

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents (1) research background, (2) problems of the study, (3) objectives of the study, and (4) significance of the study.

1. 1 Background

English is an international language that is used for various purposes, especially for developing sciences, technology and education. According to Harmer (2007, p. 13), English is a mother tongue for many people in the world, and used for international communication. It is the official language of many other countries. Goodwyn and Branson (2005, p. 1) state that English is vitally important and typically it is described as the most important of all school subjects. In Indonesia, English has been considered to be a foreign language which has been taught since elementary level up to the university level.

According to Brown (2000, p. 232), English has four skills- reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Reading and listening are receptive, while speaking and writing are productive. To develop English skills, students are required to improve the receptive one , in which people extract meaning from the discourse they see or hear, so the other skills (productive) can be achieved. These skills are needed in order to be successful in learning English.

Listening has been treated, as an essential part of communicative competence. Listening as a receptive skill is an important skill in language learning and it cannot be underestimated, particularly in academic context because

the student's competence in language learning may increase with lots of listening practices (Brown, 2001, p. 247).

Listening is a skill that deserves equal treatment with the others, both in the classroom and in the preparation of the language teacher. According to Rivers and Temperley in Machackova (2009), listening is the essence of the interaction capability to understand what others are saying in communication. It is the most basic skill from of all skills that are taught at school. Cheung et al. (2010, p. 2) pointed out that listening should be the first skill to be acquire before learning the other skills. Understanding spoken words is prerequisite to speaking, reading and writing; comprehension should precede reproduction. In other words, communication mostly dominted by the activity of listening where the time estimated in the adult human communication activities is 45% for listening, 30% for speaking, 16% for reading, and 9% for writing.

Since English is a foreign language in Indonesia, many students face some problems in listening comprehension. Based on Machackova (2009), there are some reasons that cause the difficulties of listening activity in the classroom for the students. They are pronunciation; the way English words are pronounced, speaker's speed, inability to get things repeated, limited vocabulary, failure to concentrate and failure in making interpretation; unfamiliar with the context and background knowledge of speaker's experience. Teacher should concern to the student's problems and use some of the appropriate strategies to help the students to develop their listening skill.

Serraj and Noreen (2013, p. 2) state that the necessity of developing listening skill for a foreign language learner as aural comprehension is the essential element in an act of communication. Development of listening skill, however, might be affected by the student's thinking skill. Thinking is really important in learning. When we study, we use our brain to think.

In Alqur'anulkarim, Allah has stated on surah al Imran : 7

..... وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

Which means that that “..... *but only men of understanding really heed*”.

The message of these verses of al Qur'an that Allah tells everybody will not know anything if they do not think.

Based on Ronald & Roskelly (1985) the thinking process in listening include predicting, hypothesizing, checking, revising and generalizing information, holding information in memory, focusing attention, forming images, interpreting, comparing and evaluating. Yet listening is more than hearing; it's the active process of making meaning from what is heard. Furthermore, there is a mode of thinking, called reflective thinking that it presents as a solution interpreting, deferring, translating, arrogating to the individual, comprehending the issues thought in the school and making predictions for the future.

Reflective thinking was firstly introduced by Dewey (1933). According to Dewey, reflective thinking is a part of the critical thinking process referring specifically to the processes of analyzing and making judgments about what has happened. Dewey suggests that reflective thinking is an active, persistent, and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge, of the grounds

that support that knowledge, and the further conclusions to which that knowledge leads. Additionally, reflective thinking is of crucial importance in prompting learning (including listening comprehension) through complex problem-solving situations since it provides students with the opportunity to step back and think about how they resolve problems and how a special set of problem-solving strategies is appropriated to achieve their goal (Dewey, 1933).

The ability to reflect on one's learning and to learn from reflecting on experience is a fundamental skill necessary for learning and decision-making. Bourner (2003) notes that developing students' capacity for reflective learning is part of developing their capacity to learn how to learn. By teaching and guiding learners in the development of their reflective thinking, educators thus support students in developing their capacity to learn and better prepare them for lifelong learning. Thus, it becomes evident that reflective thinking is a necessity for daily activities, because whenever a decision is made, we go through a thinking process (Rudd, 2007).

Based on the informal interview with the English teacher and the eleventh grade students of SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang, it was found that the students had difficulties in staying concerned and keeping the information in their mind during listening section. It was because of lack of inadequacies of their knowledge in grammar, vocabulary and other components in structural English area. The English teacher of SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang added that students had difficulties in listening comprehension because of length and speed of listening, unfamiliar vocabulary, different accent and lack of motivation which

made some students find that listening is very boring. They felt less confident when they found unfamiliar topics or situation talked in the script of listening test. Also students' shyness or fear of embarrassment, being afraid of making mistakes in front of others, and insufficient background knowledge hinder students from being reflective thinkers. In relation to their listening comprehension achievement, the teacher did not use any activities related to students' reflective thinking to find out students' problem in thinking to support their thinking skill in listening .

As a result of it, it is utmost importance to find the correlation and the influence between the students' reflective thinking and listening comprehension achievement. The researcher would like to conduct a study entitled “ *The Correlation between Reflective Thinking and Listening Comprehension Achievement of the Eleventh Grade Students of SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang.*”

1.2 Problems of the Study

The writer formulates the research problems as follows :

- 1) Is there any significant correlation between reflective thinking and listening comprehension achievement of the eleventh grade students of SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang?
- 2) Does reflective thinking significantly influence listening comprehension achievement of the eleventh grade students of SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are formulated as follows:

- 1) to find out whether or not there is a significant correlation between reflective thinking and listening comprehension achievement of the eleventh grade students of SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang.
- 2) to find out whether or not reflective thinking significantly influences listening comprehension achievement of the eleventh grade students of SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The results of this study have implications for teachers, students of MAN 2 Palembang, researcher and other researchers in the field of foreign language teaching and learning.

The result of the study is expected to be useful for teachers. It will give valuable contribution. The teachers can choose appropriate strategies as reflection of their thinking skill in learning and teaching process especially in listening skill and increase emphasis on the need for reflection as an integral part of learning to learn. This study hopefully will expect to reflect as a part of the students' subject-based studies and also to reflect on their learning and development of listening skill. They will know to what their reflection in their listening achievements and increase it. The result of this study is expected to give valuable information and knowledge to the researcher in capacity as an English teacher and a student in developing the way of thinking and the reflective thinking especially. It is also

expected that the result of this study may give contribution to other researchers as the basis for them to do further study.