ENHANCING STUDENTS’ LISTENING SKILL: LEVERAGING EXTENSIVE LISTENING ACTIVITY IN AN EFL CLASSROOM

Desak Ayu Pradnya Gita Sasti1), I Dewa Gede Rat Dwiyana Putra 2) *, Putu Santi Oktarina 3)

1)2)3) Universitas Hindu Negeri I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa Denpasar
ratdwiyanaputra@uhnsugriwa.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the best implementation of Extensive Listening in improving students’ listening skill at grade eleven of SMK PGRI 3 Badung. The subject of this research is XI MM 2 class that consisted of 31 students. This Classroom Action Research (CAR) cyclic procedure consist of four stages, namely: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Observation and interview was done focusing on how the students respond to the implementation of the extensive listening method, while the test was administered in the end of class to check whether the applied method is effective. The result showed that the best implementation of Extensive Listening was found in the second cycle where drilling vocabulary was applied during pre-listening, practice and adaptation of speech rate were applied in whilst-listening, and exercises were emphasized in post-listening. This syntax was proven to successfully help the students to achieve the learning goal where 96,77% passed the minimum mastery criteria or KKM (75) with the class mean score of 89,67. Besides, students stated that they liked the teaching method and were more motivated in learning listening. Students confirmed that vocabulary and pronunciation drilling was considered effective and influential for their ability in doing the listening test. So, It could be concluded that: 1) drilling vocabulary should be implemented prior to the Extensive Listening main activities to ensure that the students have sufficient vocabulary, 2) teacher should justify the speech rate of the listening material during the Extensive Listening main activities to suit the students’ ability.

Keywords: teacher education, listening skill, extensive listening, read aloud, repeated listening, narrow listening, vocabulary drilling, speech rate

INTRODUCTION

Listening is the first step in learning a foreign language. We must first hear the sounds, words, and speech patterns of a language, so listening has a fundamental role in learning English. However, many people, especially students, find listening to be a difficult skill to master. There are several problems in listening comprehension, according to some experts cited in Hamouda (2013). Boyle (1984) divides the factors that affect listening comprehension that are directly relevant to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) listening into four categories: listener, speaker, medium, and environment. Five major listening challenges have been identified by Chang et al. (1995): speed, a cluster of difficult-to-segment sounds, obsession with translation, association of sounds with words and meanings, and idiomatic expressions. According to Yagang (1993), listening difficulties are caused by four factors: the message, the speaker, the listener, and the physical setting.

In Vocational High School or Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK), teaching English is aimed at developing students’ communicative competence. Students are expected to be able applying mastery of intermediate level English skills both to communicate orally and in writing. So, students’ communication skills become the main focus in learning English.
Listening activity is a way that can be used to help train students’ communication skills because listening is the initial foundation when learning speaking.

The researcher conducted preliminary research at the end of second semester when the students were still in the tenth-grade class on May 25, 2022. The researcher gave a listening test to the students in order to measure the extent of the students’ listening skill. Before started the test, the researcher gave introduction about what test they would get on that day. The results showed that when the teacher said that today’s activity was listening, students immediately became nervous and some complained. Some of them said that listening would be difficult because they were not used to the native speaker voice. Some also said that the vocabulary they knew was not enough to understand the whole audio listening. There were only a few students who did not complain and enjoyed the class activities. The result of the listening test showed that many students got low scores. The Minimum Mastery Criterion or Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM) for English subject at that school is 75, which if the students’ scores are averaged, the results are still far below the criteria.

After conducting a listening test, the researcher interviewed the students. Most of them like English, and they want to master it well. However, listening was the most difficult skill for them. One of the students said “Listening susah miss. Banyak kata-kata yang belum saya tahu artinya dan belum pernah dengar sebelumnya”. The other students also said “Susahnya listening itu kita susah menangkap maksud dari speakernya miss, karena kan pakai aksen bahasa inggris bule jadi kurang jelas dan terlalu cepat pengucapannya”, “Audionya cepat miss, beda pengucapannya kalau orang Indonesia yang bicara”. Based on that, the students considered that their listening problems were the native speaker’s voice and speed which were not clear to understand, and the lack of vocabularies that were known by the students.

The researcher also interviewed the English teacher of that class on Thursday, May 26th 2022. The teacher confirmed that the students still had problems in listening. In addition, the English teacher also stated that listening sessions are rarely taught in English teaching there. The assignments that the students often get from the English teacher are writing and reading assignments. From the results of interviews with English teachers, the teacher assumed that the students’ listening problems are lack of vocabularies, lack of practice, and nervousness because students are not used to listening to native speaker accents.

Thus, from the results of preliminary research that had been carried out by the researcher, encourage the English teacher and the researcher to collaborate in improving students’ listening skill. Listening skill is very important to improve in order to master English well because listening is the initial foundation if we want to master speaking English well.

The research was conducted in the first semester of the eleventh grade. The results of the interview with the English teacher stated that based on the experience of teaching in the tenth grade, the teacher observed that the students in each classes on average had the same quality of listening skill and the teacher allowed the researcher to collect data in any eleventh grade classes. But after that, the teacher recommended choosing a multimedia class as a research subject. This was because multimedia students rarely got listening class if
compared to students in hospitality and culinary classes. Based on this, the researcher decided to choose a multimedia class that focuses on class XI MM 2, which at that time they were still in the grade tenth on the second semester. Students in this class did not really understand what the speaker said during the listening session. The reason was their lack of practice, lack of vocabularies, their nervousness during listening sessions, and the speech rate of the native speakers. This was evidenced by the results of interview and students’ listening test which was conducted on preliminary research.

Previous studies with the same problem have been carried out by several researchers with various techniques and approaches. Panjaitan (2018) used English Song as the media of listening session. Sari & Susilowati (2019) used Listening Application to catch students’ attention of listening session. Ghonivita et al. (2021) used contextual teaching and learning (CTL) in online learning. Day (2018) used the Modified Extensive Listening Approach in improving students’ listening skill.

From a number of techniques and approaches used by previous researchers, the researcher decided to use Extensive Listening to improve students’ listening skill in XI MM 2 class of SMK PGRI 3 Badung. This is because Extensive Listening has several listening activities that support students to obtain listening input that is understandable, fun, comfortable, and meaningful (Renandya 2011). Extensive Listening means all of listening activities that can motivate students to practice and receive comprehensive and enjoyable listening (W. A. Renandya & Farrell, 2011). This can solve students’ problems in listening, so that when they are doing listening session using Extensive Listening, their nervousness will disappear with fun and meaningful listening. Then the students will enjoy practicing and enriching their vocabulary so that their listening skills can improve. This can be done in every situation with several activities such as: 1) teacher directed dictation or teacher’s read aloud, 2) repeated listening in the classroom, and 3) narrow listening. The research questions for this study is posted as follows; What is the best implementation of Extensive Listening that can improve students’ listening skill at grade eleven of SMK PGRI 3 Badung?

METHOD

The researcher applies Classroom Action Research (CAR) method in this study because the researcher wants to make better changes and improvements by collaborating with students directly in the classroom. For the CAR procedure, the cyclic model proposed by Kemmis & Taggart (1988) was adopted, which consists of several steps, namely: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The participants of this research focused on class XI MM 2 class of SMK PGRI 3 Badung, which consists of 9 females and 22 males. They are English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students who master two other languages besides English, namely Basa Bali and Bahasa Indonesia. The reason for choosing this class is because it is in accordance with the results of preliminary research who showed that in this class, listening is a skill that is still poorly mastered and they still have difficulty listening and catching the points conveyed by the speaker.

Observation and interview was done focusing on how the students respond to the implementation of the extensive listening method, while the test was administered in the end of class to check whether the applied method is effective. The data analysis was done to calculate mean score of the listening test, while the data from the observation and interview
is analyzed qualitatively using interpretative analysis based on on Miles & Huberman (1994) qualitative data analysis steps, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The CAR cyclic process was refined and repeated until there was an increase in the average score of XI MM 2 students' listening comprehension, with minimum 75% students could pass the KKM with score 75.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of the research, the best implementation of Extensive Listening in improving students’ listening skill is categorized into three main activities. First is pre-listening activity, which includes introduction of several vocabularies and drilling pronunciation by the researcher before being given a listening test. The objective of this activity is to solve the students’ listening problems in vocabulary and nervousness when doing listening session. Next, whilst-listening. In this activity, the researcher provides exercises to the students by reading aloud and repeated listening in different speed. After that, the researcher continues by giving the students a native speaker audio recording with several repetitions. The students are asked to listen carefully and then share all the information they got from the audio. It is intended to make students adapt to the normal speech rate of native speakers, and also to solve the students’ listening problems in lack of practice time and nervousness. The last activity is post-listening. In this activity, the researcher conducts listening test after the students being given Extensive Listening activities. The students are asked to do listening test with full concentration and carefully. The aim of this activity is to find out how far the students’ listening skill have improved. The implementation of these three listening activities is in accordance with the statement from Richard (2006) who recommends three lesson structures for teaching listening. Figure 1. shows the syntax of extensive listening than could successfully improve students' listening skill in this study.

The result from the interview with the students showed that students liked the process of learning English in both the first and second cycles. They like the videos as stimulation before starting to discuss the material. Students also stated that giving several vocabularies and drilling pronunciation was considered effective and influential in make easier for students in doing the listening test. Therefore they agree that learning with Extensive Listening would enhance their ability and motivation in learning listening. The benefit they got after being taught with Extensive Listening is increasing vocabulary, increasing practice time, reducing nervousness, and adapting them to native speaker audio. They also hope that the English teacher will often hold listening classes to train students to get used to listening to native speakers’ voices.
Based on the results of reflection on the implementation of Extensive Listening, the researcher found four important issues in this research. First, students’ vocabulary. This is one of the students’ problems that affect their listening skill. The researcher overcomes students’ vocabulary problems by introducing relevant vocabularies and practicing their pronunciation together or drilling vocabulary. The researcher ensures that students really understand the meaning of each words. This is done so that students are ready to face the listening test because they have been given vocabulary related to the test. This is in line with the statement of Harmer (2007), where drilling is a technique that can be used in foreign language classes, emphasizing the repetition of structural patterns through oral exercises to demonstrate students’ abilities in using specific language items in a controlled manner. This is also accordance with the statement of Brown (2007) which states that students should have the opportunity to learn the vocabulary and grammar present in the text and they should operate their antecedent knowledge. Fransiska (2016) in her research also show that the use of drilling techniques can improve students’ vocabulary mastery.

The second aspect is practice time, which is one of the students’ listening problems which is also recognized by the English teacher. The researcher uses an Extensive Listening approach which consists of three activities: teacher’s read aloud, repeated listening, and narrow listening. Extensive Listening approach was implemented by the researcher when giving students exercises and listening tests, so that those activity can increase their practice time. This is in accordance with Renandya (2011) who gave the three listening activities in practicing students’ listening skill. It is also agreed by Nisa (2018) in her research, that the students need to practice listening for meaning and also some instructions on how to do it effectively. In addition, this is also in line with Ivone & Renandya (2019) which states that the benefit of Extensive Listening with narrow and repeated listening is students will be able to understand the aural text better in practice.

The third issue is students’ nervousness when doing listening session. The researcher used repeated listening and vocabulary drilling activities as the way to overcome their nervousness. This activity can help students to get more important information when listening, so that students’ nervousness can be reduced. In addition, the material used in listening is material that is appropriate to students’ level and the topics discussed in audio listening are topics that are familiar and related to students. It is in line with Ivone & Renandya (2019), which stated that if students practice listening to aural texts at their level of proficiency for a long time, they become familiar with words used in various topics and narrow contexts. Students do not need to stop and repeat the text to understand it. Frequent and repeated practice helps them become more fluent listeners, so when students are more relaxed in Extensive Listening, their confidence in listening to texts in the target language also increases and their nervousness also decreases. Scarcella & Oxford (1992) also argue that listening anxiety is that students face difficult tasks or unfamiliar pronunciations so that they feel anxious in listening sessions. Also, Horwitz (1987) believe that students should have a large amount of vocabulary and grammar knowledge. If the vocabulary problem is not solved, the students’ nervousness will increase. Therefore, the researcher uses drilling vocabulary activities to overcome this problem.

The last one is the speech rate of the native speakers. This is the problem that is most often encountered when carrying out listening activities. Because listening is rarely taught
by English teacher there, the researcher decided to use Extensive Listening approach to teach students, which includes three activities, namely teacher’s read aloud, repeated listening, and narrow listening. Teacher’s read aloud and repeated listening were carried out by the researcher to make it easier for students to get information from what they were listening to. The researcher read the dialogues with facial expressions, gestures, and voice intonation according to the contents of the dialogues. In addition, the researcher wants students to adapt in listening activities. After seeing the good student learning outcomes in the first cycle, the researcher wanted to upgrade the students’ listening level by using native speaker audio in the listening test of the second cycle, while still giving the teacher’s read aloud and repeated listening in the students’ exercises. In accordance with Renandya (2011), the benefit of Extensive Listening is to improve students’ ability to overcome speech rate. Students often say that they have difficulty understanding spoken language, not because the content or the language is too difficult, but because it is too fast. We could not have asked them to listen any faster, but what we can do is give them repeated listening practice so that they gradually become accustomed to listening to normal speech. This is also in line with the results of Kristanti & Ni’amah (2022), which states that Extensive Listening can explore students abilities regarding normal speech rate. Waring (2010) also stated that extensive listening is an approach to improve students’ listening fluency. According to him, if we understand almost any text we listen to, we can build word recognition speed, see more use of grammatical points, more collocations and generally our brain will work very effectively.

According to Mayora (2017), there are five general principles in Extensive Listening: quantity, understanding, student concentration, meaning orientation, and accountability. Based on these principles, the students are encouraged to listen to a large number of easy target language texts within or just above their current linguistic understanding and level, select texts based on potential relevance, interest, and enjoyment rather than their linguistic content, perform comprehension-oriented, non-intrusive tasks, writing or telling an appreciation, main idea or summary in their native language of the material at their own pace without intervention from the teacher, and focusing on meaning rather than form. The researcher used these five principles when teaching listening using the Extensive Listening approach in class XI MM 2 at SMK PGRI 3 Badung. First, the principle of quantity was applied by the researcher by providing listening exercises with videos as brainstorming and dialogue examples given before the listening test. Second, the principle of comprehensibility was applied by the researcher by choosing examples of dialogue texts that are easily understood by students. Third, the principle of learner-centeredness was applied by giving listening exercises at a slower pace when first given, then gradually increasing according to students’ understanding. Fourth, the principle of meaning-orientation was applied by providing listening exercises with dialogue texts that relate to their daily life and students are asked to understand the meaning, not the form. Finally, the accountability principle is applied by giving a listening test.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, the best implementation of Extensive Listening in improving students’ listening skills is categorized into three main activities. The first is a pre-listening activity by providing an introduction to some vocabulary and pronunciation
drilling by the researcher before being given a listening test. Next, whilst-listening by giving exercises to the students with reading aloud, listening repeatedly at different speeds, and giving native speaker audio recordings to the students with several repetitions. The last is post listening, by holding a listening test after students are given Extensive Listening activities. Based on the aforementioned best implementation, there are four issues that should be given emphasize during the implementation of Extensive Listening activities. First, students’ lack of vocabulary. This issue was overcome by the researcher by introducing relevant vocabularies and drilling vocabulary. Second is students’ lack of practice time. The researcher gave three Extensive Listening activities, namely teacher’s read aloud, repeated listening, and narrow listening to increase their practice time. The third is students’ nervousness when doing listening session. This issue was overcome by used repeated listening and vocabulary drilling to reduce their nervousness. The last one is the speech rate of the native speakers. The researcher applied three Extensive Listening activities, namely teacher’s read aloud, repeated listening, and narrow listening. The text is read by the teacher repeatedly with facial expressions, gestures, and voice intonation, then upgraded the students listening level by using native speaker audio in the listening test of the second cycle, to make students familiar with the normal native speakers’ speech rate.

This study is Classroom Action Research that took place in a single classroom in the level of high school. Future researchers are expected to replicate this study in the same context or different context includes different education levels to give a broader insight in the implementation of Extensive Listening in English Language Education.

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