

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents: (1) concept of listening, (2) concept of listening comprehension, (3) the effective listening strategies, (4) previous related study.

2.1 Concept of Listening

Listening is a process of understanding that includes hearing and a process of establishing meanings which aims to get the information of what the speakers are saying. Humouda (2013) defines listening as the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. It is supported by Gilakjini and Sabouri (2016) who state that listening is a process of receiving what the speaker says, making and showing meaning, negotiating meaning with the speaker and answering, and creating meaning by participation, creativity, and empathy. As a result, this process involves understanding of a speaker's accent or pronunciation, the speaker's grammar and vocabulary, and comprehension of meaning.

In learning a language, the first step people have to do is listening. Chao (2013) defines that listening is an essential skill of language learning as children learn their first language. Eng, Mohamed and Javed (2013) state that it provides a foundation for all aspects of language and cognitive development and it plays a lifelong role in the processes of learning and communication that is essential to productive participation in life. Moreover, Nation and Newton (2009) state that listening is the early stages to speak of language development which is naturally happen in person's first language and naturalistic acquisition of other languages. Moreover, Heyrapetyan (2016) defines that listening also become a special aspect

in language learning that can be categorized based on the goals of listening itself. It can be listening for enjoyment, for information, for persuasion, for perception and for comprehension.

After the review of listening definitions in the literature, listening can be interpreted based on each orientation. Rost (2011) asserts that almost each of listening definition revolves around one of these four orientations. First, receptive orientation means the act of receiving what the speaker says, such as decoding the message of the speaker. Second, constructive orientation means building or representing the meaning, such as listen to figure out what is in speakers' mind and what is relevant for you. Third, collaborative orientation means that listening to negotiate meaning with the speaker and to respond. Fourth, transformative orientation means listening to create meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy.

Listening also becomes an important skill in English because it has many uses for people. Boyle (1987) expresses that importance of listening lies in the fact that it enables students become aware of language and how it is used, and it gives students the creative use of grammar (as cited in Asemota, 2015, p.27). In addition, Hedge (2000) claims that there are five main reasons for listening, they are to engage in social rituals, to exchange information, to enjoy yourself, to share feelings and to exert control (as cited in Darweesh, 2014, p. 2). Therefore, listening is the most important skill in English.

2.2 Concept of Listening Comprehension

The term listening comprehension has been defined by different authors. Rost (2002) defines that listening comprehension is regarded as a complex, interactive process in which listeners are involved in a dynamic construction of meaning. Moreover, Afshar and Hamzavi (2014) state that listening comprehension is regarded as a multifaceted active process which is affected by a multitude of factors relating to the given context (as cited in Yulisa, 2018, p. 24). It means that students must be able to comprehend all of the aspects when listening. Golchi (2012) adds that listening includes comprehension of meaning-bearing, words, phrases, clauses, sentences and connected discourse (as cited in Pertiwi, 2018, p. 34). To sum up, listening comprehension involves every aspect to get the meaning of spoken language as well.

Listening comprehension also involves listeners' background knowledge because it is more than extracting meaning from incoming speech. Listeners have to understand the oral input from sound discrimination, prior knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structures, stress and intonation. According to Bdlöckcuoglu (2014), listening comprehension is strongly believed to be a process of interaction between the listeners' background knowledge and the expected knowledge in the spoken text, that is, listeners employ all relevant previously stored knowledge to comprehend the incoming input (as cited in Pertiwi, 2018, p. 34). Then, Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) state that listening comprehension is regarded theoretically as an active process in which individuals

concentrate on selected aspects of aural input, form meaning from passages, and associate what they hear with existing knowledge.

Furthermore, listening comprehension can be defined as the process of understanding speakers' talk. Hamouda (2013) states that listening comprehension as an interactive process in which listeners are involved in constructing meaning. Listeners comprehend the oral input through sound discrimination, previous knowledge, grammatical structures, stress and intonation, and the other linguistic or non-linguistic clues. In other words, Nadig (2013) explains that listening comprehension is the various processes of understanding and making sense of spoken language. These involve knowing speech sounds, comprehending the meaning of individual words, and understanding the syntax of sentences. It can be concluded that listening comprehension is the way of understanding completely the spoken language and then making up the meaning of the language being spoken by the speakers.

Based on the discussion mentioned above, Liu (2007) shows three main characteristics of listening comprehension (as cited in Lestari, 2017, p. 18). First, listening comprehension is an active activity, because it is to receive information. Second, listening comprehension is a creative activity, because listeners construct the meaning and give the information based on their background knowledge. Third, listening comprehension is an interactive activity as both speakers and listeners are involved. That is, during the listening comprehension process, speakers and listeners exchange the information.

To listen well, students have to comprehend the meaning of the spoken language. According to Azizah (2014), to comprehend something spoken by someone needs a total and complete understanding. It means that understanding is to know the meaning of something that someone says, and to comprehend the meaning of something needs a skill in order to reach the ability to understand completely to what have been spoken by the speakers. Then, Heyrapetyan (2016) states that a good listener will not listen to all the words of the listening task. Brown (2004) adds that sentences are not processed word by word and the focus is placed on the ideas behind these words and how these ideas are linked together to draw conclusions. As a result, we may skip any part of it and just focus on the information that they need for their answer and try to comprehend the key words which give them clues to understand the listening texts. Thus, we skim over parts of the message and pay attention to relevant parts only.

The contradiction between teachers and students' perceptions tells us that there are some things about teaching listening that need to be explored. According to Heyrapetyan (2016), some teachers think that listening is the easiest skill to teach, whereas most students think it is the most difficult to improve. Furthermore, Yagang (2001) explains that perhaps those who say it is "the easiest to teach" mean that it does not require much painstaking lesson preparation and all they need to do is play the tapes and test the students' comprehension. In conclusion, as a student, we must find out the way how listening can be improved and what activities are useful to this end and then use this knowledge and these activities to minimize the problems.

There are some stages in comprehending listening material. Heyrapetyan (2016) divided listening for comprehension into three stages. First, listening and making no response (following a written text, informal teacher talk). Second, listening and making short responses (obeying instructions-physical movement, building models, picture dictation. etc.), true-false exercises, etc. third, listening and making longer responses (repetition and dictation, paraphrasing, answering questions, answering comprehension questions on texts, predictions, filling gaps, summarising, etc.). So, people can identify what they need in listening comprehension by following the steps.

2.2.1 The Importance of Listening Comprehension

Some experts of language teaching define the importance of listening comprehension in some ways. Richards (2008) states that the view of listening is based on the assumption that the main function of listening in second language learning is to facilitate understanding of spoken discourse. Then, Asemota (2015) explains that the importance of listening lies in the fact that it enables students become aware of language and how it is used. Additionally, Brown (2001) defines that listening comprehension is important for language learning in general and foreign language learning in particular because it allows learners to internalize items through exposure to the target language.

Every researcher has their own opinion in giving some reasons of the importance of listening comprehension. El-Koumy (2002) demonstrates there are certain reasons for the importance of listening for foreign language learners. First, listening is essential prerequisite for oral communication to take place. Second, it

often influences the development of reading and writing. Third, it plays a central role in academic success, since students understand teachers or lectures through listening. In short, having good listening can help students to communicate, to improve other language skill and also to help students understand the material during teaching and learning process.

2.2.2 Problems of Listening Comprehension

As many researchers have investigated the problems of listening, there are various problems faced by the students in listening comprehension. Goh (2000) described ten common listening comprehension problems. They are, quickly forget what is heard, do not recognise words they know, understand words but not intended the message, neglected the next part when thinking about meaning, unable to form a mental representation from words heard, cannot chunk streams of speech, miss the beginning of the texts, concentrate too hard or unable to concentrate, do not understand subsequent parts of input because of earlier problems and confused about the key ideas in the message. In relation, Malkawi (2010) explained that there are three listening problem that senior high school students usually face in listening comprehension. Such as speech speed, limited knowledge of vocabulary and structure of sentences and limited knowledge of topic in question.

Not only problems from external factors, there are also some problems caused by internal factors. Machackova (2009) states that most students believe that listening is the most difficult skill and they start to panic when they listen to listening material in a CD player. As a result, many researchers identified a list of

common problems that students face in the classroom during the listening classes.

They are as follow:

1. Problems caused by pronunciation
2. Problems caused by the lack of control of a speakers speech speed
3. Problems caused by the inability to get things repeated
4. Problems caused by the listeners' limited word stock
5. Problems caused by the failure to concentrate
6. Problems caused by the interpretation
7. Problems caused by the inability to identify the signals
8. Problems caused by the language
9. Problems caused by the lack of visual support
10. Problems caused by the length of the spoken text
11. Problems caused by the listening material

2.2.3 Factors Affecting Listening Comprehension

There are various explanation about factors affecting students listening comprehension. Imhof and Janusik (2006) explains that there are two factors that affect listening comprehension, they are cognitive and affective factors. Cognitive factors include linguistic knowledge (vocabulary and syntactic knowledge), discourse knowledge, pragmatic knowledge, metacognitive knowledge, prior knowledge, first language listening ability, sound discrimination ability, and working memory capacity. While, affective factors include factors such as anxiety, motivation, and self-efficacy.

1. Cognitive factors

- 1) Vocabulary Knowledge, students sometimes encounter an unknown word which may cause them to stop and think about the meaning of that word which make the students miss the next part of the speech.
- 2) Syntactic Knowledge, this involves the way words are assembled and sentences are constructed in a particular language that is difficult to identify by the students.
- 3) Discourse Knowledge refers to awareness of the type of information found in listening texts, how that information might be organized, and how listeners can use the information to facilitate comprehension.
- 4) Pragmatic Knowledge, pragmatic knowledge involves the application of information regarding a speaker's intention that goes beyond the literal meaning of an utterance. Students generally apply pragmatic knowledge to determine a speaker's intention by elaborating on what they heard based on the contextual information.
- 5) Metacognition, it is management techniques used by students to control their learning through planning, checking, assessing, and changing the information that make easy to understand.
- 6) Prior Knowledge, refers to all the conceptual knowledge and life experiences that language learners have acquired and are available for comprehension purposes to fill in missing information as they listen.
- 7) L1 Listening Ability, L2 listeners already possess an acquired listening competence in their first language (L1). The degree to which this ability might contribute to L2 listening ability has only recently been examined.

8) Sound Discrimination Ability means listening ability that may transfer from L1 to L2. This contributes to growth in listening ability and vocabulary learning, particularly with children at a beginning level of language proficiency.

2. Affective factors

- 1) Anxiety, it is feeling of worry and emotional reaction that arises while listening.
- 2) Self-efficacy, it is the basis for self-confidence and motivation, refers to learners' beliefs about their ability to successfully participate in learning activities.
- 3) Motivation, motivation is the factor that determines a person's desire to do something, it is defined as some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something.

2.2.4 The Process of Listening Comprehension

In listening activity, there are some process which involves in listening comprehension. According to Wolvin (2010), the four elements of the listening process need to be mentioned in order to give a reliable definition for listening: First, the Physiological dimension which deals with physiological capacity of receiving the vocal message. Second, Psychological dimension which is assigning meaning to the incoming sound by the cognitive and mental capacity. Third, Sociological dimension, which has to do with the response of the listener for the message once he receives and interprets it. Fourth, the Communication dimension,

which has to do with how the listener cooperates for the communication purpose (as cited in Ismail, 2015, p. 4).

Furthermore, there are several basic processes at work in listening for the listener. Heyrapetyan (2016) explains that the process of listening comprehension consist of eight steps, they are:

1. determines a reason for listening;
2. takes the raw speech and deposits it in short-term memory;
3. attempts to organize the information by identifying the type of speech event (conversation, lecture, radio ad) and the function of the message (persuade, inform, request);
4. predicts information expected to be included in the message;
5. recalls background information (schemata) to help interpret the message;
6. assigns a meaning to the message;
7. checks that the message has been understood;
8. determines the information to be held in long-term memory;

In other words, the overall message is built up from phonetic units, which are placed together like building blocks and constructed into words, phrases and sentences. The listener stores the incoming sounds in the order they are heard and uses clues from within the text, such as his/her lexical knowledge, knowledge of syntactic structure, and linguistic features such as stress, pauses, and enunciation to recreate the meaning of what is heard and predict what will follow. Then, Heyrapetyan (2016) also explains that listening process is divided into 3 stages:

- 1) Pre-listening where the context is established. The teacher creates motivation and students do some activities with the purpose of preparing them for what they will hear;
- 2) In-while listening, where learners do the mentioned tasks or find answers. There are two kinds of material and procedure. On the one hand, extensive reading helps students to acquire vocabulary and grammar and it usually takes place outside the classroom. They do it for pleasure, so that their knowledge of the language improves and it makes students better readers. On the other hand, intensive listening is what students usually learn in the classroom, through activities such as answering questions, following a route on a map, making notes, etc.
- 3) Post-listening, the part where students have the opportunity to check their answers about they have been listening to, to give feedback and consolidate what they have learnt. It is useful for teachers because it helps to analyze particular difficulties the students could have with listening activity.

On the other hand, Ismail (2015) states that listening comprehension has three processes, they are: bottom-up, top down and interactive processing.

1. Bottom-up processing: listeners make up their understanding starting with phonemes and then they combine them into words which together shape phrases, clauses and so on till they fulfill a literal understanding. The last, is then interpreted depending on relevance of the information at that time to understand what the speaker means. Yet, listening comprehension is achieved

piece by piece going from the parts of the whole. According to this idea, expectations which come from the background knowledge are prerequisite for comprehension.

2. **Top down processing:** this process goes in opposite direction of the previous model. The listener comprehends discourse by moving highest unit, schemata, context and culture to the lowest, language knowledge in processing a text, emphasis is on the use previous knowledge rather than relying upon linguistic knowledge. The benefits of this model are that it can compensate to a certain level for the linguistic limitations when the listener's language knowledge is not sufficient for comprehending a spoken input.
3. **Interactive processing:** comprehension is not a simple matter-either of moving from lower to higher or from higher to lower element-but is an interactive process. The interactive model involves the previous two processes; it assumes that the application of various types of knowledge does not require a specific order to understand a language.

2.3 The Effective Listening Strategies

To overcome students listening comprehension problems, the teachers have to discover effective listening strategies for the students. Hamouda (2013) explains that the teachers at least can provide the students with suitable listening materials, background and linguistic knowledge, enabling skills, pleasant classroom conditions, and useful exercises for the students. Here are a few helpful ideas:

1. Adapting and improving listening materials

It is obvious that students differ in their learning styles and ability, therefore, teachers should adopt and adapt listening materials that match their students' interest and background since the listening materials only become stimulating and motivating them when they are slightly challenging to what they have already known and suit their interest.

2. Activating your students' vocabulary

Since lack of vocabulary becomes a great obstacle to the students in listening comprehension, it is necessary for teachers to equip students with certain key words needed in listening material. It can be better to activate students' vocabulary by asking them to guess the meaning of words used in the listening context before explaining the meaning to them, since whenever students are able to relate what they have already known to what they are supposed to listen for, they are likely to listen better or more effectively.

3. Using different kinds of input

The teacher should also provide students with different kinds of input, such as lectures, radio news, films, TV plays, announcements, everyday conversation, interviews, storytelling, English songs, and so on.

4. Using visual aids

Teacher exploit visual aids or draw pictures and diagrams related to the listening topics to aid students to guess and imagine actively. Visual aids draw learners' attentions, increase their motivation on the topic and help them relate to content of the spoken text, thus listener overcome difficulties such as unknown words, minimal pairs of words.

5. Accents

Make students aware of different native-speaker accents. Of course, strong regional accents are not suitable for training in listening, but in spontaneous conversation native speakers do have certain accents. Moreover, the American accent is quite different from the British and Australian. Therefore, it is necessary to let students deal with different accents, especially in extensive listening.

6. Pronunciation

Speakers' pronunciation is also a problem for the students in comprehending listening material. So, teachers need to help students expose themselves and get familiar with precise pronunciation of native speakers. By doing that the students' pronunciation capacity is much more improved, which will help students find listening to native speakers effective and efficient. Many teachers suppose that students' accurate pronunciation is of great help for them in listening acquisition. They also believe that one of the ultimate results of listening acquisition is to train students to produce accurate pronunciation.

7. Connected speech

Connected speech is characterized by weak forms, contractions, elision, and assimilation (Anne Anderson & Tony Lynch, 1988), which are considered the big obstacle for beginning EFL learners in spoken English acquisition. Thus, the task of teachers is to inform their students about these distinctive features

of spoken language at any time convenient so that the students do not feel stressful and surprised when they listen to authentic listening materials.

8. Activating or building students' prior topical and linguistic knowledge

Activate the schemata by encouraging the learners to think about and discuss what they already know about the content of the listening text. Teachers can also provide the background needed for them to understand the text, and it can help them focus attention on what to listen for. Consequently, students begin to predict what they might hear and make connections with what they already know, increasing the relevance of the information.

9. Arousing interest and motivating students to attend to the spoken message.

Students will be more willing to listen actively to what the speaker says if they are able to relate the listening experience to their own lives. Besides, teachers can create an environment conducive to listening and encourage effective listening behaviors that are necessary lifelong skills.

10. Encouraging prediction

This technique can be employed in the pre-listening or while-listening stages. Students are asked to predict what the text is about or what the speaker is going to say next. In order encourage students to imagine and predict what they are going to hear, teacher may tell something about the topic of the listening text or something about the speaker(s). Besides, students can be asked to predict the grammar structures that are likely to be used in the listening text or make a list of words, phrases that relate to the topic and may appear in the listening text. By this way, they can familiarize students with

key concepts and vocabulary before listening to spoken text. When students have certain vocabulary in mind, they will be more self-confident and thus ready to listen effectively.

11. Using slow rate of speech

It has been a common belief in L2 teaching that a slower rate of speech would facilitate listening comprehension. Lecturers need to be advised to slow their speech rate down to a level that suits their students.

12. Providing and trying to gain as much feedback as possible

During the course, the teacher should fill the gap between inputs and students' reply and between the teacher's feedback and students' reaction so as to make listening purposeful. This not only promotes error correction but gives encouragements as well. It can aid students to heighten their confidence in their ability to tackle listening problems. Students' feedback can assist the teacher to judge where the class is going and how it should be instructed.

13. Improving the learning environment of listening skill

Learning environment for listening skill, which is listening laboratory besides cassettes tapes, tape recorders and written listening texts, is a vital key affecting the quality of both learning and teaching listening skill. Students argue that it still lacks well-equipped listening laboratory; consequently, the students find hard and challenging to concentrate while listening. It is, therefore, essential to upgrade the recent laboratory so that all of the students have equal and much chance to study listening skill in such a motivating environment for improving their listening skills.

2.4 Previous Related Studies

The first related study was conducted by Ismail (2016) who investigated of listening problems encountered by EFL Learners of second year license of English at UKMO. The result of this study consists of four sections; first, there was 50% of the students rated themselves as poor in listening. Second, student's general self-rating to English four skills showed that quite half of them were poor in listening. Third, most of the students (80% always) were aware of the importance of listening. Fourth, students have different problems in listening comprehension. The similarity between previous study and the presents study were both studies tried to find out listening comprehension problems, meanwhile the differences are the participants were second semester students, while presents study took third semester students.

Second, Hamouda (2013) investigated Listening Comprehension Problems Encountered by Saudi Students in the EL Listening Classroom. The aimed of this study was to investigate the listening problems encountered by a group of first year English major students of Qassim. The results of the study showed students have various kinds of listening problems in learning comprehension such as unfamiliar words, the length of the spoken text, speed rate, a variety of accents, lack of concentration and pronunciation. Also, some suggestions that could be employed for teachers and students to encounter listening comprehension problems include adapting and improving listening materials, and improving teachers' classroom techniques on the part of the teachers. The similarity between previous related study and presents study were both studies tried to know some

suggestions from teachers to help students overcome their listening comprehension problems. Meanwhile, the difference is previous study used mix method, while the presents study used qualitative method.

Third, Cubalit (2016) has done a research about listening comprehension problems of thai english learners. The aims of this research were to investigate, identify, and analyze listening comprehension problems of EIC students in RMUTL, Phitsanulok Campus. The findings indicated that most participants encountered listening problems related to the listening text, the speaker, and the listener at a high level. The similarity between the previous study and the presents study were both studies tried to find out listening comprehension problems of English learners. Meanwhile, the difference is the sample from the previous study were randomly selected while the presents study were purposively selected.

Fourth, a study by Goh (2000) refers a cognitive perspective on the comprehension problems of second language listeners. This study also identified real-time listening difficulties faced by a group of English as a second language (ESL) learners and examining these difficulties within the three phase model of language comparison. The data showed that the comparison of two groups of learners with different listening abilities showed some similarities in the difficulties experienced, but low ability listeners had more problems with low-level processing. The differences is the previous study were find out the comparison between two group of students listening problems while the presents study were find out students listening problems.