



Analyzing Teacher's Problems in Teaching Listening Comprehension

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Abstract

As one of English skill, listening is the most difficult skill to be taught and this process cannot be avoided by the teacher who teach English. This study aimed to find the problems encountered by the English teacher at SMP Santa Maria Prabumulih in teaching listening comprehension. This study was qualitative research with a case study as the research design. This study's participant was one English teacher taken by using a total sampling technique. Two data collection procedures were employed to determine the teacher's problems in teaching listening comprehension; a classroom observation, and interview questions for the teacher, and the data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed a set of problems that encounter the teacher in teaching listening and consequently contribute to the difficulty of the listening skill. There were several problems faced by the teacher, such as: (1) Students' Psychological Problems; (2) The Students' Lack of Prior Knowledge; (3) Students' Lack of Vocabulary; and (4) Lack of The Availability of Teaching Tools and Media.

Keywords: English teacher's problems, listening comprehension

A. Introduction

In recent years, teaching English to learners of other languages, sometimes known as TEFL, has gained a lot of popularity. The four abilities of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the focus of English language learning because these are the areas in which students struggle the most. When it comes to studying and teaching English, one of the most essential abilities is listening, which is one of the four language skills. Nadig (2013) stated that the many processes of understanding and making sense of spoken language are collectively referred to as listening comprehension.

In learning English, especially in Indonesia, when compared to other language skills such as reading, speaking, and writing, listening is a skill that is considered difficult and also neglected. Students realize that listening comprehension is difficult to learn and they ignore it. Utomo et al. (2019) state that based on his research which had been done to find out that English teaching at the early-level students in Indonesia seems to pay less attention to listening activities. It because most English textbooks apply paper-based designs that are not equipped with audio aids. Utomo also said that usually, the main source of listening for students is the voice of their own teacher.

Some teachers still find several problems in teaching listening. Harmer (2007) as cited in Aryana and Apsari (2018) stated that there are two factors that influence the difficulty of teachers in teaching listening. First, external factors such as: Equipment, it is the various teachers' facilities in the English language laboratory, audiotapes, sound systems or microphones. Second, internal factors are problems that come from within the individual, such as: Teacher's skills. Teacher skills are how to manage classes, match assignments and provide assessments. Teacher's voice, how they speaks and what it sounds like can make an important impact in the classroom.

In teaching English to EFL learners, the teacher is one of the factors that affect the success of the teaching and learning processes. English teachers must acquire proficiency in four essential skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as part of this instructional process. According to Nation and Newton (2017), listening is crucial, particularly for students who desire or require verbal and interpersonal communication engagement. In addition, for students, mastering English communication skills is a fundamental aspect of achieving success.

According to Vandergift (2007) as cited in Hapsari (2022), listening is like having an invisible metal grip on something, making it impossible to define. Listeners are also engaged in a number of activities, such as identifying sounds, comprehending vocabulary and linguistic structure, recognizing, translating accents and visuals, memorizing and translating information fast. The media, the students, and the educators are all potential lenses through which to examine the issue.

There have been several earlier studies that various researchers have carried out. The first is Aldama (2017), who researched the first-grade students of MAN 3 Bone for the 2017–2018 academic year. The researcher discovered five issues or problems in teaching listening

comprehension to first-graders at MAN 3 BONE based on the study that had been done. Based on observation, the factors that contributed to the problems in teaching listening comprehension were a poorly functioning language laboratory, a lack of vocabulary among students that prevented them from understanding the teachers' instructions and the teaching of listening comprehension, a lack of learning media that caused a lack of student interest in learning listening comprehension, and the students' diverse personalities. Secondly, Aryana (2018) conducted research focused on analyzing teacher's problems in teaching listening. Case studies and other qualitative research methods were utilized by the author in the course of this research. This investigation focused on one of the English teacher at MA Islahul Aqidah Cikalongwetan in West Java as its topic. Observation, interviews, and questionnaires are the methods that are being utilized in this study. In brief, the study's findings indicated that there are two elements; internal factors and external ones, that contribute to teachers' challenges. Internal components that the responder provided, such as his perception of the challenges of teaching, his preparation of listening materials, and his decisions regarding method, technique, and strategy. External factors include noise from environment-related activities like woodcutter machines, modules, media issues like cables connecting sound systems to laptops, English labs, power outages, and the disparity between the listening content of the 2013 Syllabus curriculum and the materials for the National Examination. Third, Alrawashdeh and Al-Zayed (2017) performed research to look into the problems english teachers' had when teaching listening comprehension in Karak schools, as well as their views on the topic. A teacher's questionnaire and informal interviews were the two tools that the researcher utilized in order to accomplish the goals of the study. A questionnaire was created in order to understand better the challenges that teachers' face while attempting to instill listening comprehension in their students. Informal interviews were another part of the convenience sample that was employed. It included seven instructors of the English language, and each of them responded to a set of three questions.

Following the findings of this research, there are two problems which are the main topics in this study. First, there were problems with how good the teachers were. Teachers need more courses that show how little experience they have. When teachers focus on teaching other skills, they lose sight of the main goal, which is to teach people how to understand what they hear. Second, the high number of students in a class and the lack of rich libraries, resources, teaching aids, supporting materials, and audio-visual teaching facilities like an English lab cause problems for teachers in terms of the learning environment and the

availability of resources and teaching aids. Fourth, Lestari (2021) researched to find out discover that the English teacher at MAN 1 Palembang had some challenges to overcome when teaching listening skills to students there. All of the information was gathered via conducting an interview with the subject of the study. According to the data above, there were several challenges that English language teachers had while trying to teach English listening comprehension, such as psychological issues that made it difficult for them to inspire their students. Even though the instructor tried to engage the students by utilizing numerous methods, strategies, and teaching tools to promote listening comprehension, the students appeared to lack enthusiasm. The teacher also ran into issues with the learners' prior grasp of the English language, which made it challenging to teach listening comprehension. Students who lacked prior understanding of the topic the teacher was about to teach had trouble, according to the teacher. Due to their inability to relate to the tale they had never heard before in Bahasa, several students were unable to respond to the questions on the exercise. In the last related study, Hapsari (2022) conducted research to find out the problems faced by teachers while teaching listening to EFL young learners. Three middle school teachers from three separate Semarang schools were used as participants in this study. Interviews and questionnaires were the two methods of data collection that were utilized in this study. As the results of data collection, the researcher found that the three teachers have essentially the same opinion regarding the problems they face when teaching EFL listening to young students, particularly seventh graders. Students in the seventh grade have a lower level of interest and motivation in the subject of listening since it is a new concept for them. As a result, some younger learners are less concentrated in the process of learning. Furthermore, students' restricted vocabulary and teaching aids/media make it challenging for teachers to learn listening since they might obstruct and complicate listening learning in class. As a result, teachers must develop engaging materials and approaches so that students may readily retain information and feel that listening learning is enjoyable rather than tiresome.

From the explanation that the researchers has described above, therefore the researcher will discuss about the problems faced by the teacher when teaching listening comprehension with the title "Analyzing Teachers' Problems in Teaching Listening Comprehension ".

B. Research Methodology

Research design

This research was conducted by using a qualitative approach, and its components were interview and observation with an English teacher from SMP Santa Maria Prabumulih. According to Cresswell (2012), qualitative research is a method that may develop and give knowledge of problems in social life, both on an individual and a collective level. A case study was used in this research because the researcher found the social phenomenon of observing teacher's problems in teaching listening comprehension. According to Cresswell, J.W. & Cresswell, J.D. (2018), a case study is a qualitative research approach in which the researcher conducts in-depth investigation of particular situations, such as a program, event, activity, process, or even a person. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the extent of the problems that teacher at the Junior High School of Santa Maria Prabumulih encounter when instructing students in listening comprehension.

Participant of study

SMP Santa Maria Prabumulih is the site of this study. The subject of this study was English teacher at SMP Santa Maria Prabumulih using a total sampling method. According to Creswell (2012), total sampling involves selecting all members of a defined population as the sample. This approach is beneficial for understanding phenomena when researchers want to ensure that their sample fully represents the population characteristics. The objective of the study was to identify teacher's problems with in teaching listening comprehension.

Data collection

In this study, the researcher conducted interview and observation to collect information about the teacher's problems in teaching listening comprehension at SMP Santa Maria Prabumulih. According to Creswell (2009) observation is the process of gathering open-ended firsthand information by observing people and places at a research field. This indicates that data collection used in the English teaching and learning process requires the use of observation as a necessary step. In this research, the interview was used to get the data about the teacher's problems in teaching listening comprehension at SMP Santa Maria Prabumulih. According to Ary et al. (2006), conducting an interview is a method for collecting data or information about the participants' opinions, views, and feelings on the occurrence. The detailed stages carried out during the interview process, involve several key

components aimed at gathering insights from the teacher regarding the challenges and complexity of teaching listening comprehension.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the process of assessing the qualitative data, the researcher used thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested that thematic analysis is conceptually flexible for discovering, characterizing, and interpreting patterns (themes) within a data set in considerable detail. They base their argument on the fact that thematic analysis can do all of these things, and using thematic analysis in qualitative research makes the analysis more valid because of the approach's accessibility, transparency, and flexibility. Braun and Clarke (2006) also stated that there are also six steps that are typically used in the process of analyzing qualitative data. These steps are as follows: step one requires the researcher to be familiar with the entire body of data; step two involves the generation of codes; step three involves the search for themes; step four consists of the review of themes; step five involves the definition and naming of themes; and step six consists of the production of a report.

Trustworthiness

During data collection and processing, the researcher used triangulation, a form of data collection that combines information collected through interview and observation. Creswell (2012) explains that in qualitative research, triangulation is the process of corroboration evidence from various individuals (such as a teacher and a student), multiple types of data (such as observations and interviews), and multiple methods of data collection (such as documents and interviews). Triangulation refers to the practice of collecting data on a single subject using more than one approach. This is a method for ensuring the reliability of research by employing a number of distinct strategies to gather data on the same subject. This strategy entails utilizing a range of samples in addition to the strategies that are utilized to collect data.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Results

The findings of the study concerned about teacher's problems in teaching listening comprehension at SMP Santa Maria Prabumulih. After analyzing the data from interview and observation, the data was analyzed by using thematic analysis. The description of the result was described as follows:

1. Students' Psychological Problems

From the results of observations, it appeared that some students seemed to pay less attention when the teacher was explaining because they were not motivated and not interested in participating in the teaching and learning process. When the teacher entered the classroom and was about to start the listening lesson, students were unwilling to focus on the material. Most of them looked uninterested in the teacher. Some of these students were seen doing activities outside the learning process, such as chatting with their friends, just staying silent, and daydreaming.

From the results of the interview, the researcher obtained information that basically the teacher has made efforts to increase student motivation, such as asking students what kind listening material they want, whether through audio or movies, and grouping students who are categorized as having low motivation into other groups so that they can ask their friends without being shy.

The English teacher at SMP Santa Maria Mrs. G explained:

“When I teach English, especially listening, students don't want to focus on the material I give. Most of them are not interested in listening and think listening is too difficult. So I look for ways to get them interested and motivated to learn. I will provide them some questions, such as what kind of listening material they want, for example through audio or movies. Sometimes I include the students who are categorized as having low motivation into other groups then the students can ask his/her friends' help who understands the lesson better without being shy. If they experience difficulties, then I will help them” (Personal communication, November 20, 2023).

Based on the teacher's statement, it can be concluded that student motivation in learning becomes an essential issue. With various help from the teacher, students will understand and appreciate the lesson.

2. The Students' Lack of Prior Knowledge

From the results of observations, when the teacher provides listening material about 'Love Our World' in unit 1 'Look Around You', students must focus on listening to audio related to the material. When students are listening to a dialogue conversation about how to wash hands properly and correctly, the teacher tries to ask questions in advance related to the material presented to build students' prior knowledge, with the sentences "How can thorough hand washing contribute to the prevention of the spread of diseases?" and it turned out that most students could not answer the question from the teacher. By encouraging students to think critically about the information they receive, activating prior knowledge enables them to formulate hypotheses regarding the material's substance. This

is in accordance with the results of interviews with the teacher G. The English teacher stated:

“In my opinion, one of the factors in the student's prior knowledge is that they are not familiar with English lessons. So, I used some methods such as using pictures, movies, or objects in real life. I will ask to students, ‘Look at this picture of a hand soap and water tap. How does it relate to what we learned yesterday about Love Our World?’, or I will invite students to listen to a story via audio, and make sure that before starting the lesson, students can think about what they already know about the material and how it can relate to the story. I am considering doing this because listening comprehension is greatly affected by students’ prior knowledge and abilities. It will be easier for students to understand and comprehend the material that they hear if they have prior knowledge about the subject matter that they are interested in. Students are able to use their prior knowledge to create predictions about the substance of the material that they are listen, which pushes them to think critically about the information that they are receiving” (Personal communication, November 20, 2023).

Thus, prior knowledge greatly affects students' listening comprehension. Students who study frequently and they have background knowledge of a wide variety of subjects, especially listening lessons, will have a better understanding than those who do not.

3. Students' Lack of Vocabulary

From the results of observations, the teacher provides listening material about 'No Littering' in unit 1 'Did it Rain Last Night?'. Before starting the listening material, the teacher teaches new things to enrich their vocabulary. For instance, the teacher selects words relevant to the material's topic. Then, the teacher arranged the word wall components, including word cards, alphabet cards, labels, and more. The teacher instructed the students to utilize, remove, or contribute to the words displayed on the wall. Additionally, the teacher engages the students in the process of creating and keeping the word wall through activities such as asking for word suggestions, word writing, word sorting, and word review. After that, the teacher instructed the students to listen the audio related to Galang and his family are on a bridge enjoying the view of Sungai Lestari on a Sunday afternoon. While listening to the audio, the teacher asked students to complete the sentences with the Past Tense form of the verbs. As it turned out, although the vocabulary of the clue was relatively easy, some students could not complete the sentences. It was seen that some of the students had struggled with completing the task because they were unable to figure out the meanings of many of the vocabulary based on the context in which they were used. Because of that, the teacher tries another thing to overcome the problem of students with lack of vocabulary. The teacher may play games like bingo that require utilizing and guessing words. This is something the teacher does because it helps students enhance their general comprehension and allows them to derive meaning from the words

delivered. This is in accordance with the results of the interviews with teacher G, the teacher said:

“If students don't have enough vocabulary, they cannot understand each sentence spoken by the teacher or through audio. They are not used to collecting new vocabulary to memorize or just to read. I have difficulty explaining it back, and it will hinder their learning process. If I still find my students struggling and uninterested in learning new vocabulary, I will try the 'Bingo' game. First, I put together a list of words I want to teach based on what we learned so far. Then I make bingo cards for each student by drawing or writing a word in each of the 4x4 or 5x5 squares on a piece of paper. I create a set of cards or a sheet of paper with the meanings of the words marked on them, like the meaning of ‘water’. During the game, I use these to call out the words. As an example, they should listen to me read out loud the meanings and mark on their bingo cards the words that go with them. They can mark the words with coins or other things. For example when the first student to get a row, column, or diagonal of marked words should shout "Bingo!" and read out loud the words they marked. Then I award them by points or gifts. I choose this game because ‘Bingo’ is a fun way for the students to improve their listening skills and learn new vocabulary. This is something that I do because it helps students enhance their general comprehension and gives them the opportunity to derive meaning from the words that are delivered. Students that have a larger vocabulary are better able to recognize and understand words, phrases, and expressions that are articulated through spoken language. It is possible for me to assist in the development of students' self-confidence by methodically correcting vocabulary shortages. This encourages students to actively participate in listening activities and to express themselves more effectively” (Personal communication, November 20, 2023).

4. Lack of The Availability of Teaching Tools and Media

Based on the results of classroom observations, the teacher had to bring her own laptop and speaker to the classroom because no tools were available at school. When entering the classroom and preparing to start the lesson, the teacher asked one of the students to prepare the speaker and play the audio using her laptop. There are several possibilities as to why the school does not support tools for teachers to teach listening to students. The school may not have sufficient staff or tools to provide good media for listening activities. For instance, the school might need more computers, headphones, speakers, CDs, audio podcasts, or online accounts to give students a wide range of audio to listen to. The school could also be unaware of how important it is for students to learn listening comprehension for personal and academic development. Thus, listening skills might not be as crucial to the school as other skills, such as reading, writing, and speaking. This is in accordance with the results of interviews with the teacher. The English teacher G has explained:

“For me, the media or tools needed to teach listening are very important to support the learning process in the classroom. Due to the lack of facilities in this school, so I have to use a laptop and speakers that I bring myself. In my opinion and based on some information in this school, there are the reasons why this school does not support media or tools, such as lack of resources. It is possible that the school does not have enough the equipment, or staff to provide suitable media for listening activities. So, the school might not have enough audio equipment like computers, headphones, speakers, CDs, podcasts, or internet subscriptions to provide students with a wide range of listening materials.” (Personal communication, November 20, 2023).

For the teaching and learning process to be effective and interesting, it all depends on the tools and media used by the teacher when teaching listening comprehension. The school should provide adequate media or tools to make it easier for teachers to convey material to students

2. Discussion

This study's interpretation focuses on the data analysis results, which tries to validate and strengthen the findings that were discovered. Based on the results of the data results obtained using thematic analysis, the researchers found that there were several problems faced by the English teacher in teaching listening comprehension, as follows; (a) the students' psychological problems, (b) students' lack of prior knowledge, (c) students' lack of vocabulary, and (d) lack of the availability of teaching tools and media.

First problems of the English teacher at SMP Santa Maria Prabumulih discovered that she had trouble getting her students to learn efficiently because of psychological factors. According to Guo and Wills (2006) as cited in Hwaider (2017), listening comprehension is a multifaceted psychological process in which auditory language is processed by the receiver. It is an interactive process involving psychological activities and language knowledge. Psychological factors are things that have absolutely nothing associated with thinking, like a student's interest, attention, learning feelings, attitudes, and willpower. There are psychological factors that contribute to the problems that teachers have in motivating students in the eighth grade. It appears that students are less motivated and less enthusiastic about comprehending the material that they are listening to. This result was in line with Lestari (2021), who found that students' psychological factors are one of the problems faced by teachers when teaching listening comprehension. The teacher faced a significant obstacle in the form of a lack of motivation and interest on the part of the students, which made it difficult for them to effectively teach listening comprehension.

Second, teaching listening comprehension becomes problems when students lack of prior knowledge on the English subject. In the classroom, the teacher encountered problems while dealing with students who did not have any prior knowledge about the subject matter that she was about to present. Hwaider (2017) stated that in the process of learning foreign languages, it is important to emphasize that learners engage in more than just acquiring the linguistic system of those languages. When it comes to learning other languages, a statement like this shows that there is another area, which is non-linguistic. The fact of the matter is that

a language is the instrument that individuals use to express many aspects of their lives, including their views, thoughts, facts, and various feelings. Prior knowledge of the students' is an element of language processing that improves the comprehension of language learners. As a result, some students were unable to respond to the teacher's question because they have never heard the information from other sources. Thus, a prior knowledge may influence listening comprehension of students. The student who possessed some prior knowledge would exhibit greater comprehension in contrast to the student who did not.

Third, the students' less of vocabulary becoming one of the problems in teaching English. In listening comprehension, vocabulary is one of the most crucial aspects. Additionally, it exhibits commendable listening comprehension. According to Broughton et al (1978) as cited in Hwaider (2017), one of the reasons why it is difficult is that the vocabulary that is utilized in conversations or in spoken languages frequently varies and is distinct from the vocabulary that is utilized in written languages. The English teacher at SMP Santa Maria Prabumulih has found that one of the factors that become a problem when teaching listening is the lack of vocabulary that students have. Some students encountered challenges with finishing assignments and were incapable of constructing complete sentences due to their inability to deduce the meaning of several vocabulary terms from their context of usage. Therefore, students' lack of vocabulary becomes problems for the teacher when teaching listening comprehension.

Fourth, when it related to teaching listening, the lack of tools or media was the problems or that the teacher encountered. According to Heinic et al (1996) as cited in Aryana (2018), the following types of media are used in the teaching of the listening process: The teacher makes use of a computer, which is a type of electronic media, to save all of the files, such as playing audio or video conversations, recordings of DVDs and MP3s, and so on. This result was in line with Lestari (2021), who discovered that the most challenging aspect of teaching listening comprehension for teachers is preparing the material that would be presented to students. The teacher has to bring her own laptop and speaker to the classroom because there are no headphones or other media available at school. Another problem here is that when the audio was played through the speaker, it often suddenly stops in the middle of the conversation. Thus, media that was not complete or qualified had a big effect on learning because media was important for learning English, especially listening comprehension.

Students can stay interested in learning by using media. This keeps the learning process from getting monotonous.

D. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the result of data analysis by using thematic analysis, the researcher found that there were some problems faced by English teacher in teaching listening comprehension at SMP Santa Maria Prabumulih. All the data involved was obtained from observing and interviewing the participant. The researcher found some problems that discussed in the previous chapter. The results of the observations and interviews showed the problems encountered by the teacher in teaching listening to young learners, especially in the eighth grade of junior high school. The problems are related to as follows: (a) the students' psychological problems, (b) students' lack of prior knowledge, (c) students' lack of vocabulary, and (d) lack of the availability of teaching tools and media. The teacher found that students pay less attention because they have low interest and motivation in learning listening so students lacked concentration in the learning process. In addition, the students' limited prior knowledge and vocabulary makes the teacher have to repeat the subject matter several times. In addition, learning tools/media and materials that are not available at school make it difficult for teachers in teaching listening in the classroom. For this reason, the school has to prepare appropriate tools and media to be taught to students so that the learning process of listening comprehension becomes enjoyable and not monotonous.

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