

**THE USE OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING TO IMPROVE
STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILL IN THE NINE GRADE OF
SMPN 8 YOGYAKARTA IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR OF 2016/2017**

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Abstract

This research was intended to describe how the use of task-based language learning can improve the listening skill of the ninth grade F of SMPN 8 Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2016/2017. The subject of this research was class nine F of SMPN 8 Yogyakarta which consisted of 32 students. This action research was conducted in two cycle with two meetings in the first cycle and two meetings in the second cycle. This research use qualitative data. The research involved task-based language learning which divided into 3 steps: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. The data was obtained through questionnaire, interview with the students and English teacher (Collaborator), observation on teaching and learning process and taking photograph. Based on the result of this research, it can be concluded that the students' listening skill improved through the use of Task-based language learning. With meaningful, challenging and interesting tasks and a good choice of material gained the students enthusiasm in listening activity. Pair works and discussion made the students more confident in understanding the spoken text.

Keywords: Action Research, Task-based Language Learning, Listening Skill

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana penggunaan task-based language learning dapat meningkatkan kemampuan mendengarkan siswa kelas IX F SMPN 8 Yogyakarta pada tahun ajaran 2016/2017. Subjek penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas IX F SMPN 8 Yogyakarta yang berjumlah 32 siswa. Penelitian ini dilakukan dalam dua siklus dan masing-masing siklus terdiri dari dua pertemuan. Penelitian ini menggunakan data kualitatif. Penelitian ini melibatkan task-based language learning yang terdiri dari tiga langkah yaitu pre-task, task cycle dan language focus. Data dikumpulkan melalui angket, wawancara dengan siswa dan guru (kolaborator), pengamatan pada waktu tindakan dan dokumentasi. Berdasarkan hasil dari penelitian ini, dapat disimpulkan bahwa kemampuan mendengarkan siswa kelas IXF SMPN Yogyakarta mengalami peningkatan dengan menggunakan task-based language learning. dengan lembar kerja yang meaningful, menantang dan menarik juga pemilihan materi yang tepat meningkatkan antusiasme siswa dalam kegiatan listening. Kerjasama dan diskusi membuat siswa lebih percaya diri dalam memahami teks lisan.

Kata kunci: Penelitian tindakan kelas, Task-based language learning, kemampuan mendengarkan

Introduction

Listening plays an important role in English language learning. Among the four language skills, listening is the most basic skill that English language learner should master. This statement is true since the process of learning a language is the same as how children learn to speak. They listen to the models of language before starting to talk. While reading and writing skill is an advanced stage in learning a language. Listening as an early stage of learning will provide real model of English communication and it can help learners to build vocabulary, develop language proficiency and language usage (Barker, 1971).

Since listening is a very basic skill in English language learning, it is important for English teacher to give special attention for this skill in the classroom. However, teaching listening skill is a challenge for EFL teacher and for students, it is a difficult task as well. The problem with listening ability comes from numerous factors. It can come from both the teacher and the learners.

The ministry of Education announced the implementation of curriculum 2013 in some schools in Indonesia. This curriculum emphasize on the learners rather than the teacher. In other words this course is learners centered than teacher centered. The main purpose of this new curriculum is to provide students with the ability to receive and transmit information, express thoughts, knowledge and understanding, feelings and opinions. It is obvious that the course focuses on using a language in a way that emphasizes everyday usage in society. Everyday usage could be taken to mean listening and speaking, as these are two skills that are most used to communicate on daily basis.

As stated before, teaching listening is not an easy task for both teachers and students in Junior high school. This assumption is based on the idea that firstly this skill is less to be explored in the junior high classroom, whereas to gain this skill the learners must be familiarized with listening more in the classroom. Although the government has announced the implementation of students' centered in the practice of K13, the fact is teachers still dominantly present the material in front of the class while the students' role as an active learner is marginalized. The teachers do not let the students to explore the learning material by themselves. Secondly most teachers are lack of idea in developing the material, media use, and designing task. They unenthusiastically look for the good material and design tasks. The learning material is mostly text book oriented. As the result learning activity becomes meaningless, monotonous and also less communicative. The less communicative task cannot trigger the students' involvement in using the language except the teacher asks them to. As a consequence of those problems, students who should practice listening as a very basic skill become lack of proficiency in this course.

Based on the observation that the researcher did, those problems above seemed to be happened in SMPN 8 Yogyakarta. Students are not usual with listening activity because their teacher did not explore it in the class. Only a few of them got this skill in the first and second grade. This school is one of the favorite schools in Yogyakarta. The students basically are smart students. From the observation that was done in listening class, the researcher concluded that there was no problem with students' listening skill. The problems are on the students' activeness, the less challenging learning activity and the teacher who guides them in learning this skill.

For these reasons, the researcher is interested in improving the listening skills through the use of task based language learning for nine Grade students' of SMPN 8 Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2015/2016.

Brown (2001:147) stated that listening is a skill that cannot be underestimated, as a receptive skill; it leads to the language production. Scmhmidt (1990:139) in Richard (2008) argued that "we won't learn anything from input we hear and understand unless we notice something about the input". Since listening is more than noticing some linguistic features of the input, learners should try to use them in oral production. In conclusion, listening as acquisition proposes to bring integrated skill that is listening as an input text and speaking as the product of noticing activity. There were to processes of listening called bottom-up processing and top-down processing (Richard:2008).

Brown (2001:258) suggested several principles in teaching listening, the first principle is don't overlook the importance of technique that specifically develops listening comprehension competence, the second is use techniques that are intrinsically motivating, the fourth utilize authentic language and context, the fifth carefully consider the form of listeners' responses, the sixth principle is encourage the development of listening strategies, the last one is include both bottom-up and top-down listening techniques.

Willis (1996) stated that task is activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome. Further Willis and Willis (2001) highlight that in communicative task; learners are free to use a range of language structures to achieve task outcomes. According to Nunan (2004: 34) there were seven principles in task-based language learning, they are scaffolding, task dependency, recycling, active learning, integration, reproduction to creation, and reflection. Nunan (2004: 40) further suggested that there are some components that have to be noticed, those are content (the subject matter to be taught), materials (the things that learners can observe/manipulate), activities (the things that learners and teachers will be doing during a lesson), goals (the teachers' general aims for the task (these are much more general and vague than objectives)), students (their abilities, needs and interests are important), social community (the class as a whole and its sense of groupness). The TBL framework consists of three steps, they are pre-task (introduced and define the topic, use activities to help students recall/learn useful words and phrases, ensures students understand the task instruction), task cycle (task, planning, and report) and language focus that consists of analysis and practice (Willis: 1996).

Research Methods

This study was an action research study and conducted from the 5th to 17th of October 2016 in the first semester of the academic year of 2016/2017. The subject of the research was 32 students of class IX F of SMPN 8 Yogyakarta. In doing this research the researcher collaborated with the English teacher of SMPN 8 Yogyakarta. This research used the four phases in cycle that proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1998) in Burns (1999:8), those are planning, action, observation, and reflection.

The data used in this research was qualitative data. The qualitative data were collected from classroom observation, interview and field note. The researcher used process validity, democratic validity, and catalytic validity to asses the validity and reliability of the data collection.

Finding and Discussions

In doing this research, the researcher acted as a teacher and delivered the teaching and learning process. The English teacher acted as the collaborator and observed the teaching and learning process. There were two cycles in this research. The material that the researcher used in this research was procedure text. The material for the first cycle was recipe and for the second cycle the researcher used manual instruction. After the implementation of task-based language learning there were some changes between cycle one and two. The researcher found that in the cycle one the listening material was too fast and it doesn't fit with students' level, the media used was an audio. In the task cycle, the tasks were too many, too difficult for the students and not interesting. The tasks were paraphrasing the text and making questions and answer based on the text. In the report phase in cycle one the students did not know how to report and confuse about what they have to report and what to say because they only have a little time to plan and rehearse. In the language focus the activities were filling in the gap and analyzing the language feature of the text. The language features consisted of 5 that were action verb, time words/numbers, and adverb of manner, measurement and command. It can be said that the implementation of task-based language learning in the cycle 1 was not successful so the researcher decide to change some parts.

Reflected from the first cycle the researcher was more careful in choosing the material and designing the task. In the second cycle the material used was slower than the first cycle and to make the students more interested in listening, the researcher decided to use video instead of audio. Because there were too many difficult and uninteresting tasks in the first cycle so the researcher reduced the amount of tasks. The tasks that were design for the students were typically the same as the first cycle but the researcher made it more interesting and communicative. The first task was memory challenge where the students listen to the audio for only twice and they have to write some sentence, phrase or words that they can remember. It was proved to be more challenging since the students looked more enthusiasts and want to listen more and more. The second task was making questions and answers based on the text. Unlike the first cycle these time the students mingling and exchange the question to the other pairs. The report also was not like the previous cycle, the students can report because they have ever done that before. Because of the limitation of the time the researcher did not ask the students to fill in the gap. The language focus activity was analyzing only three language features (time words/numbers, adverb of manner, and command). The decrease of lang. feature based on the consideration that the students' weakness was on those three features.

Based on the analysis of field note, interview with some students and teacher and the students' works, there were some changes in the students and teacher behavior as well. The change on the students can be seen through their enthusiasm and activeness. While the changes on teacher behavior was on her performance, in designing the tasks and they way she develop the materials.

Conclusions

The research finding and discussion in chapter IV show that the listening skill of the students of IX F at SMPN 8 Yogyakarta improved through the use of Task-based language learning. It can be said that in the cycle one the teacher was failed to implement the task-based language learning. It is because the recording speed was too fast for the students' level, the tasks difficult for them because the teacher did not give any example of how to answer the task, beside the teacher's instruction was not clear and there were too many tasks so that the students became stressful and got bored. There were some improvements in the teacher performance and students enthusiasm in cycle two. The material was more interesting and the recording speed was suitable for students' level and the tasks were more interesting. Based on the students'

works analysis, all the activities applied in cycle two could improve the students' ability and their enthusiasms in listening.

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