

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

All of us know that language serves as an instrument of communication to achieve our purposes. Language is used to express thoughts, feelings or perceptions. People are interpreting other people's language and expecting others to interpret their own. Every utterance that someone says has a meaning that is to be transferred to other people. Language directs how and what people will communicate in different circumstances. Moreover, since there is a simple fact that English is an international language, so most people in the world learn and use it.

English is an international language in that it is the most widespread medium of international communication, both because of the number and geographical spread of its speaker, and because of the large number of non-native speakers who use it for part at least of their international contact (Brumfit, 1982:1).

Language consists of language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing and language components, namely, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Those skills and components are related to each other when they are used in communication.

Among those language skills, listening is one of the skills which plays an important role in communication and also plays an important role leading to the mastery of the other language skills. According to Underwood (1989:1) listening is the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we

hear. To listen successfully, we need to be able to work out what the speakers mean when they use particular words in particular ways on particular occasions and not simply to understand the words themselves. In this case, we do not just listen to what one says in communication, but we have to process it in our mind until we get the meaning of the message.

Bott (1982:1) states that listening is tied to the essential cognitive elements of comprehension and understanding, so all language skills are involved. The relationship between listening and reading is when a teacher reads a passage and the students will listen carefully. Many instructions given by a teacher are expressed orally, so the students should be able to listen and understand the instructions, which is the example of the relationship between listening and speaking. The relationship between listening and writing happens in dictation class, where the students listen to the teacher and then write the text.

Lundsteen (1971:3-4) claims that language in terms of its development, chronologically, children listen before they speak, speak before they read and read before they write. Lundsteen also acknowledges that the development of language skills proceeds from listening to speaking to reading and to writing.

Although listening plays an important role in learning a language, it seems to be neglected in the ELT at the post-primary level in Indonesia. In school we learn to read and write and sometimes to give speech, but seldom do we get any formal training in how to listen. Widdowson (1978:60) regarded listening as an ignored skill in the learning of foreign languages.

From the experiences that the writer had during her Teaching Practice Program, she found out that the students remarked as having much less listening

training than other language skills. When she did her teaching practice for almost two months, the students only had an opportunity to have listening class for one and a half hour, and it was just because the writer proposed it to the headmaster. She thought that the students should get more listening class, but the teachers seem to consider it less important than other language skills. The writer also related that observation with her own experience. Based on the writer's experience when she was studying at the secondary school, the chance of getting a special listening class was very little.

There is a contradiction here. Quite a number of experts are of the opinion that listening plays an important role in learning a language, but it seems to be neglected and considered as the least important skill in learning a language. On the other hand, the Indonesian Ministry of Education has decided to administer a special listening test on the EBTANAS for secondary schools. This listening test is held orally. The questions in the listening test on EBTANAS, for English examination, are recorded on a tape, so the students should be able to listen well.

According to the Order of the Minister of National Education no 154/U/2003 on the final examination of the year 2003/2004, that students should be able to comprehend oral texts in the form of sentences, conversations, narrations and descriptions. The material for the final examination for listening is: "To comprehend the content of spoken as well as written discourses through an understanding of its global view, specific, explicit or implicit information, pictorial vocabulary, and also be able to determine the right responses using expressions which are parts of language elements." (Jawa Pos, 21 February 2004:8-9).

Another support was taken from Jawa Pos (Metropolis, Thursday 6 May 2004:29) that wrote: "The questions of English subject for Final Examination of secondary students are not only in the form of written text but also in the form of cassette, special for listening questions. That is why each school must prepare tape recorder for next Final Examination. The Department of Education adds that in the Final Examination, there will be a specific time for listening."

Considering the paramount importance of listening, the writer would like to emphasize testing the ability of the secondary students in listening and their listening comprehension, but not the other skills. In the EBANAS the questions are recorded on a tape to be played in the class while students should listen to questions and only write down the answers, so there will be no turning back to check the previous questions. That situation demands great listening comprehension ability from the students.

To minimize the problem of the students' listening comprehension in EBANAS, first, the teachers should know their students' competence in listening. This knowledge is needed to decide whether the students need more listening class or not.

Testing listening by listening to stories and making the students just listen to the stories can arouse the students' boredom. Furthermore, the students will find it difficult to follow the stories and they feel unsatisfied because they might miss the stories (information). Therefore, it is necessary for the teacher to develop techniques to make the listening test process in class more active and through interesting ways, such as by using songs. A song is also an entertainment device, people feel much joy by understanding the meaning of the theme or the message

written in the words of the song. So, it is no wonder if songs speak about experiences and stories. Testing listening by songs will make the students feel more relaxed and it will be much fun, so the students will not feel oppressed to listen. Griffiee (1992:6) claims "... , popular songs have a powerful impact on us. No one has to force us to listen to songs and music..."

This study is held by the following basic questions: Do they have enough vocabulary knowledge to listen to pop song as the basic exercise in facing next listening test on EBTANAS (Final Examination for the third grade of secondary students or for the sixth grade of elementary students, or final examination as a passing requirement)? What major problems do secondary students have in listening to pop songs? Is there any difference between students who have heard the song before and who have not in their result? Is there any difference between excellent, good and poor competence students in their results?

1.2 Statements of the Problem

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent in terms of vocabulary do the students achieve in listening to pop songs after three times of listening
2. What are the major and minor problems that appear when secondary students are listening to pop songs?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In giving the answer to the above research question, this study is intended to:

1. Show the students' vocabulary achievement in listening to pop songs after three times of listening.
2. Describe the major and minor problems that appear when secondary students are listening to pop songs.

1.4 Significance of the Study

By investigating the secondary students' ability in listening and their difficulties or problems in listening to pop songs, first, this research is expected to help English teachers to know their students' ability and their problems in listening and can also be a guideline for the English teacher in teaching listening to prepare the students in facing the next listening test in EBTANAS. Second, it is hoped that the major contribution of this study is for the improvement of listening exercises that will be compatible with the problems found. The third contribution is that songs can be used as authentic materials to teach and test listening skill. The fourth contribution is for language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, writing and language components, because they are all related to one another.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Being aware of the depth, breadth and complexity of the field of listening, the writer decided to limit the study in several ways:

- This study was focused on the vocabulary achievement of secondary school students in listening to pop songs
- This study was focused on the problems that were limited only in speed; vocabulary; concentration; grammar; pronunciation and content, of secondary school students listening to pop songs.
- The listening test used songs as the media to test. Testing listening by songs would make the students feel more relaxed and it would be much fun, so the students would not feel oppressed to listen.
- The songs used here were two pop songs (“Beautiful Girl” by Jose Mari Chan and “From This Moment” by Shania Twain), because most of the second grade students of SMUK Mgr. Soegijapranata preferred pop songs to other kinds of music.
- The subjects chosen were 55 second grade students of SMUK Mgr. Soegijapranata at Jl Panglima Sudirman 64 Pasuruan.
- The writer only used two songs to be tested, because of the time limitation to test the students.
- The problems discussed in this study are only the major and minor problems. A major problem is a problem which has the most level of difficulty. A minor problem is a problem which has the least difficulty according to the students.

1.6 Definitions of the Key Terms

The title of this research is “Analyzing Listening Ability of Second Grade Students of SMUK Mgr. Soegijapranata Pasuruan in Listening to Pop Songs.”

The major terms defined in this section are:

- **Listening:**

According to Underwood (1989) listening is the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear, it requires concentration and understanding.

- **Listening ability:**

Listening ability is the ability or skill needed to listen and understand pop songs.

- **Listening Comprehension**

Listening comprehension means a conscious effort to hear with understanding (Webster’s Dictionary).

- **Song:**

A song is a piece of music for singing (Webster’s Dictionary).

1.7 Theoretical framework

In this study the writer deals with some theories. The first is the theory of listening; the theory of listening is used to state its definition, its importance, advantages and its relationships with other language skills. The second theory is a theory of listening comprehension; the theory of listening comprehension is used to define what listening comprehension is and how it differs from hearing. The

third is the theory of problems in listening; the theory of problems in listening is used as the basic measurements in analyzing students' ability in listening. The fourth theory is the theory of listening test; this theory is used to help the writer decide the methods used for testing listening to second grade students.

The fifth theory is the theory of song; this theory of song for language teaching indicates the use of songs in teaching learning activities and the application of it in testing listening. The sixth theory is the theory of conducting a questionnaire survey; this theory is used as a guide to make the questionnaires, which later used to test the students' problems in listening to pop songs.

The writer also took two related previous research; the related previous research is used as the consideration in doing this research.

1.8 Organization of the study

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, the definition of key terms, theoretical framework and the organization of the thesis. The second chapter deals with the theories that become the basic foundation of this study covering listening and its nature, listening comprehension, the problems in listening, songs, listening test, steps in conducting a questionnaire survey. The third chapter deals with the methodology of the study, which describes the research design, sources of the data, form of the data, research instruments, procedure of the data collection, and techniques of the data analysis. The fourth

chapter deals with the data analysis and findings. The last chapter deals with the conclusions and suggestions.