

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter describes the background of the study, the statement of the problems, the delimitation of the problems, and the research questions. The purpose of the study and the significance of the study are also explained in this chapter. At the end of this chapter, the researcher describes the organization of the study.

Background of the Study

Skills for learning a foreign language include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each of them is essential to be mastered, especially listening since it belongs to the first skill in the receptive skill. Listening is crucial for students who are learning a foreign language, for example English as it helps students communicate to others and also is used in daily life. Listening can help students improve their knowledge and speaking (Rost, 1994; Doff, 1995; Ziane, 2011). Listening is essential parts of learning language because it can give input for students and it also has important role in developing students' language knowledge as it is used in real life (Morley, 2001; Rost, 2013). In addition, these days, listening takes an important role to the development of technology and globalization (Mendelsohn, cited in Kazemi & Kiamarsi, 2017). It is in line with S. Yildirim and Ö. Yildirim (2016) who mentioned that listening is important for students in order to retain effective communication in daily life and

academic context. Based on the scholars, it is possible for a learner who has good listening ability in English language to listen to podcast, music, to study, watch film, or even communicate to the native speaker of English. Therefore, it is necessary for language learners to improve their listening skill in order to make the language learning more comprehensible and for clear communication.

With its important role in learning English, there are a number of students who are still struggling in listening process. The struggles happened because of many factors that students may face during the listening process. According to Azmi, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul (2014), students may face accents, lack of vocabulary, and rapidness of listening, quality of recording, and cultural diversity. It is also supported by Vandergrift and Baker (2015) who mentioned that students' understanding in vocabulary, listening ability, and background knowledge can affect students' listening comprehension process. Nowrouzi, Tam, Zareian, and Nimehchisalem (2015) investigated the problems which Iranian students faced in listening comprehension. The result showed that the problems in perception, parsing, and utilization were experienced by the group of the students.

The same evidence happened to some students in one of private university in Yogyakarta, particularly in English Language Department. Surprisingly, these problems are not only faced by freshmen, but also senior students in the university. Based on the researcher's observation,

these senior students experienced problem in listening even those students have been learning English for more than three years and taking the classes that are conducted by using English. Consequently, the students make unsuccessful listening and ineffective communication. Therefore, there is a need for students to employ strategies in order to improve their listening ability.

Strategies may be useful for learners studying a foreign language, which in this case is learning English. It helps students tackle their barriers and achieve their language goal. However, research which talks about listening strategies from students' perspective are lacking, especially for English as a foreign language context. Thus, this research aims to explore what kind of strategies that students use in their listening. The researcher wants to look for a number of strategies that students employ based on the problem they are facing. The researcher puts this concern into this study, entitled, "Exploring Students' Strategies in Improving Listening Skill".

Statement of the Problems

Learning listening is challenging for English language learners. What makes it challenging is not only English is not the first language in Indonesia, but also probably there are a number of problems that students faced in listening. Underwood (1989) stated seven causes of problems in listening, namely rapidness of speaker speaks, inability to repeat particular word, lack of vocabulary, inability to indicate moving point in listening,

lack of contextual knowledge, barely concentrate to listen to a foreign language, and barely understand particular word. Ur (2007) also give addition toward difficulties that students face during the listening such as “hearing sounds, understanding intonation and stress, coping with redundancy and noise, predicting, understanding colloquial vocabulary, fatigue, understanding different accents, using visual and aural environmental clues” (Ur, 2007, pp. 11-20). Those problems make students hardly understand the language input and ineffective communication will occur. In order to communicate and listen effectively, the students should design their own strategies to tackle their problem.

The fact happened in some students in English Language Department of a private university in Yogyakarta. Based on the researcher’s observation, students mentioned that they are struggling in listening because of how fast the speaker speaks. They thought that it is hard to listen to the speaker and understand the words and the meaning of what the speaker said. Those students should reflect their problems and evaluate by themselves about their struggle. Furthermore, they can find way to figure out these problems and plan strategies to develop their listening skill. The research aimed to explore students’ strategies to develop students listening comprehension process. The research entitled “Exploring Students’ Strategies in Improving Listening Skill”.

Delimitation of the Problems

This study is limited to explore the students' strategies to improve listening skill because listening have wide topic to be discussed. The researcher only investigates listening strategies based on the students' perception toward their own problems. The participants are limited to the senior students because the evidence happened to these students.

Research Question

The researcher attempts to explore students' strategies to improve their listening ability. Therefore, the following research question, namely "what are the strategies employed by students in English Language Education Department in a private university in Yogyakarta in improving their listening skill?" is used.

Purpose of the Study

This research is made in purpose, which is explained in the objective of the study. The purpose of the study is to explore students' strategies in improving listening at English Language Department in one private university in Yogyakarta.

Significances of the Study.

There are three significances of the study namely for the English teachers, the students, and other researchers.

The English teachers. The finding of the study illuminates English teacher or lecturer and gives more information about students' listening strategies. This research can be a reference for teacher or lecturer to know about strategies from students' voice. Also, there are many strategies revealed in the finding of this study. The teachers can understand those strategies and used it as a consideration in designing teaching materials and conducting courses for listening that suits for students.

The students. The findings of the study are beneficial for the students. The findings of the study elaborate which the strategies that they use in order to improve their listening ability based on their own experience when they are learning English. The result of this study can be a reflection for other students who willingly want to improve their listening. Also, the students can use some of the strategies that fit to their learning style. Furthermore, they can learn and use those strategies in order to improve listening based on other students' experience.

Other researchers. The finding of the study can be useful for other researchers. This study discusses about students' strategies in improving listening ability to learn English. As this study discusses about students' strategies and listening ability, this study can be an additional source for these researchers who conduct the same field. Furthermore, these researchers will get other information that can be a supportive source for their research. Also, this study can illuminate other researchers to conduct a research on the same field. Other researchers can use this

research as an idea for conducting research about students' listening strategies.

Organization of the Study.

Chapter one explains background of the research, statement of the problem, purpose of the research, research questions, and significances of the research. Some reviews of literature related to listening skill, processes of listening, barriers during listening process, and listening strategies will be discussed in chapter two. Next, chapter three discusses research method including research design, nature and sources of the data, research setting and participant, data collection method, and data analysis. Chapter four discusses about findings and discussion. In this chapter, the researcher discusses about the finding of the research based on the interview that has been classified and connected to theories. The last is chapter five where the researcher provides conclusion based on the findings and gives some suggestions that arise from findings.