

## **An Analysis on Empathic Listening Styles in EFL Classroom**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The objectives of this study were to explore and investigate empathic listening styles in EFL classroom, to find out the teacher's perspective used the empathic listening skill in EFL classroom and to gain the students' perspective toward the use of empathic listening styles in EFL classroom. This research employed qualitative research by which the data were collected by using observation and interview instrument. The observation data were collected to show that empathic listening utilized by EFL teacher and interview data were used to find out the students' perception and the teacher's perspective of empathic listening which have been analyzed by using coding. The result of this research indicated that the use of empathic listening during teaching and learning process helped the teacher to communicate and to build a positive relationship with the students. The interview with the students and teacher also showed that they had a positive perspective to the use of empathic listening in the classroom. Empathic listening held an important role in motivating and in improving students' learning ability. Situation and condition of the students in the classroom should be considered before applying the empathic listening skill.

Keywords: Perspective, empathic listening, EFL classroom

### **INTRODUCTION**

The status between a teacher and a student is not simply for transferring and receiving the lesson material only. More than those things, teacher and student have a special bond. A bond connects between teacher and student as a good speaker and a listener for each other. As the part of the society especially in the school, teacher and student need to be active in creating communication. Furthermore, it cannot be denied if the teacher takes an important role to create the effectiveness of teaching and learning process in the classroom. Tafsir in Getteng (2012) mentioned that there some responsibilities for a teacher in the classroom in spite of teaching the students. Guiding, evaluating, training and

judging are the important elements to be a professional teacher. Transferring information is an important part of teaching and learning process in the classroom, however, the teachers are also expected to help and guide the students either when the student find difficulties in improving their potential or when the students need support in their life.

Concerning to the purpose of education and the teacher role in the classroom, nowadays there are many ways or methods from educational practitioners in assisting the students to improve their learning ability. The presence of many methods or teaching techniques in education circle is pure to help the teachers, learners, and institutions to reach the goal of education. Teacher as the sender of information in the classroom plays the most substantial role because they communicate a lot to the students. Therefore, teachers are expected to build a positive relationship with their students. Besides, listening is a skill which can assist the teachers to communicate with their students. Listening is the most prominent thing when interacting. It helps the listener to understand and to appreciate the interlocutor. When the speakers talk to the listeners, they can evaluate the listeners' way of thinking and the listeners' character accordingly, we as the listeners can set our position and action to the speakers. Additionally, listening teaches us to determine a decision by comparing some information that we have collected from the speakers.

Adler and Rodman (2006) said that the need for good listening is obvious so, everyone needs to talk one another. Basically, listening is just as important as speaking. To obtain information from the speakers is impossible without listening to it. Hearing and listening are not the same activity. Actually they are two different thing. When we are busy in a room then television is on in another place, in fact, we are listening to it or just hearing it. It depends on how much attention that we are paying attention to the television. According to Brown and Helgesen (2007) who said that listening has an important point since listening is a very active skill. It requires the active attention on the part of the hearer. We will be difficult to accept the information without listening to it first.

In spite of doing interaction with the students is a beneficial activity yet, many teachers who are still less attention to communication to the pupils. Most of the teachers teach the pupils without regard to the students' need in the classroom. Sometimes, teachers present a material to be learned unfortunately they cannot explain it well thus some learners are still confused to receive the lesson. In another case, occasionally teachers also forget to keep their emotional intelligence during teaching and learning process. Several situation and condition in the classroom indicate that teachers' focus in teaching is forwarding the lesson then missing the process of interaction between teachers and students during the learning activity. According to Rasyid and Muhayyang (2016) interpersonal communication lies at heart of classroom processes, EFL teachers should become models and should build up reciprocal and cooperative interpersonal communication either natural or conventional in achieving the set of instructional

goals. The teachers who can interact socially with the students will be a good class manager.

Developing students emotional is one of the manners to improve the skill of the learners. In this case, empathic listening skill is a good approach to be applied in the classroom. Goleman stated in Yasin (2011) that organizing the feeling is the core of a good social relationship. People who have a good quality emotional level with their environment can adapt his/her mood (empathy). In another view, Adler and Rodman (2006) said that empathic listening is the approach to be used when others seek help for personal dilemmas. This skill is totally helpful in supporting people who are difficult to make a choice. Shuaib and Olaoye (2015) also added if Empathy is the power to project oneself into the personality of another individual in order to better comprehend that individuals emotion or feelings. In psychology area, empathic listening is used to help someone who faces problem. People who really apply this skill will become better acquainted with others. They utilized it to show opinions and feelings matter to someone because empathic listening's goal is to help and to build a relationship. Therefore, using empathic listening in the classroom can be a good option for the teachers in creating and building communication with all of the students during teaching and learning process.

Based on the previous explanation, the objectives of this research were:

1. To explore the styles of empathic listening skill used by EFL teacher in the classroom
2. To find out the teacher's way toward the use of empathic listening in EFL classroom
3. To determine EFL students' perceptions toward empathic listening skill in the classroom

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Previous Research Findings**

There are some previous findings of some researchers have relation to this researcher. Makmun (2013) in his research discussed understanding the people by using the empathic listening skill. His research showed if the empathic listening skill is one of the skills which currently needed by people. There are some goals of this article. The first, this article want to find out the theory of empathic listening and its necessity in the interaction process, secondly, to describe the barriers that are often experienced by a person to listen in the communication process. Then the last, this article want to describe how to develop empathic listening skill. The result of this study showed that one of the skills that currently needed by people is an empathic listening skill. It can be said that the trouble in communication may be caused by the lack of adequate skills in this regard. So, empathic listening is a skill which can solve the error communication and ignore a debate.

Ciptaningsih (2015) has conducted a research about building mutually support behavior through empathic listening skill and constructive feedback training. The goal of this study is to gain the experimental indication that the training of empathic listening skills and constructive feedback to improve the behavior of mutual support among fellow volunteers in the community of JMP. The result of this research indicated that there was not a significant difference in enhancing of volunteers support each other's behavior with the absence of a significant difference in scores empathic listening skills and constructive feedback after training and before training. However, other information in the observation sheet illustrated that the participants had an increasing understanding of the necessary of empathic listening skills and constructive feedback in improving social support in the workplace.

Toponindro (2012) also observed the social support behavior of an orphanage in Jakarta. Researcher examined the effect of social support through empathetic listening skills and feedback training in minimizing the fatigue of the volunteers in Panti Sosial Marsudi Putra (PSMP) 'X' Jakarta. Although the data showed if the influence between empathic listening skill and feedback training have not succeeded to improve social support in the orphanage however, the result showed that empathic listening skill has been successful in decreasing the fatigue of the workers at the place.

Huitt (2009) in his article also stated the most important issue about empathic listening in a classroom is when to use it. Teachers have the rule to teach students and the students have the rule to learn material in the classroom. The used of empathic listening skill also should considers situation and condition in the classroom. It must be used appropriately in a classroom situation.

Shrivastava (2014) in his journal observed the implication of empathic listening skill to the employess. His research proved if empathic listening skill can increase the listening ability of the employees to understand the role of empathy in communication process. Shrivastava mentioned if the total numbers of people who do interaction and communication increase ignificantly every day. Therefore, a lot of groups or companies judge empathic listening as an importance skill to be used in daily activity

Sabbanci, Sahin and Ozdemir (2016) in Interpersonal Communication Skills of the Leaders of Inspection Groups in Turkey article clarified that group leaders during this research performed better in empathic listening. In this study, the researchers focus on interpersonal communication skills of inspection group leaders in Turkey. The result of data analysis showed that directors and group leaders' views show implication difference in empathic listening, effectiveness, feedback and trusting dimensions. Group leaders reported that they performed

better in empathic listening, effectiveness, feedback and trusting dimensions compared to the views of inspectors.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research used qualitative research design. According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006) qualitative research is the set, analysis and understanding of comprehensive narrative and visual data in order to gain insight into a particular phenomenon of interest. This study applied qualitative research design to explore the phenomenon of empathic listening styles in EFL classroom. In qualitative approach, the researcher did classroom observation by taking video and audio recording, documentation and interviewing teacher and students.

Gay et al. (2006) stated that qualitative researcher should spend time in research setting before selecting sample in order to observe and obtain information that can be generally used to select participants who the researcher judges to be thoughtful, informative, articulate, and experienced with the research topic and setting. Based on the explanation, the researcher conducted preliminary research at SMAN 1 Bungoro, Pangkep. The researcher decided to conduct a research in this school because of several reasons. First, some teachers and students in this school totally recommended their school to be a research setting. Next, the result of the interview with some teachers and students in this school indicated that one EFL teacher in this school was appropriate with the topic of the research.

To collect the data, the researcher used classroom observation and interview with the EFL teacher and the five students of SMAN I Bungoro, Pangkep. According to Gay et al. (2006) in observation, qualitative researchers obtain data by simple watching the participants. The observation class was done to get the data about the use of empathic listening styles in the classroom. The data were collected by video and audio recording. After conducting the classroom observation, the researcher interviewed an EFL teacher to find out the teacher's way regarding the use of empathic listening style than after that the researcher interviewed around five students also to know the students' perception of empathic listening skill in the classroom by taking audio recording.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The styles of empathic listening skill used by EFL teacher in the classroom**

Understanding the significance of communication and interaction between educators and students in the classroom, the teacher applied the empathic listening skill in EFL classroom. In its application, the teacher focused on five styles in empathic listening such as questioning, advising, analyzing, judging and supporting.

Based on the data collected through data reduction, questioning and supporting are the most used style during teaching and learning were going on in the classroom. Although the teacher was more active to use questioning and supporting however, sometime the teacher also inserted advising, analyzing and judging to the students in the classroom. Based on the classroom observation during the research, the teacher used questioning style in the classroom to do an approach to the students either to check the students' understanding of the material or to give his attention to the students. As well as questioning style, the teacher also applied supporting style in order to respect and to appreciate the students' work in the classroom. Even though the result was not really satisfying for the teacher yet, the teacher tried to appreciate the students' effort in the classroom.

In several interactions, the teacher delivered advising, analyzing and judging for some situation or condition in the classroom. This finding supports Huit (2009) argument who said that the most important thing in empathic listening in the classroom is when the teachers apply it. When the teacher found a trouble in the class for instance related to the material or the student itself, the teacher offered advising and solution to the students. Furthermore, the teacher did analyzing style when he faced a trouble also which happened among the students in the classroom.

As a result of the styles of empathic listening skill used by the instructors in ELF classroom, empathic listening is a useful approach to be applied in the classroom. A good communication and interaction process between the teacher and the student in the classroom will create an effectiveness teaching and learning process. Most of the empathic listening styles that the teacher applied in the classroom were questioning and supporting.

### **Teacher's way toward the use of empathic listening in EFL classroom.**

To create a good atmosphere in teaching and learning in the class, teacher holds an important position. Related to the research study, one English teacher in SMAN 1 Bungoro, Pangkep has been chosen to be the sample of this research. The selected teacher who was teaching in Bahasa class asked the information regarding the use of empathic listening in EFL classroom.

The result of interview showed that the teacher was really enthusiastic to apply empathic listening in the classroom. The benefit of emphatic listening in the daily activity included in the classroom supported the teacher to utilize empathic listening styles to his students. There two important points that the researcher found during the interview with the teacher.

The first, the teacher during teaching and learning process always used empathic listening skill to his students in the classroom. The teacher looked empathic listening skill as a compulsory matter. It should be used in our daily activity either to students or the others. Presenting empathic listening styles in the classroom will

develop a good interaction and communication between teacher and learner in the class.

Secondly, the teacher showed his appreciation and his attention to the students by empathic listening styles. In understanding the students, the teacher always listened the students' explanation or the students' question firstly then responded it. Giving opportunity to students in asking questions was one of the teacher ways to respect and to appreciate the students' effort in the classroom. Moreover, presenting supporting became a motivation for the students to learn better again. The teacher emphasized if empathic listening skill in the classroom will give a positive contribution in developing and stimulating students' ability in the classroom. Based on result of interview, the researcher concludes that empathic listening skill is a useful way to support the teaching and learning process in the classroom

### **Students' perspective toward empathic listening skill in the classroom**

Students engaged an important function when the teacher applied empathic listening style in the classroom. Students' point of view toward the use of empathic listening style by the teacher in the classroom became significant point to be understood. Five people have been selected to be interviewed concern to the utilization of empathic listening style in the classroom. The interview aimed to know the students' opinion about the use of empathic listening by the teacher in EFL classroom. The interview aimed to know the students' perspective about the use of empathic listening by the teacher in EFL classroom.

All of the students who have been interviewed stated that if they enjoyed the teaching and learning process. They also added if the teacher was an active teacher in the classroom. Besides, the teacher was also active to communicate in English with the students so the students were also active to do interaction in the classroom. The teacher also always gave chance to the students for asking questions and delivering arguments. Giving feedback to students' answer or opinion like saying *good job, clap hand for her, and very good* were an appreciation from the teacher to students so the students felt that they were respected and appreciated by the teacher. Next, the students also liked the teacher way to deliver an advice in the classroom. The pupils stated that some advices that have been presented related to the material in the school and sometime referred to students who need a solution.

Concerning to theories and previous related research findings, it can be concluded that this research presents different result study which the research studies before that described about empathic listening skill in a community or a group. The benefit of the use of empathic listening in studying will help and guide the teachers to create the effectiveness of teaching and learning process in the classroom. Furthermore, empathic listening provides the teacher to do a good communication and interaction with the pupils.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher comes to conclusions. Generally, EFL teacher of SMAN 1 Bungoro, Pangkep applied five empathic listening styles, they are questioning, advising, judging, analyzing and supporting. Then, teacher of SMAN 1 Bungoro, Pangkep considered empathic listening style as a required matter in teaching and learning environment. The use of empathic listening in teaching and learning process becomes one of the factors to motivate and to improve students' ability in receiving the material. Next, students of SMAN 1 Bungoro, Pangkep showed positive attitude toward the used of empathic listening skill by the teacher in the classroom.

The use of empathic listening in SMAN 1 Bungoro, Pangkep showed that this skill can develop students' motivation in learning English. The essential thing in empathic listening is interaction process between the speaker and listener. So, teacher plays an important position to create the effectiveness of teaching and learning process. Applying empathic listening in the classroom will give big contribution and positive effect in catching the learning target in the class.

Some previous researches focused on the use of empathic listening skill in community or organization which focused also to the effect of empathic listening toward the employees. Additionally, for the upcoming research, the researcher suggests to look for another phenomenon regarding to the use of empathic listening style in our daily activity. More researches in applying of empathic listening in education area for instance in school, campus or course will guide the education practitioners like teacher and lecturer to always utilize empathic listening skill in teaching and learning process.



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