

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of Study

In English, as well as other languages, there are four skills that should be mastered by its learners. Those important skills of language are listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. In the foreign language classroom, listening becomes the important thing because it provides input for the learners. When considering interpersonal communication competence, listening is the first skill to master and also listening ability in English as a foreign language has important role in building communication skill, but when considering academic competence, listening has essential figure in teaching and learning English.

Listening is the process of understanding speech in a first or second language. It means that listening is one of the major skills that every English student must have. Listening means paying attention and making an effort to process what you heard. In other words, listening skill allows you to understand what someone is talking about. (Rivers 1981:160).

It is related to the revelation of the Allah in Q. S. An-Nahl/16:78.

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ  
وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

The verse above explained about the pleasure of Allah has given to the human who should be grateful. Allah has created them from the womb of mother in weak and knew nothing. So, he gave provisions for human to support their life

and used as good. He gave sense to the human to understand and distinguish between good and bad, he gave sight to see what not seen before, and gave hearing to hear the sounds so the human could be communicate and learn. Hearing is one of the provisions of Allah and it is very useful for human life, because without it the human cannot hear sounds of things, cannot hear human voices, cannot hear the sound of language, cannot hear the sounds of vowel and consonant, and cannot interact or communicate with each other also from hearing human be able to do the daily activity normally and also to receive some information around their environment in the world.

As the first language skill, listening is a difficult skill in second language learning. The difficulty is caused by many factors. The writer agrees with Ur (1996: 111) who said that there are some students' difficulties in learning listening: getting trouble with sounds, needing to understand of every word, being enable to understand fast and natural native speech, needing to hear things more than once, finding it difficult to keep up, and get tired.

Listening is difficult to learn, because it needs concentration and focus also the learners have to listen carefully what the native speaker said. Practically, there are still many students who have lack of listening skill than other skill, especially it is the common problem that ESL students have. For example, when students could speak fluently but they could not identify what the native speaker or their teacher said. It could be influenced by either the speed of speech that is too fast or the low responses skill of what they heard.

The learners who learn English should be able to listen well, because listening need carefulness, high concentration, and it is difficult to learn for the learners who lack in vocabularies. So, the learners must listen to anything and practice everyday to improve their vocabulary, because sufficient vocabulary is important for understanding the meaning of language. It makes the learners more easier to identify the correct word through the meaning. Besides, there are some ways to help the learners to improve their vocabulary. They can listen to the cassette, music, stories or short conversation from native speaker and so on. The learners also can utilize their own smart phone as the learning media. They can download education app to make the learning more interesting.

Addition, to do exercise is also important to improve the learners' ability in listening. There is a kind of exercise used, it is listening in minimal pairs in words. This exercise has many benefits to the learners, because they should be able to identify which one is a true and which one is false. Moreover, they can indentify the difference of sounds in English, such as as vowel sounds, consonant sounds, and minimal pairs.

Minimal pairs are pairs of words which differ in pronunciation of one sound only but it has different meaning. The learners has difficulties to discriminated minimal pairs in listening vowel. There were some words that have similar sound and it is make the learners difficult to distinguish every word. When two words such as 'pat' and 'bat' are identical in form except for a contrast in one phoneme, occuring in the same position, the two words are described as a minimal pair (Yule, 2006:46). In this case, the learners need to have many vocabularies in

their memories, because different word is different meaning. The writer assumed that minimal pairs is important to mastery because it will help students in their listening skill.

Regarding to this research, there were some researchers which are conducted about minimal pairs. The first previous research is about teaching listening minimal pairs was done by Richa, Susilawati, and Bunau, in 2014 entitled *Teaching Listening Through Minimal Pairs Sound Dictation Technique*. Students of the eighth grade A students at SMPN 3 Sungai Ambawang Pontianak in 2013/2014. There are similarities between this research and previous research. The previous research conducted the same subject such as listening to minimal pairs and the eighth grade students. The difference is in the technique of research. The previous research conducted dictation and experiment class for the research. The method that used to collect the data was pre-experimental which use pre-test and post-test to compare the results before and after applying dictation technique in a classroom. The research showed that there was an increasing of students' achievement in listening minimal pairs sound. Based on the scoring indicated students' performance in post-test is better than pre-test and the writer found that teaching listening through minimal pairs sound dictation was affective to improve the listening ability at eighth grade students at SMPN 3 Sungai Ambawang year 2013/2014.

The second previous research was done by Huda, in 2016 entitled *The Students' Ability in Listening to Minimal Pairs Through Pictures at the Fourth Semester of English Department at Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies*

*Banjarmasin Academic Year 2014/2015*. The similarity the previous research with this research is conducted minimal pairs. The differences is the previous research focused on ability in vowel minimal pairs through pictures in consonants and vowel, while this research will conduct about errors in listening vowel minimal pairs. The approach is quantitative approach which is the data are analyzed quantitatively to show how is the ability and the most difficult minimal pairs to listen through picture by the students. The finding of the previous research it states that students' ability in listening to minimal pairs through pictures at fourth semester of English Department at Antasari State Institute for Islamic studies is in sufficient category. It is based on the calculation of students' mean score that is 53.18. Furthermore, the most difficult minimal pairs in listening through pictures is sound /e/ and /ei/, in the words Pen /pen/ and Pain /pein/ and also sound /t/ and /θ/ in the words /Tanks/tæŋk/ and Thank /θæŋk/ with both of them have the same total in wrong answer that is 3.37%. From 166 students, there were 112 students who answered incorrectly.

The third previous research was done by Marawiah, in 2016 entitled *Common Errors in Listening of Eleventh Grade Students at MAN 1 Kandungan Academic Year 2014/2015*. There are similarities between this research and the previous research. The similarities are investigated about minimal pairs, common errors, and use written test to collect the data. The differences are in the object of the research. In the previous research investigated kinds of errors minimal pairs about one word stimulus, phonemic pair, consonants, vowels, morphological pair, -ed. Meanwhile this research just investigated about vowel minimal pairs. The

technique used by the previous research is descriptive quantitative to describe the common error and determine the frequency and percentage of each error that will occur. The result of the research indicates that the most common type of errors in listening made the eleventh grade at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Kandungan academic year 2014/2015 is in choosing vowels phonemics pair as many as 73 (27,96%)

Based on the background above, the writer is interested in analyze students' errors in listening minimal pairs especially for the eighth grade students at SMPN 3 Kertak Hanyar. Because it was the school when the writer did PPL 2. Another reason is the writer found some students has trouble while learning listening. This problem occurred because of several factors that have influenced the eighth grade students and make them difficult in learning listening. Based on the fact, the writer want to investigated deeply about this problem and to know the kind of factors that influenced students in learning listening. Then, the writer is interested in conducting research entitled **STUDENTS' COMMON ERRORS IN LISTENING TO VOWEL MINIMAL PAIRS AT SMPN 3 KERTAK HANYAR BANJAR REGENCY**. By conducting the this research, the writer hopes it can give many benefits such as to make the students more knowing the sounds of vowels, to develop students vocabulary with the new word and to readers who need information related to this research.

## **B. Statement of the Problems**

Based on the background above, the writer investigate the following questions:

1. What kind of errors in listening to vowel minimal pairs of the eighth grade students at SMPN 3 Kertak Hanyar Banjar Regency?
2. What are the causes of students' errors in listening to vowel minimal pairs of the eighth grade students at SMPN 3 Kertak Hanyar Banjar Regency?

## **C. Objectives of Study**

The purpose of this research are:

1. To find the most common of errors in listening to vowel minimal pairs made by the eighth grade students at SMPN 3 Kertak Hanyar Banjar Regency.
2. To identify the causes of students' errors in listening to vowel minimal pairs of eighth grade students at SMPN 3 Kertak Hanyar Banjar Regency.

## **D. Significance of Study**

The significance of this research are:

1. Giving information about the common errors in students' listening to vowel minimal pairs.
2. Giving invormation about the kind factors of common errors made by students in listening to vowel minimal pairs.
3. For the students, it can improve their ability in learning listening.

4. Enriching the writers' knowledge about the common errors made by students in learning listening.
5. For teacher should do the best for developing English teaching and learning process by performing better technique and using media to increase students' interest when teaching listening.

### **E. Operational Definition**

To avoid misinterpretation about the title. Which is adopted in this study.

The writer feels necessary to explain some terms concerning the title as follows:

1. Students' common error is regarded usual or familiar mistake or something done wrong made by the students in learning listening to vowel minimal pairs caused by many factors. The students here are students of the eighth grade students at SMPN 3 Kertak Hanyar Banjar Regency 2016/2017.
2. Listening minimal pairs is listening two words that differ in only one sound. Minimal pair is two speeches sound that are alike in a language that distinguish one word from another. Minimal pairs consist of two categories; vowel and consonant, but the writer just focused on the vowel minimal pairs.
3. Vowel minimal pairs is two sounds are pairs of words that vary by only a single sound, usually meaning sounds that may confuse English learners. There are some types of vowel minimal pairs which the writer takes, they are (/i:/ /I/), (/ʌ/ /a:/), (/ʊ /u:/), (/ɒ/ɔ:/), (/eə/ɪə/).