

# DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILL OF THE GRADE VIII STUDENTS AT SMP NEGERI 19 PALU THROUGH ENGLISH SONGS

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## **Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan keterampilan mendengarkan siswa kelas delapan di SMPN 19 Palu melalui lagu bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini dirancang sebagai kolaboratif penelitian tindakan kelas di mana peneliti dan kolaborator-nya bekerja sama untuk merancang rencana pelajaran, menerapkan tindakan, mengamati efek tindakan, dan merefleksikan hasil dari tindakan. Dalam melakukan penelitian ini, peneliti bertindak sebagai praktisi, motivator, dan fasilitator, sedangkan kolaboratornya menjadi pengamat dengan menggunakan lembar observasi, catatan lapangan. Penelitian ini menggunakan dua siklus. Siklus 1 terdiri dari dua pertemuan dan siklus 2 terdiri dari dua pertemuan. Lagu Bahasa Inggris digunakan sebagai media pembelajaran untuk mengembangkan keterampilan mendengarkan siswa. Subjek penelitian ini terdiri dari dua puluh siswa. Data menunjukkan bahwa siswa menikmati dan senang dalam proses belajar dan mengajar. Para siswa sangat aktif dalam melakukan semua tugas-tugas. Untuk memperoleh data apakah tanggapan siswa keterampilan mendengar dapat dikembangkan, diberikan kuesioner dan tes individu. Pelaksanaan dua siklus menunjukkan peningkatan prestasi siswa. Ada 13 (65,00%) siswa yang berhasil dan 10 (30,00%) siswa dianggap gagal. Kemudian, berhasil meningkat menjadi 15 (75%) siswa dan gagal menurun menjadi 5 (25,00%) siswa pada siklus 2. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa tindakan dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus dianggap berhasil untuk memecahkan masalah keterampilan mendengarkan.*

*Istilah kunci: Mengembangkan, Keterampilan Mendengarkan, Lagu Bahasa Inggris.*

Today, the central government states that teachers of English should focus their teaching on the development of language skills. It is stated in the manual for writing a school-based curriculum document that the students at the end of their learning year must be able to use the four language skills. One of the skills the students have to improve is listening skill. From the observation and documentation study of students' learning results, the researcher knows that the students have difficulty in listening skill.

Listening is a skill that complicated to be mastered, because it needs more attention and concentration to comprehend the sounds (listening material). It could be said that listening is not a passive skill; the process of listening is a complex process in which many things happen simultaneously inside the mind. Based on the researcher's observation

at SMPN 19 Palu, the researcher has also found that it is very difficult for the students to understand English through listening. The problems are most students are from different minority areas. In some junior high schools, there are no language labs to train their listening skills. Listening activities are not common for the students. When they come to senior high school, they couldnot adjust their study habits very quickly. They still rely on their eyes instead of their ears to learn English.

Usually, the students feel at a loss when they listen to some new text. Over 50% of the students could not understand the meaning of the material after playing the tape for the first time. Expecting them to understand the material, the teacher often gives them some instructions and to play the tape again, at

least three times. Still, at least 20% of students might not understand it.

In order to overcome those problems, it is better to look for good method in teaching listening. We could use some activities that could stimulate the students to improve their listening skill. The activities such as watching a film, listen to news report, and listen to English songs. In watching a film, we could cover the subtitle with a piece of paper for a few minutes and try to predict what is going to happen. In listen to news report, we could choose the topic that interests us such as about sport, fashion, or education. When listening, we could write the vocabularies that appear on the particular topic. In listening English songs, we could listen to the pronunciation of words and sing along with the songs.

Listening to English song is could be more interesting than the other activities. English songs are great language package that bundle culture, vocabulary, listening, grammar and a host of other language skills in just a few rhymes. Songs could also provide a relaxed lesson on a hot boring day. It could also form the basis for many lessons. It could be used for a wide variety of English for foreign language learning and teaching activities. It could start discussions on a topic or even become the centre of debate.

Using songs in the classroom is a great way to live up listening activities. It could be added a couple of steps that have been used with success to the process though to make the listening activities more effective.

For all these particular reasons, the researcher consider it would be useful for the students to be taught listening skill by using songs. The use of English songs would also introduce to the students the real culture of the English speaking country whose songs would be used in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The researcher also select careful the songs that have the language needed to cover the basic competence required by the students. The

researcher also considers the improvement of listening skills because without this skill it is impossible for someone to understand what is being talked about. Therefore, listening is the first skill that should be mastered before someone one master other skills.

In line with the statement above, the researcher tried to reduce the problems of the students' listening comprehension and intends to find out what could be done to help them develop their listening skill. In this research the researcher would like to use songs to develop the eighth grade students' listening skill at SMPN 19 Palu in academic year 2014/2015.

### **Listening Skill**

Listening is always said to be the first skill learned by normal people. We learn it before we acquire other language skills. Its importance in learning the first language is the same as when we learn the second language. As stated by Hill & Flynn (2006:100), second language acquisition requires a significant amount of listening and speaking in order for the student to internalize the new language.

Until now, listening in the classroom is done to check students' ability to catch the words. In the national examination also, especially for SMP students, there are no questions given to test students' ability in listening. So, the students as well as the teachers are not really motivated to learn listening as they have pressures to learn other language skills (reading and writing) to be tested in the national examination. Therefore, this is one of the reasons for the writer to choose her topic, that is to give the chance for the writer as the teacher and her students to develop listening skill. Because as we know, listening is the first language skill that should be mastered in learning a language.

Ronald and Roskelly (1985:3) define listening as an active process requiring the same skills of prediction, hypothesizing, checking, revising, and generalizing that

writing and reading demand; and these authors present specific exercises to make students active listeners who are aware of the "inner voice" one hears when writing. Listening is now treated as a much more complex activity and one that is the cornerstone of language acquisition (Krashen, 1994:87).

Recognition of listening's critical role in the language acquisition process has greatly influenced contemporary language teaching practice. The view that listening as an active and interactive process has, for example, cast the learner in a role other than the passive receiver of aural input (Rost, 1993:34). Classroom emphasis is now on aural intake through active negotiation of meaning. In face to face interaction, the listener, not just the speaker, engages in the active making of meaning. It is believed that this mutual negotiation of meaning between speakers activates the cognitive and sociocognitive processes necessary for language acquisition to occur (Breen and Coulddin, 1980:17). In short, listening has been recast as an activity central to the L2 acquisition process (Dunkle, 1991:46), and a skill integral to overall communicative competence (Savignon, 1991:61).

Language learning depends on listening since it provides the aural input that serves as the basis for language acquisition and enables learners to interact in spoken communication. Listening is the first language mode that children acquire. It provides the foundation for all aspects of language and cognitive development, and it plays a life-long role in the processes of communication. A study by Wilt (1950:89), found that people listen 45% of the time they spend communicating. Wilt found that 30% of communication time was spent speaking, 16% reading, and 9% writing. That finding confirmed what Rankin discovered in 1928, that people spent 70% of their waking time communicating and that three-fourths of this time was spent listening and speaking.

According to second language acquisition theory, language input is the most essential condition of language acquisition. As an input skill, listening plays a crucial role in students' language development. Krashen (1985:59) argues that people acquire language by understanding the linguistic information they hear. Thus language acquisition is achieved mainly through receiving understandable input and listening ability is the critical component in achieving understandable language input. Given the importance of listening in language learning and teaching, it is essential for language teachers to help students become effective listeners. In the communicative approach to language teaching, this means modeling listening strategies and providing listening practice inauthentic situations: precisely those that learners are likely to encounter when they use the language outside the classroom. Therefore, in Indonesia we also should establish "listening-first" as fundamental in foreign language teaching.

Listening comprehension refers to understanding the spoken language. When we speak about listening comprehension, what we really mean is listening and understanding what we hear (Djoudi: 2009:354). This is the skill that is expected to be achieved by the Indonesian students when they graduate from schools.

### **Teaching Listening Skill Using Songs**

There are various ways of using songs in the classroom. The level of the students, the interests and the age of the learners, the grammar point to be studied, and the song itself have determinant roles on the procedure. Apart from them, it mainly depends on the creativity of the teacher. According to Saricoban and Metin (2000), at the primary level of singing the song, the prosodic features of the language is emphasized. At the higher levels, where the practice of grammar points is at the

foreground, songs could be used with several techniques. Some examples of these techniques are:

- a. Gap fills or close texts
- b. Focus questions
- c. True-false statements
- d. Put these lines into the correct sequence
- e. Dictation
- f. Add a final verse
- g. Circle the antonyms/synonyms of the given words
- h. Discuss

According to Yoo (2002), the procedure of songs activity could be done by steps below:

- a. Pre-listening
  - 1) As a warm-up or schema building activity, ask students what they know about American pop culture. You might also want to bring some pictures or CD's of popular actors or singers to class.
  - 2) Pass out the cloze activity handout, and have students read the lyrics and figure out what the missing words might be, using their knowledge in grammar. Have the students compare their guesses with their neighbors. Ask for volunteers to share their guesses with the class.
- b. While-listening
 

Students listen for the missing words. Play the song once, and ask students whether they need to listen to the song again. If they do, play it one more time.
- c. Post-listening
 

After the second listening, go over the answers with the class. If necessary, replay the parts where students had trouble understanding the words. Go over grammar points as necessary.

However in teaching listening by songs, there are three stages; pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening. Beside of that, the activity could be formed gap fills or close texts, true-false statements, and dictation.

## **METHOD**

### **Design of the Research**

An action research is a process by which change and understanding could be pursued at one time. Action research is focused on problem solving through inquiry into human problems in a real context.

This research aims as a self evaluation for the teacher as the writer for the improvement of her teaching as well as the reflection of what she has been doing in this school, or in a specific classroom. This is also going to be done in this research as the writer wants to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the class.

### **Research Procedures**

The concept of action research was operationally defined as focusing, planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and revising by Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1988:56)

### **Subject and Setting of the Research**

This is a classroom action research which will be done in cycles. The researcher will propose to do two cycles at least, and when the result is not satisfactory yet, the researcher will perform the next cycle. This consideration has been done to the VIII grade students of SMP Negeri 19 Palu academic year 2014/2015 with the total of 20 students. The students are chosen because last year this particular basic competence (the ability to respond to requesting, giving, and rejecting services; asking, giving and rejecting goods; admitting and denying facts; and asking and giving opinions) of the students got the lowest average result of 70 with the minimum passing grade of 70.

### **Procedure of Data Collection**

Research instruments will be used to select the data in this research consisted of evaluation tools, which are written test, documentation and observation sheet.

### Technique of Data Analysis

- 1) The main sources of the research are students and teacher (researcher).
- 2) Data would be collected are the students' active participation, the students' learning result, the students' responses during the teaching and learning process by using songs.
- 3) The observation will be used to measure the students' active participation during the teaching and learning process.
- 4) Test will be done to measure the students' learning result be giving a written test to the students that are going to be performed at the end of each cycle.
- 5) Students' responses will be observed during the teaching and learning process.
- 6) Teachers' performance will be noted directly during the teaching and learning process.

The technique used for analyzing the data will be descriptive percentage. The data will be analyzed including class mean score, individual achievement and classical achievement.

### Criteria of Success

To classify the results of the method applied in this classroom action research, the writer sets a target to be achieved during the teaching and learning process. This classroom action research would be considered successful if more than 70% of the students could get the passing grade of 70

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research findings

Planning in CAR of first cycle was conducted before the action was done consisting of determining lesson materials, allocating time, planning of action and observation strategy, and preparing observation sheet. Title of songs of cycle 1: Mother How were you today (meeting I), I Love You Daddy (meeting II), I Have a

dream (test 1) cycle 2: Nobody's child (meeting 1), and song for the Children (meeting 2), Thanks to you (test 2)

The implementation of two cycles showed the improvement of the students' achievement. There were 13 (65.00%) students who were successful and 7 (30.00%) students were considered failed. Then, the number of successful students increased 15 (75 %) students and the failed students decreased 5 (25.00%) students in cycle 2. It indicates that the actions implemented in two cycles are considered successful to develop the students listening skill.

### Discussion

#### The implementation of Listening Skill Through English songs

In fact, the implementation of English song could be conducted inlistening skill in SMPN 19 Palu. This could be shown by data from result of observation in classroom while the lesson had been taught or from comments of the students. In other words, classroom action research in the form of paired dialogue could be said to be successful.

In every action research, it always starts with planning that contains steps that will be applied in actions. Several steps in relation to a successful action were: pre listening activity, materials of listening, and pairs forming.

Steps conducted in the pre-listening activity had an aim to generate scheme of students by showing pictures and interrelating experience and knowledge own by students with theme and topic of listening lesson. Through a number of questions, students could interrelate experience to theme an appreciate the mastery of vocabulary they have owned. Also with pictures that match to the topic, students become more ready to focus and participative actively in learning process.

Materials should be in accordance with the interests of students that close to the daily

life of students so that support the successful action. At the time of first cycle the theme was “trade and industry”, not many students involved actively and enthusiastic. At the time of second cycle the theme was “vacation”, some students involved actively and enthusiastic. Finally, at the time of second cycle when the theme had relation with the real life of students was “school” all students looked actively and enthusiastic. Students look active in performing dialogue to improve their activeness in listening skill, and creative to find new vocabularies that they have not known before. Learning by paired dialog strategy was very effective because at the same time all students increase their mastery of vocabulary. Learning activity becomes very enjoyable because students feel not afraid in listening lesson; they did not answer the questions between teacher and students randomly. They feel not afraid to make mistake in relation with grammar because they made dialogue with their closest friends.

Theoretically, the strategy of 'paired dialogue' was a very appropriate strategy for follow-up in teaching listening, because the 'paired-dialog' could be implemented in learning listening with speaking, reading, and writing. Thus, the strategy of paired-dialog was very helpful to improve the students' activeness in listening skill; it could be implemented to any learning foreign language, not only English and Arabic.

Learning in the classroom should be linked to real of students' life Paired Dialogue was a learning activity which was authentic in its nature; it means that, the realities in everyday life. By performing paired dialog, students must develop initiative to ask and answer questions which was not only based on the content of listening subject but also based on their knowledge of the topic of listening material.

In the implementation of the teaching learning which has to improve a comfortable atmosphere, conducive, not tense and

scwered, the teacher always gives motivation and examples of correct pronunciation in speaking, and always gives the inspiration for practiced English on daily activities, either through conversation or by turning the cassette containing the recorder of listening materials which were suitable with student ability in listening comprehension.

### **Conclusions**

Teaching listening skill through English songs to young learners gives positive responses to children's language development. As stated in the earlier chapter, songs that have simple wordings and clear vocabulary target learning could help children to learn language better. The songs are not only amusing for children, but also contextual for children as it is taught in theme as the theme song. This research was conducted in two cycles. Cycle 1 consisted of two meetings and cycle 2 consisted of two meetings. English songs were used as an instructional medium to develop the students' listening skill. The subject of this research consisted of twenty students. The data showed that the students are happy in joining the teaching and learning process. The students are very active in doing all the tasks. To obtained the data whether the students' responses listening skill was developed, the questionnaire and the individual test were administered. The implementation of two cycles showed the improvement of the students' achievement. There were 13 (65.00%) students who were successful and 7 (30.00%) students who were considered of failed. Then, the successful students increased into 15 (75 %) students and the failed students decreased into 5 (25.00%) students in cycle 2. It indicated that the actions implemented in the second cycles were considered of successful in developing the students' listening skill.

### **Suggestions**

1. For the students, English song are really

encouraging and motivating young foreign language learners the use of English songs, creates a relaxed atmosphere, and to learn English. Moreover, the vocabularies are listed through visual aids, such as pictures and flashcards, therefore the song-based activities is not only stimulates the musical ability, but also the visual ability for children. Teaching listening skill is not only about drilling the vocabulary, but also how to attract young foreign language learners, build their confidence, and enjoy the foreign language. Therefore, in the future, the students are not afraid of learning English anymore. Song-based learning for teaching listening skill to young learners actively engaging students should consider the variety of students learning interests. The students have different learning interests, teacher should facilitate children's learning interests by combining the activities. They could integrate sounds/songs with visual aids, such as pictures and real objects.

2. For the teachers who are interested in teaching English vocabulary to Junior High School students, they are suggested to create their own songs according to the theme of the learning materials. Teacher of young language learners somehow collides with the idea of singing, using familiar songs, and creating original songs for children. Creating songs for young foreign language learners could be joyful and motivating for both children and teacher. Using and creating a song in song-based learning is highly recommended to try in young foreign language learners' classroom.
3. For those who are interested in conducting the similar research, they are advised to collect the data from different perspective in order to gain more comprehensive result. For example, the researcher could assess the young learners' responses

towards song-based learning using child friendly questionnaire; and asking the parents' opinion about their children progress in song-based vocabulary learning.

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