

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Research

English is a foreign language in Indonesia but it plays important role. Many education institutions give a lot of attention to English and it is taught since kinder garden. Mastering English, as a world-wide language, is believed it can help the students a lot for their future.

The significance of English in Indonesia is evident in four major domains. First, proficiency in English is a means of obtaining better and well-paid job. Second, English is used in Indonesia as a tool for studying especially at the higher education level. Third, English is utilized in Indonesia to access to recreation and entertainment through media such as newspapers, magazines, movies, some television programs, and radio programs. At last, English is used to gain access to knowledge and information through computer-mediated communication such as e-mail, chat, information source from World Wide Web. It seems, English is no more seen as luxurious one but it is a high demand necessity.

English is a foreign language in Indonesia. There are four skills in English learnt by students. They are listening, reading, writing and speaking. Listening is so important for the beginners in acquiring English, that's why listening gets the first rank of ability that must be mastered out of four skills. When English becomes language of communication, the good ability in listening is required a lot. In having

good communication especially in conversation, students must be good either in listening or speaking. When someone can listen well, she can get the message, when she get the message and understand it, she can give the good response and it means good communication occurs. Listening is also often tested. In TOEFL there are fifty questions in listening. Mendelson (1994) says that the importance of listening in our life through the percentage of listening in communication. He mentions listening takes up 40-50%; speaking, 25-30%; reading, 11-16%; and writing, about 9% of the total communication time spent.

Listening has been taught officially since primary school in Indonesia. This long time period makes university students should have good listening comprehension. They should understand movies with English without the bahasa Indonesia translation on the screen. They should be able to get good scores in listening section of the test. But many of them feel lost when they are listening their lecturers speak in English or listening native speaker through the tape. They feel it is almost impossible to understand what is being heard at the moment.

Most of listening activities focus on the product of listening, every activity becomes a test of the learners' listening ability. Although scholars have warned against using listening activities as a disguised form of testing (Sheerin, 1987), this practice is in fact quite commonplace in many language classrooms even till this day.

Unfortunately, most often people suppose that listening comprehension is a passive activity, but contrarily, it is an "active process" because the listeners must recognize the differences among sounds, understand vocabularies and the

grammatical structures, get the meaning of language input and other prosodic proof from the text, and they must save the information gathered long enough in their mind to interpret the context in which the communication takes place. Even the students listen the same script, it does not mean either they would get the same information or have the same interpretation. It explains the different scores in listening test of the students. They listen to the same script (spoken language), catch the spoken language by the ears, send it to the brain and be processed. What makes different result of listening is actually the different process in their head or mind.

Listeners may become anxious because they have not 'done well' and may fear that they would be negatively evaluated by their teachers and peers. They work on improving their listening but many of them do not really know where to start other than to 'practice harder' on their own. They are unable to take control of their learning and do not know how to direct their extensive listening activities to achieve their learning goals. When they encounter problems, they also do not know how best to cope with them other than to 'listen harder'. Thus, many studies try to explore the causes of the difficulties in students' listening ability. One of the causes is that students' lack of learning strategies or that they cannot use learning strategies. They do not have certain listening strategy to get maximum result.

In having good listening comprehension, the students need to know the strategy. As English is not mother tongue for Indonesian people, learning strategies is needed to make learning process of target language (English) more successful and enjoyable. Many studies revealed that students would perform better if they can

apply learning strategy appropriately. Rubin (1987) states that learning strategies are the strategies that can contribute to the development of the language system in essence they are employed when learners try to develop linguistics and sociolinguistics competence in target language. Oxford (1990) mentions learning strategies as specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situation. It means to get maximum learning result, students are recommended to apply learning strategies.

There are many kinds of learning strategies. Oxford (1990) mentions six learning strategies. There are memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies.

Metacognitive strategies can help learners *how to listen*, how to manage their mental processes for listening. It involves of using experience and knowledge in understanding spoken text that are listened. In knowing metacognitive strategies, it is hoped the learners would get the messages, can get maximum knowledge and score when they are doing listening either in daily activities or taking English test.

The way of students in managing their knowledge while they do listening test would be the interest in this study. It would be seen how further the students apply the metacognitive strategies in their listening comprehension or the degree of metacognitive strategies applied by the students (English Department students of UNIMED) in listening comprehension and the difficulties found in the application of metacognitve strategies.

In the application of metacognitive strategies, there is thinking process happened. To see this thinking process Think Aloud protocols (TAP) would be used. The students would convey what is in their mind while they do listening test. They would speak loud by writing down on the paper whatever thought comes to mind while performing listening at hand.

Listening is always considered as difficult task by students and the listening task is often focused on the score more than the process. By knowing the application of metacognitive strategies and the difficulties in applying metacognitive strategies by the students, it is hoped better listening comprehension can be achieved as it is known the process happened while the students do listening test, it means the lecturers and students can do any effort to get improvement in listening comprehension.

1.2 The Research Problems

The problems in this study are formulated as follows.

1. What are the degrees of metacognitive strategies applied by English Department Students of UNIMED in listening comprehension?
2. What are the difficulties found in metacognitive strategies applied by English Department Students of UNIMED in listening comprehension?

1.3 The Objectives of the Research

Related to the research problems above, here are the objectives of the study.

1. To find out the degree of metacognitive strategies applied by English Department students of UNIMED in listening comprehension
2. To find out the difficulties of application metacognitive strategies by English Department students of UNIMED in listening comprehension

1.4 The Scope of the Research

The scope of this study is metacognitive strategies and listening comprehension by university students in English Department of UNIMED

1.5 The Significance of the Research

The results of this research either theoretically or practically are expected to give contribution to some lecturers, students, education stakeholders and other researchers. Here are the details.

Theoretically

1. For lecturers, this study can enrich their knowledge about metacognitive strategies applied in listening comprehension by university students
2. For the students, they can get information and description about the application of metacognitive strategies in listening comprehension

3. For education stakeholders, this research would provide valuable information about metacognitive strategies applied by university students in listening comprehension
4. For other researcher, the result of this research can be as an enrichment reference for further similar studies which they are going to conduct in the future.

Practically

1. The result of this research can be used as guidance for the lecturers in encouraging the students to be independent enough in applying metacognitive strategies in their listening performance in order to get better result in listening comprehension.
2. It can be used as guidance for the students to get maximum knowledge and score when they are doing listening either in daily activities or taking English test by applying metacognitive strategies.