

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TAPE-SCRIPT IN TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION EXERCISES (A STUDY OF FIRST-YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN TOEFL PREPARATION CLASSES)**

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### **Abstract**

The objective of this study was to check the effectiveness of using a tape-script in TOEFL preparation classes in improving later performance on the listening comprehension section of a TOEFL Prediction. Two groups of freshmen were involved in this study; both groups took the same TOEFL Prediction pre-test, were trained in the same listening comprehension skills and strategies as well as the same reading comprehension skills and structure, and did the same post-test. The only difference between the two groups was that the experimental group (were shown the tape-script during the listening exercises) while the control group (were not shown the tape-script). Showing a the tape-script on transparencies was intended to help the students in the experimental group comprehend better during listening exercises as they would be able to see the written form of the stretches of speech they heard, and perform better later on the listening section of the TOEFL Prediction. The pre-test and post-test comparisons showed that both groups performed better in all sections of the post test (Structure, Reading Comprehension and Listening Comprehension), and that only on the listening section did the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group. This result strongly indicates that the use of the tape-script during listening practice was effective in improving later listening comprehension performance. The pre-test and post-test comparisons also demonstrated that the better performance of experimental group on the listening section was mostly due to its better performance on part A of the listening section which consisted of short converstaions. As more listening practice sessions had been spent on part A than on parts B and C following the university policy, this result may suggest the value of showing learners the tape-script during listening practice especially in the case of listening to short conversations or the possibility that a larger amount of practice with the tape-script on parts B and C will also lead to better later performance on these parts of the TOEFL Prediction listening section. The overall conclusion remains positive in support of the use of the tape-script during listening practice.

**Keywords:** Listening Comprehension, The Effectiveness of Using a Tape-Script, TOEFL Prediction Preparation.

### **Introduction**

Out of the three sections of the TOEFL paper-based test - Structure, Reading Comprehension and Listening Comprehension - the listening section seems to be the most stressful exercises as the test takers are required to answer 50 questions within 35-40 minutes time allocation inclu-

ding the directions for each part from the recording. Unlike the other two sections, Structure and Reading Comprehension, the listening section can not be repeated or paused, so for example, if the test takers have answered item number 30, it is usually useless to change or answer the previous item they have left blank, because at the sa-

me time they have to focus on the next item. While they are listening to a certain item it is also not possible to answer subsequent numbers. In the structure section (40 questions in 25 minutes) and reading section (50 questions in 55 minutes), the test takers can answer the questions in any order. They may skip the first five items if they think they are difficult, and when they come to the last item, they may try to find the answers for questions numbers 1 to 5, and check the others to change the answers or make sure that they are wrong. In other words, they can prioritize the easier questions, which often works better rather than strictly answering the questions in order of appearance but this cannot be done in the listening test.

In addition, listening comprehension is no easy matter. Even when listening not for a test, such as in listening comprehension exercises, students often have difficulties understanding although the teacher repeats the recorded listening materials twice or three times.

Willis (1999) points out that during listening exercises in the classroom students might need tape-script during or after the listening activities to help them comprehend what they hear by looking at the printed words or information and sentence patterns to allow them identify the meanings more clearly and logically. Listening comprehension is not something easy to do for the students because there are some factors which can influence the students' listening comprehension.

Brown (2001) makes a list of eight factors that make listening difficult. First, humans have limited memory to remember every detail such as a sentence containing clauses so that students often fail to focus on the main point of what they are listening. Second, unlike written language, spoken language has many redundancies, the speaker may repeat, rephrase, or beat about

the bush before arriving at the main point. Third, language has reduced forms such as "wanna go?" for "Do you want to go?" Fourth, people make variations when they talk; usually in unplanned discourse the language contains hesitations, false starts, corrections, and pauses, and the native speakers themselves may make grammatical errors. Fifth, colloquial language is informal speech, which often uses idiomatic expressions or even slang which may make non-native speakers confused. Sixth, the rate of delivery of native speakers is too fast for non-native speakers, and may lead to misinterpretation. Seventh, different stress, rhythm, and intonation produce different meanings, so if the learners fail to distinguish the differences, they may also fail to understand the meanings. Eighth, interaction as part of the teaching technique in listening may include the instructions given by teacher and the response from the students. The students may not understand the instructions given by the teacher in English, and the students are also often reluctant to ask their teacher for clarification.

Unlike Willis (1999) who suggests the use of tape-script in the classroom to reduce the students' difficulties during listening comprehension exercises, there are some scholars who suggest the use of tape-script or audio script as a part of the students' self study. Morley (1984) who is one of the proponents of the use of tape-script as self study materials mentions that by providing not only tapes but also the tape-scripts, teacher can motivate students to be independent learners because they can play, pause, replay the tapes as many times as they want. This also enables students to analyze the sound patterns, vocabulary, information, meaning, and grammatical patterns.

Celce-Murcia (2001) is also in favor of the top-down and bottom-up listening comprehension processes accompa-

nied with tape-script by indicating that the use of lecture script discussion in academic settings like in TOEFL listening section exercises in part C can be applied to both bottom-up and top-down listening exercises for the advanced level. In bottom-up processing, the use of a lecture script is intended to make students aware of the organizational cues in the lecture texts. In this listening exercise, students circle all the cue words provided in the lecture script to get the main point, then they listen to the lecture segment and note the organizational cues. Whereas in top-down processing, the aim of providing students with a lecture script is to enable students to predict the content of the next section. The students may be first asked to read the lecture script and after finishing reading they have to predict what will come next. Finally they read to check whether their prediction is correct or not. Since there are many learners who are good at reading but poor at listening, the use of an audio script of the dialogues is very useful as a means of using students' familiarity with reading texts to comprehend spoken form of the language. Reading can be used in listening activities to check students' comprehension.

Doff (1990) conducted research in a listening class, in which the teacher read a dialog twice but the students understood nothing when they were asked some questions. Then the teacher asked the students to open the books, and the students found the questions easy afterward. Doff concludes that in listening comprehension students need the audio script to improve their listening comprehension. Harmer (1991) supports Doff's theory by saying that not only students but also some teachers find long listening tasks difficult and therefore tapescripts can be given to both students and teachers to reduce the difficulties in the listening tasks.

The standard teaching of listening comprehension did not strictly prescribe the lectures to show tape-scripts. The lecturers can either use a tape-script or not use it while explaining the listening comprehension exercises. The current study aimed at finding out the effectiveness of using tape-script in listening comprehension classes in increasing students' listening comprehension performance. There is no record to date of such a research.

### **Research methodology**

An experiment was set up to answer the research questions. Two classes of English matriculation for first-year students at a university were involved in the study; one as the experimental group, and the other as the control group. These two groups each consisting of 22 students had shown similar results in the TOEFL Prediction pretest. Both groups underwent listening practices in 15 weeks. The experimental group was shown tape-script of the exercises in the practices while the control group was only exposed to the auditory input from the tape recorder. After the listening practices both groups did another TOEFL Prediction (post test) and the results of the two groups were compared.

### **Bottom-up and top-down views of the listening comprehension process**

(Buck 2001) indicates that when we are talking about how listening comprehension works, especially for L2 listeners, we will see how listeners use linguistic knowledge, such as phonology, grammar, and semantics and knowledge about the world, but when we are talking about the process of listening comprehension, the views of listening comprehension process most commonly applied are bottom-up view and top down views. According to Buck (2001) most people think that the listening comprehension pro-

cess will begin from the lowest detail, then gradually move to its highest level. For example, as soon as people listen, first they will work with phonemes to identify individual words, the next step is to analyze the sentence, after that, at the semantic level the sentence is interpreted literally, and at last this literal meaning is interpreted according to what the speaker means in that context of communication. Hedge (2002) agrees with Buck (2001), and believes that we use such a bottom-up process in listening by segmenting speech into identifiable sounds. Then we analyze the words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and intonation patterns. While analyzing the message, we use clues to arrive at the meaning. Some of the clues that we use to infer the meaning are such as the stress and pause as well as non-verbal clues like head shaking and frowning, and also the use of our lexical knowledge to find the relationship between one word with another in a sentence. So, for example a news reader says: *The terrible hurricane on the coast of Florida has damaged many houses and caused many families homeless.* Then as soon as we hear the sentence, we can immediately identify the agent or the doer is the noun phrase *the terrible hurricane*, *on the coast of Florida* is the location, *has damaged* is the verb or action, *many houses* is the thing object, *many families* is the person object, *homeless* is the effect or result of the damage. In this case, we use our logical categorization and relation of words in a sentence based on our experience of the world because we know that *the hurricane* is a severe storm, so when we hear the word *hurricane* we expect that there will be damage and a bad effect because of *the hurricane*.

Hedge (2002) is sure that the example of the sentence about hurricane above also shows that knowledge of syntactic structure can help us to understand

the meaning. While listening, we tend to expect the speaker saying something using commonly used structure such as subject + verb + object. Not only adults, but also children of English speakers will easily understand the message with that structure. However, when the speaker uses a structure which is less frequently used such as the structure of passive voice, children will find the sentence very difficult although the content of the words are exactly the same. Children especially hard to find what the speaker means in passive sentences since children's exposure to the passive sentences are rare. Their parents usually teach or communicate with simple sentences. Besides the clues that are discussed briefly above, another important thing in the bottom-up process of listening is memory. Listeners use memory during the process of identifying sounds, analyzing the structure, and expecting what is going to come next. Anyway, listeners do not need to remember every word, especially for long or complex sentences, they just focus on the key words and pauses.

In reality, the process is not always and necessarily in that order. Their knowledge of phonemes, individual words, syntax, and semantics may be used simultaneously in listening comprehension. People can even first analyze a sentence to find the meaning of a single word. People may also catch meaning before decoding the sound because people have linguistic and world knowledge. Normally when listeners are paying attention to a long listening passage with much unfamiliar information, listeners will not catch every word they hear. In this case, the listeners will rely heavily on the gist rather than on the detailed structure. So, after getting the gist (essential information) of the message, listeners will store the gist in their long term memory. In this situation, listeners make use of a top-down process to comprehend what someone is

saying. In Buck's view (2001) listening comprehension is called a top-down process if some or many types of language are used conveniently in any order or maybe simultaneously. The different types of knowledge influence and interact each other (a process called interactive especially by reading theorists. People do not need to know all the details in listening to confirm or reject their hypotheses. So for example, when we hear a teacher saying "Those students never pay attention to what their teacher says, they often come late and make noise, so ...." What the teacher said may help our hypotheses to say that the teacher is very angry." Our background knowledge about indiscipline and naughty students will help us to guess that teacher will be angry. Likewise, when we cannot hear clearly, such as at the train station, we may not need acoustic information to make sure that our friend is saying 'good bye' or 'see you later' as he is waving his hand. In this situation, we do not need to process the sound because waving hands is normally an indication of saying good bye, so we will not ask him to repeat the phrases because the place is too noisy and our friend will be getting farther and farther as the train moves. Although in some cases we may understand what we hear without requiring the acoustic input and the linguistic information, we should not underestimate both acoustic input and the linguistic information. Because when people interact, they use any information available including the acoustic input and the linguistic information and other types of knowledge such as world knowledge, context of communication, and the building of mental representation of the meaning, which are relevant to help the listeners to comprehend.

The theory proposed by Hedge (2002) suggests that people use the knowledge they have to comprehend a message. According to her the knowledge people ha-

ve is 'inside the head' information, and people apply such knowledge as their top-down comprehension strategies. Hedge gives an example that when an engineer said that he worked in a car factory that produced crankshafts, crankrods, and connecting rods; listeners can still understand that crankshafts, crankrods, and connecting rods are cars' parts because listeners know the speaker and the place. In this way, listeners use contextual clues and make connection between the message heard and the previous knowledge they already have to infer the meaning. Listeners' previous knowledge consists of mental frameworks in their memories about various topics.

### **Types of knowledge used by listeners**

Buck (2001) says that natural language is redundant. Weak learners may have difficulty to get the main idea of an utterance when a speaker speaks redundantly. Actually there are usually many clues from the speaker while saying something, and because of the clues, listeners can understand even when the speaker does not speak very clearly. The speaker realizes that he speaks redundantly and fast, but he normally does it because the listeners share background knowledge. Therefore when the listener and the speaker share less background knowledge, it is better to speak more slowly and clearly with high information content or non-redundant words. Flowerdew and Miller (2005) state that in listening comprehension, listeners use their knowledge to understand the meaning, and the types of knowledge they use to comprehend the meaning are phonological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and kinesic knowledge (knowledge about ways how people use movement other than speech while communicating). By making use of phonological knowledge, listeners break down the message into smaller units of sound. By making use of the smallest unit

of sound or phonemes, listeners can distinguish between two different consonants in the words *big*, and *pig*, and also distinguish between two different vowels such as the words *sheep* and *ship*. L2 learners may find difficulties identifying such minimal pairs when there are no such consonants or vowels in their L1. For example, French students studying English usually cannot differentiate between word *ship* and *sheep*, Spanish students cannot distinguish clearly the word *cut* from *cat*, and Arabic students have to think hard whether the word they hear is *ben* or *pen*. But the most important thing in listening comprehension is to know the stressed words. The stressed words are very important because they are usually content words or essential information that the speaker needs to convey to listeners. Whereas the less important words are the function or grammatical words, so speaker does not stress these words. In syntactic knowledge, the listeners link the grammar rules with words in a sentence, then they analyze the words in a sentence based on the grammar rule. The process of analyzing a sentence by using grammar rules is called parsing. By parsing the message they hear, they can differentiate the meanings of two sentences with exactly the same words in each sentence, but with different words arrangement. For example in the following sentences:

- *An old woman wearing a golden necklace was chasing a poor girl.*
- *A poor girl was chasing an old woman wearing a golden necklace.*

In the first sentence, the *an old woman wearing golden necklace* is the subject or the doer and the *a poor girl* is the object or the recipient. Although the second sentence contains exactly the same words, the meaning is completely different from the first one. Since the noun phrase *a poor girl* is put before the verb *was chasing*, now a poor girl is the subject and *an old woman*

*wearing golden necklace* is an object. Semantic knowledge is the knowledge of how people investigate the meaning based on the interrelationship among the words, phrases, and sentences. Semantic knowledge is also related to the investigation of the relationship between one sentence to another sentence in a discourse. While investigating the relationship between one sentence to another sentence, the focus of the investigation of the meaning of a sentence is not based on the form but on the semantic content. The mental representation of semantic meaning at this sentence level is called a proposition, which is the smallest unit of meaning to determine a truth value. Pragmatics deals with an utterance, not a sentence. The utterance in pragmatics is the specific linguistic realization of a proposition in a certain situation. Pragmatics is important to disambiguate utterances. For example, with knowledge of pragmatics, we can interpret a simple sentence such as *okay* to have different meanings depending on the context. Therefore, we know that the word *okay* in the first sentence is different from that in the second sentence:

- *My exam was just okay.*
- *Okay, I'll lend you a pen then.*

In the first sentence *okay* means not bad, whereas in the second sentence *okay* means to agree. Finally, kinesic knowledge is non-verbal means of communication. The non-verbal means of communication includes facial expression, eye contact, and body movement, as well as positioning. The kinesic meanings are often different from one language or culture to another. For instance, a shake of the head does not always mean to say *no*, because in some culture the shake of the head is an indication of agreement or saying

### **Using tape-script in teaching listening comprehension**

There are some scholars who support the use of tape-script for listening comprehension exercises. Willis (1973) points out that during listening exercises or, students get confused or panicked especially when they are trying to listen to a long conversation. Some of them may get behind, and some others may give up concentrating on the listening and may try to guess the answers wildly. This situation will bring negative effect because the students will not be able to understand the conversation although they try to concentrate well. Providing students with the tape-script during or after the listening comprehension exercises can help students to comprehend better. The students can compare between what they hear and what they look on the tape-script. From the tape-script, students can see the information and sentence patterns to understand the meanings more clearly and more logically.

Doff (2001) agrees with Willis by saying "I told the class to close their books and listen, and I read the dialogue twice. Then I asked the questions. But they couldn't answer most of them. So I told them to open their books, and we read the dialogue together. Then they seemed to find it quite easy. They couldn't understand it from just listening-it was too difficult for them." In addition to repetition and tape-script, Doff says that in listening exercises the teacher also needs to introduce new vocabulary during before listening to the tape. The steps in the listening comprehension are first, teacher introduces the topic orally. He may introduce new vocabulary when it is necessary. Second, teacher gives guiding questions and the students answers orally or in written. Third, the students listen to the tape and write answers for the questions. Finally, the students check the tape-script to relate to their answers.

To cope with difficulties in listening comprehension exercises, Little wood

(1992) stresses the importance of visualization in listening comprehension, which is not only the use of tape-script or a fragmented short text, but also pictures and diagrams that can help students to see and analyze certain important facts, especially for learners whose listening ability is low. Ur (1984) agrees with Littlewood, saying that listening provided with tape-script make students feel more confident and more relaxed. The use of text should be given proportionally, that is when students feel that they are not familiar with certain content or there is too much new vocabulary in the listening exercises. If the use of text is not given proportionally during listening comprehension exercises, the students will be too dependent on the tape-script or visual aids rather than their listening ability.

Morley (1984) states that by providing not only tapes but also the tape-scripts, teacher can motivate students to be independent learners because they can play, pause, replay the tapes as many times as they want. This also enables students to analyze the sound patterns, vocabulary, information, meaning, and grammatical patterns.

Graham (1997) says that self study access such as giving tapes to students is important to give students additional listening exercises at home, which allows them practice listening comprehension without direct monitoring. Anyway the students need to discuss answers by checking tape-script provided in the class room. Another self study activity is that the students do all listening exercises in the class room, but the students have to find the meaning themselves, without teacher's explanation. The students look up at the dictionary for new vocabulary or idiomatic expressions found in the tape-script after listening to the tape recorder.

Rost (2002) stresses the importance of self access listening center for

learning and teaching. One of the successful principle is to keep tape-script available in the library for reference for at least some of the material. These references can help students to be more familiar with different types of talks or conversations, so students will not be under pressure while doing listening exercise. Reading English sub-title while watching films can improve listening, especially, in dramas, for instance, where there are many idiomatic expressions which are difficult to understand by just relying on replaying some parts of the listening section.

Celce-Murcia (2001) says that the use of lecture script discussion in academic setting like in TOEFL listening section exercises in part C can be given in both bottom-up and top-down listening exercises for the advanced level. In bottom-up processing, the use of a lecture script is intended to make students aware of organizational cues in lecture texts. In this listening exercise, students circle all the cue words provided in the lecture script to get the main point, then they listen to the lecture segment and note the organizational cues. Whereas in top-down processing, the aim of providing students with a lecture script is to enable students to predict the content of the next section, and in this case, students may be first asked to read lecture script section, then after finishing reading they have to predict what will come next. Finally they read to check whether their prediction is correct or not. Since there are many learners who are good at reading but poor at listening, the use of audio script from dialogues is very useful as a means of using students' familiarity with reading texts to comprehend spoken form of the language. Reading can be used in listening activities to check students' comprehension.

Hunter and Rae (1991) state that listening activities can go together with

reading the tape-script as in listening to get information, listening for a gist, intensive listening, listening to identify main points, listening for interpretation, making predictions, recognizing words, finding the speaker, recognizing the tone and attitude, selecting a certain item listening for better pronunciation, and listening to discuss certain topics. In doing the listening exercises above, students can read the tape-script before or after listening, or while listening to help them confirm what they hear and discuss problems with vocabulary, grammar, effect, etc.

Phillips (1996) suggests the use of some fragments of the tape-script written on the board as the basis of an interactive question-and-answer method when presenting the listening skills. For example the teacher writes some fragments on the board as follows:

- Woman: *Great! It's seven A.M. And you have never been late since you had a new car.*
  - Man: *Right. But I still have to get up early or there will be no parking space.*
- Narrator: *What does the man mean?*
- a. ....no parking space on campus  
.....
  - b. .... late now.....
  - c. .... too spacious
  - d. .... leaves home early.....

Based on the fragments of the tape-script and the choices, the teacher may ask questions to students, such as: *In which line you need to focus in order to get the best answer? What are the key words in the second line? Why is the best answer d ?*

Flowerdew and Miller (2005) suggest that despite different students' learning styles and personalities, teachers need to encourage the students to use listening strategies according to specific learning training programs or integrate specific learning skill objectives in the classroom.



Flowerdew and Miller (2005) statement above is in line with Phillips (1996) opinion's about introducing certain listening skills and strategies planned by the teacher in the listening comprehension program. The purpose is to give the students the opportunity to be familiar with the listening strategy.

In the TOEFL listening comprehension section exercises, the students may look at the written conversations after they have tried several times to understand the conversations on the tape. To discuss the answers for the TOEFL listening comprehension section exercises, the teacher may underline a part of the tape-script on the transparency or students may also underline a part of the tape-script when they are given the copies of the tape-script.

### **Listening comprehension section of TOEFL**

Both experimental and control groups were given the same listening pre-test questions. At the end the TOEFL prep program they were tested with the same listening post-test questions. The format and the number of questions in the pre and post tests are similar to that of real paper based TOEFL tests. King and Stanley (2004) state that during listening comprehension section of the TOEFL, students usually listen to conversations which take place in academic settings and public places in United States. The language in this test is typically North American English by educated speakers. The total question items is 50, which is divided into part A, B, and C. It is important to train students to have similar listening comprehension exercises in preparing the listening TOEFL test. The listening comprehension materials were broken down into 24 sessions. The students practiced listening part A for 14 sessions, listening part B for 6 sessions and listening part C for 4 sessions.

The reason for listening part A to be given the biggest proportion to practice is that in this part there are 30 questions. Part B consists of 8 questions and part C consists of 12 questions. But the sessions in part B are more than those in part C because basically the listening skills tested in part C are the same with part B skills. Hinkel (2005) believes that although test-takers often find the rate of speech on the tape is a little too fast, the designers of the test are sure that the speakers on the recording talk at a normal speed just like in normal American English conversations.

### **Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology**

Some scholars agree that listening is an active skill. One of them is Woods (1992) who states that listeners have to participate in order to comprehend an utterance. In some cases people do not interact to negotiate the meaning. One example is listening to the radio, in which listeners cannot ask for clarification from the news broadcaster, but here too listening is an active skill. Listeners not only need to concentrate but also to process what they hear in order to get the information. While listening people may use top-down processing such as when they want to predict what a speaker is going to say, or people may use bottom-up processing such as when certain words in the sentences become hard to understand because the speaker does not speak clearly so that the listeners may ask the speaker to repeat some phrases to make the information clear. For instance, people may also use the bottom-up process to get someone's name by asking someone the person to spell to spell his name. Sometimes the listeners may even write the name down while listening. In our daily communication generally people combine both top-down and bottom-up listening comprehension processes.

Even in L1 listening, such as listening in a literary subject class, students may have problems when the teacher does not speak clearly when citing a poem or part of a novel and the students do not have the printed materials that they can read while listening. Therefore, especially for the purpose of language teaching in L2, the use of tape-script may help students get familiar with L2 sounds, as listening is combined with reading. For instance, teachers can provide tape-script of dialogs with missing words to be completed by students. Students listen to the short dialogs and have fill out the missing words. This example of bottom-up listening exercises facilitates learners to analyze the surrounding words while completing a blank. With the use of tape-script it will also be easier for the teacher to ask students to analyze the vocabulary and grammatical patterns. Some fragments of the tape-script written on the board are useful because the teacher can discuss the answers or introduce the listening skills. The teacher may need to distribute copies of tape-script to students to analyze parts from the recording by underlining, or may show the class transparency sheets of the tape-script to discuss. The diagram below (fig. 3.1) summarizes the theoretical framework adopted by the present study.

Two groups of freshmen from various departments of a university in Jakarta were involved in the study. All freshmen were supposed to join TOEFL preparation classes provided by the university. Before they joined the TOEFL preparation program, they had to do a TOEFL prediction test as part of a screening test. Students with scores below 400 had to join the TOEFL matriculation classes. Two of these two matriculation classes were chosen (26 students) to be the experimental and the control (24 students) group of the study.

At the beginning of the TOEFL matriculation program, both groups took another prediction test (pre-test). Four out of the 26 students in the experimental group and two out of 24 students in the control group were dropped. These six students had to be dropped from the study because their pre-test results were incomplete due to their late arrival on day of the test. These six students continued to take part in the classes activities, but their work was not included in the data of the study.

### **The Comparison Between The Control (NSc) Group and The Experimental (Sc) Group**

A Mann-Whitney test was carried out to statistically test the significance of the difference between the control group's and the experimental group's performance. This non-parametric test was used because the assumption of normality of independent t-test cannot be met especially with respect to part B and C results.

The experimental group significantly performed better than the control group in all parts. Part A showed the biggest difference between pretest and posttest and the highest level of significance.

Besides comparing the post-test performance of the experimental and the control groups in the listening comprehension section and its parts, we also checked whether the two groups showed different post-test performance in the other two sections (Structure and Reading).

There was no significant difference between the two groups in in the Structure and Reading comprehension sections. This indicates that the listening comprehension contributes the most to the significance in the difference between the two groups in the TOEFL complete test result. More importantly, it reinforces the assumption that both groups were actually similar, the only

difference was in their post-test listening performance.

## **Conclusions**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, both groups' listening comprehension scores improved in the post-test after the listening practices but the script (experimental) group performed better than the control (non-script) group. This suggests that the application of tape-script during listening comprehension exercises increased students' listening comprehension scores.

Ur (1984) cautions that the use of tape-script is important as long as the teacher tells the students that they should not rely only on reading the tape-script. It is a warning for students who do not pay attention to what they hear while the recording is played simply because it is easier to comprehend the listening comprehension exercises when the teacher discusses the answer and shows the tape-script. The students might think because they recognize written words better than speech then they just answer without concentration and wait for the tape-script to be shown.

Without tape-script shown, students actually can answer the items from the recording well if they keep concentrating if even when they are not familiar with some words. What the students should do is to find the relevant information or the gist from the listening comprehension passage, not trying to recognize every word but using their top-down listening strategies.

In this chapter we elaborate our discussion into three sections: the tape-script effect, further research, conclusion and suggestions.

The fact that the experimental group's TOEFL performance was better than the control group's TOEFL performance only in the listening comprehension

section of the post-test strongly indicates that the use of tape-script during listening comprehension exercises improved later listening comprehension performance better than exercises without tape-script. The tape-script shown during listening exercises allowed the students to make connection between some spoken forms they heard and the corresponding written forms on the tape-script. Therefore, the greater improvement in later listening performance may have been brought about by an increased ability of the experimental group to connect certain spoken forms of the language with the already known written forms.

The exercises (without the tape-script) themselves did not necessarily account for the general improvement in the post test shown by both control and experimental groups. We have seen that both groups performed better in all sections in the post-test than in the pre-test. Students may have been totally unfamiliar with the test format when they took the pre-test, for example, during the TOEFL pre-test many students were not sure about the instructions, so they asked whether they had to cross the answer or blacken the space available on the answer sheets. The lack of answering skills such as this, as well as unfamiliarity with other features of the test, can clearly have a negative impact on the test results. The exercises or practice given after the pretest would have at least familiarized students with various aspects of the TOEFL Prediction. Therefore, both groups' better performance on all three sections (Listening Comprehension, Structure, and Reading Comprehension) of the post-test may have been partly or exclusively caused by better familiarity with the test format. The difference between the experimental and the control groups in the listening section of the post-test, however,

could only be linked to the use of the tape-script.

It was also found that the listening improvement was mostly in part A of the TOEFL Listening Comprehension section. This can be linked to the time allocation for the exercises. It has been pointed out in section 3.4 that listening exercises related to part A took up a large part of the time (8 weeks for part A, 3 weeks for part B, and 2 weeks for part C, as shown in Table 3.11). The difference in the amount of practice between part A on one hand and parts B and C on the other hand was likely to be responsible for the greater improvement being in part A. If the amount of practice for parts B and C had been equally substantial, later performance on these parts may have been better. As Buck (2001) says, the more students practice listening comprehension skills, the more automatically the students can process the utterance they hear. The automaticity of processing what the students hear during listening comprehension exercise brings positive effect for the students' listening comprehension.

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