

Using Dictation Techniques to Improve the Eighth-Grade Students' Listening Comprehension Achievement at SMPN 35 Surabaya

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Abstract

Dictation is an ancient technique in teaching language becoming one of interesting ways to improve the students' listening comprehension proposed by Davis & Rinvoluceri (1988). This study was aimed to solve the students' listening comprehension achievement by using dictation techniques as a technique in teaching listening at SMPN 35 Surabaya in the academic year 2020/2021. Classroom Action Research (CAR) was applied in this study in two cycles. In this classroom action research, the technique was divided into note taking and partial dictation. The primary data about students listening achievement were gained from the listening test. Meanwhile, the supporting data were gathered from observation and documentation. The results on students' activity showed the use of text dictation techniques could improve the eighth-grade students' activity in listening. Furthermore, In the first cycle of the test' result, the teaching listening activity was not so good as what was expected. On the average, the percentage of the students' involvement in the process of teaching listening was only 45% in the first meeting and 50% in the second meeting. But, in the second cycle the percentage of students' involvement in the process of teaching listening increased from 77% in the first meeting to 80% in the second meeting. This improvement happened because of some revision, they were; choosing the text with familiar story for the students, reading the text more clearly, turning up the volume, and using more gestures in teaching listening technique.

Keywords: listening, listening comprehension, dictation

INTRODUCTION

Language is used as a means of communication. It functions to express ideas, thoughts, opinions, and feelings. English is an international language that is spoken around the world. It also has an important role in many aspects of life, such as: in business, education, technology, tourism, and in the international relationship as an important means of global communication. For this reason, English is taught in Indonesian schools, from elementary school to university or college, and even it is taught in kindergarten school. However, the teaching-learning English still faces some problems since most of students are afraid of using English. They think that English is very difficult to study. We have to help them to solve the problem, so that the purpose of getting success in teaching learning English can be achieved. English as a language has four skills, namely: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Among those skills, listening is the skill that is acquired and mastered first, and the other skills follow

afterwards. Listening makes sense of what one heard in which that listening is a primary skill, because children learn listening skill unconsciously and naturally before they learn the other skills. Listening as a basic of language skill was as a fundamental for interactive multimedia development in improving students' critical listening skill (Arono, 2014, p. 64). This means children learn to listen before they learn to talk. The development of listening skill has its beginning before the child enters schools.

Listening is the skill to understand and identify what others saying. When we listen to something, we should comprehend the sound so that we will understand what we listen to, and it is usually called listening comprehension. According to Vandergrift (1999, p. 168), listening comprehension is an interactive, interpretive process where listeners use both prior knowledge and linguistics knowledge in understanding messages. This means that it is a complex active process in which the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, and interpret stress and intonation. Listening is a hard skill that needs more attention than others. Listening comprehension is not either top-down or bottom-up processing, but an interactive, interpretive process where listeners use both prior knowledge and linguistic knowledge in understanding messages. The degree to which listeners use the one process or the other will depend on their knowledge of the language, familiarity with the topic or the purpose for listening. For example, listening for gist involves primarily top-down processing, whereas listening for specific information, as in a weather broadcast, involves primarily bottom-up processing to comprehend all the desired details (Vandergrift, 2016). It is implied listening needs a very hard concentration especially for young learners because they have a very short attention span. It cannot be denied that for example in a conversation, we sometimes cannot hear all the things that have been said. Once in a while, we just heard only the part of the conversation or not all because we cannot focus our mind on the things that the speaker said.

Thirumalai (2002, p. 6) argued there are several kinds of listening comprehension exercises, one of them is dictation. Davis & Rinvolutri (1988, p. 1) say "Dictation is an ancient technique in any average group of European teachers more than half do use dictation either regularly or from time to time in their teaching." It means dictation has been used since many years ago by the teacher in teaching language. This activity asks the student to listen to a paragraph and write the missing word. Moreover, dictation refers to a person reading some text aloud so that the listeners can write down what is being said. Some research in the classroom showed it

to be a valuable technique for language teaching, and for testing students' competence in the language they were trying to learn, especially to improve students' listening and writing skills. Students get the opportunity to hear and pay attention to the rhythm of a sentence, to listen to ideas related to other disciplines as well as to improve their handwriting and spelling.

Based on the observation in SMPN 35 Surabaya on 11th January 2021, it was known SMPN 35 Surabaya uses curriculum 13 (K-13). Thus, the students are expected to use English as means communication either in oral or written form. But, the use of English at this school was not optimal because the students did not get English from the elementary school. Based on interview with the students, it was found that the students were interested in studying English, but they found difficulties in listening. The eighth-grade students' listening score was low, the students made mistakes in answering the questions from the teacher, like inappropriate vocabulary, wrong spelling, could not catch the content of the text, and they also could not distinguish the pronunciation well.

To solve such problem faced by the students, it was necessary to conduct classroom action research on the students' listening comprehension achievement. Therefore, this research was done to improve the eighth-grade students' listening comprehension achievement by using dictation technique at SMPN 35 Surabaya in academic year 2020/2021. Related to the research background the researcher was formulated the research problem: How is the implementation of dictation techniques to improve the students' listening comprehension achievement and students' active participation at SMPN 35 Surabaya in the academic year 2020/2021?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Dictation

Dictation is an ancient technique in teaching language. It is one of the oldest techniques known for both teaching and testing of foreign language. By utilizing dictation procedures of various types, it demonstrates quite nicely that dictation should be regarded as a general method that permits a wide variety of different techniques, many of which are potentially interesting and motivating because they are designed to promote meaningful communication between students as well as to provide opportunities for creative language use (Davis & Rinvolutri, 1988). In addition, dictation is comprehension practice and should, therefore, be read at normal speed with normal expression. It helps students to consolidate written

structure, idiom, and vocabulary, which can already be pronounced correctly and it is also a useful test of listening comprehension. According to Lightfoot (2005, p. 1), dictation refers to a person reading some text aloud so that the listeners can write down what is being said. Concerning to the definitions mentioned, dictation is known as a teaching device and it is used as instrument for teacher to test their students' language skill. Dictation also can prove an effective instructional device for foreign language listening.

B. The Technique of using Dictation in Teaching Listening

Dictation is an instrument of teaching device. It is easy to use because it can be prepared in advanced and checked directly after the exercise. However, it will depend on the teacher herself to manage the class in using it. It is important for the teachers to make some preparation when they are going to give a dictation test to their students. Oller (1979, p. 39) states, as an integrative test, dictation has to meet the naturalness requirements: a) The sequences of words or phrases to be dictated are selected from normal prose, or dialogue, or some other natural form of discourse (or perhaps the sequences are carefully contrived to mirror normal discourse, as in well-written function). b) The material is presented orally in sequences that are long enough to challenge the short-term memory of the learners. From the requirements above, it is clear that the materials of dictation are any single words, compound words, word phrases, and sentences which are going to be dictated. The teacher can choose the material from the book provided and used as reference and the teacher may use a tape recorder as an aid in presenting the test. For Junior high school students, teacher should choose the material which can be easily done by students. Besides preparing the materials, teachers have to select suitable procedures which are appropriated in giving dictation test.

C. Listening Comprehension

Listening is one of language skill that is very important. People need this skill in daily activity. They do this activity much more than the other skills such as: speaking, reading, and writing. Most people assume that listening has the same meaning as hearing and this is one of the problems that the students face. Actually, there is the difference between listening and hearing. According to Tarigan (1994, p. 28), listening is a process of hearing with comprehension an appreciation, while hearing is a process to perceive sounds, which is not followed by comprehension and appreciation. Rivers & Temperley (1978) also stated 45% of the time adults spend in communication activities is on listening, 30% on speaking, 16% on

reading, and 9% on writing. In addition, Brown (2004, p. 284) agrees that listening especially for academic and professional context is a highly refined skill that requires a learners' attention to series of strategies for extracting meaning from texts. This means the students have to pay attention and understand the text given. The students have to understand the content of the text; they have to listen for general n specific information of the text. General information that involving listening for finding topic and listening for main ideas. While listening for finding specific information that involving listening for finding detailed information of the text.

Brown (2004, p. 249) argues "listening comprehension is the psychomotor process of receiving sound waves through the ear and transmitting nerve impulses to the brain". It means that listening comprehension is an interactive process and important for listener to keep it in mind. In teaching listening comprehension, the teacher should be clear about the teaching goal in teaching lesson for listening comprehension (Thirumalai, 2002, p. 3). The goal must be made explicit and explained to the students so that the learning process becomes meaningful to them. The second is the teacher should give direction to the students as to what they listen for. The third is the teacher should insist or active evident/overt students' participation. In this case the students should provide some written/ physical response. In other words, it needs to be demonstrated by the students.

D. The Purpose of Teaching Listening Comprehension

In listening activity, the students listen for something for purpose. It means that the students do not pay attention to everything: they listen selectively, according to the purpose of the task. Richards (1990, p. 58) differentiates between an interactional and a transactional purpose for communication. Interactional use of language is socially oriented, existing largely to satisfy the social needs of the participant; for example, small talk and casual conversation. In contrast with interactional listening, transactional listening requires accurate comprehension of a message with no opportunity for clarification with the speaker. Therefore, the purpose of this research concerned with transactional listening, as it is used primarily for communicating information, such as writing down a message or carrying out an instruction. From the purpose of listening, we can find it greatly reduces the burden of comprehension since listeners know that they need to listen for something very specific, instead of trying to understand every word.

E. The Use of Dictation to Improve the Students' Listening Comprehension

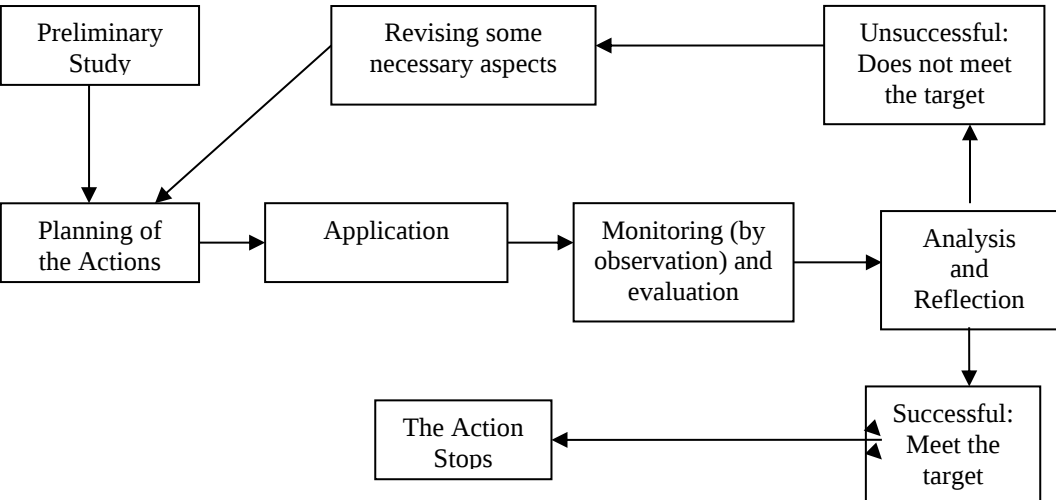
Dictation is a useful and legitimate literacy activity in the classroom at all levels. However, its usefulness is depending upon the way it is carried out in class. Dictation is fundamentally listening skill which means that students are required to listen to an unseen text and to write down the text. It encourages intensive listening, short-term memory work and meaningful practice in grammar and writing (Davis & Rinvolutri, 1988). Students who do not understand the text cannot possibly write down the words, so listening comprehension is another important component. Additionally, when teachers give the students text dictation, it will improve their spelling, their vocabulary range, their listening abilities, their comprehension, and will have a direct effect on their performance. Furthermore, dictation was confirmed to be an effective teaching method in his experiment, he decides the students into three groups, and the student in all three groups showed statistically significant improvement in foreign language listening comprehension. He used clued dictation in his research. It means that he dictated the text and deleted some words. The result of this experiment reported that dictation is effective in foreign language teaching.

RESEARCH METHOD

A. Research Design

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009, p. 9), research means any sort of careful, systematic, patient study and investigation in some field of knowledge, undertaken to discover or establish facts and principles. In other words, it means that research is a scientific activity undertaken to test the truth of knowledge in order to find new findings. Whereas, design is used in research to refer to the researcher's plan of how to proceed (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992, p. 58). The design of this research was classroom action research. The researcher chose the classroom action research in conducting the study because the purpose of the classroom action research is to improve the current class condition or to increase the quality of any educational matters. The researcher as the English teacher at this school conducted this study in collaboration with the other English teachers at this school. This collaboration focused on discussing and carrying out some action to find an appropriate technique in teaching listening. In this case, dictation techniques were chosen by the researcher and the English teacher as the technique that was predicted could improve the students' listening comprehension achievement. The action

model was adopted from Kemmis and McTaggart (in Hopkins, 1993, p. 48). It began with planning of the action, application, monitoring by observation and evaluation, and ended with analysis and reflection. The design of this classroom action research is illustrated in the following diagram.



(Source: Kemmis and McTaggart; in Hopkins, 1993, p. 48)

Figure 1. Model of Classroom Action Research

The research design was organized through the following procedures:

1. Preliminary study
 - a. The researcher found out the fact about the condition of the students' listening comprehension achievement.
 - b. The researcher found out the problem to be solved relating to the students' listening comprehension achievement through text dictation.
2. Planning of the action

The researcher and the English teacher designed the lesson plan, prepared the materials that were used in this research, and also designed the instruments of evaluation.
3. Application (action)

The researcher applied the teaching listening comprehension through the text dictation. In this case, the researcher/the English teacher dictated a text to the students three times and asked the students to write it down.
4. Observation

The researcher was helped or assisted by the English teacher in observing the students during teaching learning process of listening comprehension through text dictation and take some necessary aspect related to the teaching learning process. After that, the students' listening comprehension achievement was measured through listening test.

5. Reflection

In this phase, the researcher did some evaluation from the result of listening test to know whether the target could be achieved or not. If the target had been achieved, the action cycle should be stopped. But if it is not, it would be continued to the next cycle by revising some necessary aspects.

Before giving the action, the researcher and the English teacher give the explanation about the procedure of teaching listening by using text dictation clearly, so that the action was conducted appropriately based on the procedure. However, due to the limited time, the action cycle is limited up to two cycles.

B. Research Subject

In this action research, the research subjects were taken from SMPN 35 Surabaya in the academic year 2020/2021. In this school, there are four classes and each class has about 40 students. However, there was only one class that was chosen purposively, that was class VIII-A, which consisted of 40 students. The researcher selected this class based on the researcher's observation during listening activity that was conducted by the researcher as the English teacher at this school, which was found that less than 75% students' listening score could not achieve the minimal score that is 75 based on SKM (Standard of minimum passing-grade or requirement). So, this class listening comprehension achievement was needed to be improved.

C. Data Collection Method

Data collection methods applied in this action research were listening comprehension test and observation for collecting primary data. Meanwhile, interview, and documentation were used for collecting the supporting data.

1. Listening Test

Weir (1993, p. 51) states there are two kinds of testing listening comprehension, they are: testing extensive listening skill and testing of intensive listening. Testing extensive listening skill can be divided into multiple choice questions, testing short answer questions, and information transfer techniques. Meanwhile, the testing of intensive listening is divided into dictation and listening recall. So, this research concerned with the testing of intensive listening, that is dictation.

The listening test was given to measure the students' listening comprehension through text dictation. It consisted of a text, which was read by the researcher, and the material was familiar to the students. Based on the

curriculum, the topics of the material are “Holiday” and “Teenage Life”. In each cycle, the researcher gave two kinds of dictation, they were cloze/partial dictation and note taking. The test was conducted after each cycle done. In every cycle, the test consists of two kinds of test. The test lasted for 90 minutes and there were 20 items. Dealing with scoring, each correct answer of the test items was scored 5 points. So, the total score of the test item was 100 points. Then, the researcher conducted analysis and reflection to know whether student' listening comprehension achievement could be improved by using dictation techniques. After conducting analysis and reflection, if it was known that the students did not achieve the target minimal score that is 64, some aspects need to be revised to improve the result of the research. One of the aspects was liked revising the lesson plan by finding the easier topic to make the students easier in answering the questions. That was why the second cycle would be conducted. After analyzing and reflecting the actions in cycle 2, if it concluded that the target score was achieved and it could be reached by 75% of the whole subjects of the research, the cycle would be stopped.

2. Observation

According to McMillan (1992, p. 128), observation allows the researcher to take into account important contextual factors that may influence the interpretation and use of the result. In this case, the researcher noted the students' activity during listening comprehension class through text dictation. The observation was focused on the students' active and passive participation in the listening teaching process. Asking questions, answering questions, paying attention and being enthusiastic are indicators of the active students. Meanwhile, never asking question, never answering questions, never paying attention, and never being enthusiastic to the lesson are indicators of the passive students

3. Documentation

Documentation was used in this action research to support the mean data. Arikunto (2013) says documentary studies are held for the purpose to find the data in form of notes, transcripts, books, newspaper, magazines, etc. In this research the supporting data was taken from the school document dealing with the personnel of the school and the names of respondents, curriculum, and the school profile.

D. Data Analysis Method

An important step in research was analyzing the data. The purpose of the data analysis is to interpret and analyze the data into meaningful information. The data analysis method applied in this research was descriptive statistics. The formula to analyze the students' listening comprehension achievement test is as follows:

$$M = \sum x / N$$

Notes:

M: The mean score

$\sum x$: The total score of the students' listening comprehension test

N: The number of the students

(Adapted from Arikunto, 2013)

The criteria of success in this research were to know the improvement that had been gained by the students concerning with the achievement of listening comprehension. The criteria were based on the SKM (Standard of minimum passing grade of requirement) score in listening comprehension test, which was at least 64 and should be reached by 75% of the whole subjects of the research. Besides, the action was considered successful if 75% of the subjects did at least three indicators of observation stated in checklist.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Cycle One

The researcher conducted the first cycle on April 9th 2020. There were two kinds of data gathered in this action. The first, data were collected by using observation that focused on the students' participation in the process of teaching listening. Meanwhile, the second, data was focused on the students' listening comprehension achievement after having the action of teaching listening through text dictation techniques. The data were collected by using listening test in each cycle. Observation was done by both the researcher and the English teacher, using checklist. It was done during the process of teaching listening. The observation was focused on the students' activity. The indicators of the active students were: (1) Asking question, (2) Answering question, (3) Paying attention, and (4) Being enthusiastic on the lesson. The students were considered active when they fulfilled at least three indicators.

The first listening test was conducted after the first cycle was done. Based on the result of observation and the listening test in cycle one, it could be said that

the students' listening comprehension achievement had not improved yet. According to the result of observation in cycle one, it was found that there were only 18 students or 45% of 40 students who were actively involved in the process of teaching listening in the first meeting. Meanwhile, there were 20 students or 50% of 40 students who were actively involved in the process of teaching listening in the second meeting. This means that the students' involvement in the process of teaching listening in the cycle one had not fulfilled the requirement of this research which was 75%. In other words, most of the students were passive during the teaching learning process. The students still felt reluctant to answer and ask questions.

Moreover, from the result of the average score of listening tests ($M = 48.5$), it could be said this score had not reached the standard requirement of the average score which was 64. This means that the first score was not successful yet, that were caused by most of the students could not hear the teacher's voice, and that's why the students could not catch the content of the text that was dictated by the teacher. Based on the result of observation and listening test in cycle one, it was concluded that the action of teaching listening through text dictation techniques was not successful yet. The teacher has already followed the procedure of teaching listening by using dictation, and also taught based on the lesson plan, but the result of observation in cycle one could not improve the students' activity. The students were passive and the score did not meet the standard score, it was because the students could not hear the teacher's voice clearly and they were not familiar with the text given by the teacher. That is why, further action was needed to solve the problem appeared in cycle one. The next cycle focused on: (1) Choose the text with familiar story for the students, (2) Reading the text more clearly, (3) Turning up the volume, and (4) Using more gestures. Besides that, the teacher used more gestures during dictating the text, and it was believed that it could make the action more effective. These actions were done in cycle two. It expected that the students would be more active in the process of teaching listening, so that they would be more motivated to improve their listening comprehension achievement.

B. Cycle Two

The researcher conducted the second cycle on April 26th 2020. The action was administered based on the result of the first cycle. In this action, there were two kinds of data collected. The first, the data were collected by using observation that focused on the students' active and passive involvement in the process teaching

listening. Then the second, the data focused on the students' listening comprehension achievement. They were accumulated by conducting listening comprehension achievement test after having the action. Observation was done by both the researcher as the English teacher and the other English teacher at this school along with the process of teaching listening. The observers used checklist which focused on the students' active and passive involvement in the listening teaching learning process. Based on the observation that was done in the first meeting, there were 31 students of 40 students or 77% were active (see Appendix 10). Besides, in the second meeting, there were 32 students of 40 students or 80 % active involved. On the average their participation was 75%, this means the students had reached the percentage requirement of the students' active participation in the listening teaching learning process. It can be said that the students were more active in this action than in the action in cycle one. Some of them were able to answer the questions given. They were more enthusiastic during the teaching learning process. The students showed better understanding about the text after the teacher gave emphasis on some words and used more gestures.

The listening test was given at the end of the class activity in cycle two. The students answered the questions on the answer sheet individually after having the action of teaching listening through text dictation techniques namely note taking and partial dictation. From the result, it could be seen that the result of listening test in cycle two was better than the result of listening test in the first cycle. The mean score of the students' listening test ($M = 69.9$) in the second cycle was higher than that of the first cycle ($M = 48.5$). It means that the action of teaching listening through text dictation techniques in cycle two could improve the students' listening comprehension achievement.

Based on the result of observation and the listening test in cycle two, it could be said that the students had better improvement in the process of teaching and learning listening. Having known the result of observation in cycle two, it was found that there were 31 students of 40 students or 77% were active in the first meeting. Furthermore, there were 32 students or 80% of 40 students were more actively involved in the process of teaching listening in the second. This means that the students' involvement in the process of teaching listening in cycle two had fulfilled the requirement of this research that was 75%. In the result, the students had not felt reluctant anymore to raise questions and also answer the questions given.

From the results of listening test in cycle two, it was also found that the mean score of the students' listening comprehension test was higher than that of cycle one. It increases from 48.5 in the first cycle to 69.9 in the second cycle. Derived from the results of observation and the listening test in the second cycle, it was concluded that the techniques of teaching listening through text dictation in cycle two gave positive result. The students did not get difficulties in comprehending the text. That is why the students were active and enthusiastic to join the teaching learning process. In other words, the action in cycle two had successfully improved the students' listening comprehension achievement and the action was stopped.

Mostly, in the first cycle, the students' involvement in the process of teaching listening activity was not so good as what was expected. On the average, the percentage of the students' involvement in the process of teaching listening was only 45% in the first meeting and 50% in the second meeting. It could be said that the students were passively involved in the process of teaching listening. Most of the students were still reluctant to raise questions to the researcher and they worried to respond to the researcher's questions. In addition, the students' listening comprehension achievement after being given the actions by teaching listening through text dictation techniques was unsatisfactory yet. It was found that the mean score of students listening test was only 48.5.

Concerning the objective of this research, the students' listening comprehension achievement in the first cycle improved but not achieved the standard average score which was 64. Therefore, the action cycle was continued to the next cycle by revising some necessary aspects namely choosing the text with familiar story for the students, reading the text more clearly, turning up the volume, using more gestures, and in order to help the students achieve the target of the research. It was done because; according to Hornby (1995, p. 321) dictation is an activity whereas listeners have to write down a word or passage that is read aloud, as a way of helping them learning a language. Moreover, it is argued listening is the ability to identify what others are saying, it is a receptive skill, and receptive skills give a way to productive skills. That is why, revising some necessary aspects namely choosing the text with familiar story for the students, reading the text more clearly, turning up the volume, and using more gestures to help the students achieve the targeted score of the research.

After giving the actions in the second cycle, it was found that the students' listening comprehension achievement improved significantly. The score of listening tests improved from 48.5 in the first cycle to 69.9 in the second cycle. This means that the students' listening comprehension achievement had achieved the standard average score that was 64. Related to this case, the improvement of the students' listening comprehension achievement in the second cycle was followed by improvement of their involvement in the process of teaching listening. The percentage of students' involvement was 77% in the first meeting and 80% in the second meeting. In this case, the students did not feel reluctant or worried to respond the researcher's questions and asked questions to the researcher because they can catch the content of the story that was dictated by the teacher. That is the effect of revising some necessary aspects namely choosing the text with familiar story for the students, reading the text more clearly, turning up the volume, and using more gestures. In conclusion, based on the result of this research, it could be said that the use of text dictation techniques could improve the eighth-grade students' listening comprehension achievement at SMPN 35 Surabaya in the academic year 2020/2021.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of listening test after the actions were given in two cycles, it could be concluded that the use of dictation techniques could improve the eighth-grade students' listening comprehension achievement at SMPN 35 Surabaya in the academic year 2020/2021. The improvement could be seen from the students' mean score of the test ($M=69.9$) in the second cycle that was better or achieved the standard mean score requirement (64), compared with their mean score in the first cycle that was 48.5. This means that the target the students listening comprehension achievement was classified fair. The results of observation on students' activity show that the use of text dictation techniques could improve the eight grade students' activity in listening. In the first cycle, the teaching listening activity was not so good as what was expected. On the average, the percentage of the students' involvement in the process of teaching listening was only 45% in the first meeting and 50% in the second meeting. It could be said that the students were passively involved in the process of teaching listening in the first cycle. But, in the second cycle the percentage of students' involvement in the process of teaching listening increased from 77% in the first meeting to 80% in the

second meeting. In conclusion, the use of text dictation techniques could improve the eighth-grade students' activity in listening.

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