

USING DICTATION AS A TESTING DEVICE IN TEACHING LISTENING

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Abstract: *The objectives of the research are (1) to know the students response in teaching listening by using dictation (2) to describe how the improvement of students listening skill using dictation as a testing device. The type of this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). The researcher implements dictation as a testing device in teaching listening within two cycles. Each cycle consists of two meetings. Every cycle consisted of four steps, including planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The qualitative data were acquired by observation, interview, and field notes. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were collected from the students pre-test and post-test during the implementation of the actions which were analyzed to get the mean scores to be compared and to determine the gain scores. Based on the observation checklist, the students' response in learning listening became better. The result of the research shows that there are improvements in teaching and learning process. In the pre-test given before the treatment, the mean score is 50.45. After treatment in cycle 1 and conducting post-test 1, the means score is improved to 65.65. Then the researcher gives treatments in cycle 2. In the post-test 2, the mean score improved 79.16. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that using dictation technique in teaching listening could improve students listening skill and the students give positive response.*

Keyword : *Dictation technique, Skill, teaching listening.*

INTRODUCTION

English is very important for students. Why is English important? The answer is obvious. English has become an international language. Because of that in Indonesia English is taught beginning in the elementary school in order that the students are

familiar with English and can use and communicate in English well. There are many ways to know the students' proficiency in English. One of them is by using dictation. Using dictation as a testing device of listening is effective since dictation can check the students' proficiency of English spelling through their listening skill. We

realize that English as a foreign language is a difficult subject for Indonesian students to learn, because the language has a lot of rules which are different from Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian). For example, pronunciation of most English words are not spelled the way they are pronounced, while in Indonesian language the students will never find any difficulty in pronouncing or writing down Indonesian words because it correspondences between sounds (phonic) and letters (graphic symbols). The grammatical rules, such as adding an -s ending to pluralize a noun of English words never occur in Indonesian grammar. Such differences will make the Indonesian students unable to comprehend easily the language being learned. They have to be trained both in written and oral exercise.

Dictation as a testing device of listening is effective since the teacher begins to realize the weaknesses of the students in comprehending the language as well as the weakness of the teaching method. By giving the test, the teacher will get the data by classifying which of the problems are more serious than the others to

overcome. From the results of the test, the teacher will be able to collect the common mistakes made by the students so that he can provide a remedial course in the next teaching learning process.

Reasons for Choosing the Topic As I have mentioned above, using dictation as a testing device of listening is effective since the test can check the students' proficiency in recognizing most of the aspects of English through their listening skill. Therefore, my reasons to analyze students' errors are: (1) Dictation is an inseparable part of class activity since the students need it as supporting activity. (2) Dictation is closely related to listening activity and the further application is that it can be used as a testing device as well.

DISCUSSION

Teaching English to Young Learners Human language skill is firstly developed through their auditory sense in which the sense is to be one of vital apparatus for normal person to recognize things outside them. Petty and Jensen (1980:10) claimed, "An infant's first contact with a language is through listening and it is the sole contact for

approximately a year, the importance of listening in language development continues to be a major factor throughout life.” Paul (2003: 71) says that it is important for children to listen to as much English of an appropriate level as possible. The level should either be easy for them, at their present level, or just beyond the level they can already understand. If the level is too difficult, the children may lose confidence and positivity. Some teachers say that children should first hear a new language target for a while before speaking it and for quite some time before reading or writing it. One of the arguments often made in support of this approach is that babies hear new items of their native language first, say them next, and read and write them some time later. Another argument in favor of learning listening first is that listening does not demand very much of children or put pressure on them. If we expect children to speak before they feel ready to do so, they may lose motivation. Learners listen, notice the pattern, and then try to use these patterns to express themselves either soon after hearing them or some time after. So, if the children have a

number of English lessons a week, it can be very helpful to do regular listening exercises from a tape, or with us providing the input. These exercises should be spread out as evenly as possible between lessons rather than done all at once in special lessons. For the scope of a school environment mainly in the context of teaching learning situation, Petty continued, “Children come to school as listeners (proficiency varies from child to child) whose speech patterns were essentially learned by listening.” Every oral communication situation is an opportunity for developing listening skills and fostering good listening habits. However, to conduct listening program in a language study, a teacher needs an organized plan and systematic evaluation in order that in structural activity of listening skills to be synchronic with other three major skills in a language teaching. This is because of the fact that there are close relationships among those language skills.

They listen effectively if what they hear is presented well and is within their language abilities and experiences. Listening involves more than just hearing or paying attention.

Effective listening requires active and conscious attention to sounds in order to gain meaning from them. Lundsteen as quoted by Petty and Jensen (1980:181) has stated that listening refers to the process by which spoken language is converted to meaning in the mind. According to Hornby (1995: 687) "listening comes from a verb to listen which means to make an effort to hear somebody or something." From the definition above the writer concludes that listening is figuring out what is in the speaker's mind with active and conscious attention. For instructional purposes, it is convenient to think of the listening process as having four types: (1) Hearing First we hear a series of sounds, the actual words and sentences. (2) Understanding Second, we understand the meanings of these words and sentences in the context in which we have heard them. (3) Evaluating Third, we evaluate the meanings and accept or reject the total communication. (4) Responding. Finally, we respond to what we have heard with further thought, bodily movement, facial expression, or audible reaction. (Petty and Jensen, 1980, p.181) According to Rost (2002: 137-144) they are three

types of listening: (1) Selective listening Selective listening tasks encourage learners to approach genuine spoken texts by adopting a strategy of focusing of specific information rather than trying to understand and recall everything. Reconstruction of the spoken material based on selective listening tasks can help students link selective listening to global listening.

Interactive listening Interactive listening refers to listening in collaborative conversation. Collaborative conversation, in which learners interact with each other or with native speakers, is established as a vital means of language development. (3) Intensive listening Intensive listening refers to listening for precise sounds, words, phrases, grammatical units and pragmatic units. Although listening intensively is not often called for in everyday situations, the ability to listen intensively whenever required is an essential component of listening proficiency. The prototypical intensive listening activity is dictation, the transcription of the exact words that a speaker utters. Dictation is often claimed to be an excellent integrative test because it

involves listening, vocabulary, grammar, and the ability to make inferences from context. According to Underwood as quoted by Rost (2002: 142) says that it is unfair to plunge students straight into the listening text, even when testing rather than teaching listening, comprehension, as this makes it extremely difficult for them to use the natural listening skills (which we all use in our native language) of matching what they hear with what they expect to hear and using their previous knowledge to make sense of it. So before listening, students should be 'turned in' so that they know what to expect, both in general and for specific tasks. Pre-listening work can be done in a variety of ways and occurs naturally when listening is part of an integrated skill course, and a listening task is linked to a previous content-based activity.

Underwood as quoted by Rost (2002:142) summarizes a variety of ways that pre-listening work can be done in the classroom including: (1) The teacher gives background information before students listen to the text. (2) The students read something relevant to the topic. (3) The students look at pictures that

prepare them for the topic. (4) There is a class discussion of the topic or situation in the upcoming text. (5) There is a question-answer session with the class as a whole. (6) The teacher gives written exercises to preview the content. (7) The students go over the procedures for the upcoming listening task. Any of these activities, one or combination of them will serve to activate students' knowledge and vocabulary to listen fluently.

Dictation is useful when well integrated with the learning activities. It is a teaching technique which has proved extremely effective at all levels of instruction. It ensures attentive listening, trains students to distinguish sounds, enables students to learn to transfer oral sounds to written symbols, helps to develop aural comprehension and assists in self-evaluation. Several experts gave their statements about dictation that are very useful for teachers. For example Oller (1979:39) stated that, "as an integrative test, dictation has to meet the naturalness requirements: (1) The sequences of words or phrases to be dictated are selected from normal prose, or dialogue, or some other

natural form of discourse (or perhaps the sequences are carefully contrived to mirror normal discourse as in well written function). (2) The material is presented orally in sequences that are long enough to challenge the short term memory of the learners.” Based on those two naturalness requirements, it is important to teachers to make some preparation when they are going to give a dictation test to their students. Firstly, they have to select suitable materials to be dictated. Secondly, they have to select suitable procedures to be used in giving the dictation.

According to Richards, Platt and Weber as quoted by Fachrurrazy (1989), “dictation is a technique used in both language teaching and language testing in which a passage is read aloud to students, with pauses during which they must try to write down what they heard as accurately as possible.” Another definition of dictation is given by Taylor as quoted by Fachrurrazy (1989) says that dictation means “(1) reading a passage aloud, (2) dividing the passage into phrases suitable for committal to short-term memory and re-reading phrase with phrase with gaps long

enough for subjects to record the preceding phrase in writing, (3) optionally re-reading each phrase as it is being written, and (4) re-reading the whole passage as in (1).

According to Hornby (1995: 190), dictation means “being dictated to; passage that is dictated”. In short, it can be said that dictation is an activity where a student transcribes a word, phrase, sentence or passage he hears.

According to Zhiqian (1989) dictation serves the teacher and the students efficiently. It has several characteristics: (1) Dictation can be used with a class of any size. When the dictation is given, all of the students are working, even in a very large class. (2) Dictation ensures attentive listening. When the students are doing a dictation, their attention will totally be focused on the exercises. (3) Dictation gives the students a chance to get practice in the sort of note taking that many courses require. This is a very important part of the students’ needs in using language. (4) Dictation requires the students to make the transfer from the spoken to written language. The written record proves their ability to reproduce spoken language in a

correct visual form. (5) Dictation, if properly varied, can provide practice in listening comprehension, vocabulary building, increasing reading speed and comprehension, as well as elementary aspects of handwriting, punctuation, spelling, and composition formation. Certain types of dictation also lend themselves to the grammar class, and train the students to distinguish sounds and grammatical elements.

There are several types of dictation. According to Oller (1979:264-265), they are as follows: (1) Standard dictation This is best known type of dictation. It requires the examinee to write verbal sequences of material as spoken by an examiner or played back from a recording. (2) Partial dictation This is similar to standard dictation, except that the examinees are given a written version of the text (along with the spoken version) in which the written passage has certain portions left out. The examinees must listen to the spoken material and fill in the blanks in the written version. (3) Dictation with competing noise. This type of dictation can also be called noise dictation. The addition of noise in the

process of dictation is intended to imitate a natural condition. (4) dictation/composition or dicto-comp. In this type of dictation, the examinees are instructed to listen to a text, one or more times while it is presented either live or on tape at a conversational rate. Then they are asked to write from memory what they have heard. (5) Elicited imitation. This is similar to dictation in terms of the material presented to the examinee, but dissimilar with respect to the response mode. In this case, the examinee hears the material, just as in standard dictation (and with equal possibilities for 15 variation), but instead of writing down the material the examinee is asked to repeat it or otherwise recount what was said. (6) Dictogloss According to Taylor, Davis and Rinvoluceri as quoted by Fachrurrazy (1989), it is a dictation where the examiner reads a sentence once, after which the examinees are to jot down the main or key words they can recall, and then to reconstruct the sentence in writing as accurately as they can. This dictation is sometimes called natural dictation. (7) Combined cloze and dictation This type of dictation is similar in procedure to

partial dictation, but the portions left out follow the deletion procedure of cloze. Variations of pure dictation have been developed in order to provide greater ease of use, more interaction, forced output, and better focus on specific language items.

According to Rost (2002:137-144), other variations of dictation are: (1) Fast speed dictation The teacher reads a passage at natural speed, with assimilation, etc. The students can ask for multiple repetitions of any part of the passage, but the teacher will not slow down her articulation of the phrase being repeated. This activity focuses students' attention on features of fast speech. (2) Pause and paraphrase The teacher reads a passage and pauses periodically for the students to write paraphrase not the exact words used. (Indeed, students may be instructed not to use the exact words they heard). This activity focuses students on vocabulary flexibility, saying things in different ways, and in focusing on meaning as they listen. (3) listening cloze the teacher provides a partially completed passage that the listeners fill in as they listen or after they listen. This activity allows students focus on

particular language features, e.g. verbs or noun phrases. (4) Error identification The teacher provides a fully transcribed passage, but with several errors. The students listen and identify (with correct) the errors. This activity focuses attention on detail: the errors may be grammatical or semantic. (5) Jigsaw dictation Students work in pairs. Each person in the pair has part of the full dictation. The students read their parts to the other in order to complete the passage. This activity encourages negotiation of meaning.

Advantages of Using Dictation in the Classroom

Lightfoot (2004) says that dictation exercises are very important, particularly for developing the children's awareness of phonic sounds, and contrary to the popular view of dictation, it can be a lot of fun. Lightfoot continued that there are several reasons why dictation activities work well in the classroom. From the teacher's point of view, dictation: (1) Can be done with any level, depending on the text used. (2) Can be graded for a multi-level class. For the students, dictations: (1) Can focus on both accuracy (form) as well

as meaning, e.g. in the dictogloss activity. (2) Can develop all four skills- listening, speaking, reading and writing can be developed if the students do the dictating rather than the teacher. (3) Give students the opportunity to notice features of pronouncing such as weak forms, linking and elision. In fact, dictation can be used to decrease preparation time for other activities.

METHODOLOGY

The type of this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). The setting and the subject of this research was the fourth semester of STKIP-MPL in the academic year of 2016/2017. The researcher implements dictation as a testing device in teaching listening within two cycles. Each cycle consists of two meetings. Every cycle consisted of four steps, including planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. This research was conducted from February 5th until 24th, 2017 to the fourth semester of STKIP-MPL. The data obtained during the research are in qualitative and quantitative forms. The qualitative data were acquired by observation, interview, and field notes. Meanwhile,

the quantitative data were collected from the students pre-test and post-test during the implementation of the actions which were analyzed to get the mean scores to be compared and to determine the gain scores.

To take the sample, the writer was used simple random sampling. It was easy to carry out and did not need to follow difficult procedure. In this case, the students were randomly chosen as the sample of the research in which each of them (as a member of the population) had an equal chance to be included in the sample. It means that no member of the population was excluded from the sample 28 except by chance. Thus, each of the student's names was written on a piece of paper. The papers were rolled up and mixed well in a tin can. After that, 26 rolled up papers were dropped out of the slot one by one. The researcher took 26 students out of 42 students as the sample after consulting with the English teacher and the rest was taken as try out test students.

Based on Tinambuan (1988: 55-56), the objective test includes a variety of items types. Objectives items can be classified into supply-type and selection-type. Supply-type

test which is known as “short answer” or “completion” requires pupil to supply the answer. And the selection-type test is one which requires pupil to select the answer from a given number of alternatives, such as true false items, matching and multiple choices. Then, to collect the data, the writer used the selection-type of objective test that was multiple choice tests. The test consisted of fifty multiple choice items with four 29 options: A, B, C, and D. the writer chose the objective type test based on the following consideration: (1) Objective test type makes easy for the examiner to compute the difficulty level and the discriminating power of each item. (2) Objective test type will not make the examiners have different interpretation of students’ answer. (3) Objectives test type will be easier to score the students’ responses quickly. (4) Students’ test paper can easily be administered and scored. So, it will be more practical. Based on the above considerations, the writer used multiple choices in conducting the dictation test. Paul (2003: 73) corroborated the statement. She mentioned that “the children can also have worksheets with sounds or words

on them, and do activities such as listening to dictated sounds or words, then choosing the correct ones on their worksheets.

RESULT

The researcher implements dictation as a testing device in teaching listening within two cycles. Each cycle consists of two meetings. Every cycle consisted of four steps, including planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. This research was conducted from September 5th until 24th, 2016 to the fourth semester of STKIP-MPL. The data obtained during the research are in qualitative and quantitative forms. The qualitative data were acquired by observation, interview, and field notes. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were collected from the students pre-test and post-test during the implementation of the actions which were analyzed to get the mean scores to be compared and to determine the gain scores. Based on the observation checklist, the students’ response in learning listening became better. The result of the research shows that there are improvements in teaching and learning process. It can be seen from the result of the test

which improved, from the pre-test conducted before the action and the post-test conducted after the action. In the pre-test given before the treatment, the mean score is 50.45. After treatment in cycle 1 and conducting post-test 1, the means score is improved to 65.65. Then the researcher gives treatments in cycle 2. In the post-test 2, the mean score improved 79.16.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The writer was found 328 errors made by the students of the fourth semester students of English Education Study Program at STKIP-MPL in the academic year 2016/2017. The highest percentage of incorrect answers made by the students was 50% while the lowest one was 0%. The writer also found that there were four of spelling errors. There were spelling errors caused by clusters, diphthong, distinguishing long and short vowels and recognizing words, phrases and sentences. The data can be described respectively as follows: 9.7% errors which were caused by clusters, 40.5% were caused by diphthong, 19.8 % errors which were caused by distinguishing long and short vowels and 29.9 % errors which

were caused by error in recognizing words, phrases and sentences. From the data, the writer also was found that there were two possible causes of those errors; they are Interlingua interference, that is transfer, and intralingua interference, that is ignorance of rule restrictions. The data can be described respectively as follows: 65. 24 % errors which were caused by transfer, 34. 76% errors were caused by ignorance rule of restrictions. From the data above, I found that the dominant errors were caused by diphthong; they are 19.8 % or 133 errors. 49 50 After knowing the result, I conclude that the errors mostly happen because in Bahasa Indonesia, the pronunciation follows the spelling system, while in English it does not follow the spelling system.

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