

Listening Comprehension: An IPA-based Needs Analysis of Indonesian English Education Students

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ABSTRACT

*This study investigates students' needs for listening instruction in English. The researcher carried out a descriptive research by applying an IPA (Importance Performance Analysis) in conducting the needs analysis. The respondents of this study was second year students of Indonesia English Education Department academic year 2012-2013 who were enrolled in the the **Listening Comprehension 2** subject. The instrument of the research was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to assess the gap between two elements, the importance and the performance of twelve aspects of teaching listening, namely language, topic, content, genres, process model, instructional activities, listening instruction, learning approach, media, out-class assessment, time and place. The result shows that there are some students whose needs are not fulfilled. The teacher as the instructional designer should consider some features of content, media, learning process, learning approach, and aspects of teaching listening.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Learners play important roles in determining the success of the learning and teaching process in the classroom. Therefore, it is important for teachers to know their students' needs before designing the materials that they are going to implement in the classroom. By realizing that the material meets their needs, the students can maximize their engagements in the learning process. Studies on needs analysis have been conducted by many researchers and experts (Richard, 1983; Wong, 1996; Chand, 2007; Wong, Hideki, & Philips, 2011). They argued that it is important to conduct needs analysis before designing any material whether for English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and even for General English (GE).

2.0 NEEDS ANALYSIS

A needs assessment is a comprehensive evaluation plan of a school's strengths and weaknesses (Stockton, Dullatt, & Basinger). Rouda and Kusy (1995) defined needs assessment as a systematic exploration of the way things are and the way they should be. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) identify needs into three necessities, wants, and lack. Necessities are what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target

situation. Lack, on the other hand, are what the learner has already known. Wants are what the learners perceive.

Formerly, needs analysis tended to be associated with the ESP and neglected in GE, General English, (Seedhouse, 1995). Hutchinson and Waters (1997) state that the difference between GE and ESP is not the existence of the needs but the awareness of it. Nowadays, studies conducted in other fields, unrelated to ESP, also conduct needs analyses.

3.0 THE TEACHING OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION

a. Objectives

As listening is defined as an activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear (Underwood, 1990), there should be a clear identification of the purpose before doing the activity. The listener needs to identify the purposes or the goals of conducting the activity.

Related to listening instruction, Richards (1983) proposes the taxonomies of listening, conversational listening and academic listening. Richards develops these microskills from a variety of sources, including needs analysis, discourse analysis, and related research. Thompson, Leintz, Nevers, and Witkowski (2004), however, state that listening goals involve people, settings, and tasks/purposes. They explain that an effective listener must determine his goals because goals are varied and incorporate both verbal and non verbal components. The characteristics of listening goals according to Thompson, Leintz, Nevers, and Witkowski (2004), are 1) Discriminative, 2) Comprehensive, 3) Evaluative, 4) Appreciative, 5) Empathic/therapeutic, and 6) Interpersonal.

Before conducting a listening comprehension class, a lecturer should clarify the directions of the course by considering the characteristics above. These characteristics can help the teacher in clarifying or stating the objectives of the listening comprehension course. They meet the listening goals which involve people, settings, and tasks/purposes.

b. Material

In most language programs, the teaching materials are the key component. The teaching materials can be in terms of textbooks or the teacher's own materials which are specially designed for teaching instruction, unless the materials are authentic ones like magazines, newspapers, videos, and TV shows. Authentic material refers to the use in teaching of texts, photographs, video selections, and other teaching resources that were not specially prepared for the pedagogical process (Richards, 2001).

Using authentic materials provides some advantages. Heitler (2005) mentions some advantages of the authentic materials when they are used in the Business English classroom. To summarize, the advantages of using authentic materials are a) they bring learners into direct contact with a reality level of language use, b) those that are drawn from periodicals are always up-to-date and constantly being updated, c) those from a particular source tend to work in consistent areas of language, d) they provide us with a source of up-to-date materials that can be directly relevant to learners' needs.

c. Methods and Strategies of Teaching Listening

Three main phases or stages in a listening lesson are as follows (Flowerdew and Miller, 2005):

- 1) Prelistening – Preparing students to achieve the most from listening
- 2) While listening – challenging and guiding students to handle the information and attitudes of the speakers during listening
- 3) Post listening – reflecting on the language of the listening (sounds, grammar, vocabulary, inferencing, etc) and applying understanding and interpretation.

There are some activities which can be conducted in a listening comprehension course. These activities can lead the students to achieve the goals or the objectives of the course. In turn, the intended skills can be achieved too. The activities can be in terms of macrostrategies (Lynch, 2004), namely *predicting, monitoring, responding, clarifying, inferencing, and evaluating*.

In conducting these activities the students are involved in some tasks. Doff and Backet (1991, in Field, 2008) describe some activities that can be done for independent listeners such as form-filling and labeling, completing a grid, comparing and contrasting, putting events in order of occurrences or facts in order of mention, making notes on specific topics, filling in gaps in a paraphrase summary or in a paraphrase set of notes, and explaining connections between topics or completing a mind-map. These activities or tasks can be applied by compiling them with the macrostrategies in each stage of listening activities.

a. Strategies of the Listening Comprehension Course

Flowerdew and Miller (2005), however, summarized the strategies of learning listening differently. They summarized three main areas of learning strategy, namely metacognitive, cognitive, and socioaffective.

- 1) Metacognitive strategies are the ways learners organize, monitor, and evaluate their learning.
- 2) Cognitive strategies are the processes learners use to acquire the language.
- 3) Socioaffective strategies are the ways in which learners use others to enhance their learning and encourage themselves to continue learning.

d. The Teacher's Role in Listening Instruction

Beltrán (1995) explains teacher's roles in the classroom by dividing the roles into two main functions, namely *managerial function* and *instructional function*. To conduct the managerial function, teacher is assigned to create the conditions under which learning can take place. In this role, the teacher is associated with the social side of teaching. In the instructional function, the teacher imparts, by a variety of means, knowledge to his/her learners. In this case, the teacher is involved in the task-oriented side of teaching.

These desired teacher's behaviors are implementable in any type of instructional process including language instruction. The teacher can adopt these behaviors in order to help students gain competence on the language skills being trained. The effort of encouraging the learners to speak is not only applicable to the speaking classroom but also to listening skill instruction. The listening course is designed not only to get the students listen to text –audio- but to get them to respond to what they have comprehended from the message with a spoken response, written response, or nonverbal response. Therefore, the teacher should be *helpful, respectful, considerate, empathetic, approachable, and available for extra help*.

3. The Importance-Performance Analysis

The importance-performance analysis was first introduced by Martila and James (1977). Martila and James (1977) stated that an importance-performance analysis was an easily applied technique which was used to measure attribute importance and performance in the development of a marketing program. This analysis, nowadays, has been widely used not only for marketing but also for other service industries like travel and tourism, education, medical (hospitals), and other sectors (Wong, Hideki, and George, 2011). Lewis (2004) also used this analysis in analysing the teaching performance at University of Wollongong, Australia. The Importance-Performance Analysis conceptually rests on multi-attribute models (Kitcharoen, 2004). This technique judges the gap between strengths and weaknesses of the evaluated program.

In an Importance-Performance Analysis, a two dimensional model is divided into four quadrants with performance on the x-axis and importance on the y-axis. As a result of this,

four quadrants namely Concentrate Here, Keep up the Good Work, Low Priority, and Possible Overkill are created. These quadrants are:

- 1) Quadrant I, high importance and low performance, is labelled *Concentrate Here*. Attributes that fall into this quadrant represent key areas that need to be improved with top priority.
- 2) Quadrant II, high importance and high performance, is labelled *Keep up the good work*. All attributes that fall into this quadrant are the strength and pillar of the program, and they should be the pride of the program.
- 3) Quadrant III, low importance and low performance, is labelled *Low Priority*. The attributes that fall into this quadrant are not important and pose no threat to the program.
- 4) Quadrant IV, low importance and high performance, is labelled as *Possible Overkill*. It symbolizes the attributes that are overly emphasized by the program. Hence, The program should reflect on these attributes, instead of continuing to focus in this quadrant, they should allocate more resources to deal with attributes that reside in quadrant I.

The following is the chart of quadrants that summarised the explanation above.

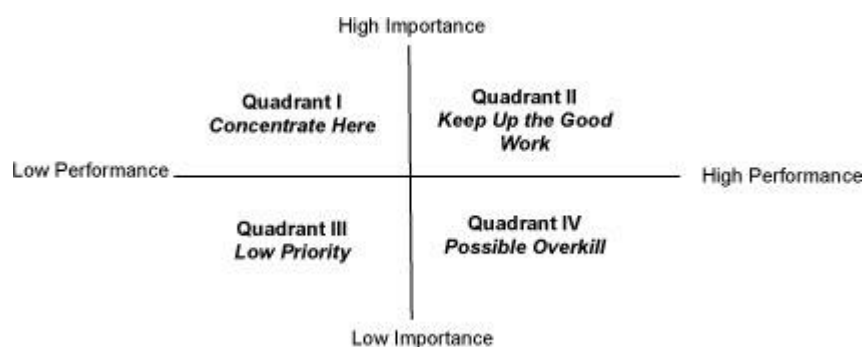


Figure 3.3. The Importance-Performance Framework (Taken from Wong, Hideki, & George, 2011)

4.0 METHOD

This study applied a descriptive research method. The Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) was used to analyze the data. The Importance-Performance Analysis is an analysis which is used to see the difference between the performance and importance. In an Importance-Performance Analysis, a two dimensional model is divided into four quadrants with performance on the x-axis and importance on the y-axis. As a result of this, four quadrants namely *Concentrate Here*, *Keep up the Good Work*, *Low Priority*, and *Possible Overkill* are created. The performance in this case is the particular act, deed, or fact which is performed in the elements of Listening Comprehension instruction at the English Education Department of Umpar, Indonesia. Meanwhile, the importance is the desired act, deed of fact which is performed in the instruction elements.

The population of this study were the second semester students of English Education of FKIP Umpar in Indonesia in the academic year 2012-2013. Five groups of students were enrolled in the second semester. Each group consisted of 40 students, so the number of the population was 200 students. . The researcher chose eighty students as the respondents of the research. The instrument of this research was a questionnaire which consists of two main

sections, the first eliciting general information about the learners and the second, questions which attempt to elicit information about the performance and importance of learning needs of the Listening Comprehension Subject at Umpar, Indonesia.

5.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1) IPA of Language

Figure 4.2 is a scattergram which shows how the four features of language used in the Listening Comprehension instruction were ranked according the importance (y-axis) and performance (x-axis) by the students. The scattergram shows that no feature falls in the area of *Concentrate Here*, two features fall in the *Keep up the Good Work*, one feature falls in *low priority*, and one feature falls in *possible overkill*. This scattergram leads the researcher to decide what features of the language element should be repaired and preserved.

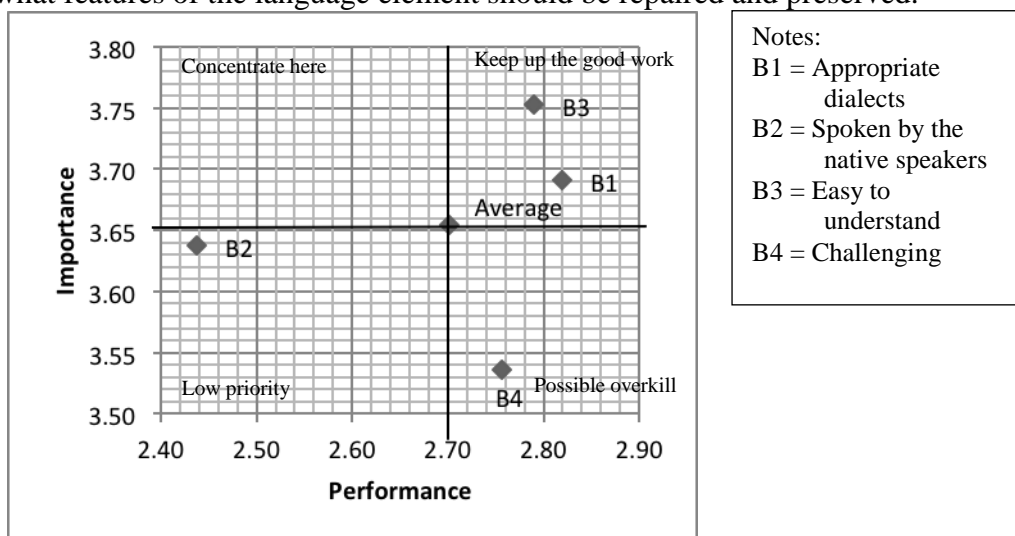


Figure 4.2 The IPA of Language used in the Listening Material

The language *features* of the existing listening material which should be maintained are the features of language in which has *appropriate dialects* and *easy to understand*. The feature of *spoken by the native speakers* is in low priority. However, one feature, *challenging*, was considered to be of low importance by the students but it was performed well in the existing material of the Listening Comprehension. Even though this feature was considered to be slight important, it should be held in the model which was developed by the researcher. The reason is good material should be challenging for it can improve the students' motivation. The motivation, in turn, affects the students' engagement in learning. Crawford (2002) states that the learning material should engage learners affectively and cognitively in the learning process.

2) IPA of Topic

Figure 4.3 shows how the four features of topic used in Listening Comprehension instruction were ranked according the importance (y-axis) and performance (x-axis) by the students. The scattergram shows that one feature falls in the area of *Concentrate Here*, one feature falls in the *Keep up the Good Work*, no feature falls in *low priority* and two features fall in *possible overkill*. This description helps the researcher to decide which elements of the *topic* should be enhanced/ repaired which should be maintained.

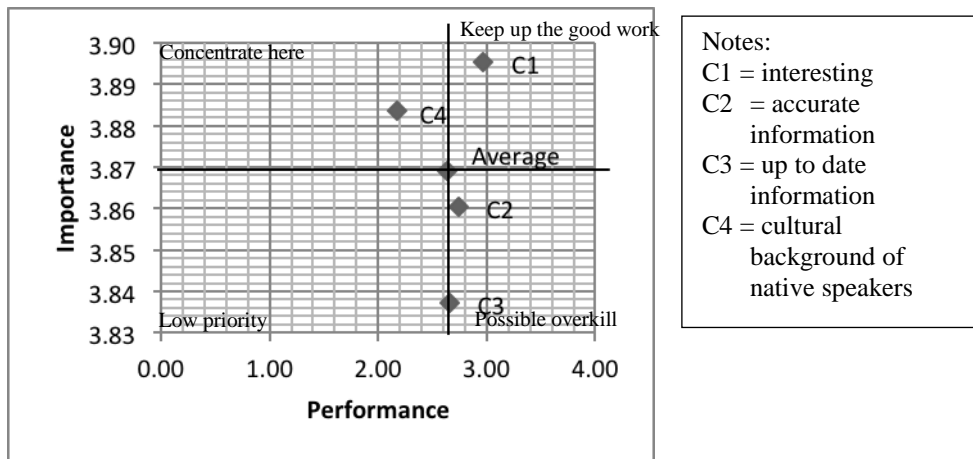


Figure 4.3 The IPA of Topic used in the Listening Material

The topic elements or features of the existing listening material that should be repaired are those which have cultural background of the native speaker of English (C4). However, the researcher maintains the feature of *interesting* topic (C1) for it falls in the area of keep up the good work. Moreover, good material should possess these criteria (Richard, 2005a). Two features of the listening material’s topic, accurate information (C2) and up to date information (C3), were considered to be of low importance by the students but they were performed well in the existing material of the Listening Comprehension. Even though these features were considered to be of slight importance, they should be maintained in the model which is developed by the researcher.

3) IPA of Content

It seems that the content of the existing listening material which is used in Umpar is quite good. Figure 4.4 shows that out of four features, only one feature needs to be maintained. The others three features are in the good work criteria and one feature is of low priority.

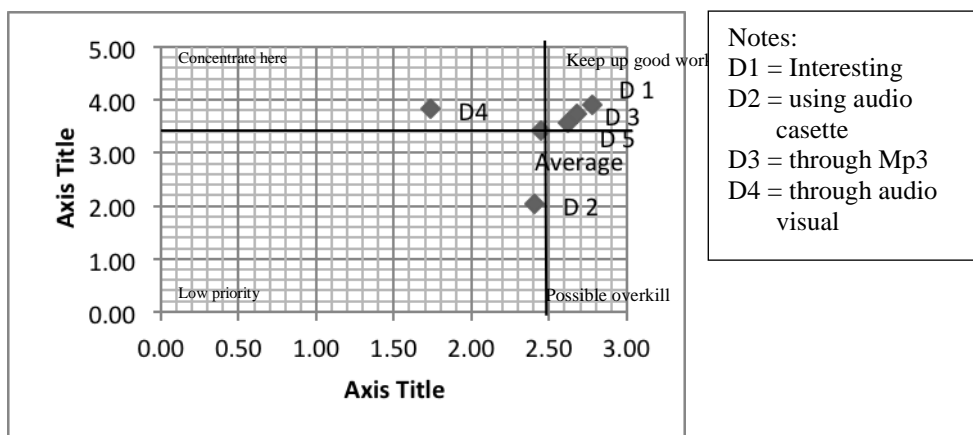


Figure 4.4 The IPA of Content used in the Listening Material

The only feature of content which needs to be repaired is the feature in which the content should be displayed using audio visuals. This is the main reason for selecting the material from YouTube.com. There are some materials or video clips that can be downloaded from YouTube.com which can fulfill students’ eagerness to possess audio visuals materials in learning Listening Comprehension.

4) IPA of Model of Process

The scatter gram of Importance-Performance Analysis in Figure 4.6 which displays the model of listening process shows no feature needs to be repaired; they but only need maintenance. No feature falls in the quadrant areas of *Concentrate here* and *Possible Overkill*. It means that the listening comprehension materials at Umpar are conducted in appropriate ways according to the listening process model.

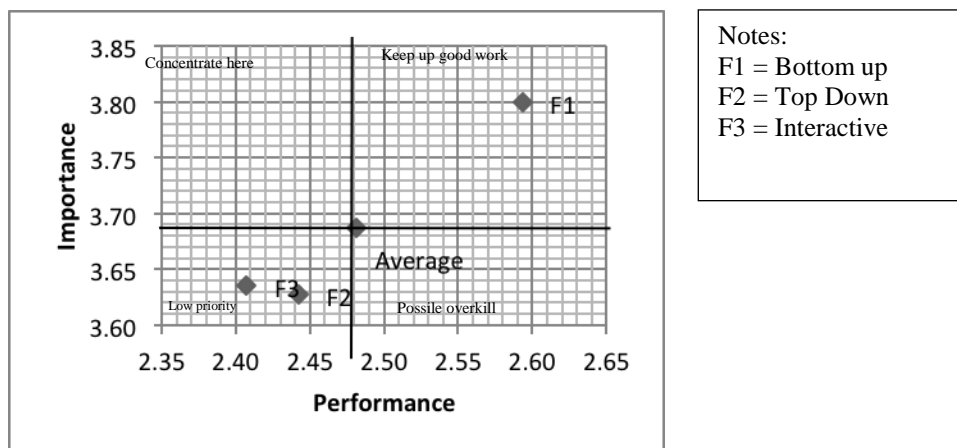


Figure 4.5 The IPA of Process Model in the teaching Listening

5) IPA of Learning Activities

Figure 4.7 shows that there are two features that fall in the first quadrant, *Concentrate Here*, namely feature G2 and G4. Based on the Importance-Performance Analysis, these features should be implemented in the learning activities. These activities are listening and speaking (G2) and listening and repeat activities (G4). Therefore, the researcher includes these activities in the model which is developed through this study.

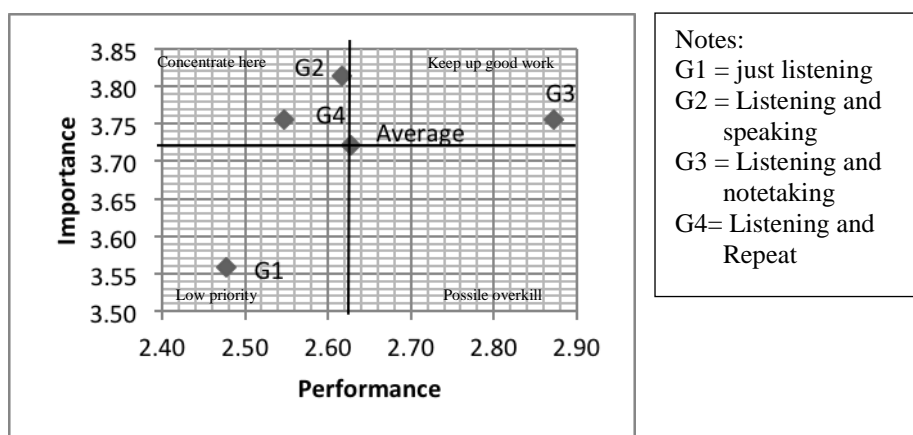


Figure 4.6 The IPA of Learning Activities

6) IPA of Listening Activities

Out of five features, hearing the sound (H1), understanding intonation and stress (H2), copying with redundancy and noise (H3), predicting (H4), and understanding colloquial vocabulary (H5), predicting (H4) is the only feature which falls in *Concentrate here* category. It means that the developed model should cover such activities. Therefore, *predicting activities* is one main characteristic of the syntax in the model developed through this study.

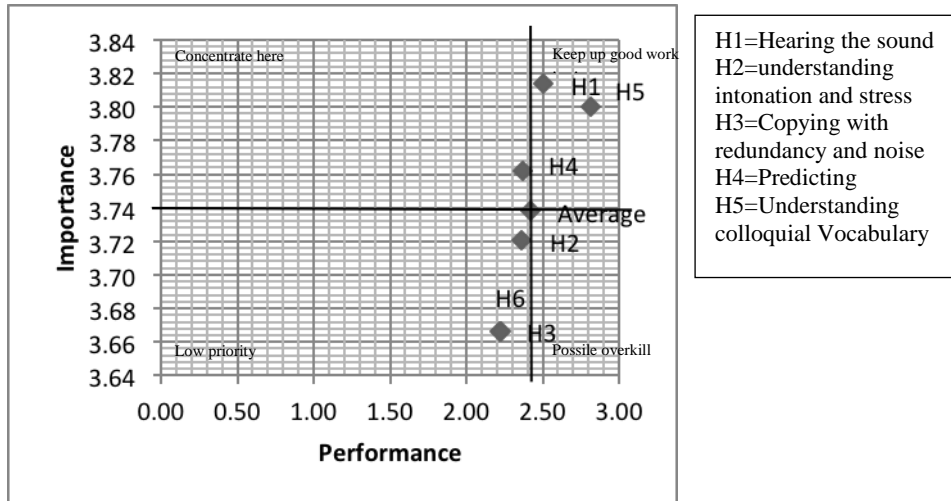


Figure 4.7 The IPA of Listening Activities

The existing material for listening comprehension instruction has covered listening activities, hearing the sound (H1) and understanding the colloquial vocabulary (H5). However, it does not mean that the researcher does not cover these activities in the developed material. The researcher still maintains these activities in her YouTube-based material.

7) IPA of Learning Approach

Figure 4.9 shows that there is no feature that should be repaired seriously but the features of learning approaches that are used at Umpar only need maintenance. This is shown by the fact that no feature falls in the quadrant areas of *Concentrate here* and *Possible Overkill*. It means that learning approaches that are used in listening Comprehension instruction at Umpar are conducted in appropriate ways.

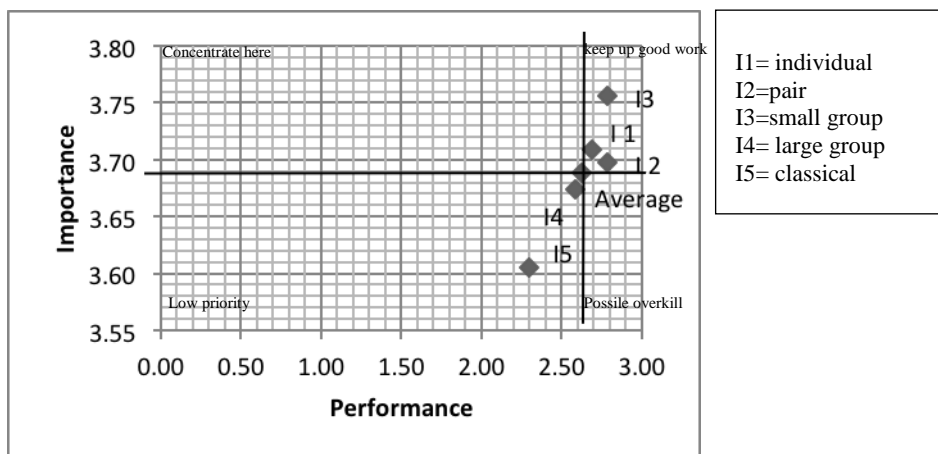


Figure 4.8 The IPA of Learning Approach

8) IPA of Out-Class Assignment

For the out-class assignment features, there is no also feature to repair because all features fall in the areas of keep up good work and low priority. These features only need maintenance.

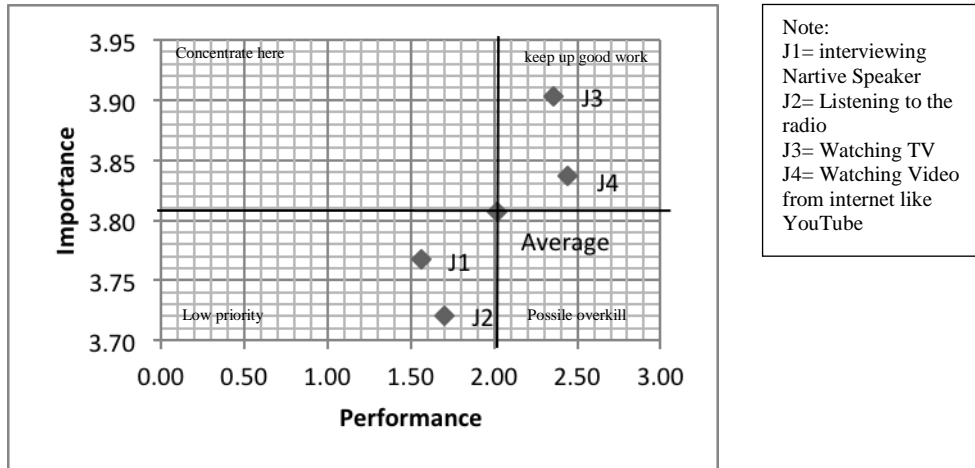


Figure 4.9 The IPA of Out-class assignment

9) IPA of Media

Figure 4.11 shows that there are two features that fall in the first quadrant, *Concentrate Here*, namely feature K1 and K4. Based on the Importance-Performance Analysis, these features have low performance but high importance. Therefore, they should be implemented in the learning activities. These media are television (K1) and video (K4).

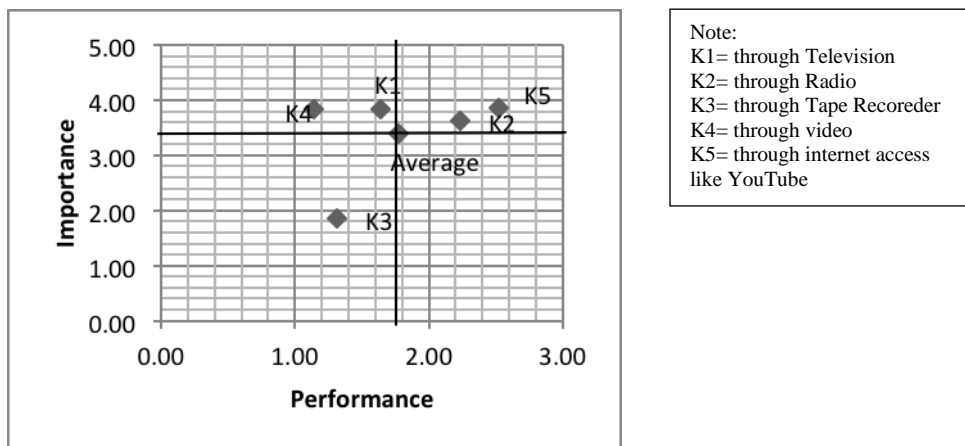


Figure 4.10 The IPA of Media used in the teaching Listening

10) IPA of Place

For the out-class assignment features, there is also no feature to repair because all features fall in the areas of keep up good work and low priority. However, the researcher should reconsider the reason why the students consider it as low importance.

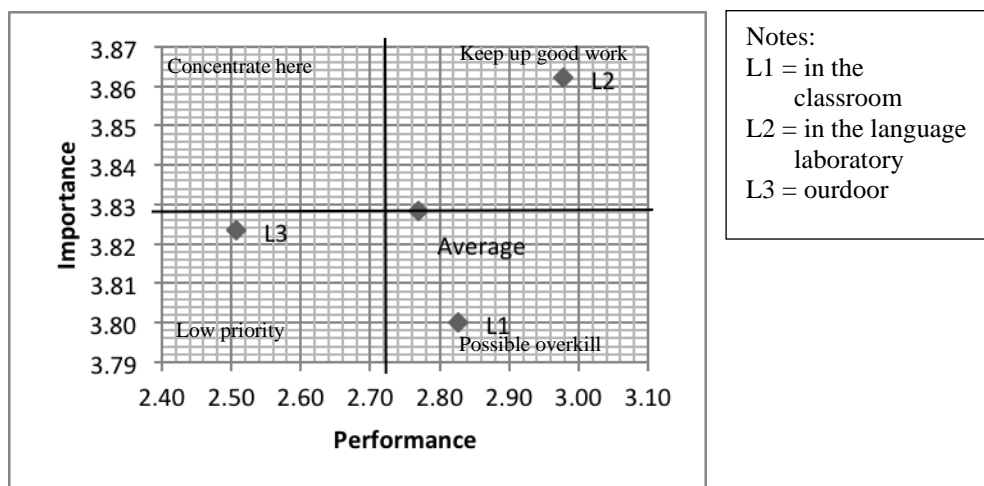


Figure 4.11 The IPA of Place of Teaching Listening

11) IPA of Time

For the time allotment features, there is no also feature to repair because all features fall in the areas of keep up good work and low priority. These features only need maintenance.

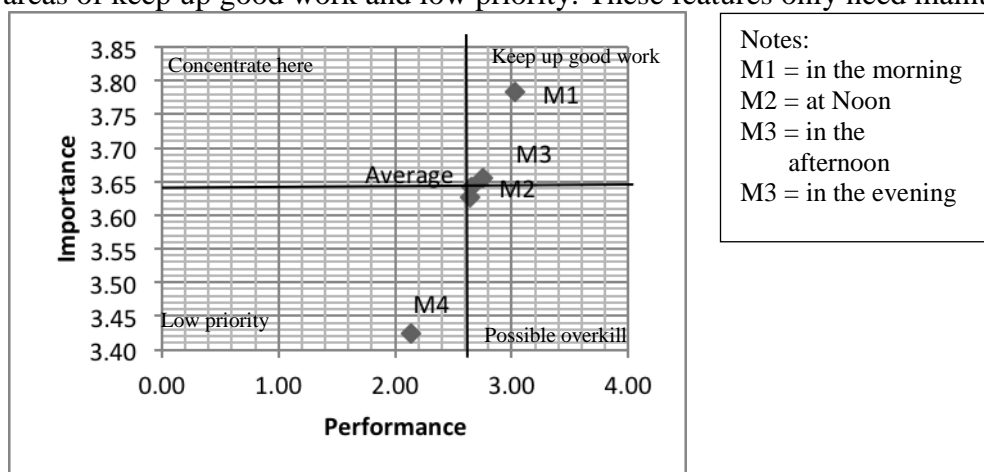


Figure 4.12 The IPA of Time Allocation

6.0 CONCLUSION

After applying the IPA and finding the difference between the performance and the importance features of teaching Listening Comprehension at Umpar Indonesia, the researcher concludes that there are some features in the teaching of listening that should be repaired, maintained, and reconsidered.

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