

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the introduction, including the background of the research, formulation of the problems, research objectives, significances of the research, and operational definition of the terms.

A. Background of the Research

Listening is the very first thing people do before they can speak, read or write. This is in line with the statement of Alrawashdeh and Al-Zayed (2017) that listening comprehension is the primary skill among the four language skills. It is also a fundamental skill for creating great knowledge for communication. According to Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011), as cited in Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016), listening is the most important skill in communication among the four other skills. In addition, Andrade (2006) cited in Ulum (2017) asserts that listening can be referred to as one of the four key skills that is employed when communicating orally. Listening is often considered as one crucial thing in communication competence. Siegel (2015) states that listening is an active process in which the listener must differentiate between voice, comprehend vocabulary and grammatical structures, analyze stress and intonation, and interpret them within the immediate of the larger socio-cultural contexts. Purdy (1997) cited in Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) defines listening as the pocess of collecting, creating meaning from, and responding to spoken messages. Therefore, the researcher concludes that listening is the basic

skill in the field of communication which includes the process of hearing and analyzing the meaning of the utterances in order to be able to give responses to what others are saying.

In EFL context, listening is a highly notable skill. As what has been stated by Hamouda (2013), that the importance of listening skill in EFL learning is unquestionable since the key of acquiring a language is to obtain language input. Jafari and Hashim (2015) stated that more than 50 percent of the time learners spend in learning a foreign language is devoted to listening. Moreover, Gilbert (1988), as cited in Cheung (2010), claimed that students from kindergarten to high school spend 65-90% of their communication time for listening. It has been presumed that listening is the most widely used language skill in the classroom and it plays a prominent role in one's academic achievement than reading skill or academic competence (Conaway, 1982) cited in Bano (2017). Hence, listening is one of the language inputs which is necessarily influential skill in learning a foreign language because it affects the learners' achievement in classrooms.

Teaching listening skill in EFL classroom can be difficult for teachers and particularly difficult for students to learn as well. The difficulties that learners experience are led by some problems, such as the difference between pronunciation that is uttered by the speakers and the written text. Learners who do not have many vocabulary knowledge may feel unfamiliar with them. In addition, the speed of the utterance also hinder learners listening practice. Furthermore, listening skill is not a substantial part of some of English coursebooks and teachers do not consider this

skill in their classes. These problems are also encountered by other researchers, a case in point is Hamouda (2013) as cited in Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016), who mentioned that EFL learners have crucial problems in listening comprehension because high schools pay more attention to grammar, reading, and vocabulary. Some other listening problems are concerned to the listening materials (Seferoglu and Uzakgoren, 2004) cited in Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016). The listening materials do not reach real-life condition of the learners. Shortly, it can be assumed that most of EFL learners have low ability in mastering the listening skill.

As what has been mentioned earlier, listening materials play an important role in the development of listening skill. Listening materials can be in the form of songs, radio programs, and news broadcast. One of the newest news broadcaster is the Voice of America (VOA). VOA is the US international multimedia broadcaster which produces more than 40 languages. VOA has a program namely VOA Special English, and later its service includes more materials to teach English. This contains various programs such as American Mosaic, American Stories, In the News, Education Report, Health Report, People in America, Personal Technology, Everyday Grammar, VOA Newscast, etc. VOA is believed can help learners with their listening skills since the audio read in slower pace and clearer pronunciation. Yao and Zuo (2009) assumed that VOA exposes learners to vocabulary used to express recent issues that are widely discussed around the world and thus provides learners with what they actually need in terms of vocabulary for authentic communication. It also stimulates the learners' enthusiasm for English learning with its

interesting, informative, and detailed reports. Thus, VOA can be used as authentic materials to help learners with their listening skill.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher attempts to review some studies in respect with the use of VOA in developing students' listening skill.

B. Formulation of the Problems

Based on the background above, the researcher formulated the problems as follow:

1. What are the benefits of using VOA to teach listening skill?
2. How is the development of students' listening skill taught by using VOA?

C. Objectives of the Research

In line with the formulation of the problems, the objectives of this research are:

1. To find out the benefits of using VOA to teach listening skill.
2. To find out the development of students' listening skill taught by using VOA.

D. Significances of the Research

1. Theoretical Benefits

The findings of this research are expected to give understanding about the benefits of VOA in developing students' listening skill.

2. Practical Benefits

The findings of this research are hopefully bring beneficial for the following:

a. For the Students

This research is expected to motivate the students to learn English, especially listening skill.

b. For the Teachers

This research will inform the teachers about the benefits of using VOA in developing students' listening skill. Hence, they can consider using VOA in their classes.

c. For Other Researchers

For other researchers, this research may be helpful as an additional reference.

E. Operational Definition of the Terms

To avoid misunderstanding about the title, it is notable to explain the terms used in this research. The terms are as follow:

1. VOA

The Voice of America (VOA) is a dynamic international multimedia broadcaster with service more than 40 languages. Serving an estimated weekly global audience of 141 million, VOA provides news, information, and cultural programming through the internet, mobile and social media, radio, and television.

2. Listening Skill

Listening skill is one of language skills that is not just hearing something or someone, but process them into a message and giving the right response with benefit of grammatical awareness.