, especially those involving fatigue and immune response, such as a cold. Therefore, option (c) correctly interprets the man's implication that the woman should focus on resting to help her body recover from her current cold, aligning with his advice to "take it easy."

Question number 26

Man: I can't seem to get the TV to come on. It must be broken. OK

Woman: Have you checked to see if it's plugged in.

Question: What does the woman imply?

- a. The man's house has no electricity.
- b. The TV's plug might be broken.
- c. The man can't afford to fix the TV.
- d. The TV might not need to be fixed.

In question number 26, most of the students still choose the incorrect answer. Most of them choose (option b) "The TV's plug might be broken". From the dialogue the woman says "Have you checked to see if it's plugged in". It means the woman asks the man to check the plug, because the TV might not be broken but it's just the electricity problem. So, the correct answer is option (d) "The TV might not need to be fixed". The speaker here flouts the maxim of relation. We can understand the conversation by knowing the implied meaning. The woman's question might seem slightly off-topic because the man has already

proposed a solution that the TV is broken. However, by asking if the TV is plugged in, she indirectly questions the necessity of his conclusion that the TV is broken, suggesting a simpler potential problem and solution. This can be seen as flouting the maxim of relation because her response shifts the focus from discussing a broken TV to verifying whether it is connected to power a basic and often overlooked check.

Question number 30

Man: Do you think the blue jacket would look better with these pants?

Woman: In this heat, I don't think you'll be comfortable in anything but the cotton one.

Question: What does the woman suggest the man do?

- a. Wear a blue jacket.
- b. Dress warmly.
- c. Wear something cool.
- d. Wear cotton pants.

The woman's response, "In this heat, I don't think you'll be comfortable in anything but the cotton one," implies that due to the warm weather conditions, the man should opt for wearing clothing that will keep him cool. She specifically mentions the "cotton one," indicating that this garment is more suitable for the current temperature. While she doesn't explicitly say "wear something cool," the mention of comfort in the heat directly implies that the man should choose clothing made from a material (like cotton) that is cooler and more comfortable in warm weather, hence option (c) is the most accurate. The woman flouts the maxim of manner. The woman's advice is subtly communicated through a focus on the material (cotton) and the weather, rather than directly stating what he should wear for style. Her statement could be clearer in directly advising on the style choice rather than implying a shift to a more practical aspect of clothing choice due to the weather. This introduces a level of ambiguity about whether her response is strictly about comfort or if it indirectly suggests something about the style as well.

According to the test, most of the questions flouted relationship maxims and attitude maxims, and the students still could not find their meaning. The aim of the study is to improve the learners' ability to recognize the occurrence of implicatures. The aim is to investigate the recognition of the occurrence of implicatures due to the ignorance of maxims. This will lead to a deeper understanding of the learners' recognition of implicit meanings. The results of the statistical analysis show that the learners' level of recognition of the occurrence of implicatures due to the violation of maxims was low and they were not able to distinguish all cases of violation of maxims. Additionally, instructors provide guidance to students on their difficulties in answering the listening test, allowing them to develop alternative solutions. Moreover, statistical analysis shows a high average recognition rate for adhering to the maxims, indicating learners' ability to understand the implicatures. In general, it can be asserted that English for Foreign Language learners possess the ability to discern or recognize the emergence of conversational idioms at a rate that is approximately average, however, their proficiency in distinguishing between different types of maxims is comparatively low. The findings indicate that learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) comprehend and recognize implicatures in listening tests can indeed be closely correlated with Grice's theory of conversational implicatures and the flouting of conversational maxims. Grice posited that effective communication depends on speakers and listeners adhering to certain cooperative principles, which are broken down into four maxims: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. When these maxims are flouted (intentionally violated), it often generates an implicature, or an implied

meaning that is not explicitly stated but understood through inference. Most students struggled to recognize when these maxims were flouted, indicating a difficulty in identifying and interpreting the implied meanings. This suggests a gap in pragmatic competence, where learners fail to detect the subtleties that native speakers might easily infer from such conversational clues.

The factors of students' difficulty in answering listening comprehension in TOEFL Test

Based on data analysis, it was found that most students found it difficult to answer the listening section of the TOEFL test. After collecting data from students at Bali International Polytechnic, the writer found five factors about the difficulties encountered by students in answering the TOEFL listening section, namely, conversational implicatures knowledge, idiomatic expression, lack of vocabulary, lack of concentration, and unfamiliar accent. Below is the students' response to the questionnaire from the present study. The following table contains the students' responses regarding their beliefs regarding the listening test in the TOEFL.

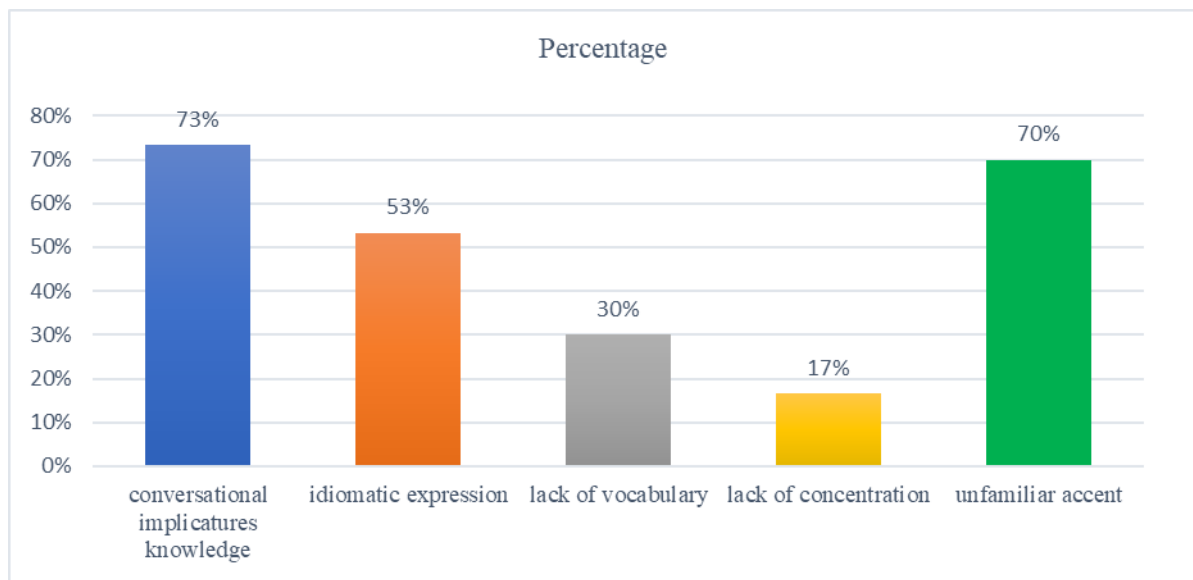


Figure 2. Factors of Students Difficulties on Listening Comprehension

From the figure above, it is obvious that most of the students found the difficulties in comprehending the implied meaning or conventional implicatures. Other five difficult aspects of understanding listening test are conversational implicatures knowledge, idiomatic expression, lack of vocabulary, lack of concentration, and unfamiliar accent. a) Conversational implicatures rely on the context of the conversation and the knowledge shared between speakers and listeners. These are often governed by Grice's maxims, such as the maxim of relevance, which assumes that what is said by a speaker is pertinent to the conversation. EFL students may find it difficult to pick up on these nuances, especially when they involve subtle hints or require inference based on a dialogue that extends beyond the words spoken. b) Idioms pose a significant challenge due to their non-literal nature. Idioms cannot be understood through direct translation of their constituent words. Instead, they must be learned as whole units of meaning. EFL students often struggle with idioms because they require a deep familiarity with the language and cultural context that goes beyond basic vocabulary or grammar. c) A limited vocabulary can severely restrict a

student's ability to follow and understand spoken English. When students lack knowledge of key words in a listening passage, it impedes their ability to grasp the overall meaning or follow the development of ideas. This is particularly problematic in academic or technical contexts where specialized terminology is used frequently, and missing even a few key terms can lead to misunderstandings of the essential concepts or arguments being presented. d) The issue of concentration is critical in listening comprehension, particularly in an academic setting like a listening test. EFL students often struggle with maintaining focus over extended periods, which is essential for understanding spoken English, especially when it involves complex or lengthy conversations. e) Finally, the challenge of understanding unfamiliar accents cannot be underestimated. EFL students often learn English with a particular accent, such as American or British, and may find it difficult to understand speakers from other regions or those with less common accents. This issue is compounded in listening tests that use a variety of accents to gauge a student's ability to comprehend English globally. Accents can alter the pronunciation, speed, and intonation of speech, all of which can confuse learners who are not accustomed to such variations.

The data revealed that 73% of students encounter difficulties in comprehending the implied meaning from the examination. According to the findings of the interview, it is evident that the less successful students, referring to those who have scored below 60, express their dissatisfaction with the limited vocabulary, grammar, and accent, as the primary factors hindering their listening comprehension. Conversely, the proficient students, referring to those who have scored above 60, assert that their difficulty in deducing the implicit meaning of the speaker is responsible for the low scores in the listening section of the TOEFL Test. In the figure above, the low scores in the listening section are largely attributed to the insufficient proficiency of grammar and vocabulary, particularly among students who have had less success in their academic pursuits. Besides grammar and vocabulary, it is also important to be familiar with pragmatic theories, such as conversational implicature and cooperative principle.

The findings of this study are in line with those of Sucahyo (2016) who found that listening is the most difficult part of the TOEFL test. Later, a study conducted by Rina and Tiarina (2020) found that lack of vocabulary knowledge, lack of concentration, lack of listening time and speed, and physical condition were other factors that contributed to students' difficulties in answering the listening test. Furthermore, a study conducted by Lubis and Irmayana (2019) confirmed that conventional implicature is another factor that makes it difficult for students to answer the listening test. Therefore, it is important for learners to understand some basic pragmatics such as Grice's theory of conversational implicature, as this theory focuses on the expression of implicit meanings rather than what the speaker has said. In summary, the findings of this study can provide students with insights on how to tackle the listening section by identifying factors that hinder their success in the TOEFL test. Additionally, instructors will also be informed of the difficulties students face in answering the listening test so that they can develop alternative solutions.

The significances of applying the conversational implicature in EFL Classroom

Many English language learners have difficulty understanding the meaning of English conversations. This is because there is often a gap between what is being said and what is being implied. Overcoming this problem is key to improving your English listening comprehension. For some students, one of the difficulties in listening is that they can understand the meaning of sentences in a conversation, but cannot find the correct answer

to the question. Some are completely lost when it comes to passages. Some gradually lose enthusiasm and motivation and become passive listeners.

They even believe that tests cannot improve listening ability. Some of them continue to focus on theoretical debates on the interpretation of implicatures. Given the problems, we see the need for ingenuity to improve listening comprehension. For various reasons, introducing conversational implicature theory to improve listening comprehension is a very effective approach. Grice's theory helps explain how native speakers interpret the implicit meaning of utterances. Second, speakers rely heavily on the cooperative principle when interpreting utterances that contain implicatures. Speakers assume that the hearer will be able to interpret the implied meaning according to Grice's maxim. Finally, the cooperative principle and reliance on that maxim are strategies that non-native speakers must learn if they want to be conversationally competent.

The role of conversational implicature in listening comprehension in the TOEFL test is very important. English speakers often use conversational implicatures for various reasons, such as to show eloquence, to avoid taboos, and to be polite. Conversational implicatures have evolved significantly through continuous refinement and have become increasingly sophisticated and prevalent in discourse. A concrete formal analysis of listening comprehension can be conducted using Grice's cooperative principle as an example. It is suggested that implicature can and should be taught in the classroom and that it is the instructor's responsibility to develop it. Therefore, instructors need to improve students' language use skills. And teaching students implicature analysis is a good way to improve students' performance in the listening section of the TOEFL test. There are two ways to do this: a) Students need to clarify whether the speaker intentionally ignores the cooperative principle; b) They judge the implicature of the conversation based on the context. As we all know, different contexts produce different conversation contents, which complicates listening comprehension. Therefore, you need to choose the appropriate conversational meaning depending on the particular context.

Integrating conversational implicature into EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching has profound impacts on both the instructional methods and the outcomes for students. This approach boosts communicative competence by teaching students to understand not just the literal meaning of language, but also its more nuanced, implied aspects. Such skills are crucial for effective communication in real-world settings, where meanings are often implied rather than directly expressed. Additionally, this method fosters cultural awareness and sensitivity, as understanding implicatures requires knowledge of cultural contexts and norms. This enhances students' ability to navigate cross-cultural interactions successfully. Moreover, focusing on implicature improves listening skills by requiring students to pay close attention and interpret subtle cues within conversations. It also promotes critical thinking and problem-solving, as students learn to analyze and infer meanings beyond the surface. Finally, regular exposure to conversational implicature prepares students for real-life language use, equipping them with practical skills for engaging in authentic dialogues outside the classroom. This holistic development not only enhances language proficiency but also prepares students more comprehensively for interaction in diverse linguistic and cultural landscapes. So, integrating conversational implicature into EFL instruction significantly enhances students' linguistic skills, thereby improving their ability to communicate effectively in English. This method does more than just boost language proficiency; it also develops a wide range of cognitive and cultural abilities, establishing it as a crucial component of language education.

CONCLUSION

Listening competence serves as an essential measure for evaluating a foreign language learner's overall linguistic knowledge and communicative abilities. In the context of the TOEFL test, the listening comprehension section is particularly emphasized by educators, largely due to consistently low scores observed among students in this domain. This section of the test often integrates a significant number of pragmatic items that challenge students to not only understand spoken English at a literal level but also to infer implicit meanings a skill that is essential for effective real-world communication. Recognizing the difficulty that students face in dealing with these pragmatic challenges, there is a clear necessity to focus more intently on enhancing students' abilities to comprehend implicature as delineated by Grice's theories.

The importance of teaching these skills is underscored by the insights provided by Grice's theories, which elucidate how native speakers intuit the implicit meanings conveyed by their interlocutors through the cooperative principle. This principle is foundational in helping listeners infer meanings that are not explicitly stated but are implied by the speaker, relying on the shared understanding of conversational contexts and norms. Effective training in this area involves direct application of these theories in the classroom, equipping students with the tools to navigate complex pragmatic cues within the TOEFL listening tasks. By enabling students to proficiently handle utterances that involve implicature, educators can significantly boost their students' chances of success on the test. Therefore, it is imperative that lecturers not only impart knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar but also focus on developing students' pragmatic comprehension skills, which are crucial for achieving a high level of understanding in listening comprehension sections of language proficiency exams.

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