
STUDENTS' PROBLEMS IN WRITING THE TV NEWS TYPESCRIPT

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Abstract

Listening as one of language skills learned needs practices inside and outside the classroom. These practices are aimed to provide students with kinds of listening activities which can increase students' ability in listening skill. Listening to the TV news is one of the weekly assignments given to the students at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang. They are asked to listen and watch English News from international news TV stations, such as CNN, BBC, ABC, NHK and Al Jazeera. From this activity students are assigned not only answering the questions WH questions related to the news but also writing the typescript of the news. They are asked to choose the news from any TV stations they like and write the typescript of one headline news, so that the news is not so long. In doing this assignment, they have to write the typescript of the news as it is. The purpose of asking students to do this assignment is to check whether the students understand or not about the words, the phrases and the sentences read by the news readers. These are related to their knowledge about pronunciation, vocabulary mastery and sentence constructions in listening to the news.

Keywords: *typescript, English news, listening skill.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of teaching listening is to provide students with listening skill in order to enable them to understand what the people are saying, (Yagang, in Adnan 2013). Underwood (1989) states the listening situation for which the teachers should prepare their students: (a) Listening to live conversation in which one takes no part, (b) Listening to announcements (at airports, railway stations, etc), (c) Listening to the news, the weather forecast, etc on the radio, (d) Watching the news, the weather forecast, etc on television, (e) Listening to the radio for entertainment, (f) Watching television for entertainment, (g) Watching a live performance or play, (h) Watching a film in a cinema, (i) Listening to records, (j) Following a lesson, (k) Attending a lecture, (l) Listening on the telephone, (m) Following instructions, (n) Listening to someone giving a public address.

One of the listening situations the teacher should provide is watching the news, the weather forecast on television. This activity needs students to watch the news on television and do listening exercises related to the TV news, such as answering the WH questions for the news, mapping the news stories and writing the typescript of the news. Watching the news can be done in the classroom or outside the classroom if the media is not available in the classroom. In this case the students can be assigned to watch TV news and do the exercises that can be reported or presented in the classroom. The typescript the students written will be compared with the news video (the students watch and record the video of the news). It is realized that writing a typescript of the TV news is not an easy one, that is why students are given a week to do this assignment, because they need to watch the news many times and make correction for the typescript they have written. Sometimes they need to discuss with other friends. Based on what the writer has done in her listening class, it is known that some students did not write the typescript completely and other left some words of the news in their typescript. This is in line with the ideas stated by Underwood (1990 p.16-19) about the potential problems in learning to listen to English, (1) lack of control over the speed at which speakers speak. Many English language learners believe that the greatest difficulty with listening comprehension is that the listeners cannot control how quickly a

speaker speaks. (2) Not being able to get things repeated. Another difficulty associated with controlling what the speaker says is that the listener is not always in a position to get speaker to repeat an utterance. (3) The listener's limited vocabulary. Choice of vocabulary is in the hand of speaker, not the listener. (4) Failure to recognize the signals. Students need to listen to the 'signals' in order to be able to connect the various utterances in the way the speaker intended them to be connected. (5) Problems of interpretation. Students who are unfamiliar with the context may have considerable difficulty in interpreting the words they hear even if they can understand the surface meaning. (6) Inability to concentrate. Inability to concentrate can be caused by a number of things, but in listening work it is a major problem. (7) Establish listening habits. Traditionally, teachers have aimed to teach their students to understand everything in the English lesson, and have gone to considerable trouble to ensure that they do, by repeating and pronouncing the word carefully, by graduating the language to suit their level.

Seeing the students' assignments about writing the typescript of TV news, it seems that students have problems in doing this assignment. They have problems in hearing the phonemes, words, sentences and opening and closing of the news. The students tend to write the words of typescript based on the sounds they hear. Sometimes they write the typescript without considering the meaning of the words, the structure of the sentences which cause misunderstanding in reading it.

2. DISCUSSION

What is listening?

As language skill listening is the first communication skill acquired by native speakers. It is an invisible mental process, making it difficult to describe. Listening plays a vital role in daily lives. People listen for different purposes such as conversation, announcement, entertainment, news, academic purposes or obtaining necessary information. As for foreign language learning, listening is of paramount important since it provides the language input (Rost, in Adnan 2013).

The definitions of listening have been defined by many experts. According to (Underwood 1989), listening is the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear. It is the ability to identify and understand what people are saying (Yagang, in Adnan 2013). This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary and grasping his meaning. Listening is also an active process which requires the listeners to participate in that process (Yang 1999). Vandergrift (2002) adds that listening is a complex, and active process of interpretation which listeners match what they hear with what they already know. Helgesen in Nunan (2003) says that listening is an active process of not only what people hear but also how people connect it to other information they have already known.

Based on theory of communication, Rost in Adnan (2013) views listening as a part of transactional process in which all participants are simultaneously 'sending' and 'receiving' messages. He says definitions of listening based on four orientations or perspectives. First from the perspective of receptive, listening is viewed as receiving what the speaker actually say. Second, from the perspective of constructive, listening can be defined as constructing and representing meaning. Third, viewed from collaborative perspective, listening is negotiating meaning with speakers and responding it. Fourth, from the view of transformative perspective, it means creating meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy. It can be concluded that listening is the activity of paying attention and trying to get meaning from we hear which need the ability to identify and understand what people are saying.

Listening to the TV news

There are two media of broadcast news, television news and radio news. Television news provides voice and picture that is called audio visual media. Meanwhile radio news just provides voice that is called audio lingual media. TV news provides not only the voice but also the pictures, running text, so that the viewers can predict what they are going to listen.

According to Alteide, (2002). Television news needs be highly entertaining and visual in order to maintain audience attention. Much of the "news" content consists of summaries of events, but those

summaries are accompanied by often dramatic video clips and bulleted lists of headline summaries. Moreover, in contrast to the BBC “newsreaders,” national news anchors themselves such as Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw, Peter Jennings, and Paula Zahn as well as local anchors are often celebrity stars whose own perspectives, comments, and asides become a part of the broadcast.

In watching a news clip or the entire news, consider how much and what kinds of conceptual content you are acquiring from the news. The news is also highly segmented based on an unfolding flow of stories organized down to the second. Most stories last for less than a minute, a use of time, a pace that differs from the slow, unpredictable flow of time in everyday worlds. The high speed at which stories are reported with an emphasis on a multi-media presentation may ironically detract from a substantive understanding of the news content one may acquire from reading a newspaper account.

Related to the characteristics of TV news, it seems that the ideas above are in line with Ur ideas (1984, p. 9). He summarizes six features of most real-life listening, even though not all of them are relevant for listening to the news.

1. We listen for a purpose and with certain expectations.
2. We make an immediate response to what we hear-not to the speaker, but sometimes to co-listeners.
3. We see the person we are listening to.
4. There are some visual or environmental clues as to the meaning of what we is heard.
5. Stretches of heard discourse come in short chunks
6. Most heard discourse is spontaneous-while interviewees’ discourse might be spontaneous.

It also needs to know that the newsreader is likely to speak at a reasonable pace, enunciate clearly and to have an accent which is not very strong. The listener can expect the text to be well organized. Vocabulary can be wide ranging but certain lexical items and collocations occur frequently, such as “government spokesman”, “crisis talks”. Certain grammatical features occur more frequently, such as the use of the Present Perfect, (Basquille: undated)

Problems in listening to the news

Assigning students to listen to the English news does not mean that the teacher does not know the problems faced by students, but this is one of the ways to improve their listening ability. They need to be introduced and familiar with TV or radio news. In addition they will know various accents of English since the international TV news channels provide English news with various accents. They may not stick on a certain accent of English, because English has various accents. Everyone will agree that listening to the news is difficult as it is stated by (Basquille:undated). When listening to the news, the learner will encounter some difficulties more than others. On television news there is often strident background music playing while the news headlines are being read. The speed of delivery can be quite fast and of course there is no possibility of asking the speaker to repeat or clarify. Many learners believe that their greatest difficulty with listening is their inability to control the speaker’s speed (Underwood, 1990 p.16).

The range of vocabulary and grammatical complexity can vary from news service to news service. Learners are not always aware that they are likely to hear similar news items presented in linguistically contrasting ways, depending on which station they are turned (Basquilla: undated). For example, the BBC’s will use more formal language than others stations.

He also says that the facts of the TV news show that even though the news is scripted, learners still have problems identifying sounds and words. Although the news is clearly articulated, some problems with connected speech cause difficulties. One such difficulty is assimilation (the blending of words at their boundaries).

Students’ Problems in Writing TV News Typescript

Based on the students’ assignment of writing TV news typescript, the students’ problems can be categorized into four, they are:

1. Hearing the wrong phoneme.

From the assignment collected, it can be seen students' mistakes in writing the typescript which caused by their problems in listening the correct phonemes. They failed in catching the correct phonemes uttered by the news reader.

Examples: (the words in italic are students works)

- a. ***Flooding have cold are still happening***
(Flooding have **occurred and** are still happening).
- b. ***Some people have made the emergency situation.***
(Some people have made the emergency **shelter**)
- c. ***....dangerous lines***
(...dangerous **lands**)
- d. ***.....reneged pulps***
(... **drainage pumps**)
- e. ***The countries repeated in the build to safely control large cross***
(The country repeated **in ability** to safely control large **crowded**)

The examples above show that the words students written in the typescript are different from the word mentioned by the news reader, so that the words are not appropriate with the context of the sentences. These are caused by phonemes the students heard have similar sounds with phonemes the newsreaders read. Unfortunately, the students did not re-check the words they have written, they did not realized that those words gave a different meaning toward the meaning of the sentences, which make the sentences difficult to be understood and it may cause misunderstanding.

2. Mistakes in writing the words because of miss hearing of the words.

The second category of mistake made by students in writing the typescript is miswriting of the words caused by mishearing of the words uttered by the news reader, like the following examples;

- a. ***A lot of water rushes into this part of***
(A lot of water rushes into East Part of.....)
- b. ***.....taking all this way***
(..... taking in its way)
- c. ***Unusual heavy rain's over flowing across low lank areas***
(Unusual heavy rain's over flowing across low land areas)
- d. ***We have not seen this much weather in decades***
(We have not seen this much water in decades)
- e. ***Helicopters are resqueing people from windows and ropes***
(Helicopters are resqueing people from windows and roofs)
- f. ***The down floods for....***
(Threatened floods for.....)
- g. ***One man said people were claiming over to brief.***
(One man said people were climbing over to breath)
- h. ***...from the rack sale in the mid 10980's***
(.....from direct sale in the mid 1980's)
- i. ***As she changes that.....***
(As she chases that....)
- j. ***I don't feel the procedure one year....***
(I don't feel the pressure one year.....)
- k. ***I feel like I wanna one year...***
(I feel like Iwon one year...)
- l. ***A body shining is coming....***
(A bodi shaming is coming....)
- m. ***You know, I have grand slime, to win people....***

(You know, I have Grand Slam, to win people....)

- n.** *More than 20 rivers the rain falling in just 24 hours*
(More than 20 inches of rain falling in just 24 hours)
- o.** *Japanese is middle all ages's morning of this in minute and serious danger.*
(Japanese meteorologist is warning this eminent and serious danger)
- p.** *Correct selling is a solution for pharmacy size boots investment is huge*
(Direct selling is a solution for farmer. He says that boost investment is huge)
- q.** *Now the places and the trains are stopping them to access to the stations.*
(Now the police and the trains are stopping them from getting the access to the station)

The mistakes above occurred because the students have problems in hearing the words mentioned by the news readers. They could not catch the correct words. It seems that they tried to find the words that have similar sound, even though the meanings are different. These mistakes also cause misunderstanding for the readers.

3. The third category of the mistake made by students in writing the typescript is hearing the correct words. The students do not know the words mentioned by the news readers. These can be caused by their limited vocabularies. It is difficult for them to understand the words since the news readers use the wide range of vocabularies and read very fast. The following sentences written in italic are examples of students sentences of typescript.

- a.** *Around the world toninght into an _____ deadly.....*
(Around the world tonight into an awful deadly.....)
- b.** *More than seven hundreds lost their lives, making it deadly _____ there in 25 years.*
(More than seven hundreds lost their lives, making it deadly tragedy there in 25 years.)
- c.** *Witness said today the _____ began when two _____ wide pilgrim conversed in the valley of Mina.*
(Witness said today the stampede began when two huge wide pilgrim converged in the Valley of Mina).
- d.** *_____ already stop _____ stampede.....*
(Saudi Arabia stop artificial stampede.....)
- e.** *You are _____ that this is my body*
(You are brave to say that this is my body)
- f.** *Public say a mix double partner of _____*
(Public say a mix double partner of the court)

The examples above show that students did not know many words, they left many blank spaces. In some examples they students left the words not because they did not know the words, but it might be cause by the speed of the news reader in reading the news.

4. The fourth category of the students' problem is writing the correct sentences of typescript. For example:

- a.** *Correct selling is a solution for pharmacy size boots investment is huge*
(Direct selling is a solution for farmer. He says that boost investment is huge)
- b.** *It would be lowest cost to produce....*
(It would be wiser to produce....)
- c.** *Producers now want concrete hikes in from the you to help ease the process.*
(Producers now want concrete actions from EU to help ease the crisis)
- d.** *Germany may help be the destination they could reach on Monday*
(Germany may have been the destination they could reach on Monday)
- e.** *Now the places and the trains are stopping them to access to the stations.*
(Now the police and the trains are stopping them from getting the access to the station)

Lack of grammar knowledge of English sentences causes problems for students in writing the correct sentences. Actually they have learned English grammar in Intensive Course, Grammar 1,

Grammar 2 and Grammar 3 subjects. They should have known the rules of constructing correct English sentences so that the mistakes can be avoided. However they did not use the knowledge they have learned, and just focused on the sound they heard without considering the rules of the sentences. The result is the ungrammatical sentences.

The examples above also show that the students did not know where the sentences end. It can be seen from the way the students combined the sentences. The combination of the wrong words, caused by mishearing words make the wrong sentences that are difficult to be understood.

The use of inappropriate personal pronoun also caused misunderstanding for the readers who read that typescript. Students who do not have background knowledge about certain topic of the news, and they also do not know the acronyms used by the newsreaders also caused problems in writing the typescript, i.e. 'EU' (European Union) which was written as 'the you'. That student should have tried to catch the sound [iyu], that led them to the acronym instead of the you which has no meaning. However s/he stopped at 'the you'. It seems that s/he did not want to recheck the words, whether it has meaningful or not. It is believed that that student was sure that there is no English phrase that consists of 'the you'.

5. The fifth category of the students difficulties in writing the typescript is their inability in writing the opening and the closing of the news, like the following examples:

(the student did not write the last part or closing of the news read by the newsreader).

After watching the news video they collected, the missing part is:

(Syrian Boy: My message: "please help Syrian. Syrians need help now. You can stop the war. We don't want to go to Europe. Just stop the war in Syria. Just that). Most of the students tend to exclude the opening and the closing of the news, even though they are clearly stated by the news readers. The students also have been instructed to write the typescript as it is. It is true that those parts are read faster.

Besides the above factor the way the news readers in the studio and the reporter in the field change the turn in delivering the news also cause another difficulty for students in writing the typescript of the opening and the closing parts of the news.

3. CONCLUSION

Assigning students to listen to the news is aimed to improve their listening ability. Their understanding of the news they listened can be checked by asking them to write the typescript of the news. Based on their assignments, it can be concluded that the students have problems in writing the typescript of the news. They have difficulties in hearing the phoneme, it caused them mishearing of the English phonemes. They also have difficulties in hearing the words because they have limited vocabularies. Constructing the correct sentences of the news is also difficult for them, even though they have learned English grammar in Grammar 1 and Grammar 2. They also tended not to write the opening and the closing part of the news.

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