CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, aims of the study, statement of the problems, hypotheses, significance of the study, scope of the study, clarification of terms, and the organisation of the paper.

1.1 Background

Listening is one of the primary language competencies, and one that is often thought to be difficult. A simple English classroom observation conducted by Mariani, Gantini, Salsabila, Fitriani, and Rachmawati (2013) in a high school in Bandung reveals that 40% of students think that listening is the most difficult language skill to master. This might happen because of several reasons such as students' lack of concentration, or when the teacher uses a recording that students think is too fast or not engaging enough. Scharle and Szabó (2000) also find distraction, speech that is too fast, strange dialect, too many new words, background noise and too much information as problems that students mainly face in listening exercises.

Related to that, Cahyono and Widiati (2009) argue that the development of listening techniques and strategies seems to be neglected. Listening is also considered as a passive skill thus it should not be taught (Call as cited in Cahyono & Widiati, 2009). This statement gives us an inference that listening is not thought to be as important as the other main language skills. Despite this misconception, listening comprehension is a vital skill, and mastery of it can also lead to productive development of speaking skills as well (Al-Jawi, 2010).

The development of the 2004 curriculum as well as the establishment of standard of content shifted EFL instructions in Indonesia from reading as the primary goal to the mastery of the four language skills; reading, speaking, listening, and writing (Cahyono & Widiati, 2009). With this establishment, we

cannot see listening as only a passive skill which is not important for students to master. Listening is as important as the other three language skills and as such it is necessary to teach it. This can be proved by the presence of a listening test in the English national examination (UN).

According to Renandya and Farrell (2010) students' listening difficulty comes not only from not being able to catch the sounds or the words but also from missing the gist or important details of the spoken text. Students inevitably encounter some obstacles during the listening process. First, they rarely have the opportunity to hear the speech repeated, or listen at their own pace (Hughes, 2003). They have to keep listening no matter what happens, thus some of them miss important points in the recording. Second, listeners think the tape is too fast (Renandya & Farrell, 2010). As the result, students feel that listening is difficult and they may feel demotivated. The third challenge originates from the teachers themselves. Teachers tend to present listening activities in EFL classes as simply opportunities for students to practice passively listening to English, argues Field as cited in Kurniasih (2011).

There are various approaches that teachers can try in the classroom to teach listening. One of the approaches is called personalised learning, re-emerged by David Miliband in 2004. A definition of personalised learning as defined by National Education Technology Plan (NETP) (2010) is an instruction which is paced to learning needs, tailored to learning preferences, and adapted to the specific interests of different learner.

Personalised learning implementation in listening is expected to be able to help pupils master listening skills by letting the students anticipate their difficulties *before* the recording is played through their personal learning plan, *during* the recording, and *after* the recording has been played.

Personalised learning has five principles, namely 1) Ensure every learner is as active as possible; 2) Design frequent formative assessment; 3) Put the emphasis on peers learning together; 4) Consider whether learning tasks can be personalised; and 5) Consider how technology can help (O'Donoghue, 2010; Smyth, 2009). However, this paper only examines two of the five

principles mentioned earlier; ensuring the learners to be active and using technology's help in the classroom.

According to Bray and McClaskey, (2013b) personalised learning implementation in the classroom can be done in six steps. First, knowing the students better by asking the students to think what makes listening is difficult and instruct them to think about what they should do to anticipate the difficulties they may face. Second, introducing them to learner's voice and choice. In this stage, the learners are actively involved in creating their personal learning plan (PLP) and selecting which video from the list that they like to watch on that day. Other than that, they are required to write what they have done to deal with the difficulties. Third, helping the learner to study so they can achieve the standards and integrating the technology in the classroom. Fourth, facilitating the students to ask more questions inside or outside of the classroom. Fifth, choosing the tools and resources to support teaching and learning. The resources can be from anywhere such as from books, websites or from videos. Meanwhile the tools can be an application, a device, a software, etc. Last, using assessment as a part of their learning process. The students may learn from their previous exercises or from the teacher's feedbacks. By implementing this approach, students are expected to know their weaknesses in listening as well as how to deal with them. Additionally, listening practice will not only be about answering questions based on the recording, but about improving students' skill as well.

A study conducted by Bautista (2012) shows that students who receive personalised instruction score better in post test. He further added that this approach is significantly better than the traditional model in terms of impact on the overall academic achievement of the students. Students' self awareness improvement and engagement in non academic skills and extracurricular activities are also some of personalised learning's impact as reported by Ostler, Hodara, and Jahangir (2014).

Considering the importance of a better listening practice together with the objective to see whether personalised learning implementation is able to improve the students' score, this study is going to investigate the students'

listening skill improvement through personalised learning with the steps of the implementation and students' perceptions of it.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

This study will be conducted to answer the following formulated questions.

1. How much will the implementation of personalised learning help students to improve their listening ability?

2. What are students' perceptions of the implementation of personalised learning?

3. How is personalised learning implemented in teaching listening skills?

1.3 The Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to measure students' listening skill development by implementing personalised learning, investigate the steps involved in teaching listening skills using personalised learning, and students' perceptions of it.

1.4 Hypotheses

Hypotheses are made based on the first research question stated in this paper. The hypotheses formulated for this study are below:

1. There will be a positive improvement in students' listening skill in post-test.

2. There will be no significant effect within students' listening skill between pre-test and post-test.

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1.5 Significance of the Study

The research conducted is believed to have some theoretical, professional, and practical significance as follows.

1. **Theoretical benefit**

   The findings of the research will contribute to research sources about teaching English, especially in personalised learning and teaching listening using personalised learning in EFL context.

2. **Practical benefit**

   The research will benefit researchers, teachers, students, and readers who are interested in the topic. Moreover, it will help English teachers who are interested in implementing personalised learning in their classroom and to those who are currently struggling either in studying or teaching any subject whether it is English or not.

3. **Professional benefit**

   The professional benefits will help teachers and other authorities to improve their teaching strategy and knowledge especially in teaching listening.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study only examines two of five key components of personalised learning; 1) ensuring every learner to be as active as possible; and 2) considering if technology can help.

1.7 Clarification of the Key Terms

1. **Personalised learning** – an approach that involves five key components: 1) Ensure every learner is as active as possible; 2) Design frequent formative assessment; 3) Put the emphasis on peers learning together; 4) Consider whether learning tasks can be personalised; and 5) Consider how technology can help (O'Donoghue, 2010). Personalised learning refers to an approach used by the teacher to help students with listening tasks. For

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this study, the teacher will implement personalised learning in the classroom in several steps as follows. First, the teacher will ask the students to think of the problems the have when they are doing listening exercises. Second, they are asked to write their own personal learning plan (PLP). In the PLP, they are supposed to write about problems they may have or what they think is difficult in listening. Third, they will try to anticipate and deal with the difficulties they may face while listening based on the learning plans. Last, they need to write what they have done in order to deal with the difficulties. Meanwhile the teacher will help them by providing guidance for them.

2. **Multimedia** – as explained by Bornman and Solms as cited in Güngören (2013) multimedia is defined as the combining of different media types such as sound, animation, text, graphics, and video for the presentation of the information by making use of computers. This study uses video as a multimedia aid as a part of the treatment because it covers two of three main learning channels as mentioned by Linse and Nunan (2005). The teacher will use this as a media to help her engage the students in the classroom.

3. **Student's voice** – is the antithesis of depersonalised, standardised, and homogenised educational experiences because it begins and ends with the thoughts, feelings, visions, and actions of the students themselves (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012). During the study, student's voice is reflected through the personal learning plan (PLP) writing opportunities that are given to the students to help them focus on what they need to improve during the listening practice. They are also given chances to deal with the listening problem they have by using their own strategy, with the help of the teacher.

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1.8 Organisation of the Paper

This paper will be organised into five chapters as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction; the first chapter of this paper introduces the background of this topic, the reason why this topic is chosen, the statements of the problem, the aim of the study, the method of this study, clarification of key terms, and the organisation of this paper.

Chapter II: Theoretical framework; this chapter deals with the theoretical framework of this study and explores the experts' findings about listening, multimedia, personalisation in learning, and the relation to language learning.

Chapter III: Research Methodology; this chapter presents the methodology used in this study. It explains the method used, the procedure for data collection, and the analysis of the data.

Chapter IV: Findings and discussions; the fourth chapter discusses the findings and results of this study after conducting the research. It also shows the result of the analysed data in the visual form of tables and graphs and the relationship to the theoretical framework.

Chapter V: Conclusion and suggestions; the last chapter of this study talks about the conclusion of the research and offers suggestions related to this topic. Conclusion is the final findings and results of the study which are presented in one part. Suggestions are the researcher's opinions about this study which are offered to the readers for further studies.

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