

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher starts at the beginning of the whole thesis. In this part, there are several sections, namely: the background of the study, research problems, research objectives, hypothesis, the significance of the study, scope and limitations, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

In today's globalized world, proficiency in English has become a necessity for academic advancement, career success, and international communication. Among the four primary language skills reading, writing, listening, and speaking students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) often find listening the most challenging (Jiang, 2018; Yildirim & Yildirim, 2020). For young learners, particularly at the elementary school level, these challenges are even more pronounced due to limited exposure to authentic English listening materials and traditional teaching methods that tend to emphasize grammar and vocabulary over practical communication (Renukadevi, 2019; Kuśnierek, 2020).

Research across different countries highlights the widespread difficulty young learners face with listening. In Saudi Arabia, Alqahtani (2020) reported that a significant majority of EFL students found listening the most difficult skill, citing factors like fast speech rates and unfamiliar vocabulary. In Indonesia, Yuliawati et

al. (2022) found that students in elementary schools struggled with listening comprehension, primarily due to limited exposure to native English speakers and the use of unnatural, scripted dialogues in textbooks.

For young learners in elementary schools in Indonesia, the traditional classroom environments often fail to provide the necessary exposure to authentic listening experiences for English language learners. This limitation is evident in various contexts worldwide. For instance, Masruddin (2018) found that EFL classrooms in Indonesia heavily relied on textbooks containing artificial dialogues and listening exercises, which poorly represented real-world language use. This overreliance on inauthentic materials creates a significant gap between classroom learning and practical application. Furthermore, Kuśnierek (2020) highlighted that traditional classrooms in Poland frequently create artificial listening environments. Factors such as teachers' clear articulation, slower speech rates, and simplified vocabulary, while well-intentioned, ultimately fail to prepare students for the challenges they will face in real-world listening scenarios. These studies underscore the persistent challenge in EFL contexts of bridging the gap between classroom instruction and authentic listening experiences. Textbooks, while helpful for building basic vocabulary and grammar, often lack the variety and spontaneity of real-world English conversations (Syuhada & Munir, 2021). Additionally, classroom time constraints limit opportunities for listening practice, and many students only get short, teacher-led listening exercises during lessons (Safotso,

2020). This can result in learners who perform well in written tests but struggle to understand spoken English in real-life situations (Nugroho & Rahmawati, 2020).

Young learners are also particularly sensitive to the psychological aspects of language learning. Anxiety and self-consciousness can create barriers to learning, especially when listening tasks are perceived as too difficult or when students fear making mistakes in front of their peers (Jiang & Dewaele, 2019). For children, it is important to create a low-stress environment that fosters enjoyment and curiosity, which traditional methods often overlook (Gao & Zhang, 2020).

The rise of digital technologies, however, presents new opportunities for improving listening skills in young learners. Shadiev and Yang (2020) suggest that Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) can provide the individualized and engaging experiences that traditional classrooms often lack. CALL tools allow learners to practice at their own pace and offer access to a wide range of authentic listening materials, making them ideal for young students (Zou et al., 2021).

One resource that holds particular promise is the English Listening Lesson Library Online (ELLLO). ELLLO offers a vast collection of free audio and video materials, featuring native and fluent English speakers from around the world. What makes ELLLO especially valuable for elementary school students is its focus on real-life conversations and topics that can engage young learners. ELLLO's materials range from simple dialogues to more complex discussions, allowing for gradual progression as learners build their listening skills (Jiang et al., 2022).

Moreover, ELLLO features a variety of English accents and dialects, which is essential in a globalized world where learners are likely to encounter different forms of English, such as Australian, British, or Indian English (Rose & Galloway, 2019). This exposure is especially beneficial for elementary school learners, helping them become accustomed to the diversity of spoken English.

ELLLO also supports different learning styles through its multimodal format, which combines audio with visual elements. Visual learners can benefit from the accompanying videos, while auditory learners can focus on the spoken language. Additionally, ELLLO offers interactive features like quizzes and transcripts, encouraging young learners to engage actively with the content. These features align with the Noticing Hypothesis (Shintani & Ellis, 2020), which suggests that language acquisition is enhanced when learners consciously notice new language patterns.

The accessibility of ELLLO also makes it a practical supplement to classroom instruction. Since the platform is available online, students can access it anytime and anywhere, allowing for spaced repetition—a technique proven to improve retention (Serrano & Huang, 2018). This is particularly useful for young learners in elementary school, who may need more frequent and consistent exposure to English listening outside of the classroom.

ELLLO's potential is supported by established language learning theories. Krashen's Input Hypothesis, as discussed in recent literature (VanPatten et al.,

2020), argues that learners acquire language most effectively when exposed to comprehensible input slightly above their current level. ELLLO's graded materials, ranging from beginner to advanced, align with this principle, offering elementary students' content that is both engaging and appropriately challenging. Moreover, regular interaction with authentic listening materials can build a foundation for listening skills that will be essential as students' progress in their language learning journeys.

While online listening resources have been widely studied, research specifically on ELLLO (English Listening Lesson Library Online) for young learners is limited. Studies have shown ELLLO's benefits for language learners in general. For example, Meskill (2017) found it improved listening skills in university students, and Reichle (2018) noted its positive impact on vocabulary learning. However, these studies mainly focused on adult or teenage learners. Li and Zou (2022) examined ELLLO's use with high school students, but there's a noticeable lack of research on elementary-level learners. This gap is particularly evident in understanding how ELLLO affects young children's listening skills, its long-term benefits for this age group, and how to best integrate it into teaching methods for young learners. As a result, while ELLLO appears promising, its effectiveness for young EFL learners in elementary schools remains an area needing further investigation. One study by Wahyudi et al. (2019) with Indonesian university students found that using ELLLO significantly improved listening skills

compared to traditional methods, mainly due to its authentic content and self-paced nature. However, little is known about how ELLLO might impact elementary school students, particularly in terms of listening comprehension.

This study aims to fill that gap by investigating how ELLLO affects the listening skills of young learners in elementary schools through a mixed-methods sequential design. The research first employs a quantitative approach to compare listening test scores between students who use ELLLO as a supplement to their regular English lessons and those who rely solely on traditional classroom instruction. Following this, a qualitative phase explores how and why ELLLO influences students' listening skill development. This sequential design allows for both measuring the effectiveness of ELLLO and understanding the underlying processes that contribute to any observed improvements in young EFL learners' listening comprehension.

This investigation is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, young learners have unique cognitive and developmental needs that differ from those of adults or teenagers, necessitating age-appropriate digital tools and strategies (Pinter, 2017). Secondly, early exposure to authentic listening materials can significantly impact long-term language acquisition, making it vital to understand both the quantifiable effects and experiential aspects of using resources like ELLLO at this stage (Muñoz, 2020). Thirdly, as digital literacy becomes increasingly important, integrating online resources into elementary education can help prepare students

for future learning environments, requiring evidence of both effectiveness and implementation processes (Tseng, 2022). Lastly, given the limited classroom time often allocated to listening practice, supplementary tools like ELLLO could potentially offer a solution to provide more extensive listening exposure without overburdening teachers or curricula (Zhang & Graham, 2020).

By addressing these points through both quantitative and qualitative lenses, this study aims to contribute comprehensive insights into not only whether digital resources like ELLLO enhance young learners' EFL listening skills, but also how these improvements occur in practice. This dual approach will provide educators with both statistical evidence of effectiveness and practical understanding of implementation strategies.

B. Formulation of Research Questions

A research problem is a question that the researcher wants to find the answer.

The research question for this search is as follows:

1. Is there any significant different score in the listening skills of elementary school EFL students at SDN Bono who use ELLLO compared to those who do not use ELLLO?
2. How does the use of ELLLO contribute to the development of listening skills among elementary school EFL students at SDN Bono?

C. Purpose of the Study

1. To know significant different score in the listening skills of elementary school EFL students who use ELLLO compared to those who do not use ELLLO.
2. To explore how ELLLO contributes to the development of listening skills among elementary school EFL students through analysis of student experiences.

D. Significance of the Study

The final results and findings of this research will specifically contribute towards the following:

1. Pedagogical Implications: This study will provide both statistical evidence of ELLLO's effectiveness and detailed insights into how this online resource enhances EFL students' listening skills. The mixed-methods approach will offer educators not only data on learning outcomes but also practical understanding of implementation strategies and student engagement patterns.
2. Elementary School EFL Teaching: The focus on elementary school students addresses a crucial gap in current research. The quantitative findings will help teachers make evidence-based decisions about incorporating ELLLO, while the qualitative findings will reveal specific ways to effectively

implement the tool in young learner classrooms. This comprehensive understanding will guide elementary EFL teacher.

3. Future Research Development: This study's mixed-methods approach will provide a methodological framework for future investigations into digital learning tools in elementary EFL contexts, while identifying both measurable outcomes and areas requiring further qualitative exploration.

E. Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on investigating the effect of ELLLO on the listening comprehension skills of young EFL learners in an elementary school context in Indonesia through a mixed-methods sequential design. The study employs a pre-experimental approach with one group pre-test-post-test design to evaluate how the ELLLO platform influences listening skill development, followed by a qualitative phase exploring how students develop their listening skills through ELLLO. The scope is limited to elementary school students in Indonesia, which offers a targeted view of both the impact and implementation experiences of ELLLO within this specific educational environment.

The study faces several key limitations that should be acknowledged. The pre-experimental design with a single group limits the study's ability to control for external variables and establish causation, as there is no control group for comparison. Furthermore, the study employs purposive sampling in

selecting participants, which, combined with the single-group design, may reduce the generalizability of the quantitative results. The qualitative phase focuses on the same group of participants, which may not capture the full range of potential student experiences with ELLLO. Additionally, this research assumes participants have access to reliable internet and devices, which may not reflect all EFL learning environments, particularly those in under-resourced areas. Since the study is conducted during a single academic term, it may not fully capture long-term effects of ELLLO usage on listening skill development. Despite these limitations, the mixed-methods approach allows for both measurement of listening skill development and deeper understanding of how ELLLO contributes to this development.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. ELLLO (English Listening Lesson Library Online): A free website providing a wide range of audio and video materials featuring native and fluent English speakers from various countries.
2. Listening Skills: The ability to recognize and understand simple spoken language in familiar contexts. This includes identifying key information such as names, numbers, and everyday vocabulary, following basic instructions, and responding to simple questions. Elementary students should also be able to understand slow, clear speech, including familiar

phrases and expressions, and differentiate between basic sounds and words commonly used in classroom and daily situations.