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The Effect of Task-Based Learning on The Listening Skills of Second Semester Students in The English Education Study Program

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of Task-based Learning on students' listening skills in English as a Foreign Language learning. The research used a quantitative experimental design involving two groups of second semester students in the English Education Study Program at the University of HKBP Nommensen. Listening skills were measured through pre-tests and post-tests consisting of 25 multiple-choice questions designed to assess students' ability to identify main ideas, specific information, and draw inferences from audio texts. The experimental group received treatment through Task-Based Learning activities, including task cycles, group discussions, and reporting stages, while the control group was taught using conventional methods. The results showed a significant improvement in the post-test scores of the experimental group, with the average increasing from 57.80 to 70.19. Meanwhile, the control group's scores increased moderately from 55.2 to 63.2. Statistical analysis using an independent t-test indicated that the obtained t-value (4.512) exceeded the critical t-table value (2.005) at a 0.05 significance level, indicating a statistically significant effect of Task-based Learning on students' listening comprehension. These findings support using Task-based Learning as an effective instructional strategy to improve listening skills in higher education. The study recommends integrating Task-based Learning into listening instruction to enhance student engagement, comprehension, and contextual language use.
Keywords *: Task-Based Learning, Listening Comprehension, Language Teaching Method*

INTRODUCTION

Effective dialogue relies heavily on listening comprehension. To participate in debates, follow directions, and assimilate information presented through auditory channels like lectures, movies, and conversations, students studying English must be able to comprehend spoken English. Afriyuninda and Oktaviani (2021), claim that listening is an action that allows people to process the information they have heard. It implies that students need to be able to listen well, particularly throughout the teaching and learning process. However, many kids have trouble hearing for various reasons, including a small vocabulary, a lack of exposure to many accents, inability to focus, and low self-esteem. These difficulties frequently result in dissatisfaction and a lack of desire to study.

Learning methodologies have changed to become more communicative and learner-centered by recent advancements in language instruction; task-based learning has drawn a

lot of interest in this regard. One pedagogical strategy that stresses language use is task-based learning, which involves students doing meaningful tasks that mimic real-world communication. To accomplish specific communicative goals, task-based learning encourages students to use language authentically instead of traditional methods emphasizing mastery of grammatical forms and structures. According to research Sholeh (Afriyuninda & Oktaviani, 2021a) task-based learning can improve students' listening comprehension, communication proficiency, and active engagement through pertinent and contextual task-based activities (Arifuddin, 2019).

To solve these challenges, educators should implement more student-focused and engaging teaching methods that enable learners to actively participate in their educational journey. One practical approach is the task-based learning method (Afriyuninda & Oktaviani, 2021b). The academic approach known as task-based learning emphasizes the importance of engaging in meaningful tasks that reflect real-life communication (Sholeh, 2021). Task-based learning enables students to engage with the language for a specific purpose while completing a task, moving beyond a mere focus on the language's structure or form. Enhancing students' listening skills can be significantly achieved by promoting attentive listening, appropriate reactions, and active peer engagement throughout this process (Juliana, 2021).

Based on the writer's preliminary observation at the English Education Study Program at University of HKBP Nommensen in second semester group A, many students are expected to struggle to understand spoken English materials. This issue becomes apparent through their performance in listening tasks, which show unsatisfactory results. Some students struggle to grasp audio texts' main ideas and specific information. Others were easily distracted or anxious about making mistakes, which hinder their listening ability (Juliana, 2021). Traditional teaching methods focusing on grammatical explanations and structured exercises are often less effective in improving communicative and contextual listening skills. Therefore, when students are given a listening test or passage, they struggle to comprehend the meaning (Joshi, Desai, & Tewari, 2020). The researcher provides evidence to support this statement, as follows:

Table 1. The Result of Observation

No	Students' Initial Name	Score of Listening Test
1	DHW	50
2	NFB	60
3	SAP	38
4	SUPB	45
5	LRYP	55
6	ASOP	65
7	WN	62
8	DTNS	50
9	JS	52
10	DEH	45
11	WNS	68
12	CM	35
13	JS	45
14	PG	45

15	MS	50
16	RS	40
17	RD	60
18	SLM	48
19	ZN	50
20	RS	65
21	GS	55
22	RLG	45
23	ENB	65
24	EBS	48
25	SMS	48
26	ROR	60
27	TMR	40

Based on the result of observation, it is evident that most of the 27 students from second semester group A at the English Education Study Program at University of HKBP Nommensen demonstrated low performance in the listening comprehension test. The students' scores ranged from 35 to 68, with the majority scoring below the acceptable proficiency threshold. Only a few students, such as WNS, RD, RS, and ROR, achieved relatively high marks above 60. However, a significant number scored between 45 and 55, while some, like SAP and CM, scored as low as 35. According to the program's grading criteria, scores ranging from 63 to 68 are categorized as "good," yet still fall below the minimum passing grade. Meanwhile, scores below 63 are considered unsatisfactory. These results indicate that most students demonstrate low listening proficiency, highlighting an urgent need for more effective teaching strategies. This condition supports implementing Task-based Learning as an alternative approach to improve students' listening skills through meaningful and contextual activities (Permatasari, 2013).

To tackle these challenges, educators must adopt more interactive and learner-centered strategies that actively engage students in the learning experience (Stefania Palieraki, 2021). One such method is Task-based Learning (Troussas, Krouska, Sgouropoulou, & Voyiatzis, 2020). Task-based Learning is an instructional approach that focuses on acquiring knowledge through engaging in meaningful tasks that reflect authentic communication scenarios. Instead of concentrating exclusively on the structure or form of the language, Task-based Learning enables students to utilize the language for a particular purpose while engaging in a task. This process encourages individuals to listen attentively, provide suitable responses, and interact with peers, significantly improving their listening abilities (Lestari & Br Sianipar, 2024).

According to Sholeh (2021), Task-based learning centers learning around completing particular activities. Task-based learning encourages students to work at their own pace while digesting and rearranging their interlanguage within their degree and area of interest. Arifuddin (2019), defines tasks as activities that emphasize meanings over forms, involve actual language comprehension, manipulation, or interaction, and can stand alone as basic components. Because projects are usually completed in groups or pairs, they offer the exposure and opportunities for language usage required to learn the language (Azlan, Zakaria, & Yunus, 2019). Students are exposed when they must read handouts to finish

assignments, when they hear their friends speak, and when the teacher gives instructions (Pingmuang & Koraneekij, 2022).

The researcher is interested in carrying out a study titled "The Effect of Task-Based Learning on the Listening Skills of Second Semester Students in the English Education Study Program at University of HKBP Nommensen." because of the significance of enhancing listening skills and the possible advantages of task-based learning. This study aims to determine if task-based learning may improve students' listening comprehension and general performance on listening tasks. The results will offer insightful information about successful teaching methods for improving listening comprehension in higher education settings.

METHOD

This investigation was employed experimental quantitative research methods. Ahmad et al. (2019), quantitative research was characterized as a methodological approach that employs the principles of the natural sciences to produce concrete facts and numerical data. It employed a range of statistical, computational, and mathematical methodologies to elucidated the causal relationship between two variables. According to Arikunto (2023), experimental design is a systematic approach in research that involves the application of a treatment to a specific group to evaluate its effects, while simultaneously comparing it with a control group to ensure objectivity and validity.

In this experiment, two distinct classes of students were identified: the experimental group and the control group. Both of those groups was given pre-tests and post-tests. The experimental group was undergo training through Task-based Learning, while the control group was received instruction via the traditional approach. A population consists of a collection of all elements that exhibit one or more pertinent characteristics. Arikunto (2023), defines a population as the complete collection of individuals or items that are intended for examination and possess specific characteristics relevant to the investigation. The study involves a population of 56 second semester students enrolled in the English education program at the University of HKBP Nommensen (Sreena & Ilankumaran, 2018).

Sample is a small segment of the population selected for a study to reflect the characteristics of the whole population. This study was employed the total sampling technique, whereby every member of the population was chosen as the sample for analysis. The sample was included all second semester students from the English education study program at the University of HKBP Nommensen, totaling 56 students divided into two classes. Class A was identified as the experimental group, whereas Class B was function as the control group. Consequently, the complete population was incorporated into the sample to guarantee comprehensive representation in this study.

This selection is grounded in various practical factors, including the alignment of class schedules, comparable academic backgrounds reflected in their previous GPA, and recommendations from the course lecturer. Furthermore, both classes are instructed by the same lecturer and adhere to a comparable curriculum, which contributes to maintaining consistency in the teaching and learning environment while minimizing potential discrepancies. The identified factors play a crucial role in preserving the internal validity of the study and facilitate an equitable comparison between the two groups. Consequently,

utilizing the entire population as the sample seeks to guarantee thorough representation in this study (Romeo et al., 2018).

The listening test was a tool for data collection in this study. The assessment featured 25 multiple-choice questions from brief dialogues or monologues, emphasizing critical components like main ideas, specific details, and inferences. Each item was presented with four answer options, and students had to choose the most suitable answer based on the audio they heard. This assessment evaluates students' listening comprehension and determines their proficiency in understanding spoken English material. The listening assessment was conducted as both a preliminary and subsequent evaluation. The pre-test was administered to assess the students' baseline listening comprehension skills prior to the implementation of the intervention. The post-test was conducted to assess the efficacy of the Task-Based Learning approach in enhancing listening skills.Quantitative data were collected through tests administered by the researcher. In order to obtain the data for this study, the procedures included pre-test, treatment, and post-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data

This study employed an experimental quantitative research design. The population consisted of second-semester students in the English education study program at University of HKBP Nommensen. The total sample consisted of 56 students, devided into two groups class as the experimental group and class B as the control group. Both groups were given a pre-test and a post-test in order to measure the students listening comprehension before and after the treatment. The treatment applied to the experimental groups was Task-based Learning, while the control groups was taught using conventional teaching methods (Priatna & Patmawati, 2020). The students scores from the experimental and control groups on the pre-test and post test were showed in the table below:

Table 2. The Result of Pre-test and Post-test in Experimental Group

No	Students Initial Names	Score Pre-test (X_1)	Post-test (X_2)
1.	WNS	76	84
2.	NFB	60	72
3.	WN	64	76
4.	SUPB	60	72
5.	CM	56	68
6.	ASOP	68	76
7.	SAP	52	72
8.	DTNS	56	68
9.	JS	60	68
10	DEH	64	72
11.	DHW	52	64

12.	LRYP	72	80
13.	JS	56	68
14.	PG	52	64
15.	MS	60	76
16.	RS	56	72
17.	RD	56	68
18.	SLM	60	72
19.	ZN	52	64
20.	RS	56	72
21.	GS	52	64
22.	RLG	56	68
23.	ENB	60	72
24.	EBS	52	68
25.	SMS	60	72
26.	ROR	48	56
27.	TMR	52	68
28.	EB	56	64
29.	PAJ	64	76
30.	RNM	52	68
31.	AP	60	72
Total		1.792	2.176
Mean		57,80	70,19

Based on Table, the total pre-test score of the experimental group is 1,792, with a mean score of 57.80. After receiving treatment using the Task-Based Learning method, their total post-test score increased significantly to 2,176, with a mean score of 70.19. This improvement suggests that the experimental group showed better listening comprehension after the treatment.

Based on table 4.4, the total pre-test score of the control group is 1380, with a mean score of 55.2. After conventional teaching methods, the total post-test score increased to 1,580, with a mean score of 63.2. The difference between the pre-test and post-test scores (d) was 200, and the total of the square of difference scores (d^2) was 1,952. These results indicate that there was a noticeable improvement in the students' listening comprehension. However, the gain was relatively smaller compared to the experimental group that was taught using the Task-based Learning method. This implies that while conventional learning can improve listening skills, Task-based Learning appears to be more effective.

The mean calculation of pre-test and post-test by the control group is calculated as follows:

$$Md_X = \frac{\sum d}{N} = \frac{200}{25} = 8$$

The sum of squared deviations of the control group is calculated as follows:

$D_x^2 = (\sum d^2) - \frac{(\sum d)^2}{Nx}$

$D_x^2 = 1.952 - \frac{(200)^2}{25}$

$D_x^2 = 1.952 - \frac{40.000}{25}$

$D_x^2 = 1.952 - 1.600$

$D_x^2 = 352$

From the calculation above, the control group's mean is 8 and the sum of squared deviations is 352. Based on the calculation above, the researcher identifies the data of the experimental group and control group as follows:

Experimental Group:

1. Total Pre-test Score (X_1) = 1,792
2. Total Post-test Score (X_2) = 2,176
3. Total Difference (d_x) = 384
4. Total Square of Difference (d^2) = 4,832
5. Number of Students (N_x) = 31
6. Mean of Difference (Md_x) = 12,12
7. Variance Component (d_x^2) = 155,87

Control Group:

1. Total Pre-test Score (X1) = 1,380
2. Total Post-test Score (X2) = 1,580
3. Total Difference (dx) = 200
4. Total Square of Difference (d^2) = 1,952
5. Number of Students (Ny) = 25
6. Mean of Difference (Md_x) = 8
7. Variance Component (d_x^2) = 78,08

After obtaining the students' scores from both the experimental and control groups, the researcher continued to analyze the data using the t-test formula. This calculation aimed to determine the effect of using Task-Based Learning on the students' listening comprehension in the second semester of the English Education Study Program at University of HKBP Nommensen. The detailed results of the statistical calculation are presented as follows:

$$t = \frac{Mx - My}{\sqrt{\left[\frac{dx^2 + dy^2}{Nx + Ny - 2}\right]\left[\frac{1}{Nx} + \frac{1}{Ny}\right]}}$$

$$t = \frac{12{,}12 - 8}{\sqrt{\left[\frac{272 + 352}{31 + 25 - 2}\right]\left[\frac{1}{31} + \frac{1}{25}\right]}}$$

$$t = \frac{4{,}12}{\sqrt{\left[\frac{624}{54}\right][\,0.03226 + 0.04]}}$$

$$t = \frac{4{,}12}{\sqrt{11{,}55 \times 0.07226}}$$

$$t = \frac{4{,}12}{\sqrt{0.834}}$$

$$t = \frac{4{,}12}{\sqrt{0.913}}$$

$$t = 4.512$$

According to the calculation above, it could be seen that t-count was obtained at 4.512.

Testing Hypothesis

The decision to accept or reject the hypothesis was based on the result of the t-test. The t-test calculation was carried out with the degree of freedom (df = Nx + Ny - 2 = 31 + 25 - 2 = 54) at the significance level of 0.05 was applied in this study. Based on the t-test result, it was found that the t-count is greater than the t-table.

t−count > t-table (p = 0.05) With df 54

4.512 > 2.005 (p = 0.05) With df 54

This comparison indicates that the t-count is higher than the t-table value, leading to the conclusion that the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of using the Task-based Learning method on the listening comprehension of second-semester students in the English Education Study Program at University of HKBP Nommensen.

Validity

Validity analysis was conducted before the instrument was implemented to ensure that it accurately measured students' listening comprehension. The type of validity used in this study was content validity, which focuses on the degree to which the test items reflect the instructional objectives and indicators of listening skills.

To ensured the quality of the instrument, the researcher developed 25 multiple-choice listening comprehension questions designed to assess various aspects such as identifying main ideas, understanding details, and making inferences. These items were constructed based on the course syllabus and the listening competence indicators for second-semester students in the English Education Study Program.

To evaluated the content validity, the instrument was reviewed by two experts, both of whom are English lecturers with professional experience in teaching and evaluating listening comprehension. The validators assessed each item in terms of its relevance to the objectives, clarity of wording, grammatical accuracy, and appropriateness for the students' proficiency level. Based on the suggestions provided by the validators, several test items were revised to enhance the clarity and alignment of the instrument with the learning indicators. Revisions included rewording questions, refining answer choices, and adjusting the level of difficulty (Muamaroh, Mukti, & Haryanti, 2020).

The results of the expert judgment indicated that the instrument fulfilled the standards of content validity and was considered suitable for assessing students' listening

comprehension. Therefore, it can be concluded that the test instrument used in this study was valid and appropriate for measuring the effect of Task-based Learning on students' listening comprehension.

Reliability

Reliability analysis is essential to determine the consistency and dependability of the test instrument used to assess students' listening comprehension. In this study, the reliability of the instrument was calculated manually using the Kuder-Richardson (KR-20), which is appropriate for instruments with dichotomous items such as multiple-choice questions. The KR-20 formula considers the total number of items, the proportion of students who correctly answered each item, and the standard deviation of the total test scores.

The test consisted of 25 items and was administered to the same group of students during both the pre-test and post-test phases. The reliability coefficient was 0.84 based on the manual calculation, indicating a high level of internal consistency. Based on reliability classification, a coefficient value above 0.81 indicates that the research instrument has very strong internal consistency. In other words, the instrument developed in this study is highly reliable in measuring students listening comprehension abilities (Hariyanto, Wijaya, Y Yahfizham, & Zaini, 2021).

This result indicates that the listening comprehension test items used in this study were consistent and dependable in measuring students' listening skills. Therefore, the test instrument can be considered a reliable tool for evaluating the effectiveness of the Task-based Learning method in improving students' listening comprehension.

Discussion

This study investigated the effect of using the Task-based Learning on improving the listening comprehension of second semester students in the English Education Study Program at the University of HKBP Nommensen. Data were collected through listening comprehension tests administered during both pre-test and post-test sessions in the experimental and control groups. The central research question was: Does the used of Task-based Learning significantly affect students' listening comprehension skills? (Andriani, Yuniar, & Abdullah, 2021).

The results revealed a notable improvement in the students' listening scores after the implementation of the Task-based Learning method. The experimental group's average score increased from 57.80 in the pre-test to 70.19 in the post-test. In contrast, the control group's mean score improved from 55.20 to 63.20. These findings indicate that students taught using Task-based Learning method better than those who received conventional method.

Furthermore, statistical analysis using an independent t-test showed that the obtained t-value ($t = 4.512$) exceeded the critical t-table value (2.005) at the 0.05 significance level with 54 degrees of freedom. Since the t-value was higher than the t-table ($4.51 > 2.005$), the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. This

confirms that the Task-based Learning method had a statistically significant effect on students' listening comprehension.

This result is in line with the study conducted by Hawara et al. (2019), who investigated the effect of Task-based Learning on the listening comprehension of tenth grade students at SMAN 3 Kota Bengkulu. In their quasi-experimental research, students were divided into two groups: the experimental group was taught using the Task-based Learning approach, while the control group received instruction through conventional methods. The results of the independent sample t-test showed that the p-value was less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Specifically, the experimental group obtained a higher average post-test score mean 81.00 compared to the control group group mean 67,30, with a t-value of 4.954.

This supports the conclusion that Task-based Learning provides more meaningful and engaging listening experiences, as it involves learners in completing authentic, real-life tasks that require them to listen actively and process spoken input. Compared to traditional approaches that tend to be more passive and teacher-centered, Task-based Learning encourages students to focus on understanding and using language in context, which ultimately enhances their listening skills in a more practical and communicative way (Palupi, 2021).

The findings of this study are also consistent with previous research that has demonstrated the effectiveness of the Task-based Learning approach in improving listening comprehension. One such study was conducted by Juliana (2021), which focused on university students enrolled in a TOEFL preparation class. In research, Juliana implemented the Task-based Learning approach over several learning cycles and found that students' listening scores increased significantly from one cycle to the next. The tasks used were designed to mirror the structure of TOEFL listening items, encouraging students to comprehend complex academic contexts and develop more effective listening strategies. These findings suggest that Task-based Learning is also relevant and effective in academic listening contexts that are aligned with international standardized testing.

Furthermore, a study by Ostad et al. (2018), demonstrated that task-based listening activities had a significant effect on students' listening comprehension. In their research, Iranian IELTS candidates in the experimental group improved their scores from an average of 13.12 on the pre-test to 17.54 on the post-test, while the control group showed only a slight increase from 13.26 to 14.18. These findings clearly indicate that the implementation of task-based listening activities substantially enhanced students' listening skills compared to traditional methods, thereby reaffirming the effectiveness of task-based approaches in improving listening comprehension proficiency.

When compared to the current study, the Task-based Learning approach also demonstrated a positive effect on second-semester university students' listening comprehension. Although the practical gain in this study was considered moderate, the statistical analysis showed a significant difference between the experimental and control

groups. This confirms that Task-based Learning remains a relevant and beneficial method for enhancing listening comprehension skills, even though its effectiveness can be greatly influenced by task design, training intensity, and the overall learning environment (Br Simamora & Oktaviani, 2020).

Findings

This study aimed to examine the effect of using the Task-based Learning method on students' listening comprehension at the second semester of the English Education Study Program at University of HKBP Nommensen. The data analysis revealed that Task-based Learning had a significant positive effect on students' listening skills. The experimental group achieved a higher post-test mean score (70.19) compared to the control group (63.2), indicating that students who were taught using Task-based Learning outperformed those who received conventional instruction. Additionally, the statistical analysis showed that the t-value obtained from the independent t-test was 4.512, which is greater than the critical t-table value of (2.005) at a 0.05 significance level with 54 degrees of freedom. Since the t-value exceeded the t-table value (4.512 > 2.005), the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. This findings demonstrates that implementing the Task-based Learning method effectively enhances students listening comprehension

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the Task-based Learning method has a significant effect on improving the listening comprehension of second-semester students in the English Education Study Program at the University of HKBP Nommensen. The findings revealed a clear difference in listening achievement between students taught using the Task-based Learning method and those who were taught using conventional teaching methods.

The statistical analysis showed that the calculated t-count was 4.512, which was higher than the critical t-table value of 2.005 at the 0.05 significance level with 54 degrees of freedom. This result confirms that the improvement in students' listening comprehension was statistically significant and supports the conclusion that Task-Based Learning is more effective than conventional methods in enhancing listening skills.

However, it should be noted that the improvement observed during the learning process was not always fully reflected in the students' test results. One of the contributing factors was the difficulty students experienced in understanding the speaker's accent in the listening materials, especially when native speakers were used in the recordings. These speakers often had different speaking speeds and intonations from those typically encountered in the classroom. Although students actively engaged in task-based activities and demonstrated good understanding during classroom practice, some of them still struggled to accurately grasp meaning when listening under exam conditions.

In addition, time constraints and the multiple-choice format of the tests may have hindered students' ability to recall and recognize vocabulary or phrases they had previously learned. The pressure to respond quickly often reduced their focus and accuracy in comprehending the recordings. This indicates that, while Task-based Learning has proven effective in enhancing listening skills through meaningful and contextual practice,

understanding speaker accents and pronunciation variations remains a significant challenge that should be addressed in future listening instruction.

Overall, the Task-based Learning method has made a positive contribution to the development of students' listening comprehension. Therefore, it is a promising approach that should be further developed and implemented in listening instruction, either independently or in combination with other teaching strategies, to optimize English language learning outcomes in a more comprehensive manner.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of this research, several suggestions are proposed for relevant stakeholders:

1. For Teachers

It is recommended that English instructors consider integrating the Task-based Learning method into their listening instruction. The method's emphasis on real-world tasks and student interaction has been shown to effectively enhance listening comprehension. Teachers are also encouraged to gradually expose students to various English accents and speech patterns to improve their ability to understand different speakers, especially in academic and authentic contexts.

2. For Students

Students should actively participate in task-based activities and make the most of opportunities to practice listening in meaningful, real-life situations. To overcome difficulties in understanding different accents, students are encouraged to engage with diverse audio materials such as podcasts, news broadcasts, and interviews involving native speakers from various regions.

3. For Future Researchers

Further research is suggested to examine the long-term effects of Task-based Learning on listening comprehension across different educational levels and settings. Additionally, future studies may explore the integration of Task-based Learning with other teaching methods or its application to other language skills, such as speaking, to evaluate its broader impact on language acquisition

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