



LISTENING MATERIALS IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOK: QUALITY REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to assess the quality of listening materials in the English textbook "Work in Progress: Buku SMA," published by Pusat Perbukuan in 2022. The research focused on evaluating the effectiveness of the listening materials based on a set of criteria developed by Zhang (2020). The research question formulated was, "What is the quality of the listening materials in the English textbook?" The methodology employed in this research was content analysis. The data were collected through document analysis, and the researcher organised and classified the data into eight criteria. After categorising the data according to the seven criteria, the researcher analysed the data chapter by chapter. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the findings. According to the results, out of the eight criteria, five were fully met, one was partially met, and two were not met. Therefore, it can be concluded that the listening materials in the English textbook "Work in Progress" are deemed "effective."

Keywords: Listening, Materials, English, Textbook, Quality Review

1. INTRODUCTION

When learning a foreign language, four skills must be mastered. These four skills will help you gain proficiency in the language. The four skills are all as important, but listening is arguably the very first skill one needs to master Yahmun et al. (2020) asserts that listening refers to a person's ability to catch or hear something. However, hearing does not equal listening. Essentially, hearing is a passive and automatic activity. A person does not need to actively focus on the process to hear sounds. Meanwhile, in listening, a person needs to focus. There are so many aspects that affect listening. Listening happens when we interpret the significance and meaning of the sounds. While listening,

we do not only catch the sounds, but our brain also converts the sounds into words, phrases, sentences, and messages. This shows that listening is an active and dynamic process that incorporates a lot of simultaneous events occurring inside the mind. Although it is not passive, listening is a receptive skill. This means that it is via listening that language learners receive language input. Listening serves as the main source of language input, especially for foreign language learners. Teachers introduce sounds in their pronunciation to the learners while they are listening. This is why listening is crucial for students' language development.

Additionally, Hendrawaty and Nurhayati (2019) asserts that listening is considered the

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most essential communication skill since learners' ability to receive will influence their ability to produce. Students learn word pronunciation through listening, which they will subsequently utilize to practice speaking new words. In addition to helping learners with their pronunciation, listening also helps them learn how to stress words correctly and use sentences correctly, which improves their language knowledge and ability.

Due to the dynamic process that occurs throughout listening, it is reasonable if students often regard listening as a challenging skill to master. Several research, including the one conducted by Darti and Asmawati (2017), have demonstrated this fact. They investigated English Department students in their second semester, who took a Listening course at one of Indonesia's state universities. Darti and Asmawati discovered three characteristics which make listening challenging for students. These criteria included listening resources that addressed accents, pronunciation, length of speech, and poor audio recording quality.

Considering this significance, it is imperative that language teachers assist the students in developing their listening skills. Unfortunately, both English teachers and students often disregard listening skills. Gilakjani&Ahmadi (2011) adds that listening is often less emphasized than other language skills. Hamouda (2013) supports this by pointing out that EFL learners face difficulties in listening comprehension due to the teachers are more interested in

strengthening other skills including grammar, reading, and vocabulary, compared to listening.

Adnan (2013) explains that English teachers in Indonesia tend to forego listening as they see it as a secondary skill. They believe that since listening is a skill that everyone eventually learns, it does not require particular effort. This perception is problematic, because according to Harmer (2015), there is no such thing as a linguistic skill that can be mastered only with time. Each skill must receive equal attention.

Saraswaty (2018) conducted research on EFL students in Palembang. She notes that there are three major challenge that are faced by the students in practicing listening. First, the time allocated to practice listening in classroom is limited. Second, the strategies used in classroom are deemed inappropriate. Third, the listening materials provided by the teachers are inadequate.

The researcher believes that the obstacles faced by language teachers in teaching listening contribute to this phenomenon of disinterest. Not only learning it, teaching listening as English teacher is also rather challenging. This is because teachers would need auditory equipment in order to teach listening. Additionally, it is fundamental for students to be able to hear the native version of the language they are learning. In some cases where the equipment is hard to obtain, the audio can be substituted by the teachers' voice. However, even this can be problematic

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as not all teachers are able to speak the words fluently, thus leading the students to incorrect pronunciations and misinterpretations of the words.

Arfiansyah (2018) states that learning materials play a vital role in English language learning. One of the most common learning materials is textbook. The majority of English teachers in Indonesia rely significantly on textbooks. Despite the rapid advancement of technology and the appearing of many online learning platforms, textbooks remain a preference among teachers. Gilakjani&Saouri (2016) points out that, unfortunately, many English as Foreign Language textbooks in Indonesia lack sufficient listening materials.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW**Listening**

According to Newton and Nation (2020), listening is "... the natural precursor to speaking..." He continues to argue that listening is crucial in the early stages of language acquisition.

Moreover, Sadiku (2015) defines listening as a condition of receptivity that allows for comprehension of the spoken language and complete participation in the communication process. Having good listening skills entails completely comprehending the messages communicated or exchanged in a spoken language.

Additionally, listening is defined by Nadig (2013) as the many processes of interpreting and integrating meaning of

spoken language. This would include catching speech sounds, grasping the meaning of words, and comprehending sentence structure.

Textbook

Hadar (2017) asserts that textbooks act as the primary provider of the curriculum. Textbooks also play a prominent role in academic setting. Evidently, Pratama (2017) states that since textbooks are directly related to classroom interaction, it can be regarded as one of the most crucial tools of English language teaching. a textbook is generally regarded as a bridge between the government's made curriculum and the one executed by teachers. They provide learning and teaching opportunities for both students and teachers by providing an objectively established didactical structure of the material. As a result, textbooks are perceived as curriculum facilitators and are sometimes referred to as curriculum substance.

Although Damayanti et al (2018) comments that there can also be some disadvantages of using textbooks, Richards (2001) argues that there are numerous benefits to using textbooks in a language classroom. The benefits are namely:

1. Textbooks offer structured courses;
2. Textbooks assist in the standardization of learning instructions;
3. Textbooks uphold quality;
4. Textbooks offer a wide range of educational resources;
5. Textbooks are efficient;

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6. Textbooks offer useful language templates and information;
7. Textbooks are visually appealing.

Teaching Listening

Karakas (2002) in Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) comments that there are three common subcategories of listening lesson. They are pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities.

- Pre-listening activity

This activity often has two basic objectives: 1) To enable the students integrate prior knowledge and set expectations for the following material.; and 2) To establish the relevant context for the specific listening materials

- While listening activities:

In this step, students review and revise their expectations. Depending on what they hear, they create perspectives and draw interpretations. The listening teacher may direct students to take notes on terms in order to identify the text's main ideas. Students complete comprehension questions and select specific details to complete out the table provided. while listening to the audio materials.

- Post listening activities:

At this stage, teachers evaluate and examine learners' comprehension, as well as clarify their understandings. Post-listening activities are crucial because they help learners improve their listening skills. These activities are most successful when they are

completed immediately following the listening experience.

This is supported by Wilson (2008) who describes three stages of listening activities as follows:

- Pre-listening: before the learners undertake the listening tasks, the teacher prepares them. Knowing what they are going to listen to will help them perform better when doing the assigned work. First, students are frequently encouraged to use their schemata to help them predict the content of the things they will hear. Second, the teacher motivates students to pay attention. They must comprehend why they must listen or why they must perform these listening tasks.
- While-listening: This stage includes the listening activities as well as the assignments assigned to the students. There are some variables that must be considered while assigning tasks. They are the difficulty level, the length of the passage, the instructional focus, and the likelihood of boredom.
- Post-listening: At the end of the listening activities, the teacher instruct students to finish assessment to help them enhance their skills and knowledge.

Listening Materials

According to Ocak et al. (2010), every student requires supporting materials during the learning process. Tomlinson

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(2011) asserts that learning materials are any items aiding the process of language learning. Language learning materials, according to Meraji and Zamanian (2014), are the key sources of information that assist EFL students as they learn.

Rost (2015) adds that teaching materials for listening consist of some sort of input and some sort of a task or a set of tasks. Language pedagogy relies heavily on tasks. As a strategy or a work plan for the students, task becomes the roots of listening. As part of the classroom activities, teachers typically design tasks for each meeting for students to comprehend and learn. The work will be included in the module of learning or distributed to the students and must be completed successfully.

Types of Listening Materials

Damayanti et al. (2018) asserts that there are mainly two types of listening materials. They are:

1. Created materials

Created materials are materials designed specifically for educational purposes. They are purposefully constructed with the intention of meeting specified teaching and learning objectives. Created materials include course book, audio materials, and video materials.

2. Authentic materials

Authentic materials are not designed with education in mind. They are centered on a variety of themes, including journalistic, pleasure, and social agendas, among others.

Although authentic materials are not targeted for educational purposes, they have immense instructional potential.

Criteria of Effective Listening Materials

Some experts have elaborated on the criteria of effective listening materials. Baleghizadeh (2012) proposes four features that must exist in order to call listening materials effective. They are:

1. Listening materials must incorporate both bottom-up and top-down processes. Bottom-up and top-down processing are used in real-world listening.
2. Listening materials must expose students to various forms of aims. Materials may introduce students to intensive, selective, interactive, extended, responsive, and autonomous listening depending on their level of language skill.
3. Authentic recordings must be used to create listening materials. It indicates that listening materials utilized in language classes should correspond to native speakers' actual discourses.
4. Listening materials should assist students enhance their listening comprehension instead of just test it.

Zhang (2020) proposes a modified and complete category for effective listening materials. He concludes that to evaluate a listening material, some aspects must be analyzed. They are:

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1. types of material;
2. types of activities;
3. context of material;
4. types of tasks (pre-, while-, post listening);
5. quality of audio materials;
6. context of video material;
7. application of listening skills and strategies;
8. actualization of the syllabus

3. METHODS

This research was conducted using the qualitative research approach.

Data Collection Technique

The data of this research were collected using the document analysis method. Bowen (2009) explains that Document analysis covers organizing information into themes, similar to how focus group or interview transcripts are analyzed. He goes on to say that document analysis incorporates skimming (superficial investigation), reading (thorough examination), and interpretation.

The document in the research is the listening materials found in the English textbook written by Budi Germawan, DwiHaryanti, and NiningSuryaningsih entitled “Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress untuk SMA/SMK Kelas X” published by Pusat Perbukuan Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset dan Teknologi in 2022. The book consists of six chapters and 182 pages. The textbook was downloaded on <https://buku.kemdikbud.go.id/katalog/Bahasa>

-Inggris-Work-in-Progress-untuk-SMASMKMA-Kelas-X**Data Analysis Technique**

The data were analyzed using the content analysis method. Three steps of data analysis in content analysis proposed by Ary et al. (2010) were used in this research. They were:

1. Familiarizing and Organizing

During this step, the researcher read the passages, questions, and tasks presented in the listening sections in the book. Then, the writer listened to the audio recordings. Next, the researcher organized the raw data and transferred them into processable format.

2. Coding and Reducing

In qualitative research, coding is defined by Gibbs (2012) as how we define the data of our research. In this step, the transcribed audio and passages from the textbook were analyzed and sorted into categories. The coding process was carried out manually by the researcher using Microsoft Word software.

3. Interpreting and Representing

According to Ary et al. (2010), interpretation refers to bringing out the message, retelling, and providing and constructing credible arguments. In this step, the researcher made an analysis on the quality of the listening materials in the book by exploring its strengths and

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weaknesses. Additionally, representation refers to how the findings are reported. In this research, the findings were elaborated through descriptive details.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After completing the data collection and data analysis technique, the researcher was able to answer the research question. The research data and the result of data analysis are described below :

Research Findings

The listening materials are sectioned into six chapters, each chapter related to one main topic.

**Table 1. Listening Materials in the textbook:
Work in Progress**

| Chapter | Text | Audio | Video | Picture |
|---------|------|-------|-------|---------|
| 1 | 1 | 2 | - | 1 |
| 2 | - | 2 | - | 8 |
| 3 | - | 1 | - | - |
| 4 | - | 1 | - | - |
| 5 | - | 1 | - | - |
| 6 | - | 1 | - | - |
| Total | 1 | 8 | - | 9 |

The findings of this research were reviewed and classified using Zhang's criteria for good listening materials (2020). There are eight main criteria followed by several sub-criteria. The main criteria describe the listening materials in terms of:

1. types of material
2. types of activities

3. context of material
4. types of tasks (pre-, while-, post-listening)
5. quality of audio materials
6. context of video material
7. application of listening skills and strategies
8. actualization of the syllabus

Discussion

After completing the data analysis, the researcher found that the book has fulfilled some of the criteria of effective listening materials proposed by Zhang (2020). However, there are also some criteria that are only partially fulfilled, or even not fulfilled. Zhang (2020) proposed eight main criteria followed by several sub-criteria. To elaborate, here is the description of the researcher's in-depth analysis of each criterion.

1. What types of listening material is provided in the book? What are their aims? Three types of listening materials are found in the textbook. They are intensive listening, responsive listening, selective listening, and extensive listening. Out of sixteen listening activities, four of them are intensive listening, the other four are responsive listening, and seven are selective listening.
2. What kinds of activities are based on the listening materials? There are seven types of listening activities provided in the book. They are:
 - a. True-False: appeared 1 time

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- b. Answering questions: appeared 5 times
- c. Circling words: appeared 1 time
- d. Gap-filling: appeared 1 time
- e. Note taking: appeared 3 times
- f. Filling table: appeared 3 times
- g. Ordering events: 1 time

3. Is the listening materials set in a meaningful context?

All the listening materials are set in a meaningful context as each of them is derived from real-life figure, events, tips, and local legend that is famous between students.

4. Are there pre-, while-, and post-listening tasks?

There were no specific pre- and post-listening tasks provided in the textbook. However, the textbook provides prior information for each listening activity, so that students can try to guess the context of audio that they will be listening.

For instance, in chapter 3 (p.56) the students are informed that they are going to listen to someone sharing tips on how to say healthy. There are also some pictures to help students gain more imagination.

5. How is the quality of the recorded audio in terms of:

a) Sound quality

Overall, the sound of the speakers in the audio materials are clear. However, there is a background music in the audio. Although the music is not very loud, it can be distracting the students from the spoken language. Moreover, the music is not considered

necessary because it does not add any context to the audio material. Music/sounds may be added if they add nuance to the spoken language.

b) Speed of delivery

The speed of delivery in the audio materials are considered proper, as it is not too fast nor too slow. The speakers also used proper intonation, word stress, and pauses to add nuances to the spoken language

c) Accent

The accent used in the audio materials is easy to understand. The words are pronounced correctly with no local accent. The speakers also did not use thick western accents that could confuse the listeners.

d) Authenticity

Unfortunately, this textbook doesn't provide authentic materials. The audio recordings are specifically produced by Pusat Perbukuan, Badan Standar Kurikulum dan Asesmen Pendidikan, Kementerian Pendidikan Kebudayaan Riset dan Teknologi.

6. Is there any video material for listening? If so, are the videos used to provide meaningful context?

There are several videos provided in the textbook, but the speakers do not speak English, so the videos cannot be used as supporting materials to practice listening.

7. Are there specific listening strategies practiced in the book?

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The book used top-down strategy for 15 of the listening activity, and bottom-up strategy for one activity. Top-down strategy is mainly used because in 10th grade syllabus of Kurikulum Merdeka, the aims of the lessons are for the students to identify general and specific information from various texts.

8. Does the listening material contribute to the actualization of the syllabus?

All the listening materials are in accordance with the syllabus. Although there are various types of listening activities in each chapter, all audio and tasks are designed to help students identify general and specific information from various types of texts.

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