

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will present a discussion of the research background, the formulation of the problem, the research objectives, previous research, the scope and limitations of the research and the definition of keywords.

### **A. Background of the study**

Listening comprehension is one of the 4 elements of language skills in addition to speaking, reading, and writing skills. This ability is a skill that allows an individual to understand the oral context of someone. With it, the individual can effectively participate in global communication between other individuals around the world.

Listening ability not only involves deciphering the meaning of words and sentences, but also involves interpreting context, meaning and non-verbal cues. According to Kim and Pilcher (2016), listening comprehension is an ability that requires a variety of cognitive and language abilities, including working memory, attention, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, inferencing, theory of mind, and comprehension monitoring. Based on this opinion, it can be concluded that listening skills are a complex skill that is not easy to learn by most people, especially for people who make English as their foreign language (ESL).

Listening is so important to learn in order to communicate with others. In the academic context, qualified and effective listening skills greatly enable an individual to understand the learning material, help students to understand classroom instruction and to help actively participate in material discussions. As it has been said that, of the total time that humans spend communicating, listening takes up 40-50% of the time; Speaking takes about 25-30% of the time; reading takes 11-16% of the time; and writing only takes about 9% of the time (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). From this data it can be seen that so much time is used for listening, so it is very important to learn and develop this ability.

In the context of entertainment, learning or exploring listening comprehension is equally important. In this modern world, the tide of globalization is no longer unstoppable. More and more entertainment from western countries that in fact speak English enter Indonesia which is also widely enjoyed by our people. For example, in terms of music, songs such as Taylor Swift's, Ed Sheeran's, Adele's, etc., many of us are starting to like it both from children to the elderly. The problem is people's ignorance of the meaning of each song. Whether it is worth hearing by children or not or only certain circles, is rarely known by everyone. So, the importance of sharpening listening comprehension in this case is so that we can decipher or analyze every meaning of a word or sentence from a song, or movie in another example, and then we can find out the appropriateness of the song for

which group and so on. For singers also by mastering this ability they can easily regulate expression in the passion of the song performed. So that the meaning of the song they want to convey can be channeled to the listener.

In the discussion of understanding the meaning of words, it will not be separated from morpheme awareness. Morpheme is the smallest meaningful or consistently occurring element in a language, which is often conditioned phonologically and morphologically by the relevant elements (Ruibo Xie, 2021). Morphological awareness (MA) refers to “the ability to understand and manipulate morpheme as well as use it in sentences” (Kuo LJ, 2006). Being aware of the meaning of each morpheme means being aware that each word consists of many supporting aspects that ultimately lead to the meaning we want to convey.

Language learners who have an awareness of morphemes will also have sensitivity to the internal structure of a word. This is especially important in the oral comprehension process where listeners are often required to interpret words they have never heard before. The language learners will be able to easily utilize it to enrich their vocabulary and understand the meaning of words in an even more complex sense.

Kuo and Anderson (2006) argue that awareness of the morphemes of a word contributes to a person's writing and reading ability, as well as to grammatical comprehension. If understood further, all of these things are important components in listening comprehension.

The morphological awareness in the process of understanding spoken language (listening comprehension) is very important. This is crucial as it helps to comprehend spoken language by recognizing and interpreting the structure of complex words (Choi, Kiaer, Jun, & Kim, 2020). After knowing how the structure of a word is formed, the listener will be able to easily analyze the meaning of the word spoken by the speaker.

Utami (2021) said that the role of MA (Morphological Awareness) on one's listening ability is much broader. She said that understanding in listening also requires vocabulary enrichment. With MA, after the word structure can be easily understood, our vocabulary will be continuously renewed. The more vocabulary that is known, the more one's listening comprehension develops. So MA plays a very important role in Listening comprehension, especially in its initial development at the age of early education, which tends to be underestimated.

English was first officially introduced as a subject in the national curriculum in 1994. Of course, in its introduction to the wider community there were various obstacles. One of them is in terms of listening which then continues to the pronunciation of the letters and how to understand the other person's speech because English is neither their native language nor their second language.

Listening is one of the skills that students need to master. It is the first skill that students are introduced to and learn. Listening plays a vital role in understanding one's thoughts. Therefore, developing it before starting to speak is highly

recommended. So, students who have good listening skills will be more able to understand what the speaker is saying (Yusnida et al, 2017).

In its implementation to students, it does not necessarily run smoothly. Generally, the obstacles experienced by students in terms of listening are speaking speed, limited vocabulary, level of concentration, and established language habits (Amir, 2019). To overcome this problem, the teacher applies bottom-up strategy.

Bottom-up strategies in English language learning focus on understanding information through analyzing sounds, word meanings, and grammar (Mandarani, 2016). For example, in the context of listening, students will be given an overview of the topic to be heard, then they are asked to understand the main idea of each word or phrase.

Furthermore, Mandarani (2016) explained that in its implementation in class, this strategy is divided into 3 stages, namely pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening. In pre-listening, the teacher can help students to connect the context of what they hear with their background knowledge. The teacher can also introduce new vocabulary and structures that will appear in the listening material. The next stage is while-listening in which the teacher can guide students to predict what is important and what is not important to pay attention to so that students get the urge to understand it. The last is the post-listening stage. In this stage, students are encouraged to engage their understanding of the material, such as answering questions, summarizing, or discussing the content of the material with classmates.

The bottom-up strategy in Indonesia's newest curriculum, Kurikulum Merdeka, is not explicitly mentioned. However, some principles of Kurikulum Merdeka appear to support this strategy. Reporting from the website of the Banggai District Education and Culture Office, Kurikulum Merdeka has a focus on developing 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. Bottom-up strategies can help students develop these skills by encouraging them to analyze the information they listen and construct their own understanding. Furthermore, Kurikulum Merdeka also has a student-centered learning system. So, students are enabled to take charge of their learning process and are more active in listening to the lessons with bottom-up strategy.

Several studies on the relationship of morphological awareness to many aspects of English have been carried out. For example, research conducted by Md. Kamrul Hasan and Singhanat Nomnian in 2021 regarding the relationship of morphological awareness with listening comprehension of EFL undergraduate university students in Bangladesh. As a result, these two things have a very significant correlation. Unfortunately, research related to the relationship between these two things, especially in Indonesia is still very minimal. This can be seen from google scholar data that within 10 years (2014 - 2024) scientific articles from research that specifically examine the relationship between morphological awareness and listening comprehension in Indonesia are 0 article. Articles that discuss morphological awareness are 68 articles. Most of them examine the relationship between morphological awareness and vocabulary knowledge, which

is around 25 articles and as many as 20 articles examine the relationship between morphological awareness and reading comprehension. From these data it can be concluded that in general research on the relationship between morphological awareness and listening comprehension is relatively minimal. Of course, the use of the word "minimal" tends to be chosen because it is possible that in data sources other than google scholar there is research on this matter. Presumably, the application of developing morphological awareness is still underestimated, especially when this is related to listening comprehension. Yet research on this subject is important because it helps students in Indonesia master the English language, which is crucial in the educational and professional world. Understanding morphology can improve vocabulary and listening comprehension, which is especially important given the limited exposure to English. It also helps improve scores in national and international exams such as TOEFL and IELTS, opening up advanced study and international career opportunities. In addition, good English skills are required in the world of work for communication in multinational companies. This research helps create more effective teaching strategies and adaptive curricula, ensuring students not only learn English theoretically but also practically in real listening contexts.

Although previous studies have shown significant results, the researcher feels that research on this subject should still be conducted because any new research can strengthen and validate previous findings, especially in a different context such as with Indonesian subjects. The unique social and linguistic conditions in

Indonesia could affect the relationship between morphological awareness and listening comprehension differently from other populations. In addition, recent developments in education and changes in teaching methodology may have affected the results, so repeating the study with more relevant subjects and in an updated context is crucial to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the findings. Therefore, a study entitled The Correlation Between Students' English Morphological Awareness and Their Listening Comprehension, was chosen.

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

Based on the statement above, we can formulate the research problem as:

Is there a significant correlation between students' english morphological awareness and their listening comprehension in UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung?

#### **C. Research Objectives**

According to statement of formulation of the problem stated above the general objective of the study is to describe whether there is any correlation between students' english morphological awareness and their listening comprehension.

#### **D. Research Hypothesis**

Based on the theory previously, the writer formulates the hypothesis of this research as follows:

1. Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) = there is no significant correlation between students' english morphological awareness and their listening comprehension.



2. Alternative Hypothesis (Ha) = there is a significant correlation between students' english morphological awareness and their listening comprehension .

#### **E. Research Significance**

The findings of the study can be beneficial for the following stakeholders:

1. Teachers: The findings of this study provide guidance to pay attention to teaching morphology as part of the curriculum, while looking for other methods that can more effectively improve listening comprehension.
2. Learners: The findings of this study can help learners realize the importance of improving morphological awareness even though its correlation with listening comprehension is low, as any improvement in language skills can contribute to overall English proficiency.
3. Future researchers: The findings open up opportunities to explore other factors that may more significantly affect listening comprehension and to conduct further research on how different linguistic aspects interact with each other in language learning contexts.

#### **F. Research Scope and Limitation**

This study aims to investigate the correlation between students' english morphological awareness and their listening comprehension at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, using a quantitative approach. The study will examine a variety of factors, including students' English morpheme awareness, and their listening skills.

However, the study is limited to one school and uses a quantitative approach. This means that the findings cannot be generalized to other schools and may not provide insights into the complex and subjective experiences of students in learning English. Additionally, the study may be limited by the availability of data, particularly in regards to students' perceptions of English.

#### **G. Definition of Key Terms**

1. Morpheme: the smallest unit of language that carries meaning. It can be a root, prefix, suffix, or affix
2. Morphological awareness: a person's awareness of the morpheme structure of words and how that morpheme can contribute to meaning
3. Listening comprehension: the ability to understand and process information obtained in the form of spoken language