

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Listening plays a key role in communication and is considered one of the essential skills in learning English. According to Neal et al. (2022), everyday listening and communication can directly influence participation across multiple spheres of life. This shows that listening is the most important part of communication. When people can listen, they can better understand and interact in different situations.

Within the scope of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), listening skills become increasingly complex as students are exposed to a variety of different accents, dialects and cultural contexts. According to Namaziandost et al. (2020), listening is viewed as one of the hardest language abilities to be created, on the grounds that when learners need to listen, they need to confront numerous troubles to comprehend the message totally. Among the various language skills, listening is seen as particularly demanding because it involves processing and understanding spoken information. This makes it one of the main difficulties for students learning English. In addition, a lack of exposure to spoken language in real-life circumstances often hampers their listening skills. To address these challenges, it is crucial to implement engaging and practical listening activities that can enhance students' confidence and proficiency.

Even though the curriculum states that students must master both oral and written texts, many teachers in Indonesia tend to skip teaching listening skills in the classroom because they find it difficult to find appropriate materials and prepare media to teach listening skills so that students can more easily understand what they hear. This is

because listening is often given less attention in schools than other language skills like speaking, reading, and writing, and many English textbooks are paper-based, and listening materials are boring and uninteresting.

Additionally, based on the results of pra-observation, the English teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Bintan Timur who teaches eighth-grade students identified several challenges in the learning process, particularly in listening activities. These include: (1) Students' difficulties with listening; (2) Students' limited vocabulary and pronunciation; (3) Students often feel insecure about their abilities. The first problem is that students often struggle to follow audio materials, which can lead to disengagement from the learning process. The second issue is the limited access to English-language video media, which restricts students from enriching their vocabulary and practicing correct pronunciation. The third problem concerns students' lack of confidence; those who doubt their abilities are less likely to take risks or fully engage in learning. This lack of confidence may further hinder their participation in discussions and listening activities.

In response to the identified challenges, the findings emphasize the importance of creating innovative learning media that can boost student engagement during the learning process. Such media should be closely aligned with the learning content and designed in a creative manner. One potential alternative that researchers can consider is Animaker-assisted learning media to support the development of listening skills to eighth-grade students.

Animaker is one of the free and easy-to-use web applications that can be used to make learning videos more engaging (Adinda et al., 2024). Expert on animation video learning media shows that learning media strongly agree to be used as a tool in the

learning process as well as a variety, effective and also easy to understand learning media (Apriansyah, 2020). In the context of teaching listening, Animaker can be used to create learning videos with real-life scenarios, dialogues or procedure instructions relevant to the material being taught. The advantage of Animaker is its ability to deliver audio and visual material simultaneously to increase student interest and understanding of the material. Consequently, Animaker was developed to address the needs of both students and teachers by integrating technological and linguistic advancements to enhance student engagement in learning English.

Addressing the current problems faced by students, the researcher attempted to develop an Animaker for teaching listening. Thus, this research is expected to make a real contribution in improving the quality of teaching listening in schools and it is hoped that teachers can use it. Therefore, the development of the Animaker was carried out as research entitled "Developing *Animaker*-Assisted Learning Media for Teaching Listening Skills".

1.2 Research Question

Based on the research background above, the research question can be formulated as "How can Animaker-assisted learning media be developed for teaching listening skills in the topic of asking and giving opinions to VIII-G students?"

1.3 Research Objectives

From the research question above, the objectives of the research is to develop Animaker-assisted learning media for teaching listening skills in the topic of asking and giving opinions to VIII-G students.

1.4 Specification of Product

In this research, Animaker is used as a learning media for teaching listening. It has the following specifications:

1. In the form of animation contained in the media that is able to move objects.
2. The features contained in the media include an audio animation that provides voice.
3. The media is accessible online through the official website at <https://www.animaker.com> or use the link provided by the developer.
4. The Animaker platform creates the final result in a high-quality video format.

1.5 Research Significances

1.5.1 Theoretical Significances

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of teaching listening using Animaker-assisted as a learning media in asking and giving opinions.

1.5.2 Practical Significances

This study will be beneficial for teachers, students, and future researchers. They are as follows:

a. Teachers

Using Animaker in teaching asking and giving opinions helps make the lesson more fun and interactive. It shows the dialogues clearly through animation, so students can understand better. It also helps teachers prepare materials faster and be more creative in the classroom.

b. Students

This media improves students' listening skills, enriches their English vocabulary, and makes the learning process more enjoyable and engaging. Furthermore, the interactive videos encourage students to be more focused and active during the lesson.

c. Researcher

This media provides a useful resource for researchers to create creative and useful teaching aids. In addition, it lays the groundwork for future research on the use of technology in English language teaching, encouraging the investigation of additional online resources to improve student learning outcomes.

1.6 Assumption and Limitation

An Animaker of media that students can use to increase their interest in learning English and to increase their confidence when listening to English words. The researcher selected junior high school students for the study. The source material of

the research is Phase D, an asking and giving opinions. It is because it corresponded to the learning outcomes for VIII-G students. Teachers are also supposed to employ creative teaching methods to help students learn. In the teaching and learning process, teachers can use Animaker-assisted learning media with projector or speaker.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. Animaker

Animaker is an online animation creation software with features including dubbing, backgrounds, text, audio, characters, and transitions, enabling educators to create engaging and interactive learning videos.

2. Listening

Listening is the ability to hear, understand, and interpret spoken language, allowing individuals to process and respond to verbal information in various contexts.

3. Asking and giving opinions

Asking and giving opinions is the act of expressing one's thoughts or ideas and responding to others' opinions in a conversation.