

## **Information Transfer Technique to Improve Beginner Level Students' Listening Skill and Classroom Participation**

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### **Abstract**

The lack of English vocabulary makes listening the most challenging skill for most of EFL students. Some techniques have been applied to help students overcome their difficulties in learning English. This research aimed at improving non-English department students' listening skill and engagement by using information transfer technique. The design used was classroom action research that consisted of planning, implementation, observation and reflection. The data were taken from the pre-test and post-test results. The instruments used were listening task, observation, and questionnaire. The findings showed that by using transformation transfer of reading text, the EFL students got much better listening comprehension and were more involved in their classroom activities. Thus, more techniques to improve students' language skill should be implemented.

*Keywords: information transfer, listening, participation,*

### **1. Introduction**

Listening is the basic skill that is crucial for communicative necessity in everyday life in the global world communication. It plays an important role in educational, professional, and social lives. Schwartz (2004) argued that adults are estimated to spend almost half of their communication time listening. Students may receive as much as 90% of their information through listening to instructors and to one another. Listening is very important because it can be most language input received unconditionally by a person. Rost (2002) defined listening as a complex process of interpretation in which listeners match what they hear with what they already know. Since the ability of understanding people talking about is important, learning listening for EFL students is needed as they are rarely exposed to the target language.

According to Hamouda (2013), EFL learners have crucial problems in listening comprehension because universities pay attention to grammar, reading, and vocabulary. Listening is basic receptive skill that can build student's vocabulary and comprehension message. They have a problem understanding sounds and it drives to wrong interpretation. Even when they hear the sounds correctly, they have interpretation problem due to a lack of vocabulary. They said that the difficulty occurred because they did not know about what the native speaker talked about in detail. Yet, for language

learners who are often unable to process information quickly to make sense of what is said, listening can be a stressful activity (Goh & Taib, 2006).

Learning English through listening is not easy for most EFL students. They have many obstacles to learn English through listening because it is a complex process. According to Vandergrift (1999), listening comprehension is a complex process. When listening, listeners play an active role in discriminating between sounds, understanding vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpreting intonation and stress, and finally making use of all the skills mentioned above, and interpreting the utterance within the socio-cultural context. This action should be done at once as an automatic process and it is not an easy task for beginner level students who are unfamiliar with English utterances.

Teaching listening for ESL students' needs a certain strategy to reach learning goal. It is not only a matter of language teaching but also but also learning strategy for students to comprehend the information. According to Simanjuntak (1998), comprehension means relating what one does not know or new information with what one already knows, and knowledge is the basic element for comprehension. Teachers should put the comprehension of listening on the first stage to reach the goal in learning listening. An appropriate teaching technique to overcome the students' problem should be considered by teachers. Miqawati (2014) mentioned that a teaching technique needed to be implemented to promote students' performance and comprehension, especially those related to text or input enhancement like PQRST strategy. Newton & Nation (2009) state that teacher can assist the learners by providing listening in four main ways that include 1) providing prior experience with aspects of the text (i.e., with language, ideas, skills or text- types), 2) guiding the learners through the text, 3) setting up cooperative learning arrangements (for example, shared reading approaches), 4) emphasizing the learners' comprehension and clarification of sound source with the teaching and learning objective.

When students are listening, they may often listen unfamiliar words from the speaker. For example; they can be confused when they hear new vocabulary. The data in preliminary study showed that most of the beginner level EFL students who studied English in their first year at an Indonesian vocational higher education had problems in listening activities. They said that they just could catch few words from the whole narration in the audio. They also did not understand the words and it made them frustrated. They encountered problems when listening for main ideas, detailed information of the text, recognizing words, and reformulating what the speakers said. Moreover, since the learning happened during the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a need to find suitable way so that the students could learn optimally. As stated by Miqawati and Wijayanti (2021), because of the pandemic, a shift to the need to restructure students learning' activities and experience occurred. Thus, it needed a good strategy or teaching technique to overcome the problems the students faced. One of the solutions is by giving a reading text as information what they listen to. This kind of technique includes a bottom-up processing means using the information we have about sounds, word meanings, and discourse markers to assemble our understanding of what is heard one step at a time (Brown, 2006).

By giving some information to guide the students is one way that can help the students. It can be done by sharing reading texts, diagrams, and pictures so that students can be familiar with words or vocabulary in audios to be listened to. This technique is quite simple and easy for students. It is called information transfer. According to Garfinkel (1982), information transfer is a set of techniques applicable to reading and listening comprehension. It is achieved by facing the students with a written or spoken text and providing incomplete visual stimuli to be completed with information drawn from the text. The idea is that the learners are helped in understanding the text by means of a nonverbal device such as a diagram, a graph, or a table. Nation (1989) stated that information transfer technique can be used in three ways. They include (1) attention on language and content, (2) attention on discourse, (3) a self-questioning strategy. Thus, the purpose of this study was to improve students' listening skill and active involvement by using information transfer technique.

## **2. Method**

The research design for the Information transfer technique is Classroom Action Research (CAR). The steps in this method design included planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting in each cycle as promoted by Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1988). The research was conducted at Politeknik Negeri Jember which is located at Jalan Mastrip PO.BOX 164 Jember, East Java. The researcher determined Politeknik Negeri Jember is based on the consideration that the students especially non-English Department students had problems in learning English listening.

The first step in this research was preliminary study to gain the information of the problem in listening class. The researcher conducted the research in a cycle which has four steps, they are: 1) planning the action, 2) implementing the action, 3) observation, and 4) reflection that proposed by Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1988). The activities in planning stage were: a) preparing the teaching technique and material, b) designing lesson plan, c) setting the criteria of success, and d) designing research instruments. In implementing the action, information transfer technique was used to improve students' listening comprehension and their active involvement in the listening class. The implementation of the action was carried out based on the lesson plan in each meeting. there were four meetings to implement the technique. The first was for having pre-test and the other three meetings were for implementing information transfer technique. The next step was observation. It covered observations of the students' active involvement. The observer used checklist as the tool to observe. The checklist consisted of several points, such as students' attention to their teacher's instruction, active questioning, response toward their teacher's questions, understanding about the materials given, interest, and motivation. The last was reflection. It was used to determine the final result of the data obtained from implementing information transfer technique. The purpose was to know whether the technique was successful or not. It was considered successful if 75% of the students obtained a minimum score of 75. The data were taken from the students' test score, an observation checklist result, and a questionnaire.

### **3. Findings**

#### *a. Meeting 1/Pre-test*

According to the analysis result, it was found out that the mean score of students' achievements was 59.79. It was lower than 75 (the passing grade). In addition, the observation results showed that their involvement in the learning process was low. Only 18% of the students was involved actively. It meant that most of the of the students did not participate in the classroom activity. Based on the results of the pre-test, it could be inferred that and the criteria of success was not fulfilled and an action needed to be taken.

#### *b. Meeting 2*

In the second meeting, the students obtained higher score compared with the previous meeting (the mean score was 64.46), meaning that it did not meet the success criteria. In terms of involvement, there were 11 students (28%) who actively involved in the classroom activity and 28 students (72%) did not participate actively in the classroom.

#### *c. Meeting 3*

The mean score obtained was 76.28. It means that most of the students passed the passing score (75) and met the criteria of success. However, there was no significant increase in their involvement. Only 15 students (38%) who involved in the activity. Based on the results, it could be inferred that the implementation of information transfer technique could improve the students' listening comprehension and met the criteria of success. Unfortunately, not many students were actively involved in teaching learning process in the third meeting.

#### *d. Meeting 4*

The fourth meeting was focused on the listening comprehension as the final test. The mean score obtained was 80,46. It meant that they passed the criteria of success and the technique was successful to help them improve their listening skill. were included excellent category of the criteria of success for their achievement.

#### *e. Reflection*

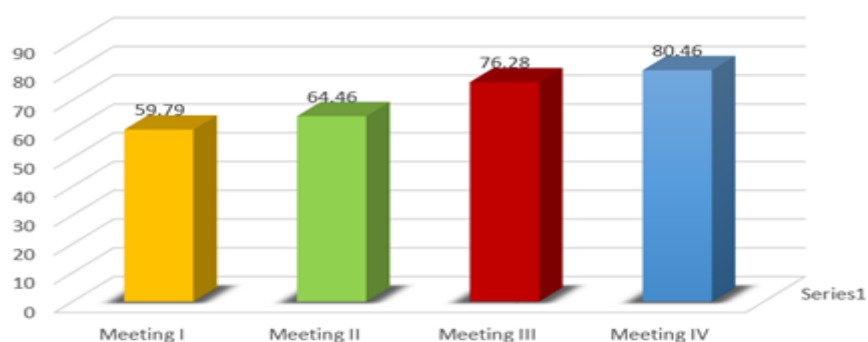
Based on the results of the students' listening comprehension test score, it could be inferred that the implementation of information transfer technique could improve the students' listening comprehension and the scores met the criteria of success. In addition, the students' participation in the classroom also increased although it was not very significant. They showed good response to answer the teachers' questions during the discussion. They had good listening comprehension and were motivated to express their opinion in classroom discussion.

### **4. Discussion**

The objective of this research was to improve students' listening skill and engagement using information transfer technique. The following discussion is based on how the information transfer technique improved the students' listening achievement, their active

involvement in the process of the implementation, and their opinion about the information transfer technique.

Based on the results of the test, both the students' performance and involvement improved. The information transfer technique could increase their interest which is shown by their participation in teaching learning process. their enthusiasm in the listening activities gradually improved. Their achievement in listening after the implementation of information transfer technique also increased as shown by gradual improvement in their test scores. The implementation of information transfer technique has proved that it is effective to optimize their participation. From the results of questionnaire analysis, it was found out that most of the students agreed with the effectiveness of the implementation of information transfer technique to improve their listening comprehension. The mean score of students' achievement and students' active involvement can be seen in Figure 3.2. The initial mean score was 59.79 and after the implementation of information transfer technique, the mean score was 80.46.



**Figure 3.2.** *The students' score of Information Transfer Technique Implementation*

Dealing with the process of the implementation of the action, it was done by observing the teaching learning process. The results revealed that the implementation of information transfer technique could enhance the students' involvement in the classroom. And, in terms of students' perception about the implementation of information transfer technique, they mentioned that it could stimulate their participation in teaching learning process. They thought that they increased their comprehension of the text which motivated them to share their opinion on the topic discussed. The students' response of the implementation of information transfer technique showed that 4 (10.3%) students agreed that technique implementation could increase and help their listening comprehension. 26 (66.7%) students strongly agreed, 5 (17.9%) students agreed, and only 2 (5.1%) students disagreed with the implementation of information transfer technique. This research was in line with the results of other studies conducted in different settings. Jaya (2021), Yonantha & Khan (2020), and Yanti & Husin (2013) mentioned that

teaching listening by using information transfer diagram activity was able to improve students' listening skill. In addition, the provision of a certain technique is considered effective in improving students' language skills. Novawan et al. (2019) highlighted that students' experience in an action-based teaching with the implementation of MALL nurtured their ecological learning habit and promoted their learning motivation.

## 5. Conclusion

The information transfer technique has proven that it can improve students' listening comprehension achievement. In implementing the information transfer technique, the highlight is using the text to support the listening audio content, develop vocabulary, reading, speaking, listening and writing skills. In implementing this technique, the teacher can give more questions to comprehending the text and encouraging students' motivation to involve in discussion. In addition, the implementation of information transfer technique improved not only the students' achievement of listening comprehension but also their active involvement in the teaching learning process. Therefore, information transfer technique can be used in the classroom as an alternative technique for teaching listening.

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