

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, listening comprehension refers to a learner's capability to hear, interpret, and grasp the significance of spoken language expressed through speech. Zulfizar (2025). Listening comprehension involved not only the activity of hearing sounds, but also cognitive processing that enabled learners to understand the ideas, information, and meaning of utterances as a whole. This ability is a fundamental aspect of second language and foreign language acquisition because it formed the basis for oral communication and the development of other language skills. Without adequate listening comprehension, learners experienced difficulty understanding authentic and meaningful language input. However, in practice, listening comprehension remains one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners.

Challenges in listening comprehension in the EFL context arise due to various linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Students often have difficulty understanding spoken language due to the speed of native speakers, unfamiliar vocabulary, and variations in accent and intonation. These factors limited students' ability to process information in real time, so that the message conveyed could not be fully understood in real communication situations. These difficulties show that listening was not just an activity of receiving sounds, but a complex cognitive process.

The complexity of listening skills was also reflected in the stages of the listening process itself. Asatryan (2022) stated that listening consists of five stages, namely hearing, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. However, many EFL students experienced challenges in the stages of understanding and remembering, especially when faced with spoken texts that use natural language with variations in accent, intonation, and vocabulary. This problem was exacerbated by the use of listening teaching materials that are not authentic and did not represent the use of language in real contexts.

In response to this problem, various listening learning techniques have been developed to increase student engagement and comprehension effectiveness. One technique that is considered to have potential was the Cloze Listening Technique. According to Rost (2025) This technique was an extension of the traditional cloze procedure, which students were asked to fill in the missing parts of a text while listening to the corresponding audio. Listening Cloze Technique allowed students to focus on specific linguistic elements and use auditory cues and context to reconstruct the missing parts of the text. Thus, this technique encouraged students to listen more carefully and actively.

Despite its potential, the application of the Cloze Listening Technique was still rarely found in learning practices in a secondary school in Indonesia. Listening learning is generally still teacher-centered and had not fully integrated interactive strategies that require active student

involvement. This condition was contrary to the demands of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasized student-centered, participatory, and meaningful learning. This curriculum also encourages the use of narrative texts as a means of strengthening character and moral values, given the systematic

However, in reality, many students especially those in grade VIII at SMPN 4 Tanjungpinang, still experienced difficulty understanding narrative texts presented orally. Common problems included an inability to follow the sequence of events, limited vocabulary, and difficulty in identifying the main idea of the story. This showed that students needed learning techniques that not only provide oral input but also helped them actively process and construct meaning.

Furthermore, preliminary observations showed that most students were unfamiliar with the Cloze Listening Technique. This unfamiliarity caused students to become accustomed to passive listening patterns and view listening activities solely as evaluative activities. In fact, the Cloze Listening Technique was designed to train students to pay attention to pronunciation, language structure, and context simultaneously, thereby improving overall comprehension (Rost, 2025).

Therefore, the application of the Cloze Listening Technique was seen as a relevant and potential alternative to overcome students' listening comprehension problems, especially in narrative texts. This technique was expected to help students increase their focus, expand their vocabulary,

and strengthen their ability to understand the sequence of events and main ideas in oral texts.

Based on this background, this study aimed to examine the effect of the Listening Cloze Technique on students' listening comprehension in narrative texts. It was expected that by integrating this strategy, students would become more engaged listeners, better able to focus on meaningful input, and more successful in reconstructing and understanding narrative stories.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on interview with eighth-grade English teacher, several problems identified among students are as follows:

1. Students had difficulty following the sequence of events in narrative texts when listening. They tended to lose track of the storyline because they were not accustomed to processing verbal information in real time.
2. Students had difficulty identifying the main ideas and supporting details in narrative texts because they had limited vocabulary.
3. Students were unfamiliar with Listening Cloze Technique, a strategy that could help them focus on contextual and linguistic clues during listening activities. As a result, their listening practice tended to be passive and exam-oriented rather than interactive and meaningful.

1.3. Limitation of the Problem

This study was limited to investigating the effect of the Listening Cloze Technique on Students' Listening comprehension in Narrative Text of eighth-grade students in SMPN 4 Tanjungpinang.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the background above, the problem formulation studied in this research was:

1. Was there any significant effect of using the listening cloze technique on students' listening comprehension, specifically in understanding narrative texts?

1.5 Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to know the effect of Listening Cloze Technique on the listening comprehension ability of grade VIII students of SMPN 4 Tanjungpinang in understanding narrative text. Specifically, this study aimed to determine whether the application of Listening cloze technique could significantly improve students' ability to understand oral narrative content, including key elements such as character, setting, plot, and moral values.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study was anticipated to offer the following theoretical and practical contributions:

1. Theoretical Benefit:

The findings were expected enrich the body of knowledge in the domain of second language acquisition, especially regarding listening comprehension strategies. It provides empirical support for the effect of the Listening Cloze Technique, which integrated bottom-up and top-down processing in listening, as suggested by theories from (Rost, 2025) and (Oxford, 2019). The findings could validate the cognitive frameworks that underline listening as an active process of constructing meaning, thus strengthening the theoretical foundation for the use of cloze-based instruction in language learning. Additionally, this study contributes to the relatively limited literature on the application of this technique in the context of narrative text and EFL settings.

2. Practical Benefit:

Practically, this study was expected to provide valuable insights for several stakeholders. For English teachers, it offered an alternative technique that could be easily implemented to improve students' listening comprehension in engaging and interactive ways. The Listening Cloze Technique could be applied using simple materials and did not require sophisticated technology, making it suitable for varied classroom contexts. For students, this technique was expected to help

them become more attentive and strategic listeners, particularly in understanding the structure and moral content of narrative text. Lastly, for future researchers, this study could serve as a reference and starting point for further investigations into other genres, language skills, or learner levels using similar techniques.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. **Listening Comprehension:** The ability of students to identifying main ideas, spesific information, squence of events, meaning of the contexts, and vocabulary of what they heard in narrative text.
2. **Listening Cloze Technique:** A listening activity in which students filled in missing words in a text while or after listening to the audio. This helped them focus and understand in listening comprehension.
3. **Narrative Text:** A type of text that told a story and typically included a structured such as orientation, complication, resolution and re-orientation. The type of narrative text used in this research proposal was a Legend and this text was used as teaching material in listening comprehension.