

Chapter One

Introduction

The first chapter of this study introduces the reasons why this research should be conducted. This part discusses background, problem statement, problem limitation, research question, research significance, and outline of this study.

Background

Listening is the first skill of humans when they are born. As the most basic part of language skill, listening plays a vital role in a learning as it is one of four main skills in language acquisition (Renukadevi, 2014). Furthermore, she stated that when we get involved in a communication, we gain 45% of language competence from listening, 30% from speaking, 15% from reading and 10% from writing. Similarly, Mendelsohn, as cited in Bingol, Celik, Yildiz, and Mart (2014) argued that listening also has an important part in communication. He mentioned that students spend 50% of the time operational in a foreign language to listen. It indicates that listening is the most frequently used skill in the classroom.

In learning foreign languages, students should have a good listening skill as a foundation to determine the success of other language skill learning. Harmer (2007) claimed that listening is good for students' pronunciation. He argued that students could accurately acquire pitch, intonation, word stress, and the sounds of both single word and multiple words in connecting the speech. In the other words, listening serves as the foundation for speaking development.

Listening as a basis of language skill is important to be learned. Krashen (1985) as cited in Hamouda (2013) argued that people acquire language by understanding the linguistic information that they hear. Ranukadevi (2014) highlighted that listening stimulates awareness of the language as it is a receptive

skill that first develops in a human being. Hamouda (2013) stated that language acquisition is acquired mainly through receiving understandable input and listening ability is the critical element in achieving understandable language input. In addition, listening is needed as a tool in the development of spoken language proficiency. In line with Hamouda, Rost (2011) stated that developing proficiency in listening is the key to achieve proficiency in speaking. It means that listening should be learned optimally by beginner learners because it determines students' ability in developing their speaking.

As a foundation of language skill, beginner learners should know how to master listening skill. In Indonesian, English is firstly taught as a subject at school start from junior high school level. This can be assumed that students in this level are 12 years old. Specifically, that age is the first year of junior high school or grade VII. This research was conducted for junior high school learners.

Many beginner students face the difficulties in listening comprehension. Hamouda (2013) investigated that many students find that listening is hard to learn. In his study on Saudi Arabia learners, he found about listening problem such as accent, pronunciation, the speed of speech, insufficient vocabulary, the different accent of speakers, lack of concentration, anxiety, and bad quality of recording file are the major listening comprehension problems. This case also happened in Indonesian schools. The researcher found that beginner learners have low performance in listening skill based on her observation during practicum and internship program at Muhammadiyah schools in Yogyakarta.

Listening is not only hard to learn but also hard to teach. Walker (2014, p.168) claimed that "listening is the most difficult skill to teach". Pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar are the main factor that listening is hard to teach in the

classroom (Bloomfield and Osada as cited in Walker, 2014). Besides, Bingol (2014) indicated that most of the educators focus more on improving speaking proficiency as the target in learning a foreign language than listening. This is suitable with the facts that the researcher found in the classroom that the portion of speaking tasks is more than listening tasks.

Many teachers think that speaking is more important than listening as a result in a teaching course. Vandergrift (2004) stated, "At one time, listening was assumed to be a passive activity, meriting little classroom attention" (p. 3). Brown (2001) highlighted that in the decades of 1950s and 60s listening hardly attracts the attention of English teachers and their focus is on speaking although now the trend has changed. Some schools begin to pay attention to listening. However, Walker (2014, p.168) stated, "Listening is the forgotten skill". It was assumed that the focus of most teachers is in speaking aspect although what their students said based on what they listen.

Students need a good listening source to improve their proficiency. Harmer (2007) stated, "One of the main sources of listening for students is the voice of their teacher" (p.133), but he pointed out the problem when the teacher is non-native English speakers. He mentioned non-native English teachers has varieties of accents. It is possible for them to do a mistake and pronounce inaccurately. Based on that problem, teachers need additional sources to support them in teaching practice.

On the other hand, students in this era are growing up with technology as a part of their daily life, as Prensky (2001) said that students of this era are digital native, which means that they are born with technology. He argued that digital native is more interested in technology-based tools. Based on this phenomenon, the

researcher thinks to change conventional tools in the classroom become digital-based. This way is to gain students' attention in the learning.

Audio books are an alternative of conventional books becoming digital books. Audio books are printed books with audio files, so when learners read a book they also listen to the audio. Grover and Hannegan (2008) stated, "Audio books bring together a listening experience and a learning experience that benefits students and teachers" (p.1). Moreover, when an audio file is read by English native speakers, so the foreign language learners can listen accurately the sound of every word in the text. Grover and Hannegan (2008) found out that using audio books enhance comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and language acquisition. From this analysis, teachers can implement audio books in listening class.

Audio books are interesting tools. Baskin and Harris (1995) claimed that audio books are an interesting media for learners. They mentioned that audio books increase the interest of the readers. They argued, "Audio books can facilitate understanding of dialect and complex language, emphasize humor and drama, and provide the advantages of storytelling" (Baskin and Harris, 1995, p. 372). This meant that audio books help learners to understand the book. Audio books can also be implemented in learning process. Audio books may help students to develop their listening skill with the audio file in audio books.

Based on the benefits of audio books in improving students' listening skill, the researcher tried to implement audio books in listening activities. This study presented the effectiveness of using audio books. Besides, this study also discussed how to implement audio book in the classroom. While listening is a foundation of language skill, this research was conducted in junior high school. It was a first formal subject of English in Indonesian schools. The researcher used audio books as

digital-based media that it was appropriate media for students born as digital native. The researcher wanted to know how effective audio book is in improving students' listening skill.

Problem Statement

Based on the researcher's experience during the internship program at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta, the researcher found some problems in teaching learning process especially in listening. The problems included the teachers, students, material, and media.

Although listening is very important as a foundation of language learning, listening rarely receives a lot of attention. An English teacher of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta mentioned that listening was not examined in national examination and final test in junior high school level. Hence, she assumed that these cases make many teachers focus more on other skill than listening. Listening was rarely taught in classes. Listening also took the smallest portion of the whole classes during the semester. The fact happened in SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta that listening did not receive any attention in English teaching is a common case, as Walker stated that "Listening is the forgotten skill" (Walker, 2014 p.168).

Another problem came from student itself. They lacked opportunities to learn in listening. This case made it hard for them to face listening test because they rarely practiced listening skill. In addition, students lacked vocabulary. Pronunciation of English native speaker also became a problem for students. Those reasons are that made students have low performance in listening.

An English teacher of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta mentioned that appropriate materials for listening section are hard to find. The material referred to

audio files that the sound was from English native speaker. The English teacher mentioned that there were many textbooks which were not completed with audio files. The teacher said that sometimes she only used a song or even she just dictated the words or sentences orally. This case possibly made the students listen inaccurately, as Harmer (2007) stated that when non-native English speakers became a source of listening, they possibly made mistakes or pronounced inaccurately.

The last problem was the lack of exploring ICT class in that school. SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta has two ICT classes in every batch. These classes are facilitated with LCD projector, sound system, and everything that is needed to implement tools with technology-based. The researcher wanted to optimize the use of multimedia class in teaching learning process. This study encouraged teachers to use technology-based media.

From this condition, the researcher formulated the problem that both students and teachers face in listening skill. Teacher and students perceived that listening was difficult. SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta has digital classes that it has powerful facilities to implement technology-based tools in learning process. Students in that school are also digital native that Presnky (2001) said that they were born with technology and more interested in technology-based tools. From these cases, the researcher wanted to use audio books as learning media with technology-based. It will supply students' need in listening.

This study is to examine the effectiveness of using audio books in improving students' listening skill. If the use of audio books gives benefit to the learners, educators may apply audio books in the classroom.

Problem Limitation

This study is aimed at examining the effectiveness of audio books as technology-based media in listening class. However, the researcher limited this study. It was conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta. The sample was students of class VIII-A academic year 2015/2016. This class was ICT class that support in the implementation of audio books. Audio books that be used in a short story format that appropriates with students' level.

Research Question

The purpose of this study is to know the effectiveness of using audio books in improving students' listening skill. The main question addressed in this study is:

1. Is there any significant differences of students' listening skill after they are taught by audio books?

Research objective

This research contains one research objective, which is set as follow:

1. To investigate the effectiveness of using audio book in improving students' listening skill

Research significance

There are five significant of this study including for the researcher, for the teachers, for the students, for the schools, and for the further researchers.

For the researcher. The result of this study improves the researcher's knowledge in exploring teaching learning media.

For the teachers. This study encourages the teachers to provide teaching learning material in the classroom. This study is as references of alternative media in

listening class. This study helps teachers to choose media that can improve students' listening skill. In addition, teachers know how to implement audio book.

For the students. This research introduces audio book as educational media in learning foreign languages. Students may practice their listening skill by audio book. This research helps students to improve their listening skill, and help them to know the benefit of using audio book.

For the schools. This study also explores, optimize and promote technology school-based that the digital class is helpful for students.

For further research. This research provides a literature and findings related the using of audio book that can be as references for further research in this area.

Research Outline

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter introduces the reasons why this research should be conducted. The second chapter presents the literature that related with this study. The third chapter discusses the research methodology. The fourth chapter discusses the result of this study including findings and discussion. The last chapter explains the conclusion and the recommendation of this study.