

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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

1.1 Background

Language used in humans' life. There are two functions of languages in social life. The social function of language divided into two categories, namely ideational function and interpersonal function. Liu (2014) explains that ideational function is mainly concerns with content or proposition of message meanwhile interpersonal function is concerned with the interaction between speaker and addressee(s) through which they express their own attitudes to influence other's attitudes. Therefore, there are two functions of language in social activity such as interactional function and ideational function.

Concerning of language use, English is one of international language. There are three positions of English such as inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle. Cook (2003) identified that the term of inner circle refer to countries where English is used as the primary language such as in the USA, UK, Australian, and Canada. Then, he also states that in term of outer circle refer to countries where English is used as a second language such as India and Singapore. Next, Sharifian (2008) explain that the expanding circle is reserved for countries in which English is learned as a foreign language such as in China, Japan, Korea, etc. In brief, English as global language because it takes different place.

English is important to learn. There are four skills in learning English which is divided into two parts. Aydogan and Akbarov (2014) argue that there are two parameters which are related to four basic skills such as receiving or producing the message. Mundhe (2015) explains that in receptive skills, it includes two skills listening and reading, and in productive skill is speaking and writing. In other words, English skill has two parameters such as productive and receptive skill.

Related to those four skills, listening is one of skills in English. There are some reasons why listening is important to learn. Yilidirim (2016) states that listening is to communicate effectively in the class. Then, Harmer (2007) explains that the importance of listening is enable students to acquire good speaking habits. Moreover, Iwankovitsch (2001) argue that listening is importance because it makes student understand and retain the information for later call. Thus, from the reasons, it can be inferred that listening is important to be mastered.

Besides the important of listening, the process of understanding listening needs comprehension of the individual. The listening comprehension has some functions. Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) explain that listening comprehension as information processing. Vandergrift (1999) argue that listening comprehension plays a key role in facilitating language learning. Renukadevi (2014) explain that listening comprehension as the helper of language learner to understand the beauty of the language. Furthermore, listening comprehension has some function which is be useful in daily life.

Additionally, students' face some problems while doing listening. The problems are the fast speed of delivery, new terminology and concepts, difficulties in concentrating and problems related to the physical (Chen, 2013). Furthermore, Buck and Osada state that listening can be difficult for some learners due to their limited processing skill and lack of control over the rate of speech or inadequate knowledge of vocabulary, topics and accents (as cited in Pan, 2016, p. 12). Students also have problems while doing listening. Those problems are pace of the speaker, difficulties in memory, physical, lack of vocabulary, etc. In short, students have difficulties to study in listening such as difficult to remember what speakers says, do not understand because speaker too fast to deliver the information, physical, less knowledge about words, etc.

Concerning problems in listening, there are some factors that affect listening comprehension of EFL undergraduate students. Those factors are listener, speaker and material factors. Boyle (1984) emphasizes that the environment, motivation, language knowledge, psychological of learners has big role in learners' factors of listening comprehension problems. Yildiz and Albay (2015) explain that speakers' ability, pronunciation/accents of speaker, and speed of delivery of speaker plays big role in comprehension of listening factors. Then, he also states that the choice of content listening material holds an important place in factors of listening comprehension problems because if message is not conveyed then the materials will not be useful. Furthermore, listening comprehension has problem in different context such as hearing, pronouncing and surroundings.

Besides, there are some solutions to improve listening skills. The solution is relating to strategies to improve listening comprehension of EFL undergraduate students. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), there are three main types of strategies in listening: metacognitive, cognitive, and social strategies (as cited in Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011 p. 981). Cognitive, metacognitive and socio affective are different strategies. Those three strategies have different function. First, cognitive strategies are related to comprehending and storing input in working memory or long term memory for later regeneration (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). Second, metacognitive strategies incorporate thinking about the learning process; include planning, monitoring and evaluating (Vandergrift, 1999). Third, socio-affective is added to describe learning which happens when language learners co-operate with classmates, question the teacher for clarification, or apply specific techniques to lower their anxiety level (Vandergrift, 1999). In brief, the strategies to improve listening has different requirement. Those strategies are cognitive strategy, metacognitive strategy, and socio affective strategy.

Related to listening comprehension problems and listening strategies, an informal interview for preliminary study of this research was conducted to undergraduate EFL students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. In the preliminary study, some questions were posed to them in order to know what the weaknesses of students in listening. Some difficulties were faced by the EFL learners in listening. They reported that they could not listen to the speaker clearly because the pronunciation of speaker was not easy to comprehend. Students could not hear

the material because the volume of the speaker was too low and students could not identify right answer because the listening content was too difficult to understand. Thus, it could be concluded that there were some factors affecting listening comprehension such as listener factor, speaker factor and material of the listening.

Moreover, from previous study, I reviewed other research as comparison in this research. The previous researches are from Naci Yildiz and Mustafa Albay (2015), Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011). This study had similar aims which were to find out some factors affecting listening comprehension of EFL students and provided some strategies in order to improve their listening. On the other hand, Teng (1998) had research which the purpose of this study was to investigate the EFL listening comprehension strategies used by college students in Taiwan. The result of this study indicated that among the six strategies category “compensation” is most often employ by subjects, “cognitive” is the next, and “affective” was least often used. Furthermore, Chengxing (2005) had a study which found in the objective that there were three factors affecting listening comprehension such as incorrect and insufficient codes, lacking necessary listening skills and inappropriate listening material and also he found that there are three stages in listening process at class, such as pre-listening, during and post listening.

Based on some previous studies, it is known that they used quantitative studies. Therefore, it makes me want to conduct similar research but by using qualitative design. Besides, factors affecting students’ listening comprehension problems and strategies for improvement in State Islamic University in

Palembang have never been done. In short, based on those explanations, I will conduct a research which the title “Factors Affecting Listening Comprehension Problems and Strategies for Improvement: A Study of Undergraduate EFL Students at State Islamic University of Raden Fatah Palembang.” This research can give a huge impact for many people, whether for the students, the English teacher and further research.

1.2 Problems of the Study

Based on the background above, the problems of this research are formulated as follow:

1. What were the factors that affect listening comprehension of undergraduate EFL students at State Islamic University of Raden Fatah Palembang?
2. What were the strategies that undergraduate EFL students used to improve listening comprehension at State Islamic University of Raden Fatah Palembang?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

From the problems above, the objectives of the study were:

1. To find out factors that affect listening comprehension problems of undergraduate EFL students at State Islamic University of Raden Fatah Palembang
2. To find out the strategies that undergraduate EFL students used to improve listening comprehension at State Islamic University of Raden Fatah Palembang.

1.4 Significance of the Study

From the study hopefully I can get some results. The results are expected to have some advantages. Firstly, it is for the students. The results of this study hopefully will be useful for undergraduate EFL students in Palembang to know their own ability in listening and find some factors that affect their listening comprehension and strategies to improve their listening. Then, the results of the study hopefully can be used by teachers. Teachers as students' facilitator in teaching and learning process must be a good consultant for the students to facilitate them to conquer their listening comprehension problems. In other hand, teacher should be able to apply the strategies of the difficulties students' listening comprehension in order to improve students' listening skills. The third advantage is the researcher. I as the researcher expect that students will get some data to know the fact to tell learners that this is important for learning at school. For the next researchers, they can get new knowledge from the research.

