

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Humans are social creatures that always relate to other human beings. To establish the relationship human beings need a communication tool. The main tool for human communication is language. With language, humans can convey ideas, thought, and message to others resulting in communication. In order for the communication goes well, it is necessary to master the language main skills. According to Tarigan (1994:2) language skills include four aspects, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening skills become the basis to master other language skills. At the beginning of human life, someone learn to listen first, then learn to speak, to read and to write. Listening skills will effect the ability of other language skill. As Tarigan (1994:3) states that improving listening skill means it will help improve the quality of speaking ability.

Listening is always used in human life because human beings are always required to listen to, both within the family, school, and community. In the family, the human is always required to listen. Child language acquisition also came from listening to the speech in a family environment. In association with the community, people are required to listen well when they want to interact with each others, Sutriani, et al.(1997:8) stated that most adults use 45% of their time listening, 30% speaking, 16% for reading, and 9% for writing. Based on the statement above it appears that the ability in listening is important for human life in society.

There are some reasons why listening is felt difficult to be mastered by the students. First, the students begin to learn English by the way of reading, instead of listening. In fact, reading is different from listening, like writing is different from speech. The biggest

difference is that speech consists of sounds. Listener must know the sound system; otherwise, they cannot understand speech. Moreover, writing uses different language. Written English consists of neat, correct sentences, while speech does not (Mee, 1990).

Second, the materials on the tape are usually read by English speaking people. There are different accents, difficult idioms and unfamiliar language chunks in their speaking. This is another difficulty. For the students, their English teachers are usually local people. So the students may not be used to the accents of the foreign people. It is hard for them to understand native speakers.

Third, when English-speaking people speak English, they usually speak at a normal speed. It is too fast for the students to follow. When listening, the students cannot choose a comfortable listening speed; they have to keep pace with the speaker's thinking process. So sometimes they have not even got the meaning of the first sentence, before the second sentence has already passed. Their results show that they have missed the whole passage.

Fourth, the contents of the tape are not always familiar with the students. Some of them are not relevant to the students. The students may lack the background knowledge about foreign countries and cultures. So sometimes they cannot understand the material or they may misunderstand the meaning of it.

Usually, in the English lab, during listening activity the students feel lost when they listen to some new text. Over 50% of the students could not understand the meaning of material after playing the tape for the first time. Expecting them to understand the material, the teacher often gives them some instructions and to play the tape again, at least three times. Still, at least 20% of students might not understand it. Then, the teacher sometimes has to stop the tape to explain the difficult or unfamiliar words and occasionally explain material sentence by sentence through the whole text. So, this is a serious problem because some students cannot understand the whole text after listening to it three times in class. Furthermore,

the students might gradually lose their self-confidence. They are afraid to go to the lab to listen to English again. When they are face to face with listening material, they have little confidence in their listening comprehension abilities (Ross, 2006). Therefore, they may not understand them because they have to battle the psychological suggestion. That they could not understand spoken English.

Based on the description above, the researcher would like to conduct a research under the title “ A Study on the Listening Ability of the Eleventh Grade Students of Sman 6 Kupang in the School Year 2014/2015”.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Based on the background above, the writer conducted a research to answer the following questions:

1. What is the listening ability level of the eleventh grade students of SMAN 6 Kupang in the school year 2014/2015?
2. What might be the difficulties found by the eleventh grade students of SMA N 6 Kupang in listening?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the problem statements above, the objectives of this study are to find out the level of listening ability of the eleventh grade students of SMAN 6 Kupang, and to find out the difficulties that might be found by the students in listening.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study are as follows:

1. For the Teacher

The result of the study will be inputs for the English teacher at the researched school about the students' level of listening ability, so that when teaching the teacher will provide more ways to enhance students' listening ability.

2. For Students

The students at the researched schools will be informed about their listening ability so that they can practice more whether at school or out of schools.

3. For the Writer

By seeing the result of this study later, the writer as a prospective teacher will prepare herself by learning methods and techniques of teaching English especially listening, so students will have good level of listening.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study is about language skills especially listening. In listening there are three levels of ability they are literal, interpretive, and critical level. In this study, the writer focuses on literal listening of the eleventh grade students of SMAN 6 Kupang in the school year 2014/2015.

1.6 Definition of Terms

There are some terms related to this study that the writer defines to avoid readers' misunderstanding.

1. Listening

According Hornby (1993: 206), listening is a complex problem solving skill and it is more than just perception of the sounds. Listening is making an effort to hear something:

listen to the radio, tape. In other words, listening is to pay attention. In this study, listening means one of the way to improve students ability in listening by using recording media.

2. Ability

Ability means a capacity or power to the something physically or mentally (Hornby, 1982: 2). In this study, ability means the ability of listening of the eleventh grade students of SMAN 6 Kupang in the school year 2014/2015.

3. SMA N 6 Kupang

SMA N 6 Kupang is one of the public high schools in Kupang located in Sikumana.