

BRAINSTORMING, ACTIVATING, REINFORCING, APPLYING (BARA) AS A LEARNING STRATEGY IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Listening comprehension is an important language skill that needs to be developed continuously and intensively to enhance the student's language competence. This study used a classroom action research design conducted in two cycles of learning activities to improve students' listening comprehension through the BARA learning strategy. Indonesian educators developed the BARA learning strategy consisting of four learning stages: brainstorming, activating, reinforcing, and applying. This trial of the BARA strategy in an EFL classroom established the final construction of the BARA learning strategy. Data collection was done by administering a pretest, posttests and a questionnaire. The results showed that the student's listening comprehension improved significantly in the first and second learning cycles compared to the pretest result. Therefore, the BARA strategy is very effective in teaching listening comprehension. This study suggests that teachers should consider using the BARA learning strategy to improve students' language competence.

Keywords: classroom, listening, comprehension, strategy, learning

INTRODUCTION

Human beings, as social beings, indeed regard language ability as very important in their daily lives. Language teaching and the language-learning process improve students' abilities, including three significant aspects of the educational field: expanding knowledge, improving language skills, building positive attitudes and polite language (Mantra, & Kumara, 2018). Technically, language is a set of utterances that have meaning or arise from words. Therefore, language is a means of

communication as a symbolic system of meaningful sounds (Mantra et al., 2019).

Communication is the most important activity in human life (Wallace et al., 2004). Communication directly contains information in the form of feelings, intentions, thoughts and feelings (Radhika, 2017). When people communicate, they rely on excellent and correct language skills to achieve their communication objectives in any communication activity (Astawa et al., 2018). Nonetheless, it can be accepted that language skills still need to be improved

because the purpose of information transmission cannot be maximized during the communication process. Good communication skills are essential for teachers to create effective and efficient learning activities. Moreover, it also contributes to solving various problems encountered in learning (Astawa et al., 2017).

In learning a language, students have to master four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Mantra et al., 2020). Listening and reading are receptive, and speaking and writing are productive. Listening is considered the most critical language skill among those language skills because the language acquisition process is completed only through these activities. All language skills are essential and closely interrelated (Handayani et al., 2019). Through listening activities, someone can later master the language. Listening means not only hearing the sounds of the language but also understanding their meaning at the same time (Zhang, 2012). The term listening is, therefore, often equated with listening comprehension. Therefore, listening activities involve intentionality, concentration, or even comprehension (Khuziakhmetov & Porchesku, 2016).

Listening involves the senses of hearing and comprehension, performed with total concentration to apprehend, grasp, and understand the purpose of the speaker's verbal communication (Constantine, 2007). Listening is done to obtain information, comprehend the message or content, and understand the communication. Listening activities include an intentional element performed with sufficient care and focus on achieving proper comprehension (Ghaderpanahi, 2012). Consequently, all listening activities should be carefully designed to ensure students' active engagement in learning.

In learning a language, listening skills are acquired through an unconscious process called the acquisition process rather than through a learning process (Zhang, 2012). There are two types of listening situations: interactive listening situations and non-interactive listening situations. Interactive listening occurs face-to-face, via telephone, and many others—the type of listening alternates between listening and speaking activities. Therefore, there is an opportunity to ask questions for clarification, to ask the other person to repeat what has been said, or to speak a little more slowly. In this case, all

people involved can communicate more effectively and meaningfully (Astawa et al., 2018).

In general, listening is to perceive, understand or appreciate the messages, ideas or ideas contained in the spoken discourse (Ahmadi, Seyedeh, 2016). Through listening activities, people can find out what is happening in their environment. Furthermore, listening can also form a positive and sensitive attitude, allowing people to react quickly to surrounding events. Therefore, in language teaching, listening comprehension is critical to teach before teaching other language skills. In this case, teachers should focus on developing students' listening skills to develop other language skills more effectively (Mantra et al., 2020).

Based on classroom observation, teachers provided minimal time for listening comprehension activities. Most of the students in the listening classroom are mainly forced to memorize, retain, and accumulate information without having to understand the content of the information. Students are not encouraged to develop their thinking and creative skills (Handayani et al., 2019; Mantra et al., 2022). Students need to be given more

opportunities to practice their listening skills. Moreover, listening skills should be addressed and seen as necessary compared to other skills. Considering the importance of listening skills in language teaching, it is essential to further study related to listening skills.

Several studies have been conducted by researchers related to listening comprehension and have revealed vital findings about the importance of listening comprehension (e.g. Mulyadi et al., 2021; Vasiljevic, 2010; Pangaribuan et al., 2017), It is. However, most studies implemented well-known learning strategies in the field of education. This study used a recently developed learning strategy and was considered a special investigation because the study was part of an experiment in teaching English. BARA is a learning strategy developed by the author of this article. In this strategy, four learning stages were implemented in an integrated manner: brainstorming, activating, reinforcing, and applying. It is hoped that conducting this research may support the development of the BARA learning strategy.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used classroom action research, commonly abbreviated as CAR. Classroom action research is a type of research conducted by educators in the classroom or place of teaching that focuses on improving the learning process (Burns, 2010). Classroom action research serves both as a tool for solving problems in the classroom and for in-service training for teachers to apply new skills and methods and hone analytical skills. Moreover, CAR is a tool for generating innovative learning, improving communication between teachers and scientific researchers, and providing an alternative to problems that arise in the classroom. CAR is carried out in four phases: planning, action, observation and reflection.

This study was conducted in an English education program participated by EFL students currently doing a pre-service teacher training program. There were two types of research instruments used in this classroom action research two types of tests (pretest and posttests) and a questionnaire. After the BARA learning strategy was implemented in the classroom, pretests and posttests were used to collect data on the student's listening comprehension. A questionnaire was also

conducted to examine student responses to implementing the BARA learning strategy.

The pretest was used to determine students' existing listening comprehension, and posttests were used to determine improvement in students' listening comprehension following the BARA learning strategy implementation. The data were analyzed using the mean formula to find improvement in students' listening comprehension. Questionnaire results were analyzed using a rating scale to find changes in student behaviour when the BARA learning strategy was implemented.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Essentially, listening is the process of deepening our understanding of spoken language. This process occurs by matching or connecting the knowledge and experience schemas present in the informational content within the discourse to form an understanding. Listening comprehension is the activity students do to connect new information with old information to obtain new knowledge. In this study, data were collected by administering a pretest and posttest. A pretest was conducted to assess the students' pre-existing listening comprehension.

The average pretest score was 50.00, followed by 25 students. The pretest results showed that most students could only answer some questions correctly based on the criteria specified in the pretest. In cycle I, students showed improved listening comprehension after implementing the BARA learning strategy. Posttest 1 average score, administered by 25 students, was 75.20. It indicated that students' listening comprehension was significantly improved after implementing the BARA learning strategy. Most students were able to answer correctly based on the required criteria in the scoring section. It was found that the students could answer the questions about spoken dialogue correctly.

In cycle II, after the second posttest, the students' mean score was 84.50. The results of posttest 2 showed that the students' listening comprehension improved significantly. It is much better than pretest and posttest 1. Cycle II results indicated that implementing the BARA learning strategy could improve the student's listening comprehension. All students were able to answer the questions correctly and appropriately in terms of grammar and content. In the second cycle, students were more active and enthusiastic

and enjoyed the teaching and learning process. Observations also showed that students appeared more severe and proactive in teaching and learning. Furthermore, the results showed that all students achieved the success indicators previously determined before the study was conducted.

For supporting data, researchers conducted questionnaires to learn students' responses to implementing BARA to improve listening comprehension. Survey percentages were 75%, 20%, 5%, 0%, and 0% of respondents who responded strongly, agree, do not agree, disagree, or strongly disagree, respectively. These figures indicated that the students responded positively to implementing the BARA learning strategy while learning listening comprehension. In other words, most students agreed that implementing BARA learning strategy could improve their listening skills. Moreover, students' questionnaire responses indicated that the BARA strategy might help improve listening skills.

In this trial, the BARA strategy's stages consist of four learning stages: brainstorming, Activating, reinforcing, and applying. In brainstorming, the activities may include (1) asking students what they

know about the topic, (2) providing opportunities for all students to express what they have understood about the topic, and (3) providing opportunities for students to ask questions about the topic. Meanwhile, during the activating stages, the activities may include (1) exploring the subject matter, (2) questioning students about the learning material being explained, and (3) providing exercises to develop students' understanding.

Moreover, in the reinforcing stage, the learning activities may include (1) providing exercises to deepen their understanding (tasks, problem-solving, projects), (2) providing opportunities for students to discuss in small groups, (3) giving opportunities for students to present their results the discussion in front of the class, (4) giving opportunities students to ask questions about student presentations. Furthermore, in applying stage, the learning activities are in the form of (1) giving exercises to students to apply what has been learned in the form of products/works (monologue/dialogue, products, for example, sentences, paragraphs, speeches, conversations, conferences, paragraphs, text, pictures, designs, concepts, objects, etc.), (2) asking for students to present or demonstrate their

works, (3) providing students opportunities to ask questions about the presentation, (4) giving additional emphasis and explanations to complete the students' explanations, (5) closing the class.

The present study utilizing BARA learning strategy to improve students listening comprehension was regarded as successful in reaching the success indicator. It can be seen from the pretest result, posttest one, and posttest two, which increased significantly after being taught by the BARA learning strategy. Furthermore, the results of the questionnaire showed the students' positive responses toward implementing the BARA learning strategy to improve the student's listening comprehension. In other words, the students strongly agreed that the BARA learning strategy could help them improve their listening comprehension. This strategy allows students to maximize their potential to comprehend spoken discourses. Consequently, students may enrich their abilities by gaining much information from various spoken resources.

CONCLUSION

The present study was designed in the form of classroom action research

conducted in the EFL classroom. This study aimed to investigate whether students' listening comprehension could be enhanced by implementing BARA learning strategy. This study was carried out in two learning cycles, each consisting of two learning sessions. Each session contained interrelated activities: planning, action, observation, and consideration. First, the researchers conducted an initial reflection by pretesting the students. The average student scores indicated that students' listening comprehension improved significantly after implementing the BARA learning strategy. The questionnaire results also confirmed that the student's motivation to study listening comprehension increased after implementing the BARA learning strategy. The BARA learning strategy consists of four stages of learning: brainstorming, activation, reinforcement and application, all of which are highly effective in promoting active student participation in learning. This study suggests that teachers should consider using the BARA learning strategy in all teaching and learning processes to improve students' competence.

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