

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into six distinct sections: the background of the study, the research questions, the research purpose, the significance of the research, the conceptual framework, and the previous study.

A. Background

The ability to listen is an essential language ability that is necessary for acquiring information and knowledge. Developing effective listening skills improves the acquisition of information (Tyagi, 2013). Rost (2001) argues that listening skills are essential in facilitating the acquisition of foreign language skills among students, as they serve as a primary source of language input. Students who have good listening comprehension skills will quickly understand and integrate information and ideas.

The status of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia necessitates the usage of English native speaker utterances as pronunciation models and standards for interpreting communications in a variety of situations, academic and social. As English has lately emerged as an international language that may be used to communicate with people from non-English speaking countries, the importance of listening activities in English education cannot be overstated.

The complicated nature of listening makes it the most challenging language skill for students. According to Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Mart (2014), the quality of records in certain educational settings has the potential to impact an individual's listening comprehension abilities. Furthermore, Bloomfield, Wayland, Rhoades, Blodgett, Linck, and Ross (2010) suggest that diverse regional accents can aid individuals in understanding the intended message conveyed through speech. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to investigate additional challenges encountered by students in comprehending listening exercises at the ninth-grade level in junior high schools in Bekasi.

According to Underwood (1989), several factors impede the effectiveness of listening comprehension. Firstly, individuals engaged in listening cannot actively influence or control the pace at which speech is delivered. Furthermore, it is not

possible for listeners to request the repetition of specific words. Thirdly, it is evident that individuals who engage in listening activities often exhibit a limited range of vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, individuals who are listening may have a limited understanding of the context surrounding the information being presented. Furthermore, listeners encounter challenges while attempting to maintain their focus on the audio content. According to Tambunan, Saragih, Pane, and Siregar (2018), a significant number of students encounter challenges and impediments due to their limited vocabulary, which limits their comprehension during listening activities. Challenges in vocabulary and grammar impede the individual's ability to comprehend auditory information, exerting a notable influence on their cognitive and emotional processes. The statement discusses the fact that there are various challenges that impede the effectiveness of student listening.

Based on the above explanation, it is obvious that EFL students, particularly in Indonesia, encounter a lot of challenges. In their recent study, Hadist, Hidjanah, Dtakiyatuddaaimah, and Dewanti (2022) conducted research on the elements that affect the listening comprehension of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor. The researchers identified several key aspects, including the nature of the listening materials, the attitude and previous knowledge of the listener, the characteristics of the speaker, and the physical location in which the listening activity takes place. The study identified several notable challenges encountered during the hearing comprehension task, including lengthy parts of speech (60%), foreign vocabulary (80%), various listening materials (54%), comprehension of connected speech (54%), and accurate identification of specific words (44%). The main challenges encountered in this study were the speaker and the physical setting, which accounted for 93% of the challenges faced. Specifically, the recording quality was found to be poor in 93% of cases, while challenges with the equipment were observed in 90% of instances.

In a subsequent study, Zulfikar, Aulia, and Akmal (2020) conducted an investigation of the challenges faced by students studying English at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh's Department of English Language Education in the context of listening to English news broadcasts. The participants of the study consisted of a

sample size of 50 students in their third semester. The data collection techniques employed in this research included a closed-ended questionnaire and direct observation. The findings of the study indicated that the students confronted some challenges during the listening process, including foreign subject matter, unfamiliar vocabulary, diverse accents, and the pace at which the speaker delivered the information.

Rajab, Saadallah Yaseen, and Nimehchisalem, Vahid (2016) conducted an additional study. The researchers conducted an investigation into the hearing challenges encountered by Kurdish English as a Foreign Language (EFL) undergraduate students. The researchers found that these students primarily employed techniques focused on improving their understanding of the input and context during listening comprehension tasks to overcome these challenges. Students frequently reported challenges with listening encompassing input, context, process, affect, and task-related challenges, while cognitive processing emerged as the primary coping mechanism. The results indicate that educators should possess knowledge of the diverse listening challenges experienced by students in order to implement suitable approaches to instruction.

Based on the explanation provided above, the research in consideration is a repetition of previous studies regarding challenges encountered in listening comprehension courses of study. This research not only focuses on the challenges that need to be investigated, but it also analyses the factors that contribute to listening comprehension. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate the kinds of challenges encountered by students learning English as a foreign language in the ninth-grade at a junior high school in Bekasi. Ninth-grade students were chosen as the research object due to school considerations, as they are actively learning English at school.

B. Research Questions

This research aims to explore the challenges that are encountered by students in junior high school in the subject matter of listening comprehension. Therefore, the

research questions that are connected develop within the context of listening. The research questions are presented in the following way:

1. What are the challenges faced by ninth-grade students in learning listening comprehension at a junior high school in Bekasi?
2. What are the contributing factors to listening comprehension challenges as encountered by ninth-grade students of a junior high school in Bekasi?

C. Research Purpose

There are two main objectives of this research:

1. To find out the challenges faced by ninth-grade students in learning listening comprehension at a junior high school in Bekasi?
2. To find out the contributing factors to listening comprehension challenges as encountered by ninth-grade students of a junior high school in Bekasi?

D. Research Significance

The research is anticipated to be theoretically significant and practical in nature. The results of this research can assist researchers in gathering data on listening comprehension challenges.

Furthermore, the practical aim of this study was to assist teachers in better understanding their students' challenges with English listening comprehension.

- a. English teachers: This finding will be beneficial to English teachers. It is because the research results provide them with an awareness of the challenges that students face with listening comprehension. Teachers can put certain teaching strategies into practice based on the research findings.
- b. Students: This research aims to help students understand the challenges they encounter when listening to and understanding spoken English. Additionally, it is essential for students to acquire knowledge regarding effective strategies to help improve their listening skills.

E. Theoretical Framework

The ability to listen in the English language is recognized as one of the most challenging abilities to acquire. This research aims to explore the numerous challenges encountered by students in their study of listening comprehension. Furthermore, it is important to note that every student has a unique and individualized style of their own when engaging in the activity of listening, consequently resulting in the generation of knowledge based on their auditory experiences. The chart below shows the theoretical framework for this research.

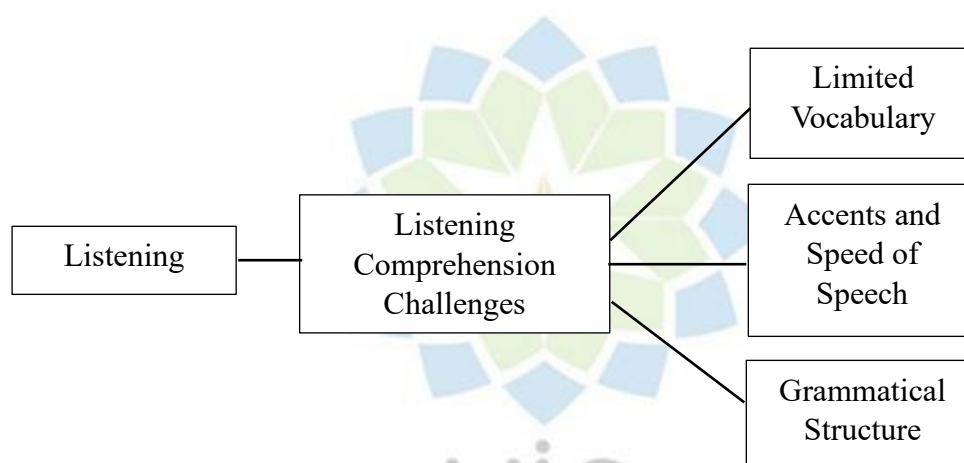


Figure 1.1 Theoretical Framework

Figure 1.1 presents the conceptual framework of this research, offering an overview of its framework and components. The diagram in this study explores the interconnections among various conceptual elements, including listening, listening comprehension, challenges in the process of listening comprehension, and factors that contribute to effective listening comprehension. In this way, students can acquire an understanding of the challenges that they encounter in the realm of listening and improve their abilities for comprehending spoken language in a way that follows their own preferences and comfortable levels.

For the communication process to take place, listening cannot function properly without effective listening skills (Hamouda, 2013). For example, the listener is unable to understand what the speaker is saying without listening skills. Since then,

listening has played an important role since. According to Morley (2001), listening entails auditory discrimination, aural grammar, picking relevant information, memorizing it, and connecting it to the process. Students participate in the listening activity to hear the primary idea. It is also a means of obtaining information from the speaker.

According to Rost (2002), the process of learning can be regarded as a complex cognitive task, including the processing of auditory input via the lens of existing knowledge. The paper's writer continues to assert that active listening constitutes a fundamental element of proficient communication, as it improves our comprehension of the environment in which we find ourselves. In the opinion of Jafari and Hashim (2015), listening plays an essential part in comprehending information during the process of learning a foreign language. Students improve their listening comprehension abilities in order to facilitate the acquisition of other essential English language skills necessary for effective oral communication with others.

Rost and Hamouda (2002) highlight the significance of listening comprehension in relation to actions that aid in the development of meaning. Various factors such as sound recognition, previous experience, grammatical structures, accent and intonation patterns, as well as other languages or non-linguistic clues facilitate the comprehension of auditory information by individuals. The concept of "listening comprehension" encompasses a range of cognitive processes that are involved in the comprehension and interpretation of spoken language. These encompass the ability to exhibit phonological awareness, comprehend the grammatical meanings of certain vocabulary words, and understand the syntactic structure of sentences.

According to Fang (2008), the procedure of comprehending spoken language involves an active cognitive process wherein students must concentrate on the significance of auditory input and establish connections with previous knowledge. Implementing several elements, including language features, factors related to listening strategies, and affective components (Bang & Hiver, 2016), facilitates the achievement of good learning outcomes. In other words, the acquisition of auditory

comprehension skills requires the student's capacity to identify and comprehend significance.

Listening comprehension practice in junior high school is largely aimed at teaching students how to operate successfully in everyday circumstances. The purpose of the listening activity, in particular, is for students to be able to execute instructions or gain information from various forms of listening texts or genres. They can also provide information and respond to inquiries. Based on the definition above, it is easy to conclude that vocabulary and grammatical understanding are required for listening comprehension. Students should be able to follow instructions from the teacher and learn through different genres or types of listening texts, such as speeches or monologues.

Many students still face challenges with understanding what they are hearing. According to Elkhafaifi (2005) in Bagheri and Karami (2014), listening causes stress, since it makes it difficult to comprehend what is being said. Teachers seldom teach listening material, despite the significance of strong listening comprehension abilities. Ghaderpanahi (2012) states that the loudness, speed rate, accent, intonation, listening tactics, and pronunciation of native speakers are only a few of the characteristics that cause students to feel confused during listening exercises.

Other factors, such as a limited vocabulary, poor grammar, and misunderstandings of listening duties, according to Graham (2006), can make it more difficult for learners to understand what is being said to them. Seferoglu and Uzakgoren (2004) claim that some additional listening comprehension issues are linked to the type of listening materials. One of the major issues with listening comprehension, according to Bloomfield, Wayland, Rhoades, Blodgett, Linck, & Ross (2010) and Walker (2014), is linked to words being pronounced differently from how they appear in print. The ability to recognize the words that make up oral speech can be challenging for students because spoken language differs from its written version.

Based on the explanation above, listening is one of the lessons that presents challenges for students. Which includes the challenges in listening comprehension faced by students such as a lack of vocabulary, comprehension structure, inability

to understand natural speech, loss of confidence, concentration maintenance, poor recording quality, most students had problems with poor recording quality, the speaker speaking too fast, making it challenging to understand. As consequently, this study was carried out to explore problems with listening challenges faced by ninth-grade students at a junior high school in Bekasi.

F. Previous Study

This section discusses the previous studies relevant to this research. First study was conducted by Harianja, Lumbantoruan, Sinaga, Purba, and Napitupulu (2022), with the title "The Students' Listening Problems for Senior High School in Pematangsiantar". This study discusses the English listening problems faced by senior high school students in Pematangsiantar. This research was conducted at a senior high school in Pematangsiantar, North Sumatra. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with data obtained through a series of listening tests, observations, and interviews. The findings of this study demonstrate that speaking speed, limited vocabulary, and concentration levels are all factors in the challenges that students have when listening to English. To address this problem, the teacher implements a variety of techniques for students to practice listening in English. It can be concluded that the teacher's efforts are relevant to the students' listening problems. The previous study was conducted at the senior high school level, while this study was conducted at the junior high school level.

Second, Jyoti (2020), whose title is "Exploring English Language Students' Difficulties in Listening Comprehension" conducted this research at Tribhuvan University, Nepal. This research was conducted to explore students' listening comprehension difficulties. This research method used a survey research design, the respondents to this study were sixty male students and sixty female students who were randomly selected to study English in three community schools in Rupandehi district, Nepal. Data were obtained from respondents using a closed questionnaire with 24 items on students' listening problems. The results of the questionnaire show that the content of listening texts (for example, foreign words and idioms, feeling tired when listening to long texts) is the main source of listening

difficulties for students. These findings increase teacher and student awareness of listening comprehension issues. The difference between previous research and this research is that previous research used a survey research design as a method, while this research used a descriptive qualitative method.

Third, the research title "Listening Problems for Junior High School" was conducted by Haloho, Sinaga, Rajagukguk, Nainggolan, and Napitupulu (2022). The study was carried out at the Junior High School Kalam Kudus Pematangsiantar in North Sumatra. This study was carried out to determine and solve problems with listening comprehension. The qualitative descriptive method was used in this study, with a sample of class VIII students at Junior High School Kalam Kudus Pematangsiantar. Based on the findings of this study, the most common difficulties encountered by students are a lack of concentration, the speaking pace of a native speaker, unfamiliar words, and a lack of effort to understand each word. The solutions to the problems discovered are focus and concentration when listening to class, concentrating on what is heard, looking at the dictionary to look for foreign or newly heard vocabulary, memorizing vocabulary, and practicing listening to audio in English. The difference between previous studies and this study is that previous studies used a sample of class VIII students, but this study used class IX students.

Fourth, Toni, Susilowati, and Sartipa (2021) in their research entitled "Students' difficulties in listening comprehension at the third semester of the English education study program of the university Muhammadiyah Kotabumi academic year 2019/2020". This study was carried out to find out the difficulties that third semester students had with listening comprehension. Muhammadiyah University Kotabumi in North Lampung carried out this study. This study's population were 49 students from two classes participating in semester III of the English Education Study Program at Muhammadiyah University in Kotabumi, North Lampung, for the 2019/2020 academic year. Data was collected with questionnaires and interviews, and a qualitative descriptive method was used to determine and solve the problem. Based on the data collected through questionnaires and interviews, there are

different problems and difficulties that students experience when listening. Among these include a lack of vocabulary, accent variances, and grammatical competence.

This study has similarities and differences from previous studies. In the previous study, the researcher examined the problems that students had with listening comprehension. This study additionally explores the challenges that students experience with listening comprehension. However, there are differences in location, participants, methods, and research instruments between this study and previous studies. Apart from exploring the challenges faced by students, this study will also focus on the factors that contribute to the challenges experienced by students in their listening comprehension. The subjects of this research were ninth-grade students from a junior high school in Bekasi. There are four ninth-grade classes in the entire school. This study used a purposive sampling technique to select one class as the research sample based on the school's considerations.

