

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

One of the fundamental skills of someone who learns English is listening skills because a verbal communication one must listen to every utterance of the interlocutor to understand the topic of the conversation (Wah, 2019). Listening is also an effective way for students to formally understand the material in process of learning, in addition to students being able to interact with others both in small groups and larger social groups (Picard & Velautham, 2016). For students who always practice language skills by listening before speaking or reading have greater potential to master a foreign language than when they are taught four skills simultaneously (Lubis, 2022). Although listening skills are one of the important skills to master, in fact until now there are still many students who have difficulty understanding authentic English conversations, in formal or informal contexts.

Podcasts are one digital technology that has significantly changed foreign language learning (Rahimi & Soleymani, 2015). Using podcasts as authentic materials has allowed students to perform a series of exercises that allow them to listen more to the language being learned, in this context learning English. In addition, students can also recognize a variety of new vocabulary, remember the sounds of words that have been spoken, and improve their competence linguistically to become more effective listeners (Rahman et al., 2018). Podcasts, a

widely used learning media today, can make students enjoy their learning activities and encourage them to be active during learning in the class (Sabrila & Apoko, 2022).

Based on some recent studies, using podcasts can help to improve students' listening skills. Research conducted by Sabrila & Apoko (2022) showed significant results with an increase in students' listening skills after using podcasts as media conducted on class X Accounting students at SMK Negeri 18 Jakarta. Similar findings were found in a study by Janicka (2023) which showed that the use of podcasts can increase vocabulary development for university students who also indirectly get an increase in listening skills from listening to the podcast. Then the research conducted by Astuti (2022) also showed significant results in improving the listening skills of 7th grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Makassar.

Based on previous observations at SMPN 15 Tanjungpinang, most students lack mastery of English language skills, especially in listening skills. There are still many students who have difficulty understanding the context or listening material presented in class. Based on the interview, the English teacher also said that students' listening skills in the class were still low. One of the obstacles identified as the reason why students in the school are lacking in mastering listening skills is the lack of variety of learning media. This makes students unmotivated to have enthusiasm for their learning, especially in learning material related to listening skills.

One of the media that has never been applied at SMPN 15 Tanjungpinang is podcasts. That is why this research was conducted to find out how the effectiveness of using this podcast has an impact on the listening skills of 8th grade students. The name of the podcast channel chosen for this study is “6 Minutes English” produced by BBC Learning English. The 6 Minutes English podcast presents a variety of audio content that corresponds to questions related to daily life topics. by utilizing this podcast, students are expected to understand spoken English, increase vocabulary, and hone their listening skills gradually.

This research focuses on examining how far the effectiveness of the use of 6 Minutes English podcasts on the ability of grade 8 students' listening skills at SMPN 15 Tanjungpinang. This research is expected to contribute in developing learning methods for effective student listening skills, and is expected to be a reference for English teachers in utilizing media to improve the technology-based learning process.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the background in this research, here are several problems that researcher has been identified, such as:

1. Students who have a low level of English listening skills.
2. Lack of media variations applied by teachers in their learning.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

This research will focus on the effect of using “6 Minutes English” podcast on the listening skills of grade 8 students at SMPN 15 Tanjungpinang.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on background of this research, the research question is: Is there an effect of using podcasts on the listening skills of grade 8 students at SMPN 15 Tanjungpinang?

1.5 Objective of the Study

Based on research questions, the objective of this study is to see how far the effect of using the 6 Minutes English podcast on listening skills of grade 8 students of SMPN 15 Tanjungpinang.

1.6 Significant of the Study

1.6.1 Theoritically

The theoretical significance of this research is to contribute to English language education on the use of podcasts as a medium for students' listening skills, which connects with previous theories that have the same discussion.

1.6.2 Practically

1. Students

This research it is hoped will provide students with information about the variety of learning media that can be used, namely podcasts to help their learning about listening skills.

2. Teachers

For teachers, this research is expected to help in the learning process to find the right media to teach in learning about students' listening skills in English using podcasts that suit students' needs.

3. Other researchers

This research is expected to provide the information that related and help develop further theories that examine the same case related to the use of podcasts on students' listening skills.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. Listening

Listening skill is the ability to receive, understand, and respond to information conveyed orally.

2. Podcast

A podcast is a digital audio file that is distributed over the internet and can be downloaded or listened to publicly.

3. Student

Students refer to learners who follow a learning program under the guidance of a teacher. The students who contributed to this study were 8th grade students at SMPN 15 Tanjungpinang.

