

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

In foreign relations, English is considered a primary language. The four aspects of listening, speaking, reading, and writing can be factored in the learning of foreign languages (Hadian, 2015). According to Hsu et al. (2013), listening is an essential social interaction function, and it has been found that listening helps people to interpret new messages more effectively than reading. According to Wolvin (2009), “The vital role of listening in communication begins with the recognition that listening is the first language skill to be acquired”.

Listening holds a main role in the receptive skill in English learning. As Feyten (1991) reported, listening is an important part of the second-language learning process. Listening offers natural feedback to encourage students to learn the languages and to communicate with each other. Listening is the children's first language mode. It provides the basis for all the linguistic and cognitive processes, and it plays a vital role in communication processes. According to Wilt (1950), “People listen 45 percent of the time they spend communicating” (as cited in Malkawi, 2010). This study is still widely cited (e.g., Martin, 1987; Strother, 1987). Wilt found that 30% of communication time was spent speaking, 16% listening and 9% writing. The result confirms what Rankin found in 1928, that 70% of their waking time was spent communicating, and that 3/4 of their time was spent listening and speaking (as stated in Malkawi, 2010).

According to English (2009), for certain classrooms, communication skills are taught in the traditional classroom setting, with rows of desks and chairs reflecting the preferred method based on passive communication. Teachers usually use an auditory teaching approach since they

believe students are capable of listening. Yet, this case does not presume their students will be able to listen. Also, it is necessary for teachers to find some way to teach listening skill that is compatible with the interest of students. One of the approaches is to use music or song.

In the English language learning classroom, the use of music and song is nothing new. Several studies have found that music and songs are one of the most effective forms in English classrooms. Brand and Li (2009) stated that teachers of English as a second language (ESL) from around the globe enthusiastically report contributions about their successful use of music and associated song lyrics with students (as cited in Hadian, 2015). Horn (2007) also said different methods of teaching are used for ESL learners, and music is the most effective tool for enhancing the learning of ESL, according to research (as cited in Hadian,2015).

Using songs will make students interested in learning English. Students might feel bored if the English class always uses the same kind of audio. Teachers can actually make use of songs to properly develop communication skills in a foreign language to enable students to talk with confidence. Teachers also have the ability to teach in an enjoyable way.

Lynch (2005) pointed out that language teachers should use songs in their teaching of English. The reasons given include the natural language of the songs, that they can be easily obtained and are enjoyable and natural. He also stated that a variety of new vocabulary and cultural aspects, as well as different types of English accents, could be introduced. Songs can be selected to match the students interests and preferences. Generally, he believes that songs will deliver a pleasurable experience of speaking, listening, vocabulary and grammar. The researcher prefers to use a song rather than a movie because it takes less time to listen to a song than to watch a film. And also, a movie could sometimes make the students get bored.

Therefore, the researcher is encouraged to find out about the belief of the English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya (WMCUS) in using songs to improve their English, specifically to improve their listening skill.

### **1.2 Research question:**

- What is the belief of the English Department students of WMCUS regarding the role of English songs to improve their English skills?
- Which aspects of listening skill are greatly helped by listening to English songs?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

- i. To find out students' beliefs on the role of English songs to improve their English skills.
- ii. To find out which aspects that are greatly helped by listening to English songs.

### **1.4 Significance of the study**

It is expected that this research will give contribution to the practice of listening teaching and learning in the future and also help further researches to get information about the relation between the use and importance of songs towards language acquisition, especially listening.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

This study is focused on the English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya and their beliefs about the effectiveness of using songs to improve their listening skill in English.

## **1.6 Theoretical background / Framework.**

### **1. Theory of Belief**

Richardson (1996) described beliefs as world understandings, assumptions, or proposals that are believed to be true in a psychological context. Beliefs in every discipline that deals with human actions and learning are fundamental structures (as cited in Abdi and Asadi, 2015). Horwitz and Wenden (1987 as cited in Abdi and Asadi, 2015) have discovered that second-language learners came to a language class with preconceived beliefs about language teaching and expectations about what they intend and what actions they should take to learn English. As Horwitz has emphasized (1985, 1987 and 1999), it is necessary to understand learners' beliefs as it allows teachers to better understand learner attitudes and the use of learning methods to prepare language instruction adequately.

### **2. Theory of Listening**

Listening is the natural precursor to speaking; the early stages of language development in a person's first language (and in naturalistic acquisition of other languages) are dependent on listening (Nation & Newton, 2009). Listening is therefore our first ability in communication when we are born. Littlewood (1991) stated that listening has often been called as a passive skill. This is misleading since listening requires the hearer to engage actively. The hearer must actively contribute knowledge from both linguistic and non-linguistic sources, to reconstruct the message that the speaker wants. Littlewood (1991) also added that the nature of listening comprehension is such that students should be encouraged to participate in an active manner in the process of listening for meaning. It

used not only linguistic guidance but also nonlinguistic knowledge (as cited in Shofiyah, 2015)

### **3. Using Songs to Learn English**

According to Harmer (2001), music is "a strong trigger" for linguistic teaching. He classifies music as a medium for learning, and refers to a versatile means of displaying the phrases in graphics (printed song texts), verbally (listening to the song), and in meanings (song lyrics). The song can change not only the mood of the students but also its motivation for learning (Chen & Chen, 2009). Not only the song lyrics but even their music influence can boost the listening ability of the students (Harmer, 2001). Wickham (2011) stated that music trains the audience's attention on the heard sensation and promotes immersive learning (as cited in Rezaei and Ahour, 2015)

#### **1.7 Definition of key term:**

##### **1. Belief**

Beliefs were considered a "messy" concept (Pajares, 1992). According to Pajares, this difficulty may be partially due to the paradoxical existence of the researchers' beliefs and their different goals (as cited in Barcelos, 2000). Therefore, Richardson (1996) described beliefs as world understandings, assumptions, or proposals that are believed to be true in a psychological context. Beliefs in every discipline that deals with human actions and learning are fundamental structures (as cited in Abdi and Asadi, 2015).

##### **2. Listening**

Listening requires the capacity to hear what other people say and to understand it. It ensures that one hears the dialect or pronunciation of a person, his grammar, and his

vocabulary and appreciate its significance (Howatt and Dakin, 1974). A competent listener is likely to perform all four tasks at the same time (as cited in Syam, 2012).

Tyagi (2013) stated that listening requires several key components, which are:

- distinguish between sounds
- recognizing words and understanding their meaning
- identifying grammatical groupings of words,
- identifying expressions and sets of utterances that act to create meaning,
- connecting linguistic cues to non-linguistic and paralinguistic cues,
- using background knowledge to predict and to confirm meaning and
- recalling important words and ideas.

### 3. Songs

A song is a brief piece of music, always with lyrics, at the simplest point. While some composers have written instrumental pieces or musical works without words, it incorporates melody and vocals that imitate the sound of a singing voice. A song's words are called lyrics. Lyrics can be a series of verses that are the longer sections of the storytelling song and a short sentence repeated at the end of each verse. Songs may have a basic one- or two-verses structure, or a more complex one with several verses and refrains. Usually, songs have a meter or beat. Whether the lyrics are sung or spoken, you can feel a pattern or pulse in the way the words move the song forward (<https://great-home-decorations.com/what-is-a-song-definition-examples/>)

## 1.8 Organization of the chapter

The organization of the chapter will help the readers to understand the main point of this study. It will be divided into:

Chapter I is introduction which deals with the background of the study, research problem, objective of the study, hypothesis, significance of the study, scope and limitation, definition of key term, and organization of the chapter.

Chapter II is the theoretical framework of this study. This chapter is dedicated to review some relevant theories and studies of teaching listening using songs.

Chapter III will discuss the method used by the researcher in conducting this study.

Chapter IV will present three topics related to research findings. Which is the description of the data, hypothesis testing, and discussion.

Chapter V devoted to present some conclusion and suggestion based on the research findings and discussion that presented in the previous chapter.