

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING TOP-DOWN STRATEGY TO IMPROVE THE STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILL**

**M. FARIS ARROMAL<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> the Graduate of English Education Study Program  
STKIP Islam Bumiayu  
E-mail: farisarromal91@gmail.com  
Phone. +62 823 1437 3510

### **Abstract**

This study is to find out whether using Top Down strategy is effective for teaching listening or not. The design of this study is an experimental study. The population of this study is the eighth grade students of SMP Ma'arif NU I Bumiayu, Brebes regency in the academic year 2014/2015. The number of the subjects is 60 students. The samples of the study are class VIIIA as experimental class which consists of 32 students and class VIII B as control class which consists of 28 students. The writer uses tests (pre and post-test) in collecting the data. The data is analyzed by using SPSS (*Statistical Package for Social Science*) 16 program. It shows that in *Independent Samples Test* between control and experimental class score *sig* is 0.948 (more than 0.05). It means that both of classes have same variant. It can be seen from comparing the means both of the classes; it finds that the mean of experimental class 68.5 is higher than control class 67.5. Then the result of the mean of

post-test of experimental class 76.4 is higher than pre-test 71.3. For that reason, it can be concluded that Top Down strategy is effective for teaching listening on the eighth grade students of SMP Ma'arif NU I Bumiayu in the academic year 2014/2015.

**Keywords:** effectiveness, Top Down strategy, listening

## **A. Introduction**

One of the important skills in learning language activity, especially foreign language learning is listening skill. According to Hermawan (2011: 30), listening is a complex skill that needs sharpness of attention, concentration, actives in mental of attitude, and perspicacity in assimilating and implementing in each of the arguments.

Listening is also one of the skills that give influence to the other skills in language learning activity. Tarigan (1986: 2) says that people usually get language skill through a series connection. First, they hear or listen to the language, they speak, then they will learn to read and write. According to Nation and Newton in Cahyono & Mukminatien (2011: 9), listening is the natural precursor to speaking. It means that listening is one of skills that give influence to the other skills in language learning activity especially learning of foreign language.

Wassid & Sunendar (2008: 229) state that the strategy of learning listening had growth especially in teaching foreign language. They also say that appearing of transcription technology such as cassette, CD, Video, and the other tools to increase the progression of giving listening lesson. The strategy of learning listening still uses conventional method. It means that the learners just listen and try to answer what was explained by teacher.

There are several strategies in learning language especially in learning listening. Nunan (1991: 17) says that there are two views of listening in communicative approach to listening comprehension. They are Bottom-Up and Top-Down views. According to Nunan (1991: 18), Top-Down is the use of inside the head knowledge, that is, knowledge that is not directly encoded in words. Moreover, Anderson & Lynch in Nunan (1991: 18) state that the position of listener in Top-Down as “Model of Builder”. It means that the students or listeners must be given opportunity as much as possible to become role active model in learning activity. Therefore, it is expected that the students will communicate actively and also increase the achievement especially on listening skill.

Based on the interview with the English teacher in SMP Ma’arif NU I Bumiayu, he explains that the most of the students there can not understand the English instructions and write what have been listened properly.

Thus, based on the problem above, the writer needs to find out wheather using Top-Down strategy can improve the students’ listening skill on the eighth grade students of SMP Ma’arif NU 1 Bumiayu in the academic year 2014/2015 or not.

## **B. Literature Review**

These theories are related to definition of listening, teaching and learning strategy, teaching listening in junior high school, teaching Top-Down processing, and listening assessment.

### **1. Listening**

According to Nurgiyantoro (2010: 355), listening is the ability to catch, making of, and perceive the message orally.

Brown (2004: 120) states that there are four kinds of listening, which are: Intensive Listening (listening for the reception of the components (phonemes, word, intonation, discourse markers, etc.) of larger stretch of language), Responsive Listening (listening to relatively short stretch of language in order to make an equally short response (greeting, command, question, comprehension check, etc.)), Selective Listening (processing stretches of discourse such as short monologue such as: classroom directions from a teacher, stories, TV or radio news item), and Extensive Listening (listening to develop Top-Down, global understanding of spoken language).

## **2. Teaching and Learning Strategy**

According to Djamarah & Zain (2010: 5), there are four basic strategies in teaching and learning activity as follows:

- a. Identify and establish the specification and qualification change of student attitude and personality like hoped
- b. Choose the approach system of teaching and learning according to aspiration and life view of society
- c. Choose and establish the procedure, method, and technique of teaching and learning correctly and effectively
- d. Establish the activities and minimum boundary of successful or criteria and successful standard

Dick and Carey in Uno (2010: 3) say that there are several components of learning strategies as follows: preface learning activity, give information, students' participation, test, and continuation activity.

### **3. Teaching Listening in Junior High School**

Learning of English in junior high school has a goal to attain functional level. It is to communicate orally and written to solve daily problems. English learning in junior high school has a goal in order that learners can have competences as follows:

- a. Involve the competence of communication in oral and written to attain functional literacy level
- b. Have an awareness about the essence and important of English to increase competitiveness of nation in global society
- c. The understanding of learner about the relevance between language and culture (Standard and Basic Competence English for junior high school)

### **4. Teaching Top-Down Processing**

Richard (2008: 7) says that the processing of learning by using Top-Down is started from meaning to language. Furthermore, previous knowledge about the topic of discourse, situational and contextual knowledge or knowledge in the form of schemata or scripts required for the background of knowledge of Top Down processing.

Richard (2008: 9) states that the exercises which can develop the learner's ability to do in Top-Down processing are as follows:

- a. Use the key words to construct the schema of a discourse
- b. Infer the setting for a text
- c. Infer the role of the participant and their goals
- d. Infer causes or effect
- e. Infer unstated details of a situation
- f. Anticipate question related to the topic or situation

Furthermore, Richard (2008: 9) offers the following activities to develop Top-Down listening skill. *First*, students generate a set of a question they

expect to hear about a topic, then listen to see if they are answered. *Second*, students generate a list of things they already know about a topic and things they would like to learn more about, then listen and compare. *Third*, students read one speaker's part, then listen and compare. *Fourth*, students read a list of key points to be covered in a talk, then listen to see which ones are mentioned. *Fifth*, students listen to part of a story, complete the story ending, then listen and compare endings. *Sixth*, students read news headlines, guess what happened, then listen to the full news items and compare.

## 5. Listening Assessment

According to Buck (2001: 63), listening assessment means assessing the ability to recognize the element of the language in their oral form. The common forms are true or false items. However, the three or four options of multiple choice formats have become so closely associated with discrete point testing.

### a. Retelling Test

According to Brown (2004: 138), in this test, the students or listener listen to a story or news event and they must retell it simply, or summarize it, either orally or in writing. After that the students must identify the gist, main idea, purpose, supporting points, and make conclusion to show full comprehension.

### b. Dialogue and Authentic Question on Details

In this test, the students hear the conversation. Then, they must answer the multiple choice and short answer question that they have been obtained base on what they have listened. Moreover, Brown (2004: 132) says that, in scoring this technique, there are several possible kinds of errors to decide as follows:

- 1) Spelling error only, but the word appears to have been heard correctly
- 2) Spelling and/or obvious misrepresentation of a word, illegible word
- 3) Grammatical error
- 4) Skipped word or phrase
- 5) Permutation of words
- 6) Additional words not in the original
- 7) Replacement of a word with an appropriate synonym

Whereas, Buck (2001: 95) says that there are several common purposes for testing listening as follows: general language proficiency, representing oral skills, assessing achievement, and diagnostic testing.

### **C. Method of Investigation**

The writer uses true-experimental design. The source of data is taken from the eighth grade students of SMP Ma'arif NU 1 Bumiayu which is located in Karang Dempul Kalilangkap Bumiayu, Brebes.

The samples are selected randomly and total of sample is 60. They are class VIII A as experimental class that consists of 32 students and class VIII B as control class that consists of 28 students. The writer collects the data by using test (pre and post-test), and observation.

### **D. Findings and Discussion**

In collecting the data, firstly the writer conducts pre-test to both experimental and control groups. The test has been tried out before. For the post-test, the writer uses the same test to see whether there is a significant difference between experimental and control group or not. Meanwhile, in analyzing the

data, the writer uses interpretation analysis and statistical analysis. The results are as follows:

### **1. Try Out Analysis**

The writer tries out the instruments of test in the eighth grade students of MTs Nurul Ittihad Pacinan Bumiayu. The try out test is held on May, 20<sup>th</sup> 2015. The number of the students of the try out test is 15. The purpose is to find out the validity, reliability, level of difficulty and discriminating power of the test before implementing the research.

After inputing the result of try out test, the writer counts validity of the instrument of the research uses SPSS 16 program. Based on the result of output test of validity above, it can be seen that the score of Pearson Correlation for score and total are **1.000\*\*** and 1, it means that the instrument of the research is valid. The writer continues to find the reliability of the instruments of research uses SPSS 16 program. Based on the table, the score of Alpha > 0.514 (from table r *Pearson*,  $df = n-2$ ,. It means that the item of question is **reliable**.

There are two kinds of tests in this research, they are essay question and multiple choice. To count the level of difficulty of the tests, (a) the score of the essay is 0.74, it is closer to 1.00. Thus, it means that the essay question is in medium level, and (b) the level of difficulty of the multiple choice questions. The result above, the number of questions which are easier are 6 numbers, the medium questions are 3, and the hardest question is only 1 number.

### **2. The Result of Pre-Test Analysis**

In this step, the writer analyses the result of pre-test to find the normality and homogeneity of the data.



After conducting pre and post test for both classes, the writer puts the scores into a table. The respondents of experimental class are 32 respondents and the respondents of control class are 28 respondents. The mean of experimental class is 68.5 meanwhile the mean of control class is 67.5.

After getting the result of pre test, the writer counts the normality and homogeneity tests. Based on the result of output test of normality, it can be seen that the score of sig is  $0.167 = 16.7\% > 5\%$ , the position of the spot is close to the line of Q-Q plot normality, and the box plot is in the middle position. It means that visually, the experimental and control class have a normal distribution. Test score of homogeneity of sig =  $0.612 = 61.2\% > 5\%$ , so both of classes have same variant (homogeneous).

### **3. The Result of Post Test Analysis**

In this step, the writer analyses the result of post test for the control and experimental class. It is to find the normality and homogeneity of the post test result. The writer counts the normality for both classes. Based on the result of output test of normality above, it can be seen that the score of sig is  $0.200 = 20\% > 5\%$ , the position of the spot is close to the line of Q-Q plot normality, and the box plot is in the middle position. It means that visually, the experimental and control class have a normal distribution. The writer finds the homogeneity of the result of post test for both classes, the results are as follows: the score of sig =  $0.948 = 94.8\% > 5\%$ , so both of group had same variant (homogeneous).

### **4. The Result Pre Test and Post Test Analysis**

This is the last analysis for the result of pre and post test for both classes. The purpose is to find the comparing score between pre and post test.

- a. Compare Test (Pre Test and Post Test Control Class)

Table. 1. Group Statistics

kelas	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Nilai X	32	68.66	10.171	1.798
X1	32	76.44	10.377	1.834

- b. Compare Test (Pre and Post Test of Experimental Class)

Table. 2. Group Statistics

kelas	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Nilai Y	28	67.54	9.693	1.832
Y1	28	71.61	10.440	1.973

- c. Comparison between Post-Test of Control and Experimental Class.

Table. 3. Group Statistics

kelas	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Nilai X	32	76.44	9.693	1.832
Y1	28	71.61	10.440	1.973

## 5. The Formula of Analysis Design

Standard of error is 0.05 (5%). The result of test of homogeneity shows that both of group was homogeny. It can be seen in Levene's Test for Equality of Variances column and the result of analysis. Based on the  $t$  result, the score of  $sig$  is

$0.047 = 4.7\% < 5\%$ , so  $H_0$  is rejected; it means that  $H_1$  is accepted. Therefore, the mean score of experimental class is different from the mean score of control class.

## 6. The Interpretation of the Result

By accepting  $H_1$ , so the mean score of both classes is different. Based on the output of *Group Statistics*, it can be seen that the mean score of experimental class is 76.44, and the mean score of control class is 71.61. It shows that the mean score of experimental class is better than control class ( $76.44 > 71.61$ ). It can be concluded that Top-Down strategy is effective for teaching listening because there is difference achievement between control and experimental.

## E. Conclusion

The writer concludes that there is a significant difference between the students who are taught by using Top Down strategy in teaching listening and the students who are taught without using Top Down strategy (conventionally). It finds that *Independent Samples Test* between control and experimental class gets score *sig* is 0.948 (more than 0.05) and the score from *t-test* and *Equal Variance Assumed* is 0.04 (less than 0.05). It means that both of classes have same variant but have different achievement. It can be seen from comparing the means both of the classes that the mean of experimental class is 76.4 higher than control class 71.3. Then the result of the mean of post-test of experimental class is 76.4 higher than pre-test 68.5.

The writer finds that the students are more interested in learning listening skill by using Top Down strategy. They can be easier to catch the main idea of the oral text. The use of Top Down strategy in

teaching listening is more effective than without Top Down strategy. For that reason, it can be concluded that Top Down strategy is effective for teaching listening on the eighth grade students of SMP Ma'arif NU I Bumiayu in the academic year 2014/2015.

### **Acknowledgement**

The writer would like to express the deepest gratitude to some people who have assisted the process of the research, such as; the writer would like to express her deepest gratitude and thanks to Prof. Dr. Yahya A. Muhaimin as the head of STKIP Islam Bumiayu. Mr. Nur Hasan, S.Ag, S.Kom as the headmaster of SMP Ma'arif NU 1 Bumiayu and Mr. Didit Anggoro, S.S as the English teacher at the eighth grade students of SMP Ma'arif NU 1 Bumiayu who helps the writers to conduct the study.

## Bibliography

- Buck, Gary. 2001. *Assessing Listening*. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, Douglas, H. 2001. *Teaching by Principles an Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy (second edition)*. San Fransisco State University.
- Brown, Douglas, H. 2004. *Language Assessment, Principle and Classroom Practice* . San Fransisco State University.
- Cahyono, Yudi Bambang & Mukminatien, Nur. 2011. *Techniques and Strategies to Enhance Language Learning*. Malang: State University of Malang Press.
- Djamarah, Syaiful Bahri & Zain, Aswan. 2010. *Strategi Belajar Mengajar*. Jakarta: PT. Rineka Cipta.
- Hermawan, Herry. 2012. *Menyimak (Ketrampilan Berkomunikasi Yang Terabaikan)*. Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu.
- Iskandarwassid & Sunendar, Dadang. 2008. *Strategy Pembelajaran Bahasa*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Nunan, David. 1991. *Language Teaching Methodolgy*. Sidney: Marquire University.
- Nurgiyantoro, Burhan. 2012. *Penilaian Pembelajaran Bahasa Berbasis Kompetensi*. Yogyakarta: BPFE UGM

- Uno, B. Hamzah. 2012. *Model Pembelajaran: Menciptakan Proses Belajar Mengajar yang Kreatif dan Efektif*. Jakarta: PT. Bumi Aksara.
- Richards, Jack C. 2008. *Teaching Listening & Speaking from Theory to Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Tarigan, Henry Guntur. 1986. *Menyimak Sebagai Suatu Keterampilan Berbahasa*. Bandung: Angkasa.