



COLLEGE STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN LISTENING COURSE

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ABSTRACT

Listening plays the most crucial skill since it develops first in people's language learning process, including foreign language learning process. Listening skill would enable people to improve their ability in communication. However, in some cases of EFL classes, college students still find difficulties in learning the skill since it needs more attentions and concentrations in order to comprehend the language materials. This study tries to discover the listening difficulties encountered by English Education Department students of Faletehan University taking the listening courses. There were 16 students participated in this study. The data was gathered by using questionnaires, interviews, and documentations. The results of the study showed that there are four main categories of students' difficulties in listening, namely: difficulties related to the learning materials (unfamiliar topics, topic that doesn't exist in students' cultures, too many unfamiliar words, and the length of the spoken texts); difficulties related to the speakers (unclear pronunciation, varieties of accents, and the speed of speaking); difficulties related to the listeners (inferring the meanings of unknown words, losing concentration, memory, and the length of the questions); and difficulties related to the physical settings (noises around, the online learning media used, and the internet connection).

Keywords: listening skill, EFL classes, difficulties

INTRODUCTION

From the very beginning of their lives, people start learning language through listening. Hence, listening plays a very crucial role in language learning process since it is the most commonly used skill in daily life. This theory is supported by Gilakjani & Ahmadi (2011) who state that listening plays a significant role in the lives of people. Further, Morley and Rost (cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016) reveal that listening is the most crucial skill for language learning because it develops faster than the other language skills which indicates that it would enable people to master the 3 other language skills. For short, it could be said that through listening, people will greatly improve their ability in communicating to each other.

Hien (2015) states that listening as foreign language learning is important since it presents the language input. This language input would be

beneficial for the foreign language learning process. When students obtain various language inputs, their language development would be achieved. Hence, EFL students have to listen to various kinds of English sounds and materials regularly and continuously to achieve the potential role of the language inputs from the listening activities.

In some cases of the language classroom settings, listening was recognized as the most difficult language skills to learn since it requires more attentions and concentrations in order to comprehend the language materials including dialogue and monologue texts. Besides that, listening is considered as a complex process in which many things happen simultaneously inside the mind (Darti and Andi Asmawati, 2017). This has become the lecturer's responsibility to facilitate students to learn better in listening.



As the most crucial language skills, listening is taught in series for students of English Education Department at Faletihan University Serang. However, in the learning process, students still find some difficulties related to listening. In fact, this is a natural thing in the language learning process. This issue has raised interests to investigate more about types of difficulties students face in learning listening and how to deal with those difficulties.

There have been numerous studies analyzing students' difficulties in listening around the world. While other studies focused on learning listening in the language classroom settings, this study investigated students' difficulties in listening course at English Education Department of Faletihan University Serang during the pandemic in which classes were conducted online.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Listening

Many scholars have defined what listening is. One of the definitions comes from (Nation & Newton, 2009) who states, "Listening is the natural precursor to speaking; the early stages of language development in a person's first language (and in naturalistic acquisition of other languages) are dependent on listening." Other theory comes from Bostrom (2011) who reveals that listening is the acquisition, process, and retention of information in the interpersonal context.

Howat and Dakin (cited in Hien, 2015) defined listening as the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. The aim of listening is to comprehend what people said in English. Further, according to Nordquist (2020), listening is the active process of receiving and responding to spoken (and sometimes unspoken) [messages](#).

From those definitions above, it could be inferred that listening is not merely hearing what other people are saying. It is the early process of acquiring information from spoken languages which are then interpreted into various language inputs. Through listening, people not only comprehend the messages but also develop the ability to convey the meanings in other forms, both spoken and written languages.

In the EFL classroom settings, the sources of listening activities may come from different forms. The first source of listening is the direct lectures form the lecturers who are not native English. The

lecturers may use English in explaining the materials and giving instructions. Here, students have to process the language input into comprehensible meanings. Other classmates may also become the source of listening since students are encouraged to use English to communicate to each other in the teaching and learning process. Again, classmates are not native English. For this reason, the language input will be easily understood without or with minor difficulties.

More natural and authentic sources of listening should be from the native speakers. However, native speakers do not always exist as sources of learning in every school and college in Indonesia. Therefore, teachers and lecturers have to provide suitable listening materials involving the natives from audio recordings or videos, so that students can learn much from the materials presented and obtain various language inputs to be processed as comprehensible messages. Those suitable materials need to be interesting, in the right level of students' proficiency, and presented in various activities.

2. Difficulties in Listening

Goh (cited in Hamouda, 2013) defines listening difficulties as the internal and external factors that might interrupt text understanding and real-life processing problems directly related to cognitive procedures that take place at various stages of listening comprehension. The difficulties faced by students would interrupt during the listening process, especially for EFL students in non-native settings. According to Lindsay (cited in Darti and Asmawati, 2017), a major problem students have is that they have little or even no experience in real listening settings, and no memory of past learning or social experiences. The fact that students live in non-English speaking country is the major factor to various listening problems.

In general, students' difficulties may come from the materials, the speakers, the listeners themselves, and the physical settings. Those difficulties are then broken down into these following parts:

1) The Materials

The listening materials are always focused on what topics usually go with people's daily life. The material itself could be the beginning of the students' difficulties since students have no any idea with some particular condition such as some



unfamiliar vocabulary from the speakers, or the speaker goes with some confusing grammar, the length and speed of the listening is too long, and the quality of the recorded materials.

a. Unfamiliar Vocabulary

Butt et al., (2010) reported that the major problem hindering listening comprehension was that students' vocabulary was too limited to understand the messages. Besides that, lots of words have more than one meaning and if they are not used properly in the appropriate contexts, students will get confused.

On the other hand, when listening texts contain familiar words and those words are used in appropriate contexts, it would be easier for students to understand the messages even if the theme is not familiar for them. If students know the meaning of words appeared in the listening materials, their interests and motivations will increase and it could have a positive impact on their listening ability.

b. Grammar

Complex grammatical structures could disrupt the learner's listening comprehension. It could cause much trouble to students in comprehending the materials since there may be students who find difficulties because they are poor at grammar (Darti and Asmawati, 2017)

c. Length of Listening

The level of students can have a significant role when they listen to long parts and keep all information in their mind. It is very difficult for lower level students to listen more than three minutes long and complete the listening tasks (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Short listening passages make listening activities easier for students and reduce their tiredness.

d. Cultural Differences

In order to provide various ranges of language inputs, listening topics may contain partly or even completely different cultural issues that students have. In this case, students may have difficulties to imagine what has been said. In other words, if the listening task involves completely different cultural materials, then students may have critical problems in their comprehension. For short, it could be said that being unfamiliar with cultural knowledge of language plays a great role in understanding the contexts. Students should be familiar with the cultural knowledge of language that has a significant effect on understanding. It becomes the responsibility of teachers and lecturers to give background knowledge about the listening activities in advance (Bingol et al., 2014).

2) The Speakers

These difficulties may appear because of the natural way of speaking the speaker has. Students who are trying to do well in listening must consider some aspects from the speakers talking in the texts: natural speech, pronunciation, varied accents, and other things related to the speaker's way of speaking (Dary, 2017).

a. Accent

Unfamiliar accents, both native and non-native, can cause serious problems in listening; however, familiarity with an accent helps students in listening activities. Buck (as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016) indicated that when students hear an unfamiliar accent, such as Indian English, for the first time after studying only American English, they will encounter critical difficulties in listening. This will certainly interrupt the whole listening process and at the same time, an unfamiliar accent makes comprehension difficult for the students.

b. Speed of Listening

According to Underwood (cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016), speed can make listening passage difficult. If the speakers speak too fast, students may have serious problems to understand the target language words. In this situation, listeners are not able to control the speed of speakers and this can create critical problems with listening.

3) The Listeners

Listeners, here referred to as students, play significant roles in the listening activity itself. The students' abilities would make the listening process possible to be done well.

a. Inability to Understand the Whole Texts

Hamouda (2013) reveals that students' difficulties in listening come from their inability to understand the whole spoken texts from the listening activities.

b. Psychological Condition

Students' feeling about doing listening is also affecting on to students' capability of the listening process itself. Every time students feel nervous, not confident, and uncomfortable, they will find it difficult to focus on the listening activities. Hence, students may fail in understanding the listening materials.

c. Low Concentration

In addition to those difficulties related to the students above, low concentration also affects the listening process. This might be the most common difficulties happened in a listening class. Since



students have to understand new information coming from the listening, they will be very confused if they lose their concentration. Losing concentration will also make them miss some part of the information given from the spoken texts. And this is very problematic.

d. Bad Listening Habit

Most people have developed poor listening habits that could be barrier to listening. For example, some people have the habit of “faking” attention, or trying to look like good listeners in order to impress the speaker and to assure him that they are paying attention. Others may tend to listen to each and every fact and, as a result, miss out the main point (Tyagi, 2013). In other cases, students do not like to practice listening outside the classroom setting. Hence, they just learn listening during classes.

4) Physical Settings

These difficulties may be directed to students surrounding environment. According to (Bloomfield et al., 2010), noise or distortion in the audio signal interferes with listening comprehension for listeners. Sometimes, inconvenience situation of the classroom affects students listening comprehension. In a large classroom, students sitting on the back rows may not hear the recordings clearly as students sitting in front rows. Students sitting next to the windows are also affected by the noise coming from outside.

a. Quality of Recorded Materials

In some classes, teachers use some recorded materials that do not have high quality. Low quality of recorded materials could be caused by noises, or unclear pronunciations. Unclear sounds resulting from poor quality equipment could also interfere with the listener’s comprehension (Azmi, Celik, Yidliz, and Mart, 2014).

b. Learning Media and Internet Connection

During this pandemic, teaching learning process in all education levels has to be done online. Teachers or lecturers and students use different kinds of media to conduct the learning process. The media could be developed by the educational institutions or other parties. Most of the media require strong internet connection. Sometimes, the media have some troubles. Other times, troubles come from the internet connection itself.

As the researcher mentioned previously, there have been numerous studies in the field of EFL

students’ difficulties in listening. A study by Hamouda (2013) showed that accent, pronunciation, speed of speech, insufficient vocabulary, different accent of speakers, lack of concentration, anxiety, and bad quality of recording were the major listening comprehension problems encountered by EFL Saudi learners. Understanding students’ learning difficulties may enable EFL teachers to help students develop effective learning strategies and ultimately improve their English listening abilities.

Another study by Yusuf & Faisal (2019) at MA Nurul Falah showed that there were two listening difficulties factors that students encountered which were then divided into two categories: internal factors (such as unclear pronunciation, limited vocabulary, poor knowledge of grammar, unfamiliarity with the listening topic, inability to concentrate, do not like English, self-distrust, speech rate, and accent) and external factors (like poor tapes quality and noises around them while they are listening). Then, Diora & Rosa (2020) conducted similar study at English Language and Literature Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang. The results showed that the difficulties students faced in listening comprehension were related into three categories, they were the listening material, the listener, and the physical setting. Other factors causing students’ difficulties in listening comprehension included: depending to others, being shame to ask the lecturer about the material, having emotional disturbances, the lecturer’s material explanation was too fast, lacking of reward and reinforcement, and being unfocused.

METHOD

A qualitative analysis based on a descriptive approach was used to investigate the students’ difficulties in learning listening. The opinions of what difficulties students face in learning listening were collected in the form of standardized questionnaire data (quantified for analytical purposes) to address the research questions since the researcher planned to explore certain attitudes and beliefs rather than evaluate particular variables (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). To endorse the questionnaire, interviews were also used. Furthermore, the researchers decided to leverage the evolving nature of the qualitative analysis, keeping the design relatively loose and flexible to respond to evolving knowledge (Dörnyei, 2011).



This section outlines the methodology that was employed in this study: the participants, the instruments and the procedure for data collection.

Participants

The study was carried out with the participation of 16 English Education Department students of Faletihan University Serang, Banten Province who took listening classes as one of the compulsory courses in the department. In the listening courses, students were exposed to English videos and audio recorded as the learning materials that were played by using online media since the study was conducted during the pandemic.

The Instruments

One of the instruments used was a close-ended questionnaire. This instrument made it possible to collect a large amount of data in an easily processable manner, and was methodologically similar to other questionnaire-based studies on this subject (Hamouda, 2013); (Darti and Asmawati, 2017); (Diora & Rosa, 2020). The questionnaire was in the form of scaled questions by using *Likert-scale* from 1 to 5 ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The questions were structured by paying attention to the indicators forming the theories, the concepts of writing the questionnaires, such as the contents and aims of the questions, the vocabulary used, styles and forms of the questions, the length of the questions, the order of the questions, and the questionnaires’ physical appearance. In addition, a semi-structured interview and documentations were used to elicit more detail information on the study and triangulate the collection of data.

Data Collection Procedures

As demonstrated by DÖrmyei (2011), this research may well be thought of a quantitative one because it included data collection procedures primarily resulting in numerical data which was then analyzed primarily using statistical methods. Since it used a 5-point *Likert-type scale*, it was referred to as quantitative. The responses of students were counted and translated into percentages; however, a descriptive method of the study was performed, and, based on probability theory, descriptive statistics were not advanced. The qualitative information was used to address the research questions. The data from the semi-structured interview with the listening lecturer at

English Education Department of Faletihan University belongs to qualitative.

Furthermore, the researcher employed some procedures in this study, they were: (1) planning, (2) gathering the data, and (3) processing and analyzing the data. In the planning process, the study method and the participants were determined by the researcher, as well as organizing the questionnaire and the delivery technique of the questionnaire, also the method and data collection technique. A close-ended questionnaire to collect the quantitative data was conducted while collecting the data. Next, using a semi-structured interview, the qualitative data was carried out and documentation was used to generate more detailed information and triangulate the data.

To address the research questions, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to evaluate the questionnaire and interview data that were obtained in the second step of this inquiry. The descriptive statistics including frequency counts and percentages were determined. Interview data was then analyzed by using content analysis. To promote research, answers were carefully read, keywords were highlighted, and documentation was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

There were four parts of questionnaires given to the participants. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of six statements about difficulties related to the listening materials. The second part of questionnaire consisted of four statements about difficulties related to the speakers. Then, the third part of the questionnaire consisted of ten statements about difficulties related to the listeners. And the last part of the questionnaire consisted of five statements about difficulties related to the physical settings. The results of the questionnaire were then strengthened by the result of the interview with the listening lecturer.

Difficulties Related to the Listening Materials

The listening material may deal with almost any area of life. It might include street gossip, proverbs, everyday conversation, new products, and situations unfamiliar to the student. Also, in a spontaneous conversation speakers frequently change topics (Hamouda, 2013).

Referring to the table 1, it could be concluded that regarding to the listening materials, 7 students (43.75%) agree and even 3 students (18.75%)



strongly agree that understanding listening texts when the topic is unfamiliar is a difficult thing to do in the listening activity. This result is consistent with Hamouda (2013) who states that familiarity with the topic of the listening texts results in comprehension. On the other hand, unfamiliarity hinders students from comprehension.

Further, Darti and Asmawati (2017) reveal that students construct their understanding based on their experience and background of the knowledge. This may be the cause why most students (50% strongly agree and 6.25% agrees) find difficulties in understanding topic which does not exist in their culture. The problems may affect them because maybe they lack of reading about the topics being discussed. Hence, they need to increase their knowledge by reading and get more listening practices with wide ranges of topic. Those results are supported by the listening lecturer of English Education Department at Faletahan University who declares:

In the listening course, I always provide the students with wide ranges of topics, starting from the simple ones to the more complicated ones. The topics should enhance their listening ability as well as their knowledge related to the topics. The topics themselves could be about everyday life, people, places, education, health, environment, business and economy, science, and even culture. I choose the topics that are suitable with their level. However, in practice, students often find

difficulties especially when the topic is not of their interest or when the topic discusses something which does not exist in their culture. This is because they do not have any idea or maybe they only have a little background knowledge about the topic. Take for example, I provide an audio about history of the Ottoman Empire. Some of the students did not know about the Ottoman Empire. Some others only heard about it once in the past, but they did not have any idea about that. Of course, this will make the listening difficult. This has become every listening lecturer to give a short review of the topic before having the listening activities.

Unfamiliarity with words also interfere students' comprehension in listening. Vocabulary has become a big obstacle for most students (50% agree and 31.25% strongly agree) in their listening activity. They find it difficult to comprehend even simple materials when there are too many new words that haven't been learned previously. It means that they have insufficient of vocabulary mastery. This finding coincides with Butt (2010) and Hanoi (2010) who reported that the major problem hindering listening comprehension was that the students' vocabulary was too limited to understand the messages. The data also proves the theory realized by Underwood (cited in Hamouda, 2013) that lack of vocabulary is a big obstacle to most students in listening comprehension. The interview revealed:

Table 1. Difficulties Related to the Materials

Item No.	Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA
1	I find it difficult to understand listening texts when the topic is unfamiliar.	0 (0%)	4 (25%)	2 (12.5%)	7 (43.75%)	3 (18.75%)
2	I find it difficult to understand topic which does not exist in my culture.	2 (12.5%)	5 (31.25%)	0 (0%)	1 (6.25%)	8 (50%)
3	I find it difficult to understand listening texts in which there are too many unfamiliar words.	1 (6.25%)	2 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	8 (50%)	5 (31.25%)
4	I find it difficult to understand every single word of incoming speech.	2 (12.5%)	6 (37.5%)	1 (6.25%)	6 (37.5%)	1 (6.25%)
5	I find it difficult to understand listening texts with complex grammatical structures.	0 (0%)	8 (50%)	2 (12.5%)	5 (31.25%)	1 (6.25%)
6	I find it difficult to understand long spoken texts.	1 (6.25%)	4 (25%)	0 (0%)	6 (37.5%)	5 (31.25%)



Table 2. Difficulties Related to the Speakers

Item No.	Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA
1	I find it difficult to understand the natural speech of the native speakers.	0 (0%)	9 (56.25%)	2 (12.5%)	3 (18.75%)	2 (12.5%)
2	I find it difficult to understand the meaning of words which are not pronounced clearly.	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	11 (68.75%)	2 (12.5%)
3	I find it difficult to understand well when the speakers use varieties of accents.	1 (6.25%)	3 (18.75%)	2 (12.5%)	6 (37.5%)	4 (25%)
4	I find it difficult to understand well when the speakers speak too fast	2 (12.5%)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	6 (37.5%)	6 (37.5%)

The biggest problem that most of my students face in the listening course is their limitation of the vocabulary mastery. They cannot understand what the speakers are saying every time they are exposed to new words. Hence, I have tried to introduce the vocabulary related to the topic before getting the students to listen to the audios or watch videos related to the materials. However, sometimes they still find difficulties even though we have discussed the vocabulary first. They need more time to recall the vocabulary over and over in order to enhance their mastery.

In addition to the unfamiliarity of the topic, topic which does not exist in their cultures, and insufficiency of the vocabulary, the length of the spoken text is one of the main reasons why students cannot understand most of the talks. The table shows that 6 students (37.5%) agree and 5 (31.25%) of them strongly agree that long spoken texts interfere with their listening activity. This finding is consistent with Hamouda (2013) who declares that the length of the text can be one major factor that negatively affects the learners' listening comprehension. This is because they feel tired trying to understand the unfamiliar sounds for long time. Students feel fatigue and distracted when they listen to a long spoken text. Further, in their finding, Diora & Rosa (2020) reveal that the meaning of long spoken texts are difficult to be interpreted by the students as the interview shows:

My students prefer short to long spoken texts in their listening activities. Even they think that a 4-minute-spoken-text of the native speakers has been too long for them. They cannot focus on understanding of what the speakers are saying since there is too much information to process from the long spoken texts. Problems with memories or even fatigue could distract students' attention from grasping the meaning of the text. Further, they

could miss the rest of the text when they cannot concentrate on such long texts.

Difficulties Related to the Speakers

Speakers are sources of the audios and videos. Speakers are usually the native speakers of English that could be British, Americans, or Australians. Sometimes, speakers are not the native ones. They could be Europeans, Asians, Africans, or Latin Americans

From the table 2, it could be inferred that most students (68.75% agree and 12.5% strongly agree) find difficulties in understanding the meanings of words which are not pronounced clearly. It means that unclear pronunciation has become a source of problem in students' listening activities since it makes them unsuccessful in grasping the meaning of the spoken texts. This result is consistent with Hamouda (2013) and Darti and Asmawati (2017). Further, the interview reveals, "Many of my students do not have good pronunciation mastery. They recognize the words in written forms, but they couldn't pronounce them accurately. Hence, they find difficulties in recognizing what the speakers are saying."

Related to the speakers' accents, 6 students (37.5%) agree and 4 of them (25%) strongly agree that varieties of accents are other sources of difficulties in listening activities. It is because they do not have much exposure to different accents. They have been familiar with their lecturers' and classmates accents but they are not familiar with the native accents. Thus, they feel confused with British English, American English, and Australian English because the pronunciation and intonation are quite different. So are different speakers from different places. This is in accordance with the interview result saying:

I provide my students with audios and videos containing different speakers of English. Every speaker has different accent in their speech. Even British have different accents among themselves. Sometimes, the audios or videos also contain conversations between speakers of English with those who are not natives. Take for example; when the topic is about going holiday to Melbourne, there is a chance that the speakers are an Australian as the tour guide and Spanish as the tourist. Here, the students will listen to people with different accents. There may be a chance that they misunderstand the messages conveyed since they are not familiar with those accents. The question now is, why should I provide materials containing those accent differences? The answer is that I want to introduce and expose my students with more language inputs to enrich their knowledge.

Speed delivery has become another source of problem for students learning listening. It is clear for most language learners and teachers that a slower speech speed would facilitate learners' listening comprehension, especially for the beginner. Table 2 above shows that 6 students (37.5%) agree and 6 more students strongly agree that they cannot understand the messages from the

spoken texts when the speakers are speaking too fast or without pauses, even if the words spoken are familiar for them. This coincides with the findings of studies conducted by Maulida (2018) and Diora & Rosa (2020). As interview points out, "When listening to an audio in which the speakers are speaking too fast, my students cannot understand the messages clearly. Sometimes, they only catch some of the information from the spoken texts."

Difficulties Related to the Listeners

In the third part of the questionnaires, students were asked about their difficulties in listening related to their selves as the listeners. For more details, it can be seen from the table 3.

Most students (68.75%) agree that they find difficulties to infer the meaning of unknown words in their listening activities. This may be because they have limitation of vocabulary mastery. In fact, the ability to infer meaning is important since it could help them understand the messages conveyed from the spoken texts. As the interview reveals, "My students tend to have limited vocabulary mastery and are typically word-by-word processors. These things have inhibited their ability to infer meaning while listening."

Table 3. Difficulties Related to the Listeners

Item No.	Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA
1	I find it difficult to understand the whole spoken texts from the listening activities.	5 (31.25%)	6 (37.5%)	1 (6.25%)	4 (25%)	0 (0%)
2	I find it difficult to infer the meaning of unknown words while listening.	0 (0%)	3 (18.75%)	2 (12.5%)	11 (68.75%)	0 (0%)
3	I find it difficult to recognize the signals which indicate that the speaker is moving from one point to another.	5 (31.25%)	6 (37.5%)	1 (6.25%)	3 (18.75%)	1 (6.25%)
4	I feel worried if I cannot understand the spoken texts.	3 (18.75%)	7 (43.75%)	0 (0%)	2 (12.5%)	4 (25%)
5	I find it difficult to pay full attention to what the speakers are saying in the spoken texts.	2 (12.5%)	8 (50%)	0 (0%)	4 (25%)	2 (12.5%)
6	I lose my concentration when I think about the meaning of new words.	0 (0%)	2 (12.5%)	2 (12.5%)	8 (50%)	4 (25%)
7	I lose my concentration when I think of another question.	1 (6.25%)	3 (18.75%)	0 (0%)	8 (50%)	4 (25%)
8	I find it difficult to quickly remember words or phrases I have just listened.	0 (0%)	4 (25%)	1 (6.25%)	6 (37.5%)	5 (31.25%)
9	I find it difficult to answer question which require long answers.	2 (12.5%)	3 (18.75%)	0 (0%)	6 (37.5%)	5 (31.25%)
10	I have bad listening habits in which I never practice outside the classroom.	7 (43.75%)	4 (25%)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	3 (18.75%)



Another difficulty is students' concentration. In listening, even the smallest pause in attention may considerably spoil comprehension. Most students (50% agree and 25% strongly agree) tend to lose concentration when listening to and thinking about the meaning of new words from the spoken texts. Moreover, same numbers of students lose their concentration when they think of another question in the middle of their listening activities. It is because they think too much to find better answer. It shows that they need good strategy to keep concentrate on their listening activities. As the interview reveals:

Students often try to catch everything they heard. In fact, new words and structures are often found in the listening materials. They become panic when they fail to recognize those new words and structures. This has caused them lost their concentration and the general understanding of the texts. At another time, students only focus on the questions asked, not on the information delivered from the spoken texts. Hence, they lose concentration on the listening activity itself.

The next difficulty is related to the students' memory. Related to memory, students find it hard to remember the definition of new words after being taught and recall the meaning of familiar words. Further, many students tend to quickly forget what they have just heard right after the speakers finished talking. Six students (37.5%) agree and five (31.25%) more strongly agree with the statement. As a result, when they need to answer questions related to the audio, they end up

not knowing what correct answers should be. The interview adds, "Students tend to have problem with their memory in listening, even after the audio is repeated over and over. They quickly forget the information that the speaker has delivered."

The last difficulty related to the listeners lies on the length of the questions. Most students (37.5% agree and 31.25% strongly agree) that they find it difficult to answer questions requiring long answers. This may be related to their limitations of vocabulary and problems in memory. The result of the interview shows, "Students prefer multiple choice questions, True/False questions, or cloze tests to WH questions which require longer answers. They find it hard to write down long answers on the tasks given after the listening activities."

Difficulties Related to the Physical Settings

The physical settings are related to the surrounding environment when the teaching learning process takes place. In this pandemic condition, the physical settings may also relate to the online media used and the internet connection during the teaching learning process.

Related to the physical settings, 5 students (31.25%) agree and 8 of them (50%) strongly agree that they find it difficult to concentrate if there are noises around them. The noises can make them lose much information from the audio since they cannot listen to the audio materials clearly. Hence, they may fail to understand the messages from the spoken texts.

Table 3. Difficulties Related to the Physical Settings

Item No.	Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA
1	I find it difficult to concentrate if there are noises around me.	1 (6.25%)	2 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	5 (31.25%)	8 (50%)
2	I find it difficult in listening to the materials because of the unclear sounds resulting from poor quality videos and audios.	3 (18.75%)	7 (43.75%)	1 (6.25%)	2 (12.5%)	3 (31.25%)
3	Poor quality equipment disrupts my listening comprehension.	4 (25%)	5 (31.25%)	1 (6.25%)	4 (25%)	2 (12.5%)
4	Troubles in online learning media used by the lecturers disrupt my comprehension.	3 (18.75%)	2 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	8 (50%)	3 (18.75%)
5	The poor internet connection causes troubles in my listening activities.	0 (0%)	2 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	5 (31.25%)	9 (56.25%)



In this pandemic situation, education institutions, including colleges, must hold the teaching and learning processes online. It has been taking place for more than a year. So that, institutions are required to develop their own online learning media or at least suggest the lecturers of what learning media will be best for their students. It's true that not all of the learning media support the online learning process. Sometimes, the media causes some troubles in the classroom activities. Eight students (50%) agree and 3 more students (18.75%) strongly agree that the troubles have disrupted their comprehension on the listening activities. The media fails in sharing or playing the audio materials. At another time, the media doesn't work at all. The result of the interview adds:

Sometimes the media I use in teaching listening get stuck. It cannot play the audio. When I switch to other media, same things happen and of course my students cannot catch the messages from the spoken texts clearly. Hence, I ask them to do the listening activity by themselves. However, sometimes I get fail when sending the files to them. Online learning is so challenging for us.

Besides the use of the learning media, the internet connection has become a problem in online learning. Five students (31.25%) agree and 9 of them (56.25%) strongly agree that the poor internet connection has caused troubles in their listening activities. Both lecturers and students often experience poor connection in the middle of the teaching learning process. There may be some reasons of why the connection is poor. It could refer to the places where the lecturer and students sit, the bad weather, troubles in the internet provider, or even because the electricity is off. The result of the interview shows, "I think the poor internet connection has become the biggest problem during online learning. We've got nothing to do if it is about the internet connection. All we can do is to wait until the connection recovers, then we can continue the activities."

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, it could be concluded that EFL students face varieties of difficulties when learning listening. Those difficulties have been categorized into four major classes, namely difficulties related to the listening materials, difficulties related to the speakers, difficulties related to the listeners, and difficulties

related to the physical settings. Each difficulty may contribute to hinder the students from comprehension of the spoken language inputs. If this is not solved, students may find it hard to master the other three language skills since listening is the basic of the four skills of language. Hence, the lecturers must use effective strategies and choose interesting topics as well as create as fun as environment and activities to let students enjoy the listening courses and comprehend the information from the listening materials.

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