CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the background of the study, the research questions, the research purposes, the research significance, the research scope, the research methodology, and the conceptual framework.

A. Research Background

In the English language, there are four macro languages: listening, reading, speaking, and reading. Listening and reading are receptive skills while reading and speaking are productive. These language skills are the bedrock for the teaching, learning, and comprehension of language (Bano, 2017). Out of the four skills, Ismail & Aziz (2020) argued that listening is the most frequently used language skill in the daily communication of the average human to gain information. Therefore, listening is the most used skill to harness information daily. This statement is backed up by Nushi & Orouji (2020) claim that listening is paramount in collecting information daily. In addition, Ismail & Aziz (2020) has argued that among the four skills of the English language, listening activity is a superb language skill used in daily life to communicate. On top of that, derived from Gilakjani & Ahmadi (2011), listening makes up 40-50%; speaking 25-30%; reading 11-16%; and writing 9% of the total time spent on communication.

However, several problems and challenges thrive while the student learn listening in a foreign language. The fist one is anxiety that L2 learners consider as a problem. L2 anxiety has long been recognized as a strong predictor of success or failure in L2 learning. Conceptualized as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 284), L2 anxiety is multi-faceted. It has various types,

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including facilitative-deliberative anxiety acts as a (de) motivating agent to stimulate/impede L2 learning (Scovel, 1978). It shows that anxiety disadvantages L2 learners due to insufficient knowledge of English learning, especially in listening skills. The second consideration is the recorded material's quality. The quality of the sound impacts the comprehension of listening. The third is cultural differences. The unfamiliarity with cultural knowledge can lead adversaries toward taking a bigger picture of what has been told. The fourth is the accent. Accent can be a problem in listening comprehension with its diverse genres. The fifth one is unfamiliar vocabulary. Many words have more than one context, which causes problems for learners. The sixth is the length and speed of the listening. Not every student can keep focused for a long time to listen. Therefore, a short listening text could facilitate listening comprehension and reduce boredom. Furthermore, the listener may find it challenging to catch the words spoken by the speaker, who speaks faster than average. The seventh problem is the physical condition of the classroom. Inconvenience situations where students sit in the back rows and those who sit next to a window are affected by noises that come from outside. Moreover, with a huge classroom, it will be difficult for teachers to manage, and the class's temperature could also influence students' performance. The last one is lack of concentration. The student's motivation is one of the vital roles affecting listening comprehension. It requires a big deal of effort not to miss the context (Bingol et al., 2014). In addition, the lack of practice is also a challenge for EFL students, according to Rintaningrum (2018). They struggle to understand what the speaker said.

Saraswaty (2018) elaborates that listening is a complex mental process involving perception, attention, cognition, and memory. Understanding communication from a foreign language is a tricky task for language learners. Many language learners struggle in listening to a foreign language. Language teachers must understand their students' listening difficulties in comprehending spoken texts to instruct effective listening strategies to help students solve their listening difficulties.

Based on a preliminary study, an interview with a first semester of the English Education Department, at present, they have an intensive listening course. Additionally, the first semester students are introduced to learning material, such as songs, for listening activities. The researcher was intrigued to commence this study to discover challenges the first semester of the English Education Department may encounter and how they cope with the challenges regarding listening comprehension due to their new steps of experience into university education.

A previous study by Mensah (2021) showed challenges to listening comprehension in Ghanaian ESL classrooms. Besides of students' limited vocabulary, speed of speech, lack of contextual knowledge of the subject matter, and the (un)clarity of the speaker, the poor condition of the class also affects the quality of listening comprehension. Another previous study organized by Alzamil (2021), a study of 87 Saudi female university students, aimed to discover whether they experience struggles in learning and listening to spoken English. The results revealed that most participants felt that speaking and listening were the most critical learning skills, but listening was also the most challenging. Finally, research by Serri et al. (2012) investigated the relationship between learners' listening strategy use, cognitive, metacognitive, social/affective, while they listen to the texts and some of their differences from 40 Iranian university EFL. The results reveal a significant relationship between the level of motivation and the listening strategies. After motivation, learning style also affected the listening strategies used. The other variables had no notable effect on using the three listening comprehension strategies. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that the social/ affective strategy was omitted in the analysis because the mean of this strategy use was so low since no individual groups applied this strategy.

From the previous studies above, there are similarities and differences from this study. In terms of similarity, this study has a similar topic about listening comprehension. In contrast, the differences can be identified from the sample taken and the methods used, as shown in Alzamil (2021), to administer the research instrument

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online due to Covid-19. Furthermore, the research gap can be seen in the study conducted by Serri et al. (2012), who tried to investigate the relationship between learners' listening strategy use while they listen and their differences. Meanwhile, this study aims to find out the first semester of English Education Department students challenges in listening English language and how they coped with the challenges.

B. Research Questions

1. What are the challenges encountered by the first semester students of English Education Department in learning English listening activities?
2. What are the strategies used by the first semester students of English Education Department to cope with the challenges?

C. Research Purposes

1. To identify the challenges encountered by the first semester students of English Education Department during learning English listening activities
2. To find out the strategies used by the first semester students of English Education Department to cope with the challenges

D. Research Significances

The results yielded from this research are expected to be theoretically and practically usable for students and teachers.

1. Theoretical significances

This research may support the theory of the importance of listening comprehension in the university context. This research shall give a revelation to exert higher quality listening comprehension activity. This research could be a reference for any party, especially lecturers, about listening comprehension activity at university. As for students, they are expected to be critical of challenges in listening comprehension and be more motivated and encouraged in listening comprehension.

2. Practical significances

The findings of this research hopefully can enlighten and inspire lecturers to be more adaptable and create an exciting concept of listening comprehension activity during class by generating a wide array of media and an adequate amount of material relating to listening comprehension and widen their knowledge and awareness towards supportive elements in listening comprehension activity.

E. Research Scope

This study was limited to finding the challenges faced by the first semester of English Education Department students in learning English listening and how they coped with it.

F. Conceptual Framework

Few strategies exist for listening to English as a foreign language; the most significant features are paying attention, note-taking, using the dictionary, summarizing, and guessing (Herlina et al., 2021). From the theory above, paying attention is a significant point in listening to understand what speakers say while taking notes. Students can guarantee their understanding and accuracy if they dictate what they listen to. Using a dictionary can provide students with abundant new vocabulary understanding to catch words spoken in listening activities. Associating Herlina et al. (2021) that once someone understands something they have listened to, they can write a summary. When we do not understand a piece of information, we should use the information around the part of that particular information. It is called guessing.

However, several problems and challenges thrive while learning to listen in a foreign language. Anxiety is the first problem for L2 learners. L2 anxiety has long been recognized as a strong predictor of success or failure in L2 learning. Conceptualized as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p.

284), L2 anxiety is multi-faceted. It has various types, including facilitative-deliberative anxiety acts as a (de) motivating agent to stimulate/impede L2 learning (Scovel, 1978). It shows that anxiety disadvantages L2 learners due to insufficient knowledge of English learning, especially in listening skills. The second one is the quality of the recorded material. The quality of the sound also affects the understanding of listening. The third is cultural differences. The unfamiliarity with cultural knowledge can lead adversaries toward taking a bigger picture of what has been told. The fourth is the accent. Accent can be a problem in listening comprehension with its diverse genres. The fifth one is unfamiliar vocabulary. Many words have more than one context, which causes problems for learners. The sixth is the length and speed of the listening. Not every student can keep focused for a long time to listen. Therefore, a short listening text could facilitate listening comprehension and reduce boredom. Furthermore, the listener may find it challenging to catch the words spoken by the speaker, who speaks faster than average. The seventh problem is the physical condition of the classroom. Inconvenience situations where students sit in the back rows and those who sit next to a window are affected by noises that come from outside. Moreover, with a huge classroom, it will be difficult for teachers to manage, and the class's temperature could also influence students' performance. The last one is lack of concentration. The student's motivation is one of the vital roles affecting listening comprehension. It requires a big deal of effort not to miss the context (Bingol et al., 2014). In addition, the lack of practice is also a challenge for EFL students, according to Rintaningrum (2018). They struggle to understand what the speaker said.

According to Vandergrift (1999) and Ak (2012), listening strategies are metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) also stated that there are three types of listening comprehension strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective. In addition, Oxford (1990) identifies six major groups of L2 learning strategies. These strategies are metacognitive, cognitive strategies, affective strategies, memory-relating strategies, compensatory strategies, and social strategies.

G. Previous Studies

For reference purposes, a previous study orchestrated by Saraswaty (2018) focused on how teachers enhance their positive attitudes; train them to be responsive by giving suitable strategies which enable them to develop their listening skills. This study used a literature review by researching, reading, analyzing, evaluating, and summarizing scholarly literature. This study concludes that listening is essential not limited to language learning but also in daily communication. However, the students have an issue with listening, where the time invested in studying themselves is minuscule to improve the skill, the learner's inappropriate strategies, and the listening material itself. The students should have much more exposure to various listening and learn the tips or strategies through each of their learning themselves. There is no ideal method that fits all types of English classes. Here, the teachers play an important role in selecting suitable listening strategies and applying them to the listening task. Listening activities should be arranged from basic to more complex as the learners learn English.

The research by Paramitha (2019) served as another previous study. This study attempted to investigate the listening challenges encountered by English Language Education (ELE) Program students at Kristen Satya Wacana University using qualitative research and phenomenological study methodology. The participants involved were 10 students from batches 2015 and 2016 who had taken extensive listening classes in the second semester of their first year. It consisted of 6 students from batch 2015 and 4 from batch 2016. This study used interviews to collect data from students who had joined the Extensive Listening class and used thematic analysis to answer the research question. The result showed that there were four challenges experienced by students in Extensive Listening class and classified into; 1) speech is considered too fast, 2) the utterances are regarded as too complex, 3) word boundaries are blurry, 4) and the speech has to be processed in real-time.

An extensive view of past studies supervised by Yulisa (2018) purposefully identified the correlation and influence between listening strategies and listening

comprehension. This research used a correlational design with an explanatory design to determine the correlation between variables to explain and interpret the results. The 11th grade students were selected as participants in this study. The instruments used in this research were a listening strategies questionnaire adapted from Lee (1997) and modified by Ho (2006) (as cited Golchi, 2012) and a listening comprehension test conducted to measure students' listening comprehension. The population used in this research is all the active Islamic Senior High School Students of *Babussalam Payaraman* in the academic year 2016-2017, which consisted of three classes. The total population of this study was 68 students. Based on the findings and interpretations, some conclusions can be made. First, it could be proved that different levels of listening-strategies had a significant effect on the students' listening comprehension. Second, it can be concluded that students' listening-strategies significantly influenced their performance in listening.

From the previous studies mentioned above, the research gap of this study can be seen from the methods and the sample taken. First, this research used a qualitative research method with a case study design. However, some previous studies use a literature review and correlational method with an explanatory design. The participants of this research is the first semester of English Education Department students, other previous studies are teachers, and senior high school students.