

Analysing Teacher's Difficulties in Teaching Listening Comprehension

Putri Ayu Lestari

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang
putriayu@gmail.com

Renny Kurniasari

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang
rennykurniasari_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

Winy Agustia Riznanda

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang
winyagustiarizananda_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the teacher's difficulties in teaching listening at MAN 1 Palembang. This study used a qualitative research. One of the qualitative research designs applied in this study was case study design. The participant of this study was one of the English teachers at MAN 1 Palembang. The participant of this study was taken from one of the four English teachers at MAN 1 Palembang by using criterion sampling strategy. The data were collected through interview. The data were analyzed and presented descriptively. there are six steps commonly used in analyzing qualitative data, as follows; (1) the researcher have to be familiar with entire body of data (2) generate codes, (3) search for themes (4) review themes (5) define and name themes, and (6) produce the report. The results of this study showed that the difficulties faced by the teacher's in teaching listening at MAN 1 Palembang were related to as follows: (a) the students' psychological factor; (b) students' background knowledge; (c) students' attitude; (d) lack of students' vocabulary; (e) teaching aids or media; (f) the material; and (g) method of teaching listening comprehension.

Keywords: Difficulties, listening comprehension, teaching

A. Introduction

In recent years, teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) has become very popular. The purpose of English language teaching is to improve the learners' four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Of these four language skills, listening becomes one of primary skills in learning and teaching English. Ur (1989) asserts that teaching listening comprehension is one of the major tasks in TEFL.

Listening is different from hearing. As Andrade (2006) defines 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 and answering, and creating meaning by participation, creativity, and empathy. In conclusion, listening is not merely hearing what other speaker is saying, but it is a process of understanding and getting the meaning of what others are saying.

Listening skills should be taught effectively in the EFL classroom in order to produce better English speakers. As Andrade (2006) proposed that listening is a complementary skill to speaking, and it is important to stress listening in teaching English to the students for becoming good speakers.

However, teaching listening is neglected in that teachers are generally less aware of its importance for students. The teaching of listening is neglected and poorly taught aspect of English in many EFL programs (Mendelsohn, 1994 as cited in Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011, p. 977). Therefore, the teachers should consider that listening skill is an important component of language learning.

Moreover, Listening is one of the most challenging skills for both teachers and learners. As Bingol, Celik, Yildiz, and Mart (2014) describe that second language learners have significant problems in listening comprehension because of the fact that schools pay more attention to structure, writing, reading and vocabulary.

Therefore, There are some reasons why listening is neglected. Persulesy (1988) as cited in Hamouda (2013) states that one of the reasons for the opinion that listening is a skill that tends to be neglected is the feeling among language teachers that this skill is automatically acquired by the learner as the student learns to speak the language.

Based on the explanation, preliminary study, and previous study, there is a need to conduct a study to investigate deeper about difficulties faced by teachers in teaching listening comprehension at MAN 1 Palembang as this is never been done before and the result can be a useful information for English teachers, schools, government to create better policies which can improve English Language Teaching (ELT) in Madrasah Aliyah.

B. Literature Review

Concept of Listening

Listening is one of the subjects studied in the field of language study and in the discipline of conversation analysis. This skill can be improved by practice and there are many

rewards to develop your listening skill. It is the active process of receiving and responding to spoken (and sometimes unspoken) messages. Helgesen (2003) states that listening is an active, purposeful process of making sense of what we hear. More often we hear, more we can understand something.

The skill of listening is an essential part of communication and a basis for second language learning. According to Nunan (2003), listening is a process of decoding the sounds that are heard from the phonemes to the text completely. Brown (2001) suggests that learning to listen really means learning to respond and continue responding to listening as a chain.

Process of Listening

Listening is an active process by which we make sense of, assess, and respond to what we hear. Kline (1996) specified the process of listening through five steps which are divided into two groups:

- a. The first three steps are the necessary steps which are receiving, attending, and understanding.
- b. The secondary process consists of two steps which are responding and remembering.

Teaching Listening

Principles of Teaching Listening

The students are difficult to do or understand something without teaching. There must be a teacher who teaches them to make them understand. Brown (2001) states that teaching is showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand. Listening has also been considered from a further perspective in recent years when it is examined in relation not only to comprehension, but also to language learning. Teaching listening requires a bit more on the part of the teacher than that of the learners. One of the main principle of teaching listening, should be “Language material intended to use for training listening comprehension should never be presented visually first.” Good listening lessons go beyond the main listening task itself with related activities before and after the listening. It means that the teaching of listening should beyond the understanding, then the action.

In teaching listening skill, there are certain principles which is needed by the teachers to help them creating their own techniques, activities, and philosophy towards teaching listening skills. According to Brown (2001), there are some principles of teaching listening

skill that should be known by the teacher. Include a focus on listening in an integrated-skills course, Use techniques that are intrinsically motivating, Utilize authentic language and contexts, Carefully consider the form of listeners' responses, Encourage the development of listening strategies, Include both bottom-up and top-down listening techniques

Difficulties in Teaching Listening

According to Vandergrift & Goh (2012), listening and thinking processes are not easily observed by others or even by learners themselves. This often makes the teaching of listening difficult. Listening, unlike writing, speaking, and even reading, is typically done in real time where the input is transient and there is little record of what happens during listening. Teachers therefore find it difficult to teach listening in the way they teach the other language skills.

Graham and Santos (2015) state that there may be at least two important factors leading to a general perception of listening as a difficult skill to be taught. The first one is that, compared to other skills, listening has been under-investigated (Field, 2012; Vandergrift, 2007; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012), which means that it is fair to argue that we know less about the development of listening than we know about the development of reading, writing or speaking. Another potential factor leading to teachers' perception of the teaching of listening as challenging may be related to insufficient attention given to listening pedagogy in teacher training programmes and beyond.

C. Research Methodology

This study was based on a qualitative method which included interview to the English teacher at MAN 1 Palembang. According to Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun (2012), qualitative research refers to research studies that investigate the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials. This study was included in a case study method; a strategy of inquiry in which I explore in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to find out the specific information about teacher's difficulties in teaching listening at MAN 1 Palembang.

Participants

The participant of this study was taken from one of the four English teachers at MAN

1 Palembang by using criterion sampling strategy. Miles and Huberman (1994) as cited in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2007) conveys that criterion sampling is all those who meet some stated criteria for membership of the group or class under study.

Data Collection

In this study, the interview was used to get the data about the teacher's difficulties in teaching listening comprehension at MAN 1 Palembang. According to Creswell (2012), a qualitative interview is a process of asking one or more participants general, open-ended questions and recording their answers. The interview questions were given to one of English teacher at MAN 1 Palembang.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, I used thematic analysis. Braun and Clark (2006) stated that thematic analysis is used to identify, analyse, and report themes within data. Braun and Clark (2006) mentioned that there are six steps commonly used in analyzing qualitative data, as follows; (1) the researcher have to be familiar with entire body of data (2) generate codes, (3) search for themes (4) review themes (5) define and name themes, and (6) produce the report.

Establishment of Trustworthiness

In the process of data collection and analysis, the accuracy of findings and interpretation were assured. There were three primary strategies used to validate qualitative accounts typically used by qualitative researchers: triangulation, member checking, and auditing (Creswell, 2012). In this study, to enhance the ability to assess the accuracy of findings as well as convince readers of that accuracy, I used strategy proposed by (Creswell, 2007), member-checking.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Results

The research findings of this study presented the teacher's difficulties in teaching listening at MAN 1 Palembang. The data of this study were obtained from interview to the teacher of English. Through interviewing process, I found some problems in teaching English that had become difficulties for the teachers of English. From the results of this study, related to the teacher's difficulties in teaching listening of English, I categorized into

some themes, and codes below.

Difficulties of English Teacher in Teaching Listening Comprehension at MAN 1 Palembang

Table 1: Themes and codes for the teacher's difficulties in teaching listening at MAN 1 Palembang

Theme	Code
1. Psychological Difficulties	A. It was difficult to motivate students and how to make them interested with listening.
2. Student's Background Knowledge	A. The teacher found difficulty with students' who did not have a prior knowledge about the material that she was going to delivered.
3. Students' Attitude among others and did	A. Some students were often busy talking and chatting not concentrate on the listening subject. B. Some other students were passive during the listening process, which causes them to be bored with and reluctant for listening C. Some students did not know hot to do a listening task was
4. Lack of student's vocabulary	A. The lack of student's vocabulary becomes the difficulty the the teacher faced B. The teacher faced the challange while teaching listening comprehension to the students in the class where the ability of the students was at the first grade of learning English
5. Teaching Aids or Media	A. The lack of the tool like there was no earphone and the language laboratory was not availableThe teacher brought her own laptop and speaker to teach listening comprehension because there was no media like headphone or earphone provided by the school

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| 6. The Material | A. The teacher faced problem in preparing the materials to be presented to the students because the material that was needed to be presented to the students based on syllabus was not available on the source books provided by school |
| <hr/> | |
| 7. Method of Teaching Listening | A. The teacher felt difficulties in choosing method in teaching listening Comprehension listening comprehension because the teacher knew that the use of appropriate method or technique can make the students understand more about the lesson and they can use it for producing other skills in English such as speaking, reading and writing. |
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Students' Psychological Obstacles

Students' Psychological obstacle is a factor that is mentally or spiritually concerned with the aspects in students' learning; it was non-mental factor, not directly involving cognitive processes such as students' motivation. The English teacher at MAN 1 Palembang Mrs. RL explained that she had difficulties in teaching listening comprehension. The teacher said, *"Well, I've never seen students with high anxiety in my listening class. I think it's still in a normal level. What become my concern is about students' motivation. I don't know how to motivate and how to make them interested with listening. Some students have low motivations because they feel like being forced to be in the class and because they are not willing to learn. Some of them have problem on concentration and find listening is more difficult than other subjects. Students simply turn off when listening to spoken English as it is seemed too difficult to follow without high level of concentration. When I met student with demotivation, it was hard to get his/her attentions back. So, in teaching English, moreover in teaching listening comprehension, I think what made it difficult was about how to motivate students and how to make them interested with listening,"* (personal communication, October 20, 2020). It is a reality that the motivation in EFL classroom is a very important issue. We can change students' opinion impressively with the help of it.

Students' Background of Knowledge

A student's background knowledge is knowledge that the students have, learned both formally in the classroom as well as informally through life experiences. Background

knowledge is an essential component in learning because it helps us make sense of new ideas and experiences. A student's background knowledge on a subject affected their listening comprehension. According to the teacher, "*I found difficulty with students' who did not have a prior knowledge about the material that I was going to delivered. For example when it came to the material of Biography. Then, I took the biography of BJ. Habibie; students with poor listening comprehension may tune out, having no connection to their vocabulary. Without background knowledge about BJ Habibi, the students with poor listening skills have difficult time accessing difficult information. I had told them about what we were going to learn on the previous meeting, but still they did not get what I meant*" (personal communication, October 20, 2020). The student who knew about BJ. Habibie is not smarter or more advanced than someone who doesn't know him; he simply has knowledge that allows him to unlock the meaning. With a little bit of background, the student may be able to answer low-level comprehension questions about BJ Habibie, but the full meaning of the text eludes them without pertinent background knowledge.

Students' Attitude

Students have different attitudes in the classroom. The students' attitude could be a challenge for a teacher in teaching listening comprehension. The teacher denoted that the students have different attitudes in the classroom. According to the teacher, there were two kinds of attitude; positive and negative attitude. Students with negative attitude absolutely became the difficulty for her in teaching listening. "*Example of negative attitude was when my students were talking and chatting among others and did not focus on the listening subject. They could not focus on the audio being played, and they might not catch the messages from the audio*" (personal communication, October 20, 2020).

Lack of Student's Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a set of familiar words within a student's language of English. The lack of the students' vocabulary of English was the reason why the students did not understand what a passage was. The English teacher at MAN 1 Palembang stated that, "*The lack of the students' vocabulary becomes the difficulty that I faced as an English teacher.*

The lack of the students' vocabulary made me as a teacher was rarely to teach listening passage to the students because the ability of the students was not capable yet to learn listening passage. I thought that taught listening passage to the students brought the students feel bored" (personal communication, October 20, 2020). In listening comprehension, it would be easy for students if they know the meaning of words and their interest and motivation can be aroused which can have a positive effect on the listening comprehension capability of the students.

Teaching Aids or Media

Teaching aids are objects (such as a book, picture, or map) or devices (such as a DVD or computer) used by a teacher to enhance or enliven classroom instruction. Teaching aids or media are valuable instructional tools that can help learning more effective and interesting. According to the teacher, *"The challenge or the difficulty that I faced when teaching listening comprehension was the lack of the tool like there was no earphone and the language laboratory was not used well. I taught listening comprehension by explaining the main point about how crucial listening comprehension was. Then, I gave example and test. Furthermore, I brought my own laptop and speaker to teach listening comprehension because there was no media like headphone or earphone which had been provided by the school"* (personal communication, October 20, 2020). The teaching aids or media used by the teacher can make the listening more interesting and stimulate the students' interest in learning. The English teacher at MAN 1 Palembang face difficulty in teaching listening comprehension was the lack of teaching aids and media.

The Material

The material for teaching listening comprehension is crucial. The materials selected for a particular course should meet the aims of the course itself. As the teacher claimed that, *"The major problem that I faced when teaching listening was the material that was needed to be presented to the students based on syllabus was not available on the source books provided by school. Moreover, in teaching listening that needs textbook which should completely CD or DVD audio. Consequently, I should find out the material from other books*

or from the internet” (personal communication, October 20, 2020). In addition, it is hard for me to find some particular material for listening comprehension. For example, when I had to teach my students Narrative text about legend as stated on the Syllabus. I had asked my students about the legend that was familiar with them, but it was difficult for me to find the story that was familiar for them. When I used the material from the textbook, I found that the students were difficult to comprehend it (personal communication, December 3, 2020).

From the statement above, the teacher faced difficulty to find appropriate material in teaching listening comprehension since some sources in the school which was necessary for the teacher are not available. The use of appropriate learning materials and activities by teachers' are needed to improve learners' listening comprehension.

Method of Teaching Listening Comprehension

Teaching listening comprehension for EFL students is not an easy job. Using variety when teaching listening can develop students' motivation in comprehending the material. The implementation of appropriate methods and techniques by the teachers in a classroom will influence the outcome for students. She attempted to use the appropriate method or technique to make the students understand more about their lesson and they can use it for producing other skills in English such as speaking, reading, and writing. The teacher stated that, *“I feel difficult in choosing method, technique and strategy of teaching listening Comprehension. I know that to make the students being interested and motivated in listening comprehension, I should be creative in finding a method of teaching. I did not want to teach listening only by presenting the listening material through a tape recorder.*

It can be concluded that the teacher found difficulty in choosing methods, techniques, and strategies for listening comprehension. In teaching listening comprehension, the teacher should have a set of exercises, tasks or other activities for the students to make her class more exciting.

2. Discussion

Interpretation of this study was made based on the result of data analysis which aimed to ensure and strengthen the findings. Based on the findings above, there were some difficulties in teaching English listening comprehension faced by the teachers of English, as

follows: (a) the students' psychological factor, (b) Students' Background Knowledge; (c) Students' Attitude; (d) Lack of students' vocabulary; (e) Teaching Aids or Media; (f) The Material; (g) Method of Teaching Listening Comprehension.

First, the English teacher at MAN 1 Palembang found that from psychological factors, the teacher faced difficulty in motivating the students. The students seemed lack of motivation in listening comprehension though the teacher had tried to motivate them by using various method or strategy and media in teaching listening comprehension. According to Guo and Wills (2006) 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 teacher to make listening comprehension was taught well.

In addition, according to the teacher, she faced difficulty in motivating students mostly when she taught students from social science class. The teacher had tried to motivate them by using various method or strategy and media in teaching listening such as pictures, video, song or games. However, some students were not interested and demotivated joining the activities in the class of listening comprehension. Thus, it can be concluded that from psychological factors, the teacher faced difficulty related to the students' motivation though the teacher had tried to motivate them by using various method or strategy and media in teaching listening comprehension.

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, Hamouda (2013) showed that Saudi students face difficulty in listening comprehension due to anxiety, lack of motivation, and lack of interest. Goctu (2016) state that motivation is a crucial factor in learning and teaching a foreign language, precisely in listening skills. Thus, it is important for an English teacher to know more how to motivate students in teaching listening comprehension.

Second, background knowledge of students on English subject become the difficulty in teaching listening comprehension. The teacher found difficulty with students' who did not have a prior knowledge about the material that she was going to delivered. The result was some students could not answer the questions given on the exercise because they could not relate with the story that they had never heard before in Bahasa. Though the teacher had told them the story before she started to play the audio. Thus, background knowledge could affect

students' listening comprehension. The student with a little background information would have more understanding than the student who did not.

Hwaider (2017) stated that background problem is one of non-linguistic problems which become the main hindrances in teaching listening comprehension. According to Hasan, Gushendra, & Yonantha (2017), background knowledge is when students make connections to what they are reading as well as listening, their comprehension increases. Prior knowledge of the learners is one aspect of language processing which enhances the comprehension in learning a language. Thus, when the content of the material is familiar to the listener, he will employ his background knowledge at the same time to make predictions which will be proved by the new input. Without adequate background knowledge, the students with poor listening skills have difficult time accessing difficult information. The teacher faced difficulty because some students did not have background knowledge about the material given.

Third, the teacher faced difficulty in teaching listening comprehension related to the students' attitude in the classroom. There are obviously many differences among the students all over the world. The English teacher at MAN 1 Palembang found that the students have different attitudes in the classroom. She found that, negative attitude become challenge for her in teaching listening comprehension. She found that some students were chatting with other students; whether it was about the listening material or other topic. While, some other students were passive during the listening process, which causes them to be bored with and reluctant for listening. Thomson (2005) says that some teachers find that their students are often busy talking and chatting among others and do not focus on the listening subject. In listening, students need to be focus on the audio being played, otherwise they may not catch the messages from the audio. It indicated that students' attitude to listening imparted on listening comprehension. The result of this study was in line with Taysi's study (2019) who found that there is a significant correlation between the students' attitude and their listening comprehension. Thus, the English teacher was challenged to inspire students to be more engaged and to be interested in learning listening comprehension especially for students who have negative attitude.

Fourth, another difficulty was the lack of students' vocabulary. The students limited vocabulary becoming one of the problems in teaching English (Utomo, Kusmaryati, & Sulistyowati 2019). One of the matters why it represents a difficulty is that the vocabulary used in conversations or in a spoken language often varies and differs from that for the

written language (Broughton et al, 1978, p.72). Consequently, students sometimes show inability to understand unfamiliar words a thing which may confuse them.

The English teacher at MAN 1 Palembang rarely teaches listening passage to the students because the ability of the students is not capable yet to learn listening passage. Furthermore, according to the English teacher at MAN I Palembang, teaching listening passage to the students makes the students feel bored.

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. Listening was the basic skill in mastering English. The lack of vocabulary for the students was the explanation why the students didn't understand what the passage was. That was the challenge the teacher was having.

According to Bingol, Celik, Yildiz, & Mart, (2014), when listening texts contain known words it would be very easy for students to them. If students know the meaning of words this can arouse their interest and motivation and can have a positive impact on the students' listening comprehension ability. A lot of words have more than one meaning and if they are not used appropriately in their appropriate contexts students will get confused.

Fifth, the challenge or the difficulty that the teacher faced when teaching listening comprehension was the lack of teaching aids or media. Le (2019) found that lack of teaching aids become another problem encountered by the teachers in teaching listening comprehension. In the listening teaching process, teachers should use a variety of teaching aids with full of attraction to appeal to students towards the lesson. In teaching listening comprehension, the teacher at MAN 1 Palembang lack of tools like there was no earphone and the language laboratory was not used well. The teacher brought laptop and speaker to teach listening comprehension because there was no media like headphone or earphone which had been provided by the school. The use of media in teaching listening comprehension have positive affection for teachers when teaching listening comprehension. The listening will be meaningful and enjoyable. In teaching listening comprehension, the teacher taught the students listening comprehension by presenting the audio, cassette, or video but sometimes if there was no media which could be used in the class so the teacher taught them by pronouncing the material to the students afterwards the students listened while write what they had heard then gave a commentary.

Sixth, difficulty faced by the teacher in teaching listening comprehension was preparing the materials to be presented to the students. The main problem that the English teacher at MAN 1 Palembang faced when teaching listening comprehension was the material that was needed to be presented to the students based on syllabus was not available on the source books provided by school. The teacher should find out the material from other books or from the internet. In addition, the teacher faced difficulty to find some particular material for listening comprehension.

Furthermore, according to the teacher, as a teacher she should be more creative in choosing material so that students do not encounter difficulties in taking the exam in the future. From the statement above, the teacher faced difficulty in finding suitable material in teaching listening comprehension because some textbook provided in the school that were relevant for the teacher are not available. This result is in line with Aryana & Apsari's study (2018) who found that one of the teacher difficulties in teaching listening comprehension is in preparing the material. To improve the listening comprehension of learners, the use of appropriate learning materials and activities by teachers is required.

Seventh, the teacher felt difficult in choosing method of teaching listening comprehension. A teacher should have a set of exercises, tasks or other activities for the students in teaching listening comprehension. It is really important and positive experience to try various method and technique of teaching because successful materials of the subject matter would depend on the use of teaching method. The teacher at MAN 1 Palembang knew that to make the students being interested and motivated in listening comprehension, she should be creative in finding a method of teaching. The teacher did not want to teach listening only by presenting the listening material through a tape recorder. She attempted to use the appropriate method or technique to make the students understand more about their lesson and they can use it for producing other skills in English such as speaking, reading, and writing. Some techniques of teaching she had used were answering questions according to the text, rewriting songs, listening to television by watching video movie clips or CD-Rom, listening to the radio, using dictation, etc. But, sometimes it was frustrating for her, because the method she chose did not always work for some students. However, she realized that successful listening skills are acquired over time and with lots of practice.

This result is in line with Aryana & Apsari's study (2018) who found that the teacher felt difficult in choosing method, technique and strategy in teaching listening comprehension.

Thus, the influence of the methods used by the English teacher in teaching learning process is really vital to improve the students' listening comprehension. The teacher is supposed to be more imaginative and creative in developing their teaching methods to create good atmosphere and make the English lesson more exciting.

D. Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter presents the following sub topics: (1) conclusions and (2) suggestion of the study. In this chapter, all of the results from findings had been concluded. I also presented the suggestions that were expected to be useful for teacher, students, and other researcher.

Based on the result of data analysis by using thematic analysis, I found that there were some difficulties faced by English teacher in teaching listening at MAN 1 Palembang. All the data was obtained from interviewing the participant involved. I found some difficulties that discussed in the previous chapter.

Based on findings and discussion in the previous chapter, there were some difficulties faced by English teacher in teaching listening at MAN 1 Palembang. The difficulties are related to as follows: (a) The students' psychological obstacles (b) Students' Background Knowledge; (c) Students' Attitude; (d) Lack of students' vocabulary; (e) Teaching Aids or Media; (f) The Material; (g) Method of Teaching Listening Comprehension.

The recommendation for the teacher :

It is better for the teacher to know the students' interest and motivation in learning English well. The teacher can teach listening comprehension by choosing the students' favorite song to improve their interest and motivation. While listening, the students can also enjoying the music of the song. After the students are interested to learn English especially listening comprehension afterwards the teachers give the teaching listening comprehension by English conversation or a passage. In teaching listening comprehension in the class, it is better to have a good preparation about all the teaching aids or media, materials and source of books needed.

The recommendation for the student:

The students need to study harder and practice more to improve their listening in order to become a better listener. Not only practice but also follow the instruction from the teacher.

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