

## **CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the background of the study, formulation of the research problem, objective of the study, formulation of hypothesis, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, and definition of the key terms.

### **A. Background of the Study**

In this digital era that characterized by the widespread use of social media, has brought significant changes in people's information consumption patterns. This phenomenon is also influenced by the dominance of English as the lingua franca in the digital realm. Along with the increasing number of internet users and social media platforms, exposure to the contents ranging from short posts to long videos, are easily accessible to anyone without geographical restrictions. As a result, people are indirectly exposed to English vocabulary, grammar and culture.

Exposure to English through digital media does more than just provide information; it can also foster increased motivation and interest in language learning. When students are regularly exposed to English content that aligns with their personal interests, they tend to feel more engaged and motivated to improve their skills (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Consistent exposure to English audio, such as podcasts or songs, helps the brain internalize linguistic patterns, including vocabulary and grammar structures (Krashen, 1982; Vandergrift, 2007). This process mirrors first language acquisition, where learners naturally absorb language patterns through repeated listening and observation. Moreover, auditory exposure contributes to the development of listening fluency, which in turn supports the

acquisition of other skills such as speaking and writing (Field, 2008). In other words, frequent exposure to English audio media not only supports overall language acquisition but may also reinforce grammatical structures by providing learners with repeated and contextualized examples of correct sentence formation. This raises the question of whether students who listen more frequently to English audio content develop stronger grammar proficiency—a relationship that this study aims to investigate.

Good English proficiency is essential for understanding the meaning of individual sentences. As a result, grammar instruction is consistently incorporated wherever English is taught. In the Indonesian context, grammar is considered one of the key linguistic competencies, along with vocabulary, spelling, writing conventions, sociocultural competence (language expression based on community context), strategic competence (problem-solving in communication), and discourse markers (Depdiknas RI, 2006, as cited in Mattarima & Hamdan, 2011).

As shown in Nurhayati (2020), traditional grammar instruction often fails to engage learners, with 35% of students criticizing ineffective teaching strategies. This supports exploring supplementary approaches, such as audio media exposure, to reinforce grammatical patterns. One promising avenue lies in integrating language learning with meaningful content, particularly through literature.

Engaging with English-language literature not only fosters a deeper appreciation of the language but also provides rich exposure to authentic grammar and vocabulary in context. Traditionally, this engagement took place through

reading printed texts. However, the development of digital media has introduced more creative ways of accessing literature. For example, novels and storybooks can now be experienced through audiobooks; poems may be adapted into song lyrics; and conversations with native speakers can be simulated or observed through digital platforms. Whereas conversation once required direct verbal interaction, it is now possible to experience authentic dialogues by listening to talk show podcasts and similar formats.

Listening is the first language skill to develop and serves as a foundation for acquiring other language skills (Siegel, 2015). These alternative modes of delivery help remove barriers for learners who may not yet be proficient in reading or writing. Such formats are particularly beneficial for early-stage learners who may not be literate but can absorb language through auditory input. Although listening is not always directly associated with grammar acquisition, it can in fact support grammatical development. Listening is the most frequently used communication skill, accounting for 40%–50% of adult communication, and students receive up to 90% of their in-school information through listening to teachers and peers (Hagen, 2011).

While exposure to the English language is widely recognized as an important factor in language acquisition, it is equally essential to have reliable methods for measuring learners' progress. Assessing English proficiency provides valuable insights for educators and learners alike, enabling targeted instruction and informed curriculum development. Standardized tests such as TOEFL, IELTS, and ESOL examinations are commonly used to evaluate a range of language skills, including

reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Abedi, 2008; Tugan, 2013). Among these, the TOEFL test has gained international recognition as a reliable benchmark for English proficiency (Manganello, 2011; ETS, 2009). In the context of UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, students are required to take the TOEP (Test of English Proficiency), which functions as a prerequisite for thesis examination and includes components that specifically assess grammar knowledge.

According to Abedi (2008), assessing English proficiency is an essential aspect of evaluating English language learners. Several standardized tests are available to measure English proficiency, including the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), IELTS (International English Language Testing System), and the ESOL Examination (English for Speakers of Other Languages) (Tugan, 2013). Among these, the TOEFL is one of the most widely recognized and trusted English proficiency assessments, having been administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) since 1964 (Manganello, 2011). More than 7,500 colleges, universities, and licensing agencies in over 130 countries recognize TOEFL scores as valid indicators of English proficiency (ETS, 2009). As a result, the TOEFL is considered a widely used criterion-referenced test for foreign language learners, particularly in Indonesia (Rezkiani, 2019).

At UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, students are required to pass the TOEP (Test of English Proficiency) with a minimum score as a prerequisite for applying for the thesis examination. The score obtained serves as a consideration in determining whether a student is eligible to proceed with the thesis defense.

There are three proficiency categories in TOEP; Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension. In Structure and Written Expression, there would be questions about a sentence structure and grammar. Students' will decide if a sentence was right or wrong and show which part of it that was wrong. This category tests out the students' grammar understanding. And because this test applies national standard of English proficiency test, the results are very accurate in measuring the level of test takers' English proficiency.

The Written Structure and Expression section specifically assesses grammar proficiency, highlighting its important role in English language learning. Given the importance of grammar mastery, exploring the relationship between listening to English audio and grammar development is a very important area of research. By understanding how frequent exposure to spoken English can affect grammar ability, teachers can develop more targeted and effective language learning strategies and resources.

Research on the relationship between the frequency of listening to English audio and grammar acquisition remains limited, particularly in studies that quantify this correlation using empirical data. While existing literature has explored how listening input supports language development more broadly, few studies have focused specifically on grammar proficiency as an outcome. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to provide evidence on whether frequent exposure to English audio media contributes to improved grammar skills. The findings have the potential to inform curriculum design, enhance learning strategies, and support the

development of more targeted language learning tools. Furthermore, the results may either support or challenge existing theories of second language acquisition, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of how input-based learning influences grammatical competence. In the context of globalization, where strong English proficiency is increasingly essential, this research may offer practical insights for improving the language skills of English language learners.

### **B. Statement of Research Problem**

Based on the background of the study, the researcher stated the problem as follows “Is there any correlation between the frequency of listening English audio media and Grammar Proficiency of English Department in UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah?”

### **C. Objective of the Study**

Based on the research problem above, this study is intended to investigate the correlation between the frequency of listening English audio media and Grammar Proficiency of English Department in UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah.

### **D. Formulation of Hypothesis**

Based on the research question and purpose, the researcher formulated the hypothesis as:

#### **1. $H_0$ (null hypothesis)**

There is no correlation between the frequency of listening English audio media and Grammar Proficiency of English Department in UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah.

2. H<sub>1</sub> (alternative hypothesis)

There is a correlation between the frequency of listening English audio media and Grammar Proficiency of English Department in UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah.

### **E. Significance of the Study**

The researcher conducted the research to provide benefits in the area of English education as follows:

1. For English teachers

The researcher hopes that the result of this study can be useful for the teacher as one of the resources of teaching English can be applied in the future.

2. For students

The researcher hopes that the findings in this study will be able to motivate students to improve their English proficiency, especially proper English grammar understanding by listening to English audio media.

3. For the future researchers

The researcher hopes that the research will be useful for the future researchers as a reference to make further research.

### **F. Scope and Limitation of the Study**

This study focuses on investigating the correlation between the frequency of listening to English audio media and grammar proficiency among sixth-semester students of the English Education Department at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah in the academic year 2024.

The scope of the research is restricted to two main variables: (1) the frequency of listening to English audio media—including podcasts, songs, audiobooks, and other spoken English formats—as measured by a self-reported Likert-scale questionnaire, and (2) grammar proficiency, measured through the Structure and Written Expression section of the TOEP (Test of English Proficiency) administered by the university's Language Development Center. However, the study has several limitations.

1. It does not classify participants into subgroups based on their listening frequency (e.g., high, medium, or low frequency). This limits the analysis to general correlation, without identifying whether specific levels of listening frequency are more strongly associated with grammar proficiency.
2. The reliance on self-reported data for measuring listening habits may introduce response bias, as students' actual listening behaviors were not directly observed or tracked.
3. The study focuses solely on grammar proficiency and does not account for other linguistic competencies (e.g., speaking, writing, or vocabulary), which may also be influenced by listening activities.

Future research is encouraged to incorporate subgroup comparisons, longitudinal designs, or mixed methods approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of audio media in language development.



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

### **1. Correlation**

Correlation refers to a statistical measure that describes the degree to which two variables are related. In this study, it indicates the extent to which students' frequency of listening to English audio media is associated with their grammar proficiency. Correlation does not imply causation, but it helps determine whether a systematic relationship exists between the two variables.

### **2. Frequency**

Frequency is the number of occurrences of a repeating event per unit time. In this research, the frequency means the students' intensity in listening to English audio media.

### **3. English audio media**

English audio media are any audio media such as audiobooks, podcasts, songs or speech recordings.

### **4. Grammar Proficiency**

TOEP stands for Test of English Proficiency. The test measures the participants' English proficiency indicated by the test score. TOEP accurately measures the level of English proficiency with a national standard test.