

Improving students' listening ability using jigsaw technique

*(A classroom Action Research in Third Year Students of Science Department
one (XII IPA-1) SMA Negeri 1 Kandat in 2008/2009 Academic Year)*

BY

Muhammad Yasin

S8907076010

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

English plays an important role broadly as a bridge for the sake of all aspects of human being's life such as; technology, culture, science, communication, correspondence, etc. English, in Indonesia, is the first foreign language taught at school starting from elementary school level up to the university level. Based on the 2004 curriculum, the general objective of teaching English in Indonesia is to develop students' communicative competence of the four language skills orally and in written form (Depdiknas 2005: 171). The purpose of language instruction in Senior High school is to achieve the informational level because they are prepared to continue their study to the university (Depdiknas 2003: 11)

There are four skills in language learning. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among the four language skills, listening is the skill which is acquired and mastered by learners for the first time, the other skills follow afterward. Scarcella *et al.* (in Wallace, 1998: 243) states that listening a

fundamental language skill that typically develops faster than speaking and that often influences the development of reading and writing ability in the new language. Furthermore, Sutari *et al.* (1997: 11) points out some important roles of listening; as a basic of language learning, increasing more knowledge or information, accelerating oral communication, supporting speaking, reading and writing skills. Realizing the essential skill in enhancing learners' performance in all language skills as stated above, listening is a language skill that is quite important to master, so it has got much more attention.

Since 2004, the English teaching in Indonesia has given equal attention to listening as other skills. The final exam for English of Senior High School and Vocational School consists of listening and reading comprehension. The listening part is about 33% of the total number of questions. This skill, therefore, must be trained as often as possible to the students in order to accustom to them.

According to 2006 syllabus, the objective of listening instruction in Senior High School is the students are able to comprehend the meaning of short oral functional text, conversation, simple narrative and descriptive monologue text in daily life context (Depdiknas, 2006: 2). The statement above can be elaborated into competence standard of Third Year Senior High School students that states the students are able to comprehend the meaning of oral transactional and interpersonal text and sustained in daily life context (BSNP, 2006: 15).

One of important issues in teaching listening is teachers' strategies in conducting the teaching listening, which has big contribution to the learners' success in order to get a better achievement. By applying good strategies, teachers

can propose several helps to assist them overcoming their listening problems and make them easier to comprehend listening passages.

Although this matter is considered important, it gets less attention from language teachers, especially English teachers. They do not have time to do much more than see if students get the answers right or wrong and no time is spent to find out why and where they go wrong. In this case, the listening activity is just to know whether the students understand or not and help them to develop their listening ability.

In language learning, listening functions as an important input to learn to speak. This means that listening is a means of speaking as well as a means for understanding. The students must be given a lot of opportunities to learn of listening comprehension by using different techniques.

The result of preliminary observation on the language teaching and learning process in SMA Negeri 1 Kandat, held on July, 20th, 22nd and 23rd, 2008, showed that although, the Third Year students of Science department one (XII IPA-1) of SMA Negeri 1 Kandat have been taught listening for 5 five years, they thought that listening was very difficult compared with speaking, reading, and writing. They still lacked of listening ability. There were more than 75% students got below 65.00. It could be seen from the average score of listening test. These score was considered to be under minimum of score standard (SKM). It was 70.00 for listening skills ability. It means that listening considered difficult skills for the students. The interview result supported the idea of the difficulty of learning listening conducted by the researcher. One of the students said:

“Belajar listening, menurut saya, lebih sulit dibandingkan dengan reading, speaking, dan writing. Saya tidak mengerti apa yang saya dengar dan maksud pembicara, sehingga waktu pelajaran listening saya merasa takut karena tidak mengerti sama sekali maksudnya”.

Another student said:

“ Saya paling tidak suka pelajaran listening karena bahasanya sulit dimengerti. Apalagi kalau teksnya panjang, saya semakin pusing karena saya gak mengerti sama sekali, gitu lo pak karena gurunya hampir tidak pernah mengajar listening. Kalau diberi latihan atau ulangan ya saya duduk dekat teman yang pintar bahasa Inggris untuk menyontek”.

Based on the interview with the students above, it could be identified that there were some causes why they thought that listening was the most difficult skill. When they were asked why they considered listening is difficult, they said that they could not comprehend the spoken text well since they had low vocabulary mastery and they were almost never taught listening. As also stated by one of the students who was interviewed by the researcher, she said:

“Ketika guru meminta siswa mendengarkan pembicaraan penutur asli lewat tape recorder, saya merasa sangat tidak mengerti maksud dari isi pembicaraannya karena jarang sekali diajar listening. Jangankan mengerti isinya, mendengar penutur asli lewat tape saja baru dua kali ini. Sehingga pada waktu mendengar saya merasa nggumun karena menurut saya sangat asing”.

Another statement which was not so different was also given by another student. He said:

“Menurut saya, sebenarnya belajar bahasa Inggris itu tidak terlalu sulit, namun yang membuat saya sulit memahami listening karena kurangnya latihan mendengarkan teks bahasa Inggris. Saya merasa sangat sulit memahami kata-kata yang diucapkan oleh penutur asli, kadang-kadang kata-kata itu sulit saya bedakan dan bahkan ada juga yang belum pernah saya dengar sama sekali. Selain itu kesulitan berasal dari speed berbicara yang menurut saya terlalu cepat sehingga saya tidak mengerti sama sekali apa maksudnya”.

The questionnaires distributed to the students also showed that the teaching of listening is given little attention (15%) since the teacher emphasizes on teaching reading (40%), speaking (25%), and writing (20%).

Based on the statement above, it could be said that that listening did not have the same proportion of time as the other skills. The teaching of listening was given little attention. The lack of the teacher's attention was due to the difficulties in getting appropriate technique which was suitable for the students' ways of learning and there has been no effort to try the appropriate technique that could improve the listening comprehension skills of the SMAN 1 Kandat students. The listening class was only conducted by listening recorded material or teacher-talk. The teacher asked the students to answer the question individually. He never gave them opportunity to do exercises in pairs or in groups. There has been no practice to improve the students' listening skills and to get more students' participation in class discussion. They cannot share ideas with their friends, so they got difficulties in listening comprehension. The reason was they were bored. They did the same activities in every listening subject. The activities were (a) the teacher asked the students to listen to tape recorder or teacher-talk then he asked them which words you did not know the meaning. If they did not know the meaning he would translate it into Indonesian. (b) finally he asked them to do listening comprehension exercises individually in the book. Those activities were always done in teaching listening process. As a result, they got bored or even they got sleepy in the class. Due to the fact, it is necessary to make an attempt to improve students' listening ability by applying other listening teaching techniques. Moreover, the language laboratory owned by the school is rarely used. So, the

students rarely get listening exercises to arouse the students' motivation in learning English, especially listening.

When the researcher interviewed the previous teacher she said:

“Pak, terus terang saja saya hanya tiga kali mengajar listening karena saya tidak tahu tehnik apa yang harus saya gunakan. Kalau saya mengajar listening, ya saya baca teks dan menyuruh anak-anak mendengarkan sambil mengerjakan latihan secara individu. Setelah itu jawaban kita bahas bersama. Itu yang saya lakukan setiap mengajar listening, tapi sekali pakai tape recorder”.

It was also supported by result of interview between the researcher and one of the students. The researcher asked his opinion about the technique the teacher used during listening instruction. He said:

“Saya bosan pak, masak setiap mengajar listening caranya itu-itu saja, anak-anak disuruh mendengarkan sambil mengerjakan soal/ latihan. Tidak pernah menyuruh siswa untuk mengerjakan berkelompok atau diskusi dengan teman sebangkunya dan kalau ada anak bertanya tentang arti kata, Bu X langsung menterjemahkan. Bahkan kadang-kadang tidak dijawab. Apalagi kalau teksnya sulit saya jadi males”.

In accordance with the statement above the teacher should find technique suitable for the students' way of learning. He also needed to give the students regular practice for English listening, so that the students will not only listen to the teacher's English command or listen to tape recorder but also speak English well. He needs to provide the students with more exercises in listening comprehension. In relation to the above problems, the teacher and the researcher will collaborate on conducting an action research in the listening instruction by implementing Jigsaw technique. This technique is selected because it is different from the traditional technique. The ultimate goal of Jigsaw is to enable students to transfer knowledge to new situation. Brown (2001: 185) states that Jigsaw technique promotes positive interdependence, masters the concepts in their

sections, and develops a strategy for teaching what they have learned to other students in their original collaborative learning group. Meanwhile the traditional approaches often lead to learning concept without understanding. Bransford, *et al.* (in Crawford, 2001: 1) state that students who memorize facts and procedures without understanding often do not know when or how to use what they know beyond the test, which is designed around the facts and procedures.

Jigsaw technique makes the students be actively involved in teaching and learning process and the students could learn from their friends, discuss, and correct one another in groups.

Through this student-centered technique, Jigsaw enables the students to be more active in learning process, so it is not a passive process which just receives information about knowledge from teachers. If the learning does not give a chance to students to take parts actively, of course, it is contrary to the essence of learning. The active role of the students is very important in constructing a creative generation, having the ability to produce something for the sake of themselves or others.

By considering the benefits of Jigsaw technique, the researcher would like to implement Jigsaw technique in teaching listening in the hope of improving students' listening ability in the Third Year Students of Science Department one (XII IPA-1) SMA Negeri 1 Kandat.

B. Problem Statement

From the description of the background above, the problems formulated in this research are:

1. Can Jigsaw technique improve the students' listening ability?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Jigsaw technique when it is applied to teach listening?

C. Objective of the Study

Based on the problem statement above the objectives of the study are:

1. To know whether Jigsaw technique can improve the students' listening ability.
2. To know the strengths and weaknesses of Jigsaw technique when it comes to teach listening.

D. Benefit of the Study

Hopefully, the result of this study is useful to other teachers, students, and other researchers. For the other teachers, it will provide them with an alternative technique to improve the quality of language learning and teaching process, particularly in teaching listening. For the students, it can also be useful to facilitate them to improve their listening comprehension and cooperate with their friends because they are taught using the technique that is theoretically effective to improve listening comprehension. For the decision makers, it can improve the quality of the students' listening achievement. Finally, for the other researchers, it will encourage them to provide the other techniques that are appropriate to students' ways of learning.