

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter tells about the basic problems of this research related to the teaching of listening and listening comprehension. It consists of the background of the problem, the problem of the research, the objectives of the research, the uses of the research, and the scope of the research that are used in this research.

1.1. Background of the Problem

Interaction is needed for people in the world in order to fulfil their needs. For this purpose language is used. English as one of languages is used throughout the world. Ramelan (1992:2-3) stated that “English as an international language is used to communicate, to strengthen and to fasten relationship among all countries in the world in all fields”. Referring to the importance of English, it can be understood why English is considered as a compulsory subject in Indonesia that should be taught on Elementary School, Junior High School (SMP), Senior High School (SMA) and University.

As stated in School-Based Curriculum (KTSP), one of the objectives of education in Indonesia is to create independent individual that is able to compete globally with other people around the world. To do so, students need to be supplied with appropriate skills, including language skill. English as an international language is

is major important to be taught. In addition to it, School-Based Curriculum also mentioned that the objective of teaching English in Junior High School is to develop student's language skill and to facilitate students to be able to communicate in oral and written form as the preparation for the globalisation era.

In oral communication there are two major activities, speaking and listening. Good communication is not only indicated with good speaking ability of the speaker but also with good listening ability of the listener. The process of hearing, identifying, understanding and interpreting spoken languages is the first step of successful communication (Lewis, 2000 in Yang, 2006). Successful communication cannot be achieved without effective listening. In fact, listening may be the single most important skill in facilitating one's personal and professional development.

Listening plays a very important role on students' language development. Listening is the way of learning the language. To learn a language the first step will be listening. Listening is a time of observation and learning which provides the basis for other language skills. One has to be a competent listener in order to learn a language. Huberner (1959:28) states that in acquiring a foreign language, listening of course comes first. Listening is a gate to help learners acquiring languages, especially foreign language.

Listening process is not simply just decoding activity, listening includes understanding the spoken message or information. Listening is a complex, active process of interpretation; in which listeners match what they hear with what they

already know. In this process, listener uses their listening comprehension skill. Improving listening comprehension is extremely important. Student with good listening comprehension skills are able to participate more effectively in class (Brown, 2001).

Most of students still get difficulties in listening especially when it deals with listening comprehension. Harmer (1999: 231) states that teaching listening can cause some problems for students. Anderson-Mejia (1986) also states that it is in listening rather than reading and speaking that non-native learners experience a great deal of difficulty. Listening comprehension has information processing such as phoneme perception, word recognition, syntactic analysis, propositional construction. Low on concentration is one of problems in listening comprehension process (Yamaguchi, 2001). Underwood (1989:19) stated that inability to concentrate is a major problem because even the shortest break in attention can seriously impair comprehension.

Unlike other language skills such as reading and writing, which can be observed directly, listening is an abstract process of hearing, identifying, understanding and interpreting spoken language (Lewis, 2000 in Yang, 2006). Listening is an invisible mental process, making it difficult to describe. And it is getting more difficult to describe about comprehension process. But the two processes top-down and bottom-up process which are adapting from reading comprehension process, can be use to explain listening comprehension process.

According to Hedge (2000:232), in bottom-up process, listeners use information in the speech itself to try to comprehend the meaning. And in top-down process listeners infer meaning from contextual clues and from making links between the spoken message and various types of prior knowledge which listeners hold inside their heads.

To be able to comprehend better, students need to use and combine the two processes in listening activity. The combination of the two processes was later known as ‘interactive process’. Teachers need to teach students to use the combination of the two processes in order to support them in their listening comprehension difficulties. The reality is that most of listening activities that were done in classroom focus only on top-down process. This is in line with Morley’s (2007) statement that the emphasis in EFL listening materials in recent years has been on developing top-down listening processes.

The regular way of teaching listening that is done in many schools recently is by using the top-down process only. Students are not asked to recognize every word they heard, as long as they can answer the following comprehension test, they are considered to have comprehended all the passage. Sometimes it is not true. Students sometimes still don’t understand what is actually spoken on the passage. They may figure and guess part of the spoken text, but they never really understand the rest of text, while it is important to understand the whole text to get the precise comprehension. For low-level students like Junior High School students, it becomes more difficult; remembering that they do not have enough vocabulary or knowledge of the language yet.

Decoding process in bottom-up listening might be the key to help students especially low-level students to understand enough linguistic elements of what they hear to then be able to use their top-down skills to fill in the gaps.

Recognizing all words being said is important. It is because one word can determine the meaning of the whole text. If one important word is missed; it can hamper students to comprehend the message of the text being said. That is why bottom-up process in listening needs to be given more attention and needs to be practiced in listening classes so it can help develop students' listening comprehension skill.

Low level students like Junior High School students are those who need this process more than students in more advanced level. Intermediate or even advanced level students like those of Senior High School students or of higher education level will have fewer problems with identifying spoken text. It is because they have much information about English and language elements that is stored in their background knowledge or "schemata". Low level students do not listen to English as much as intermediate or advance level students so they do not have enough "schemata" to only use the top-down process in listening activity. That is why it may be more valuable if the bottom-up process of listening starts to be introduced from the beginner classes like SMP students.

The appropriate technique is needed in order to bring bottom-up process-based activity into listening classes; since top-down process has been used continuously. In teaching learning activity, teaching technique has a great role. The students' learning depends upon the effectiveness of the teacher technique (Wilkins, 1983).

One technique that is appropriate to give more focus on bottom-up process is dictation technique. Dictation is a valuable language learning device that has been used for centuries. Its advantages are numerous. The most common are that dictation can help students to diagnose and correct grammatical mistakes, it ensures attentive listening and trains students distinguish sounds; helps learning punctuation and develops aural comprehension.

Some language practitioners view dictations negatively, believing that it hardly teaches anything, but it may have some value as a testing device. But Nakamura (1978) states that dictation offers much as a technique for motivating language learners to understand spoken language, specifically in a teaching or learning situation where the teacher feels that literary skills based on grammar learning are emphasized too much over aural-oral skills.

Introducing beginner students to this technique may be more valuable. Dictation can help beginner students to get used to concentrate on listening. It also can help them memorize what they have heard well. This is in line with a research done by Kiany and Shiramiry (2002) that resulted in the significance improvement on elementary EFL students' listening comprehension achievement who used frequent dictation technique.

A research done by Zuhar (2008) also shows that listening comprehension achievement of students of SMPN 8 B. Lampung is still low. His research intended to know whether there is any significance increase of students' listening comprehension achievement taught through picture dictation technique. The low

ability of students' of SMPN 8 B. Lampung is proved by the mean of pre-test score that shows 57.35 in experimental class and 56.5 in control class. This is in line with the result of pre-research test done to 37 subjects at SMPN 8 which shows that the mean scores of their listening comprehension achievement were 52.72. That is why the writer wants to know whether dictation technique can increase students' listening comprehension achievement at SMPN 8 Bandar Lampung.

1.2. Problem of the Research

Based on the background above, the problem of the research is formulated as follows:

Is there any significant increase of students' listening comprehension achievement at SMPN 8 Bandar Lampung after they are taught using dictation technique?

1.3. Objective of the Research

The objective of this research is:

To find out whether dictation technique significantly increases students' listening comprehension achievement in SMPN 8 Bandar Lampung.

1.4. Uses of the Research

The uses of this research are:

1. Theoretically to support theories that dictation technique can be applied to increase students' listening comprehension achievement that will be discussed in Chapter II.
2. Practically, the results of this research can be used as a consideration for English teachers to use dictation technique for teaching listening.

1.5. Scope of the Research

This research was conducted to investigate students' listening comprehension achievement at the eighth grade of SMP N 8 Bandar Lampung. The focus of the research is on increasing students' listening comprehension achievement through dictation technique. This research was conducted at the eighth grade of SMPN 8 Bandar Lampung. The writer chooses the eighth grade of SMPN 8 Bandar Lampung because the eighth and ninth grade students are assumed to be those who have experienced top-down-based listening class; the third grade students of SMPN 8 Bandar Lampung were preparing for the national examination. So there is a chance that they do not focus on receiving new technique.