An Analysis of Students’ Difficulties in Listening Skill  
(A Case Study on Critical Listening Subject at 2nd Semester of English Education Department Class B in UIN SMH BANTEN)

Khaerani Nurfadilah¹, Eulis Rahmawati², Selnista Hidayani³
¹,²,³English Education Department of UIN SMH Banten
Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia

Abstract: The aims of study were to find out the difficulties that were mostly faced by students in learning listening and find out the factors of students’ difficulties in learning listening. The formulated problems of this study were: (1) What are students’ difficulties found in listening at the student college of the English education department? (2) How the factors that cause the difficulties students in listening skill at the student college of the English education department? This study employed the qualitative research approve with case study method. The qualitative method was chosen because this study aims to analysis cases of students’ difficulties in listening skills. The participants of the research are 29 students from 2nd semester of English education department. Collecting the data of analysis, the students’ difficulties in listening skills were obtained by observation, questionnaire, interviews. The result of the study showed students difficulties in listening skill, there are four characteristics. The first characteristic is characteristic of the message, second characteristic of the delivery, the third is characteristic of the listener and the last is characteristic of the environment. Moreover, factors influenced are internal and external factors. Internal factors are physical condition and motivation, and external factors are facilitated such as environment, speakers and materials.

INTRODUCTION

English is a worldwide language. Many countries around the world believe that learning the English language is essential for students and society as a whole. This situation necessitated the mastery of four fundamental English skills. According to Brown (2004) learning English is difficult because the language requires four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening is an important skill in learning. According to Pollard (2018), listening is one of the most important competencies that allows people to gain knowledge and information while also achieving the ability to communicate with others. Listening and reading are receptive skills in which students capture and understand the language as well as interpret the written words. There are the difficulties in listening skill and come from the material, speaker and environment. Beside that there are two factors that influence listening difficulties. There are both internal and external factors. Physical problems are an internal factor influencing the listening process. If someone has
hearing problems and damage to their hearing, damage can avoid a wave of a volume of waves, and the listening process is disrupted. Environmental factors, material factors, speakers, speech style, and skills are also examples of external factors. Internal factors include intellectual abilities, affection such as feelings and self-confidence, motivation, maturity to learn, age, gender, study habits, memory skills, and sensory abilities such as seeing, listening, and feeling. External factors include factors related to the learning process such as teachers, learning quality, learning instruments or facilities in the form of hardware and software, as well as the environment, both social and natural environments. Based on description above the researcher get the idea to find out the difficulties in listening skill and the factors difficulties in listening skill. The purpose of this research, the researcher will conduct a case study in listening subject difficulty at second semester of English education department. The researcher conducting research entitles “An Analysis the Difficulties Listening Skill of Student’s”. Based on the focus study above, there are two objectives of the research such as (1) Analysis the students’ listening difficulties found in the student college of the English education department; and (2) analysis the factors that caused the students’ difficulties in listening skill at the student college of the English education department.

THEORETICAL SUPPORT

The Concept of Listening

Listening is the basic initial talent and ability for beginners to learn a new language. This is a receptive ability, which means that language learners receive new words from what they need to hear. Receiver flexibility will affect production flexibility. If they are good at listening, so they will be able to perceive and even have good production skills, especially oral and written. According to Anderson and Lynch (1998) is not something that happens because of what a speaker says: the listener has a crucial role to play in the process, by activating various types of knowledge, applying what he knows to what he hears, and attempting to understand what the speaker means.

Listening ability is essential for all effective communication. Messages are easily misunderstood when people lack the ability to listen effectively. As a result, communication breaks down, and the message’s sender may become frustrated or irritated. According to Herbert J. Walberg (2004) the authorities have some definitions. Listening skills are essential for learning because they allow students to gain insights and information while also communicating effectively with others.

Listening Difficulties

Learning difficulties can be interpreted as a condition and a learning process marked by obstacles certain barriers to achieving learning outcomes. These learning barriers not just an instructional or pedagogical problem, but refers to a problem psychological. According to Wilson (1988) Listening is regarded as a difficult skill. The difficulties can be classified into four broad categories there are:

1. Characteristics of the Message

This refers to word boundaries such as unknown words, lexical density (short time intervals between content words, forcing the listener to concentrate harder), complex grammatical structures, unfamiliar topic within the message, and text type.

2. Characteristic of the delivery

The importance of delivery cannot be overstated. We will first learn about reciprocal and nonreciprocal listening. Reciprocal means that the listeners interact with the
speaker or listen to the conversation directly. Meanwhile, nonreciprocal is the inverse of reciprocal. After all, the speaker's accent, number of speakers, duration, and pronunciation is all part of the delivery.

3. Characteristic of the listener

This refers to a listener's state of mind, such as anxiety, boredom, tiredness, or illness. For example, the listener may be suffering from a cold and earache (blocked sinuses affect the aural system). As a result, the students are unable to hear the speakers clearly.

4. Characteristic of the environment

This refers to the listener's environment when listening to the speaker, such as hot or cold room temperature, background noise, and defective equipment that causes a recording to become unclearly spoken.

Factors Influenced the Students’ Listening Difficulties

According to Tarigan (2015) there are eight factors affecting listening, such as:

1). Physical factors

A listener's physical condition is an important factor that influences the effectiveness and quality of its listening activity. For example, fatigue, illness, and possibly being under a normal nutritional size. Furthermore, the physical environment is very likely to be to blame for the ineffectiveness of listening to someone. The room could be too hot, humid, or noisy.

2). Psychological Factors

This factor involves the listener's attitudes and personal qualities. The problem is one of these factors. Prejudice and a lack of sympathy; Selfishness and preoccupation with personal interests and problems, boredom that causes no attention to the subject, and, finally, Sightings and inappropriate attitudes toward schools, teachers, or speakers.

3). The experience factors

Our attitudes are, without a doubt, the result of our own growth, development, and experience. Lack of interest or lack of experience in the field to be listened to is caused by a lack of experience or no experience at all.

4). Attitude factor

Everyone tends to pay close attention to topics or topics on which he can agree or is interested. Human life, in general, has two major attitudes toward everything, namely acceptance and rejection. People will be open to things that are interesting and beneficial to him, but will be resistant to things that are not interesting or beneficial to him.

5). Motivation Factor

One of the determinants of success is motivation. If someone has a strong desire to accomplish something, that person is expected to succeed. The same holds true for listening.

6). Gender Factors

Listening style is generally objective, active, hard-hearted, analytic, rational, stubborn, or unwilling to back down, neutral, instructive (disturbing), independent, able to meet their own needs, and can master control emotions; whereas women's listening style is more subjective, passive, friendly or sympathetic, diffusive, sensitive, easily influenced.

7). Environmental Factors

a. Physical environment. When it comes to the physical environment, the classroom plays a significant role in motivating listening activities.
b. Social environment. It is appropriate and consistent with overall curriculum planning to provide a teaching and learning environment that allows children to use classroom situations to improve their communication skills.

8). The role factor in society

Our role in society can also influence our willingness to listen. A well-educated (student) is expected to listen more carefully and attentively to new developments in science and technology than regular employees at a local company.

METHOD

This study employs qualitative descriptive research with a case study approach. The qualitative method was chosen because the purpose of this research is to examine students' listening difficulties. The descriptive method is a research model that is used to learn everything there is to know about a specific object. It was intended to investigate the circumstances, conditions, or other things mentioned, and the findings are presented in the form of research reports. According to Gay and Peter (2000), descriptive research is research that determines and describes the way things are, and thus the researcher reports the research results exactly as they were discovered. In this study, the researcher would like to involve participants as the unit of analysis. The participants of the research are second semester of English education department class B, they are 29 student’s 1 male and 28 female. The researcher chose 29 students’ college for questionnaire and there are 5 students’ college for interview. The setting of the study is UIN SMH Banten in the second semester. It is a student college of English education department located in Jl. Jend. Sudirman No. 30 Ciceri Serang.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Students’ difficulties in listening skills

To collect data, the researcher creates questionnaires for students using Google Forms. The questionnaire provided to 29 participants covered 20 questions to determine the answer based on their experience. The questionnaire was issued on Wednesday, 6th April 2022. The questionnaire’s questions were categorized into four characteristics explained by Wilson. The first characteristic is a message, the second is the delivery, the third is the listener and the last is the environment.

Table 1 Characteristic of the message

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES (%)</th>
<th>Student Count</th>
<th>NO (%)</th>
<th>Student Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Do you stick with one or two unfamiliar words?</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Do you find it difficult to understand every single word?</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Do you find it difficult to interpret the meaning of a long-spoken text?</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Do you find it difficult to understand listening text when the topic is unfamiliar?</td>
<td>82.8%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Do you find listening material is too hard for you in any condition?</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to result above the first is characteristic of the message, he said unfamiliar topic inside the message, unknown word or unfamiliar word and shorts space of time to understand the text. Based on the result of this research can be related because the result showed unfamiliar topics, and unfamiliar words most of them answered yes from the questionnaire, and unfamiliar topics 82,8% (24 students) answered yes, and 17,2% (5 students) answered no. 33 Based on interviews lack of vocabulary or unfamiliar words is a student’s difficulties in listening skills.

Table 2 Characteristic of the delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>Student Count</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Student Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Is your teacher (listening) very pleasant and can liven up the class atmosphere and convey learning clearly?</td>
<td>89,7%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10,3%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Do you find it difficult to understand when the speaker speaks too fast?</td>
<td>82,8%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17,2%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Do you find it difficult to understand when the speaker does not pause long enough?</td>
<td>79,3%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20,7%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Do you find it difficult if unable to get repeated?</td>
<td>75,9%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24,1%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Do you find it difficult to understand when the speaker has a variety of accents?</td>
<td>93,1%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6,9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the result above the second characteristic is the characteristic of delivery, he said the delivery refers to the speakers’ accent, number of a speaker, duration, and pronunciation of the speaker. Based on the result of this research can be related because students still have difficulty with the variety of accents from speakers and limited duration. Based on the result of the percentage, in this case, 93,1% (27 students) answered yes and 6,9% (2 students) answered no. Based on the interviews pronunciation, accent and speakers too fast are related in this case.

Table 3 Characteristic of the listener

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>Student Count</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Student Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Are you interested in listening subject?</td>
<td>79,3%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20,7%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Can you concentrate on listening subject learning when you are not feeling well?</td>
<td>37,9%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>62,1%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Is listening learning difficult to learn?</td>
<td>51,7%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>48,3%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Are you very passionate about listening lesson learning?</td>
<td>58,6%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41,1%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>If you have problems with hearing, can you do listening lessons well?</td>
<td>37,9%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>62,1%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the result above the third characteristic is the characteristic of the listener, he said the listener refers to physical conditions as the main point such as tiredness and sick. Based on the results of this research can be related because the problems student
difficulties, in this case, are physical conditions and the problem with hearing, if they do not feel well they can't concentrate well. This can be strengthened by questionnaire percentage and answered interviews. The researcher gives questions in the questionnaire about can they concentrate if they are physical, not good enough, and can they do listening lessons well when they have a hearing problem. And the result of the data showed 62,1% (18 students) answered no, and 37,9% (11 students) answered yes. Based on interviews if they are not feeling well can they concentrate on the listening learning process. Most of them said if not in a good health condition, the listening learning process could be very hard because listening needs full concentration. For example, if get sick they can’t concentrate on studying. Therefore, the body must a good health condition so that it can concentrate well.

### Table 4 Characteristic of the environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>Student Count</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Student Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Do you find it difficult to concentrate if noises around?</td>
<td>93,1%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6,9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Do you lose concentration if the recording has poor quality?</td>
<td>89,7%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10,3%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>If without seeing the speakers' body language, do students feel difficult to understand the speakers meaning?</td>
<td>48,3%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>51,7%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Do the unclear results from the poor quality of the CD player interfere with students' ability in listening?</td>
<td>75,9%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24,1%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Does the unclear sound resulting from poor equipment interfere with students' ability in listening?</td>
<td>82,8%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17,2%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the result above the fourth characteristic is the characteristic of the environment, he said background noise and defective equipment which affect a recording to become unclearly spoken. Based on the result of this research can be related because that's the problem in this case. It can be seen the percentage of the questionnaire is 93,1% (27 students) answered yes, and 6,9% (2 students). Based on interviews facilitating adequate is it has sufficient for the listening learning process. Based on their answer the facilitation is not good enough to facilitate. It's better if we have a separate room for listening courses. Such as a soundproof room so 45 that noise outside the room does not disturb students during the learning process.

### 2. Factors that influenced the students’ listening difficulties

Based on the result above it can be concluded the factors that can be influenced students’ difficulties in listening skills are internal and external factors. For the internal based on the listener, the data was shown by coming from the listener. Physical condition is the main factor that can be influenced by internal factors. Because the unhealthy physical conditions can be influenced students’ process of learning listening and listening skills too. It can see based on the resulting questionnaire about they can’t concentrate when their physical condition is unhealthy and there are problems with their hearing, they answered yes 62,1% (18 students) and answered no 37,9% (11 students). In addition, the external
factors come from speakers, materials, and the environment. It can be seen from the result of the data, from the speaker or delivery, that long spoken, speaking too fast, and not pausing long enough can be influenced students listening. From the resulting questionnaire, most of them answered yes in this case 82.8% (24 students) and 17.2% (5 students) answered no. From the materials, lack of vocabulary, unfamiliar words, and unfamiliar text can be influenced difficulties students in listening skills. It can be seen from the percentage of results from the questionnaire data and the answered interview the percentage of questionnaire data, that most of them answered yes 82.8% (24 students) and answered no 17.2% (5 students). From the environment, the student cannot concentrate if the noise is around, and poor-quality recording. It can be seen from the result of the questionnaire data the percentage showed 93.1% (27 students) answered yes in this case, and 6.9% (2 students) answered no.

Based on the result and description above there are the difficulties in listening such as from message in this case the researcher can give solution If students still have difficulty in unfamiliar words or sentences or text, students can do independent learning to increase vocabulary in order to understand new words or sentences. Second is delivery or speaker in this case if it is felt that the delivery has not been maximized or the student cannot understand the meaning and the student can ask the lecturer (speaker or delivery) to repeat what was said, if indeed the student still does not understand the speaker can provide a more similar word or sentence easy to understand. Third is listener in this case the problem of difficulty comes from oneself such as physically unhealthy or lack of motivation in learning. The researcher can provide a solution that in order to concentrate on studying well, it is hoped that students can maintain health and to increase motivation students must be able to have goals and remember what they will get so that students are more enthusiastic about learning. Last is environment in this case the lack of a special room and inadequate facilities the parties concerned can see the existing problems and can improve what facilities are lacking so that students are more comfortable during the learning process.

CONCLUSION

The students’ difficulties come from four characteristics. The first is the characteristic of the message in this characteristic there are unfamiliar words, lack of vocabulary, and unfamiliar topic. The second characteristic of delivery or speakers in this characteristic there are pronunciation, variety accent and speakers too fast. The third characteristic of the listener in this characteristic there are physical condition and motivation. The last, characteristic of the environment in this characteristic there are facilitation such as background noises and the CD or audio it’s not good enough.

The factors that influence the student’s listening English from internal factors are hearing problems such as there is some problem in their hearing like a deaf, and physical condition such as unhealthy condition like a sick it can be influence their physical condition. The things that influence the student’s listening English from external factors are material factors in this case such as unfamiliar word, unfamiliar topic, and environment factors such as lack of facilitation, and speaker factors such as variety accent, long spoken text without repeated.
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