ENHANCING LISTENING SKILL OF YOUNG LEARNERSTHROUGH VIDEO*MAGIC ENGLISH*

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ABSTRACT

Listening is one of the most challenging skills for language students to develop and yet also one of the most important. By developing their ability to listen well, a language teacher develops his students' ability to become more independent learners, as by hearing accurately they are much more likely to be able to reproduce accurately, refine their understanding of grammar and develop their own vocabulary.

Research shows that the best time to acquire a new language is before the age of 10; children are natural language learners as they use language skills long before they are aware of them. Young children love to play and learn best when they are enjoying themselves. However, it is necessary not to overload young children when working on listening tasks since they have very short attention and concentration span.Children will internalize a second language more readily if they are asked to engage in meaningful activities that require using the language.

Foreign language input can be provided in a variety of fun ways for kids. Expose children to language in a natural way, using games, music, and immersion techniquesto provide aural input and enhance effective language instruction. *Magic English* videos introduce basic vocabulary (numbers, family, weather, etc.) through cartoon and music. It is especially well-suited to early elementary students. Video modeling has been scientifically proven to be effective to enhance listening skill as well as to overcome some of the obstacles to foreign language learning in traditional language schools.For this reason, this essayexamines the goals, implementation, and outcomes, including the conclusions drawn about the benefits and drawback of using video to teach languages to young children.

Key words:young learners, foreign language learning, acquisition, aural input, Magic English video.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In this globalized world, communication in a foreign language is highly necessary. Mastering an international language such as English is a prerequisite for competing for an internationally standardized education and jobs. For that reason, the early teaching of a foreign language has been popular in many countries, including Indonesia. Studies show children have better memories than adults. Besides, learning foreign language is proven to increase children's cognitive ability and to enhance their academic skills. Thus, it is necessary to teach children a foreign language in their early ages.

Indonesian people generally speak local vernacular (e.g: Javanese, Balinese, etc.) as their mother tongue, and later learn Bahasa Indonesia at school. It can be said that Bahasa Indonesia is formally learnt as a second language. Nevertheless, there is a phenomena occur in recent years where young children acquire Bahasa Indonesia as their first language for some reasons. In Denpasar, for example, young children do not speak Balinese language with their parents; Bahasa Indonesia has become the first and only language spoken at home. Later, when these children enter school they will be taught another new language (i.e. English) which is a part of the National curriculum. English, used to be a foreign language, now has become a second language learnt by these children.

In learning a language, it is clear that listening is the first skill that children acquire. When students start to learn a new language, it is going in through their ears and what they hear is their main source of the language being learnt, especially when they have not yet learnt to read. Listening is good for the students' pronunciation in that the more they listen, the better they get, not only at understanding speech, but also at speaking themselves. Since children learn best when they are enjoying themselves, one effective way to give them exposure to aural input is by watching videos in English. There are a number of English learning videos available nowadays, one of them is *Disney's Magic English* which is used in this research. This essay is going to discuss how *Magic English* contributes as an effective aural input for young learners in learning English.

II. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

2.1 Young learners in second language acquisition

The term second language is used to describe the acquisition of any language after the acquisition of the mother tongue.It is commonly believed that children are better suited to learn a second language than are adults. Thus, young learners in this essay refer to the children who learn a second language in their early ages. Learning a second language is similar to learning a first language in that a child needs to experiment and produce utterances by attempting to figure out the patterns and rules that govern the language.

There are three basic concepts of second language acquisition, namely:

(2-1) The language is acquired through imitating and conditioning.Imitation is when the children imitate the language pattern or vocabulary from people around them – usually their parents or teachers. While conditioning is the habitual mechanism of any aural input received by children, which is associated with objects or events around them.

(2-2) Comprehension precedes productivity. Most learners begin their acquisition process with a silent period in which they speak very little. Later, when they have developed sufficient receptive and active vocabulary, they start to produce utterances.

(2-3) Listening and speaking skill precedes reading and writing skill. Listening is the main source of language when children start to learn a new language, especially when they have not yet learnt to read.

Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell first explored five stages of second language acquisition in their 1983 book, *The Natural Approach*. However, it is important to keep in mind that different children may be exposed to a new language at different ages, and that not all children may pass through all stages at the same rate or even in the same sequence.

(2-4) *Stage I: The Silent/Receptive or Pre-production Stage*

This stage approximately lasts from 10 hours to six months. Students have receptive words – words they can understand, but may not be comfortable using – and can understand new words that are made comprehensible to them.This stage often involves a "silent period" during which students may not speak, but can respond using a variety of strategies including pointing to an object, picture, or person; performing an act, such as standing up or closing a door; gesturing or nodding; or responding with a simple

"yes" or "no" . During this stage, teachers should not force students to speak until they are ready to do so.

(2-5) *Stage II: The Early Production Stage*

The early production stage can last an additional six months after the initial stage. Students have usually developed receptive and active words –words they are able to understand and use.During this stage students can usually speak in one or two-word phrases, and can demonstrate comprehension of new material by giving short answers to simple yes/no, either/or, or who/what/where questions.

(2-6) *Stage III: The Speech Emergence Stage*

This stage can last up to another year. Students have usually developed more words and can use short phrases and simple sentences to communicate. Students begin to use dialogue and can ask simple questions, such as "Can I go to the restroom?" and are also able to answer simple questions. Students may produce longer sentences, but often with grammatical errors that can interfere with their communication.

(2-7) *Stage IV: The Intermediate Language Proficiency Stage*

Intermediate proficiency may take up to another year after speech emergence. Students are beginning to make complex statements, state opinions, ask for clarification, share their thoughts, and speak at greater length.

(2-8) *Stage V: The Advanced Language Proficiency Stage*

Gaining advanced proficiency in a second language can typically take from five to seven years. By this stage students have developed some specialized content-area vocabulary and can participate fully in grade-level classroom activities if given occasional extra support. Students can speak English using grammar and vocabulary comparable to that of same-age native speakers.

Some research make distinction between the term second language acquisition and foreign language learning; language acquisition is when the learner obtains the language (i.e. mother tongue and second language) unconsciously and (probably) informally, whereas language learning takes place in a formal institution (school, language course, etc.) in which the learner consciously learn the new language. In this essay, however, the two terms are not going to be distinguished as the process of acquisition and learning the language appear to happen at the same period of time.

2.2 The importance of aural input in language learning

It has taken many years to bring the language teachers to realize the importance of listening in second and foreign language learning. As observed by Rivers (in Murcia, 2001: 70), speaking does not of itself constitute communication unless what is said is comprehended by another person. In accordance, Burley – Allen (as cited in Flowerdew, 2005: 22) stated that the average time spent on basic skills during daily communication process is 35 percent for speaking, 16 percent for reading, 9 percent for writing, and 40 percent for listening. For this reason, teaching the comprehension of spoken speech is therefore of primary importance if communication aim is to be reached.

Listening provides the aural input that serves as the basis for language acquisition and enables learners to interact in spoken communication. Effective language teachers show students how they can adjust their listening behavior to deal with a variety of situations, types of input, and listening purposes. They help students develop a set of listening strategies and match appropriate strategies to each listening situation. There are three main phases in a listening lesson according to Flowerdew and Milller(2005), such as:

(2-9)   Prelistening – preparing students to achieve the most from listening

(2-10) While listening – challenging and guiding students to handle the information and attitudes of the speaker during the listening.

(2-11) Postlistening – reflecting on the language of the listening (sounds, grammar, vocabulary, etc.) and applying understanding and interpretation.

The type of questions asked in a listening lesson very often depends on the stage of the lesson. With pre-listening questions, the teacher is usually trying to get students ready for the listening activity. The types of questions here will focus on eliciting background knowledge that may help contextualizing the listening; checking whether pictures are understood; and checking whether students understand how the while listening activity should be done.

During the while-listening section of the lesson, the students' attention is directed toward the activity. The type of questions the teacher may ask here will guide students to develop either their focused or general listening skill.

In the post listening section of the lesson, the teacher attempts to exploit and extend the information the students heard in the while-listening section. The questions here generally are more open or referential, with the intention of using the information in a more individual way.

2.3 Video viewing to enhance listening skill

The use of video to help enhance listening skill has gained much attention since the mid- 1970s (Flowerdew, 2005). Over the decades, researchers have shown that video often promotes the motivation to listen, provides authenticity of language use, and it aids the learners' understanding of the cultural context in which the language is used.

Video viewing in the language class, however, can be a relatively passive activity but is still beneficial in helping learners enhance their listening skill. When using video in the classroom, the teacher must select the video material and supporting materials to facilitate the learning goals. The type of follow-up activities and tasks are also vital for teachers to consider in order to exploit the material.Teachers must be sure to give a clear lead-in to what the students are going to hear and to provide visual back up to the listening wherever possible to help students' understanding.Another teacher's tasks when teaching listening is to train students to understand what is being said in the video. The learners need to participate in the process of listening and to engage in the pre-, while-, and postviewing activities in order to enhance their listening skill.

Some listening activities will wake up the students and create movement and/or noise. Others will calm them down and create a peaceful atmosphere. Teachers can use listening activities for both situations. For example, *Listen and repeat* activities are great fun and give the students the chance to get a feel for the language: the sounds, the stress and rhythm and the intonation. When there is a combination with movements or pictures, this type of activity also helps to establish the link between words and meaning. In addition, s*ongs* are also a form of "listen and repeat". All children love songs and like to repeat them again and again, especially when the songs have natural rhythm and element of fun, of playing with the language. Singing songs is a familiar part of the children's world, and it is important to play in their learning process.

The following section will discuss one material that is used to improve listening skill in class with a group of young learners. *Magic English* provides a good aural input for young learners of English, in which it allows them to listen to native speakers in very simple English and set a fun-learning atmosphere.

Description of Class:

The class takes place from 3.00 – 4.30 pm on Mondays and Thursdays. There are eight boys and six girls; age between 7 – 8 years old. The class can be categorized as homogenous

since all students appear to have even level of English proficiency. The students have learnt English for one year at school, in which, so far, the only aural input they have is from the teacher – a non-native speaker speaking English. To enhance listening skill, however, students need exposure to different speakers of English. For this reason, video is used in the classroom as a supplementary input.With the video viewing, children may gain real English input and learn to imitate the sounds they hear.

Description of Material:

The lesson described here comes from a supplement of the beginning of the course, in which the students are not yet familiar with the video. The material is taken from *Disney's Video Magic English Vol.1, entitled "Hello"*. After watching the video, the students are expected to be able to:

(2-12) greet and respond to greetings (hello, good morning, how are you? etc.),

(2-13) say numbers (oneto four),

(2-14) identify animals/objects around them (bird,flower, pop corn, etc.)

(2-15) pronounce ending –s in plural objects (one flower – two flowers, etc.)

(2-16) recognize family members (she's mummy, he's daddy, etc.)

(2-17) respond to yes/no questions (yes, it's a flower, etc.)

The students may gain the best aural input as well as enjoy the learning through video viewing which has four parts as described below.

In **part one**, this is what the students hear:

Hello	*(Play Time)Now repeat*
Hi	*Hello Jasmine*
How are you?	*Hi Aladdin*
Good morning	*Good morning Minnie*
Hello.How are you?	*Hello Mickey, how are you?*
Hello Donald	*Hi Goofy, how are you?*
Hi Daisy	*Hello Donald, how are you?*
Hi Minnie	*Fine, thank you.*
Hello, Mickey	
Good morning, Pluto	
Hello, Goofy	
Hi, Jasmine	
Hello Aladdin. How are you?	
Fine, thank you	

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In thispart, students are exposed to greetings "Hello", "Hi", "Good morning" and "How are you?". These are simple daily greetings that the students already acquired. One of the benefits of video viewing is that it catches the attention of students and keeps them focused on the audio visual input.In the earlier session, students perform external listening in which they simply watch and enjoy the cartoon.

Later, during play time, students are asked to repeat a number of phrases. Most students could be very excited in repeating the phrases, some students might be reluctant and remain silent, though. The teacher, then, will have to give instruction: *"Come on, all of you. Repeat!...Hi Aladdin"*. Whenthe teacher appears to have enthusiasm in repeating the phrases loudly, the students will be encouragedto perform the task as the teacher does.

In **part two**, this is what the students hear:

A rabbit … A bird …	*A rabbit…Mummy rabbit*	(Play time)*Answer*
Birds …. Rabbits …	*He's Bambi. Bambi is a baby.*	*Is it a flower? Yes, it's a flower.*
Wake up … wake up	*She's mummy. He's daddy.*	*Is a rabbit?No, it's a butterfly.*
Hello	*A bird.*	*Is it a butterfly? No, it's a rabbit.*
Good morning	*Is it a bird?*	*Is it a bird? Yes, it's a bird.*
He's Bambi. Bambi is a baby	*Yes,Bambi. It's a bird*	*Is he daddy? Yes, he's daddy.*
She's mummy	*No, Bambi. It's a butterfly*	*Is he Bambi? Yes, he's Bambi.*
Go to sleep Bambi	*No,Bambi.It's a flower.*	*Is she mummy? Yes, she's mummy.*

At the beginning of part two, students listen to some animal names, such as rabbit, bird, and butterfly. Since the children's first vocabulary is objects (noun) around them, this material suits the stage of children's language acquisition. Students are also exposed to the plural form of those animals. Here, students are introduced to basic forms of English, in which every plural object requires ending –s, i.e.: rabbits, birds, and butterflies.In addition, students are also introduced to family members, (i.e. *mummy* and *daddy*) and learn about third person singular pronouns (*he* and *she*). They as well listen to some instruction such as: *wake up* and *go to sleep*.

The play time provides more challenging tasks than those in the previous part, which is answering to yes/no questions (e.g. *Is it a flower?*) Firstly, the students could only respond in simple "yes" and "no", but later, after listening to repeated complete answers (e.g. *yes, it's a flower; yes, it's a bird; yes, it's daddy.*) students tried to give complete answers, e.g. *Yes, he's*

Bambi; yes, she's mummy. In this section, students started to appear confident and enjoy the learning very much.

In part **three**, this is what the students hear:

She's Daisy.	*(Play time)now repeat*	*(Play time) now sing.*
He's Donald.	*One flower, two flowers,*	*Mummy mummy,*
Donald loves daisy	*three flowers, four flowers*	*Mummy mummy,*
Hello Donald	*One bird, two birds,*	*Hello mummy, I love you*
One two three	*three birds, four birds*	*Daddy daddy,*
Dance ..dance ... dance	*One rabbit, two rabbits,*	*Daddy daddy,*
Pop corn ..pop corn ...	*three rabbits, four rabbits*	*Hello daddy, I love you*
One…two…	*Hello…hello…hello*	
One… two… three… four…	*Hi…hi….hi…*	
Dance Donald	*Love… love… love*	
Dance Daisy	*Mummy daddy*	
Daisy loves Donald	*Mummy daddy I love you*	

In the third part of the video, students are exposed to numbers i.e.: *one, two, three, four.* They also listen to sound /s/ in final position as the plural marker in English countable noun, such as: *one flower, two flowers, three flowers, etc*. The play time in this section is very easy and fun for the students, as they are only requested to sing a song. Every student seems to have a great time and gain beneficial aural input from the video.

In part **four**, this is what the students hear:

He's Mowgli	*It's a girl*
He's Bagheera	*Mowgli is a boy*
Mowgli is a boy	
A girl…	*(Play time) answer*
A baby elephant	*Is he Baloo? Yes, he's Baloo.*
He's Baloo	*Is she Jasmine? Yes, she's Jasmine.*
Dance, Baloo	*Is it a bird? No, it's a rabbit.*
	Is she Minnie? No, she's Daisy.
(Play time) Repeat	*Is he Aladdin? Yes, he's Aladdin.*
It's a flower	*Is it a flower? Yes, it's a flower.*
It's a baby elephant	

In the last part of the video, the students watch and learn again the material in theprevious parts. It is important to frequently repeat the material to give as much aural input as possible for the students. At the final section, the play time required the students to answer questions about the characters they have seen during the video played, e.g.: *Is she Minnie? Is he Aladdin?*etc. then answer in complete sentences: *Yes, she's Minnie* or *No, she's Daisy*.

Assessment and Follow-up Activity:

Many types of questions associated with assessment appear to elicit and test comprehension. The type of tasks in the video is considered to be *intensive listening* (i.e. listening for specific information involves finding the answers to specific questions). Asking students to listen and repeat the transcript in order to identify a certain grammar or vocabulary point is a further example of intensive listening, e.g.: ending -s as a plural marker in *"two flowers"*, identifying gender in third person singular pronouns *"he's daddy, she's mummy"*.

In part one, a classic test task gives a spoken stimulus and asks the students to recognize phoneme /z/ in plural objects; in this case, minimal phonemic distinction is the target.

studentsseeand hear　　:

students repeat　　　: /wʌnbɜːd/, /tuːbɜːdz/, /θriːbɜːdz/, /foːbɜːdz/

students see and hear　:

students repeat　　　: /wʌn'ræbɪt/, /tuː'ræbɪts/, /θriː'ræbɪts/, /foː'ræbɪts/

It is true that young children are natural language learners as they use language skills long before they are aware of them. As shown above, the students successfully repeat and make a distinction of the final sound /z/ and /s/ without understanding that those are two different phonemes (i.e. phoneme /z/ occurs after voiced alveolar /d/, whereas phoneme /s/ occurs after voiceless alveolar /t/). The two cases above have proven that video viewing is successful in providing meaningful aural input of English phonemes at a beginning lesson.

Some of the task in the video material might also be considered as responsive listening, which implies that the students are able to communicate their genuine understanding (empathy),

acceptance and, at the same time, increase the understanding of the issue by clarifying the student's statement. Thus, teachers must be able to communicate to the student theiridentification and understanding of the primary concern and the underlying feeling, as well as their owncaring. For example: response to greetings, questions, as follows:

Students listen and see   :

Students answer   : Yes.

Students listen and see the complete answer:

Students repeat   : Yes, he's daddy. Yes, she's mummy.

A question-and-answer format like theones above, can provide some interactivity in a listening task. The students' response is the appropriate answer to a question. The objective of this kind of task is recognition of yes/no questions and the third person singular pronouns he/she together with their appropriate responses. Again, this task proves that the video materials enable students to correct themselves, in which at first they could only answer yes and no, but later they could follow the complete patterns.

For follow-up activity, teachers might provide some supporting materials to assess the students' general comprehension. These models of activity below may be found useful in developing comprehension as well as listening proficiency.

(2-18) The teacher provides some black and white pictures (e.g. pictures of birds, butterflies, and rabbits) and distributes them to the class. Then, the students are requested to listen to the teacher's instruction.

Students hear: color the one bird blue. (*later,*) color two birds yellow

Students then color the picture of one bird blue. (*then,*) color the other two birds yellow.

Or, the students may hear: How many birds are there?

Students answer   : three birds.

(2-19) Teachers may ask students to make a yes/no question about their classmates. The teacher gives example "Is she Santi?" "Is he Angga?" while pointing at the students (i.e. Santi and Angga). The students then in turns practice asking and answering the questions.

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(2-20) The teacher could ask one student to mime the animals in front of the class, while the others try to guess what animal being mimed by asking questions: "Is it a bird? Is it a rabbit?" until they could guess correctly.

Providing a variety of follow-up activities after each video viewing, with a focus on activities that relate to the curriculum, helps children practice the language and see its usefulness. After the children have viewed the story on the video, teacher incorporates vocabulary from the story into a topic of the lesson. Once students reach a certain level of proficiency, they need to interact with a teacher who speaks the target language in order to progress to higher levels of fluency.

2.3 Benefits and drawbacks of video in language learning

The use of videos in classroom has distinct benefits and drawbacks as mentioned below. Video viewing is claimed to give beneficial audio visual input, such as:

(2-21) can serve as a substitute during the absence of the foreign language teacher

(2-22) creates visual contextualization

(2-23) appeals to different learning styles

(2-24) develops listening comprehension skills by exposing children to native speakers with a variety of accents

(2-25) provides access to aspects of the culture

Meanwhile, videos in language learning is also said to have disadvantages for some reasons:

(2-26) may be boring if overused; may encourage passive learning

(2-27) lacks feedback and reinforcement if the teacher does not speak the language

(2-28) does not foster interaction among students and between students and the teacher

(2-29) does not allow teacher control over content and vocabulary

From the discussion, it is indisputably that video, in this case is Magic English Video, has a meaningful contribution in enhancing listening proficiency of young learners through a fun and enjoyable learning.

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III. CONCLUSION

Learning a second language is similar to learning a first language in that a child needs to experiment and produce utterances that may be inaccurate yet reflect normal language development. While children may appear to be making more mistakes during experimentation, they are actually attempting to figure out the patterns and rules that govern the language. To correct the child's speech, teachers should rephrase or expand on what the child has already said. Feedback from peers will also help the children determine which phrases are right and wrong. Therefore, when teachers are talking to young learners, it is necessaryto say things clearly and to repeat them, as well as not to overload young children when working on listening tasks since they have very short attention and concentration span.

Young children use language skills long before they are aware of them. They love to play and learn best when they are enjoying themselves. Children will internalize a second language more readily if they are asked to engage in meaningful activities that require using the language. Demonstrations, modeling, and role-playing are recommended in order to engage teachers with their students. It is important for children learning English to interact with others in the classroom as much as possible. Speaking with their peers will increase confidence and motivation to communicate.

Videos provide children with much-needed interactive listening activities, a view of aspects of the culture that they wouldnot have an opportunity to learn about in the classroom, language models with a variety of accents, and the visual reinforcement of concepts learned in class.A well-planned and well-taught video-based program can begin to meet the needs for foreign language instruction, though there is no aural input from native speaker. Activities introduced in the videos can be used as a drive for all students, whether or not they receive language instruction.

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