

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Language was used as a medium to communicate, exchange ideas, and establish relationships between people. It was also our way of conveying information; communication could be successful when the speaker and receiver of information could understand each other (Purwanto, N, H, et al., 2020). Nowadays, language mastery is needed, one of which is mastery of English. In learning English many students were found to spend hours learning English. We could even see that English was taught starting from school to college; this aimed to make students able to master English (Subhan, Y. A., Sunardi, S., & Azis, K., 2023). When students learn English as their second language, they need to make a serious effort and know the scope of English itself.

One of the many changes taking place in Indonesian education at the moment was the curriculum, specifically the Merdeka curriculum, which was heavily weighted toward the development of attitudes and was meant to help students develop stronger character traits. There were many different perspectives and opinions about integrated learning, but they all stressed the importance of delivering meaningful lessons by involving students in the learning process. The Merdeka Curriculum was an educational innovation that aimed to improve education quality and relevance by integrating freedom, innovation, and students' ability to adapt (Gumilar, G., Rosid, D. P. S., Sumardjoko, B., & Ghufon, A.).

We knew that English was an important subject and had to be taught at school periods such as elementary, junior high, high school, and even university. One of the learning objectives in junior high school was to develop listening skills in English. The Competency-based curriculum clearly states this objective, represented by the title Basic Competencies (Grossman, P. (Ed.), 2021). One example of competency criteria in junior high school for listening skills was comprehending the meaning in essential transactional and interpersonal discussions to effectively interact with the immediate surroundings.

English has four essential skills: speaking, writing, reading, and listening where the division. The four skills were divided into Productive Skills, namely speaking and writing, and Receptive Skills, namely reading and Listening (Sharma, C., & Rachna, S. 2021).

Listening was an essential aspect of language in learning English, especially for international communication. According to (Putri, L. M. & Islamiati A., 2018), "Listening was the initial stage of natural spoken communication, which emerged during the early development of language. The acquisition of a person's first language and other naturalistic languages relied on the ability to hear". In other words, listening was not the same as hearing, which refers to the ear and also the sounds that come in. Based on the opinion of Goh, C. C. (2000), there are three benefits to incorporating listening into language learning practices. Firstly, by actively listening, children can acquire accurate and proficient examples of word pronunciation. Secondly, students could also learn speed, stress, accent, and intonation. Furthermore, by engaging in listening activities, children could acquire

grammar skills indirectly. For academic purposes in Indonesia, these listening skills were also sometimes required for graduation requirements in some schools for English subjects. English listening skills are not just like listening to audio; students can also understand the situation and the speaker's speech (Octaviani, S.K, 2022). Listening skills was necessary for learning because through listening, students receive information and gain insight (Shariyevna & Israelova, 2020).

Listening was the key to building effective communication. In mastering this listening skill, students also sometimes encounter several problems. This comprehension problem is caused by several factors, such as not understanding certain English pronunciations, not knowing how to overcome redundancy, not being able to predict language meaning because they are not familiar with the pattern of words, not understanding vocabulary, not being able to regulate speed, had difficulty accent and also lacking the ability to get the meaning of listening delivered (Mandarani, Vidya, 2016). In Indonesia, students still need to improve their listening skills. Based on the TOEIC test participant report (2014) revealed that Indonesia's listening performance was ranked 42nd out of 44 countries. This is undoubtedly quite concerning. This has led many teacher-trained faculties in Indonesian Universities to provide more courses in their curriculum. On average, there are 12 semester credits offered to students. However, students still needed help with listening (Jaggars, S. S, 2014).

In the current era, technology has developed rapidly, and it makes it easier for anyone to find information as well as sources of learning. Nowadays, many people, especially students, have become accustomed to using cell phones.

Mobile devices have been commonly used by various age groups due to their affordability and availability (West, D, 2012). Based on research conducted by Amiri M (2013), cell phones were not only used as communication tools but could also be used for learning and improving students' skills in English when used properly. Nowadays, teachers can utilize technology to make techniques to improve education and teaching methods (Alam, A., 2022). Technology has also turned into a means of supporting methods for English language teaching. If teachers do not use technology in teaching their students, they will never be able to keep up with these technological developments (Tiara, Anisa, Dwi, et al. 2021). With the development of technology today, we must also make good use of it, this is because it cannot be denied that the world of education is affected by technological advances. Learning a foreign language was not a boring and difficult thing for students because it can be learned through the Internet, which has become the easiest platform; there are many supporting applications that can be utilized by students to improve their listening skills in English, such as the application (Widyastuti, Myta & Hermariyanti, Kusumadewi, 2018).

Duolingo was an application that could be used to improve English language skills such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening. As a language learning platform, Duolingo was considered a popular application. According to the website, Duolingo was a free language learning application (Nushi, M., & Eqbali, M. H., 2017). Duolingo was also a popular English learning app in the future (Habibie, Alvons, 2020). The Duolingo application had been the largest online language learning platform in the world, according to (Munday P, 2016).

According to Putri and Islamiati (2018), the Duolingo website offered several benefits, including an engaging game-like system that allowed users to learn while having fun and attractive displays complemented by audio files. A free online conversation service called Duolingo offered speakers both a vocabulary translation tool (which took the shape of speakers practicing the subject) and a listening tool (Bende, 2017).

Based on previous research, the research conducted by Putri & Aulia (2018) examined listening teaching using the Duolingo application; where this research was conducted at SMKN 2 Karawang and one class consisting of 36 students in class X-Tata Boga 3 class; the research used a pre-experimental design and used quantitative methods. The previous research revealed that the Duolingo application was proven to improve students' listening skills and could also create a teaching list to motivate students to learn English. The research gap between the previous and current research was seen from the research method, where the previous research used pre-experimental and quantitative, while the current one used qualitative methods; furthermore, based on the location, where the earlier research was located at SMKN 2 Karawang and the current one at SMP Negeri 3 Sidikalang. The result of the study was that using the Duolingo app could improve students' listening skills and motivate them to learn English.

In addition, preliminary data in the form of interviews had been conducted by the author with English teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Sidikalang, as follows:

R : How long had Duolingo been used in this school?

T : Duolingo had been used for about two months.

R : Why did you use Duolingo?

T : This was because Duolingo was one of the most famous language learning apps and had a very good rating. In addition, we could see the leaderboard to monitor the performance of students, and Duolingo was also a free app that could be used anytime. Additionally, Duolingo allowed teachers to observe how students learned, and students could join the Duolingo class provided by the teacher using the class code given by the teacher.

R : How could you see the progress and measure the students' ability?

T : I usually looked at the ranking given by Duolingo, so I could see the abilities and tasks of my students.

R : What did you think about using the Duolingo application to learn English, especially in listening skills?

T : In my opinion, the Duolingo application was very good to be used by students to learn English, especially in listening skills.

R : So far, what were your obstacles when applying Duolingo in class?

T : The obstacle in applying Duolingo in class with students was that sometimes the Wi-Fi connection was not good and students has to use their own internet data.

Note:

T: Teacher

R: Researcher

Based on observations at SMPN 3, Sidikalang showed that teachers were using the Duolingo application as a learning medium for listening skills. Previously, students could only learn through traditional learning materials, which made it difficult for them to access effective learning materials. For this reason, teachers used Duolingo, which allowed students to learn without getting bored and engaged in game-like play. The teacher had been using the Duolingo application for two months, so the researcher would see whether the students' abilities were classified as positive or negative, and the researcher would evaluate the application related to listening skills in asking questions.

The results of this research were expected to provide input to anyone, especially educators, where learning media was very important in teaching and learning activities and could utilize applications that could support student learning activities. This research would also provide an overview of the features provided by Duolingo and how to use this application so that it could help teachers in applying it in the classroom. In addition, data from students' perceptions of the Duolingo application were also expected to help teachers find out how students think about the application. So, based on the explanation above, the researcher decided to conduct research titled "Students. Perception of Using Duolingo Application on Listening Skill at VII Grade SMP Negeri 3 Sidikalang".

B. The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the problem was formulated as:

1. How were the students' perceptions about Duolingo application for listening asking questions grade VII SMP Negeri 3 Sidikalang?
2. What were the barriers that students encounter when using the Duolingo application to enhance listening asking questions grade VII at SMP Negeri 3 Sidikalang?

C. The Objectives of the Study

1. To explained the students' perception about Duolingo application for listening Asking questions grade VII at SMP Negeri 3 Sidikalang.
2. To investigated the barriers that students encountered when using the Duolingo application to enhance listening Asking questions grade VII at SMP Negeri 3 Sidikalang.

D. The Scope of the Study

This research was limited to explaining the perception of seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Sidikalang regarding the Duolingo application as a medium for listening asking questions, and also to find out the obstacles students encountered when using the Duolingo application.

E. The Significances of the Study

The findings of the study were expected to be useful, relevant, and give a contribution, theoretically and practically, like the following:

1. Theoretically

The results of this research could contribute to thinking about the Duolingo application, which could help students in learning English listening and asking questions. It was also hoped that this research could become a reference for other researchers when they had similar research.

2. Practically

a. Students

This research helped students to increase knowledge about listening asking questions by using the Duolingo application. This research also informed students that they can learn English from anywhere by using the Duolingo app.

b. Teachers

This study also provided the description about the features in Duolingo application and the use of the application, so it could help the teacher to apply it in the classroom. Moreover, the data of the students' perception in this study could also help the teacher to know the students' opinion about the application.

c. Future Researchers

This research offered researchers' various advantages regarding students' perception of using Duolingo application for listening asking questions.