

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter elaborates on six research points, including the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significance, research scope, research framework, and previous studies.

A. Research Background

This research focuses on university EFL learners' perspectives of comprehensible input in extensive listening outside the classroom context. This research investigates problems university EFL learners face in extensive listening and finds out extensive listening activities that can provide comprehensible input. Besides, this research also reveals learners' skills in listening that are fostered by using comprehensible input through extensive listening activities.

Listening skill is one of the receptive skills that should be mastered in learning English. Listening skill becomes crucial in language learning because it often implies a component of speaking skill, and the aural-oral method accounts for most of the success in mastering a language (Brown, 2003). Besides, Brown (2003) also states that the key to effective communication is listening skills because if someone does not have good listening skills, it can cause misunderstanding in receiving messages from the interlocutor.

According to Brown (2003), listening has four different types: responsive listening, selective listening, intensive listening, and extensive listening. Responsive listening is listening to a relatively short expanse of language, such as greetings, commands, questions, comprehension checks, etc., to make an equally concise response. Selective listening is a type of listening where the listeners process a discourse, such as a short monologue, over several minutes to scan certain information. In intensive listening, the listeners perceive the components, such as intonations, phonemes, words, discourse markers, etc., of an enormous scope of

language. Meanwhile, in extensive listening, the listeners engage in listening activities to develop their global understanding of spoken language from top to bottom. Learners commonly use extensive listening to improve their listening skills because it can be done outside the classroom, such as at home, in the car, etc. (Harmer, 2006). Harmer (2006) also states that in extensive listening, teachers encourage learners to choose what they want to listen to, so they do it for pleasure. This activity can dramatically increase learners' motivation because they can make their own choices about what they will listen to.

However, in every learning process, there must be problems faced by learners, with no exception in learning listening skills. Edessa (2019) states that EFL learners often face problems in listening comprehension including the fast speed rate and pronunciation of the speakers, unfamiliar vocabulary and accent, the lousy quality of the recording, the lack of concentration, and anxiety. Moreover, those problems should be appropriately overcome so as not to hinder the learners' learning process in improving their listening skills.

While based on the results of discussions with some EFL learners who are studying at a state Islamic university in Indonesia through a WhatsApp group which consists of 21 students, four learners gave their responses regarding the problems they faced in listening activities. The problems include speakers who speak with unclear pronunciation and too fast, and lack vocabulary mastery. It is in line with Darti and Asmawati (2017), who state that speed of speech, different accents of the speakers, unclear pronunciation, lack of concentration, insufficient vocabulary, and bad quality of recording are the major problems encountered by English Education students.

Furthermore, to overcome learners' listening problems, they need to get comprehensible input. Input in language learning is analogous to the fuel used by a vehicle. The better the fuel used, the better performance of the vehicle. If the input provided can be understood well, it will provide a good stimulus for learners' language understanding. Krashen (1985), as cited in Rijoly (2017), states that a language can only be learned if the input can be understood. Therefore, to be able to

master a language, it is necessary to have comprehensible input because when the input cannot be adequately understood, it will hinder the process of mastering the language.

In recent years, several studies with relevant topics to the current study have been conducted. Darti and Asmawati (2017) conducted a study that investigated the problems faced by learners in listening comprehension. Yavuz et al. (2015) carried out a study that analyzed problems and activities in listening skills of EFL classrooms, from traditional to more comprehensible input. Another study was conducted by Ozturk and Tekin (2020), which explored how to encourage extensive listening in language learning.

Based on the previous studies, it can be concluded that those studies mainly focused on the difficulties and problems faced by EFL learners in listening comprehension, comprehensible input in listening, and encouraging extensive listening in language learning. Meanwhile, this study focused on the problems faced by EFL learners in extensive listening. This study also seeks several activities which can provide comprehensible input to help learners deal with their problems. Besides, this study reveals explicitly learners' skills in listening that are fostered by using comprehensible input in extensive listening activities.

B. Research Questions

From the description above, this research is aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the problems faced by university EFL learners in extensive listening outside the classroom context?
2. What are the extensive listening activities outside the classroom context that can provide comprehensible input to learners seen from the learners' perspectives?
3. From the learners' perspectives, what learners' listening skills are fostered by using comprehensible input through extensive listening activities?

C. Research Purposes

From the research questions above, this research is intended to obtain the following purposes:

1. To figure out university EFL learners' problems in extensive listening outside the classroom context
2. To find out extensive listening activities outside the classroom context that can provide comprehensible input to learners seen from the learners' perspectives
3. To reveal learners' listening skills that are fostered by using comprehensible input through extensive listening activities seen from the learners' perspectives

D. Research Significances

Theoretically, this research contributes to EFL classrooms by providing additional information teachers need related to listening activities. Practically, the result of this research might help EFL teachers to determine what activities and materials they use in the listening course that is comprehensible to foster learners' listening skills and make the learning process better to get better outcomes.

E. Research Scope

This research is limited to the extensive listening problems encountered by the fifth-semester EFL learners, the extensive listening activities outside the classroom, and the learners' skills in listening. This research has been conducted at the English Education Department at a State Islamic University in Indonesia.

F. Research Framework

According to Edessa (2019), listening is the process of receiving, making meaning, and answering spoken and/or nonverbal messages. Hamouda (2013), as cited in San (2020), also states that listening is not only a receptive skill but also has an essential role in developing spoken language proficiency. After all, the key to

effective communication is listening because if someone does not have good listening skills, it can cause misunderstanding in receiving messages from the speaker (Brown, 2003). Thus, listening is a receptive skill that must be mastered well because it dramatically affects someone's communication ability and proficiency in mastering a foreign language.

Extensive listening is a method commonly used to improve learners' listening fluency with enjoyment (Ozturk & Tekin, 2020). According to Brown (2003), extensive listening is listening to develop a top-down and global understanding of spoken language. Harmer (2006) implies that extensive listening, such as listening at home or in a car when travelling, can increase the strength of learners' motivation because they can listen to what they like. Harmer (2006) also claims that extensive listening can dramatically affect learners' motivation. It is because the teacher encourages learners to choose what they want to listen to and do so for pleasure to improve their general language. From the explanation above, it can be said that extensive listening is listening for pleasure and how learners use their global understanding of spoken language (top-down processing) to comprehend what they hear. Besides, extensive listening is more flexible because it can be done outside the classroom.

However, the difficulties EFL learners face become problems in the learning process, possibly preventing them from mastering listening skills. Yangang (1993), as cited in Mirza (2021), states the four sources of problems in listening comprehension, including the message, the speaker, the listener, and the physical environment. Furthermore, Mirza (2021) classifies listening difficulties into fourteen obstacles: the lack of background knowledge, making a prediction, recognizing the main point, guessing unknown words while listening, unfamiliar topics, speed of speech, long listening text, ungrammatical words, different accents, authentic materials, colloquial words, the poor equipment, the poor tape quality, and noises. Those problems will undoubtedly hinder the learners in learning a foreign language because they will face difficulty in accepting and processing the input they receive, and affecting their comprehension ability.

To overcome learners' problems, they need language comprehensible input to provide a good stimulus to make them easier to process what they learn. Jafari and Hashim (2015), as cited in Edessa (2019), emphasize that listening is a channel for comprehensible input because more than 50% of the time learners spend when learning a foreign language is used for listening. Krashen (1985), as cited in Rijoly (2017), argues that comprehensible input is essential in learning a language because someone can only learn a language if the input can be understood. Krashen (1985) also states that using this input will help learners acquire language naturally rather than learn it consciously because it will help learners develop a better understanding. Furthermore, this input will enable learners to use their language knowledge in the correct and appropriate context rather than just memorizing what they learn.

Afterwards, Martono (2010), as cited in Sujarwo et al. (2020), implies that perspective is the point of view in viewing a problem or phenomenon that occurs. Sujarwo et al. (2020) state that perspective is an internal process recognized by an individual when selecting and regulating an external stimulus. Aw (2010), as cited in Sujarwo et al. (2020), states that when a person's five senses capture a stimulus, then the person's feelings and thoughts will give meaning to the stimulus that exists spontaneously. Hence, in investigating or evaluating something related to the learning process, learners' perspectives can be used because it is their point of view or attitude about a phenomenon or something that happened related to their learning process.

G. Previous Studies

Several studies with relevant topics to the current study have been conducted. Darti and Asmawati conducted a study in 2017 that aimed to investigate the problems faced by learners in listening comprehension. This study used a descriptive method. The instruments of this study consist of interviews, questionnaires, and observation. The population of this study was second-semester English Education Department students in the academic year 2016/2017 at the State Islamic University of Alaudin, Makassar, Indonesia. 37 learners were taken as the subjects of this study. The result shows that the main problems faced by learners in listening include unclear

pronunciation, unfamiliar accents, poor vocabulary mastery, speech speed, lack of concentration, and poor recording quality. This study implies that understanding the difficulties encountered by learners allows teachers to help learners develop effective learning, and the use of appropriate strategies can help learners improve their listening skills. Teachers should adjust and improve the material used, increase learners' vocabulary, train learners with various accents, practice learners' pronunciation from native speakers, and explore learners' knowledge of the topic being discussed. Besides, teachers must also provide several strategies to help learners improve their listening skills and continually motivate them.

Another study was conducted by Yavuz et al. (2015), which discusses the problems and activities of EFL learners in listening skills from tradition to more comprehensible input. The purpose of this study is to provide a list of some listening programs that teachers can use to help learners deal with their listening problems. This study employed a qualitative approach with a literature review as the research design. The result of this study reveals two ways that can be a solution to make listening skills digestible for learners, namely at the word level and the sentence level. At the word level or the initial stage, learners are trained to listen and pronounce isolated sounds of words that are ideally spoken by native speakers without the distortions or blurriness usually occurring in the natural speech context. In contrast, the sentence level becomes easier for learners because they recognize daily and spontaneous conversations. In conclusion, this study suggests that teachers should give tasks suitable to learners' abilities and levels. Besides, teachers also have an essential role in knowing and planning the learning process so that learners will not get tasks unsuitable to their abilities because it can discourage them.

Ozturk and Tekin (2020) conducted a study that explain about how to encourage extensive listening in language learning. This study aims to determine the effects of extensive listening activities on English learners' listening skill development and perceptions, and their suggestions on how to utilize this activity by integrating it into language learning. The qualitative and quantitative approaches were used in this study, with a mix-method research design. This study was conducted in a

State Preparatory School in the spring term of the 2018-2019 academic year. Six Turkish English learners were chosen as the participants, who take English courses at the School of Foreign Languages at a State University in Turkey. The data of this study were obtained from the interviews, worksheets completed by participants after listening activities every five weeks, listening quiz scores of the participants, and observations about extensive listening activities. The findings of this study reveal that learners have a favorable view of extensive listening. Besides, this study implies that learners have a positive tendency toward listening because it can develop their level of listening and other skills in the target language.

Apart from the gaps in the research design, participants involved, and instruments used, the focus of this study from the previous study is also different, although related to each other. Those studies mainly focused on the difficulties and problems EFL learners face in listening comprehension, comprehensible input in listening, and encouraging extensive listening in language learning. Meanwhile, this study focused on the problems faced by university EFL learners in extensive listening. This study also seeks several activities which can provide comprehensible input to help learners deal with their problems. Besides, this study explicitly reveals learners' listening skills that are fostered by using comprehensible input through extensive listening activities.