

Chapter One

Introduction

The introduction to the study is presented in the first chapter of this research. Several significant points are listed in this chapter. First, the background of the study explains why the researcher is concerned and interested in examining the challenges and strategies students use when doing the Listening Comprehension section of the TOEFL test at a private university in Yogyakarta. The research's problems are discussed and delimited. Next, the research questions are presented as a guide to analysing the students' perceptions of challenges and the strategies when doing the Listening Comprehension section of the TOEFL test. The significance of the research covers the advantages of the research for particular people. Finally, the organization of the chapters reveals how every topic is described.

Background of the Research

Students' listening skills have been considered an important skill to be mastered in learning languages. Improving listening comprehension abilities supports language learners' language learning development and enhances their comprehensible input (Ahmadi, 2016). Listening skill plays a crucial role in EFL students' learning process since listening is one of the language skills as an input that the students must comprehend the information that is heard. According to Windrawati and Asrori (2022), since people listen to understand the information that they get, listening skills are crucial, and people need high-quality information.

The Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) is conducted to prove EFL students' language abilities. TOEFL plays a crucial role in EFL students' learning process since it is used as proof to quantify English skills. Fitria (2021) stated that some universities outside the United States recognize the TOEFL score as a validation of English proficiency.

Moreover, in the Indonesian context, a TOEFL score is a requirement to graduate from university by passing some values that have already been determined. The TOEFL exam is required as part of the graduation requirements at some Indonesian universities (Soali & Pujiani, 2020). The TOEFL tests language abilities are specific to the academic and professional settings. The TOEFL has three sections with 140 questions in total. Three sections that are tested in TOEFL are listening comprehension, structure and written expression, and reading comprehension (Kuswoyo, 2013). TOEFL begins with listening comprehension test first and then followed by structure and written expression and reading comprehension. Each part has its own time allocation. In TOEFL Paper-Based Test (PBT), listening comprehension part has 50 questions and 40 minutes time allocation. These listening comprehension questions include speeches, long discussions, and short discussions (Fitria, 2021).

Listening is one of the skills in TOEFL that students find challenging to be acquired. It might be challenging to do a listening comprehension test due to various issues. The study conducted by Lengkoan et al. (2022) found that speech speed, accent, pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, and recording quality are the problems that students face during listening comprehension. Further, the study conducted by Darti and Asmawati (2017) revealed that the difficulties that students face are grouped into three aspects: listening material, listeners factors, and physical setting.

Despite the number of studies investigating the students' perceived difficulties in listening TOEFL comprehension already exist, the strategies for understanding and improving listening TOEFL comprehension need to be better explained. Study students' difficulties that will be revealed and the strategies used in doing the listening comprehension section of the TOEFL test. Another limitation is that the previous study used a questionnaire as the sole method for data collection. In this research, the researcher uses an interview as the data collection of the research for a depth data. Investigating the EFL student's difficulties in

listening TOEFL comprehension section and student's strategies in doing the listening section are the issues that should be investigated further.

Based on the researcher's observation, English Education Department students at Islamic Private University in Yogyakarta were tested using TOEFL, held by universities every year, to monitor the progress of EFL students' abilities. However, some students are unsatisfied with their TOEFL scores, especially in the listening comprehension section. The students need more exercises for preparing for their TOEFL, and some did not learn while taking TOEFL. According to Fitria (2022), students faced some difficulties in taking the TOEFL listening comprehension section since they lacked experience and practice, so they needed to be well-prepared.

EFL students felt they needed clarification while preparing TOEFL test. They needed to learn what skills and materials should be learned. They need more exercise to prepare for TOEFL. In addition, EFL students were not exposed to the English language because it was rarely used in everyday conversation. They only learn English in the classroom, so they need to take extra time and effort to learn English autonomously. In addition, teaching listening is often neglected in EFL instructions since the pandemic that happened in few years. Therefore, the students need to learn to listen optimally. Explaining listening online is challenging to conduct if the students only learn during the teaching process. This research aims to investigate EFL students' difficulties in the TOEFL listening comprehension part and the strategies that will be used in the TOEFL listening section.

Identification of the Problems

There are many skills to be mastered by EFL students while learning the language. One of them is listening skills. The researcher observed the learning process of listening in an EFL classroom. Based on the observation, the researcher found that EFL students

encountered difficulties while learning listening materials. Based on the researchers' observation, there are problems.

First, students have taken the test multiple times to pass the criterion to graduation from university, some universities require all students to have a high score on the TOEFL test, and the problem is that there are still many English primary students who cannot reach the target score in their first test and have to take another test which the student achieves the least score, even in one case that found by the researcher there is one student who achieved the target score with ten tests in total. This implies that students need strategies and more practice to comprehend the questions in the test better, especially in the listening section

Second, students need more listening input. In the EFL context, students are not exposed to listening because English is rarely used in everyday conversation. They only learn English in the classroom, so they need to take extra time and effort to learn English autonomously. EFL students also need more listening exercises since students feel confused while preparing TOEFL test. They need to know what skills and materials should be learned.

Third, listening materials are rarely taught to EFL students. In teaching and learning, many students only focus on grammar, especially tenses and students' assignments. Teaching listening is difficult to be conducted because of some factors. It needs a suitable technology device so students hear the voice of speakers. Other than that, teaching listening in the classroom has limited time. It is because the teachers should replay several times to explain each sentence's pronunciation and meaning. Because of the limited time, the students cannot learn listening skills optimally if they only learn in the classroom.

Delimitation of the Research

In this study, the researcher focuses on examining students' difficulties in the TOEFL listening comprehension part. The difficulties in this research refer to the difficulties faced during the TOEFL test. In addition, this research also tries to examine the strategies which

are going to be implemented in the students' future TOEFL tests. This means that the strategies refer to the strategies applied by the students after they got experience from their previous TOEFL test. The strategies are to be implemented based on the challenges in their previous TOEFL test, especially in the listening comprehension section. To become effective research, the researcher limits the exploration of the study. First, among many aspects tested in TOEFL, this research only focuses on the TOEFL listening comprehension section. The researcher only examines the students' difficulties during the test of TOEFL. Second, the researcher explores the students' strategies during their next TOEFL test. Third, the participants of this research are the EFL students of the English Language Education Department at a private Islamic university in Yogyakarta.

Research Question

The researcher constructed the problems for this investigation based on the background mentioned above. The following is an overview of the research questions:

1. What are the factors that can cause difficulties to do TOEFL listening comprehension test?
2. What are EFL students' strategies in doing their TOEFL listening comprehension?

Objectives of the Research

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of this research are:

1. To investigate the factors that can cause difficulties in TOEFL listening comprehension test?
2. To identify the EFL students' strategies in doing the listening comprehension part in their next TOEFL.

Significances of the Research

This research provides the information for the researcher, lecturers, pre-service teachers, institutions, and other researchers. The explanation is presented below:

For the Lecturers

This research can be helpful for lecturers since this study provides information about students' difficulties during TOEFL listening comprehension. Therefore, the material that might be difficult for the student can be taught multiple times. In addition, this study provides lecturer information on the strategies to be implemented by the students in doing the listening section of TOEFL. Therefore, they can guide the students in selecting various strategies for the TOEFL listening comprehension section.

For the Students

This research provides information on difficulties encountered by EFL students in TOEFL listening comprehension section and the strategies in doing listening section of the TOEFL. By knowing the difficulties faced by the students, they can minimize the problems that will be faced by them. They can evaluate and become well-prepared. Students also can use the information on strategies in improving the TOEFL listening skills to find effective learning in achieving their learning goals. The information in this research can be a reference for students on how to prepare TOEFL especially listening comprehension section.

For Future Researchers

Future researchers can use the results of EFL students' difficulties encountered while doing TOEFL listening comprehension section and the strategies to be implemented by EFL students in doing their TOEFL listening section. This research can serve as a reference point for other researchers who are interested in conducting research on the same topic. Also, it opens a possibility for futures researchers conduct wider research than this current research under the same topic.

Organization of the Chapters

This research contains five chapters. Chapter one consists of the background of the research, identification of the research, delimitation of the problem, research questions, objective of the research, and the significance of the research. Chapter two is the literature review. This chapter provides all the information and basic theory which cover about TOEFL, listening skill, TOEFL listening comprehension part, EFL students' difficulties in TOEFL listening comprehension part, and the strategies in improving students' TOEFL listening skill. In this chapter, the researcher also provides review of related studies and conceptual framework. Chapter three is the methodology. This chapter gives a clear illustration of how this research is conducted and how the data are collected. This chapter discusses the methods, the instruments, the participants, settings, and data gathering techniques. In this chapter, the researcher also explains how to analyze the data.

Chapter four discusses the research findings and discussion. This chapter reports detailed information about the data collection from the conducted research and analysis of the data. This chapter presents the results of the data which are about the students' difficulties faced by students in TOEFL listening comprehension section and strategies in improving their TOEFL listening skills. Besides, the researcher also relates the finding to the relevant literature reviews or theories provided in this research to be the discussion of the research.

Chapter five consists of the conclusion and recommendations. This chapter explains the general answers to the research questions and the recommendations from the researcher. In the conclusion, the researcher presents the summary of this study. The second part is the recommendations which are given to lecturers, students, and other researchers.