CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reveals the importance of this research that needs to be conducted, the significance of this research from the expert to make this research more valid. They are the background of the study, the research questions, research purposes, literature review, and previous studies are also included in the content.

A. Background of the Research

Listening seems to be a very essential component of EFL learners. Listening can be a very valuable skill since it is the most frequently used in everyday life. Learning to listen will enable us to improve our speaking ability significantly. People need to hear different types of English frequently and constantly if they want to interact effectively, meaningfully, and naturally. According to Rost (2007) cited in Saraswaty (2018), listening comprehension is regarded as a complex, interactive process in which listeners are involved in a dynamic construction of meaning. Listeners understand the oral input from sound discrimination, prior knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structures, stress, and intonation, as well as other use of linguistic, paralinguistic, or even nonlinguistic clues in contextual utterance.

Though, learning English can be the most difficult skill to learn for EFL students. It is confirmed by Jyoti (2020) in his research that explained, "very little mark is allocated for listening test, and students have difficulties to attain the message by following the speakers." He often finds the students whispering to each other and looking at others' answer sheets to solve the questions instead of paying attention to the speakers. Jyoti classified there are 4 major difficulties in listening, those are; content of the listening text, the listener, linguistic feature, and the speaker. The explanation is similar to the statement from Hamouda (2013) cited in Nushi & Orouji (2020) also names unfamiliar words, the length of the spoken text, speech rate, accent, pronunciation, and lack of concentration as problems that university students faced while listening to an aural text. Additionally, Saraswaty (2018) enlightens that EFL learners have serious problems in English listening

comprehension because of the fact that universities pay more attention to English grammar, reading, and vocabulary. Listening and speaking skills are not important parts of many course books or curricula and teachers do not seem to pay attention to these skills while designing their lessons. Most teachers take it for granted and believe that it will develop naturally within the process of language learning.

At the University level, especially at UIN Bandung, listening comprehension has become an important subject in the English Education study programs. The students have to learn listening comprehension for three semesters (Literal listening, Interpretative Listening, Critical Listening). In learning listening comprehension, the students are going to face the challenge and the obstacle to achieving the final goal of learning it. The students have to focus on speech sound recognition, the identification of speech event type, the use of linguistic decoding skills, and the exact linguistic form deletion toward speech performance. However, the learners also face difficulties in listening comprehension.

There have been few types of research on the listening problems that foreign language learners experience in learning to listen to spoken English in the classrooms. The first research by (Yahmun, Sumarti, & Setyowati, 2020) verified that the students face four challenges: the speed and length of the spoken text, vocabulary, grammar, and accents. The researchers then made some recommendations on the basis of the results for more researchers and other language teachers to consider this research in their practice. The second research by (Nushi & Orouji, 2020) found that the learners' listening difficulties belonged to three categories, namely, pronunciation-based, individual characteristics–based and content-based difficulties. The third research was by (Trisno, Emzir, & Mayuni, 2018) explained six sub-listening skills that often become the obstacles that students face. Five sources of listening problems have also been obtained from this study. It implies that to train students in listening skills, the lecturer needs to have digital and technological literacy. However, the researcher differentiates this study in level-applied and solution. The level applied in this research is university level and the researcher offers the strategies for the difficulties in listening comprehension.

Based on the information above, the research is aimed to analyze the students' difficulties in listening comprehension and provide strategies for it. Finally, the researcher decided to write the research with the title "Analyzing Students' Listening Difficulties: A Case Study in the English Education Department UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung".

B. Research Questions

The problems are formulated from the analysis background in the following two questions:

1. What are the difficulties faced by the students in learning listening at the English Education Department of UIN Bandung?
2. What are the strategies for coping with difficulties in learning listening at the English Education Department of UIN Bandung?

C. Research Purposes

Centered on the research issue referred to above, the purpose of this research is to achieve the following two objectives:

1. To find out the difficulties faced by the students in learning listening at the English Education Department of UIN Bandung.
2. To know the strategies for coping with difficulties in learning listening at the English Education Department of UIN Bandung.

D. Research Significances

The findings of this research are expected to be useful theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically

   The study will enrich the information about the problems that commonly happen in teaching and learning, especially in learning listening for foreign language learners.

2. Practically

Understanding students' learning difficulties may enable EFL teachers to help students develop effective learning strategies and ultimately will improve their English listening abilities. However, it will be useful for students; to inform students what is the problem they usually faced in listening. Then, the result of this study may also be useful for those who are interested in this field.

E. Literature Review

Foreign learners have significant problems in listening comprehension because of the fact that schools pay more attention to structure, writing, reading, and vocabulary. Theoretical explanations of listening comprehension provided three factors that learners faced when they listened to a spoken text were listening material, listener factors, speaker factors, and physical setting. All of the problems for each factor need to be identified in order to find students' difficulties.

The more students listen, the more language they acquire, and the better they get at listening activities in general. Whether they chose passages from textbooks, recording of a simplified reader, listening material designed for their level, or recordings of radio programs which they were capable of following, the effect would be the same. So, the students have problems to do it. The lecturer's role is to find out their students' difficulties. According to Yahmun et al., (2020) mentioned provided the input is comprehensible they will gradually acquire more words or greater schematic knowledge which will, in turn, resolve many of the language difficulties they started with.

Listening difficulties are internal and external characteristics that interrupt text understanding directly related to cognitive. Jyoti (2020) stated that factors causing students' listening comprehension problems were categorized into different sources including problems related to the listening text, listening problems related to tasks and activities, listeners' problems related to the listeners, and lecture methodology.

The difficulties that faced by the student would interrupt during the process of listening comprehension especially those who learn English as a foreign language in a non-native setting. According to Lindsay, the major problem students have, in

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contrast to students studying English is that they have little or no experience in 'real' listening to fall back on, and no memory of past learning or social experiences. The fact that they lived in a non-English-speaking country was a major factor in their listening problems.

Although a number of studies have been conducted concerning students' listening comprehension problems. While this research focuses on the difficulties faced by students. As a result, this research attempted to investigate the student's difficulties in listening comprehension at the English Education Department of Tarbiyah and Teachers' Training Faculty at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.

F. Previous Study

In previous research, listening is a complex and active mental process that involves perception, attention, cognition, and memory. During the process of listening, various factors might affect learners. Thus, some findings of related research are presented in the section as follows:

Yahmun et al., (2020) found in their research entitled Listening Difficulties Faced by The First Semester Students at Basic Listening Class. This research uses a qualitative method of data collection. This study was carried out with the participant of 25 students' who took Basic Listening classes during the 2019/2020 academic year. The findings showed that there were four difficulties faced by the students. They were the speed and length of the spoken text, vocabulary, pronunciation, and accents. Based on the findings, then, the researchers made several suggestions for further researchers and other language teachers to consider this study in their practice.

Nushi & Orouji (2020) mentioned in their research entitled Investigating EFL Teachers' Views on Listening Difficulties among Their Learners: The Case of Iranian Context. This study was conducted with 208 teachers' views on listening difficulties among Iranian EFL learners. A mixed-methods approach, integrating a questionnaire and an interview, was employed. The findings from the questionnaire suggested that the top 10 identified difficulties ranged from practical issues such as poor-quality audio materials to content-based impediments such as unfamiliar

topics. Furthermore, analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests revealed that there was no significant relationship between either the teachers' educational or professional background or the gravity of the difficulties they reported. Among different components of the questionnaire, the input and process components were highly correlated, indicating that learners' problems with input perception could lead to problems in listening comprehension. Moreover, based on the results of the interviews, it was concluded that the teachers believed that the learners' listening difficulties belonged to three categories, namely, pronunciation-based, individual characteristics–based, and content-based difficulties.

Trisno & Mayuni, n.d. (2018) in his research entitled Students' Problem in Listening Comprehension at University Level. The research used a qualitative method to collect data from students of the English Department of FBS, Universitas Negeri Padang. This study is a research report related to problems faced by students in listening skills. Findings from this study show that there are six sub-listening skills that often become the problems faced by students. This research also gathered five sources of the listening problems. It implies that the lecturer needs to have multimedia and technological literacy to prepare the students for listening skills.