

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a wide-ranging description of the study. It comprises the background, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, aim of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The listening skill is considered an important skill that has to be mastered. According to Darti and Asmawati (2017), listening is one of the main skills in English, along with writing, speaking, and reading, and mastering this skill is very important because it can significantly improve other language competencies. On the other hand, Mohamed (2018) suggests that students' listening skills are paramount for effective learning, as they enable effective communication and facilitate academic success.

Although listening is important; speaking and listening are the two most crucial abilities to master, while listening is also the most difficult (Alzamil, 2021). This is similar felt by EFL students who study at one university in an intensive listening course. This course is designed to enhance the listening skills of non-native English speakers. The emphasis is on finding specific and detailed information from recordings of native and non-native English voices, which will be a challenge for the students. The researcher also conducted a pre-interview with those who attended the course, the researcher got information that they experienced various challenges when learning.

Previous studies investigated the listening challenges in listening classes. The initial one came from Izzah and Keeya (2019), which revealed that the common challenges faced by EFL students were related to distortion, lexical recognition, phonological awareness, complexity of passages, and speech rate. The second study by Yahmun et al., (2020) shows that there are four difficulties faced by the students, such as the speed and length of the spoken text, vocabulary, pronunciation, and accent. In another study by Darti and Asmawati (2017), found the problems in listening comprehension faced by students are not only from the

listeners themselves but also from the content material and environment of listening.

Several studies have investigated the challenges of listening difficulties. Thus, Yahmun et al., (2020) suggest that further researchers should be encouraged to conduct research on similar topics but use different methods and find out some strategies to minimize teaching and learning listening difficulties. To fill the gap from the previous study and pre-interview, this study aimed to investigate the students' listening challenges in the intensive listening course and explore the strategy for how the student overcame those challenges.

1.2 Formulation of Problem

Based on the background above, the research questions addressed in this present study are

1. What are the challenges faced by EFL students when learning in intensive listening courses?
2. How did the students overcome the challenges?

1.3 Operational Definition

To avoid misunderstanding the terms mentioned in this paper, the research provides definitions related to this study as follows:

1.3.1 Listening Skills: Listening is the ability to receive and interpret meaning accurately. Listening skills are taught, practiced, and improved by using the macro-skill and micro-skill domains of listening.

1.3.2 Listening Challenges: The term listening challenges refers to any obstacles that may occur in English listening involving comprehension in learning.

1.3.3 Intensive Listening: A listening course taken by the students of the English Education Department in the first semester.

1.4 Aim of Study

According to the research question, this study aims to investigate listening challenges encountered by EFL students and how they overcome the problems.

1.5 Significance of Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Use

This research contributes to enriching theories related to listening skills and provides insight into the challenges that students usually face in intensive listening classes and how they overcome these challenges.

1.5.2 Practical Use

This research can be a reference for teachers to select learning models when conducting teaching and learning activities. Students can find out the challenges that are often faced in intensive listening classes and know how to get through these problems.

1.5.3 Empirical Use

This study contributes to the researcher's empirical insight during the research regarding the students' challenges in learning listening skills in intensive listening classes and the students' ways of coping with the challenges.