**Hints of Teaching Listening**

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**Abstrak**

**Banyak penelitian tentang pembelajaran bahasa telah menunjukkan bahwa keterampilan menyimak memainkan peran penting dalam proses belajar mengajar. Terlepas dari pentingnya, ketrampilan menyimak telah diabaikan oleh guru dalam program belajar mengajar bahasa Inggris di sekolah. Hal ini membuat siswa kurang menguasai keterampilan menyimak bahasa Inggris. Ketidakmampuan menyimak dapat disebabkan oleh banyak faktor, salah satunya adalah kurangnya kompetensi guru dalam menerapkan kaidah-kaidah pembelajaran menyimak. Tujuan dari artikel ini adalah memaparkan tentang definisi ketrampilan menyimak, posisi ketrampilan menyimak dalam pengajaran bahasa, prinsip-prinsip pengajaran menyimak,, proses menyimak, tahapan proses menyimak, dan teknik evaluasi.**

**Keywords**: *Hints, Teaching listening*

1. **Introduction**

Listening is one of the skills of language. It is categorized into productive skills. Listening skill should be mastered by the students. It is the first skill and had been viewed as a primary vehicle for language acquisition process. It is very important skill in foreign language classrooms because it provides input for students. Through listening the students can produce language skills such as speaking, reading and writing by vocabularies that they obtain from listening. It is also one important factor that support the communication process.

Traditionally, people ignore the role of listening skills, on the other hand emphasizing the role of reading and writing in learning. Many teachers did not focus on this skill in activities of teaching English daily. It is caused of listening is a bored lesson. It also made learners rejected this skill. Listening materials are not authentic so that It becomes not interesting for the learners. Besides that, bad messages and/or speakers also present a barrier to effective listening. Sometimes learners trouble listening originates in the sender. In terms of message construction, poorly structured messages or messages that are too vague, too jargon filled, or too simple can present listening difficulties.

Listening is an important role in mastering a target language in spoken forms. By mastering listening skills, English students will be able to grasp the message sent by speakers and able to respond logically to what is meant by the speakers. In a listening process the listeners understand and translate the messages addressed to them.

Nowadays, listening can no longer be considered as a complementary language skill. This listening skill must be possessed by every student. Teachers should no longer ignore this listening skill. The teachers must place this skill the same as other language skills in teaching English, because almost every day students intentionally or unintentionally hear English either through songs, watching movies, listening to the radio, or watching TV at home. It means students can listen to English at any time. The problem is, even though students can listen to English every day, they are still not skilled at understanding the English they hear. One of the factors is the teacher's lack of attention to listening skill. Listening skill must be a teacher's concern because this skill is not only as a skill focuses on getting idea, decoding the message, unpacking the content from the sender or speaker, but this skill is also as skill to be tested in the national examination, not only at junior high school but also at senior high school level as well.

This article discusses about definition of listening, listening position in language teaching, principles for teaching listening, process of listening, stages of the listening process, and the technique of evaluation.

**II. Definition of Listening**

Listening has been defined by many authors. Rost (2002) defined listening as a complex process of interpretation in which listeners match what they hear with what they already know. According to Nadig (2013), listening comprehension is the various processes of understanding and making sense of spoken language. These involve knowing speech sounds, comprehending the meaning of individual words, and understanding the syntax of sentences.

Listening is the first language skill mastered by a person and has a very important role as the beginning of the other skills. listening is also the most widely used language skill. Some communication researchers estimate that approximately half of the time we spend communication is listening. Bulley-Allen in Flowedew (2010) states that listening: learned first, used most (45%) taught least, speaking: learned second, used next most (30%) taught next least, reading: learned third, used next least (16%) taught next most writing: learned fourth, used least (9%) taught most. It means that the most skill used in all activities every day is listening skill. Communication will not runwell if it is not supported by good mastery of listening.

Li and Renandya (2012) identified five factors that might affect students’ listening comprehension. They are text factor, text factor are variables related to the aural text characteristics, such as vocabulary and picture cue access. Processing factor, namely factors that associated with short term listening input processing, such as missing some information because of trying to catch the previous listening part and inability to memorize what is heard. Listener factors, anxiety, interest and intensity of listening practice are examples of internal factors of student that affect students listening comprehension. Task factor, variables mainly associated with the task instruction to be done by the students whether to answer multiple choice questions, blank-filling questions, text completion, and so forth, and external factor, variables associated with the EFL learning environment, such as the availability of listening materials and the sufficiency of classroom listening instruction.

In short, listening is an important part of the communication process. Students spend the majority of each school day listening, and much of what students know is acquired through listening. It is essential skill that students have opportunities to practice the behaviours of effective listeners.

# Listening Position in Language Teaching

English listening has been included in the National Examinations in Indonesia, particularly at junior and high school levels. This means English teachers must spend time teaching listening comprehension to their students. The importance of listening should not be underestimated; neither should it be treated trivially in teaching- learning a second-language.

In language teaching, (Rost, 1991) has written about teaching listening to develop the listening skills of students. In particularly, he focused on principles for developing listening ability for four (4) different learning styles viz:

1. Listening ability developed through face-to-face interaction. By interacting in English, students have the chance to get new language input and the chance to check their own listening ability.
2. Listening developed through focusing on meaning and trying to learn new and important content in the target language. By focusing on meaning and reasons for listening in English, students can mobilize both their linguistic and non-linguistic abilities.
3. Listening ability developed through work on comprehension activities. By focusing on specific goals for listening, students can evaluate their efforts and abilities.
4. Listening developed through attention to accuracy and analysis of form. By learning to perceive sounds and words accurately as they work on meaning oriented activities, students can make steady progress.
5. **Principles for teaching listening**

A good listener will listen not only to what is being said, but also to what is left unsaid or only partially said.

Good teaching English should follow the certain principles to get good result. The regular use of the learning principles while teaching makes it easier for students to actively engage in the learning process since these principles involves going beyond learning only within the four walls of the classrooms which allows students to be more active and engaged in the learning process.

Helgesen & Brown (2007) then proposed some principles for teaching listening for beginning learners:

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

There are four important principles for teaching listening the teacher should apply in teaching. The teachers and students have the maximum responsibility for enhancing the listening teaching and learning process.

1. **Process of Listening**

There are two types of listening processes, They are;

1. Top-down process

Top-down processing relies on prior knowledge and experience to build the meaning of a listening text using the information provided by sounds and words. Richards (1990) says

“Background knowledge may take several forms. It may be previous knowledge about the topic discourse, it may be situational or contextual knowledge, or it may be knowledge atored in long-term memory in the form of schemata and and script, plans about the overall structure of events and the relationships between them”.

Top-down strategies are listener based; the listener taps into background knowledge of the topic, the situation or context, the type of text, and the language. This background knowledge activates a set of expectations that help the listener to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next.

Top-down strategies include:

1. listening for the main idea
2. predicting
3. drawing inferences
4. summarizing
5. Bottom-up process

Bottom-up strategies are text based in which the listener relies on the language in the message, that is, the combination of sounds, words, and grammar that creates meaning. Murcia (1999) says;

Bottom-up processing, this model of the processing of language information is evoked by an external source, that is, by the incoming language data it self. Bottom-up comprehension of speech, then, refers to the part of the process in which the “understanding” of incoming language is worked out proceeding from sounds, into words, into grammatical relationship and lexical meaning, and so on. The composite meaning of the “message” is arrived at based on the incoming language data.

Bottom-up strategies include listening for specific details, recognizing cognates, recognizing word-order patterns

1. **Stages of the Listening Process**

Doing an activity needs some stages in order get the best result. In the teaching and learning process also has certain stages. Author Joseph De Vito (2000) has divided the listening process into five stages: receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding.

1. Receiving

This is a physiological process of receiving sound and/or other stimuli.

This stage is represented by the ear because it is the primary tool involved with this stage of the listening process. At this stage, students are still only hearing the message. Receiving is the intentional focus on hearing a message. Here, listeners filter out other sources so that they can isolate the message and avoid the confusing mixture of incoming stimuli. Hearing alone can require sincere effort, so that students must hear the message before they can continue the process of listening or they must hear to listen.

1. Understanding

The process of decoding the symbols or behavior attended to. This step helps the students to understand symbols which have been seen and heard. They must analyze the meaning of the stimuli they have perceived; symbolic stimuli are not only words but also sounds applause… and sights like blue uniform… that have symbolic meanings as well; the meanings attached to these symbols are a function of their past associations and of the context in which the symbols occur. For successful interpersonal communication, the listener must understand the intended meaning and the context assumed by the sender.

1. Remembering

The process of placing the appropriate information into short-term or long-term storage. Remembering is important listening process because it means that an individual has not only received and interpreted a message but has also added it to the mind storage bank. In listening students attention is selective, so too is their memory – what is remembered may be quite different from what was originally seen or heard.

1. Evaluating

The fourth stage in the listening process is evaluating, or judging the value of the message. The process of deciding the value of the information to the students. Only active students participate at this stage in listening. At this point the active students weighs evidence, sorted fact from opinion, and determines the presence or absence of bias or prejudice in a message; the effective students makes sure that he or she doesn’t begin this activity too soon; beginning this stage of the process before a message is completed requires that they no longer hear and attend to the incoming message as a result, the listening process ceases.

1. Responding

The last stage is responding. Responding is the process of giving feedback to the teacher and/or other receivers. This stage requires that the students complete the listening class through verbal and/or nonverbal feedback; because the teacher has no other way to determine if a message has been received. This stage becomes the only overt means by which the teacher may determine the degree of success in delivering the material during the process of teaching listening. This stage can be also an activity to see whether students has understood the material or not.

1. **The Role of Teacher in Listening Activities**

Harmer (2002) and Machackova (2009) identify six roles of teacher in teaching, they are;

1. Controller

Teachers should know when they act as controller. It is a responsibility of teacher to arrange what students do, what language they should use. The teachers tell students things to follow. Specify what students should do in the listening phases. During the teaching and learning process, the teacher should use time to act as controller of activities.

1. Organizer

One of the role of teacher in teaching process is organizing. The teachers have to organize various activities for students in teaching listening. Giving the students information what to do the listening activities, how to do it, should the students do the activities individually, in pair or in group, it should be clear for students.

1. Assessor

A good listening class consist of many academic activities. The teachers may evaluate academic activities to see the level of the students, and give them the necessary feedback on their performance.

1. Prompter

Teachers should support their students during every phases of listening activities, motivate them to follow the listening class and give recommendations towards activities that are done by them.

1. Resource

The other role of teacher in teaching is as a resource. Teachers give their students the necessary advise and help them solve their problems especially unfamiliar vocabulary or grammar to understand the material for listening text.

1. Tutor

Teacher as tutor mean teachers should guide the students how to find ideas, information, characters from the listening passage. Teachers are also helps their students toward predicting missing information.

1. **Listeng Evaluation**

Evaluation is very important because by evaluation we will get the information about the result of the teachers’ efforts in teaching and learning process.

Generally, a discussion of teaching starts with planning and ends with evaluation. Therefore in appraising students’ work we sill talk about evaluation. Purwanto (1986 : 3) says “Evaluation is the estimation of the growth and progress of pupils toward objectives or values in the curriculum” While the aim of evaluation is to reach the information about the yield of teaching, aptitude, interest, and other personality aspects of the students.

One way to evaluate the students’ knowledge and understanding, skills and competence is through test. The test is as a tool of measuring all the significant features of what taught. The test itself must be valid, efficient and reliable. According to Nord (1992 : 180)

Validity means simply that the procedure measures what we want to measure and not other things. Reliability means that the procedure yield consistent result, not measuring high one time and low another or bring any wise caprious in its finding. Efficiency means of course that neither time nor effort is wasted.

In addition, clarity and discrimination are also very important. The test should be constructed as clearly as possible because the vague construction of test will give an opportunity or opening for guessing the answer. Discrimination means the test can discriminate the students who have learnt the material being tested, or the students who have not learnt it, can answer the test, it means the test is bad because it can not discriminate the students’ ability.

Therefore, test construction requires careful planning in keeping with the previously determined objective of the lesson. The teachers should determine the length of the test, the time allowed, when the test held, and what kind of test items to use, and the materials that will be tested.

The materials of the test must be based on the text book and the lessons that have been taught. Presumably a test will show what was taught and what was learnt. Beside that, it is recommended that the test is written with different form. The questions should be separated into several groups in order to avoid confussion among the students. The test should be written in certain logical order for example; from easy to difficult questions. When the test is finished, the teachers should collect the test to be corrected promptly and return it to the students. Every correct answer should be given the same credit. The teachers should not give credit to answer unrelated to question because it is not the answer we want even though the answer is factually correct.

In general, there are some types of questions in the Listening test, they are

1. Multiple choice.

Multiple choice item is made up question or statement called stem, and four or more possible response, one or more of which is correct and the reminder called distractors.

For example;

(Recording)

Man : Nancy, Why were you late for class this morning

Woman: I oversleep and miss the bus

Narrator : Why was Nancy late?

(Written)

a. She got up later than usual

b. Her clock was wrong

c. The bus was late

d. She didn’t set the clock

e. She forgot her class

1. Completion. A test which consist of a number question based on passage is completion item. The question is written as incomplete statement to be complete by the students after finishing listening to the recording.

For example;

(Spoken)

I had to look after my small brother until my mother returned home.

(Written)

I had to look after my small ….. until my mother returned home.

1. Gap Filling

This test can work well where a short answer question with unique answer is not possible.

For example;

(Spoken)

Woman: Do you think you can give me a hand with this:

Man : I’d love to help but I’ve got to go round to my mother’s in a

minute.

(Written)

The woman asks the man if he can \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ her but he has to visit his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. Matching test. Matching test is a test where the students are required to match the statements or questions or pictures with certain words or sentences which have been prepared. It consists of the answers. The number of answer is more than the questions. Matching test is very good when used for specific information such as causes and effect, terms, dates, places, definition and pictures. It can use to test words and sentences too.

For example;

(Spoken)

Tom is not going to your school

(Written)

* 1. Tom is not going to your pool
  2. Tom is going to your school
  3. Tom is not coming to your school
  4. Tom I not going to your school

1. True–False. A true-false test is a test where the students are required to have only one answer between the two possible responses. There are no alternatives except true-false (T-F). The most common words which are used in this test are true-false. But sometimes we can use yes-no, right-wrong, agree-disagree. True-false test is very good when used for recalling factual knowledge and recognition. For example;

For example;

(Spoken) The sun rises in the west

(Written)

The sun rises in the west T F

1. Cloze test. A cloze test usually consists of one or more paragraphs where some words left out from every sentences. The first two or three sentences usually written completely. The interval at which word are deleted is usually between every fifth. Cloze test is very good when used for measuring the students’ ability to decode interrupted or mutilated messages by making the most acceptable substitutions from all the contextual clues available.

For example;

(Spoken)

Once upo a time there was a fisherman armed with his fishing road who would make his way every day from his village to the river bank. There he would wait patiently for the fish to bite. As soon as he had caught exactly three fish, he would leave the river and went his way slowly home to the cottage where he lived with his wife and so on.

(Written)

Fill in the blanks with suitable words.

Once upon a time there was a fisherman armed with his fishing road who would make his way every day from his village to the river bank. There (1)….. would wait (2) ….. for the fish to bite. As soon as he had (3)….. exactly three fish, he would leave the …. and went his way slowly home to the cottage where he …. with his wife and so on.

1. **Conclusion**

The ability in mastering spoken English such as listening skill is a very essential thing for students to face the future life. A good listener is a student who listens to the speaker to receive and interpret messages accurately. Listening skill is a vital part of good communication. If students have good listening skill they can start to improve relationships with their teachers and friends in the classroom as well as in society. Through this article, the writer believes that the students competencies in listening skills can be improve again, if the teachers have the will and capability to apply the principles, the process, the stages and the evaluation of teaching listening skill seriously and consistently.

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