Teachers' Difficulties in Teaching Listening Comprehension of Junior High School

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Abstract. Listening comprehension is the most crucial part of communicating with each other. Meanwhile, in teaching listening comprehension, it is challenging for teachers because the teaching of listening comprehension has long been somewhat neglected and is often poorly taught in many EFL programs. There must be difficulties that teachers face because listening is frequently overlooked and poorly trained in the English language. In teaching listening, the teacher faced several problems, including the message, the speaker, the listener, and transcribing the words. The students cannot get the information from the listening skill. This research aimed to identify the difficulties teachers encounter in teaching listening comprehension. The study employed a qualitative research method with a case study approach. The participants in this study were English teachers at MTs Negeri 1 Jakabaring Palembang, selected through a purposeful sampling technique. The data were collected through open-ended interviews. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings of this study revealed that there were six difficulties faced by teachers in teaching listening comprehension, namely: (a) students' anxiety; (b) discomfort in listening; (c) students' attitudes; (d) difficulty in controlling a large class; (e) limited teaching time in class; (f) lack of learning facilities for listening.

Keywords: Teachers' Difficulties, Teaching, Listening Comprehension.

1. INTRODUCTION

English is the most crucial language in the current era of globalisation. When discussing English, there are four key skills involved: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. In Indonesia, it is a foreign language. However, learners must learn it since it is part of the Indonesian curriculum. Ur (1984), cited in Helgesen and Brown (2003), stated that the apparent need of the foreign language learner is to perceive and comprehend everything they hear, even though they would not do so in their native language. It was suggested that a learner who tries to

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understand every single word will be handicapped both by his failure to do so and his success. It is well known that education is essential for achieving the goal of learning. Furthermore, teachers play a crucial role in achieving the goal of learning. Hence, they must care about how they teach their students.

Listening is a crucial component of language skills. Andrade (2006) defined listening as the ability to hear attentively and to understand what others are saying. In addition, Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) state that listening is a process of receiving what the speaker says, making and showing meaning, negotiating meaning with the speaker, answering, and creating meaning by participation, creativity, and empathy. In conclusion, listening is not merely hearing what the other speaker is saying, but it is a process of understanding and getting the meaning of what others are saying. According to Nunan (1998), most people believe that being able to write and speak in a second language means they know the language; however, if they lack efficient listening skills, it is not possible to communicate effectively. That is, listening is a fundamental skill in language learning, and over 50% of the time that students spend functioning in a foreign language will be devoted to listening.

Listening is an essential skill in English. Goh (2000) argued that it is necessary to teach listening strategies to students, and before doing this, it is even more critical for teachers to improve their students' vocabulary knowledge. According to Vandergrift (1999), strategy development is essential for effective listening practice, allowing students to guide, assess, and answer questions themselves. According to Backer (1971) explains why teaching listening comprehension is essential: (1) Listening is an activity that occurs more frequently than any other form of verbal communication, (2) Listening is essential in developing abilities such as (writing, reading, and speaking), (3) Communicative, which is the basis for improving communicative competence and can increase the use of language tools and vocabulary, (4) Pronunciation of words that must be learned exclusively through listening, (5) listening can help in overcoming linguistic barriers in lectures such as in a course.

In listening, students face some difficulties in listening comprehension. As Goh (2000) mentions that there are ten listening comprehension difficulty, such as; (1) quickly forget what is heard; (2) do not recognize words they know; (3) understand words but not the intended message; (4) neglected the next part when thinking about meaning; (5) unable to form a mental representation from words; 6) cannot chunk streams of speech; 7) miss the beginning of the texts; 8) concentrate too hard or unable to concentrate; 9) do not understand subsequent parts of input because of earlier problems; and 10) confused about the key ideas in the message. Thus, teaching some was difficult because the teachers had to build the students' understanding of how the listening step worked. Nunan (2001), cited in Bueno & McLaren (2006), stated that students must take several steps when completing a listening task; the first is to pay attention to what they are hearing. The second they were choosing stimuli (selecting). The third was after they decided to focus their attention (attend). The fourth, they were assigning meaning (understanding). The fifth, they evaluated, was analysing and judging the students. The sixth, they were remembering, and the last was responding.

Then, teacher difficulties in teaching listening include external factors, such as problems that arise from outside individuals, including equipment, facilities in the English language laboratory (e.g., computers, sound systems, audio, microphones, and cables). If one of them cannot work, it will be due to a teacher or teacher-related factor. A student is someone who learns in the classroom and can affect the teaching process if they are unable to fulfil their role in the

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school. Teachers will not succeed if they only impose a pattern of student autonomy. Harmer (2007) stated that internal factors are those that originate from individuals, such as teachers' skills. According to Harmer (2007), teachers' skills are managing classes, matching assignments, variations and goals or arrangements. The teachers' voice, how they speak and what seems to be very important in influencing the class. Harmer (2007) argued that teachers should pay attention to students at the back of the class, whether they can hear clearly or not, just as they do with students at the front of the class.

Several earlier studies related to this study have been conducted. Firstly, Lestari (2020) at MAN 1 Palembang identified six difficulties faced in listening comprehension, related to the students' psychological aspects, background knowledge, attitudes, lack of vocabulary, teaching aids or media, the material, and the method of teaching listening comprehension. Secondly, a study conducted by Aldama (2017) at MAN 3 Bone Tulang Makassar showed that teaching in a large class, students' ability to catch the teaching listening comprehension, the lack of the students' interest to learn English particularly in learning listening comprehension, the lack of the tool in the school, in dividing the students into group. Then, The factors caused the difficulties were there were 40 students in the class, the lack of the students' vocabulary so the students did not comprehend what the native speaker or the teachers said, the lack of the learning media in the school, and the language laboratory was not used well, and the students have different character which caused the teacher got difficult to divide into group. Lastly, a study conducted by Maulidia (2018) at SMAN 11 Banda Aceh showed that teachers face difficulties, including the unavailability of adequate facilities, which contribute to limited vocabulary, as well as paralinguistic features such as accent, noise, rate of delivery (speed), pronunciation, and intonation.

There are several things that differentiate this research from previous studies. First, in terms of study location, which, of course, has different characteristics from earlier studies. Second, in terms of research subjects, in previous research, the researcher selected one participant; now, the researcher selects two participants. Third, in terms of the instrument, it differs, judging from previous studies using data from 2019-2020, whereas this research uses data from 2022-2023.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "Teachers' Difficulties in Teaching Listening Comprehension at MTs Negeri 1 Jakabaring Palembang".

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

In this research, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive method. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is a means of exploring and understanding the meaning of an individual or group about a social or human problem. In addition, Hyun (2012) defines qualitative research as studies that investigate the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials. Based on the description above, the qualitative method is considered the most suitable approach to address this research problem. This descriptive qualitative research aims to identify the difficulties that teachers encounter in teaching listening comprehension. The descriptive qualitative approach also helps in providing a more comprehensive and detailed description of the phenomena experienced by the informants, so that answers and solutions to the problem

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studied can be found. Creswell (2012) stated that this study employed a case study method, a strategy of inquiry in which researchers explore in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals.

2.2 Participants of the Study

The participants in this research were two English teachers at MTs Negeri 1 Jakabaring, Palembang. The study used a purposeful sampling technique in this research. According to Sugiyono (2016), purposeful sampling is a sampling technique that considers specific data sources. The reason for using this technique is that not all samples have criteria that match the phenomenon being studied.

2.3 Data Collection

To collect data using the interview technique, the researcher selected two English teachers who taught at MTs Negeri 1 Jakabaring, Palembang. The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview that consisted of a list of open-ended questions. Ary (2010) stated that the semi-structured interview falls between the unstructured and structured interviews, in which the area of interest is chosen and questions are formulated. Still, the interviewer may modify the format or questions during the interview process. A semi-structured interview is appropriate for this research because the researcher is still allowed to ask new questions that arise during the interview process, which also allows the researcher to delve deeply into the information provided by the respondents.

2.4 Data Analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis aims to identify patterns or find themes within data collected by a researcher. This method is beneficial when a study wants to explore its qualitative data in detail to find patterns related to a phenomenon and explain the extent to which it occurs from the researcher's point of view. Several methods can be employed in qualitative research, and thematic analysis is critical to study because it is considered a core skill for conducting qualitative analysis.

2.5 Establishment of Trustworthiness

In this study, the validity of the data was tested with Member Check. According to Creswell (2012), member checking is a method for verifying the accuracy of findings. Moreover, according to Varpio et al. (2017), Member-checking is a process in which data transcripts are presented to some or all participants for feedback on the research by reviewing the transcripts. When considering the method of examining a transcript, researchers should also consider the time needed. Candela (2019) stated that for participants, it takes time to review a transcript to ensure the interview has been accurately transcribed.

3. RESULT

The results and findings of this study are explained in this chapter. The researcher aimed to identify the teachers' difficulties in teaching listening comprehension at MTs Negeri 1 Jakabaring, Palembang. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. The result was described as follows.

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3.1 Teachers' difficulties in teaching listening comprehension.

From the analysis of interview data, the researcher found several difficulties faced by English teachers in teaching listening at MTs Negeri 1 Jakabaring Palembang. In the table below, the researcher has divided the data results into several themes and codes based on the findings of this investigation.

Table 1. Themes and codes of the difficulties faced by English teachers in teaching listening at MTsN 1 Jakabaring Palembang

Themes	Codes
1. Students' anxiety in listening	a. The teachers stated that some of the students felt fear in class regarding things related to teaching material and the teaching-learning process, such as being afraid of being questioned by the teacher. b. The teachers argued that when students were faced with exercises, they were afraid that the questions given would be difficult, and they got bad grades.
2. Discomfort in listening	c. The teachers agreed that outside noise could disturb students sitting in the back seats who were unable to hear the native speakers in front. d. The teachers explained that outside noise came from the corridor of another classroom.
3. Students' attitudes in the classroom	e. The teachers stated that some of the students were often busy talking and chatting with others. f. Teachers claimed that when students were given assignments, they showed rejection because they felt the assignments were challenging. g. The teachers explained that their students were worried about practicing conversational learning in class because what they heard from native speakers was different.
4. Difficult to control the large class	h. The teachers argued that it was difficult if the class was large, so the class conditions for learning were not conducive. i. The teacher claimed that it was difficult if there were a large number of students, as the teacher had difficulty dealing with these students.
5. LLimited teaching time in class	j. The teacher argued that the opportunity to learn listening comprehension in class was very short in duration. k. The teachers explained that the busy curriculum and limited time allocated for each subject made teachers feel rushed in delivering listening material.
6. Lack of support facilities for listening	l. The teachers stated that there was a lack of earphones. m. The teachers claimed that there was a lack of a language laboratory. n. The teacher argued that the facilities at school were lacking, so they had to bring a laptop.
	o. The teachers explained that when teaching, they brought a speaker to teach listening.

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After the researcher analysed the results of the data using thematic analysis, it was found that some teachers experienced difficulties in teaching listening comprehension at MTs Negeri 1 Jakabaring Palembang. These difficulties consisted of: (1) students' anxiety in listening, (2) discomfort in listening, (3) students' attitudes in the classroom, (4) difficulty in controlling the large class, (5) limited teaching time in class, and (6) lack of support facilities for listening. Therefore, the problem is explained as follows;

The first perception was the students' anxiety in the classroom. The results showed that teachers agreed that students felt anxiety in the school. Essentially, anxiety is a condition in which a person is filled with worry, experiencing these feelings about something uncertain. Some of them were busy because some students said they didn't understand the lesson, which could have made these students anxious. According to Atkinson (2001), anxiety is an unpleasant feeling, that is marked by worries, concerns, and fears, sometimes experienced at different levels. As a result, the teachers stated that some students felt fear in class regarding aspects related to the teaching material and the teaching-learning process, such as being afraid of being questioned by the teacher. Thus, when students were faced with exercises, they were worried that the questions given would be difficult and that they would receive low grades.

The second perception was the discomfort in listening. Based on the research, the teachers claimed that when they taught listening, there was some noise, such as the noise caused by students who often talked to their friends. There was also noise from outside the classroom, which could be disruptive. For instance, noises were coming from the corridor of another school, and this noise from outside could disturb students sitting at the back who were unable to hear the native speakers at the front. This finding was consistent with Hamouda (2013), who explained that, first, they were distracted by noise, regardless of how hard they tried to focus on the task. Otherwise, the noise resulted in a complex sound rather than a solo recording being played. Second, it interfered with students' listening and their ability to focus on assignments. These statements indicated that problems related to noise disturbance created discomfort in the class and influenced the learning comprehension learning of other students who were studying.

The third perception was the students' attitudes in the classroom. The result of the data indicated. For instance, some students chatted with each other, and when they were noisy, it made it difficult for other students to concentrate on learning. Consequently, some students were unable to catch the message from the audio or native speakers. This finding is relevant to the statement by Thomson et al. (2005), who noted that their students were often busy talking and chatting among themselves, and therefore did not concentrate on the listening material. In listening activities, students needed full concentration on the audio being played. The teachers also stated that when assignments were given, some students showed resistance because they found the assignments challenging. Moreover, some students claimed that they were apprehensive about practising conversational learning in class because what they heard from native speakers differed. In conclusion, the teachers had difficulties with students' attitudes in the classroom.

The fourth perception was the difficulty in controlling a large class; it was claimed that teachers found it challenging to maintain a large class. According to Murphy (1998), the ideal

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class contained 13-17 students, while a large class had 22-25 students. Brown (2001) stated that ideally, language classes should have no more than a dozen students. They should be large enough to provide diversity and student interaction, but small enough to give students many opportunities to participate and receive individual attention. Thus, the teachers stated that it was difficult when the class was large, as the conditions for conducive learning were often compromised. Having a large number of students also made it challenging for teachers to manage the class effectively.

The fifth perception was the limited teaching time in class. Based on the research, due to the limited number of hours each week, students were unable to learn English comprehensively, and teachers were unable to cover all the content. Rahayu (2016) stated that working as a teacher requires exceptional time management skills, as teachers must balance the classroom's long-term goals, students' immediate educational needs, and the considerable amount of paperwork associated with each assignment. Furthermore, the findings from the teachers' interviews also revealed that the opportunity for learning listening comprehension in class had a very short duration. Thus, the teachers explained that the busy curriculum and the limited time allocated for each subject made them feel rushed when delivering listening materials.

The last perception was the lack of support facilities for listening. The teachers mentioned the lack of earphones and a language laboratory. This finding aligns with Aldamas' (2017) explanation that schools lacked tools such as language laboratories. Teaching aids are essential for teachers to effectively deliver materials to students. Furthermore, Kapur (2018) described teaching aids as educational tools, including books, chalkboards, and pictures, as well as objects such as globes, maps, or specimens, or devices like DVDs, computers, projectors, and others used by teachers to enhance classroom instruction. Teaching aids serve as educational resources and tools that enable teachers to conduct the teaching process. However, others argued that the facilities at the school were lacking, which led them to bring their laptops and speakers to compensate for the shortcomings.

4. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the findings and previous discussion were discussed. The researcher discovered that an English teacher at MTs Negeri 1 Jakabaring, Palembang, needs assistance in teaching listening comprehension, based on the data examined through theme analysis. Based on the results of the interview, there were several difficulties faced by an English teacher, namely:

(a) students' anxiety in listening; (b) discomfort in listening; (c) students' attitudes in the classroom; (d) difficulty to control the large class; (e) limited teaching time in class; (f) lack of support facilities for listening. In short, six difficulties were faced by English teachers in teaching listening comprehension at MTs Negeri 1 Jakabaring, Palembang.

Based on the conclusions described above, the researcher would have liked to provide some suggestions to address and draw attention to the difficulties that English teachers faced in teaching listening comprehension at MTs Negeri 1 Jakabaring Palembang. The researcher's suggestions were directed to English teachers, the school, and other researchers.

First, researchers hoped that English teachers would make teaching and learning activities more successful. Activities were conducted by the teacher to create a conducive classroom atmosphere and situation during every listening and learning activity. Therefore, teachers had to create a learning environment that was conducive, orderly, disciplined, and full of

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enthusiasm. Teachers also had to maintain good relationships between students and teachers, as well as between teachers and students, on an interpersonal level. Additionally, to ensure that English teachers could manage the class effectively, the teacher needed to employ an appropriate and distinctive teaching method/style. Teaching methods had to be tailored to the subject matter being taught and to the students' abilities. Apart from that, teachers also needed to understand the characteristics and learning styles of their students in class so they could adapt their teaching style accordingly.

Second, based on the results of this research, the researcher hopes that the principal could improve facilities supporting the teaching of listening comprehension to enhance the learning process. This includes providing earphones, a language laboratory, laptops, speakers, and other equipment so that the learning process could have run optimally and more efficiently.

Third, it was hoped that the findings of this study would serve as a guide for future research on the difficulties faced by teachers in teaching listening comprehension. Future research should focus on investigating listening comprehension more specifically and offering solutions to these issues.

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