

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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

1.1 Background

English is the most developing language used in the world. It has the different position in every country. There are three position usage of English. First, Yang states English is used as the official language which is placed in more than 70 countries (as cited in Albalawi, 2015, p. 1; Reddy, 2016). In addition, Cook (2015) argues that English is employed as the second language in virtually some countries. Then, English is utilized as foreign language in some countries such as Rusia, China, and Indonesia (Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, and Pincas, 2003; Crystal, 2003). Therefore, English is the most growing language which has the status as official, foreign, and second language.

As the first foreign language in Indonesia, English is important to learn due to some reasons. The first reason English is required in the field of work. Crystal (2013) argue that English is needed for work because many companies have criteria for employees to master English. He also states that English is substantial to learn because it is used in international relation as lingua franca. Next, English is important because it is taught in schools and tertiary education, also the scientific papers published are in English (Abrar, Mukminin, Habibi, Asyraf, Makmur, Marzulina, 2018; Lauder, 2008). Then, English is essential to be

learned because 80% of the world's electronically stored information is in English (Jenkins, 2015). Finally, English is necessary to learn is because most airports around the globe will reveal signs not only in the language of country but also in English (Harmer, 2007). There are many reasons why English is necessary to learn English.

In learning English, there are four skills that must be learned, they are classified into two types. Those types are productive skills and receptive skills. Productive skills consist of speaking and writing while receptive skills consist of listening and reading. Husain (2015) states that productive skills are active skills that learners need to produce language such as producing sounds in speaking and symbols, letters, and so on in writing. Moreover, receptive skills are passive skills where a learner generally receives information and comprehend that information either through listening and reading (Pollard, 2008). To sum up, language skills are divided into productive and receptive skills.

As one of receptive skills in English, listening is important to learn due to some reasons. First, students have to listen carefully and attentively to lecturing class and class discussion in order to understand and retain the information for later recall (Stepanoviene, 2012). Secondly, listening has become an important part to provides inputs for learners to make learning occur (Lotfi, 2012). The last, listening is substantial to be learned because listening is important part in learning foreign language to facilitate other language skill (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

Therefore, from the reasons it can be inferred that listening is important to be mastered.

However, Listening is one of difficult skills to learn because of several factors. The first factor is listener factor. Boyle (1984) states that listener factor refers to student's experience, physical, intellectual and psychological from learner itself that can affect listening be difficult. The second factor is speaker factor. Speaker factor includes language ability of speaker, speaker's production, speaker speed of delivery, and personality of speaker which can be causes why listening is difficult. In addition, the third factor is about teaching method factor. Teaching method means the technique used by teacher in teaching can affect the students in their listening difficulties for example whether teacher use traditional method or grammar translation method, etc. that can cause listening difficulties (Suk-kaew, 2005). The next factor is linguistic and non linguistic factor. Anderson and Lynch (1998) discuss that linguistic and non linguistic factor is the way in which the information is organized in spoken text that can influence listening difficulties. The last factor is classroom facility. It means facilities in classroom or physical setting including noises, audio visual aids and time (Yagang, 1993).

Additionally, there are facts about listening difficulties found in some countries. Firts, many students in Asia continent face difficulties in listening process. The students in Palestine and Iran have difficulties in term of lack of information background, lack of exposure to different kinds of listening materials

and long and alien content (Assaf, 2015; Nowrouzi, Nimehehisalem, Tam, & Zareian, 2015). Next, the students in Thailand and Malaysia also face difficulties in distraction and missing sounds, the differences of contracted form of English language, and differences between features' passage of origin language (Anandapong, 2011; Juan and Abidin, 2013).

Furthermore, the listening difficulties are also found in some cities in Indonesia. For example, the students in Indonesia especially in Malang and Lampung have difficulties in learning listening. The students in Malang face difficulties in term of physical condition of learner. For instance the students are not in good health. Besides, there are some students who have bad perception of listening subject, and lack of listening practice (Santi, 2016). Moreover, the students in Lampung have difficulties in listening material, poor equipment, and listeners' performance (Kurniawati, 2015). Therefore, listening difficulties are not only found other countries but also in Indonesia.

In relation to listening difficulties, a preliminary study was conducted in a private university in Palembang by interviewing some students. It is known that listening was taught in the first three semesters in Private University in Palembang (English Department's Syllabus, 2016/2017). It starts from attentive listening in the first semester, followed by selective listening in second semester, and interactive listening in the third semester. Furthermore, in relation to students' listening skill, students' reported that they had difficulties in comprehending the meaning of the speaker's utterance, the difference of culture, structure and

pronunciations' speakers, lack of quality of the audio, lack of vocabulary comprehension, lack of clarity of speaker speech and the last speech rate. Moreover, some features which were considered by listeners when listening were material, task types, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

Regarding the problems stated previously, there were some previous related studies related to this matter. First, the result of study conducted by Wang and Fan (2015) showed there were six conceptual categories causing listening difficulties such as general language text, listening specific text, processing, listener, task, and external variables. Chiou (2012) found mostly the difficulties reported by the participants were related of linguistic factors, lack of vocabulary size, and knowledge. Shteiwi and Hamuda (2016) reported that 47% the students never had listening activities, 21% usually had activities and 18% always got opportunity had listening activities. Furthermore, Hamouda (2013) showed that the problems related to listening difficulties were listening materials, learners, failure to concentrate, psychological characteristics, listeners, speaker, and physical settings.

In brief, there are many problems faced by students in learning listening, it was supported by the findings of the previous studies and my preliminary study. Those previous study and preliminary study took an important role in designing this research. And the circumstance had brought clear consideration to my study to analyze further. Moreover, this research has not been investigated frequently in Indonesia especially in Private University in Palembang. Therefore I want to find

out what factors cause the difficulties in listening. Thus, it can help students to find a solution to make students learn listening better in future.

1.2. Research Problems

Based on the background, the research problems are formulated in the following questions:

1. What were the kinds of English listening difficulties faced by undergraduate EFL students in a private university in Palembang?
2. What were the factors causing English listening difficulties faced by undergraduate EFL students in a private university in Palembang?
3. How did undergraduate EFL students in a private university in Palembang deal with their listening difficulties?

1.3 Research Objectives

In accordance with the problem above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the factors causing English listening difficulties faced by undergraduate EFL students in private university in Palembang.
2. To investigate how the undergraduate EFL students dealt with their English listening difficulties.

1.4 Significance of Study

From the study hopefully I can get some results. The possible result might be expected useful to some parties. Firstly, for students, factors affecting listening difficulties that are found from this study are expected can make them aware and help themselves to solve the causes. They will not do error in listening and improve their listening skills. Then, the result of the study hopefully can be used by teachers. Teachers as the facilitator and crucial person in teaching and learning process need to know how important listening difficulties and what are the causes so she/he can give the best solution for the students. The third party is the researcher. I hope that I could conduct a good research that contains benefit for the EFL learners and hopefully this research could be a good reference for the further research later on.

