

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of The Study

Listening is one of the four fundamental skills that must be mastered by individuals, particularly in language learning, especially in learning English. Listening is the initial skill used by humans before beginning to use other skills such as reading, speaking, and writing (Nation & Newton, 2009, as cited in Putri & Islamiati, 2018). As a receptive skill, listening involves a complex cognitive process of identifying and understanding spoken language through various linguistic elements including vocabulary, syntax, accent, and pronunciation (Rost, 2011). In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, listening comprehension serves as the foundation for developing other language competencies, as it provides learners with comprehensible input necessary for language acquisition (Goh & Vandergrift, 2022). Therefore, listening is one of the essential aspects that must be mastered in learning English, as it enables learners to understand spoken messages, participate in meaningful communication, and develop proficiency across all language skills.

In international communication, listening skills are critical competencies that must be mastered to effectively communicate with others. Research demonstrates the prevalence of listening in daily communication, with Miller (2003) finding that "we recently spent more than 40% of our primary communication by listening, 35% by speaking, 16% on average by reading, and

only 9% by writing" (p. 16). This distribution underscores that listening skills constitute one of the most important aspects of daily life, particularly during communication processes. The significance of listening extends beyond casual conversation to academic and professional contexts, where effective listening enables individuals to comprehend instructions, process information, and respond appropriately (Wolvin & Coakley, 2000).

In the Indonesian educational context specifically, listening skills play a crucial role in students' English language development. Research conducted in Indonesian EFL classrooms has revealed that students predominantly engage in listening activities during English lessons, with teacher talk occupying approximately 75.5% of classroom interaction time while student talk comprises only 9.8% (Huriyah & Agustiani, 2018). This significant imbalance indicates that students spend the majority of their class time listening to teachers rather than actively speaking, as the remaining time is largely devoted to silence, confusion, or unclassified activities (14.6%) rather than student-initiated communication. Consequently, students' listening proficiency often falls below expected levels, partly due to limited exposure to diverse and engaging listening materials that could transform this passive listening into active comprehension (Nadhira & Warni, 2021). For seventh-grade students who are at a foundational stage of their English language learning journey, mastering listening skills becomes even more essential as it establishes the groundwork for their continued language development and academic success in subsequent grades (Widiyastuti et al., 2023).

However, mere exposure to extensive teacher input does not guarantee listening comprehension. Wolvin and Coakley (2000) argue that effective listening necessitates understanding how and why to listen (cognition), possessing a willingness to engage in listening (affect), and actively enacting associated listening behaviors (behavior). Through listening, a person's behavior is influenced by the information they receive, making it a fundamental mechanism for learning and knowledge acquisition. In English language classrooms, listening activities serve multiple pedagogical functions: they expose students to authentic language use, help develop pronunciation awareness, build vocabulary knowledge, and enhance grammatical understanding through contextualized input (Harmer, 2007). Furthermore, listening activities in the classroom provide opportunities for students to practice essential 21st-century skills such as attention control, critical thinking, and information processing, skills that are increasingly valued in today's globalized world (Alismail & McGuire, 2015). Research has consistently shown that systematic, well-designed listening activities significantly contribute to students' overall English proficiency and their confidence in using the language for communicative purposes (Erzad, 2020).

The integration of digital media has emerged as a powerful approach to supporting and enhancing listening activities in English language learning. Digital media offers several distinct advantages over traditional listening materials, including enhanced accessibility, provision of authentic language input, increased learner engagement, and opportunities for self-paced,

individualized learning (Islam & Hasan, 2020). Technology-based listening materials provide students with exposure to various accents, speaking rates, and communicative contexts that closely mirror real-world language use, thereby preparing them for genuine communication situations (Al-Jarf, 2021). Furthermore, digital platforms enable educators to incorporate multimedia elements such as visual aids, interactive exercises, subtitles, and immediate feedback mechanisms that significantly enhance listening comprehension and retention (Ampa, 2015). Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) applications, in particular, have demonstrated positive effects on students' listening skill development by offering flexible, personalized, and engaging learning experiences that can be accessed anytime and anywhere (Sepyanda et al., 2022).

Studies have shown that students who learn listening through digital media exhibit higher motivation, better comprehension, and improved retention compared to those using conventional methods alone (Afana et al., 2025; Khasanah et al., 2023). The interactive nature of digital media also allows for repeated listening practice, which research identifies as crucial for developing listening proficiency, especially among EFL learners who have limited exposure to English outside the classroom (Maulina et al., 2022). Additionally, digital media addresses common challenges in traditional listening instruction, such as limited access to authentic materials, inability to control playback speed, and lack of individualized practice opportunities (Fouz-González, 2020).

This emphasis on digital media integration aligns with the demands of 21st-century education, where technological competence has become inseparable from academic success and future workforce readiness. Globally, educational systems are undergoing transformation to incorporate technology as a fundamental component of teaching and learning processes (UNESCO, 2022).

In Indonesia specifically, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek, 2024) through the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the integration of technology in teaching and learning processes to develop students' digital literacy and prepare them for the challenges of the modern world. The curriculum explicitly encourages educators to utilize digital resources and platforms to create more engaging, interactive, and effective learning experiences. As stated in the Merdeka Curriculum framework, education in the 21st century must be closely connected to technology, and the recent pandemic has clearly demonstrated that digital technology has tremendous potential for supporting learning, even when facing infrastructure and teacher preparedness challenges (Kemendikbudristek, 2024).

The curriculum's focus on student-centered, differentiated instruction further necessitates the use of varied, technology-enhanced materials that can accommodate diverse learning styles and paces, particularly for developing receptive skills such as listening. This policy direction reflects Indonesia's recognition that preparing students for the digital age requires not only teaching them English language skills but also ensuring they can effectively use digital tools to access, process, and communicate information in English.

However, despite these policy directives and the documented benefits of digital media integration, research conducted across Indonesian educational contexts reveals a persistent gap between curriculum expectations and actual classroom practices regarding technology-enhanced listening instruction. A study by Maulina et al. (2022) examining technology-based media used in teaching listening skills in Indonesian schools found that while various digital tools exist, their implementation in actual classroom practice remained limited, with teachers primarily relying on conventional textbook-based materials. Research by Sepyanda et al. (2022) investigating Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) among Indonesian university students revealed that despite students owning mobile devices, many had never experienced digital listening activities during their previous schooling, indicating a gap in technology integration at the secondary education level. Similarly, Putri and Islamiati (2018) found that Indonesian teachers at vocational high schools rarely utilized digital applications for listening instruction, with traditional teaching methods dominating classroom practices even when technological resources were available.

In examining listening instruction at Indonesian junior high schools, Afana et al. (2025) discovered that limited exposure to digital listening materials resulted in students' difficulty in comprehending authentic English audio, as they were primarily exposed to teacher-read texts rather than native speaker recordings through digital platforms. These findings collectively demonstrate that despite the availability of digital technologies and supportive curriculum policies, the

actual integration of digital media in listening instruction across Indonesian schools remains inconsistent and inadequate.

This broader pattern was directly observed during the PLP II program at UPT SMP Negeri 17 Medan, where field observations revealed significant gaps between curriculum expectations and actual classroom practice regarding listening instruction for seventh-grade students.



Figure 1.1 Preliminary Data

The observation showed that while teachers at the school have access to government-provided textbooks containing structured listening activities, these activities were systematically not implemented during English lessons. Teachers were observed intentionally skipping listening sections in the textbook and proceeding directly to other language activities such as reading

comprehension or grammar exercises. Further investigation into SIBI (*Sistem Informasi Perbukuan Indonesia*) database revealed that the audio or audiobook materials supposedly accompanying these textbooks for listening practice were not available, which likely contributed to teachers' inability to conduct authentic listening activities. Consequently, the materials used for the limited listening instruction that did occur relied heavily on teacher-read texts or dialogues rather than authentic audio sources, and no digital or technology-based materials were incorporated into the listening lessons despite the curriculum's emphasis on digital literacy development. As a result, seventh-grade students at the school received minimal exposure to structured listening practice, severely limiting their opportunities to develop this essential language skill. Therefore, building on the validated findings of previous studies, this study aimed to address this gap by developing engaging listening materials using the Educaplay Video Quiz for seventh grade students.

B. The Problems of The Study

Based on the background above, the problems of the study were stated below:

1. What were the specific needs of seventh-grade students at UPT SMP Negeri 17 Medan regarding the development of listening materials using Educaplay Video Quiz?
2. How were the listening materials using Educaplay Video Quiz designed and structured for seventh-grade students at UPT SMP Negeri 17 Medan?

3. How were the designed listening materials using Educaplay Video Quiz developed for seventh-grade students at UPT SMP Negeri 17 Medan?
4. How was the validity of the developed listening materials using Educaplay Video Quiz for seventh-grade students at UPT SMP Negeri 17 Medan according to design experts?

C. The Objectives of The Study

Based on the formulated problem, the objectives of this study was:

1. To identify the specific needs of seventh-grade students at UPT SMP Negeri 17 Medan regarding the development of listening materials using Educaplay Video Quiz.
2. To design the listening materials using Educaplay Video Quiz for seventh-grade students at UPT SMP Negeri 17 Medan.
3. To develop the designed listening materials using Educaplay Video Quiz for seventh-grade students at UPT SMP Negeri 17 Medan.
4. To determine the validity of the developed listening materials using Educaplay Video Quiz for seventh-grade students at UPT SMP Negeri 17 Medan according to design experts.

D. The Scopes of The Study

Based on the stated problems, and objectives of the study, this study was limited around the scope of:

1. The study specifically involved seventh-grade students at UPT SMP Negeri 17 Medan as the target participants for this development project.
2. In terms of language skills, the research exclusively concentrated on developing materials for listening comprehension, rather than addressing other language skills such as speaking, reading, or writing.
3. The materials developed were strictly limited to listening content for different learning styles aligned with the English for Nusantara textbook for Grade 7, ensuring consistency with the national curriculum framework currently implemented at the school.
4. For the technological platform, this study employed Educaplay, specifically utilizing its Video Quiz feature as the primary tool for creating interactive listening activities.
5. As a Design and Development (DDR) study, this study focused on creating a specific educational product rather than testing hypotheses or examining causal relationships, with the developmental process following a systematic R&D model from Borg and Gall (2003).
6. The study did not address KKM (*Kriteria Kelulusan Minimum*) and focused solely on developing listening materials using Educaplay Video Quiz for seventh-grade students.

E. The Significances of The Study

The significance of this study was broken down into 2 parts:

A. Theoretically

This study contributed to the existing body of knowledge on the use of technology in language education, particularly in the area of listening. By exploring the effectiveness of Educaplay as a tool for developing listening materials, this study provides insights into how digital resources can enhance language learning.

B. Practically

1) For Teachers

The findings of this study offered teachers innovative strategies for incorporating technology into their teaching practices, enabling them to create more engaging and effective listening activities.

2) For Students

The development of interactive listening materials was expected to increase students' motivation and interest in learning English, ultimately leading to improved listening skills and language proficiency.

3) For Future Researchers

This study served as a reference for future research on the integration of digital tools in language education, particularly in the development of listening materials and activities.