



## Listening Material in the 2013 Curriculum English Textbook: What Do the Teachers Think?

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### **Abstract**

Listening is considered as the basic skill in learning a language. Listening lets students gain input in the form of audio. Due to the 2013 curriculum, schools are provided with English textbook prepared by the government. This textbook is used for the listening input which may affect the output of listening process. Therefore, the researchers are interested in conducting a research related to the weaknesses of the K13 English textbook *When English Rings a Bell*. The researchers want to know the weaknesses of the listening material in the textbook which can be known from the teachers' perception. This research used qualitative and quantitative method. The instruments of this research are observation, questionnaire, and interview. The result of the study shows that there are several weaknesses of the listening material existing in the K13 English textbook. These weaknesses may affect to the output of language learning and cannot develop students' listening skill. Therefore, it is expected that the government would take more attention on the listening material for students to help them better input for listening activity.

**Keywords:** listening material, English textbook, the 2013 curriculum, teachers' perception, Indonesia curriculum

## A. Introduction

Listening is considered as one of main skills that should be mastered by learners in learning English since it plays important role during the process of language learning. Listening belongs to the basic skill of language learning that helps learners to communicate effectively (Nunan, 1998). Besides, the listening activity in the classroom let learners gain input for language learning (Rost, 1994). Input is very important for learners' language development because in achieving certain stage in the language development, learners need to comprehend the given input. Without understanding the input, the process of language learning will not be able to be begun.

Considering the importance of listening in language learning process, teachers have to be able to determine appropriate learning material to be given to the learners. Learning material or learning sources refer to any material with instructional content which is used for formal or informal learning purpose (Evaluation & Selection of Learning Resources: a Guide, 2008). Moreover, listening materials may refer to anything which is used by teachers during the listening activity to support the language learning process. The appropriate listening material should fit the learners need. There must be several criteria should be contained by the listening material to support learners language learning.

In Indonesia, there is a new regulation that is applied to learning process at school. The new curriculum which is called the revised 2013 curriculum lets both teachers and learners explore the provided English textbook prepared by the ministry of education. The implementation of the revised 2013 curriculum moreover has been considered due to the betterment of educational quality to be able to face the globalization challenges (Nur & Madkur, 2014). The revised 2013 curriculum provide schools with two kinds of book which can be downloaded freely. The books are designed differently for teachers and learners. There will be a guidebook for teachers which contain several instructions toward the teaching and learning process and there is also textbook for learners which will not provide the same instruction as the teachers have. The provided textbook contains material which is not arranged separately, it is integrated designed. The five skills of English are integrated designed in this textbook (Wachidah, Gunawan, & Khatimah, 2017).

Since it is already considered that the input for the EFL learners is important to support the language learning, the textbook which is used for language learning should be evaluated. Moreover, the integrated skills in the text book is not able to give clear explanation about the provided listening material as the language learning input, it is important to analyze the weaknesses of the listening materials since the textbook is used as the listening input during listening activity. Therefore, the researchers are interested in finding out the weaknesses of the listening material provided in the textbook that can be known from the teachers' perception toward the revised 2013 curriculum.

## B. Literature review

### 1. Listening

Listening is considered as the important process that must be faced by people when acquiring a language. Moreover, in the study of second language acquisition, listening take an important role as the receptive skill that must be possessed by learners. Listening is defined differently from one expert to another. Brown (2004) defined listening as the process of identifying the certain information such as gist, main idea, supporting points, and even conclusion which can show the learners' comprehension toward the given input. Meanwhile, Rost (1994) defines listening as the complex process which let listeners understand spoken language. The process is invisible that make it difficult to be described. The process enables listeners to comprehend the speakers' accent and pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and also meaning. The process of listening is not only about hearing the sound, it is more about an active process which involves the perception of sounds and understanding the message represent by sound. Furthermore, Purdy (1997) says that listening is an active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to the needs, concerns, and information, which are offered by the speaker. Besides, Krashen (2008:48) views listening as the process of understanding a spoken language uttered by the native speakers. Furthermore,

Chamot (2005) defines listening to be more extensive definition that is listening is an active and conscious process in which the listener constructs meaning by using cues from contextual information and from existing knowledge while relying upon multiple strategic resources to fulfill the task requirement.

Based on the experts explanation it can be concluded that listening is considered as the active process which is done in order to get information or message represent with sound and to enable the learner to comprehend the speakers' accent, pronunciation, grammar, even vocabulary by involving constructing meaning by using contextual cues from contextual information and from existing knowledge, while relying upon multiple strategic resources to fulfill the task requirement.

## **2. Listening Material**

In designing listening material, it is important to consider whether the prepared materials are able to take students interest or not. Some materials which are boring and over theoretical should be avoided, something more practical and relevance should be considered in order to make learners feel interested (Ur, 1984). Besides, listening material should contain several criteria to be categorized as good listening material such as the material could entertain and amuse the learners, can be used for self-access learning, easy to be used, contain various task and involve authentic materials (Anderson, 1993; cited in Kadagidze, 2006).

Tomlinson (2011) stated that the planned listening material should provide certain events which the speakers of foreign language need to participate, there is also broader area where the language speaker could play role in that event. Moreover, the language speakers are being taught to do something which they need or want to do, being taught about something which is useful or interesting, teaching somebody else to do something and listening to their questions and request for clarification taking part in discussion with friends about topics or interest and concern, taking part in communication (e.g. small talk situation where the main point is to establish social contact rather than communicate information ideas), listening to questions about what they want or need (e.g. in bank, at a ticket office or travel agent), listening to announcements (e.g. at air ports, at stations, at sports even), listening to information, listening to advertisements (and separating information from persuasion), listening to radio program for enjoyment, and watching TV and films for enjoyment (Tomlinson, 2011). In conclusion, the listening material should be able to reach the real-life condition of the language speaker or even the learners as the input for the listening.

## **3. The Teaching of Listening**

In order to reach the successful English language learning, it is important for teachers to teach four skills of language which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening is considered as active as speaking skill, then in some ways, listening is considered more difficult than speaking. There are several principles which should be aware during the teaching of listening. Helgesen & Brown (2007) then proposed some principles for teaching listening for beginning learners:

- a) Consider the task goal  
EFL teachers should consider the appropriate goal based on the students' importance when they give task. So, the listening activity should fulfill the students' need which could be influenced by their age or level.
- b) Administer various task  
By administering many types of tasks, it can help students gaining much experience with different types of listening task. When they gain much experience, students will be familiar with those types of listening tasks and it can ease them during the learning process.
- c) Consider the differences between spoken and written language  
It is important for teachers to be able to differentiate between the spoken and written language during the English teaching and learning process. Furthermore, bigger portion of focus should be given to spoken language than written language since listening activity process input in the form of auditory not visual.

d) Focus on students' success

The purpose of listening activity should let students gaining their success. The activity should focus on the betterment of students' achievement.

Furthermore, Brown (2007) mentioned some teaching listening principles which must be known by teachers. First, listening should be the main focus in the early stage of English second language instruction. In other words, it can be said that students must be familiar with the process of listening during the learning process. Second, the relevant material with the students' life should be maximized. Therefore, students will understand the importance of the given material with their real life context. Third, the authentic material which is relevant to students' level should be maximized in order to avoid students' problem in comprehending the given material. Fourth, listening material should be various that can be gained based on different speakers' gender, age, dialect, accent, topic, and etc in order to make the material more interesting to be learnt. Fifth, it is important to instruct the students to pay attention to the purpose of each listening activity and show their comprehension toward the given task. Sixth, in training the listening comprehension, the listening material should never be presented in visual form in order to make students familiar with the audio first.

Based on these strategies, it can be seen that in teaching listening to students, teachers must consider about these things: (1) listening should receive primary attention by setting goal of task in order to know students' comprehension, (2) listening should use variety of task which is relevant to students' life, students' gender, act, dialect, etc., and (3) the language material intended to be used for training listening comprehension should never be presented visually first.

#### 4. The 2013 Curriculum

The 2013 curriculum is the effect of the innovation done by the Indonesia education stakeholders in order to catch up with the globalization era and also its problematic issue. The betterment of education in Indonesia is done to compete with the global challenge. Moreover, the ASEAN Free Trade Area could be one of reason why it is urgent to improve the quality of the education. Due to this condition, Indonesia government start to concern about the young generation preparing them to face the effect of globalization whether it is positive or negative effect (Nur & Madkur, 2014).

Regarded the quality of education, a study was conducted by PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) shows that Indonesian learners have low quality in education (Nur & Madkur, 2014). Furthermore, it stated that Indonesian learners are lack of critical, analytic, and procedural competences. This kind of condition might happen due to the previous curriculum which only focused on covering broad content and cognitive aspect, meanwhile, the essential aspects were left behind therefore these aspects should enable students to be more critical thinking and make them able to participate in the future global challenges. In addition, the new curriculum also offers the building of character to prepare the students to face various opportunities, which could bring both positive and negative sides to students and society in general. Character education gives the students the knowledge they need to know especially concerning the negative effects of the advancement of technology, science, and art and how they could deal with them properly.

The curriculum 2013 involves several innovations during its implementation. The new curriculum provides syllabus for the teachers. Basically, teachers only need to download the syllabus from online source. This is done in order to help teachers to be more focus on teaching and providing students with good learning materials in order to support learners in improving their quality to reach the goal that is the betterment quality of Indonesia education. Besides, the thematic-integrative approach gives more opportunities for teachers to enrich the learning materials. In addition, the learners could get benefit as well since they may obtain broader knowledge. In a bigger paradigm, the curriculum changes which concern on character education are expected to be a new hope for the quality betterment of national education. Furthermore, the character education is directed to give birth to generation with strong character, high integrity of moral and tough mental-spiritual behavior (Nur & Madkur, 2014).

In addition, after the 2013 curriculum is implemented, the Indonesian government considered that some revision must be done for the betterment of the curriculum quality. There are some changes exist in the new curriculum which later called as the 2013 curriculum revised edition such as change in the scoring method, which contains several new features (Jahari, 2016).

### **5. The “When English Rings a Bell” Textbook**

The 2013 curriculum does not only provide teachers with the syllabus but also with textbook entitle *When English Rings a Bell*. This textbook is printed in two kinds of printed textbook which are teachers’ guidance textbook and students’ textbook. Therefore, for the research purpose, the researcher will focus on the content of this textbook in terms of its listening material.

This textbook is written by Siti Wachidah, Asep Gunawan, and Yuli Rulani Khatimah. The textbook is designed based on criterias of the 2013 curriculum. The content of the textbook is hoped to be able to improve the quality of education, besides it can help learners to comprehend the learning material better (Wachidah, Gunawan, & Khatimah, 2017). In line with the purpose of the education, this textbook is designed to improve the learners learning quality. It uses the text based approach for the learning process where there is emphasize on the comprehension of the text based on the context given in the text (Wachidah, Gunawan, & Khatimah, 2017). Moreover, the content of the textbook relates to the students’ daily life. An adaptation is needed to implement this textbook if the content of the textbook may not be existed in certain areas. As part of the 2013 curriculum which focus on the balance of the competence in behaviour, skills, and English competence, this model of learning will focus on the knowledge of text types, context, then continue with skills in presenting a text both in written or oral form (Wachidah, Gunawan, & Khatimah, 2017). This kind of approach let learners have continued language learning. In terms of its listening material, this textbook does not provide any listening material in the form of audio. There is not CD or other audio format for the listening material. The listening material or activity that can be found is the lyric of certain song. Moreover, there is not enough listening material and activity provided by the textbook. This kind of thing could be possible weaknesses which can be obtained from the current textbook used by the teachers to teach listening for their students.

Furthermore, this book describe minimal competence which must be done by learners in order to achieve the intended competencies. Based on the approach used in the 2013 curriculum, learners are invited to explore other learning sources which could be obtained from their surrounding. Moreover, teachers role play important role in this process. Teachers may enrich the learning activities which is relevant and taken from the surrounding as well.

### **C. Methodology**

The present study used mix methods which are quantitative and qualitative method. The instruments of this research are observation, questionnaire, and interview. Observation was done in order to analyze the listening activity happen in the class, questionnaire was used to gain information related to teachers’ perception toward the quality of the K-13 English textbook, then the interview was done in order to gain and confirm the collected data from the questionnaire. This research used purposive sampling. The participants of this research were EFL teachers who teach in junior high school level and they use and have experience in using the K13 textbook. The data from the questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively by finding the percentage of each item mentioned in the questionnaire. Meanwhile, the result from the interview was used to confirm the data from the questionnaire. The interview result was analyzed qualitatively. Additionally, the result form the observation was used to help researchers draw conclusion toward the quality of the listening material in K13 English textbook *When English Rings a Bell*.

### **D. Findings and Discussion**

The textbook Bahasa Inggris “When English Rings a Bell” provides students with a full color textbook. The cover of the textbook is dominant with the red color and completed with cartoon illustration. Each chapter of the textbook is full of pictures that make the textbook become

interesting. The design of the textbook seems interesting and it may develop students' interest. People including students may love to see beautiful things. Since there are many attractive pictures presented in the textbook, it may give students positive experience which may support them in learning a language (Tomlinson, 2008) because indirectly it can improve students' interest (Rowntree, 1997). However, in terms of its listening material, this textbook does not provide students with attractive listening material. The listening material is presented visually. The listening material is presented by text. The content of the listening material in the textbook is lyric of song. The researchers cannot find other listening material except song lyric. This textbook does not provide students with listening activity especially for the first semester. It seems that listening does not get enough attention.

This textbook furthermore is not accompanied by CD or any audio for the listening activity. The result from questionnaire shows that 65% of teachers stated that the listening material is not accompanied by the audio. In teaching listening, teachers tend to use the written materials as the listening sources (Adnan, 2014). The listening activity cannot be done without any listening input from audio. Listening material should be presented with sound, it should not be presented visually in order to make students familiar with the audio (Brown, 2007). It may be much better if there is audio for the listening activity such as CD or DVD. The support of CD or DVD as the multimedia in teaching listening might benefit students or teachers. Tomlinson (2008) suggests that ELT materials have to be accompanied by multimedia in order to provide the target language experience.

The result of observation shows other weaknesses of the existing listening material. The existing listening material is not spoken by the native speaker or native-like speaker. The listening activity is done by doing role play or teacher reads aloud. It is also found in the textbook, the listening activity is done by listening to teacher reading a dialogue or monologue. The questionnaire result shows that 74% of teachers stated that the listening material is not spoken by the native speaker. Besides, the absence of the native speaker input provided by the existing listening material is also considered as the weakness of the existing listening material which cannot improve students' listening skill since the listening activity is mostly done by role playing and reading aloud done by the teacher. Students need to improve their listening skill by having appropriate pronunciation so they may get better output. The result from the questionnaire shows that 74% of teachers stated that the existing listening material does not improve students' listening skill. When interview was done, a teacher stated that the listening material cannot improve students' listening skill.

Researcher : *Do you think the existing listening material can improve your listening skill?*

Teacher : *I don't think so. I consider that I may make mistake by doing mispronounce, and it also can happen to my students.*

Furthermore, the use of native speaker or native-like speaker may help teacher or students to promote students' learning motivation (Major, Fitzmaurice, Bunta, & Balasubramanian, 2002; cited in Mulyono & Vebriyanti, 2016). There is no guarantee that teachers' or students' pronunciation is always correct. They may make mistakes and the result will affect the output of the listening activity. Based on the observation result, researcher found that the listening material and activity are not interesting. The listening material comes from the text which was read by the teachers, so it was like reading the textbook. Besides, the listening activity was mostly done by listening to students' role play. There is no various listening materials and listening activities. The result from questionnaire shows that 55% of teachers stated that the listening material is not interesting. Furthermore, researchers found that the listening activity mentioned in the textbook was done by listening to teachers' pronunciation, it is considered as monotonous activity that may lead to boring teaching and learning activity. When the researchers tried to ask teachers about this matter, they found that teachers agreed with the statement that listening activity and materials were monotonous. There are 68% of teachers who stated that the listening material and activity are monotonous. Meanwhile, the interesting listening material may improve students' motivation and willingness to follow the listening activity. The interesting learning material can improve students' interest (Rowntree, 1997). Furthermore, it is also important to administer various tasks during the listening activity in

order to help them gain much experience with different types of listening material (Brown, 2007). So, when students are already familiar with various tasks, they will feel easy to do the listening task or activity. Additionally, according to Anderson's survey, it shows that teachers prefer to have various types of listening task or activity that can be given to students. It can be seen that various tasks do not only give benefit for the students but also for the teacher (Kadagidze, 2006).

The absence of the native speaker and the less variety of listening material and activity may lead to the other weaknesses of existing listening material. The inappropriate listening input may not fulfill students' need. In order to get better output of the learning process, the right pronunciation is needed by the students. On the other hand, this need cannot be fulfilled by the existing listening material. The questionnaire result shows that 61% of teachers stated that the existing listening material does not fulfill students' needs. When the interview was done, teachers mentioned that the existing listening material is not enough for them.

Researcher : *Do you think the existing listening material is enough for students to conduct the listening activity?*

Teacher : *Actually, no. Sometimes students need a good pronunciation, interesting topic, or various vocabularies. The common activity usually done by us is only role play.*

In order to be the good input for students, it is important to provide student with the listening material which can meet their needs. Students have their own need that may help them in getting better comprehension toward the given input. Brown (2007) stated that it is important to provide students with listening activity or material that can meet their need.

The last weakness in term of the existing listening material's content is there is no grammar section in the textbook. The result of questionnaire also shows that 52% of teachers stated that there is no grammar section for the listening material. Meanwhile, grammar also plays important role during the language learning process. Grammar cannot be separated from language learning process since it can be a monitor for the language learning process (Krashen, 1982). Due to the shape of the textbook, the result of observation shows that this textbook cannot be accessed anytime and anywhere. The result of the questionnaire shows that 77% of teachers stated that the existing listening material cannot be accessed easily. It is important to ease students in learning a language (Tomlinson, 1998). When the listening material can be accessed easily, it may ease students whenever they want to learn.

This finding is also supported by the interview result:

Researcher : *Can you access the listening material easily?*

Teacher : *The shape of the textbook is not easily brought anywhere. If I want to see the book, I need to bring big bag. It may also happen to my students.*

Based on the description above, it can be seen that the existing listening material cannot fulfill students' need and it cannot be a good listening material for students. The result of the questionnaire shows that 55% of teachers stated that the existing listening material is not a good learning source for them. Student cannot get appropriate listening input since the input comes from their friends' pronunciation instead of the native speaker. Moreover, the listening activity is done almost the same in every chance of listening activity which can make students bored during the listening process.

From 18 statements of the possible weaknesses of the existing listening material, researcher found 9 weaknesses as follows:

**Table of Weaknesses of the Existing Listening Material**

No.	Item	f	%
1.	The existing listening material does not meet students' need.	19	61
2.	The existing listening material is not interesting.	17	55

3.	The existing listening material cannot develop students' listening skill.	23	74
4.	The existing listening material does not provide audio for listening activity.	20	65
5.	The existing listening material and activity are monotonous.	21	68
6.	The existing listening material does not provide grammar section.	16	52
7.	The existing listening material is not from native speaker.	23	74
8.	The existing listening material cannot be easily accessed.	24	77
9.	The existing listening material is not a good source for students.	17	55

Listening input plays important role during the language learning process. The weaknesses of the existing listening material as mentioned above should be overcome.

### E. Conclusion

Considering some current issue related to the implementation of the 2013 curriculum, it is interesting to find out how teachers view the 2013 curriculum itself. One of interesting point in the current curriculum is the provided English textbook namely *When English Rings a Bell* which is prepared by the ministry of Education. This textbook is suggested to be used in teaching and learning process. This textbook is distributed in two types which are teachers' textbook and students' textbook. There are some differences in both textbook. Furthermore, this kind of condition leads the textbook becomes the input for language learning process. As the input for students, it may affect the output of the learning process as well. Regarded to this point, teachers may have their own point of view related to the textbook.

In general, teachers considered that this textbook is good enough. On the other hand, when it comes to the its listening material, teachers considered that there are several weaknesses of the existing listening material which may affect the students' output during the language learning. The weaknesses found in the existing listening material are (1) the listening material does not meet students' need, (2) The existing listening material is not interesting, (3) The existing listening material cannot develop students' listening skill, (4) The existing listening material does not provide audio for listening activity, (5) The existing listening material and activity are monotonous, (6) The existing listening material does not provide grammar section, (7) The existing listening material is not from native speaker, (8) The existing listening material cannot be easily accessed, (9) The existing listening material is not a good source for students. Therefore, it is suggested to the government to give more attention to listening material in order to support students and teachers to get better input that may lead to the better output of language learning process as well.

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