
Problems Faced by the Third Semester Students of English Education Study Program in Listening Skills at Muhammadiyah University Of Palu

Masalah-Masalah yang Dihadapi Mahasiswa Semester Tiga Program Study Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris dalam Kemampuan Mendengarkan di Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to investigate the listening problems faced by the third semester students of English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University Palu. This research applied descriptive research method. The subject was the third semester students of English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University Palu. The number was seven students. The data of the research were collected through a questionnaire, interview, and observation check list. The result of this research indicates that the students faced problems; (1) they get difficulty to determine the main idea and details information; (2) they are lack of vocabulary; (3) they are less initiative to read; (4) they get difficulty with speaker's accent; (5) they get less focus; (6) they have less motivation to express themselves.

Key words: *Problems; listening; skill*

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui masalah pendengaran yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa semester tiga Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian deskriptif. Subjek penelitian adalah mahasiswa semester 3 Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu. Jumlahnya adalah tujuh siswa. Data penelitian dikumpulkan melalui daftar pertanyaan, wawancara, dan observasi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa menghadapi banyak masalah; (1) mereka kesulitan menentukan ide utama dan merinci informasi; (2) mereka kekurangan kosakata; (3) mereka kurang berinisiatif untuk membaca; (4) mereka mendapat kesulitan dengan aksen pembicara; (5) mereka kurang fokus; (6) mereka kurang memiliki motivasi untuk mengekspresikan diri.

Kata kunci: Masalah; keterampilan; menyimak

BACKGROUND

English is very important to learn because English is a global language that is commonly used to communicate with people who come from abroad. Even the young children, they are using English in their daily activities now, although there is still some of those who mix the native language to English.

To master English is learning not only about language skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing, but also the language components namely: vocabulary, grammar, tenses, pronunciation, and spelling. As we know listening is one of the language skills. Listening is receiving language through the ears. Listening involves identifying the sounds of speech and processing them into words and sentences. Listening in any language requires focus and attention. It is a skill that some people need to work harder than others. Listening in a foreign language requires even greater focus.

In fact, many students cannot understand the words or sentences spoken in English verbally by the interlocutor. It means that their Listening skills are lacking. For example, basically humans cannot talk before listening. We can observe this on the development of children under five years. They generally get the vocabulary from what they hear and what they see at the moment interacting with the mother and the people around her. Wallace (2004:13) argues that "listening skills are a very important skill because these skills make people gain insight, understanding, knowledge and information, and achieving success in communicating with others". Therefore, listening is a very important skill in language, but listening is not a simple process, a listener must distinguish between sounds, capturing, and understanding vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpreting stress and intent, remembering and interpreting all at once.

Listening is an essential part of English as a foreign language. It seems like the other skills such as writing, reading, and speaking. Listening is very important skill because it is the most widely used in daily life. Learning listening will help us to improve speaking skill considerably. People need to hear various types of English repeatedly and continuously if they want to communicate properly, meaningful, and naturally. It means that without hearing people cannot acquire language because listening provides language input. Teaching listening needs more attention in order to develop students' language.

In some cases of the language classroom, listening was considered to be the most difficult language skill for students because it needs more attention and concentration to comprehend the material that included understanding dialogue and monologue text. It could be said that listening is a complex process in which many things happen simultaneously inside the mind. Nevertheless, the lecturers hold a very crucial demand in learning process. The lecturer had ability to handle the students and the class circumstances. When the students find difficulties in their listening, it was naturally because they were studying. It became the lecturers' responsible to solve the difficulties faced by the students. However, most lecturers did not pay attention about that. The teacher might assume that it was not important to do.

Learning listening is not easy but most students still ignore it. The problems faced by students certainly have an impact on the success of learning. Based on the preliminary observation of the third semester students at English Education Study Program Muhammadiyah University of Palu, the researcher found that in listening class, students face problems. The researcher who is also one of the students from English Education Study Program Muhammadiyah University of Palu felt challenged to find the problems faced by students in listening class. Based on the above problems, the researcher is interested in investigating about listening with the title "Problems Faced by the Third Semester Students of the English Education Study Program in Listening skill of Muhammadiyah University of Palu".

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher used descriptive research method which aims for investigating students' problem faced in listening. The subject of this research is the third semester students of English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Palu. The total of number of population is seven students. In this research, the researcher used total sampling technique. The researcher conducted the research at Muhammadiyah University of Palu. The students from different intelligence, social background, and characteristics of students setting and subject of the research. The researcher conducted the research on September 2019.

The researcher used three kinds of instruments to collect the data of research; questionnaire, interview, and observation. Then, there are three kinds of instrument used in collecting data questionnaire, interview, and observation. Firstly, the researcher gave questionnaire to the students in the classroom. Secondly, the researcher interviewed the lecture who teach listening. The last one is class observation.

The obtained data from the questionnaire, interview, and observation are analyzed descriptively. In this technique of data analysis, the researcher describes the problems faced by the fifth semester students in Listening at Muhammadiyah University Palu.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The Analysis of the Data Collected from Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of forthteen questions distributed to the students. The questionnaire is divided into six statements. It will be explained below.

The first question is about their lecturer that provide explanations.

Table 1. Provide explanation

| No | Statements | Response | | | |
|----|---|----------|--------|-------|--------|
| | | Never | Seldom | Often | Always |
| 1 | Lecturers provide explanations before listening | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 |

Tables 1 shows that the lecturer often provide the explanations before listening task. Three students choose “always”, four students select “often” and no one student pick “never” or “seldom”. It means the lecturer always provide the explanations before listening task in every meeting.

The second statement is about message content problems. Among of them are explained below:

Table 2. Message Content

| No. | Statement | Response | | | |
|-----|--|----------|--------|-------|--------|
| | | Never | Seldom | Often | Always |
| 2. | During the listening process, You ever felt difficult in determining the Main Idea | 0 | 3 | 4 | 0 |
| 3. | You often find it difficult to collect important information conveyed by the speaker | 0 | 3 | 4 | 0 |

Table 2 message content problems in the first question is about to find the Main Idea in listening conversation or text. Three students select “seldom”, four students pick “often”, and no one student choose “never” or “always”. Then, the second question in this case is about to find the Detail Information in listening task. The result of the question is three students choose “seldom”, four student select “often” and also no one student pick “never” or “always”. Both of the result, it means the students have difficulties to find Main Idea and Detail Information.

The third statement is about speaker’s problems

Table 3. Speaker’s Recording

| No | Statements | Response | | | |
|----|------------|----------|--------|-------|--------|
| | | Never | Seldom | Often | Always |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. | During listening, you often follow the native speaker's intonation or speed | 0 | 3 | 4 | 0 |
| 5. | During listening, you can follow the native speaker's intonation to guess the words that you did not know | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 |

Table 3 shows the statement is about student can/cannot follow the native speaker's intonation or speed. Then, response from students is four students select “often”, three students choose “seldom”, and no one student pick “always” or “never”. It means almost of students can follow native speaker’s intonation or speed. Second question is about students can/cannot you follow the native speaker's intonation to guess the words that they did not know. Then, seven students choose “seldom” and no one student select “never”, “often”, or “always”. The students cannot follow the native speaker's intonation to guess the words that they did not know.

The four statement is listener’s problems

Table 4. The Listener

| No | Statements | Response | | | |
|----|---|----------|--------|-------|--------|
| | | Never | Seldom | Often | Always |
| 6 | Before listening, you clarify the purpose of the listening task | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| 7 | You have difficulty in translating dialogues or texts that are spoken native speakers | 0 | 3 | 4 | 0 |
| 8 | During the listening process, you have ever felt less focused or had difficulty concentrating | 0 | 2 | 5 | 0 |
| 9 | During listening, you make a small note to find problems in the dialogue or text listening | 0 | 5 | 2 | 0 |

Table 4 shows that first question is the students clarify the purpose of listening task or not. There are six students select “always”, one student choose “often”, and no one student pick “never” or “seldom”. The result of this questions the students always clarify the purpose of the listening task before listening. The second question is about the difficulty of translate the dialogues or texts. Four students choose “often”, there are three students pick “seldom”, and none student select “never” or “always”. The students’ response is they feel difficulty to translate the dialogues or text. The third question is students’ feel to less focus or difficulty concentrating. There are five students pick “often”, two students choose “seldom”, and no one student select “never” or “always”. The students’ response is they feel to less focus or difficulty concentrating. Then, the forth question is about students make a small note if they find problems in dialogues. Two students select “often”, five students pick “seldom” and there is no student that pick “never” or “always”. From the result rare student make a small note if they get problems in dialogues or text when listening class. Last question in this statement is about students open a dictionary if they find word, phrases, or idioms that they don't know yet. There are seven students pick “often” and none student select “never”, “seldom”, or “always”. The result of this question is students open a dictionary when they get word, phrases, or idioms that you don't know yet.

The fifth statement is physical setting

Table 5. Physical Setting

| No | Statements | Response | | | |
|-----|--|----------|--------|-------|--------|
| | | Never | Seldom | Often | Always |
| 11. | During the process of listening, the room is noisy | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12. | During listening, you often find Unclear Sound | 0 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| 13 | The media used function properly | 0 | 1 | 5 | 1 |

In table 5 physical setting in the first question is about the room noisy. There are seven students choose “never” and no one student select “seldom”, “often”, or “always”. It means the room is not noisy. Second question is about unclear sound. None student pick “never” or “always”, two students select “often”, and five students choose “seldom”. It means they get rarely get unclear sound. In the last question is about media used functions properly. There is a student select “always”, five students pick “often”, one student choose “seldom” and none student select “never”. It means the media used always works well.

Last statement is lecturer motivation

Diagram 1. Lecturer motivation

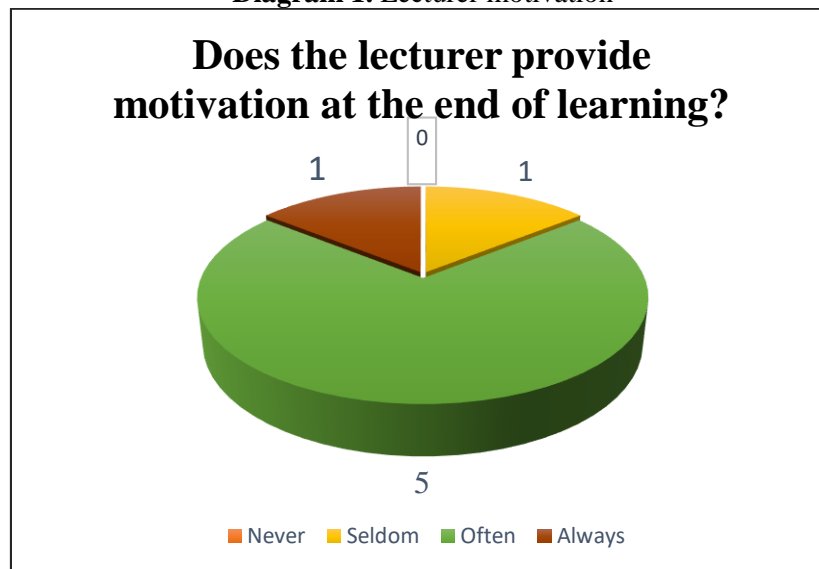


Diagram 1 lecturer motivation in the first question is seven students that became subject selected their own answer. Based on their answer, there is a student choose “always”, five students select “often”, a student pick “seldom”, and none student select “never”. The data show that the lecturer always give them motivation in every meeting.

FINDING INTERVIEW

The researcher interviewed the lecturer of listening comprehension course to get accurate data to support this research on October 02th 2019. The interview consisted of seven questions. The researcher describes the results of the interview.

The main problem usually found by the students in listening class

In the first main problem faced by students is lacking practice. The students rarely practice to listen any material outside the listening class. Second problem is lacking of vocabullary. It interm of

the meaning and the pronunciation. The students find difficult to recognise the pronunciation of the words and then the words itself. The students also didnot know the meaning of the words. So they make them difficult to understand the message from the audio.

Finding a message content

In the message content have two kind, there are finding a main idea and details information. The first is about a finding a main idea the lecturer states the students have difficult to find this. It is because the students lack of vocabullary. The lecture suggests that “In lestening they need to know how to pronounce the words by knowing the pronunciation of the words they may be able identify the meaning how ever if they couldnot recognise the words how come they interpret the meaning”.

The second is about finding details information. The lecture states they lack of bacground knowledge. It is because they do not read the materials at home or before the class begin. The lecture also always ask them to read the material and keep on them mind what the exercise need. But in the fact the students are lazy to read the materials at home.

The changing accent always make the students feel difficult

The student always feel difficultf the accent always changes. It is because every country in the world have different English accent. Although the common accent is three. There are British English Accent, American English Accent, and Australian English Accent. The lecturer state when the speaker change their accent the student get confuse. The pronunciation of those accent is absolutely different. It is not just about the pronunciation that have difference but also the spelling of the word.

The lecturer give a key word

In listening before the lecturer ask them to listen they will discuss the material first. The lecturer train her students to inference by using picture and the students give the opinion. In finding the key word the lecturer ask her students to read. From reading the question they may know the key words of the audio that the students are going to listen.

The lecture correct the answer

The lecture always guide the students how to find the right answer. Then, how to find what and from where the answer. In every exercises the lecture always ask her students what is the clue from this question.

Physical setting

In physical setting have three part. There are noisy room, unclear sound, and poor qalyti file. The first is noisy room. The room is not noisy. The second is the unclear sound. There is no unclear sound from the audio. And the last is poor quality file. The lecture use good quality file in her listening class.

Lecturer motivation

Motivation is importance for the students. There are five benefit of motivation. First, it makes students enthusiastic in participating in learning. Second, it minimizes feeling saturated. Third, it builds an attitude of optimism in students. Last, it teaches students to build student’s confidence so as not give up easily.

FINDING OBSERVATION

The researcher observes the third semester students of English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Palu. The class consists of seven students. From the results of observational research the researcher found several problems faced by students including lack of attention from students, difficulties in determining main ideas and detailed information, lack of initiative from students, different English accent, lack of vocabulary, and teaching method in listening. These problems will be explained in more detail as follows;

The lecturer always give them an explanation before starting the listening task. The students still could not understand and they also less focus. It means the students did not pay attention to what the lecturer explained. The lecturer also give them motivations in every meeting. It means the lecturer

want her students more active and focus on her class. Before listening task begin the lecture ask her students for identifying the exercises. But the other side the students cannot identify exercises because they are lacking of vocabulary. Therefore, the students can not translate it. The lecture has prepared the material in a book. It is given so that students are more initiative to read or identify the exercises before class begins.

Determine the main idea and details information is very important in listening because from both the lecturer can see how far students understand the material provided. In a fact, students still have difficulty in determining the main ideas and detailed information in listening. This is due to the lack of vocabulary from students. Not only that, pronunciation is also one of the aspects that cause students difficulty in determining the main idea and detailed information.

Based on the observation, the researcher found that students lacked initiative in learning, especially in listening. This can be seen from when students find difficulties only two out of seven students open a dictionary. Even though sometimes they just guess words based on the intonation and expression of the speaker. By opening a dictionary to look for words that are not understood by students this can also help students add to their vocabulary which incidentally they lack vocabulary. The other side also students also rarely make small notes if they find difficulty in listening, either during the listening process or when the lecturer asks students to identify tasks to be done.

Every country has a different English accent. As explained in the interview with the lecturer. Accent is very influential in the learning English goals, especially in listening. Sometimes in the process of listening to one speaker to another speaker has a different accent. Even the speaker's speed is difficult for students to follow. Therefore students are always difficult to conclude what the speaker said. In this case the researcher found the accent indeed greatly influenced the success of student learning. Accent is also one of the problems faced by students in listening.

If it is reviewed from the previous explanation, the researcher concludes that some problems faced by students due to lack of student vocabulary, lack of learning initiatives, even the speaker's accent is one of the problems faced by students. Not only that, researchers also assume that the physical setting will also affect student learning success. The intended physical settings include noisy rooms, unclear sound, and poor quality files of the audio. However, from observation researchers found that there were no problems faced by students in physical settings. The room used by students is not noisy, it even seems quiet. Then the sound produced by the speaker is very clear that there is no unclear sound. And finally the lecturer uses a good quality file of the audio. Therefore in terms of physical setting it is not a problem faced by students.

Based on the observations of problems faced by students not only because of the students themselves or listening itself. Teaching methods from lecturers can also be one of the problems faced by students. Teaching methods from lecturers are very important in the success of listening learning. As long as the researcher makes observations, the researcher finds that the teaching method of the lecturer is very professional in teaching. She is happy to help students who find problems in their class. In listening key word is really needed to help students find the main idea or determine detailed information. In fact the lecturer always provides a clue or provide key word in each listening task. Then the lecturer also gives appreciation to students who are active in class. Appreciation is given by lecturers so that students are more enthusiastic in learning, especially in listening. Finally, the lecturer also always helps students who answer assignments incorrectly. She also explained that was one of her responsibilities as a teacher.

DISCUSSION

In general, there is consistency between data from student questionnaires, lecturer interviews, and classroom observations. With regard to the first research question, the results show that there are various problems faced by students in listening. The lecturer said that students' speaking performance was influenced by the lack of student learning initiatives. Other problems are also due to the lack of vocabulary from students on the other hand also influenced by the speaker's accent. Yagang (1994) states that the problems in listening are accompanied by the four following factors. They are the message content, the speaker, the listener, and the physical settings. Of the four factors, the results of observations based on students' questionnaires, interviews with lecturers, and observations conducted by the researcher in class will be explained as follows.

As has been explained that there are four factors that become problems faced by students in listening. First is about message content. The results of students' questionnaires are very similar to those in lecturer interviews. The students mention that they still have difficulty in determining the main idea and detailed information. The lecturer also mentioned that it was true that the students still had difficulty in determining the main ideas and detailed information. Likewise, it can be through observation class by the researcher. The researcher found that students still had difficulty in determining the main idea.

Second is listener's problem. From the results of the questionnaire on students it can be concluded that sometimes they still find it difficult to translate, identify tasks, and often even feel less focused in class. In the interview, the lecturer said it happened because students lacked vocabulary. Students are also reluctant to open dictionaries if they find words that are difficult for them to understand. Then students are also less motivating themselves therefore they often lose focus in learning especially in listening class.

Third is speaker's problem. This problem is due to the speaker's accent is always changing. Based on the results of the questionnaire and interview even observations in the classroom really accent makes students have difficulty in listening. Not just an accent, the reader's speed also makes it difficult for students to follow. but another thing, students can guess the words they don't know based on the speaker's expression and intonation.

Last is physical settings. In this case, the researcher did not find the problem faced by students. the results of the questionnaire and interview also stated that the physical setting is not a problem that inhibits students in learning to listen. As explained before, the room used is not noisy even impressed quiet. Then, the absence of unclear sound. And finally the media used has good file quality. So it is very clearly used in the listening process.

In general, the results of the investigation prove that the students experience many problems in listening class. In addition, there are many factors that contribute to their success and failure in doing the listening task. Overall, the teaching and learning of listening skills in the third semester students of English Education Study Program, Muhammadiyah Universities Palu must be increased in order to achieve the expected learning goals.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research aims to investigate the problems faced by the Third Semester Students Of English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University Palu in listening skill. The research indicates that the students faced many problems that are (1) they are difficult to determine the main idea and details information; (2) they are lacking of vocabullary; (3) they are less initiative to read; (4) they are fell difficult with speaker's accent; (5) they are less focus; (6) they have no motivation to express themselves.

Based on the results of the research, some recommendations are made for both the lecturer and the students of English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University Palu. Firstly, the way to teach lecturers is good but it must be further improved in order to achieve learning goals. Secondly, lecturers must give more appreciation to students so that they are more enthusiastic in learning, especially in listening class. Third, lecturers should instill more constructive motivations so that students are more enthusiastic in learning not only in listening classes even in other classes.

As for students, first they must improve their vocabulary. There are many ways you can do to add vocabulary. One of them is reading, opening a dictionary if you find a word that is difficult to understand, and making small notes to be easy to remember and read again if you forget the word. Second, they should listen more practice outside of learning. listening practice can be done by watching movies without subtitles, listening to music, lectures, debates and etc in English. Finally, they should be able to motivate themselves in learning. therefore learning does not become boring, they can focus more on learning, and they will find satisfying learning outcomes. Hopefully, this research can contribute to the improvement of English teaching and learning in English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University Palu.

DAFTAR PUSTAKA

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