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A Study on Listening Difficulties Faced by students

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Abstract

In learning English, one of the most difficult skills for students was listening. There were various causes that make it difficult for students in listening skill. This study was aimed find out the difficulties that faced by students while listening. This study was applied descriptive qualitative method because the data was gaining the information relate listening difficulties and the data was collected from questionnaire as the main instrument. This study was conducted at SMPN Widya Krama, while participants of this study were the students of class 8 grades and the total of participants were 20 students. Based on the result of this study, the students encountered various difficulties such as the quality of recording used in listening, Students' vocabulary was limited, length and speed of listening, various kinds of accents and cultural differences.

Abstrak

Dalam belajar bahasa inggris, salah satu skill yang sulit untuk siswa adalah mendengarkan. Ada berbagai penyebab yang membuat siswa sulit dalam kemampuan mendengar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mencari kesulitan yang dihadapi oleh siswa saat mendengar. Penelitian ini menerapkan metode kualitative deskriptip dikarenakan data diperoleh dari informasi terkait kesulitan mendengarkan dan data yang dikumpulkan dari kuisioner sebagai instrument utama. Penelitian ini dilakukan di SMPN Widya Krama, participant adalah siswa kelas 8 dan jumlah participant adalah 20 siswa. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, siswa menemukan berbagai kesulitan seperti kualitas rekaman yang diguanakan dalam pengajaran listening, siswa mempunyai keterbatasan kosa kata, lama dan kecepatan dalam mendengarkan, perbedaan aksen dan perbrdaan budaya.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The procedure for teaching English as a second language must include listening. It appears to be similar to other abilities like writing, reading, and speaking. Another crucial communication skill is listening. this statement supported by Saricoban (1999) which is stated that listening is the skill to comprehend what human are saying.

The ability to listen also involves having a working grasp of the speaker's accent, syntax, and vocabulary. This supported by brown (2001) by stating listening is the significant factor in language learning and teaching since the learners do more listening than speaking, writing, and reading in classroom.

Generally, listening is the main skill in language that should be mastered for students because listening is the most important communication skills. According to Wolvin (2012) as cited in Hadian (2015) stated that Listening has been identified as one of the most commonly used and important communication skills in both personal and academic settings.

In learning English especially listening skill, Students faced some challenges. because listening is one of skill that really difficult. There are some theories that explained about listening difficulties faced by students but the researcher used the concept or findings from Bingol, Etc (2014) which stated that there are several difficulties that learners faced in listening such as quality recorded materials, unfamiliar vocabulary, listening length and speed, accent and cultural differences.

This research was conducted at SMPN Widya Krama because the researcher conducted teaching practice at that school. when the researcher taught English listening through song, the researcher found that some of the difficulties that students faced when listen such as the researcher found that there are students who likes listen a song but they did not understand what the meaning conveys in the song and also, they did not understand the message and every single words.

2. METHOD

This study applies qualitative method where the researcher is going to conduct this research using qualitative method, according to Creswell (2009) stated that Qualitative research is a method for investigating and comprehending the significance that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The research process includes developing questions and procedures, data collection in the participant's environment, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the data's meaning. The structure of the final written report is adaptable.

2.1 Site

This study used purposes sampling which took place at SMPN Widya Krama because the researcher conducted teaching practice at this school.

2.2 Participan

The participants of this study were the students of class 8 grades but the researcher just was conducted this study at the class VIII 3. While the total of participants were 20 students.

2.3 Data Collection

The primary data collection tool is the questionnaire. Roopa & Rani (2012) stated that A questionnaire is simply a set of mimeographed or printed questions that are completed by or for a respondent in order for him to express his opinion. The questionnaire can be written in Indonesian or English language, but in this section, researcher would be writing in Indonesian language.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

3.1.1 Quality recorded material

Despite the fact that we lived in the twenty-first century, the age of technology, some classrooms lacked computers, smart boards, multimedia systems, and so on. The quality of the sound system has an impact on listening comprehension as well. Poor recording quality may result from noises or unclear pronunciations. The majority of students believe that poor recording quality / low-quality tapes or disks are to blame for their difficulties with listening comprehension. the facilities could be a problem for students in learning listening. The facilities include tape recorded. Tape recorded could be an external factor that made students difficulties in listening. In some of their classes, some teachers use low-quality recorded materials.

3.1.2 Unfamiliar vocabulary

Even if the theme was unfamiliar, students found it easier to understand passages with familiar words. Knowing the meaning of the words may pique students' learning interests and improve their listening abilities. Another issue was that many words have multiple meanings, and when they are used in their uncommon context, students become perplexed. one of the important points in listening was vocabulary but it was the internal factor that made students difficulties during the listening activities.

3.1.3 Length and speed of listening

The level of students was extremely important when it came to listening to long parts and remembering everything. A lower-level student found it difficult to listen for more than three minutes before completing the required activities. The speed was another factor that made text listening difficult. The listener may struggle to catch the target words if the speakers speak faster than usual. students' ability levels can have a big effect in how well they retain knowledge when they listen to lengthy passages.

3.1.4 Accent

Accent of a speaker is one of the most important characteristics that affect listener comprehension; unfamiliar native and non-native accents can seriously hinder learners' listening comprehension, though being familiar with an accent can help.

3.1.5 Cultural differences

The topic could cover completely unfamiliar cultural territory to the students. Students may find it difficult to imagine what has been told in this case. In this case, the instructors should provide background information on the subject. Students may miss some points if the listening section was about Easter Day and it was not common in the area where the language was taught.

3.2 Discussion

The primary goal of this study was to identify the difficulties that students encountered while learning English, particularly listening. Following an examination of the questionnaire results, the researcher found that the students have difficulty during the listening process. The difficulties itself as mentioned by Bingol, Etc (2014) Students encountered difficulties in listening due to factors such as the quality of recorded material, cultural differences, unfamiliar vocabulary, length and speed of listening, and accent.

The facilities that support the listening process were available such as speakers but sometimes the speakers used have problems, the quality of sound system does not work properly or errors and the sound produced was not clear, the oldest sound system, poor recording quality, students had difficulty hearing what the speaker stated when listening.

In the same way, another difficulty was that the learners had a limited vocabulary. The speaker said words that the learners did not understand in the listening audio. Students encountered unfamiliar words on occasion, which caused them to pause and consider their meanings, causing them to miss the next section of the speech and the exercise.

Another source of difficulty was the length and speed with which people listened. The length and speed of listening are two of the most significant barriers to understanding. When the speaker spoke at a rapid pace, it was difficult for them to understand what was being said. Even if the words said were ones they had heard before. According to Underwood (1989) stated that there are some barriers to effective listening comprehension process. first, listeners cannot control the speed of speech. The biggest problem with listening comprehension is that listeners are not able to control how quickly speakers talk. Second, listeners cannot have words repeated and this can cause critical difficulties for them, students cannot replay a recording section. Teachers decide what and when to repeat listening texts and it is very difficult for teachers to know whether or not their learners understood what they have heard. Third, listeners do not have high vocabulary knowledge. Speakers may select words that listeners do not know them. Listeners may face an unfamiliar word which can stop them and think about the meaning of that word for a while and miss the next part of the speech. Fourth, listeners may lack contextual knowledge. Mutual knowledge and familiar texts can make communication easier for listeners. Listeners can sometimes comprehend the surface meaning of a passage but they can have substantial problems in understanding the whole meaning of a passage unless they are familiar with it. Fifth, it is not very easy for listeners to concentrate on the listening text. Sometimes a shortest break in attention can prevent comprehension. If the listening passage is interesting for listeners, concentration will be easy for them.

The last was accents. When students had little exposure to diverse accents, the range of accents made it difficult for them to listen. Students encountered this problem because they had grown accustomed to their own teacher’s accent and were shocked and unhappy when they found themselves unable to understand someone else’s. According to Goh (1999) stated that 66% of students cited a speaker's accent as one of the most important factors influencing listener comprehension. Unfamiliar accents, both native and non-native, can cause serious problems with learners' listening comprehension, whereas familiarity with an accent improves learners' listening comprehension.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1 Conclusion

After doing research in SMPN Widya Krama, there were several conclusions that can be concluded by the researcher. Conducting this research enable the researcher to deduce that Students encountered five listening difficulties. The first is quality of recorded material. The quality of recording is the main difficulty faced by students, if the quality of recording does not support it, the students will have difficulty during the listening process. Second is cultural differences. One of the most difficult aspects for students is cultural differences. The students cannot understand foreign cultures because they are not familiar with foreign languages and cultures. Third is unfamiliar or limited vocabulary. When it comes towards listening, the students have a poor vocabulary. They couldn't grasp part of the listening since they didn't understand some essential words. Even though the theme was unknown to them, learners could understand listening passages with famous words. Knowing the meaning of the terms may pique students' interest in studying and improve their listening skills. Furthermore, words have multiple meanings, which caused confusion among the students. The final category included paralinguistic characteristics such as accent, noise, rate of delivery, and pronunciation. The students were unfamiliar with various English accents. The speakers in audio recordings spoke quickly the majority of the time. The students had trouble catching the target words. Students struggled the most with listening comprehension since they cannot even control the speaker's speed. Similarly, Students struggled to hear the important words due to background noise.

4.2 Suggestions

Following the completion of this study, there are some suggestions that recommended for the teacher and students. there were a few difficulties that should be addressed. First, for the teacher should provide enough language learning facilities. Hopefully, better facilities will improve listening quality. Second, for students must practice on a regular basis and increase their vocabulary. One-way students might do is to seek up unusual words in the dictionary. Every day, students learn a large number of new words and their meanings thanks to the dictionary. In this case, utilizing technology was one of the better options. Students could download a dictionary to their computer or mobile phone. Students should also learn different English accents and word intonation. The best way to improve intonation is to carefully listen to a recorded conversation.

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