STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING LISTENING COMPREHENSION THROUGH ONLINE LEARNING

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Abstract: This research is aimed to find out the factors that cause students' difficulties during online learning in listening class and learning strategies of students to overcome their difficulties in learning listening comprehension. The sample of the research is twenty-one students of Academic Listening class at English Education Study Program that conducted in an online learning. This research is a descriptive qualitative one that uses questionnaires, interviews, and documentation to collect data. The researcher distributed the questionnaire and interview to the students that enrolled in Academic Listening class. After analyzing the data, the researcher found that the factors that caused fourth-semester students' difficulties in learning listening comprehension are problems about the message, speaker, and physical setting. Thus, the learning strategies used by the students in learning listening comprehension are cognitive, metacognitive, memory, compensation, affective, and social. Then, the implementation of the strategies are trying to remember the words by pronouncing them, translating the sentences into their own language, remembering many vocabularies, guessing the meaning of the new word or connecting it with other words in spoken text, listening to many English songs and watching English videos on You tube, encouraging themselves to do the task and to be active in the class, and talking to their classmates if they have problems in listening class.

Keywords: *Students' Difficulties, Listening Comprehension, Online Learning*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has felt the impact of the corona virus disease for a year, where the disease began to enter Indonesia in March 2020 caused some community activities were stopped because the government urged all activities to be carried out from home. This also affects education in Indonesia where the teaching and learning process is carried out from home through the LMS (Learning Management System) which is used by schools or colleges. The learning process is carried out in the form of online-based learning. Learning at home is the safety process during the pandemic. Along with it, Sintuwu Maroso University also has conducted online learning since April 2020. It has impact on all courses contracted by students where they must be ready to take part in learning with all the consequences that exist.

Online learning is a new problem for students because the learning process will be different in terms of methods, media, and learning style. Especially for listening courses which offered in semesters two, three, and four at English Language Education Study Program. This online learning will be different from previous lessons,

before the COVID pandemic, where students learn through onsite learning. Before corona virus outbreak, students learn listening in a language laboratory. In Language Laboratory, all the equipments that support the listening learning process are provided, but now they have to take part in learning through online learning where they have to provide all the technology by themselves that supports their learning process, such as laptops and cell phones that can access the internet network. Besides that, they also have to prepare internet data so that they can connect to the platform used by the lecturer and then, they have to pay attention to the internet connection in their place.

Learning listening through online learning is not easy for the students. Besides apart from technical problems, their understanding of learning listening will also be disrupted. For example, the material that delivered in the learning process, they have no concentration on the material being listened, they have no interest in following the class, and many other factors. For English students at Sintuwu Maroso University, when they take online learning in listening class, the students are unable to

follow the class well because there are many things that make them struggles to follow the class. When the lecturer asks them to answer questions from the audio directly, they seem difficult to answer. In fact, they tend to be silent, so that, the lecturer does not point at them to answer the questions. Some students in the listening class are good in follow the class, but the rest are less.

The majority of the students often do not pay attention that learning listening comprehension is difficult because they rare to develop this skill. Students' difficulties in learning listening comprehension online certainly affected by many factors.

Listening Comprehension

Listening is a receptive skill because students have to focus to receive the language and produce it. Hamouda (2013) defines listening comprehension as a complex process in which listeners participate in the construction of meaning It means that the listener has to comprehend the words or sentences that are talked about by the speaker. It can be seen when the students understand the language function that they heard in the conversations to know the expression of the certain situation (Wacana and Lantu., 2020). It describes when the listeners have to focus to gain the meaning of topics or ideas that are discussed in a conversation. For example, when the students follow listening class, they have to reconnect the audio recording that they listen to with the textbook activities task that they follow to answer the task to get the right answer.

Moreover, Alfian (2018) defines listening comprehension as the understanding of words, sentences, and the meaning in listening activity. It means that in learning listening comprehension the listener has to comprehend every activity in the listening process so they can get the information needed from listening. For example, the students get the activity task in the listening process and they have to listen to what the speakers said about the passage, and then, they have to comprehend the words or sentences to get the answer correctly. Learning listening comprehension is important, according to Ahmadi (2016), listening comprehension is divided into 4 types such as distinguish the sounds, understand the message, remember the message that is listen to, and comprehension. Therefore, in learning listening comprehension the students must focus and pay attention to what is listened to. However, in this academic year, the students must learn listening comprehension through online learning which they have to follow the learning process through the platform provided by the university. They have to focus to comprehend the meaning of the audio delivered through the platforms.

Listening Problems

Listening problems are the most important factors that could impair one's capacity to comprehend what is being said. It interrupts the understanding of the spoken text in processing the meaning of the words or sentences in listening. Moreover, Yagang (1994) divided factors of the listening problem into four types:

a. Message

The message is the listening material delivery through the audio play. The materials of the listening come from any life area such as radio news, daily life conversations, and etc. The content of the message sometimes makes the listeners difficult to understand because they tend to see the message on paper than it is talked through the audio play.

b. Speaker

Speaker is the person who delivers the speech or conveys the message. The problems of the speaker include the speed, variety of accent, pauses and hesitations, volume, and intonations.

c. Listeners

English students who use English as a foreign language will find it difficult to listen because English is not their first language.

d. Phsychal setting

The noises around the listener from their environment also can disturb their understanding in listening. The psychical setting also includes the poor quality of audiotape, CD or Video, and the learning equipment.

Moreover, the researcher will use the theory of Yagang (1994) to see the factors that cause students difficulties during online learning in listening class. Meanwhile, according to Kurniawati (2015), the factors that affect students' listening comprehension are divided into two factors such as internally and externally factors. The internal factors consists of:

a. The physical condition of the students

This problem influences the students in learning, even more if the class is not in good condition. For example, when they feel unwell and they forced themselves to attend the course, the process of listening will not be effective because they do not have concentration on the material. So that what they have heard or listen to when taking the course is not absorbed properly.

b. The interest of the students

This could be the difficulties of the students when they are not interested to follow the learning process because they have determined within themselves that learning listening is not interesting so it could make the learning process is not effective.

c. The perception of the students

This point could be the difficulties of the students when they think that listening is not easy or it is a difficult lesson. So when they follow the listening course, the information that they receive will not optimal.

d. Motivation of the students

Students who have low motivation in the learning process will not concentrate in learning the course. The goal of the study will not be reached by the students if they have no motivation in following the course.

Along with the explanation above, the external factors are as follows:

a. The learning material

This could be the problem of the students when they have lack of understanding of the material that be taught because they got difficult to comprehend the material and it is not easy for them to learn listening comprehension.

b. The instructor and the learning method

If the instructor does not create innovation in the learning process, the class will look monotonous and has no novelty so that it makes students bored to follow the class.

c. The place that used in listening class

This could affect the students learning process where the environment or the situation that is not conducive such as the noises around them that will disturb their concentration in learning listening.

d. Facilities and infrastructure

The facilities and infrastructure also influence the learning process wherein learning listening the facilities needed are speaker active or sound system and LCD that available to support the listening process. If the facilities in bad condition, it can influence the students' understanding through the material in listening. The infrastructure such as non soundproof room also influnced the understanding of listening because if there are noises around them it will disturb the learning process.

Those factors always show up when the students follow listening comprehension class. It also influences students' listening comprehension and disturbs the listening process. In the same way, in this academic year, the learning process that is used by most of the university level in Indonesia is online learning. Therefore according to Susilowati (2020), there are some challenges of online learning in listening class, namely:

a. Technological

The technological is the systems and devices that are used in listening class. It is a challenging situation where the lecturer has to choose the right system that will be used in online learning or it could disturb the learning process of the students where they have a low internet connection.

b. Material delivered

The educators must pay attention in arrange and provide the material. It should be simple and can be understood by the students.

c. The method and strategy used

The educators should choose the suit method and strategy to encourage the students to be independent and critical in learning listening.

The challenges of online learning in listening class also make them difficult to follow the class where those challenges could present difficulties for students in their listening class.

Listening Learning Strategies

Listening learning strategies are the action that the students take to assist them in learn the English language through listening. Muhhamad et al (2015) said that learning strategies make the learning process more effective where the students used it to support their learning process. Sometimes, the students feel difficult to follow the process of learning in the classroom where they unable to use the appropriate strategies in learning. In the same way, the success or unsuccessful in following the listening process could be caused by the strategies used by the students. The use of learning strategies is an important aspect for students in learning listening comprehension that relies on the strategies applied by the students. Furthermore, Oxford (2001) divided the learning strategies of the students into:

a. Cognitive strategies are the strategies used to refer to the cognitive of the students such as recalling information and translating the words or sentences.

b. Metacognitive strategies are used to control the cognition of the students such as centering or plan the learning.

c. Memory Strategies are the strategies used to help the students to remind the vocabularies of the language that be learned.

d. Compensations strategies are the strategies that the students used in guessing the meaning of the unknown words of the new language.

e. Affective strategies are the strategies that use by the students to manage the emotion and motivate them. The students manage their emotions to always be positive and have motivation in following the learning process.

f. Social strategies are the strategies used by the students to make interactions with others.

Moreover, Oxford (1990:37-151) classified those strategies into direct and indirect which are described in points one, three, and four as direct strategy and then in points two, five, and six as indirect strategy. Direct strategy are the strategies in learning the language that is involved in the target

language while indirect strategy are the strategies that help and support the learning of language which are not involved in the target language. Additionally, language learning strategies are needed to help the students to prepare themselves in following the listening learning process, so they can run it effectively. In applying the strategies that are used by the students, the researcher relies on the theory of Oxford (1990:57;151), where she has applied all the strategies to the listening process.

The strategies are described in the statements of the questionnaire that will be distributed to the students. Oxford's (2001) theory also will become a bridge for the researcher to write the result of the strategies that mostly used by the English students in the following listening class.

Academic Listening Class

At English Education Study Program of Sintuwu Maroso University, listening is learned in the second, third, and fourth semesters. In the second semester, the students are learned about intensive listening, meanwhile, in the third semester, the students are learned about critical listening, and then in the fourth semester, they are learned about academic listening. Academic listening class is a compulsory subject that must be contracted by the fourth-semester students if they have passed in the listening class in the second and third semester. The goals or learning outcomes of this class are divided into two, namely general skill (skill) and special skills (experience). In general skills, the students are required to be able to utilize listening and critical thinking skill to understand academic speech. Meanwhile, in special skills, the students are required to be able to study and discuss the meaning of academic speech.

Online Learning

Online learning is a process of teaching and learning where the students and educators are communicated through online and use the internet as the media. According to Sembiring and Arisandy (2016), online learning is learning that uses the internet or learning using a computer network that connected directly to and wide range of users. It means that every activity in learning is done online through the internet. This online learning needed to help the educators and students to follow the learning and teaching process although they are not in the classroom. In this pandemic covid, online learning is important to run the learning process and provide the students with the systems that they could access to connect them with the educators and classmates. The learning process in online learning almost the same as onsite learning where the educators also could get feedback from the students but sometimes the educators unable to control the stundents in the classroom because they are in different places.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative descriptive one that study about the students' difficulties in learning listening comprehension online and the learning strategies of the students in overcoming those problems. The sample of the research was twenty-one students in fourth semester of Sintuwu Maroso University. The instruments used in collecting the data were questionnaire, interview, and documentation. In analyzing the data, the researcher used the theory of Yagang (1994) about listening problems and the theory of Oxford (2001) about listening learning strategies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Students' Difficulties in Learning Listening Comprehension through Online Class

The Result of Questionnaire about Listening Problems

Table 1
The Result of Questionnaire on Listening Problems

No	Item	Never		Sometimes		Often		Always	
		F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
1	The internet connection in my place is run down	1	4.8%	10	47.6%	6	26.6%	4	19%
2	I find difficult to reconect with the platform when iam suddenly out during the learning process	5	23.8%	10	47.6%	3	14.3%	3	14.3%
3	I need time to connect my laptop or android with the platform	2	9.5%	11	52.4%	4	19%	4	19%
4	My laptop or android sometimes error in accessing the material	2	9.5%	12	57.1%	4	19%	3	14.3%
5	The grammar in the listening text material is too complicated	1	4.8%	5	23.8%	3	14.3%	12	57.1%
6	The material in listening text is too long so I do not get the meaning	2	9.5%	8	38.1%	3	14.3%	8	38.1%
7	I find the unfamiliar topic in the listening text material so that I do not understand the meaning	1	4.8%	8	38.1%	6	28.6%	6	28.6%
8	There are many new words in the material delivered	0	0%	4	19%	14	66.7%	3	14.3%
9	When the material was delivered, I experience difficult to the speakers who speak with variety of accent	3	14.3%	6	28.6%	11	52.4%	1	4.8%
10	I find it hard to comprehend the spoken text because the speakers do not stop longer enough when the material was delivered	3	14.3%	6	28.6%	8	38.1%	4	19%
11	The lecturer didn't make the students to be active in the online class.	11	52.4%	9	42.9%	1	4.8%	0	0%
12	The lecturer didn't comunicate with all the students during the online class	11	52.4%	4	19%	5	23.8%	1	4.8%
13	The lecturer didn't pay attention to all the students during online class	11	52.4%	7	33.3%	3	14.3%	0	0%

The researcher elaborated the classification of each items on the table above in the following explanation

a. Technological

Online learning is important to run the learning process and provide the students with the systems that they could access to connect them with the educators and classmates. In online learning process the technological are the systems and devices that are used in listening class (Susilowati., 2020). According to that statement, we can realize that the technological is needed for the students in following the online listening class.

From the result of table 4.1 above, we can see that the students still struggle in following the class where item number 1 (47.6%) of students sometimes experience the internet connection in their place is run down, item number 2 (47.6%) of students sometimes find difficult to reconnect with the platform when they suddenly out during the learning process, item number 3 (52.4%) of students sometimes need time to connect their laptop or android with the platform, and item number 4 (57.1%) laptop or android of students sometimes error in accessing the material. According to Yagang (1994)'s theory, thees problems was included into the problem that caused by the physical setting where the students learning process will be disturb if they have poor learning equipment that make the students difficult to access the learning process.

b. Material delivered

In the learning process, the material that arrange and provide by the educators should be simple and can be understood by the students (Susilowati., 2020). It means that the educator have to pay attention in designing the material so that it can help the students to understand it. From the result of table 4.1, as many as

57.1% (item number 5) of students always experience that the grammar in the listening text is too complicated, as many as 38.1% (item number 6) of students sometimes and always experience that the material in listening text is too long so they do not get the meaning, as many as 38.1% (item number 7) of students sometimes experience that they find the unfamiliar topic so that they do not understand the meaning, as many as 66.7% (item number 8) of students often.

Students' Strategies in Learning Listening Comprehension Online

The Result of Questionnaire about Listening Learning Strategies

Table 2.
The Result of Questionnaire on Listening Strategies

No	Items	Never		Sometimes		Often		Always	
		F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
1	I make efforts to remember the new word by pronounce it	1	4.8%	6	28.6%	7	33.3%	7	33.3%
2	When following listening class, I try to translate the sentences into my own language.	0	0%	4	19%	8	38.1%	9	42.9%
3	I try to recall the terms' vocabularies	1	4.8%	1	4.8%	9	42.9%	10	47.6%
4	In a spoken text, I try to guess the meaning of the new word	1	4.8%	2	9.5%	11	52.4%	7	33.3%
5	I guees the meaning of the new word by connecting it with other words in spoken text	1	4.8%	6	28.6%	8	38.1%	6	28.6%
6	In improving my listening, I try to listen many english songs	0	0%	3	14.3%	3	14.3%	16	71.4%
7	I encourage my self to do the tasks	2	9.5%	6	28.6%	5	23.8%	8	38.1%
8	I encourage my self to be active in listening class	0	0%	4	19%	8	38.1%	9	42.9%
9	I tell to my lecturer or classmates if i find difficulties in following listening comprehension class	4	19%	10	47.6%	4	19%	3	14.3%
10	I give responses when the lecturer is asked me to give the answer	1	4.8%	6	28.6%	7	33.3%	7	33.3%
11	I ask suggestions from my classmates about english songs or movies that can be a learning guidance for my listening	7	33.3%	5	28.6%	5	23.6%	3	14.3%

The researcher elaborated the classification of items which were put in the table above in the following explanation:

a. Cognitive Strategy

In the learning process the students use cognitive strategy to recalling information and translating the words or sentences (Oxford., 2001). It could be seen in item number 1 where 33.3% of students often and 33.3% always make efforts to remember the new word by pronounce it, and in item number 2 where 42.9% of students always try to translate the sentences into their own language.

b. Memory Strategy

In the learning process, the students used memory strategy to remind the vocabularies of the language that be learned (Oxford,2001). It could be seen in item number 3 where 47.6% of students always try to remember the vocabularies of the words that they learned. This strategy is in line

with Wacana and Lantu's opinion that stated the students have to focus on each important detail about what they listen about to get the meaning of the text. This memory strategy is important where in the applied of the material the students focus on the words or vocabularies that they have to remember.

c. Compensations Strategy

In the learning process, the students used compensations strategy in guessing the meaning of the unfamiliar words of the new language (Oxford, 2001). It could be seen in item number 4 where 52.4% of students often try to guess the meaning of the new word in a spoken text and in item number 5 where 38.1% of the students often guest the meaning of the new word by connecting it with other words in spoken text.

d. Metacognitive Strategy

In the learning process, the students used metaconitive strategy in control the cognition of the students such as centering or plan the learning (Oxford., 2001). It could be seen in item number 6 where 71.4% of the students always improving their listening by listen to many English songs.

e. Affective Strategy

In the learning process, the students used affective strategy to to manage the emotion and motivation of the students (Oxford., 2001). It could be seen in item number 7 where 38.1% of the students always encourage themselves to do the tasks, in item number 8 where 42.9% of the students always encourage themselves to be active in listening class.

f. Social Strategy

In the learning process, the students used social strategies to make interactions with others (Oxford, 2001). It could be seen in item number 9 where 47.6% of students sometimes tell their lecturer or classmates if they find difficulties in following listening comprehension class and in item number 10 where 33.3% of students often and always give responses when the lecturer is asked them to give the answer

Furthermore, Yagang (1994) proposed that there were four listening problems in his research. They were message, speaker, listener, and physical setting. However, based on the discussion of the questionnaire and interview that the researcher found, there were three listening problems occur. The listening problems that faced by the students in online learning listening class are message, speaker, and physical setting.

1. Message

    The message is listening material delivery through the audio play (Yagang, 1994). From the

research, the researcher found that the material deliveries that make the students difficult are:

a. Many new words in listening material. It can make the students difficult to understand the material when there are new words in listening text that they never heard before.

b. The grammar that is complicated. It makes the students difficult when they do not understand about the grammar so they unable to connect the sentences correctly or they do not very good at grammar and could not remember the grammar rules.

c. Long listening recording material. It makes the students cannot get the meaning of the whole text so they have to focus more to the text

d. They find the unfamiliar topic.

    When the students listen to listening recording material and they do not know the topic, they will feel difficult to listen to the spoken text.

2. Speaker

    Speaker is the person who delivers the speech or conveys the message (Yagang, 1994). In the research, the students experience difficult in listen to the message if the speakers speak with variety of accent and do not pause long enough. The students could not get the meaning of the text when the speaker speak with accent and talk fast or does not pause long enough in the listening recording.

3. Physical setting

    The physical setting is included poor learning equipment (Yagang, 1994). In the research, the students experience difficult in connecting their laptop or android and accesing the material if the signal is low or the internet connection is unstable.

Oxford (2001) proposed there were six learning strategies in her research. They were cognitive, memory, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. In the research, the researcher also found that the students used the sixth strategies, namely:

1. Cognitive strategy. It used by the students to remember the new word by pronounce it and try to translate the sentences into their own language.

2. Memory strategy. It used by the students try to remember the vocabularies.

3. Compensations strategy. It is used in guessing the meaning by connecting it with another words or sentences.

4. Metacognitive strategy. It is used by the students to listen to many english songs and watching English videos through Youtube.

5. Affective strategy. It used by the students to encourage themselves to do the task and to be active in listening class.
6. Social strategy. It is used by the students to talk to their classmates if they find difficulties in following listening comprehension class

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation of the discussion above, the researcher found that the factors that caused fourth semester students' difficulties in listening comprehension through online learning are the problem related to the message, speaker, and physical setting. Further, the listening learning strategies that used by the fourth semester students in learning listening comprehension are cognitive strategy, memory strategy, compensations strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy, and social strategy. Thus , the implementation of the strategies are trying to remember the words by pronounce them, translating the sentences into their own language, remembering many vocabularies, guessing the meaning of the new word or connecting it with other words in spoken text, listening to many English songs and watching English videos on YouTube, encourage themselves to do the task and to be active in the class, and talking to their classmates if they have problems in listening class.

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