EXPLORING EFL STUDENTS' LISTENING DIFFICULTIES AND STRATEGIES IN ONLINE LEARNING

SKRIPSI

BY

M. FARID FUADI

NPM 216.0107.3101

UNIVERSITY OF ISLAM MALANG

FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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ABSTRACT

Listening skill is the first and fundamental skill that is developed and used at the beginning of language learning to advance in language acquisition. Listening skill is important to ensure good communication in any language, but listening skill is considered to be difficult to master. Moreover, in the shift to online learning, the students might encounter difficulties in listening in which they have to overcome, therefore it is necessary to study students' strategies used to solve listening difficulties in online learning.

This researcher implemented a descriptive qualitative research method for this study through semi-structured interviews. The data collection for this research is from five students of the English department at the University of Islam Malang through the use of voice note WhatsApp platform.The data were presented using figure and illustration to describe the findings as well as to make it easier to conclude the study.

The result shows that the students have their unique way of dealing with online learning problems that they encounter. Each student also has different causing factors that influence difficulties in online listening. It is also found that not all strategies used by students are effective against the problems they encounter especially for the problems that are not under their direct authority. It is suggested for the next researcher to conduct a study about more specific listening strategies to cope up with online learning.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter defines the research background, research problems and question, objective of the study, scope and limitation of the research, the significance of the study, and definition of the key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Listening skill is the most basic and the first skill used at the beginning of language learning. According to Nation (2009), listening is a fundamental skill to learn to advance in the acquisition of another language skills. Listening skill plays an important role of language learning process as good language proficiency requires good comprehension in listening. Furthermore, Gilakjani and Sabouri (2011) added that listening is the most used skill in everyday life as about 40-50% of the process of communication involves listening. The skill of listening involves the process of giving attention to receive a message from hearing (Schmitt, 2016) on the other hand, Walker (2014) stated that the ability to listen is indeed significant in communication, as lacking skills in listening might result in misunderstanding and even failure to convey the message. Additionally, Vandergrift (1999) also stated that listening is a complex process in where listeners play an active task in distinguishing sounds, recognizing vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpreting intonation and stress, and get the message in the process.

The significance of listening skills is without a doubt to ensure good communication in any language, but listening skill is considered to be a difficult skill to learn (Walker, 2014). There are many kinds of listening difficulties faced by language learners such as cultural differences, unknown vocabulary, the clarity of the speech as well as the length and speed of the speech (Maulida, 2018). Moreover, there are many studies dedicated to identify listening difficulties. According to Vandergrift (2011), the difficulties in listening are caused by not realizing the importance of focusing on the whole meaning instead of translating word by word. Moreover, Hedge (2006) found that the difficulties are caused by the lack of visual support as learners listen to the recording without seeing the expression and body language.

Nowadays, the use of online learning has been increased rapidly due to the global pandemic that affected many countries in the world (Bailey, 2020). However, the application of online learning is not always suitable for every learning teaching and learning as some learning might require direct interaction (Moorhouse, 2020). In term of technology implementation, Davidson (2015) stated that it is not a one fits all method as it depends on the types of technology and learning material, it requires decent development to meet the suitable pedagogic standard.

In terms of English learning and teaching, suitable and proper online learning method development is required to satisfy the needs in ELT online learning (Bailey, 2020). Moreover, According to Susilowati (2020), learning listening is considered to be complex to implement in online learning

environments amongst the four English skills. Moreover, Milliner (2017) stated that effective listening has several challenges of online learning in listening class such as difficulties in getting the gist of the speaker, lack of vocabulary as well as rate and length of speech. Additionally, Susilowati (2020) also noted some challenges that online students encounter listening such as decoding information, grasping the speech, and speech comprehension and recognition.

To get good ability in listening suitable strategies are required, listening strategies involve a particular technique to receive information from the speech (Putri, 2019). According to Vandergrift (2012), listening strategies are defined as the combination of metacognitive and cognitive strategies to comprehend the spoken material. According to Richards (2008), metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process while they are planning, monitoring, and evaluating based on their current capacity of knowledge. Meanwhile, cognitive strategies are related to comprehending and storing input in long-term memory, it involves two main aspects that are bottom-up and top-down strategies (Vandergrift, 2012). As stated by Oxford (1990), that cognitive strategy is practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, creating a structure for input and output.

Knowing the significance of listening and the problems that might be encountered by students, the researcher interested in studying EFL students' strategies and difficulties in online listening classes as well as the factors causing those difficulties.

1.2 Research Problems

Based on the background of the study the researcher writes the research questions as follows:

1. What are the factors causing listening difficulties in EFL students in online learning?

2. What are the English listening strategies used by EFL students in online learning?

1.3   Purpose of the Research

According to the research questions above, the researcher formulates the purpose of the research as follows:

1. To identify the factors causing listening difficulties on EFL students in online learning.

2. To identify English listening strategies used by EFL students in online learning.

1.4.   Scope and Limitation of the Study

In this study, the researcher will conduct the study on 5 respondents from 5th-semester students of English department students at the University of Islam Malang. The study is focused on 5th-semester students who have finished listening 1-4 courses. The study is limited on the number of participants that only 5 students and did not includes all students equally in selecting the participants.

1.5.   Significance of the Study

This study is like agree to give a significant contribution from the information in the context of listening difficulties.

1.5.1   Theoretical Benefit

Theoretically, this study give information on the difficulties of listening encountered even by high achiever students.

1.5.2. Practical Benefit

For English students, this study allows students to understand and be able to find the solution from information about the difficulties in listening encountered by high achiever students and the causes of that difficulties.

For English teachers and lecturers, this study will help teachers and lecturers in supporting their students in listening by developing teaching methods from information about the causes and difficulties in listening encountered by high achiever students.

For the next researcher, this study is like agree to give beneficial information in conducting a study about learning difficulties that might be encountered even for high achiever learners.

1.6   Definition of the Term

The researcher explains the definition of the key terms used in this research for a better understanding of the context.

1. Listening in EFL : The term listening in EFL refers to receptive skills and one of four English language skills that involve the ability to get and comprehend information from the hearing.

2. Difficulties in Listening : The term difficulties in listening refer to any possible hindrance in English listening that involves precision and comprehension in online learning.

3. Listening Strategies : Listening strategies refer to the effective way to get

information from spoken language material.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In this chapter, the researcher points out the conclusion based on the result of the study and discussion as well as giving suggestions for the reader and the next researcher.

5.1   Conclusion

The study concludes that students encountered many problems due to various problems in the implementation of online listening class. The researcher also found that the cause that differs from one to another even though some students are having similar difficulties. Each student also has a different way of dealing with difficulties. However, the strategies used by students did not always solve the difficulties, this is due to some problems that come from instructor and institute which the students have no direct authority to deal with the problems such as cheating that happens in the class or decide the intensity of assignment they can take. For the problems that students can do anything about is the problems that related on the students' own limitation such as difficulties in coping up with the recording by keep following the recording and left the difficult things for later and lacking information that can be solved by independent learning. In this study, it is also found that moat students perceive that their strategy works against the problems they encounter.

5.2   Suggestion

Based on the result and conclusion of the study, the researcher points out some suggestions as follows:

It is suggested for the students to keep practicing and develop strategies in online listening that are suitable for personal needs, it is necessary as each individual has their own needs and strategies suitable for them.

For the lecturers, it is suggested to maintain good communication in online learning with multi-directional communication to build a good online classroom environment.

For the researchers, it is suggested to conduct deeper research about more specific listening strategies such as bottom-up, top-down, and interactive strategies or cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

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