THE USE OF COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH LISTENING ACTIVITY BY USING WHATSAPP APPLICATION

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Abstract

Listening is one of the four skills taught to learners in foreign language learning activity. Yet, it is no rarely found that students are sometimes uninterested in the listening activity caused by repeated same technique delivered by teacher in the classroom. Besides that, the interaction among students seems to be forgotten when the listening activity is conducted. This paper is about to explain and describe how the communicative approach is applied in the process of foreign language learning activity specifically in listening activity through the using of WhatsApp application as the means for communication. This technique is used in order to make students feel more lively when doing their activities in the classroom and allow for the interaction among them. As the part of technology, WhatsApp plays quite important role in this activity to motivate students to interact with their partners. The application of this method is implemented in a class consists of twelve basic-level foreign language learners and using the materials contained in their textbooks. Also, the teacher takes part in the activity to monitor and provide feedback to the result of the listening activity. By applying the communicative approach in the listening activity, teacher is expected to create an interesting learning atmosphere for students and allowing them to interact with each other. After the listening activity is conducted, questionnaires are distributed to see the response of the students telling their self-reflection regarding to this activity. As the result, besides improving the listening skill, students can also improve their communicative competence.

Keywords: Communicative approach, listening, students' interaction, communicative competence

Introduction

Listening plays an important role in communication as it is said that, of the total time spent on communicating, listening takes up 40-50%; speaking 25-30%; reading 11-16%; and writing about 9% (Mendelsohn, 1994). According to Anderson and Lynch (1988), arguing what is successful listening, "understand is not something that happens because of what speaker says: the listener has a crucial part to play in the process, by activating various types of knowledge, and by applying what he know to what he hears and trying to understand what the speaker means" (p.6). In learning English, students should study four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening is one of the receptive skills and believed as the first skill that is taught to students in order to improve their skills in English, yet the teaching and learning about listening is not an easy thing to do. Listening is usually conducted as an individual activity where students work on their exercise themselves. This can cause problem when students who are introvert and have less knowledge cannot discuss their work and in the end they cannot do the exercise. Another problem that comes up is the teaching method which still uses traditional technique causes students to feel bored and decreasing their motivation in learning. Therefore, the student-student interaction must be optimized and also an interesting teaching method must be applied in the classroom. Listening can be brought to the class in a communicative way as the objective of learning language is to reach the Communicative Competence (Dell Hymes, 1962, 1972). Hymes states communicative competence as the aspect of competency which allows us to deliver and

make meaning in particular context (Hymes, in Brown, 2007). Michael Canale and Merrill Swain (in Brown, 2007) divides four components that build the concept of communicative competence: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategy competence. To reach those competencies, listening strategies are used in the learning process. Some previous studies of listening identified items concerning the listening comprehension strategies. According to *Bacon's Coding of Listening-comprehension Strategies* (Bacon, 1992) and *Vandergrif's Listening Comprehension Strategies Framework* (Vandergrift. 1997), we can briefly mention the strategies as follows: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social-affective strategies. Besides, the role of technology is quiet important in gathering students' attention and improving students' motivation in learning English. So that, WhatsApp is chosen as the media in this learning process, where students' can use the record feature to put their voices and be heard by their friends.

Methodology
This is a small-scale study which was conducted in a once meeting to the students of and English course class. The methodology used is the qualitative descriptive.

1. Subject of the research
   The subject of this research is English course students in Intermediate level. There are twelve students divided into groups of three, in each group there was one more-skilled student took role as the main listener of the activity. The other two members had role as the second listener. In this research, the researcher didn't manipulate or give special treatment to the variable, yet tried to clearly describe the whole activities.

2. Data collection procedure
   The data was collected by doing field observation and interview. Observation was done as the procedure to identify the phenomenon when the listening activity was conducted, so the observation was done together along to the subject of the research. By doing this observation, data will be collected to find out if the communication approach in listening class is suitable to be used. The results of the procedure of this research are written and oral descriptive text, and the behavior of the subject. The oral descriptive text was collected by using the WhatsApp application and informal interview with the subject after doing the listening activity. By identifying the result we will know whether the communication approach is well-applied or not. The documentation was organized in the recording and picture format.

   In a research, instruments are the tools which are chosen and used by the researcher to make the research more systematic and easier. The first instrument used in this research was the test problem taken from the students' handbook, and also the students' answer of the test problem. The second instrument was the interview.

3. Data analysis
   The data of this mini research analyzed qualitatively. The data analysis was done by the process of data collecting, data interpreting to look for patterns within the data to explain the phenomenon. The aim of this data analysis is to determine if the communication approach is suitable in listening classroom activity.

4. Procedure of the research
   The listening recording of this study consists of some dialogue between people talking about their opinion of some activities. Before listening, students were showed some pictures related to the recording and they took notes about the vocabularies. The students then listened twice and made notes for each dialogue. There was no interaction between the more-

skilled students until the recording ended. Then, students who stayed outside started to ask questions to the more-skilled student by using the WhatsApp group.

These are the procedures of the activity:

a. Divide the students into group of three. Make sure a more-skilled student is put into each group.

b. Ask WhatsApp number of each student from each group.

c. Create WhatsApp group (four groups). The member of the group is the students and teacher. This WhatsApp group is used to communicate by using the voice recording feature. Students are not allowed to type text and teacher takes role to monitor and give comments.

d. Teach the students about the topic, some pictures and vocabularies related to the main recording to build their metacognitive strategies before listening the main recording

e. Let the more-skilled student stays in the classroom to listen to the main recording, take note, and give information while the other members stay outside the classroom with questions about the recording that will be asked to the main listener.

f. Play the recording twice while the more-skilled students are taking notes.

g. Ask students to start to communicate using WhatsApp. The outsiders ask questions to the insiders by using the voice recording feature.

h. Tell the insiders that they have to listen to the question carefully.

i. Tell the outsiders that they have to listen to the insider's answer carefully.

j. Ask them to ask clarification to each other by recording their voice via WhatsApp and teacher may give help if needed.

k. Check their answers after each group finished answering the questions about the recording.

l. Give the interview to each group and interview them about the listening activity.

m. Evaluate the data and result.

Findings and Discussion

This small-scale study focused on applying the communicative approach and optimizing the students' interaction by using WhatsApp application as the media to communicate in teaching listening. The learners participated in a communicative and fun activities designed to promote their student-student-interaction of L2 listening as a route to enhancing their listening comprehension and communicative competence ability. Finding revealed that the four groups of students can answer the test problem by using this approach. The findings can be seen from the comprehension test, students' voice recording, and interview result.

1. Listening comprehension result

Each group was given four questions related to the recording of the listening activity. The more-skilled student who stayed inside the classroom had to give as much information as they could to let his or her friends who stayed outside answered the questions. The information was given via WhatsApp by recording their voices. All of the groups can answer the questions correctly despite their mistakes in grammar usage. They used all the vocabularies that had been taught before conducting the listening activity. Some of the groups can answer the question in complete sentence yet the others only made a short answer. This condition seems to have been because their knowledge and skill in grammar are still need to be improved.

These are the questions of the listening comprehension and answers from each group:

Table 1. Answer for listening comprehension questions.

1. What is Joe watching on TV?	Group 1 Joe is watching football game.
	Group 2 Joe (is) watching football game on TV.
	Group 3 Joe (is) watching a football game.
	Group 4

		Joe is watching a football game on the TV.
2.	**Are both Susi and Maria reading interesting things?**	**Group 1** No, they aren't. Susi **(is)** reading a book, Maria **(is)** reading exercise magazine, **(they are)** is not interesting.
		Group 2 No, they aren't.
		Group 3 No, they aren't. Susi **(is)** reading a Japanese book and is it **(it is)** interesting. Maria **(is)** reading a **(an)** exercise magazine and is it **(it is)** not interesting.
		Group 4 Susi **(is)** reading a book about Japan and it's interesting. But, Maria, she's reading a sport magazine and it's not really interesting.
3.	**What does Richard think about his homework?**	**Group 1** Richard think **(s)** his homework is no **(t)** interesting but **(it)** is important.
		Group 2 He thinks it's boring.
		Group 3 Richard thinks a homework **(the homework is)** it's so bored **(boring)**.
		Group 4 Richard is doing his computer science homework.
4.	**What does Richard want to do?**	**Group 1** Richard want **(s)** to Visit Dave.
		Group 2 Richard want **(s)** to visit Dem's **(Dave's)** house.
		Group 3 Richard wants to visit Dave.
		Group 4 Richard want **(s)** to visit his friend.

From the result above we can see that each group can answer the questions correctly except the answer of number 3 from Group 4, the main listener didn't get the context of the question and he gave the wrong answer to his group. Despite of that mistake, students were confident to use the target language in asking and answering the question. Their communicative competence is improving while they were listening to their friends' sentences. The more-skilled students tried to listen to the main recording and took notes as well as the can then listened to the question given by his/her friends, while the students who stayed outside tried to listen to the more-skilled students' clues to answer the questions. It is so much different when we conduct the listening activity traditionally where students work individually without opportunity to interact with their friends. Krashen (in Mitchell and Myles, 2003) through his affective filter hypothesis stated that the second language acquisition will be successful when students have low anxiety. This situation is possible to happen because when students interact with their friends they feel comfortable and allow them to communicate to each other. The communicative approach proves that it can help students in doing the listening activity because students are allowed to deliver meaning in particular context, in line with the idea of communicative competence stated by Dell Hymes (1972, 1967)

2. Students' voice recording

According to the result of their activity in discussing the answer, the researcher found out that the activity can also encourage them not only in doing the listening activity but also to use the target language for communication. They tried to negotiate and deliver meaning without hesitate. According to Richard (2006) the communicative competence covers these aspects of language knowledge: (1) understand to use language for different purpose, (2) understand how to vary the use of language according to the setting and participant, formal or informal, oral or written, (3) understand how to produce and recognize different type of text, (4) understand how to keep a conversation

going by using the communication strategies. By doing this listening activity students can achieve their communicative competence because they did communicate during it. Here is script from one of the group while they were doing the listening activity using the WhatsApp application:

| Group 3
Student 1
(stay inside the classroom)
Student 2
(stay outside the classroom)
Student 3
(stay outside the classroom) | Student 2: *(started to ask question)* *"What is Joe watching on TV?"*
Student 2: *(tried to clarify the question) "The question is number one."*
Student 2: *"Number two, are both Maria and Susie reading interesting things?"*
Student 3: *(help to repeat the question for number one) "What is Joe watching on TV?*
Student 1: *"Joe is watching a football game."*
Student 3: *"Are both Susie and Maria reading interesting things?"*
Student 1: *(tried to ask the question) "What is number two?"*
Student 2: *(add another question) "What does Richard think about his homework?"*
Student 2: *(tried to ask the answer fro number two) "Number two, can you repeat?"*
Student 3: *(giving another question) "Number four; what does Richard want to do?"*
Student 1: *"(ask for clarification) Can you repeat the question number two?"*
Student 3: *"Question number two, are both Susie and Maria reading interesting things?"*
Student 1: *"Answer for number two, No,* |

| *they aren't. Susi (is) reading a Japanese book and is it (it is) interesting. Maria (is) reading a (an) exercise magazine and is it (it is) not interesting. (tried to ask the question for number three) Can you repeat question number three?"*
Student 2: *"OK. Question number three, What does Richard think about his homework?"*
Student 1: *"Richard thinks a homework (the homework is) it's so bored (boring)."*
Student 1: *"Answer for number four, Richard wants to visit Dave."*
Student 3: *"Can you repeat please?"*
Student 1: *"Richard wants to visit Dave."* |

3. Interview result

After doing the activity each group were given some questions orally. From the interview result, we can see that the students feel more comfortable if they can interact with their partner or groups while doing a listening exercise. Teacher as the facilitator helps students to interact and achieve the listening comprehension by giving advice and feedback. By using this method, the students enjoy the learning process and they can achieve their competence. Here is what they say:

| 1.What do you think about the topic of the listening? | Group 1
"We think the topic is interesting and easy to understand." |
| | Group 2
"The topic is not so different from what we have learned." |

	Group 3 *"The topic is very interesting and it gives us a lot of new vocabularies."*	
	Group 4 *"It is not difficult and we enjoy learning about it."*	
1. Do you think the interaction among students in listening activity help you a lot?	**Group 1** *"Yes. It helps us to find the answer."*	
	Group 2 *"Yes. It is a good strategy."*	
	Group 3 *"Yes. It helps us to do the discussion so we can use English more."*	
	Group 4 *"Yes. We can know how to ask for clarification."*	
2. What is the most difficult part of this listening activity?	**Group 1** *"When we want to say something but we don't know it in English."*	
	Group 2 *"When our friend doesn't understand the question."*	
	Group 3 *"When we don't understand what our friends say and we have to repeat it many times."*	
	Group 4 *"When we lost the signal and we missed our friend speech."*	
3. Does this activity help you to improve your listening skill?	**Group 1** *"Yes, it does."*	
	Group 2 *"Yes. But we think we still need some more exercise and*	

add our vocabularies."	
Group 3 *"Yes. But we need to listen more carefully."*	
Group 4 *"Yes, sure. We can use the taking note strategy and the interaction is really helpful."*	

Conclusion

This was a small-case study that specifically focused on comprehension of recording dialogue and examined only twelve intermediate level students where four of them are more-skilled than the others, the findings provide some empirical data for the notion that communicative approach using the optimization of the students' interaction can be useful for guiding students toward developing their listening comprehension ability. The implications of this small-scale study for teachers in other contexts are that communicative approach appears to offer an interesting teaching method that can be exploited for skills development in listening lessons. Besides, the use of technology is very important to attract students to be active and technology savvy learners. However, communicative approach and the choice of the application may not necessarily be equally beneficial to all learners in a class, and the teachers should consider how to best implement it in combination with other types of listening activity in order to improve the listening comprehension skills of the learners.

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