

IMPROVING STUDENTS' LISTENING ABILITY BY WATCHING ENGLISH FILMS

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses one of the ways to improve students' listening ability. Listening subject provides students with the materials of oral communication by English native speakers that mostly focuses on language expressions. It needs the learners to have listening practice a lot, inside and outside the classroom. Actually in teaching listening many activities can be done and many media can be used to provide students with listening activities in order to improve their listening abilities. One of the students' favorite activities is watching English Films. By watching English Films students are introduced to the real context of language and a wide range of vocabulary. After watching English Films students are assigned to make the English Films report. Since many people like watching English Films, assigning students to watch the English Films and make the report of what they have watched is expected to be more enjoyable. However they need to understand the English Films itself before they make their reports. They may watch the English Films twice or even more than twice to understand it, before they are able to make and present the English Films reports in the class. In these activities, the students have to watch and listen to the words, expressions, and sentences said by the characters. There are many advantages of these activities. By watching English Films students can learn the correct pronunciation, useful expressions from native speakers. Beside those activities, the students are also asked to write a synopsis of the English Films, find the meaning of useful expressions, understand the moral lesson of the English Films and present their own reports.

Key words: *listening comprehension, English Film.*

1.1 Background of the Research

Everybody has learned their language since they were children, especially their mother tongue. The process occurs naturally and properly with a view to communicate in society environment. Listening ability in English as foreign language also plays an important role in building communication skill.

As the foreign language in our country, English is widely taught for the first time at elementary school. The teaching at the level aims to give knowledge of the basic English to students and it will be developed when they are in the junior and senior high school.

Teaching listening is one of the duties that has to be conducted at aim to improve the students' listening comprehension in English.

Listening is a skill that tends to get neglected for various reason among other thing are:

1. The feeling among language teachers that this skill is automatically acquired by the learner as he learns to speak the language.
2. Listening is not given serious attention the fact that incompetence in it is easy to hide through nodding and shaking of the head, which may give the impression of understanding even there is none.
3. Audio lingual course give the impression that they are teaching listening when in fact teaching other skill.

Watching English English Films as media in teaching English helps sensitivity to students's sense hearing. The influence of watching English English Filmss is improving students's listening skill. Many children and teenage like English Filmss very much, and the researcher tries to take advantage of this to make the learning process easier. They will be interested and happy to learn English and watching English English Films can improve their listening skill.

Concerning the acts above, it is expected that research on trending can offer an alternative in providing the technique in teaching listening, motivating the students to learn English and can be useful for those who are interested in teaching listening.

Listening is one of aspect in learning foreign language, including English. For man students, listening is a difficult skill to be improved. So that, lecturer has to offer a kind of interesting method in teaching listening itself.

English English Films is one of media which is very good to be used to improved students' listening comprehension. It could help sensitivity to students' sense of hearing. The influence of watching English English Filmss is improving students' skill. Many teenage students like English Filmss, including the third semester of Students of Letters Faculty in Darma Agung University.

1.2 Problem of the Study

There are three main problems, in this study,they are :

1. Is watching English Films able to improve students' listening skill?
2. Is watching English English Films effective to students' listening Comprehension?
3. Is using English English Films significantly in improving students' listening skill?

2.1 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1.1. Listening

Listening is one of the language skill, in this case, the writer quoted the definition of English from:

Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia:
"Mendengarkan (memperhatikan) baik-baik apa yang diucapkan atau dibaca orang"
 Oxford Advanced Learner's

Dictionary:

To pay attention to somebody that you can hear. To take notice of what somebody says to you so that you follow their advice orbelieve them.

The listening activities develop a wide o listening in detail, and inferning meaning form context. These excercise often require completing an authentic task while listening, such as taking missing words in completion items, text of the song, or taking telephone messages. The recordings on the class cassettes contain oth scripted and unscripted conervation with natural pauses, hesitation and interruption that occur in real speech.

Listening is a very important part of learning English. It could be seen on the following statement.

"The important of listening in language teaching can hardly be overestimated. Through reception,we internalize linguistic information without which we could not produce language. In classroom, students always do more listening than speaking. Listening competence is universally "larger" than speaking competence. It is any wonder, then that is recent years the language teaching profession has placed a content emphasis on listening comprehension?" (Brow, 1994:233).

Listening as a maor component in langauge leraning and teaching first hit spotlight in the late 1970s with James Asher's (1977) work on Total Physycal Response, in which the role of comprehension was given prominence as learners were given great quantities of language to listen to before they encouraged to respond orally. Similarly, the natural approach recommended a significant "silent period" during which learners were allowed the security of listening without being

forced to go through the anxiety of speaking before they were “ready” to do so (Brown,1994:234)

2.1.2. The Goal of Listening

Listening can be characterized as problem solving activities involving the formation hypothesis, the drawing of inference, and the resolution of ambiguities and uncertainties in the input through the generation of “images” (a set of items: sensory, emotional, temporal, relational, purposive or verbal in nature) or as Stevick’s view the goal of listening is.

“..... to generate the intended image from the input and react appropriately....”

But, the effect of prior knowledge and context also seem to be instrumental in listening tests, such as Ommagio says that.

“listener construct meaning by recognizing their previously acquired knowledge to accommodate new information and concept.”

2.1.3 Aims of Listening

Sheat Rixon says that the aim of teaching listening comprehension is (or should be) to help learners of English cope with listening in real life, ut there is a large variety of different types of listening in real life.

Rixon mentions some situation in which listening is important for:

1. Listening to announcement in station, airport, etc
2. Listening to the radio
3. Participating in a conversation face to face
4. Watching a film, play or Tv
5. Participation in a meeting, seminar or discussion
6. Taking a part in a lesson
7. Listening to a talk or lecture
8. Participating in a telephone conversation

Rixon also differentiates between listen and hearing. There is an everyday distinction between hearing and something and listening to it. Hearing is simply the recognition of sound, as we say, “ I am sorry, I didn’t hear exactly what you said.” Listening implies some conscious attention to

the message of what is said, as when we say. “are you listening to me?”.

Rost (1999:3) proposes that in order to define listening, we can ask two basic questions: what are the component skill in listening? And what does a listener do?

In terms of the necessary components, we can list the following:

- a. Discriminating between sounds
- b. Recognizing word
- c. Identifying grammatical grouping of words
- d. Identifying “pragmatic unit” – expression and sets o utterances which function as whole units to create a meaning .
- e. Using background knowledge (what we already know about the content and the form) and content (what has already been said) to predict and then to confirm meaning.
- f. Recalling important words and ideas.

Rost (1999;4) says, successful listening involves an integration o these component skills. In this some, listening is a coordination of the component skills, not the individual skill themselves. This integration o these perception skills, analysis skills and synthesis skill is what we will call a person’s listening ability.

Rost has also argued that even though a person may have a good listening sility, he or she may not always be able to understand message, some conscious action is necessary to use the this aility efectively in each listening situation. This action that listener must perform is “cognitive” or mental, so it is not possible to view it directly, but we can see the efect of this action. The underlying action for successful listening is decision making. The listener must make these kinds of decisions.

- a. What kind of situation is this?
- b. What is my plan for listening?
- c. What are the important words and units of meaning?
- d. Does the message make sense

Succesfull listening requires making effective “real time” decision about these questions. In this sense, listening is primarily a thinking process thinking about meaning as they listen. The way in which the listener

makes these decision is what we will call a listening strategy.

Rost added that there are four principles for developing listening ability:

1. Listening develops through face to face interaction.

By interacting in English, learners have the chance for new language input and the chance to check their own listening ability. Face to face interaction provides stimulation provides stimulation for development of listening or meaning.

2. Listening develops through focusing on meaning and trying to learn new and important content in their target language.

By focusing on meaning and real reasons for listening in English, learners can mobilize both their linguistic and non-linguistic abilities to understand

3. Listening ability develops through work on comprehension activities.

By focusing on specific goal or listening. Learners can evaluate their effort and abilities. By having well-defined comprehension activities, learners have opportunities or assessing what have achieved and revised.

4. Listening ability develops through attention to accuracy and an analysis of form.

By learning to receive the sounds and words accurately as they work on meaning oriented activities, our learners can make steady progress. By learning to hear sound and words accurately, learners gain confidence in listening for meaning.

2.1.4 Listening as an Internal Process

Like reading, listening is an internal process that cannot be directly observed. It is rather difficult to say what happens when we listen and understand others. Ommagion (1986:3) says that:

“Listening and reading are both highly complex that draw on the knowledge of the linguistic code (language form), cognitive processing skill (the skill to process in the mind). Scheme-based understanding (background and knowledge), and contextual cues both with in and outside the text.”

2.1.5 The Steps of Listening

In general, these following steps are offered in listening class.

1. Go first over the instructions with the class, making certain that materials are understood by all the students.
2. Pronounce the words or phrases at least two times in a clear and distinct voice and at normal speed.
3. Where the question precedes the text, read the question twice in order to direct the students' attention. Then, read the entire text two times at normal speed. Teacher should feel free to vary according to the abilities of the students.
4. With longer texts, it is advisable for the lecturer to write guide questions on the board or dictate to the students.
5. After giving the students enough time enough time to answer the guide question she/he discuss the answer with them.
6. The learner continues with more detailed questions for the students to answer either in the written or oral modality. Discussion follows the activity above.
7. Other possible related activities or further intensive practice can be carried out such as:
 - a) Summarize the passage orally
 - b) Formulate questions which the students will ask their classmates to answer to answer with long or short response
 - c) Write a short summary at home

Jack (1999:4) mentions the model of the listening process includes the following steps:

1. The listener takes in raw speech and holds an image of it in short-term memory.
2. The type of interactional act or speech event in which the listener is involved is determined.
3. An attempt is made to organize what was heard into constituents. If identified, they are used to construct

proposition, grouping the proposition together to form a coherent message.

4. Script relevant to the other particular situation are recalled
5. The goals of the speaker are inferred through reference to the situation the script and the sequential position of the utterance.
6. An illocutionary meaning is assigned to the message
7. This information is retained and acted upon, and the form in which it was originally received is deleted.

2.1.6 Decoding

Decoding is the process of trying to understand (comprehend) the meaning of a word, a phrase or a sentence.

The process in decoding (comprehending/understanding) are:

- a) Hold the utterance in short term memory
- b) Analyze the utterance, is what is said by any one person says before or after another person begins to speak or something said or emitted as a vocal sound. Besides, the utterances can also identified by:
 - i. **Word** is meaningful unit of language sound. A meaningful sound or combination of sounds that is a unit of language or its representation in a text.
 - ii. **Clause** is group of words that contains a subject and a verb
 - iii. **Proposition/ Prepositional meaning** is basic meaning of sentence/ utterance.
 - iv. **Concept** is effect of the utterance to the listener/reader.

2.1.7 The Process of Listening

Listening is not a passive activity as many people thought but it is an active activity that has an internal process. The process of listening passes three stages, Underwood (1989). The stages are:

1. The sounds go into echoic memory for a very short time to be organized into meaningful units according to the

knowledge of the language the listener already has.

2. The information is then processed by the short time memory. In a matter of seconds, words are checked and compared with information already held in the long-term memory and meaning is extracted.
3. The meaning extracted is stored in the long-term memory for later use. Wilson in Adnan (2013) distinguishes the process of listening comprehension into two categories; bottom-up processing and top-down processing. Bottom-up processing refers to the listener's decoding of the incoming message by analyzing it at the level of sounds, words and sentences.

Top-down processing refers to the listener's use of background knowledge such as previous knowledge of the topic, situational or contextual clues, schemata or script stored in long term memory. However comprehension can only occur when the listener can place what is heard in a context.

Flowerdew and Miller in Amelia (2011) describe the process of listening as follow:

Auditory messages are first received by the sensory memory from the environment around us. The sensory memory activated, and the message is held for a period of not more than one second. In this period, the message is held in its exact form. Then depending on a number of factors, such as the quality of messages, the urgency of the messages, and the course of messages, it is either passed on your short term memory or lost.

2.1.8 Learner Problems in Listening

Underwood (1989) identifies the problems encountered by listeners as

- 1) Lack of control over the speed at which speakers speak.
- 2) Not being able to get thing repeated.
- 3) The listener's limited vocabulary.
- 4) Failure to recognize the signals.
- 5) Problems of interpretation.
- 6) Inability to concentrate.
- 7) Established learning habits.

The speed of delivery can be quite fast and of course there is no possibility of asking the speaker to repeat or clarify. However there are certain factors which should be less problematic. Moreover Underwood adds that many learners believe that their greatest difficulty with listening is their inability to control the speaker's speed. But the teachers can see that the other problem faced by the students in listening, such as being not familiar with words or pronunciation and do not understand the context of the language.

Looking at the problems above the teachers need to help students to develop their skills of listening such as listening for specific information, listening for gist, interpretation and inference etc.

3. Watching English Films in Listening Class

Listening skill like other language skills needs students to practice a lot not only at the classroom but also outside the classroom. To make the students practice listening outside the classroom, the teacher may ask them to do listening activities, such as listening to the English song, news, lectures, speeches and watching English Filmss.

The listening activity discussed in this paper is asking students to watch the English Filmss outside the classroom. The idea to ask students to watch the English Films is inspired by Norris (1993) thought. He states that teachers need to design activities to facilitate the practice of the listening skills, based on students' knowledge about the characteristics of the informal oral English language, in order to help students succeed in their learning. Thus watching English Filmss could become an interesting activity of learning a foreign language especially listening skill since students like watching English Filmss. The activities of watching English Filmss are followed by making report that will be presented in the classroom.

English Filmss can be good authentic learning materials for listening skill, because they contain dialogues from highly proficient English speakers, which could contribute to an

easier understanding of their pronunciation. English Filmss allow students to access to more information in listening. That is, the learners can listen and see what is happening at the same time (Potosi:undated). According to Gallacher in Potosi —A good idea is to choose scenes that are very visual. The more visual the video is, the easier it is to understand – as long as the pictures illustrate what is being saidll. Selected English TV series, English Filmss, advertising, could increase student's motivations as Van Duzer (1998) claims that students listen to relevant and interesting things for them which keep their motivation and attention high. Furthermore he claims that English Filmss provide real situation, intonation and real pronunciation and allows students to a real context. Miller (2003) says that non-verbal behavior or paralinguistic features of the spoken text are now available for the learners, so the learner can develop their listening skills in a richer context. It is because of the English Filmss contain a lot of setting, dialogues, meaningful expressions, wide range of vocabularies, phrases, and also sentences. In addition English Filmss also have correct pronunciation, since it is stared or dubbed by native speakers.

The previous ideas are in line with Porcel (2010) ideas. She states that the students can benefit a lot from watching films in English. They can improve their listening and speaking skills, they can enlarge their vocabulary knowledge and they can make their pronunciation and intonation better. Furthermore, she says that using English Filmss in English class has been one of the most rewarding experiences she has ever had.

Related to asking students to watch and make the English Films report in Listening class, it needs students to understand the English Films. To be able to understand the English Films, the students need to watch the English Films several times. It is needed because the students have to report the English Films they watched written and spoken. Even though the students are asked to write only seventy five words for their reports but their understanding of the English Filmss are needed. It is because they alsohave to fill the

work sheet provided that needs their understanding of the English Films.

According to Flowerdew (2005) general viewing of videos can be exploited. Learners can be encouraged to employ their extensive listening skills by having group in or out the class after watching a particular English Films. In addition, generic worksheets may be developed to help those students who would like more focused attention when watching English Films. He suggests the students to use the worksheet form to help them focus on their attention in watching English Films to employ their listening skill.

3.1 How to Select English Film and What to Consider

In asking students to watch the English Films, the teachers need to be aware of some potential problem concerning the contents of a English Film. Garis in Flowerdew (2005) provides an overview of some of the problems in choosing appropriate English Films. Such thing as sex and nudity, violence, profanity and slang, and controversial issues may all cause offense to some learners. In addition Stewart (2006) states that not just any film will do for teaching language. Indeed, it is often surprising what film will not do-meaning, film that students like, they may have nothing to say about. Many Hollywood films that appear every year designed to attract large numbers of young people with varying combinations of sex, violence and gross humor. These films do not work for this assignment.

According to Chan (2010), in general teachers should try to avoid films that contain some of the following elements as these make exploitation for language learning more difficult such as: high verbal density (lots of speech and very little action), naturalism in speech (very bodytalking at the same time will make it difficult to understand the dialogue), period language found in adaptations of period dramas and historical films, as it can create comprehension difficulties, because the words may be too formal, use of technical language (slang or jargon belonging to a particular group), dialect and regional accents, as they are notorious for mispronunciations of sounds.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study belongs to classroom action research. Classroom action research is one of the methods used in doing a study by having activities in the classroom. This study is usually used to revise a method or a curriculum in order to make it better. It is utilized because it aimed at improving outcomes of teaching and learning (Kember, 2005:25).

4.1 The Subject of the Study

This action research has been conducted at the fourth semester students of English Department of Letter Faculty in Darma Agung University. It is located at JLN. DR. T.D. Pardede No. 21 Medan. The sample of the researchers is one of the three regular classes available. It would be taken by using cluster sampling.

4.2 The Instruments of Collecting Data

In this research, the data were collected by using quantitative data and qualitative data. In collecting quantitative data, the researchers gave test to the students and the questionnaire as the instruments. It was analyzed based on students' learning level.

In collecting qualitative data, the researchers use the observation sheet focusing on what is happening in the classroom (classroom management).

4.3 The Procedure of Data Collection

This research conducts by administrating ten meetings which applied based on the Lesson Plan is provided. In the process of collecting data, it took the steps of procedure with two cycles. There are four steps in each cycle namely planning, action, observation and reflection. A model of action research is quoted from Kemmis (1988:134).

4.4 The Procedure of Data Analysis

This action research used qualitative data analysis that is used to describe the situation during the teaching and learning process and the quantitative data analysis is

used to analyze the score of the students. The qualitative data analyzed from the observation sheet and the quantitative data will be analyzed data based on the computation of the score of pronunciation test.

5. DATA

This study was conducted by organizing the qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were taken from observation sheet and diary notes. The quantitative data were taken from the mean of sound production test and the questionnaire. This research was conducted in one class with 35 samples. It was accomplished in two cycles, every cycle consisted of the four steps of action research (planning, acting, observing, and reflecting). The first cycle was treatment that was conducted in ten meetings both in cycle I and Cycle II. Here is the result of sound production test and the questionnaire that students did in pre test and post test in cycle one and cycle two.

Table 1
Student's Achievement in Listening

NO	Students' Name	Pret est	Posttest	
			C1	C
1	S-1	65	80	96
2	S-2	54	68	84
3	S-3	45	60	82
4	S-4	46	52	76
5	S-5	68	86	94
6	S-6	45	66	80
7	S-7	43	62	80
8	S-8	56	76	84
9	S-9	62	80	86
10	S-10	43	58	82
11	S-11	32	50	85
12	S-12	42	70	80
13	S-13	45	72	84
14	S-14	45	60	82
15	S-15	42	62	80
16	S-15	45	54	83
17	S-17	68	84	96
18	S-18	52	70	82
19	S-19	62	86	94

20	S-20	63	82	94
21	S-21	69	80	87
22	S-22	62	80	89
23	S-23	54	70	80
24	S-24	67	84	93
25	S-25	69	82	88
26	S-26	56	74	80
27	S-27	64	80	86
28	S-28	52	64	80
29	S-29	59	83	96
30	S-30	53	78	84
31	S-31	69	81	90
32	S-32	57	80	88
33	S-33	64	78	88
34	S-34	52	64	76
35	S-35	62	70	80
Total		1932	2526	2989
Mean		55,2	72,17	85,4

Tabel 2
Tabulating Data of Questionnaire

No	Student's Code	Score Per Item				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	S-1	2	2	3	2	3
2	S-2	3	2	3	2	3
3	S-3	2	2	2	2	2
4	S-4	3	2	2	3	2
5	S-5	2	2	3	3	1
6	S-6	2	3	2	3	2
7	S-7	2	2	3	2	1
8	S-8	2	3	2	3	2
9	S-9	2	2	2	2	2
10	S-10	2	3	2	2	2
11	S-11	3	2	2	3	2
12	S-12	3	3	2	3	2
13	S-13	3	3	2	2	3
14	S-14	2	2	2	3	2
15	S-15	3	3	3	2	2
16	S-15	2	3	2	2	2
17	S-17	3	3	3	3	3
18	S-18	2	3	3	2	3
19	S-19	2	2	2	2	2
20	S-20	3	3	3	3	3
21	S-21	2	3	3	2	2
22	S-22	2	2	2	3	1

23	S-23	2	3	2	3	2
24	S-24	3	3	3	3	3
25	S-25	2	2	2	3	3
26	S-26	3	3	3	2	2
27	S-27	3	3	3	3	3
28	S-28	3	2	2	3	2
29	S-29	2	3	3	3	3
30	S-30	2	3	3	2	3
31	S-31	2	2	2	3	3
32	S-32	3	3	3	2	2
33	S-33	2	2	2	3	1
34	S-34	2	3	2	3	2
35	S-35	3	3	3	3	3
Total (Σ)	84	90	86	90	79	
Mean (\bar{X})	2,4	2,57	2,45	2,57	2,25	

5.1 Data Analysis

The data above was analyzed based on the tests and the questionnaire given to the students. It was accomplished in two cycles. Every cycle consisted of four steps of action research (plan, act, observation, and reflection). The qualitative data was collected by giving observation sheet and diary notes. The quantitative data was collected by giving sound production test and the questionnaire to count the means of the students, the data was taken from post test in cycle one and cycle two.

5.2 Research Finding and Discussion

Based on the analysis above, it is found that teaching by using English Films give significant improvement to the students' Listening Comprehension. In teaching learning process, the students paid attention to the lecturer instruction and the were watching the Films seriously. The students were interested in listening by watching the short English Film. It can be seen from responses given by the students.

In this study, treating the students by using the related media such English Films can improve students' listening comprehension from the mean 55,3 in pretest, then it is improved into 72,17 on cycle I and the last

becomes 85,4 in cycle II. Based on discussion above, students get improvement in Listening Comprehension through listening and watching to the Short English Films, this improvement was also supported by the qualitative data. Diary notes and observation sheet supported the improvement of students' listening comprehension through watching English Films.

6. Conclusion

Based on the finding of this research, it is concluded that using medias by watching the English short English Films is effective to improve the students' Listening comprehension. Their comprehension improved from the cycle one and then it was getting higher on cycle two.

7. Suggestion

It is better for English lecturers especially the lecturer of Phonology, Pronunciation and speaking to use medias such as Song and short English Film on their teaching learning process since both of medias have a very crucial benefit for the students. English Film can be implemented when the lecturer wants to teach vocabulary, pronunciation or a kind of text. It is known that almost all students like watching English Films. It can be used as one of the ways to get the students' participation in teaching learning process.

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