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THE PROBLEMS FACED BY STUDENTS IN ENGLISH LISTENING AT ONE STATE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN KARANGDOWO

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Approval Sheet

The Problems Faced by Students in English Listening at One State Senior High
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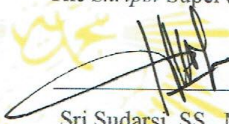Candidate for the degree of *Sarjana Pendidikan*

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Abstract

Listening is one of the most difficult skills for foreign language learners due to the complexity of its process and different types of knowledge required for successful listening. Consequently, students often find difficulties in learning listening. This research aims at revealing those problems experienced by student in listening to English. This research was conducted in one of the senior high school in Karangdowo, Klaten, Central Java. This study used a qualitative research method, especially employed the descriptive qualitative design. There were four participants who were involved in this research. To collect the data, an interview was used by the researcher. There are five findings that the researcher found in this research. They are problems in understanding English vocabularies and problem in understanding speakers' accent. This finding includes the different accent between teacher and native speaker of English from another country. The next finding was problems in hearing the sound. This finding includes speaker and also tools which the teacher use in the listening process. The next finding was student short span of concentration. The last findings was problem in students' exhausted/fatigue. This finding includes the student's condition affect in the easy and difficult in process learning listening.

Keywords: listening, students' problems, English listening

Introduction

Listening is one of the most difficult skills for foreign language learners due to the complexity of its process and different types of knowledge required for successful listening. According to Sharma (2011) "Listening skills are crucial to learning. Students who listen well are able to follow directions and complete activities. Students cannot learn effectively if they

cannot listen to and follow directions" (Placeholder2p. 12). As the quote above states, listening skills are crucial for students to learn so the students need to more focus on instruction and also need focus during listening played. In addition, Shaila (2010) stated that many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students who seek admittance to an university where English is the medium of instruction do not have sufficient language skills to understand lectures, comprehend textbooks, participate in the class discussion, or generate satisfactory written work. In Indonesia, English had been decided to be one of the foreign languages (EFL) to be taught at school (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2006). In Indonesia, English is taught from elementary school to university (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2006).

In the order of frequency are quickly forgetting what is heard, not recognizing the words they know, understanding the message but not the intended message, neglecting next part while thinking about meaning, unable to form a mental representation from words heard. Listening is one of the most difficult skills for foreign language learners due to the complexity of its process and different types of knowledge required for successful listening" (Field, 2008). Moreover, similar with Field, Goh (2000) stated that the most common problems faced by students dealing with the background knowledge have to be mastered in listening.

Apart from that, Goh also emphasizes the problem of concentrating and missing the beginning of text. Goh also suggests doing more investigations about learners' attitudes to their listening problems and how they deal with these problems. Ur (1984) also stated that identifies eight potential problems of listening comprehension. The problems are dealing with hearing the sound, understanding intonation and stress, coping with redundancy and noise, predicting, understanding colloquial vocabulary, fatigue, understanding different accent, and using visual and aural environmental clues.

Based on the researcher's experience, there were many problems in learning listening skill faced by the students when the researcher studied in senior high school, especially when the teacher gave a listening test. One of the difficulties is that it needs full concentration while students are listening since they have to choose the right answer. Secondly, the lack of vocabularies makes students difficult to get the meaning. Third, different accent makes them difficult to understand due to unfamiliar sound.

In this research, the researcher focuses on the listening skill in State Senior High School in Karangdowo Klaten Central Java. In One Senior High School in Karangdowo, there is not specific class, which taught listening skill but in grade XII, the English teacher focused on the students to learn about listening skill in order to prepare them to face National Examination.

In listening concentration also must have much knowledge about vocabulary because if students have concentration but lack of vocabularies so students can not get the meaning when listening process. This happen to students of One Senior High School in Karangdowo. Based on preliminary research, the teacher still using same teaching methods like.Based on those reasons, the researcher wants to do a research about the problems faced by students in English listening at One State Senior High School in Karangdowo.

Literature Review

Definition of Listening

Some researchers try to define what listening is. The definition of listening proposed by a researcher might be different from one to another. Researchers like Howatt and Dakin (1974) defined listening as "ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent and pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary and grasping his meaning". In addition, Yagang (1993) stated that listening is the ability to identify

and understand what others are saying; it is not passive but active process of receiving and constructing a message as one steam of sound. It means that listening is an active process that needed paying attention and also need fully of concentration to get meaning by using listening comprehension by using hearing what speakers says and try to know everything what speakers said.

Listening is an activity to hear and also to listen or hear information from the speaker. According to Downs (2008) the word listening is defined as making an effort to hear something; to pay attention or heed. The listener listen the message from the speaker seriously. The listener has to focus during the process of listening and ignore anything that can make information and concentrations are loss.

In summary, listening is a process of receiving and understanding what other is saying. In this process, listeners need to pay attention and need more concentration like as speakers' accent, dialect, vocabulary, and intonation and facial expression which are delivered by speakers.

Problems in Listening

In the process of listening comprehension, there are some potential problems in learning listening. Ur (1984) identifies eight potential problems of listening comprehension. The problems are dealing with hearing the sound, understanding intonation and stress, coping with redundancy and noise, predicting, understanding colloquial vocabulary, fatigue, understanding different accent, and using visual and aural environmental clues. They are explained as follows:

Hearing the sound. Mishearing the English sounds is one of the problems which are faced by listeners. In this case, Ur (1984) explains four reasons why listeners mishear the English sounds. First, some English sounds do not exist in listeners' native language. Second, sounds exist in listeners' first language but it has variation in English. Third, listeners do not perceive

English sounds accurately because of the sequences and collocations of English word such as consonant cluster.

Four, listeners mishear English sounds because they do not notice the stress and intonation patterns, in which stress and intonation patterns play a significant role in determining the meaning of words as well as the meaning of utterances. Hence, when they do not notice the stress and intonation patterns, they may perceive the spoken language wrongly.

Understanding intonation and stress. Intonation and stress can interfere with listening comprehension, in which when listeners do not pay attention to speakers' intonation and stress; listeners may misinterpret utterances (Ur, 1984). This is because both intonation and stress are carrying the information in the spoken language (Buck, 2001). Intonation is "the variation in pitch that takes place within an utterance" (Buck, 2001, p. 36). The variation in pitch is related to the meaning of an utterance. Buck reviews that an utterance can be identified as a statement or question by its intonation pattern. For instance, falling intonation usually refers to the statement while rising intonation refers to the question.

Besides intonation, listeners need to be familiar with stress. Buck (2001) reviews two types of stress in English that is word stress and sentence stress. Word stress refers to the "emphasis of the various syllables within a word" (Buck, 2001, p. 35). He gives examples on how certain words can function as noun, verb, or adjective when they are given different stress.

Coping with redundancy and noise. Redundancy and noise can interfere with listening comprehension. Redundancy is common in spoken language, in which speakers make repetition, make elaboration, or add some expressions when they are speaking. Anderson and Lynch (1988)also state that redundancy can lead listeners to the listening comprehension problems because there is much information that listeners have to process at one time.

Predicting. The listeners' ability to predict what is coming up in the spoken language is very important because it can improve their listening comprehension. However, not all listeners are able to make prediction while they are listening. Ur (1984)points out two reasons why predictions are difficult for listeners. First, the listeners are not pay attention to the stress and intonation. Second, the listeners are not familiar with collocations, idioms and proverbs which are used in spoken language.

Understanding colloquial vocabulary. Ur (1984) explains that colloquial vocabulary exists differently within the informal speech. To begin with, the way vocabularies are pronounced in the formal speech such as in the classroom will be pronounced differently in informal speech. Therefore, listeners, who are mainly exposed to certain ways in which certain word is pronounced, will find it difficult to recognize the same words when it is pronounced differently. In addition, informal speech is also characterized by reducing forms, in which some words are not pronounced. Ur (1984) gives an example, it is common for speakers to say 'where you going?' instead of 'where are you going?' Therefore, when listeners are not familiar with colloquial vocabulary, listeners will simply do not recognize the words or expressions they have just heard even they are not aware that certain words or expressions are pronounced by speakers.

Fatigue. Ur (1984) explains that language learners usually try to understand every single word they heard. Doing this in any length of time, they will tire and they cannot concentrate in listening. In short, fatigue can reduce their ability in comprehending spoken language.

Understanding different accent. There are many English accents in the world such as British, American, India, and Singaporean. Therefore, Ur (1984) states that language learners who are mainly exposed to the certain English accent, such as their teachers' accent, will find it difficult to understand unfamiliar accent for the first time.

Using visual and aural environmental clues. Ur (1984) notes that visual and environmental clues are important because they provide extra information that can be used by the listeners to comprehend spoken language. However, in the listening process, language learners tend to focus on interpreting every single word heard.

As they are busy to interpret every single word, they cannot use visual and environmental clues in comprehending the spoken language. In other words, they interpret the spoken language by isolating the words heard with the visual or aural environmental clues.

Methodology

This research employed a qualitative research method. This method was suitable for this research to ask students' opinion about the problems faced by students when they were learning listening. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is appropriate to be employed when it would identify research participants' opinion, belief, or even perception. The researcher chose a qualitative research design since it provided detail information which was needed to explore the students' opinion. The qualitative research aims to reveal participants' opinion.

This research used criteria in selecting the participants. This involved identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals who were especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In addition to knowledge and experience, Bernard (2002) noted the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner.

The participants of the research were students' year XII at A State Senior High School in Karangdowo. The researcher selected students in year XII who got low score in listening class by

asking their English teacher. The researcher selected one participant from each class from four classes. Therefore, this research had four participants in this class.

After doing the interview, the researcher analyzed the data. To analyze the data, the researcher took some processes namely transcribing the data, member checking, and coding. After recording the voice of the participants, the first step was the researcher transcribes the audio recorded into written text. After that, the researcher did member checking to the participants in order to check the validity of the transcription. Cresswell (2012) stated that member checking is used to prove the validity of the data. The researcher returned the transcription to the participants to check that it was in line with the participants' responses, and it could be the information that they stated in the interview which was unclear.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used steps proposed by Creswell (2008) which are: (1) collecting data, (2) preparing data for analysis, (3) reading through the data, (4) coding the data, (5) and coding the text for themes and description to be used in the research paper. Data analysis was done after the researcher collected the data by doing interviews. In this case, the researcher analyzed the data in order to comprehend and gather the data to answer the two research questions. The steps of analyzing the data was started by transcribing the interview result from four participants in the face-to-face interview. Then, after transcribing the recording, the researcher did a member checking. Each of the transcription was returned to the participants and they confirmed that all information in the transcription were correct. The researcher made sure the validity of the data gathered by doing the member checking.

After doing the member checking, the researcher analyzed the data using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was a process of data coding. In coding the data, the researcher

analyzed the script of the recording. It means that the researcher kept taking what the participants meant by their answer in each question. This activity was done by collecting all the statements that answered the research questions then the researcher made a statement that represents the participants' answer. After that, the researcher put different color to each statement that had the same meaning. Lastly, the researchers grouped answers of the same color to be found and then incorporated into chapter 4.

Finding

The researcher gathered the data from the participants of this research. There were five findings explained to answer the first research question. Those findings were served to know the problems faced by students' in learning listening.

Conclusion

This research aims to find out the problems in English listening faced by students at One State Senior High School in Karangdowo. Based on the fourth chapter discussing the findings, the researcher intends to conclude problems that make students felt difficult during learning listening, namely unfamiliar vocabulary, unclear language, the ways of speaking, different accent, unfamiliar, almost similar pronunciation, boredom, students' fatigue.

To begin with, the new vocabulary, unclear and unfamiliar language student not familiar made students get difficulty when they learning listening. It was mentioned by the participants that new vocabulary, complicated language and long duration of the listening section made students difficult and felt bored when they learned listening.

The second problem was the way of speaking used in the learning listening process. The ways of speaking, different accent, and unfamiliar language spoken by foreign people would make students felt more difficult rather than listen to language spoken by their teacher.

The third problem in learning listening is a sound problem. The quiet sound made students difficult. In addition, unclear speaking made students get difficulty in listening. Media for the listening which did not support could make student get difficult when they learned listening.

Getting bored was one of difficulties in learning listening because students could not concentrate when they got tired and bored. Moreover, students needed fresh condition to be successful inn mastering listening. If the students were exhausted they could not focus and follow the listening process. Students needed more energy to focus on the listening process.

Recommendation

Students. The researcher recommends that the students should be aware the difficulties in learning listening. They need to apply some strategies or try to use different learning style. So that they can come up with their problems.

Teachers. Based on the research results discussed in chapter four, the researcher recommends that the teachers' pay more attention on students' difficulties in learning English listening. Moreover, the teachers can help the students to overcome difficulties mentioned in this research by designing the teaching material that suitable for the students need. The teachers should pay more attention when they explain listening in class. So there is no problems that will be addressed to the lecturer while giving a video in the classroom.

Future researchers. The researcher hopes that other researchers would like to do further research related to students' difficulties in learning listening. In order to enrich the existing research, the future researchers can explore students' difficulties in learning listening deeper by using another methodology or increasing the number of research participants.

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