

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Listening is a complex receptive skill, involving an active process of understanding, processing, and interpreting spoken language in order to capture the message conveyed (Goh, 2023). In English language learning, listening becomes one of the important skills because it helps students not only understand linguistic elements such as vocabulary and grammar, but also apply information practically in the context of communication (Rustamov & Mirza ogli, 2023). Listening also contributes to incidental vocabulary acquisition, where students can expand their linguistic horizons through input modes such as listening and reading. This process allows students to learn new vocabulary and understand the language more deeply (Serrano, 2024). Listening skills support learning by providing a foundation for understanding instructions, building relationships, and acquiring new knowledge relevant to the English context.

Lack of listening skills in English language learning can have a negative impact, such as misunderstanding instructions or concepts conveyed by the teacher, resulting in errors in assignments or unfinished tasks (Nguyen, 2023). Students who are less skilled in listening also tend to miss valuable feedback that can help them develop better in learning (Alharbi & Al-Ahdal, 2024). Thus, listening skills in English language learning are an essential element that not only supports communication, but also plays an important role in the development of students' linguistic abilities and comprehension.

Various studies show that listening plays a vital role in English language learning. Qiu and Xu (2023) found that listening is a basic skill that lays the foundation for the development of speaking, reading, and writing. Another study by Tai and Chen (2024) showed that technology such as Google Nest Hub can improve EFL listening comprehension through multimodal interaction, peer collaboration, and edutainment. However,

Milliner and Dimoski's (2024) study showed a limitation; the listening training program increased students' confidence, but did not provide significant improvements in the performance of low-ability students. These findings underscore the importance of designing listening interventions that take into account students' proficiency levels to ensure successful learning.

Listening strategies and input modes greatly affect students' comprehension. Zhouhan Jin and Webb (2023) emphasized that note-taking exerts a small to moderate positive effect in improving comprehension through L2 input. Factors such as mode of input, type of material, as well as note-taking strategies affect student success. The research of Sayyadi et al. (2024) highlights the importance of well-designed multimedia to facilitate students' input processing and comprehension. In addition, Fung and Lo (2023) identified content- and language-mediated listening strategies as effective approaches, especially in the context of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI). The combination of these strategies enhances students' comprehension, especially when supported with strong linguistic knowledge.

The lack of listening competence has various implications in language learning. Bukhari et al. (2023) found that weaknesses in listening skills hinder graduate students' academic performance. In addition, Phan and Nguyen (2023) revealed that the lack of listening skills makes students more dependent on written texts, so their oral communication skills are limited. In the context of technology, Wang et al. (2023) found that an AI-based voice chatbot enriched students' language input, increasing their motivation, confidence and interest in learning. These findings emphasize the need for a variety of listening techniques to help students overcome challenges, as well as teacher adaptation to student needs to increase the effectiveness of listening learning.

Integrating listening and reading skills through the use of fairy tales offers an innovative approach to address gaps in English language learning. Although previous research has affirmed the importance of listening as a foundational skill in language learning (Goh, 2023; Rustamov & Mirza ogli,

2023), the practical application of this skill in conjunction with other modes, such as reading, remains largely unexplored. Listening skills not only support linguistic acquisition, such as vocabulary and grammar, but also facilitate incidental learning (Serrano, 2024). However, challenges remain, especially in ensuring students with low ability levels can benefit equally from listening interventions (Milliner & Dimoski, 2024). These challenges highlight the urgent need for multimodal learning methods that are accessible, engaging and supportive of students with diverse abilities.

Despite the proven importance of multimedia and innovative strategies, existing research tends to focus on advanced technologies, such as AI-based chatbots or multimodal platforms (Tai & Chen, 2024; Wang et al., 2023), often neglecting equally effective traditional resources, such as fairy tales. The use of fairy tales in listening and reading practices offers a culturally rich, flexible and accessible tool to bridge this gap. Furthermore, while strategies such as note-taking and content-mediated instruction have been shown to improve listening comprehension (Jin & Webb, 2023; Fung & Lo, 2023), research into how narrative and story elements can simultaneously improve listening and reading skills within one framework is limited.

This study aims to fill the gap by integrating fairy tales into English listening and reading activities, specifically for grade VIII students. By combining these two receptive skills, this approach aligns with students' cognitive and linguistic developmental needs, while overcoming barriers in traditional listening practices. The use of fairy tales as authentic and engaging materials provides justification for exploring their potential in creating a more effective, inclusive and enjoyable English learning environment.

Based on the results of observations that have been made at SMPN 21 Bengkulu City in the English learning process, especially in listening and reading skills, it appears that most students show good engagement during the activity. During the listening session, the majority of students seemed less focused and serious in listening to the audio material. They did not show disruptive behavior such as talking to themselves or playing with stationery,

even some of them noted important things and were able to answer questions appropriately after listening. In addition, students also seemed active in answering questions; many immediately raised their hands enthusiastically, showing that they understood the content of the material they listened to. In reading activities, students' enthusiasm varied. Some students seemed excited, but others were still less interested and only read because of instructions, not out of curiosity (see appendix 3).

In terms of learning methods, teachers have used listening materials that are appropriate to the lesson topic. The use of five types of narrative stories or texts also proved to attract students' attention because they were tailored to their level of understanding. The media used, such as audio, text, pictures, and videos, also help improve students' understanding and create a more interesting learning atmosphere. The teacher-student interaction is also good, with the teacher always giving appropriate feedback when students have difficulties. The teacher actively re-explains the material in simpler language, provides additional examples, and explains vocabulary and grammar that students do not understand in a way that is easy to understand. This builds students' confidence to ask questions and try again when they don't understand.

Based on the results of initial interviews with teachers, it is known that students' listening skills in learning English still vary. Some students have been able to capture the content of conversations or simple stories, but many still have difficulties, especially when listening to audio with fast pronunciation from native speakers. The main challenges faced by students include fast pronunciation, limited vocabulary, lack of focus, and poor audio quality. To overcome this, teachers use strategies such as repeating the audio, providing guiding questions, and presenting simple transcripts. Teachers also stated that the use of fairy tales in listening and reading activities proved effective in increasing students' interest and understanding. Familiar stories such as Cinderella or Little Red Riding Hood are able to attract students' attention and make them more active in answering questions and discussing.

Teachers consider that fairy tales help strengthen listening and reading skills because the plot is clear, the language is simple, and full of moral values. In addition, fairy tales provide space for the development of other skills such as speaking and writing. Nevertheless, technical constraints such as speaker quality and limited learning time are still an obstacle. However, teachers still try to create a fun and effective learning atmosphere by integrating fairy tales into learning activities, so that students are more enthusiastic and actively involved in the learning process.

The research entitled “Integrating Fairy Tales For Effective Reading-Listening In English Learning Environment (A Study at Eight Grade Students of Smpn 21 Bengkulu City)” has significant urgency to be conducted for several important reasons, both in terms of pedagogical, students' needs, and curriculum relevance. The results of observations and interviews show that students of SMPN 21 Bengkulu City have a higher interest when engaging in story-based learning, yet there is no approach that systematically integrates fairy tales into the English learning process. Therefore, this research can make a real contribution in developing innovative and applicable learning models according to students' needs.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background that has been described, the researcher identified several main problems in the English learning process that need attention:

1. Students' listening and reading skills are low
2. Lack of student interest and focus in listening and reading activities
3. Limited media and learning methods that are interesting and in accordance with student needs
4. Lack of integration of teaching materials that are contextual and relevant to the students' world, such as fairy tales, proven to be able to increase students' attention and participation in learning activities
5. Not yet optimal teacher strategies in overcoming students' difficulties in listening and reading

C. Limitation of the Problem

This research is limited to the use of fairy tales as teaching materials to improve students' reading and listening skills in English language learning. The focus of the research is directed at grade VIII students at SMPN 21 Bengkulu City during the ongoing school year. The research did not cover other language skills such as speaking or writing. The research only analyzes students' comprehension, interest and engagement when reading and listening to fairy tales, and how the text affects their learning experience. In addition, the research only covers the context of in-class learning and does not cover learning at home or through online platforms. As such, the results of this study are not intended to be generalized to all English language learning contexts, but rather provide a focused understanding of how the integration of fairy tales can support the development of reading and listening skills in specific educational contexts.

D. Research Questions

Based on the background that has been described, this research can be formulated in the form of research questions as follows:

1. How can the use of fairy tales in English language learning improve the listening and reading skills of grade VIII students at SMPN 21 Bengkulu?
2. To what extent does the integration of fairy tales as teaching materials contribute to the effectiveness of English language learning in creating an engaging and inclusive learning environment?

E. The Purposes of the Research

This research aims to explore the utilization of fairy tales in English language learning, particularly to improve the listening and reading skills of grade VIII students at SMPN 21 Bengkulu. The use of fairy tales as teaching materials has the potential to improve students' understanding and interest in learning English, as fairy tales can present content that is interesting and relevant to students' daily lives. Therefore, this study will analyze how the

application of fairy tales can have a positive impact on listening and reading skills, as well as how it plays a role in creating a more interactive learning atmosphere.

In addition, this study also aims to assess the extent to which the integration of fairy tales as teaching materials can contribute to the effectiveness of English language learning at SMPN 21 Bengkulu. By using fairy tales, it is expected to create a learning environment that is not only engaging, but also inclusive, so that students feel more motivated to participate in learning activities. This research is expected to contribute to the development of more innovative and effective English learning methods, which are aligned with the needs of today's students.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to provide a clearer picture of the benefits of using fairy tales in English language learning, as well as evaluating how the integration of such material can enrich the teaching and learning process at SMPN 21 Bengkulu. It is hoped that the results of this study can serve as a reference in the development of more varied and enjoyable teaching methods for students.

F. The Significants of the Research

The benefits of this research can be seen from two aspects, namely theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of English language learning theory, especially in the application of fairy tales as teaching materials. This research can enrich the understanding of innovative ways to improve students' listening and reading skills through a fun and interesting approach. In addition, this research will also provide new insights into the relationship between story-based learning materials and students' linguistic skills achievement, which can be a reference for future research in the field of language learning.

Practically, this research provides direct benefits for educational practitioners, especially English teachers at SMPN 21 Bengkulu, in improving the quality of teaching. By applying fairy tales as teaching

materials, it is expected that teachers can create a more interactive and interesting learning environment for students, which in turn can increase students' learning motivation and English language skills. In addition, the results of this study can also provide guidance for teachers in designing teaching materials that are more in line with students' needs and interests, and encourage the creation of more inclusive and enjoyable learning methods in the classroom.

G. Operational Definitions of Key Terms

This research uses several terminologies that need to be explained operationally to avoid confusion in understanding.

1. Fairy Tales are imaginative stories that often involve elements of fantasy and morality, told orally or in writing for entertainment and educational purposes.
2. Reading-Listening are two interrelated language skills, where reading refers to the comprehension of written text, while listening involves the comprehension of spoken text or sounds.
3. English Learning Environment refers to the spaces, materials, methods and interactions that support the English learning process, including the use of technology, strategies and teaching materials.