CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher would like to explain in detail about research background, research problems, research objectives, research significance, scope and limitation and definition of key terms.

1.1 Research Background

In learning English, there are four language skills which have to be mastered, they are writing, listening, reading, and speaking. Those four skills are dived into two types, namely receptive skill and productive skill. Receptive skill is a term used for reading and listening skills where meaning is extracted from the discourse. Productive skill is the term for speaking and writing skills where students actually have to produce language themselves (Harmer, 2001).

Listening comprehension is one of the four skills that plays a very important role at the beginning stage of the language acquisition. It is because listening becomes a starter to learn a language. Rost (1994, p.141-142) points out, “Listening is vital in the language classroom because it provides input for the learner: Without understanding input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin”.

When people start to learn a language he should listen first to get some knowledge and to process any kind of knowledge, then he will go to the next process to learning such as speaking, reading and writing. This statement is also supported by another expert, Jones (in Yidliani, 2001) who states that nobody can hope to be a successful language learner unless he has good ears. It is clear that the function of
bars in listening is very essential. That is why the learners should have good listening comprehension.

In fact, there are many students who have problems in their listening comprehension. In this case, some problems arise because the students hardly understand what the speaker say when they heard some conversation, especially from native speakers. The natural fast speech of native speakers sometimes make them could not catch the meaning of the conversation they have heard.

In additional, Rivers (1981) states that many students are able to read, write and even speak English well. However, they find problems to listen in English, especially when they listen to the native speaker’s speech on the radio or when watching television. This problem implies that listening has its special problems which arise from the speed and immaterial nature of spoken utterances. The other expert for communication says that the skill in listening cannot take place successfully if the message said is not understood. The learners might find it difficult to follow what is spoken to them (Cahyono in Purna, 1997).

Furthermore, the researcher sees that there are many students of English Department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang, especially the Thai students who have difficulties to improve their listening skill although they have learnt about it for some semesters. They also do not know how to improve their listening skill.

Considering the facts stated above, there is a need of an investigation to find out the students’ problems in listening. In this study, the researcher tries to identify the problems faced by the Thai students of English Department at University of
Muhammadiyah Malang in their listening subject, so hopefully the students could cope their problems by knowing their own weaknesses.

1.2 Research Problems

Based on the background of study, the statement of the problems can be stated as follows:

1. What problems do Thai students face in learning listening comprehension?
2. How do Thai students solve their problems in learning listening comprehension?

1.3 Research Objectives

According to the problems of study above, the purposes of the study are stated as follows:

1. To know the problems Thai students face in learning listening comprehension.
2. To solve Thai students’ problems of English Department in learning listening comprehension.

1.4 Research Significance

This study is conducted in the hope that the result would give some significance as follows. For English lecturers, the outcomes will give information about the students’ problems in learning listening comprehension and also will contribute for the improvement of English teaching especially for teaching listening. Secondly, for English Department students, the result will be applied as one of the sources of teaching listening when they become English teachers. Besides, it will help the students recognize their own weakness in learning listening.
So, they know how to cope with the problems they have faced. Lastly, for the next researchers, the result of this study is hoped to give illustration to the researcher about problems faced by Thai students of English Department at University of Muhammadiyah Malang in learning listening comprehension.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is focused on the Thai students’ problems in learning listening. It is limited to 7 Thai students of English Department at University of Muhammadiyah Malang. Thai students have problems in learning listening subject.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding about some basic concepts used in the study, it is necessary to provide the definition as follows:

**Problem** is some difficulties or troubles that make the process of teaching and learning not to run well. In this study, the researcher discusses both linguistic and nonlinguistic factors which affect the students’ problems in listening comprehension.

**Listening** is defined as a receptive skill. The listener cannot control the vocals, structures or the components of the spoken information. Actually listening is a process of hearing some spoken things and trying to understand about certain information. The aim is not just remembering the specific words or phrases but to extract the main ideas or information.

**Comprehension** is the listening process of getting information about the spoken massages the result of which can be a measurement in understanding listening
subject. Thus, fully understanding is a must when students are learning listening in order to get some information. This fully understanding can be reached by the learners through some process and some decision they have taken.