

# Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions on Developing Listening Test at EED of UMY

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**Abstract:** Developing listening test is compulsory to measure students listening comprehension or practice their listening skill. Pre-service teachers at English Education Department of UMY had a training in developing tests to develop their competences to be an assessor for their future career. This research are aimed to find types of questions used by the pre-service teachers at EED of UMY, the obstacles that pre-service teachers of EED of UMY faced in developing listening test and the solutions that they made to deal with the obstacle. **Methodology:** To collect the data, the researcher conducted the research qualitatively; an interview with 5 pre-service teachers at EED of UMY batch 2013 was conducted as well. The interview was about 11-15 minutes for each participant. **Results:** Based on the data, the participants were used multiple choice, fill in the blank, true and false, and matching question types. Moreover, the obstacles that pre-service teachers faced are finding the materials, test text types, speed of speech, accent, noises, and validity reliability. Besides, checking content guidelines, improving listening material, editing audio recordings, and try out are the strategies that pre-service teachers used to overcome the obstacles.

*Keywords: perception, listening test, developing listening test.*

# PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON DEVELOPING LISTENING TEST AT EED OF UMY

## Introduction

Being a teacher is not an easy thing to do. There are a lot of teacher roles which aim to help and facilitate students' learning process. One of teacher roles is teachers as assessors. In this role, teacher needs to assess students' ability, comprehension and offer feedback. Moreover, Harmer (2001) stated that teacher as assessor is when teacher offer feedback, hand out grades, measure students' performance and decide whether they can pass the subject or not.

Starting from being a pre-service teacher at college, teachers have an obligation to improve their pedagogical skills. *Constitution of the republic of Indonesia: teachers and lecturers number 14* ( 2005), stated in chapter 4, paragraph 20 on section 2 that in order to the duties of professionalism teacher are obliged to upgrading and developing academic qualification and competence in line with the developments of science, technology and arts. Thus, the considerations that teacher is needed by designing and developing their own assessment.

Based on the explanations above, to measure the students listening comprehension or practice their listening skill several activities can be done by the teacher. One of the techniques to assess students is test. In order to measure specific competencies or objectives, test plays an importance role in language teaching process. Brown (2010), argued that test in simple term is a method of measuring someone's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain. Therefore, listening test is the appropriate way in order to assess students' comprehension of English spoken form and responding the oral conversation.

Therefore, according to the statement above, this research will attempt to investigate the pre-service teachers' perception on developing listening test at EED of UMY. Then, this research will emphasize on the pre-service perception on types of questions use, obstacle that they face, and the solutions in developing listening test.

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## **Literature Review**

### **Perception**

Perception is a hypothesis or belief of what people feel and hear about their ancient times and current time. Based on Irianti (2015), that perception is also an assumption or opinion about individual experiences to recognize how people identify events. Perception is not the same for one person to another it is because every people having their own belief, experience and thought. In a human body, perception also takes place to influence the other organs. Therefore, perception can be summarized as a hypothesis or belief of what people feel and hear about an object in their early and current time that depends on the individual experiences.

### **Assessment**

Way to measure students' ability about current subject matter is by using assessment. Assessment encompasses a much larger field than test. Assessment will reflect the students' result during the teaching and learning process. The statement

above is also supported by Westwood (2008) who said that assessment is applied to facilitate the teachers to find accurate information about their students' development and their need for addition or remediation.

Assessment is also divided into two functions which are formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment is an active activity done by the teachers such as observation, homework, portfolios, interview, quiz and informal testing (Westwood, 2008). On the other hand Surgenor (2010) asserted that, summative assessment is purposed to get feedback and final grade of the students for improving learning and understanding.

### **Test**

As also stated by Brown (2010) that test is a system, a technique, and procedures for determining a person ability, comprehension or performance in given domain. In order to develop a test, there are several type of test questions that pre-service teachers often do in language teaching and

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learning process. There are several type of questions which are commonly used in language testing such as multiple choice questions, true or false, fill in the blank, short answer, and matching.

### **Multiple-choice questions**

Multiple-choice question is a type of test which consists of alphabetical options such as A, B, C, D or sometimes E. The test-taker is supposed to choose the best answer from all of the options. Moreover, multiple-choice question is quick and easy to be scored both manually or electronically (Weimer, 2015). Therefore, this test question needs several items to become the test option and offer several benefits for teacher to design or give a score.

### **True or false questions**

True or false question is exists to identify whether one of two statements are correct or not. This type of question is considered to be used more often on listening comprehension and reading comprehension test. As also indicated by Frost (2005), true or

false question type is mostly used to test listening and reading comprehension. Moreover, true-false question is also can be written quickly and also easily to score on. It is because true-false question can be objectively from teacher's judgment too (Clay & Root, 2001).

### **Fill in the blank test questions**

In this question type, test-takers or students are required to complete the incomplete sentence in paragraph. According to Clay and Root (2001), fill in the blank test question is useful in assessing factual information when a specific word or phrase is important to know. Therefore, the teachers should choose the appropriate word to be put in this test.

### **Essay questions**

The essay is a bound of words which is included in one paragraph. For language testing itself, an essay question offers the students an opportunity to reveal knowledge, skills, and abilities in a multiplicity of ways (Weimer, 2015). Then, essay questions also allows the students to

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use their own perceptions, belief, writing styles and vocabularies. Therefore, it is hard for teaching and grading the score. Teachers need to read the entire words, so they will be able to score and evaluate the test.

### **Matching questions**

Matching question commonly consists of two columns. The first column is used for the question or problem then another column is the responses or the answer. Furthermore, as stated by Clay and Root (2001), that matching question is traditionally consisting of two different columns which the column of stems is place on the left and the column of responses is placed on the right. Matching test questions in language teaching process are often used for the definitions that have to be remembered. The benefits of using matching questions for teachers, they will be able to cover all the material into one single column. Then, for the students, they only need to match one of the possible answers and no need to guessing the answer words.

### **Listening**

In second and foreign language, listening is one of the fundamental skills in understanding a language. As also indicated by Cahyono and Widiati (2009), listening is considered as the key skill in the acquisition of the native (first) language. Listening is also the first skill that students should master before they go to the next skills such as, speaking, reading and writing. It is because students can only produce the words that they ever heard

In the context of English as a foreign language listening is a hard work especially for young learner. The nature of L1 will affect them, they will spend more time to listen. Listening plays an important role in communication process. It is also indicated by Cahyono and Widiati (2009) that listening skill can facilitate learners to participate well in oral communication.

### **Developing Listening Test**

In term of assessment, listening is not the easiest skill to be assessed. Based on Coniam (2006), listening

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test less convenient and more technically complicated than reading test, suitable input material with good quality sound need to be more prepared for students. In order to develop listening test, it is not an easy thing to do.

Moreover, developing robust listening tests is a demanding task (Buck, 2015). Several problems would be faced during developing listening test. Especially for pre-service teachers who do not have an adequate experience in developing listening test. Therefore, they need to think fast, and creative to solve the problems that the might face.

### **Problems in Developing Listening Test**

#### **Finding the material**

Once the teacher decided to develop their own test, finding the listening material is the first problem that teachers might face. As also state by Azizah (2016), that the major problem for listening test is the way the materials are presented to the students. It is because the test items also need to include a variety

of listening tasks such as comprehension of the main ideas of a conversation, recognition of details conversation, identification of specific words and phrases used in a text (Coniam, 2006). Moreover, dealing with a copyright picture or audio on the internet would be one of the problems on finding test materials (Language Policy Division Council of Europe, 2011). As Renandya and Farell (2010) argued that for some institutions with great financial resources they can purchase graded audiobooks from international publishers. In fact, for those with minimum resources, they might be lack of information about how where they can find the materials.

#### **Test text types**

Text types question is an important factor in developing listening test. In developing listening test, teacher can choose whether multiple choice questions, true-false questions, fill-in-the-blank, essay questions or matching questions (Brown, 2010). Moreover, a good listening test text should have a main

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point topic, an obvious reason for what is being said, and also it should provide a clear context and understandable for the students as test-taker (Buck, 2015). Then, formatting the text questions such as, fonts, font sizes, line break paragraphs, and test directions should all receive a careful review (Educational Testing Service [ETS], 2009). Therefore, in designing text question it is compulsory for teacher to match it with the students' needs, and students' difficulty levels.

### **Speed of speech**

In the speech of durations of listening audio sometimes make teacher confuse when designing it for listening test. It is because the speaker is speaking in normal phase, or even a low speed, but usually perceived as being very or even too fast in the beginning (Renandya & Farell, 2010). Therefore, the faster speakers talk the more difficult for teacher to designing test item and questions. As also indicated by Brindley and Slatyer (2002) that speech rate and response mode influenced task and item difficulty.

Therefore, teacher needs to carefully switch the audio properly to make the listening audio keep up with the objective of the test itself.

### **Accent**

According to Crystal (2008), accent is a cumulative auditory effect of pronunciation which identify where a person comes from, regionally or socially. Moreover, an accented word exists to describe the listener's perception of how much L2 accent differs from the variety of English that commonly spoken in the community. Therefore, accent comes from L1 society which judge the other English spoken form that different with society. In spite of its definitions, too many different accents are heard in listening can lead confusion of the listeners. Referring to Hamouda (2013) that varied accent only on a listening audio is causing problems of listening comprehension. As also indicated by Major, Fitzmaurice, Bunta, and Balasubramanian (2005) that speaker accent can bias tests against English as a second language.

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### **Noises**

While developing a listening test especially for the listening audio, noises can also causes problems. It can come from the audio recording and environmental noises. It also argued by Rost (2011) that the instrument used for recording is introducing noises surrounding the speech signal.

Therefore, based on Hamouda (2013) listeners can also lose their concentration if they are disturbed by outside noises. It is also happened when a second language instructors try to adapt a listening audio for listening test. They might be disturbed by the noises then how were their students listening soon. Therefore, pay more attention for noises are another aspect in developing listening test.

### **Validity**

Validity is a crucial concept that related to test proposes a test. It because validity is the most important indicator of test quality which measure the right knowledge, skills or other attributes in the right

way (ETS, 2015). A test would be valid if it exactly, accurately measured. One of the problems in defining validity on a listening test is content validity and constructs validity. Based on ETS (2013), content validity refers to which question and tasks in represent all important aspect of the target. Therefore, according to Zheng and Jong (2011) in construct validity a test should create a strong link between a test score and what it claims to measure.

### **Reliability**

It is a technical term related to quality of test scores. On reliable test a person will get more or less score no matter what day they take it. As also stated by Language Policy Division Council of Europe (2011), that reliability in testing means consistency a test with reliable scores produces the same or similar result on repeated use. Therefore, it is mean that reliability is the standard answer to test questions that consistently trusted to present what students know (Clay & Root, 2001).



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### **Strategies in Developing Listening Test**

#### **Checking content guidelines**

According to Educational Testing Service [ETS] (2009), the first step in developing listening test is a test items should be to link with the test specifications, content standards, content, and skill that the item is supposed to measure. Therefore, following a curriculum development such as checking the syllabus, lesson plans, or content guideline for achieving the aim and objectives of the course is needed for teachers. As also stated by McKimm (2003), that curriculum is outline the learning that is estimated to take place through assessment methods to support the effective delivery of the course.

#### **Improving listening materials**

There are a lot of ways to improving listening material for teachers. The first is developing the audio of listening test. As also indicated by Myrick (2010) teachers can create by themselves, download them, link them or buy them. In spite

of the previous statement, to reduce a variety accent that used by the speaker, teachers can record their own voices. Referring to Hamouda (2013), students are familiar with the teacher's accent in listening. Second, develop listening test that approximate real-life situation and progress genuine authentic speech (Davis, 2007). For this occasion teachers can use internet sources as their references. As Rost (2011) suggested, internet sources for listening are also abundant. According to Renandya and Farrell (2010), teacher can used Voice of America Special English for world news, BBC World Service for intermediate level students, ESL Podcast for a slower rate of speech, YouTube videos and Storyline Online to help learners develop a spoken language process with ease and automaticity.

#### **Editing audio recordings**

In editing an audio recording for listening test teachers can use several applications such as audacity, windows movie maker or any other audio-editing software. According to (Developing Online Teaching Skill

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[DOTS], 2011), audacity is a tool for creating and editing audio files such as downloading and editing podcasts, recording interviews, creating personal audio messages and so on. Teachers can also use windows movie maker application to editing the audio (ABC Open, 2015). With audacity, movie maker and any other audio-editing software teacher can editing the audio whether to reduce the noises volume, slow down the speech, speed it up, compress it, normalize it and equalize it (Buck, 2015).

### **Try out**

On this activity teachers can try the listening test, on order to know whether the test is valid or not. According to Language Policy Division Council of Europe (2011), piloting, consulting colleagues and consulting other stakeholders is the next process in developing test. A pilot testing is a session or two before the real test that offers an occasion to validate the wording of the tasks, leading to more reliable results and may even supplying an additional data point (Schade, 2015).

Therefore, in pilot testing teachers can identify the strength and the weakness of their test design. As also suggested by Language Policy Division Council of Europe (2011), consultation with colleagues or stakeholders can be done through a small group, face-to-face communication, questionnaires or feedback reports. Moreover, a consultation with colleagues is so much helpful for pre-service teacher in terms of time limitation and an accessible way to try outing test.

### **Methodology**

Based on the aim of this research, the researcher employed qualitative research design in this study to explain the pre-service teacher experience. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) argued that qualitative research design is the best design to discover and advance a detail understanding of a central phenomenon. To be precise, the researcher used qualitative description as a method of this research. Based on Sandelowski (2000), qualitative description is the method of choice when straight

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descriptions of phenomena are desire to know who, what, and where of several topic, events or perceptions. Most of the data result later described the perceptions of the participants by words.

The researcher conducted this study started from November 2016 until May 2017. The participants of this study were pre-service teachers at EED of UMY batch 2013. Besides, in this batch the pre-service teachers had been taken Language Assessment and Evaluation Course (KU242). There were class A, B, C, D and E on the EED of UMY batch 2013. Therefore, the researcher was only taken one pre-service teacher from each class of EED UMY batch 2013. So, totally there were 5 participants on this research. From class A until C was 3 female and the other 2 was came from class D and E. Their contribution towards this research was because they already had an experience on teaching students on various levels. Moreover, they also finished the entire internship program which has 3 teaching experience starts from

elementary until high school students. So it is easy for the researcher to get the deeper understanding about their experience and perception.

When gained the data from each participant the researcher used in-depth interview. Based on Boyce and Neale (2006), in-depth interview is a qualitative research method that engaged the participant in performing an intensive individual interview with a small number of participants to explore the perception in a program or situation. In addition, Allmark, Boote, Chambers, Clarke, McDonnell, Thompson, and Angela (2008), argued that in-depth interview is typically semi-structure with the interviewer has subject matter questions in which to focus on discussion.

There were several steps that the researcher did to collect the data. First, the researcher made an interview guideline based on the theories in order to obtain the deeper data from the participants. Second, the researcher made an appointment with the participants to recruit the research participants. The

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appointment was made by phone invitation, it is because it more accessible and easier for the researcher to get participants schedule for the interview. Third, the interview was conducted around Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. The interview was used *Bahasa* as the language to reduce misunderstanding words between the researcher and the participants. The interview was taken 11 – 15 minutes for each participant. In order to get deeper information, the researcher was added some follow-up questions to the participants. Last, the interview was recorded by the audio recorder used researcher smartphone to make the researcher easier while transcribed more detail information from the participants. In order to keep the privacy of the participants, the name data of the participants were remained pseudonym. Therefore, the researcher named them P1 as Anna, P2 as Moli, P3 as Yuri, P4 as Agil, and P5 as Okim.

### **Findings and Discussion**

#### **The used of multiple choice questions**

The first statement which said that multiple choice was used on developing listening test came from Moli she said that, “Most of it was multiple choice” (P2.1). Moreover, the other participant who has the same perceptions with the second participant, he said that “I used multiple choice” (P4.1). Therefore, most of the participants had the same ideas which said that multiple choice questions were used on developing listening test.

#### **Fill in the blank questions type for listening test**

In fact, there were only three participants which tend to used fill in the blank questions type. Here is the statement from Anna “..... and I use fill in the blank sentence, then the test takers are required to continue the sentence, then the choice which was used is for continuing the sentence” (P1.2). Moreover, Moli was also shared their experience on using fill in the blank question “....

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And I also used fill in the blank...” (P2.5).

On the other hand, some participants had different opinion on the use of fill in the blank questions type for their students. The first statement said that the used of fill in the blank test question was easy to understand came from Moli who said that, “And it can make the students easier to understand the matter” (P2.7). Although, those benefit on the use of fill in the blank to developing listening test, it also has disadvantage too when pre-service teachers EED of UMY apply it to their students. Here is the statement from Yuri “... For fill in the blank, unfortunately its score was decreases because of fill in the blank” (P3.10).

### **Using true and false question types**

This research revealed that true and false questions types are used by three of five pre-service teachers at EED of UMY. Besides, there were several statements which describe the participants' perception about how they used true and false questions for developing listening

test. The first statement came from Yuri who said “...True and false questions types when teaching in junior high school” (P3.3). Another participant Okim, has the same experience said that “...True and false questions” (P5.6).

Besides, true and false question types are having several easiness on developing listening test. That's why pre-service teachers at EED of UMY used it when they want to develop their own listening test. Here is the participant Moli answer about it “There were lot of examples that had been made before” (P2.10). From that statement there were a lot of sources which aim to developing listening test. Moreover, one pre-service teacher to another has a different opinion about true and false question types easiness. In accordance with this, Okim said, “Commonly, students are also learnt about grammar so it can be relevance with listening itself” (P5.8).

### **Using matching test questions type**

The first statement that said about the use of matching test

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questions type on developing listening test was came from Moli, she said, "...there were also matching questions type too" (P2.3). Then, the other participant Okim, has the same opinion said that, "Hmm, there were also matching question such as like that" (P5.4). So it is basically only a few of the participants that had the same experience on using matching test questions types for developing listening test. On the other hand, there was also a reason why the participants using matching questions type for developing listening test. Here is the statement from Okim, "On matching questions we want to know how far was the listening skill of the students from listening to the audio" (P5.5).

### **Obstacles That Pre-Service**

#### **Teachers Faced on Developing**

##### **Listening Test**

##### **Finding the material**

The first statement which said that finding material is the obstacles on developing listening test came from Yuri, she said, "On the

internet, the material that we plan before is not always available" (P3.13). Another participant Moli, shares the same experience on the obstacles of finding the listening material said that, "The obstacle that I face [in developing listening test] is finding the audio materials" (P2.11). Therefore, previous statement before also have accordance with the availability of the sources itself. Next, Anna found the same obstacles said that "If we are looking for the material from text books, we should buy them first and it was expensive right?" (P1.8).

### **Test text types obstacles**

Almost, the same with the previous finding, the participants also have given their opinion related with this topic. Here is the statement from Moli "If I use my own voice, I am afraid that the pronunciation is not correct. Then, it is not understandable by the listener" (P2.18). Moreover, it is in line with Okim who has the same obstacle who said that "it is inappropriate with the students' needs, it should be this but the fact is like that" (P5.12).

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Next, test difficulty on test type questions will also become obstacles while developing listening test. As also said by Agil who said that "Second, why that questions? If it too easy and too difficult for us we can find the references on what kind of question it is" (P4.11).

### **Speed of speech**

The first statement came from Anna who said that "It is sometimes come from the speaker speed of speech from the example materials" (P1.9). Then, the Moli who has the same opinion about speaker speed of speech obstacles said that, "If we used text to speech it means that we used technology. Then, the speech tone was flat and not expressive if we made it for an expression opinion and conversation it cannot be more expressive" (P2.16).

### **Accent**

The first statement came from Yuri who said "Students can be not familiar with the accent" (P3.16). In fact, there were a lot of accent in the world that will confused whether the students as test taker and teacher.

Moreover, another statements came from the Okim said that "...differentiate the accents" (P5.13).

From those statements above it is in line with Hamouda (2013) that varied accent only on a listening audio is causing obstacles of listening comprehension. Therefore, it is also supported by Major et al. (2005) that speaker accent can bias test against English as a second language. Last, a speaker accent sometimes can cause a obstacle if it not used in appropriate context and needs.

### **Noises**

Anna said, "the place was disturbed by noises" (P1.15). Then, Okim who also has the same obstacles with Anna, he said "From the inside and outside of audio material, maybe it is because we made it manually by ourselves so that there is some noises" (P5.16).

To conclude that, noise was one of the obstacles if we are made the audio listening material manually or while administering the listening test. It is in line with Rost (2011)

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who said that the instrument used for recording is introducing the speech signal. Environment noises while developing listening test was also the obstacles toward audio listening material. Then another expert also argues that listeners can also lose their concentration if they are disturbed by outside noises (Hamouda, 2013).

### **Validity and reliability**

In a further analysis, based on the data from interview, the participants mention some obstacles related with validity and reliability of listening test. Here is some statement from the Agil "Oh yes it is validity and reliability" (P4.13). Moreover, Okim were also have the same obstacle said that "is it valid or not?" (P5.18).

So, that it can be concluded that pre-service teachers at EED of UMY still do not know whether their listening test were valid and reliable or not. Based on ETS (2015) said that validity is the most important indicator of test quality which measure the right knowledge, skills

or other attributes in the right way. Then, for reliability itself referring to Clay and Root (2001) that reliability is the standard answer to test questions that consistently trusted to present what students know.

### **Strategies That Pre-Service Teachers Face on Developing Listening test**

#### **Checking content guidelines**

Based on the data interview result that the researcher found, every participants has their own strategies to solve the obstacles. In fact, most of them were having the same meaning of strategies. Here is some of the statement that Anna who said "We must consider the test with text books, standard competence, and basic competence that matched with our teaching guidance" (P1.21). Another argument that related with checking content guideline also came from Moli who said that "Then, make a lesson plan too" (P2.30).

#### **Improving listening materials**

For the first is about things that pre-service EED of UMY offer to improved listening materials. Here



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is the first statement from Anna, she said that “We can find places that enable us to record our own voice” (P1.23).

Then, Moli who share the same opinion said “For me, I ever create my own listening test questions. I used my own voice and record it too” (P2.17). Moreover, it seems like pre-service teachers EED of UMY are recorded or used their own voice to improved listening materials. Besides, a consideration why they do that was about to ease the students while doing the listening test later. As also mention by the Yuri that “To make the students familiar with my voice and they will not too surprise with the speed and accent of native speaker” (P3.28).

Next, not only record and using their own voice to create the listening materials, pre-service teacher at EED of UMY also offers another strategy. It is about searching for the audio materials from several websites on the internet. Here several statements that came from the Anna “Just searching it on the search engine” (P1.31). Then, another

websites were revealed by Moli who mention about “.....busyteacher.org” (P2.27). Next, here is the statement from Agil said “Oh, for the references for searching the listening test, it is from podcast” (P4.18). Last, from Okim, who gave the references for improving the listening materials said “Using eslflow.com and youtube.com” (P5.29).

### **Editing audio recordings**

On this part, the researcher revealed some findings related to the topic. The first statement was came from the third participant about editing the audio recording for reduce background noises. Here is the statement from Yuri for that “And for the noises itself maybe we need, we must edit the audio more, we can do it by using audacity or podcast” (P3.29). Any other audio editing software can also use for editing audio recordings based on the data interview that researcher found. It is also mention by Moli who said “For example, in editing I used text to speech” (P2.32).

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Therefore, using software for helping us to edit the audio recording can be done for audio listening test. As also mention by Anna, she said that "Yes the audacity, do not be lack of technology knowledge to be a teacher in the future" (P1.28). As the future teacher an understanding of using technology for language learning even for language testing should be done by the teacher. Moreover, using audio editing software was helped pre-service teacher to adjust the audio material. Here is the statement from the second participant said that "We can set the tempo and sounds to make sure that the audio latter was heard by the students or not?" (P2.34).

### **Try out**

The first statement was come from Anna who said "If I'm not mistaken I am doing the piloting first. Then tried again, do not give a test to the students that you never try it before" (P1.33). Moreover, another idea that offers more strategies was come from the Yuri. Here is the

statement for that "Reliable or not, we maybe need like having a consultation first with our friends or lecturer or teacher that relate with this" (P3.25). That mean, if we want to develop our own listening test we cannot just give the test without knowing that the test were valid and reliable or not. Nor, we need some more steps before the test were able to use and give it up to the students.

### **Conclusions**

Every pre-service teachers at EED of UMY have a various choice about what kind of test type questions that they used. Then, they also have different obstacles and strategies that they faced during developing listening test. Besides, one another were sometimes be the same.

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