

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Research

Listening is one of the aspects in English language learning. Purdy (1997) described listening as the process of receiving, interpreting, and responding to spoken messages. In learning a language, listening is considered to have a very important role (Nation & Newton, 2009). When people learn a language for the first time, they do not immediately speak the language, but they will first listen to how the language is spoken. Only after listening and understanding the meaning, people will start talking. To be able to communicate, not only speaking ability is needed but also good listening ability. This is because the concept of communication is giving and receiving information (Nurhayati, 2020). Therefore, the listening ability is naturally learned before speaking. Meanwhile, in everyday life, listening cannot be separated from human activities. Whether for communicating with other people, seeking information orally through digital media, or listening to songs and watching movies, which are very common hobbies, all involve listening process. Thus, listening is highly important to master in order to be proficient in foreign language, especially English.

In EFL learning, students often experience difficulties in learning listening comprehension which hinders their learning process. These difficulties can arise from various factors, including the listening material, the speaker, the listener, and physical setting. There are quite a lot of listening comprehension difficulties related to these factors, including differences in speakers' accent, speed of speech, poor grammar mastery, inadequate vocabulary, lack of concentration, noisy, anxiety, inability to apply listening strategy, and bad quality of recording (Hamouda, 2013; Toni et al., 2021). According to Nurhayati (2010), listening comprehension as often overlooked area has particular problems which comes from fleeting experience, abstract nature of

oral speech, and the complex way a person processes information. There have been many previous studies discussing listening difficulties and strategies to overcome them, and the research findings are relatively similar. However, most previous research still examines listening difficulties in general. There are still few who have examined each of these difficulties in more detail. For this reason, the researcher took the initiative to conduct research on one of the difficulties in listening comprehension, namely anxiety.

Anxiety is defined as the subjective feelings characterized by strain, uncertainty, worry, and uneasiness related with an autonomic nervous system arousal (Horwitz et al., 1986). In other words, anxiety is a mental process where a person feels nervous, tense, afraid and worried because of certain causes. Anxiety can be experienced by anyone in certain situations, including learning situations. Generally, in EFL learning, students often experience anxiety in learning speaking. They consider that the most difficult skill to learn in learning English is speaking. Apart from that, the researcher also often notices many students are nervous, afraid, and not confident when they doing speaking practice in the class, such as speech, story-telling, and presentation. However, it turns out that anxiety does not only occur in speaking, but also in learning listening. But unfortunately, anxiety in listening is still rarely discussed by both educators and students themselves. In fact, listening anxiety has become a quite serious problem that is often experienced by students in learning listening comprehension. Such conditions make the researcher interested in conducting study about listening anxiety.

There are several previous studies regarding listening anxiety, one of which is research by Adnan et al. (2019) that aimed to analyze listening anxiety experienced by Advanced Listening Class students. The result of this research indicated that the students in advanced listening class experienced middle level of anxiety (94,14 points). Tahsildar & Yusoff (2014) conducted preliminary research, with survey as the research method, to investigate listening anxiety in L2 students. According to the result of this research, the students' listening anxiety was rather in a high level. The research deployed by Prastiyowati (2019) discussed the anxiety level and factors that related to listening anxiety

encountered by EFL learners. The findings of this study showed that most of the learners have moderate level of listening anxiety. Their anxiety frequently appeared from learners' background knowledge and characteristic. Cheng (2005) in her research examined the sources and changes in EFL learners' listening comprehension anxiety over the course of one semester. Based on the results, the sources of learners' listening comprehension anxiety came from input, instruction, information processing, and personal factors. While, the changes of anxiety levels over semester (at the beginning, the middle, and the end) were relatively stable. Lastly, Oteir & Aziz (2017) conducted research to explore the listening comprehension anxiety effects on Saudi EFL learners according to learners' perspectives. The results of this study revealed three main effects of listening comprehension anxiety based on learners' perspectives, namely personal effect (e.g. losing concentration, feeling depressed, and avoiding listening classes), social effect (e.g. isolating oneself from others and showing bad behavior), and academic effect (e.g. getting low performance and achievement).

The results of the previous study were various and differ from one another, since the aims and the design of each study were also different. After reviewing some previous studies above, the researcher found an aspect that has not been widely discussed in the previous researches, namely students' strategies for coping with the listening anxiety, particularly in the perspective of the fourth semester students majoring in English Education Department. Apart from that, the main discussion of the previous studies above is only focused on one or two aspects, such as the level or the source of anxiety. Therefore, the researcher tries to fill the research gap and complete the findings of the previous studies regarding this field by examining the fourth semester students' listening anxiety and what strategies they use to overcome their anxiety. In addition to the research subjects, other difference between this present study and the previous studies is the research method.

Apart from the explanation above, in fact, the researcher has experienced some anxiety symptoms in listening learning, such as panic, worried, and confused, which was quite disruptive to the listening learning

process in the classroom. In addition, the researcher also conducted pre-interview with several students regarding listening anxiety. Some of them admitted that they have felt symptoms of anxiety in listening comprehension class, such as worried, afraid, nervous, and confused.

Based on the information obtained from pre-interview and the result of previous studies, the researcher decided to conduct research with the aim of investigating listening anxiety in learning listening comprehension experienced by the fourth semester of English Education Department students at UIN SATU Tulungagung. The researcher wants to know whether students experience listening anxiety or not, what is their anxiety level, factors that contribute to the anxiety, and their strategies to cope with the anxiety.

## **B. Formulation of Research Problem**

1. What level of listening anxiety do students experience in learning listening comprehension?
2. What factors that contribute to the listening anxiety experienced by students in learning listening comprehension?
3. What strategies do students use to cope with the listening anxiety?

## **C. Objectives of the Research**

1. To find out what level of listening anxiety do students experience in learning listening comprehension;
2. To investigate what factors that contribute to the listening anxiety experienced by students in learning listening comprehension;
3. To find out what strategies that students used to cope with the listening anxiety.

## **D. Significance of the Research**

1. Theoretical

The findings of this research are useful for future research that want to examine listening anxiety experienced by students, particularly as a reference. In addition, this present research also provides information about

listening anxiety, which can increase knowledge of the readers regarding this topic and can increase readers' awareness of the listening anxiety that can be experienced by students in learning listening.

## 2. Practical

### a. For the lecturer

Since this research is conducted in the university environment, the finding of the research is considered to provide benefits for the lecturers in particular. The researcher hopes that the finding of this research would provide an overview of one of the problems in learning listening that needs to be considered and overcome. Other than that, this research findings can also help the learning evaluation, especially regarding the causes of listening anxiety experienced by the students.

### b. For the students

The researcher expects that through this research, the students become aware about the difficulties that can occur in learning listening, namely listening anxiety. Since this study investigates students' strategies for coping with listening anxiety as well, students can apply the strategies in order to help them overcome their listening anxiety. Apart from that, students can also reduce the occurrence of anxiety in listening by avoiding its contributing factors, as discussed in this research findings.

### c. For other parties

Other parties such as researchers could use the findings of this research as a reference to conduct study with the similar topic in the future. People in general could also use and read this research to increase their insight into listening anxiety.

## **E. Scope and Limitation**

This study focuses on investigating students listening anxiety in learning listening comprehension, including the level of anxiety, factors contributing to the anxiety, and strategies for coping with the anxiety. The subject of this study is the fourth semester of English Education Department students at UIN SATU

Tulungagung. The researcher collects the data of this study from questionnaire and interview.

## **F. Definition of Key Terms**

### **1. Listening**

Listening is a process of hearing carefully and understanding the meaning of utterances from the speaker. Listening is defined as the process of receiving, interpreting, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages (Purdy, 1997). The listening studied in this research is listening comprehension ability in EFL learning.

### **2. Anxiety**

Anxiety can be defined as a mental and physical condition characterized by particular cognitive, physical, emotional, and behavioral symptoms (Kralova & Petrova, 2017). According to Spielberger (1972), anxiety is an emotional state that is unpleasant indicated by subjective feelings of nervousness, tension, worry and fear. In relation to this study, the anxiety discussed here is related to listening ability, that is listening anxiety. Listening anxiety is an emotional condition where learners feel nervous, tense and restless when carrying out listening activities.