

## **IMPROVING LISTENING SKILL OF THE SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS USING GAMES AT MTsN MOJOKERTO**

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**Abstract:** Based on the study conducted on research at MTsN Mojokerto, the researcher found that there are some problems with teaching English especially for listening of seventh grade students at MTsN Mojokerto, those are: 1) most of the students' scores on listening test are still under the minimum of standard score (KKM) of 79; 2) most students are not attracted to follow the listening activities; 3) students are difficult to understand the native speech in a tape recorder. The main purpose of the study is to improve listening skill of seventh grade students using games. Research design for this study was Classroom Action Research and the researcher used listening tests and observation checklists as instruments. The criteria of success was successfully achieved in Cycle 2 with the percentage of 74%.

**Keywords – Listening Skill, Tic Tac Toe Game,  
Running Dictation Game, Whispering  
Game**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

English becomes an important factor to improve the quality of human resources. Supporting that case, Indonesia government has decided that English is one of the compulsory subjects, especially for Junior and Senior High Schools. In other words, studying English is a must, whether it is taught at general schools or vocational ones. In fact, private schools as such as kindergarten and elementary schools usually begin to teach English earlier. (Nur, 2003:181-182).

Listening is one of four basic language skills aside from Reading, Speaking and Writing. Developing listening comprehension for second language learners is essential. It is better for students with good listening skills to participate effectively in class. The

objective of teaching listening is that the students are able to understand the meaning of transactional and interpersonal discourses which tend to emphasize the interpersonal meaning variations, and to understand oral monologues. (Brown, 2001:247)

Based on the researcher's observation in teaching English at MTsN Mojokerto, there are three problems of teaching listening especially for seventh grade students, those are: 1) most of the students' scores in listening test are still under the minimum of standard score (KKM) of 79; 2) most students are not attracted to engage in listening activities; 3) it is difficult for students to understand native speech in a tape recorder.

The result of the preliminary study conducted on 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2015 revealed those problems. The questionnaires showed that the students have some difficulties in following listening activity. 73% of 36 students are difficult to understand native speech from the tape recorder. 51% of them are not able to keep up information from the teacher. 73% of them have an obstacle to complete the listening task. 57% of them are difficult to keep up the information from the text they listened. The last is that 89% of them thought listening was boring.

Those problems were aroused by two factors; the lack of creativity to use available listening material and lack of varieties in teaching listening. Therefore, it is essential to design lessons plan and teaching materials that involve students to be more motivated. By the time they are motivated to study, they will be interested in the subject they are studying and in the activities and topics presented (Harmer, 2001:53). The teacher should determine the suitability of the listening materials and the techniques used in classroom teaching. Brown (2001:81) offers "ten commandments" for motivating learners in classroom activities. All of them focus on stimulating intrinsic motivation of students. The two of the commandments are considered appropriate to motivate students in listening activity, which are creating a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom and making the languages classes interesting.

The useful and interesting technique to create relaxed and pleasant atmosphere in the classroom is using games. It is defined as activities with rules, competition and the element of fun, a tool to raise the students' motivation, motivate students. It is interesting and attractive, and sometimes challenging. It can be used to give practice in all language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Deesri, 2002). Uberman (1998) states that games offer students a fun-filled and relaxing learning atmosphere and give a chance for them to use language in a non-stressful way.

Games may help learners developing their ability to work in-group, to cooperate and to compete. Recent studies conducted by Huyen and Nga (2003), they give insight that

games are used to support teaching and learning activities. Games are beneficial for motivating students and increasing their vocabulary mastery. Through the application of language games in the learning process, the students will experience the language they are learning. Inserting games in the teaching and learning activity will make the atmosphere joyful and interesting. Thus, the language learning achievements can be better.

Many experienced textbook and methodology manuals writers have argued that games are not just time-filling activities but have a great educational value. Richard believes that games to be fun but warns against overlooking their pedagogical value, particularly in foreign language teaching (Uberman, 1998:20).

Games are often used as short warm-up activities or when there is some time left at the end of a lesson. Yet, as Lee observes, a game "should not be regarded as a marginal activity filling in odd moments when the teacher and class have nothing better to do". Games ought to be at the heart of teaching foreign languages. Rixon (in Uberman, 1998:20) suggests that games can be used at all stages of the lesson; it provided that they are suitable and carefully chosen.

The use of games in ESL Curriculum requires careful planning, design and execution. Games should not be used as icebreakers or time fillers only. They should be used as part of the instructional design. Games should be seen and used as a motivational tool (Mckenzie, 2004).

This research used games that can be applied in teaching listening, called Tic-Tac-Toe, Running Dictation, and Whispering Game. Tic-Tac-Toe is a very simple game. It uses teacher's voice to lessen student's problem with native speech. As Brown (2001: 254) suggested that learners need to comprehend delivered information at varying rates of speed with few pauses. Teacher provides practices by producing teacher-talk at the right level for students.

There is a reason why dictation game works well in the classroom, as stated by Wilson (2008:90), he explained that dictation is a very flexible activity with numerous variations. Because of these advantages, it is possible that Running Dictation Game can solve student's problem in listening class.

Whispering Game can be done with any level (The Chinese Whisper Phenomenon <http://www.chinesewhispers.com>). It also has some roles: as an icebreaker and as a fun game to see how language can evolve (Chinese Whispers Broken Telephone game <http://www.chinese-whisper.com>). It aims to assist students to memorize vocabulary and word spelling, and to give them a chance to use the correct vocabulary (Hakim, 2009:53). Considering these advantages, Whispering Game can be one effective way to solve the

students' difficulties to keep up the information from the text that they listen and to complete the listening task.

The researcher considers that using games is an alternative strategy in improving students' listening skill. That is the reason the researcher used interesting games in teaching listening to help the students to solve their problems during listening activity.

Based on the explanation above, the main purpose of the study is to improve the seventh grade students' listening skill using Games at MTsN Mojokerto.

## **METHOD**

The research design used was classroom action research (CAR) that focuses on a particular group of students in a certain classroom. This study used Kemmis and Mc Taggart's model (1988) that consists of four stages: (1) planning, (2) implementing, (3) observing, and (4) reflecting. The research was conducted at MTsN Mojokerto, located at Jl. Raya Sambiroto 112, Sooko, Mojokerto.

### **Preliminary Study**

The objective is to identify, analyse, and state the problems of the teacher and students. The preliminary study was conducted on 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of March, 2015 in class VII-A of MTsN Mojokerto. It is consisted of 36 students. In carrying out the preliminary study, the researcher used an interview guide and questionnaire. The researcher interviewed the students to know the listening teaching and learning process in the classroom. Then the researcher gave the questionnaire related to students' problems.

### **Planning the Action**

#### ***Model of Instructions***

In this stage, the researcher and collaborator prepared the strategy of teaching listening by using game. It was consisted of Tic-Tac-Toe, Running Dictation, and Whispering Games.

Tic-Tac-Toe (also well-known as Tick Tack Toe, noughts and crosses, Xs and Os, and many names) is a pencil-and-paper game for two players, called O and X, who make turns marking the spaces in a 3x3 grid. The player who succeeds in placing three respective marks in horizontal, vertical, or diagonal rows is the winner. The stages for implementing Tic Tac Toe Game can be described as follows: (1) showing the certain picture and giving some questions related to the picture, (2) writing some words related to the topic on the whiteboard, reading the words then asking the students to repeat, (3) telling to the students

how to play Tic-Tac-Toe Game and also the rules of the Game, (4) dividing the class into two teams and drawing a grid with 9 squares on the board, (5) each representative of groups chooses a number from the grids, teacher writes on the grid the team name can answer the right answer, when the representatives do the task, the rest of students also listen the questions from the teacher and write the ingredients of the procedure texts.

Running Dictation is an activity for any level of groups, with any number of students from two upwards. Running Dictation uses to practice the dialogues, role-play, sort texts, grammatical structure, etc. Running Dictation is a multi-skill task game involving listening, speaking, reading, and writing. (Wiesman, 2007). To apply this game, teacher and students should do these steps: (1) showing the picture and giving some questions related to the picture, (2) writing some words related to the topic on the whiteboard, reading the words then asking the students to repeat, (3) telling the students how to play Running Dictation Game and the rules, (4) finding some short sentences, write each sentence in a paper then pin each paper on the tree, (5) dividing the students into some groups and make lines. (6) first student in each group run to the tree 1, read the sentence, remembers it, run back to their group, and quietly dictates what he/she remembered to second student, the next person should listen carefully and then writes it on a paper, after that the first student takes his/her position behind fifth person, (7) after writing on a paper, second student gives the paper to the third, then repeat the same cycle as the first student did

The idea of Whispering Game is for several people to form a line and for one person to think up a phrase. He then whispers to next students, and that they should make as much effort as possible to hear that phrase. During Whispering Game, a phrase should not be repeated. Then, the last player should shout out the phrase they heard. It was taken from Kang Guru Indonesia (2009:20-32). The detail of stages can be described as follows: (1) showing the picture and giving some questions related to the picture, (2) writing some words related to the topic on the whiteboard, reading the words and asking the students to repeat, (3) telling to the students how to play Whispering Game and its rules, (4) finding some short sentences and write each sentence in a paper, then copies it based on the number of the group, (5) dividing the students into some groups, each group must choose one person to write down a text, to be a writer and one person to be a runner, then all of students in each group make a line, (6) first student in each group reads the sentence number 1 and should remember it, put down the paper, run back to their group, and quietly whisper what he/she remembered to second student, the next one should listen carefully, remembers it, whisper what he/she remember to third student and soon, the last students in

each group should write it on paper, this game continues until all members has written down all the sentences.

### ***Designing Lesson Plan***

The researcher together with the collaborator designed the lesson plan for 80 minutes. The materials were developed based on the content standard 2006. The teaching learning procedures were divided into three stages: pre-listening, whilst-listening, and post-listening.

### ***Preparing Facilities Needed Inside and Outside the Classroom***

In conducting the study, the teacher needed some short texts and tasks at the right level for the students. They are descriptive texts in Cycle 1 and procedure texts in Cycle 2.

### ***Preparing the Criteria of Success***

To determine if the cycle is successful, the following criteria are set up: the improvement of students' score in listening at least 55% or more can reach 79 or above, it is considered successful. It is based on the students' listening skills that are still under the minimum of standard score.

### ***Designing Research Instruments***

#### **1) Listening test**

This study used two kinds of listening tests. First, wrote sentences as they heard to know students' ability in comprehending the text. Second, it was conducted in the form of a multiple-choice test. It consists of some questions to measure the students' ability in identifying the detailed information in the text.

#### **2) Observation checklist**

Observation checklist was used to collect the data during the study. The observer studied the students' activities as well as the teacher's performance during the teaching and learning process. The observation guide for the students' activities included the activities during the implementation of Game. Based on the qualification attached, the activities were categorized as very good, good, fair, poor and very poor. For the teacher's performance, the observer used the observation checklists to see if the researcher follows the step in the lesson plan.

### ***Implementing the Games in Listening Class***

The researcher played as a teacher who carried out the teaching learning process in class and the collaborator helped her to observe the teaching learning process. It was begun with the explanation about what the students had to do with certain type of game. The researcher carried out listening test for the students at last of every cycle, a cycle is carried out for about 80 minutes long.

**Table 3.4 The Scenario of Implementation**

Preliminary Test		
Cycle I		
Number	Meeting	Activity
1	I	Listening Class
2	II	Listening Class
3	III	Listening Class
Listening Test of Cycle I		

### ***Observing***

Observation was intended to obtain data related to the teaching and learning activity referred to the criteria of success. In this step, the researcher was assisted by her collaborator to observe all reactions during games implementation in listening class by using observation sheet. The researcher provided observation guideline so that the observer knew the aspects she observed.

### ***Reflecting***

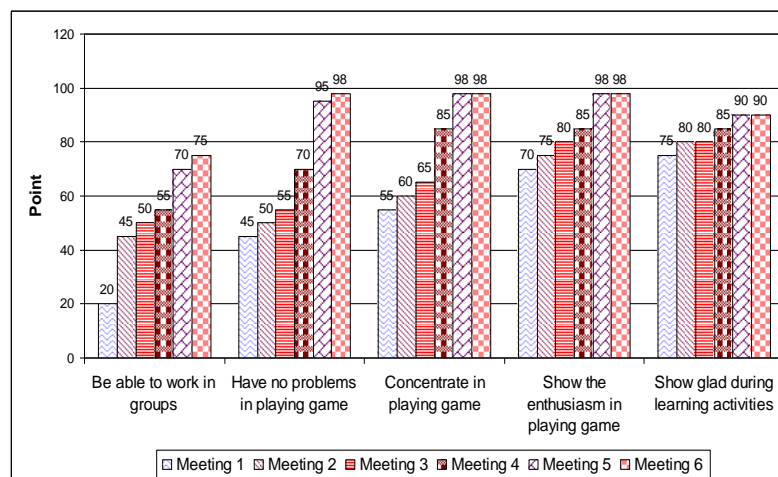
It was used to analyse the implementation during the cycle obtained by the result of the observations. The data were compared with the criteria of success to determine the successful of the cycle. The result of this reflection was used as the basic consideration to revise the model for next cycle to get a better learning result and to consider if this research should be continued.



## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

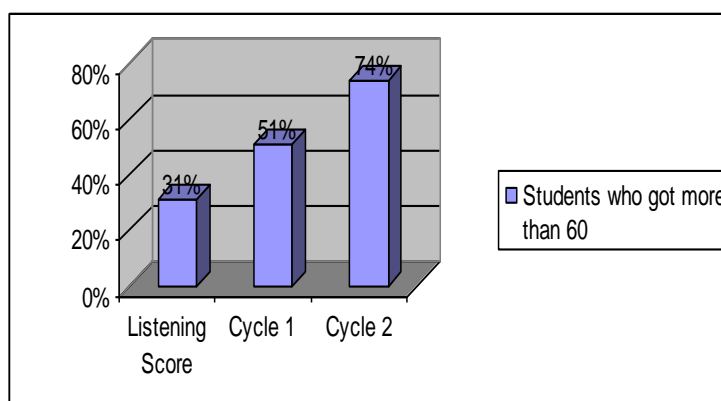
### Findings

Based on the students' learning process and test result, it was found that there was improvement in both sectors. It means that using games in teaching and learning process improves the students' participation and achievement in listening. Most of students gradually improved their participation in the listening activities consisted of three phases of activities: pre, whilst, and post listening. Student' participation generally improved from one meeting to the next that can be seen in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1 the Result of Assessing the Students' Performance**

Specifically, it was found that in preliminary study 12 students (31%) got more than 79. The students' achievement was improved in first cycle when 20 students (51%) got more than 79. However, the result of students' achievement in the first cycle has not achieved the criteria of success, and the researcher should continue to the next cycle. In the second cycle, it was found that 29 students (74%) got more than 79. It means that the criteria of success have been achieved. It can be seen in Figure 4.2

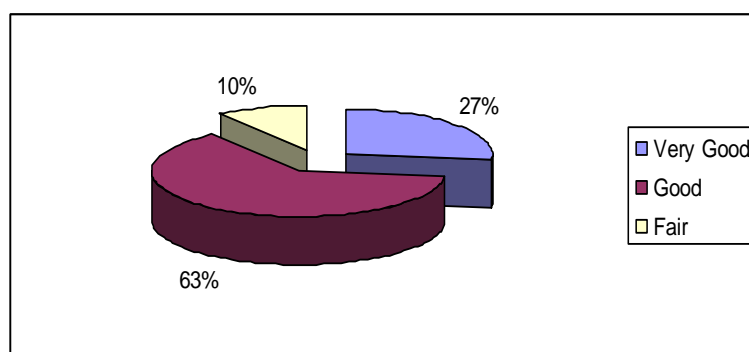


**Figure 4.2 The Result of Assessing Students' Achievement in Listening**

Every student was given a questionnaire to know the students' responses to the games using in the listening activities. It was found that most of the students have good



responses on the games. From the result of observation and questionnaires it showed that 95% prefer to learn listening using games, 97% consider that using games in listening is interesting, 87% state that games make the class interesting and fun, 95% consider that games make teaching and learning activities is not boring, 87% think games motivate them more in listening class, 90% think that they are not under pressure to accomplish the listening task, 80% think their listening skill improve by using games in studying listening. In conclusion, 90% of the students have good response toward listening activities and 10% of the students have fairly good response. The result of students' questionnaires can be seen in Appendix 7b. The diagram of students' responses can be seen in the Figure 4.3.



**Figure 4.3 Result of Students' Responses on Teaching Listening Using Game**

Training students to listen is one of the hardest things to do by foreign language researchers. That is why, teaching listening is an essential part of the whole teaching activities. Using games as the strategy in listening class gave valuable contributions to the English language learning. The use of this strategy would make students conscious of the processes underlying the learning. They were involved in learning more effectively and interesting way.

In relation to use games in listening class, the strengths of games were elaborated. The games could help and encourage the students to gain their interest and work. The students did the task in groups. Therefore, they would be more responsible in doing tasks. Using games in listening activity makes students more actively involved in the teaching and learning process. From the result of the questionnaires, it can be seen that most students have good responses to listening class using games.

Tic Tac Toe, Running Dictation and Whispering Game were an integrated game, therefore it could improve other skills such as; speaking, reading and writing. This activity can be used with any number of students from two upwards. It is a meaningful activity, which students enjoy.

It is necessary to conduct evaluation to know the teaching and learning process already has achieved the objectives. This study used two kinds of evaluations. The first evaluation is dealing with the use of games in listening activity done by observing the teaching and learning process. The second evaluation is dealing with the result of the implementation done by assessing the listening test. The result was used to identify the students' achievement in listening.

The implementation of listening strategy in teaching made the students' interested to learn and to be motivated. As a result, the students' listening achievement is improved.

From the result of listening scores, it indicated that the students' achievements gradually increased. It was proved by the students' achievement in listening score, the first test, and the second test. In other words, there were positive impacts of applying the games in teaching listening to students.

In addition, using games in listening activity can improve students' listening skill and their involvement in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the particular games can be used in the classroom as an alternative technique for teaching listening.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

Based on research findings, it was concluded that implementing games in teaching listening could improve listening ability of students. This improvement proved by the students' listening score and achievement, i.e. the percentage of students pass the minimum of standard score is 74% and based on the result of questionnaires, more than 75% students have positive response on the use of game during their listening activity.

Several suggestions are proposed to English teachers, school principal and future researchers. For English teachers, particularly those who teach English at MTs Negeri Mojokerto, these games can be used for an effective way in teaching listening. Moreover, it is better than using conventional strategy.

Second, the school principal should provide facilities related to the use of games. Third, it is suggested to the future researcher - especially those who are interested in applying game - to prepare a deliberate planning before conducting a similar study in order to make the games run well because implementing these ones also had certain weaknesses. The teacher should manage and pay more attention to the class with the big number of students, because there will be more groups formed and the atmosphere would be more crowded and uncontrollable. The teacher should work harder to monitor the use of games and its implementation during the study. The students that play these games should have good concentration to listen well and remember the given sentences.

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## Contributor's Biodata

Hanna Andyani was born in Mojokerto on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1976. She is the eldest of three daughters of Hariyono Pardis and Titik Saudjarijantini, BA. She completed Elementary School in Mojokerto in 1988, Junior High School in Mojokerto in 1991, and Senior High School in Mojokerto in 1994.

She pursued her Undergraduate Program (S1) at English Department of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Surabaya Muhammadiyah University and finished her study in 2004. She has been teaching at MTsN Mojokerto since 2005 until now.

The chance for joining the graduate program was got after passing the selection test sponsored by the Department of Religious Affairs and in 2008. She entered the Graduate Program, State University of Malang in English Language Education Program in 2009 and finished her study in 2011.

From her marriage to Dr.Ludi Wishnu Wardana, ST., SPd., SE., MM., in 2000, she was rewarded by Allah SWT three lovely daughters: Aqila Adinda Putri Wardana (15 years old) who is studying at the tenth year of Senior High School, Dhiyaa Khalila Akmalia Firaas (8 years old) who is studying at the fourth year of Elementary School and Ranaa Aufaa Azmii Wardana who is studying at the first year of Elementary School.