
THE EFL TEACHERS' CHALLENGES IN TEACHING LISTENING SKILLS AT ONE ISLAMIC SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN MUARO JAMBI

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menggambarkan tantangan-tantangan yang dihadapi oleh para guru Bahasa Inggris dalam mengajarkan kemampuan mendengarkan di satu MAN di Muaro Jambi. Peneliti menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif untuk penelitian ini dengan menerapkan pendekatan studi kasus. Peneliti mewawancarai dua orang guru yang mengajar Bahasa Inggris dimana mereka diminta menggambarkan tantangan-tantangan mereka dalam mengajarkan kemampuan mendengarkan. Berdasarkan hasil wawancara yang dilakukan peneliti dengan para guru tersebut, para guru menyadari bahwa mengajar keterampilan mendengarkan tidaklah mudah. Mereka menemukan sejumlah tantangan dalam melaksanakannya antara lain: (1). Respon yang rendah dari para siswa, (2). Kurangnya penguasaan kosakata, (3). Perbedaan aksen antara penutur Indonesia dan penutur asing, (4). Kurangnya motivasi, (5). Persiapan alat serta perlengkapan pembelajaran, dan (6). Lingkungan belajar yang berisik atau tidak kondusif.

Kata kunci: Tantangan, keterampilan mendengarkan, dan siswa penutur asing

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe the EFL teachers' challenges in teaching listening skills in one Islamic senior high school in Muaro Jambi. The researchers used qualitative research design for this research by applying a case study approach. The researchers interviewed two teachers who teach English to describe the challenges in teaching listening skills. The results indicated that all teachers knew teaching listening was not easy. They encountered several challenges in doing it. The challenges include: (1) Students low response, all teachers interviewed revealed their challenges in students low response. (2) Lack of vocabulary, which means the difficulty in understanding words from the audio. (3) Different accent from the native speaker is a challenge for teachers in teaching listening. (4) Less motivated, students who lack motivation make their enthusiasm and listening skills decrease. (5) Preparing media and equipment, which frequently occurs to start teaching listening. (6) Noisy environment, noisy sounds from outside the room can disturb the focus of students in listening.

Keywords: Challenges, listening skills, and EFL students

INTRODUCTION

In teaching listening, the teacher has an important part. The teacher teaches students to understand the information and messages conveyed through conversation or audio. Teaching listening skills in the EFL context has its challenges itself. The teachers should be able and entitled to manage the students and the class condition. EFL teachers need to know their difficulties in teaching listening. When teaching listening, the teacher will find some challenges. Hasan (2000) indicated that the most significant issues faced by teacher that cause difficulty for learners' listening comprehension are new vocabulary, challenging grammatical structures, and the length of the spoken passages. He said that students' hearing comprehension issues include clarity, lack of interest, and the desire for thorough replies to listening comprehension questions. When EFL Teachers know the students' challenges, the teachers will improve their strategies in teaching listening. Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016) argued that teachers should encourage students to develop listening strategies. Listening strategies and linguistic knowledge are necessary for successful listening comprehension.

As a result, students' responses to the methods used were positive. Yaqin (2013) examined the teachers who mainly used bottom-up process activities in the listening class. The

problems faced by the participants were the limited available listening materials and the low level of students' basic English proficiency. To overcome those problems, teachers made their listening materials and emphasized teaching vocabulary as a pre-listening activity. What distinguishes this research from previous studies are first the topic in this study; the researcher will discuss the teacher's strategies in teaching listening from the teacher's perspective. Most of the previous studies only addressed the teacher's strategy in teaching listening from the student's point of view. Second, previous researchers only discussed the strategies used by teachers when teaching listening. At the same time, in this study, the researcher will also find out what EFL teachers' challenges when teaching listening in class based on the teacher's experience. Based on the introduction above, the writers intend to answer the research question of "What are the EFL teachers' challenges in teaching listening skills at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi?"

METHODOLOGY

The researchers used qualitative research design for this research. According to Ary et al. (2010), qualitative research investigates the quality of relationships, activities, situations, and materials. It focuses on understanding the context and attempts to explain the intentionality of behaviors. This

was a qualitative study since it described a phenomenon of EFL Teachers' Challenges and Strategies in Teaching Listening at Islamic senior high schools in reality.

To reach the research purposes, the researchers used a case study approach. According to Creswell (2009), a qualitative case study approach is a way to do research in which researchers dig deep into a program, event, activity, or process that will be studied in one or more people. The case in this study which often occurs repeatedly among students in the listening class is students tend to have difficulty listening.

This research was conducted at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi. It's located at Jl. Lintas Timur RT. 14, Sengeti, Kecamatan Sekernan, Kabupaten Muaro Jambi, with the zip code 36381. This research was carried out by the EFL teachers at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi as the participant of this research

There were some reasons why we chose this place as the research site. First, to answer the research question, we chose this place because this place could support the goal of the research. The researchers chose and identify the participant using the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique for data sources with certain considerations, for example, the person is considered to know best about what we expect (Sugiyono, 2009). This study used a purposive sampling

technique because the researchers felt that the samples taken know the most about the problems studied by researchers.

The researchers chose two participants because MAN 2 Muaro Jambi only had two English teachers, and these teachers were recognized as meeting the requirements to be research participants. The researchers used pseudonyms in order to remain the participants' privacy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

EFL Teachers Challenges in Teaching Listening at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi

Teaching listening skills in the EFL context has its own challenges. The researchers interviewed two teachers who teach English to describe the challenges in teaching listening skills. Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers with EFL teachers at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi. The results indicated that all teachers knew teaching listening was not easy. They encountered several challenges in doing it. The interview results show teachers faced different challenges in teaching listening: Students low response, lack of vocabulary, accent difference, less motivated, and prepare equipment. (1). Students' low response. Based on the statement given by P1 and P2, the low student response is a challenge for the teacher. Students who are low in response

will find it difficult to understand and find answers to listening questions. Students who are less trained to listen because the portion of the lesson hours that are divided is very small for listening skills. As a result, students are less used to it and their response is low in listening learning. (2). Lack of Vocabulary. Students lack of vocabulary is the next challenge when EFL teachers in teaching listening. Based on the interviews that have been conducted. It is as stated by P1 and P2. (3). Different Accent. Based on the utterances of P1, P1 experienced difficulties or challenges in difference accent. Students who are not familiar with other accents make it difficult for them to understand and capture the meaning in listening. They prefer to be read or spoken directly by the teacher rather than audio from native speakers whose accents they don't know. They prefer to be read by the teacher rather than listening to native speakers. Similar to P1, based on the statement above, P2 also experienced difficulties and challenges teaching listening if the accents were different. Students find it difficult to hear and understand the words of native speakers with different accents.

Based on the statements from P1 and P2, it has been noted that differences in accent are a challenge for teachers in teaching listening. Students who are not used to other accents will find it difficult to hear and understand the meaning of native speakers. (4). Less motivated. Based on the

utterances of P1, P1 experienced challenges in teaching English especially listening that P1 found it difficult because the students lacked motivation to learn. The existence of motivation given by the teacher can move or spur students to arise the desire and willingness to improve their learning achievement. Motivation will have an impact on student learning outcomes, either directly or indirectly. This makes the EFL teacher must make full effort to provide motivation and enthusiasm for their students in learning English, especially their listening skills. (5). Preparing media and equipment. Based on the P2 statement above, P2 feels that preparing media and equipment is a challenge in itself before starting teaching listening. Before starting listening lessons, teachers are required to prepare their own media and equipment for the continuation of listening learning. A good speaker or audio is the main key for students' listening learning to run well in the classroom. (6). Noisy environment. In the P1 utterance above, sound from outside becomes a challenge in teaching listening. Noisy sounds from outside the room can disturb the focus of students in listening. The same thing regarding a noisy environment was also conveyed by P2. Based on the P2 utterance above, P2 also feels disturbed by the sound of a noisy environment. This is a challenge for EFL teachers to provide a conducive atmosphere in teaching listening.

Both teachers agree that a noisy environment can disrupt listening lessons. Even though there is already a special room such as the CBT (Computer Based Test) room in the MAN, it still allows noise from outside the room and the surrounding environment, this makes students not focus while listening. In this research discussion, all of the result would be connected to the research findings. This research conducted to find out the difficulties that teachers faced in teaching listening and the strategies used to overcome those challenges. Based on the interview that had been conducted, the result would be discuss in this research discussion.

The results of the questions indicate that the EFL teachers experience several challenges in teaching listening skills. Based on the interview, the researcher found that there six findings regarding the challenges in teaching listening skills.

First, students have low response. In learning activities in schools, teachers are faced with how their students respond to learning. If students have a low response in learning, then they will find it difficult to follow the on going learning. Students who are low in response will find it difficult to understand to find answers to listening questions. The participants showed that students at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi had difficulty capturing the meaning in audio because the ability to

understand was due to the low response of the students. Colins (2010) stated that teachers must try to make students understand the main point of audio. Related to this research, the previous study from Ernita et al. (2022) also found that the EFL teachers had difficulty dealing with students who were low responsive, sometimes they could not focus on the lesson. Then some of the students did not usually do the listening test, so that made them get a lot of wrong answers. Many students still struggle to understand listening lessons.

Second, students lack of vocabulary. Vocabulary is a set of words that are known for their meaning and can be used by someone in a language. Vocabulary is defined as the set of familiar words within a student's language of English. The lack of vocabulary is makes it difficult for EFL teachers to teach listening skills. Staer (2009) stated that vocabulary knowledge is an important factor for successful listening comprehension in EFL. Solak and Firat (2014) also found that presence of too many unfamiliar words in a text is a reason for the failure in comprehension. Thus, to be able to understand the English passage, the students need to increase their vocabulary mastery. Students who only have a limited vocabulary and a few will have difficulty understanding and capturing words conveyed by audio or conversation in listening. The lack of students' English vocabulary is the reason why

students don't understand audio or conversation in listening.

Third, difference accent. The two participants teachers' at MAN 2 Muaro Jambi agreed that different accents were their challenge in teaching listening to their students. Buck (2001), as cited in Azmi Bingol et al. (2014) found that when listeners hear a new accent, such as Indian English, for the first time after learning exclusively American English, they will have critical listening issues. That will probably disrupt the listening comprehension process, and an unusual accent makes comprehension difficult for the listeners. As the students are English Foreign Language learner, they have own native language they study English as a foreign language (EFL). Students find it difficult to hear and understand the words of native speakers with different accents. Students prefer to be read or spoken directly by the teacher rather than audio from native speakers whose accents they don't know.

Fourth, students are less motivated. Less motivated is a separate challenge for P1, Guo and Wills (2006) categorize less motivated as a psychological factor. Psychological factors refer to those non-mental factors not directly involving cognitive processes such as students' interest, attention, learning emotions, attitudes and willpower. The lack of the students' motivation and interest to learn

was the big challenge for the EFL teacher to make listening comprehension was taught well. Le (2019) denoted that the teachers often encountered a lot of difficulties in teaching listening skills, and one of the prominent problems was students' low motivation. In addition, Goctu (2016) states that motivation is an important factor in learning and teaching foreign languages, specifically in listening skills. Thus, it is important for an English teacher to know more about how to motivate students in teaching listening comprehension. It is a reality that the motivation in EFL classroom is a very important issue,

Fifth, Preparing media and equipment. Preparing media and equipment is a challenge for teachers, as stated by P2. This result is in line with Aryana & Apsari's study (2018) who found that one of the teacher's difficulties in teaching listening was in preparing the media for listening. Preparing media such as good audio is the main key to learning listening, this is in line with the opinion of Azmi Bingol et al. (2014) stated that the quality of the sound system can influence learners' listening comprehension. In addition, Le (2019) found that the lack of teaching media became another problem faced by teachers in teaching listening comprehension. In teaching listening skills, the EFL teachers at MAN 1 Muaro Jambi the teacher teaches listening skills to students by presenting audio, or video, but sometimes if there is no

media that can be used in class, the teacher teaches by speaking the material to students and then students listen while writing what they have heard then comment.

The last, is the noisy environment. The implementation of listening skills requires a calm classroom atmosphere. With a conducive learning environment students will also be more focused on learning. In addition, to understand one lesson that is considered difficult, students must have a high level of focus. Crowded and noisy environment will make teachers feel challenged in teaching listening. This result is in line with Meador (2018) have found that teaching in a noisy and crowded environment classroom can be frustrating, overwhelming, and stressful. From the previous research, it was not only the difficulties came from the message, the listener, or the speaker, but also from the environmental surrounding the students. At MAN 2 Muaro Jambi, there is a laboratory room, namely CBT (Computer Based Test) to conduct listening lessons. However, this room is not soundproof, so it does not rule out the possibility of disturbing noises from outside the room which interfere with listening learning activities. A noisy environment makes challenges for EFL teachers' in teaching listening.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to investigate Islamic senior high school EFL teachers' challenges in teaching listening skills. The researchers draws conclusions from the findings and discussion of research in the previous chapter. In answering the first research question, the researchers mentioned several EFL teachers' challenges in teaching listening. The challenges include: (1) Students low response, all teachers interviewed revealed their challenges in students low response. (2) Lack of vocabulary, Students who only have a limit vocabulary and a few will have difficulty understanding and capturing words conveyed by audio or conversation in listening.. (3) Difference accent, differences in accent from the native speaker are a challenge for teachers in teaching listening. (4) Less motivated, students who lack motivation make their enthusiasm and listening skills decrease. (5) Preparing media and equipment, teacher feels that preparing media and equipment is a challenge in itself before starting teaching listening. (6) Noisy environment, noisy sounds from outside the room can disturb the focus of students in listening.

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