

**Improving Students' Listening Skills of Grade VIII
in SMP Negeri 1 Wates Using *Scaffolding Principles*
in the Academic Year of 2015/2016**

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Abstract: The purpose of this action research was to improve the students' listening skills of grade VIII in SMP N 1 Wates in the academic year 2015/2016 by implementing *Scaffolding Principles*. The participants of the research were the students of class VIII C. The data collected were qualitative in nature and quantitative as the supporting data. The steps of the research consist of reconnaissance, planning, action and observation, and reflection. Some of the scaffolding principles were implemented in this research. The principles were *modeling the desired behaviors, offering explanations, inviting students' participation, giving verification and clarification of students' understanding, and inviting students to contribute clues*. The data were in the forms of field notes, interview transcripts, photographs, and the score of listening tests. The data were gained from the observations of the teaching and learning process and the interview with the research members. The data of field notes and interview transcripts were analyzed qualitatively, while the test was analyzed quantitatively. The validity was obtained by applying process, catalytic, democratic, and dialogic validity. The results of the research revealed that the use of scaffolding principles gradually could improve the students' listening skills. Based on the students' test result, quantitatively, the scores showed that there are improvements on the students' listening skills. Qualitatively, the students gained the experience and input related to the listening process. The implementation of scaffolding principles could help and support the students in the learning process.

Keywords: listening skills, scaffolding principles

Introduction

The global development of the 21st century which is characterized by the advancement in science and technology with all their impacts on every aspect of life has made us aware of the importance of language as a tool for global communication. As an international language, English has an important role as a means of communication in transferring and gaining knowledge, information, science, technology, art and culture and

maintaining international relationship. Because of its importance, English is included as a subject in the school.

In learning English, listening skill seems to be important as stated by Rost in Richards (2002:238) who says that since listening provides input for the learners, it becomes vital in the language learning. Any learning simply cannot begin without understanding input at the right level. Listening is a foundation for other skills. Therefore, it is very important to seek a good technique for teaching listening to the students.

Vandergrift (2004:4) states that listening is probably the least explicit of the four language skills, making it the most difficult skill to learn. This statement indicates that listening is a complex process which students have to deal with. The task of listening is not only perception of sound, but it also requires comprehension of meaning. This process involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, the speaker's grammar and vocabulary, and comprehension of meaning.

There are some problems found in SMP N 1 Wates based on the observation in teaching of listening. Commonly, the media became the cases in the class. This is because not all classes have the media to teach listening. Beside that, the limited materials also make the students uninterested and bored. This is can be seen that they tend to be lazy to listen to the listening activity. Specifically, the teaching of listening is related to some aspects especially related to the students such as vocabulary, knowledge, and the ability to comprehend the context. The students need some repeating and complain that they are difficult to catch to the voice to the audio because it is too fast and they can only listen to the words by words only.

Considering these problems, efforts to help the students need to be done. Furthermore, an appropriate technique should be used. In this case, the researcher uses *Scaffolding Principles* to improve the students' listening skills in Grade VIII of SMP Negeri 1 Wates.

Research Method

This research was categorized as classroom action research, aiming at improving the students' listening skill using scaffolding principles for the grade VIII students at SMP N 1 Wates in the academic year 2015/2016. It was done from August to November, 2015. It involved students of VIII C class as the subjects of the research. The class consisted of 28 students (12 male students and 16 female students). They were about 13 - 14 years old. The research was conducted in three cycles, which was held for two meetings in each cycle. It followed a model of Action Research procedure suggested by Kemmis and McTaggart

(1988). The steps are reconnaissance, planning, action and observation, and reflection. Due to the nature of the data, this research used both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative data was supported by the quantitative data. The data were in the form of observation guide, interview guideline, the report of the test result, and the photographs of the teaching and learning process during the research. Data obtained from observations and interviews were analyzed qualitatively following the analysis model proposed by Anne Burns (1999: 156-160). It consists of five steps. They are assembling the data, coding the data, comparing the data, building interpretations, and reporting the outcome. Meanwhile, the data from students' listening scores were analyzed quantitatively by using descriptive analysis in the form of mean score. In this way, the students' scores in each cycle were compared to see the improvements of the students' listening skills. The validity of the research was obtained by adopting five criteria of validity namely democratic validity, process validity, outcome validity, catalytic validity, and dialogic validity.

Research Findings

The research findings show that listening skills of the grade VIII C students of SMP N 1 Wates improved through the implementation of *scaffolding principles*.

This research was carried out in three cycles. During the implementation of the actions, explanation was effective and absolutely needed in every teaching and learning process of listening. Without explanation, the students would be confused since there was no any input for them. Besides that, giving verification and clarification of students' understanding was as effectively as giving explanation since the teacher's verification and clarification towards students helped them to construct the right understanding and correct behaviors. Giving an example helped the students did the task suitable with the instruction. They would understand and got the message toward the expected actions. In addition, the students' contribution in giving clues showed that they were involved in the process of listening activity. The improvement occurred during the implementation of the actions can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The Changes Before and After the Actions

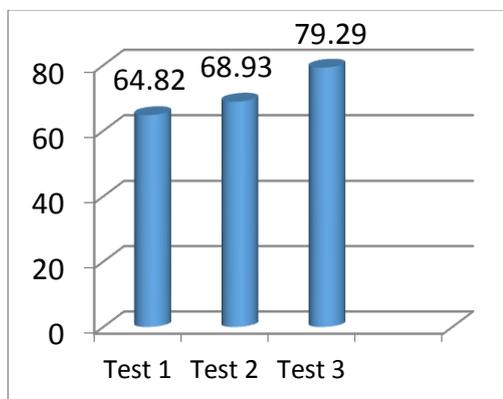
No.	Before the actions were conducted	After the actions were conducted		
		Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
1.	In the beginning of the lesson some	There were few students seemed not to be ready to	The students which were usually noisy, they	In the last cycle, the students were still

	students seemed not to be ready to join the listening activity yet.	join the listening activity yet.	looked focus and enthusiastic to join the listening activity.	focus and enthusiastic to join listening activity.
2.	The students lacked of vocabulary mastery.	The students' vocabularies were improved.	The students' vocabularies were improved more. The improvement was based on the accumulation of the first cycle.	The students' vocabularies were improved because they did various activities and tasks.
3.	The teacher focused on the testing rather than explaining the materials	The teacher focused on the testing rather than explaining the materials.	The teacher gave and offered the explanation to the students.	In cycle III, the teacher did the same, he teacher gave and offered more explanation to the students
4.	The students did not get enough explanation related to the listening activity.	The students got explanation related to the listening activity.	The students got explanation more related to the listening activity.	The students got explanation for several time related to the listening activity.
5.	The students had difficulties to guess the meaning of the words.	The students gradually could guess the meaning of the words.	The students could guess the meaning of words better.	The students could guess the meaning of the words easier based on the context.
6.	Most of the students needed repetition for several time in listening to the audio.	Gradually, some students who needed several repetition were	Only a few students who still needed several repetition.	Only few students who still needed several repetition.

		decreased.		
7.	Some students are difficult to listen to the fast conversation.	Some students began able to catch the voice of listening activity.	Many students were used to and familiar to listening activity.	In the end of Cycle III, the students listened to the audio easier. They enjoyed listening to the audio and they could work on the tasks related to the audio very well.

The improvement of students' listening skill also supported by the result of students' listening test in each cycle. The general findings of the students' mean score are presented in the following chart.

Chart 1: The Students' Mean Scores in Cycle 1, Cycle 2 and Cycle 3



From the chart above, it can be concluded that the students' listening skills had improved because the mean score of the students' listening tests improved from 64.82 in Cycle 1 become 68.93 in Cycle 2 and 79.29 in Cycle 3.

Conclusions

In this action research, the three cycles were completely done. It was implemented from August to October. In three cycles, the researcher implemented *scaffolding principles* to improve the students' listening skills. From the result of the study, it showed that the research was successful to

improve the students' listening skills. This could be seen from the students' listening test result. Besides that, their vocabularies were also improved.

References

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