

## STUDENTS' NEEDS ANALYSIS ON LEARNING OF THE ENGLISH LISTENING SKILLS IN VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Sularti<sup>1</sup>, Nur Arifah Drajadi<sup>2</sup>, Slamet Supriyadi<sup>3</sup>

Graduate School of English Education Department,

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education

Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>[lrti\\_art159@yahoo.com](mailto:lrti_art159@yahoo.com), <sup>2</sup>[drajatinur@gmail.com](mailto:drajatinur@gmail.com), <sup>3</sup>[pripus.lppmuns@yahoo.co.id](mailto:pripus.lppmuns@yahoo.co.id)

### Abstract

Learning English in Vocational High School has certain characteristics related to the learners' major. English as a foreign language has an important role to be mastered by the students. The orientation of the students after graduating from school mostly gets a job related to their competency. It is in line with the objective of the 2013 curriculum that learners of vocational high school are demanded to have a good character, an adequate competency, and be creative and innovative. As the mean of communication, English needs to be learned both in written and orally so that they can apply the English language in any situations after their graduation. This study aims at analyzing materials need in learning the English listening skills. The subjects of this study are twenty-three students from the eleventh grade of a vocational high school in Yogyakarta. The result of this research may help teachers and institutions preparing materials appropriately.

**Keywords:** analysis, students' needs, listening skills

### Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language is a crucial element for students to face and adapt the global technology which uses the English language as the mean of communication in international language. The English language has also become the instructional language in the aspects of the global communication of life, including educational aspects. [1] Listening is a crucial capability of social interaction among listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and it has been identified that people receive new messages are more effective by listening than reading. Listening materials in vocational high school are difficult for most of the students. As the language that they do not use it in everyday conversation and they merely use it in the English class, English for listening is not familiar to the students. Regarded on the importance of English listening skills, the government embodies the students' needs in designing the curriculum. Need analysis is the main thing that becomes the basis for the goals and objectives of the program that determines the success or failure of each program [2]. Students are expected to have

the ability in oral and written English. This means that the English language must be mastered by the students in certain levels which in this case are governed by the curriculum as a basis for guiding the implementation of the teaching and learning activities.

Listening is regarded as a foundation that underlies all skills. Asher, Postovsky, Winitz, and Krashen (Nurul, 2012) bring attention to the importance of listening as a mean for understanding and stressing its role in facilitating language learning. The crucial role of listening in a communication initiates the acknowledgment that listening is the first language skill to be acquired<sup>2</sup>. It is the most frequent skill that is applied in classrooms (Ferris, 1998; Murphy, 1991; Vogely, 1998). It is found that the portion of verbal communication time spent by college students is 52.5 percent in listening, 17.3 percent in reading, 16.3 percent in speaking, and 13.9 percent in writing (Barker, Edwards, Gaines, Gladney, & Holley, 1980). Moreover, listening skills are proved to be important in foreign and second languages acquisition because globalism is increasing drastically

and media such as radio, television, and the internet becomes forums for English communication (Ishler & James Mitchell, 2010, p. 1-30). However, learning and acquiring this skill is relatively difficult due to its vague nature.

“Listening is probably the least explicit of the four language skills, making it the most difficult one to learn. It is evident that children listen and respond to language before they learn to talk. When it is time for children to learn to read, they still have to listen so that they gain knowledge and information to follow directions. In the classroom, students have to listen carefully and attentively to lectures and class discussions in order to understand and to retain the information for later recall. Teaching listening can be hard for teachers and students both. Students who are fine with speaking at their own pace and reading may have trouble listening to a recording that is a regular-speed conversation. Listening is often confusing for an English learner”. [3]

Although the difficulty of the teaching of listening skill is clearly stressed, its importance in facilitating the acquisition of a foreign or second language is well acknowledged. A child should listen before being able to speak. Students also should listen before speaking or reading, even if they acquire such skills they still should listen because listening will help them to map their thoughts and the material they intend to read. In the same vein, [4] learners are increasing and expanding language competence through vigorously listening and processing the language they hear. The importance of listening skills become apparent. Therefore, comprehensive need analysis for listening skills of English as a foreign language should be conducted in an English as a foreign language or English as a second language context in order to design a program that matches the students' listening skill needs to ensure the program efficiency.

The ability of listening skills in a vocational high school in Yogyakarta is at an unsatisfactory level. The results of classroom observations when learning English listening skills showed the low

interest of students in participating in the activities in the listening class. This needs to be explored further about the causes of low student interest in learning listening skills. Therefore, the focus in this research will be on the listening skills due to their importance and our students struggle badly with it. The researcher is going to conduct a needs analysis for EFL listening skills at the vocational high school to identify their present needs. This paper aims to spot our students' needs to contribute to a better understanding of their needs. In addition, this paper hopefully will contribute to modifying and evolving the current listening materials to match students' plausible needs to elevate their proficiency levels. This research attempts to reveal two basic questions: what are the constraints that hinder the students' listening skills ability and what are their needs in term of listening skills?

### **Need Analysis**

One of the principal trust of curriculum development is that a trustworthy educational program should be based on an analysis of the needs of the students. Need analysis is important because it ensures the success of the program and achieves its aims which are embodied in students' success in learning the language. Need analysis refers to the procedures and activities that collect information about students' need then validate and prioritize those needs to be the foundation for designing and evolving a curriculum that matches those needs [2]. It is in line with the terms of need analysis showed by [4] that believes that need analysis refers to a family of procedures for gathering information about learners and communication tasks to be implemented in the design of the syllabus. The concept of need analysis has existed in the world of language education for more than three decades. Starting in 1960, need analysis comes up as a fundamental part of designing curriculum development [2]. An expert who demands the first model of need analysis in language education is Richterich (1972). In

subsequent developments, the concept is used to represent the content and objectives of the program of language instruction is identified with ESP movement during the 1960s and 1970s (Richtercih, 1972). The demand for engaging need analysis in language teaching has increased drastically. By the 1980s, needs-based philosophy has considered in language teaching programs especially in regard to ESP and vocationally oriented program design [2].

Different interpretations appear. Each competing interpretation formulates the important of need analysis from their point of view. This shows the important role of need analysis in the process of designing and carrying out a language course. Richard's statement [2] maintains that needs analysis can be used to find out what language skills a learner needs in order to perform a particular role. In addition, it can be used to help decide if an existing course appeals to students needs and to detect a gap between what students are able to do and what they need to be able to do. Need analysis convincing that the course will contain closely connected and useful things to learn [5]. Need analysis in language teaching may be used for the various purposes, such as to know the language skills that the learners needs, to help in making decision whether the existing course in accordance with the students needs, to identify a gap between what students are able to do and what they need to be able to do, and to gather the information of the problems facing by the learners [6]. As the summary that the importance of conducting needs analysis before setting up any EFL program is noticeable.

### **Listening Skills**

Listening holds an important role in language learning which carries on the complex process. Thus it needs prominent and careful attention in teaching. The instructors of language should be aware of the process and take notice of the importance of listening skills to adapt and create some techniques to teach effectively. Listening is

defined as the process of identifying certain information in the form of gist, main idea, supporting points, and conclusion which can identify students' comprehension toward the given input [7]. Listening comprehension is a highly integrative skill which plays an important role in the process of language learning/ acquisition and relieves the emergence of other language skills (Vandergrift, 1998, p. 170). In fact, listening has a key role in developing other skills such as speaking, reading, and writing. It has asserted that over 50 percent of the time that students spend performing in a foreign language will be dedicated to listening (Nunan, 1998). Listening comprehension occupies more time than other skills whether in class or out of the class since before students speak they need to listen to questions or speech to answer or comment. Moreover, before students read, they need to listen to instructions, the purpose of their reading and their task. Showed by [8], some people deem that learning a language does not only encompass learning to talk. However, they viewed learning a language as constructing a map of meaning in the mind. They hold the belief that practice in talking is not the best way to build up this cognitive map in the mind albeit it indicates that language was learned. This view suggests that listening as opposed to talking is the best way to construct a cognitive map in the mind. Based upon such view of language learning, listening is the way of learning a language. It supplies the learner with information that helps to build up the necessary knowledge for using the language (Nation & Newton, 2009). Through listening, language and knowledge are acquired. That is why it is important and deserve careful attention.

The previous study conducted by [9] in Saudi Arabia showed that most tertiary students have problems with listening skills and struggle to enhance their listening ability. Their environment which no English language causes the difficulty in improving their listening ability. Some practical suggestions to enhance students ability in

listening are delivered. Those are: lend a hand the students' to build their self-confidence and lift up their interest, help the students to get necessary knowledge of pronunciation, guide the students to have a right hearing habit, improve their listening ability with more reading, and instruct the students to have more extensive listening in their spare time.

### Methodology

The researcher conducts the study by using a qualitative and quantitative method. To investigate the students' experiences includes the difficulties in learning the English listening skill in the listening class and their needs to enhance their capabilities in English listening skill, a questionnaire is distributed to the students. The questionnaire is distributed to 23 students in eleventh grade of a vocational high school in Yogyakarta. The language in the questionnaire is in Indonesia by the consideration that the students get more understanding about the content of the questionnaire so that they can fill the data directly. For the purpose of this research, the questionnaire then translates into English. The researcher also conducts an observation in the class of English listening skill. The researcher takes some field note from the students' activities, the book references used in teaching learning of listening skills, and lesson plan that teacher used as the learning guidelines compiled based on the 2013 curriculum.

The research methods in this study compile several data to find the answer to the research questions, those are a questionnaire which is analyzed in a quantitative study and class observation which be analyzed in the qualitative study. The procedure for collecting both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study to be analyzed and reported in sequence information and based on the priority is named a mixed method [10]. The participants of this research are the eleventh grade of the students of vocational high school in Yogyakarta. There are twenty-three students in two class majors.

The research is conducted in the second semester of the grade in the academic year 2018/ 2019.

### Findings and Discussion

The findings of need analysis become a consideration for the English teachers and school institution in enhancing the skill of listening for the students. Data observation in the English class identifies that students mostly use the textbook published by the ministry of education and culture. There are no listening materials in the textbook. In certain chapters, there is some written conversation with the instruction to complete and reenact the complete conversation in front of the class. There is no audio recording for the conversations. It becomes the difficulty for the students to decide how to pronounce the words. The teacher helps the students by reading first the dialog. But, it will have a different result when the English language is spoken by the native rather than the Indonesian people.

In order to supply the students' materials for listening skills, the teacher finds the materials by adopting from the other books and sources of references. The materials that the teacher adopts from the other references have fulfilled the syllabus model of the 2013 curriculum. The data questionnaire shows that there are 96% of the students agree with this case. Moreover, the materials used are in accordance with the learning activities which shows as 91% of data questionnaire. This fact supports the idea to supply the listening materials in order to facilitate the teaching-learning of English listening skill. The supporting materials which are needed can fill the needs of listening skill that is in accordance with the learning objectives written in the 2013 curriculum.

Students say that materials of listening they got are different from the English listening skill they practice in the daily conversation. There is 87% of them agree that listening materials do not meet their needs as students. The teacher needs to find the materials that suitable with the students'



daily activities and regards to the major study of their vocational high school. By choosing the appropriate materials, the advantages of the listening skills of the students can be implemented in their later workplace after they graduated from school.

The teaching method by using audio only still implemented in the school. Data gained from the class observation in learning to listen, the teacher facilitates the students using audio recorder which is played twice or three times in duration not more than five minutes for each material. During the listening, the students have been given instructions to do related to the audio they hearing. Most of the students have difficulty in understanding and following the flow of the listening activities. It is in accordance to the questionnaire that the students in the percentage of 87 prove that listening materials by using audio make them still have a difficulty to build their background knowledge related to activities that take place in audio. In the other hand, the students need another listening materials besides the audio.

Eighty-seven percent of the students state that the materials and the activities which are conducted in learning listening skills are not the good learning sources for them. They are monotonous so that the students tend to feel bored and make their attention to the materials and activities is reduced. This is relevant to observations made by the researcher when the listening class is taking place. Several students prefer to chat with friends next to them rather than pay attention to the listening materials.

### Conclusions

Need analysis is an important factor to make a design of curriculum and method in language teaching as it is become the keystone in adjust objectives that match students' needs. Listening skills are very important in language acquisition. It becomes the key to the success of acquiring other language skills. Therefore, the study of need analysis of students in the learning of listening skill becomes the crucial factor that

decides the success of improving students ability in listening skill. This research aims at providing the students' needs in teaching-learning of listening skill and to find out the solutions for the existing problems faced by the students in their attempts to improve their listening skill. The analysis samples consist of 23 students of the eleventh grade in a vocational high school in Yogyakarta. Students need supplementary materials from the other sources besides the textbook from the ministry of education and culture. The listening materials that students learned needs to be adjusted to the students' English skills. The listening materials by using audio only make the students still have difficulty to build their prior knowledge about the contents of the listening materials. Furthermore, students state that the materials and listening activities are not good learning sources for them. From the findings of need analysis of the students in listening skills, this research can be used as one of a lot of references to conduct the materials design in improving the ability of the students listening skills.

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