

Using Barron's ToEIC Preparation Course Package To Improve The Listening Skill For Vocational School

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ABSTRACT

This research aims at finding out the use of Barron's TOEIC preparation course package to improve the listening of the eleventh grade students at SMK Negeri Tinambung academic year 2010/2011. The objectives of the research were to find out whether or not the use of Barron's TOEIC preparation course package significantly improves the listening ability of the eleventh grade students at SMK Negeri Tinambung academic year 2010/2011. The research used quasi experimental research design. The samples consisted of 50 students which belonged to two groups; experimental group and control group. The research data were collected using two the listening test was given to the both groups. The research results indicated that the use of Barron's TOEIC preparation course package significantly improved the listening ability of the eleventh grade students at SMK Negeri Tinambung academic year 2010/2011. The results of posttest of both groups were improved, but the use of Barron's TOEIC preparation course package was more improved than English in Progress Business & Management for SMK Year XI: TOEIC based Activities, By Munash F. Anwar. It was proved by the result of mean score of posttest of the experimental was higher than the control group in listening (85.00 > 79.40).

Keywords: *Barron's TOEIC preparation course package; improvemen of the listening skill; vocational School*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching materials, teaching methods, and teaching strategies of English as foreign language always need the development. The development of English teaching materials, teaching method, and teaching strategies must be relevant to the students' need. They should be formulated in the curriculum decided by the government.

Beside that, the local government should generally support to the central government to improve the achievement of the students'

subjects and especially to improve the achievement of students' English subject.

One of the researchers found that the achievement of students' English subject of senior high school and vocational school in South Sulawesi is unsatisfactory where the average grade is 5.17 for language department, 5.59 for science department, and 4.93 for social studies department. This indicates that the English teaching must be evaluated by government. So some indications should be developed are teaching materials, teaching method, and teaching strategy which relevant

with the students' need in the field (Ahmad, 2007: 59).

Attempts to find out better and more effective ways and materials of teaching English as a foreign language have frequently been made, but the results are still far from the expectation. This is as a matter of fact due to varying factors, although they have been considered, which occur unexpectedly during the process of teaching and learning. In my view it is also because English teaching is less relevant to the learners. Almost all the English teaching mostly concern to some extent with curriculum materials of the school that should be completed by the end of the semester in the year with less attention to the learners' mastery of the subject/ materials taught. The teacher may feel pushed that he has to teach the materials in the curriculum completely, neglecting the power of endurance the learners have another way of saying it could be that most of the English subject materials offered to them are beyond their interest for being not related to their study or everyday lives.

Vocational education in particular should have a great role in providing industries with skilled workers. The government should realize that vocational education must be improved. It is also the time now for the government to improve the English teaching and learning at vocational schools to provide better graduates who don't merely master their department know how and vocational skills, but are also aware of English language skills. They should be ready to adapt themselves to the demand of international market, and compete to the challenge of the globalization era (Kaimuddin, 2009: 1).

The vocational schools curriculum should meet and be relevant to the industrial needs. Therefore as the science and technology progress rapidly, the vocational curriculum needs revision and refinement in accordance with the industries or work demands. Other shortcomings are: overcrowded classrooms, poor textbooks and supporting materials. One of the main factors, contributing to the failure is curriculum and syllabus is an important component of a successful language program (Brown, 1995:42). In the other aspect that should be paid attention is how the vocational students can master the language skills in general and listening and reading skills in particular. The vocational high school students have very low scores in listening and reading

skills among four skills. It showed the students' achievement in reading and listening skills is only about 30% and 28 % (Hasanah, 2009: 77).

Listening is important because proficiency in listening contributes most to self-dependence in learning. A good listener is also more likely to become efficient users of a language than they who are deficient listening. In relation to it, the four verbal communications that human being use in their daily life, they use listening more frequently among the others. He states that listening is form of verbal communication most frequently employed during an average whole day (Rankin in Larry, 1971:15).

In order to have a good ability in listening skill, listeners are demanded to comprehend and get the message from the speaker especially in listening to short paragraph. Listening has important role in order to be used as tool of communication. Since listening is very important for the students who study English, higher interest should be given to it. Therefore, the students and the teachers especially at vocational school should be aware of the vital role of listening in foreign language learning. Besides, the teachers should be creative to choose the materials that can match what their students' need related to their field job after finishing their study.

Barron's TOEIC preparation course package is an English teaching package that contents English teaching materials, teaching methods, and teaching strategies for preparing the learners to comprehend the listening and reading skills in general and comprehend TOEIC test in particular (Luegheed, 2000: 1). The teaching materials content two skills: listening skill and reading skill. The word choices used in this package are related to the business field. It is relevant to the vocational school of content based curriculum. These help the students of vocational school in general and help the students of business department of vocational school in particular (Lougheed, 2000: 2).

Comparing among TOEIC, TOEFL, and IELTS, TOEIC is focused on the filed of business where the content of the materials related to the language use (Lougheed, 2000: 1). It helps the nonnative speakers in improving their English skills of business field. That is why the English teaching material of the Barron's TOEIC preparation course package is provided for the vocational school students in general and

business and management department in particular. Some points that make TOEIC, TOEFL, and IELTS different are in the model of listening, the language use, and the English skills teaching material. The model of listening of TOEIC uses pictures that will help the learners to comprehend the speakers talk easier. Then all pictures related to the business field that available for the vocational schools students in general and business department students in particular (Lougheed, 2000: 1).

Based on the description of background above, the researcher formulated the problem statement: does Barron's TOEIC preparation course package significantly improve the listening ability of the eleventh grade students at SMK Negeri Tinambung?

Relating to the problem statement mentioned above, the objectives of this research is to find out whether or not Barron's TOEIC preparation course package significantly improves the listening ability of the eleventh grade students at SMK Negeri Tinambung.

The results of the research are generally expected to be: 91) The source of information to develop the teaching materials, the teaching methods, and the teaching strategies to improve the students' ability in listening. (2) Useful information for the English teachers who teach listening especially at vocational school, so they can make this research as one of references to develop their strategy to teach listening skill. (3) Useful information to everyone who is interested in listening skill.

Definition of listening. There are some definitions about listening according to some researchers and linguists. According to Bernard (1985:5) listening means to use one's ears consciously in order to hear, to pay attention to speech, music, etc. While Underwood (1989:1) states that listening is the activity of paying attention to and tries to get meaning from something we hear.

"The goal in listening is to be able to get information correlated with the job, to give information or to response precisely to what we hear" (Tarigan, 1990:29). This statement does not imply the ability equal to the audience's first language. This statement does not imply the skill equal to that in the audience's first language. Even though certainly their skill in the receptive skills need to be closer to the first language level of production skills.

The application is that they reach a level at which, in ungraded context, they concentrate

on the message without conscious attention to component elements of that message at times. The students may not know the meaning of all the words being used but they should be able to guess some meanings from the context. At any and perhaps all times, the audience should expect to hear occasional words and phrases that they do not understand. Instead of becoming flustered and losing the thread of the conversation (Tarigan, 1990: 31)

Types of listening. Barbara in Barker (1971: 9) differentiates between active and passive listening by stating that in the former, the individual listen with more or less his total self-including his special senses, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and intuitions. In the latter, the listener becomes mainly an organ for the passive reception of sound, with little self-perception, personal; involvement, gestalt discrimination, or alive curiosity.

Passive listening refers to those forms of listening in which many people engage simply because they happen to present when someone else is talking. In other words the potential receiver of the message is minimally, if at all, concerning about the listening process. This type of listening is barely more than hearing. It simply involves receiving the sound stimuli and letting them evoke conscious thought sporadically, but not consistently.

The type of listening upon which Barker (1971: 13) focused is active listening in this case involving listening with a purpose for example to comprehend, evaluate, enjoy, etc. Active listening accompanies the implementation of desirable listening skills. Active listening can occur in one of the two settings previously mentioned.

According to Barker (1971: 9) in relating to types of listening, he suggested the following statement.

Listening has been classified in a variety of ways by communication scholars. Classification has differed because interest, perceptions, and philosophical background differ among authors. Each classification represents a specific way in which listening theorist and authors have chosen to discuss the listening process.

In this research, the researcher chooses the Barron's TOEIC preparation course package where the type of listening in this teaching material it's used is active listening.

Principles for designing listening techniques. Some decades of research and practice in teaching listening comprehension

have yielded some practical principles for designing techniques that include aural comprehension. These principles are summarized below.

- a. Technique should be intrinsically motivating
- b. Technique should utilize authentic language contexts
- c. Consider carefully the form of listener's responses
- d. Encourage the development of listening strategies
- e. Include both bottoms-up and top-down listening technique.

(Brown, 1997: 15)

Barron's TOEIC preparation course material is an English teaching package that contains the teaching materials, the teaching method, and the teaching strategies for preparing the students to comprehend the listening and the reading skills in general and comprehend the TOEIC test in particular. Among TOEIC, TOEFL, and IELTS, TOEIC is focused on the field of business where the content of the materials related to the language use. It helps the nonnative speakers in improving their English skills of business field. That is why the English teaching material of the Barron's TOEIC preparation course package is provided for the vocational school students in general and business and management department in particular. Some points that make TOEIC, TOEFL, and IELTS different are in the model of listening, the language use, and the English skills teaching material. The model of listening of TOEIC uses pictures that will help the learners to comprehend the speakers talk easier. Then all pictures related to the business field that available for the vocational schools students in general and business department students in particular.

Barron's TOEIC preparation course package is used as either a self-study course or class course. It is an English teaching material, teaching method, and teaching strategies for preparing the learners to comprehend the listening and reading skills in general and comprehend TOEIC test in particular. In a class situation, this will provide an excellent structure for helping the students improve their English language skills especially listening and reading skills (Lougheed, 2000:vi). This also gives the teachers what they want: a scheme to help them improve the English language ability of their students.

There are two sections on the TOEIC preparation course material, the listening and reading reviews. Each part both listening and reading consist of some subpart.

The more students hear English, the better their listening comprehension will be. Encourage a lot of discussion about the various strategies mentioned in the listening comprehension activities. Have the students work in pairs or small groups to increase the amount of time students will spend listening. All tests require the students to choose a correct answer. This means the students must eliminate the incorrect answers. There are distracters (traps) on an exam that a student can be trained to listen for. And coincidentally, while they are learning to listen for these traps, they are improving their listening comprehension.

The listening comprehension activities in this text are gold mine. We can use them for the stated purposes, which is to help students learn how to analyze photos (pictures), answer choices (questions-response), question types, and language functions. In addition, we can use them for a variety of communicative activities.

METHOD

Sometimes it is just not possible to randomly assign subjects to groups. In order to receive permission to use school in a study, for example, a researcher often has to agree to use existing classrooms. When this occurs, however, there are still a number designs available to the researcher that provide adequate control of sources of invalidity; this design is referred to a quasi-experimental design (Gay, 2006: 369). Therefore, in this research, the researcher applied a quasi-experimental design using two groups' pre-test and post-test design. The experiment involved two groups, an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group received a treatment (Barron's TOEIC preparation course package), a treatment under investigation, while the control group received a different or a usual treatment (the use of handbook of the second year students of SMKN 1 Tinambung). The control group is needed for comparison purposes to see if the new treatment is more effective than other (Gay, 2006: 254).

This research has two kinds of variables: independent and dependent variables. The independent variable of this research is Barron's TOEIC preparation course package, while the

dependent variables are students' achievement on listening skill.

The population of this research was the eleventh grade students at SMKN 1 Tinambung in the academic year 2010/2011. The total numbers of population were 185 students that belonged to 6 classes. The samples were selected based on the cluster sampling technique. It was sampling which groups, not individuals, were randomly selected. All members of selected groups had similar characteristics (Gay, 2006: 119). The researcher took two classes: one class as experimental group and the other as control group. Class XI1 (Akuntansi 1) was taken as experimental group and class XI2 (Akuntansi 2) was taken as control group. Class XII1 (Akuntansi 1) consisted of 25 students and class XII2 (Akuntansi 2) consisted of 25 students; by the reason both belonged to the business department. This research employed one instrument based on the variables investigated; it was the listening test.

Before analyzing the data, the data was collected with instrument and then analyzed it by using the procedures as follows:

- a. Scoring the result of the students' test
Score where the correct answer was given 5 and the incorrect answer was given 0.
Because the number of questions was 20,

so if the students answer all questions correctly, they will get the maximum score. In this case it is 100. (Depdiknas, 2006: 5)

- b. Tabulating the score of the students
- c. Classifying the score of the students
- d. Calculating the mean score and the t-test between listening comprehension of experimental group and control group by using SPSS 16 program (Gay, 2006:378)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The researcher used written test namely listening test to collect data, pre-test and post-test. These tests aimed at collecting data of the students' listening skill of groups, the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group was given treatment by using Barron's TOEIC preparation course material.

After conducting pretest, treatment, and posttest both experimental group and control group, the researcher found the score of listening ability of pretest and posttest of both group.

Table 1. The percentage of students' pretest score of listening ability

Classification	Experimental Group		Control Group		
	Score	F	%	F	%
Excellent	96 – 100	0	0	0	0
very Good	86 – 95	0	0	0	0
good	76 – 85	4	16	4	16
Fairly good	66 – 75	11	44	7	28
fairly	56 – 65	3	12	7	28
Poor	36 – 55	5	20	7	28
Very poor	0 – 35	2	8	0	0
Total		25	100	25	100

Based on the table above, it was known that most the students' pretest scores of

experimental group were in fairly good category. 11 students got fairly good or 44%, 4 students were categorized as good or 16%, 3 students got fairly or 12%, 5 students were in poor category or 20%, and 2 student got very poor or 8%. There was no student got excellent and very good.

In control group, the data indicated that of the twenty-five students, 4 student were in good category or 16%, 7 students got fairly good or 28%, 7 students were categorized as fairly or 28%, 7 students got poor category or 28%, and no one student got very poor, very good and excellent.

Table 2. The percentage of students' posttest score of listening ability

Classification	Experimental Group		Control Group		
	Score	F	%	F	%
Excellent	96 – 100	0	0	0	0
very Good	86 – 95	8	32	7	28
good	76 – 85	13	52	9	36
Fairly good	66 – 75	2	8	3	12
fairly	56 – 65	2	8	6	24
Poor	36 – 55	0	0	0	0
Very poor	0 – 35	0	0	0	0
Total		25	100	25	100

The data above indicated that the students' achievement in experimental group was improved, 8 students got very good category or 32%, 13 students were in good category or 52%, 2 students were categorized as fairly good and fairly or 8 % and no one student got poor, very poor, and excellent category.

In control group, no one student got excellent, 7 students were in very good category or 28%, 9 students got good or 36%, 3 students got fairly good or 12%, 6 students got fairly or 24%, and no one student got poor and very poor.

In the other hand, the data showed that in experimental group the students' achievements were improved, it was as same as control group. Moreover in control group there

still 12% students in fairly good category and 24% students in fairly category.

The mean score and the standard deviation of the students' pretest of listening ability. Before the treatment both experimental and control group were given pretest to know the students' achievement on listening ability. Furthermore, the purpose of the test was to find out whether both experimental group and control group were at the same level or not. The standard deviation was meant to know how close the scores to the mean score of the test.

The result of the students' pretest score on listening gained through the use of Barron's TOEIC preparation course package. It can be seen in a table as follows:

Table 3. The mean score and the standard deviation of the students' pretest of listening ability

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
Experimental	65.00	14.57
Control	64.80	11.94

Table 3 above shows that the mean score of students' pretest of experimental group on

listening was 65.00 which was categorized as fairly classification and control group was 64.80

which was categorized as fairly classification. Based on the table above, the researcher concluded that the students' mean score of experimental group on listening was statistically different with control group. Gay states (2006: 124) that when variables have equal intervals, it is assumed that the difference between close score is essentially the same so the students' mean score between experimental group and control group on listening relatively the same. Those experimental group and control group had the same or relatively the same baseline knowledge in listening before doing treatment.

In order to find the significant different, the researcher used t-test formula to analyze whether or not it was statistically significant. In this case, the pretest score was analyzed at level significant .05 by using SPSS version 16.0.

Based on the statistic test in asymptotic significant (2-tailed) column, in relation to the data of pretest, the .958 was greater than .05. It means that there was not significant difference between the students' listening ability both experimental group and control group before doing treatment. It

indicated that they were in the same level in listening.

The mean score and the standard deviation of students' posttest of listening ability. This part deals with the discussion of the difference of the students' listening ability after conducting treatment and posttest. The mean score of experimental group and control group in pretest was not significantly different. It means that they had the same level on the test content before giving treatment. Since the mean score of the two groups was at the same level, both groups were available to be treated. The experimental group was taught by using Barron's TOEIC preparation course package and control group was taught naturally by using handbook of SMK Negeri Tinambung namely English in Progress Business & Management for SMK Year XI: TOEIC based Activities, By Munash F. Anwar.

After doing treatment, the students in both groups were given posttest to find out their listening achievement at the same level or not by using t-test analyzed with SPSS 16.0. The results of posttest are presented in the table below:

Table 4. The mean score and the standard deviation of students' posttest of listening ability

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
Experimental	85.00	8.165
Control	79.40	10.440

The table above shows that the mean scores of both groups were different after doing the treatment. The mean score of experimental group was 85.00 which was categorized as good category and control group was 79.40 which was categorized as good category and the standard deviation of experimental group was

8.165 and the standard deviation of control group was 10.440.

For knowing the students' means score of posttest was difference, the researcher decided whether or not it was statistically significant. In order to know it, the researcher used t-test analyzes by using SPSS version 16.0.

Table 5. The t-test of the students' posttest on listening ability

Variabl	Probabilit	Asymptoti
Posttest	.05	.040

The data of posttest indicated that the statistical hypothesis is based on the statistics test in *asympt. Sig* (2-tailed), I concluded that the

probability is less than .05 or $040 < .05$. This means that H_1 was accepted, and of course the statistical hypothesis of H_0 was rejected. It meant that the use Barron's TOEIC preparation course package gave significantly greater contribution than the use of handbook of SMK Negeri Tinambung namely English in Progress Business & Management for SMK Year XI: TOEIC based Activities, By Munash F. Anwar. It could be stated that the application of Barron's TOEIC preparation course package in teaching listening could improve the students'

listening ability better than the use of handbook of SMK Negeri Tinambung namely English in Progress Business & Management for SMK Year XI: TOEIC based Activities, By Munash F. Anwar.

Discussion

The description of data collected through the test as explained in the previous section showed that the students' listening skill achievement was improved. It was supported by the rate mean score of the result of the students' pretest and posttest. The previous explanation had shown that the students' mean score after doing treatment in listening was better than before the treatment was given.

It showed clearly that the students' mean score between the results of pretest and posttest both experimental group and control group. In this case, the mean score of pretest for experimental group was 65.00 which was classified as fairly category and 64.80 for control group which also classified as fairly category. Then those mean scores was improved after giving the treatment. It indicated that both of them can be applied to improve the students' listening skill achievement.

The researcher also observed that the students' total correct numbers from either pretest or posttest were also improved. It could be seen that the mean scores between the pretest and posttest were improved where the mean score of posttest for experimental group was 85.00 which was classified as good category and 79.40 for control group which was categorized as good category.

Both groups had progress to the students' listening skill achievement. The control group which was taught naturally by using the handbook namely English in Progress Business & Management for SMK Year XI: TOEIC based Activities, By Munash F. Anwar and the experimental group was taught by using Barron's TOEIC preparation course package which had teaching material, teaching strategy, and teaching method.

As Ahmad (2008: 59) stated that choosing appropriate and relevant teaching material, teaching technique or strategy, and teaching method become evidence so that our learner will learn effectively. So the choice of teaching material, teaching strategy, and teaching method must be considered by the

teacher in getting the teaching goals that have been formulated.

The improvement of students' listening skill achievement was marked by the results of the posttest occurring in both experimental group and control group. However, the improvement rate of experimental group was higher than that of control group. The proof could be seen from the result of the t-test analyses by using SPSS version 16.0 (appendix 10). The researcher found out that the probability was smaller than .05 or .040 < .05 at the degree of freedom was 48.

The researcher concluded that both experimental group and control group were improved. However, the experimental group was improved significantly than the control group in listening.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher comes to conclusion. Both Barron's TOEIC preparation course package and handbook of vocational school namely English in Progress Business & Management for SMK Year XI: TOEIC based Activities, By Munash F. Anwar under this study of listening improved students' achievement. Both groups made progress to the students after treatment, but Barron's TOEIC preparation course package made more progress than handbook of vocational school namely English in Progress Business & Management for SMK Year XI: TOEIC based Activities, By Munash F. Anwar. Mean score of experimental group was higher than control group (85.00 > 79.40) which was categorized very good and good category. Beside that, based on the t-test analysis by using SPSS 16 program in asymptotic significant (2-tailed), the probability is less than .05 or .040 < .05. This means that H_1 was accepted, and of course the statistical hypothesis of H_0 was rejected. It means that the experimental group was significantly improved than the control group. So the researcher concluded that the use of Barron's TOEIC preparation course package can significantly improve the listening ability of the eleventh grade

students of SMK Negeri Tinambung academic year 2010/2011 than the use of handbook of vocational school namely English in Progress Business & Management for SMK Year XI: TOEIC based Activities, By Munash F. Anwar.

Based on the view of fact that the use of Barron's TOEIC preparation course package in teaching the listening and the reading skills has been proved to be more effective to improve the students' achievement in listening and reading English, the researcher would like to give suggestions as follows:

1. The teachers who teach at vocational school should be creative to choose the teaching materials which have relevance with the students' need in the field of job such as by applying Barron's TOEIC preparation Package.
2. The teachers who teach at vocational school should know English for Specific Purpose (ESP) as a guide to apply the teaching materials, teaching method, and teaching strategies in teaching and learning process.
3. The teacher should give more opportunity to the students to practice their listening skill to improve their ability in listening.

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