

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Rationale

Language is important to human's daily-life since they have to communicate with others. People in the world use different languages in different situation according to their culture and society, they use language as system of communication by using sounds, symbols, or word in expressing meaning. The primary function of languages is undoubtedly to facilitate interaction among people. Language and human are two things which have been always together and related each both. Language becomes characteristics of human being. Without language humans are doing nothing as existence of life.

Language is an arbitrary system of symbolic relationship that permits the encoding of ideas into utterances and decoding of utterances into their meanings. Language is manifested in speech and writing. Speech is manifestation<sup>1</sup>. It means that language comprises a set of vocabularies from our thinking of manifestation to our speaking. Language is that a set of rules. It simply reflects on aspect of the systematic structure of a language.

Language is also the God's gift for human. He created different languages, as written in the Holy Koran in the Ar- Rum Verse 22, as follows:

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<sup>11</sup> Ian RA. Mackay, *Phonetics, the Science of Speech Production*, (United States of America : A College Hill Publication, 1987), second edition, p.29-30.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَاللُّغَاتِكُمْ  
 إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

The verse above explains that God created many languages in this world. One of the important languages that are used in learned by most people in the world is English.

Human language involves both receptive and productive use. Receptive language use occurs during the comprehension or understanding of words and sentences. Productive language use involves idea generation and the articulation of words in speech. Both reception and production utilize the four basic structural components of language including: *Phonology, Semantics, Grammar, and Pragmatics*<sup>2</sup>.

These four basic systems can be extended and elaborated when humans use language for special purposes, such as for poetry, song, legal documents, or scientific discourse. The literate control of language constructs additional complex social, cognitive, and linguistic structures that are built on top of the four basic structural components.

Learning a language is not a matter of acquiring a set rule and bulding up large vocabularies. But learning the language of how well people are able to use the language itself. Language is not only notified but has to use not by how much he knew about it. In this case, learn the language has many similarities with learning a musical instrument. The drills and exercises someone does have one end in sight: to

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<sup>2</sup>Brian Macwhinney, *The Basic Components of Human Language* <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2153/Language-Acquisition.html> (accessed on June, 9 2010 at 19 : 53).

enable him to become a skilled performer. Someone who learned much grammar, but cannot use the language is in a position as a pianist who has learned a lot about harmony but cannot play the piano. So how a person is judged not to know but how well he could be skilled in public.<sup>3</sup>

If your goal in learning English is to be able to communicate, you need to understand listening while it is possible to learn to understand without speaking, it is not possible to learn to speak without understanding. One person who was studying china language in a class in his home country then visited china and was fumbling as he tried to speak with Chinese because they spoke too fast, and he was not practicing in listening, so he couldn't think of how to answer question because he couldn't understand what was being said. Many times people devote so much more time to speaking skill than to listening skills. This can be a problem because student who cannot listen and understand have trouble speaking even if they have good speaking skills.

Acquiring a foreign language can happen by many methods, at any age, and for the purpose of any kind. Based on to this fact, acquiring a foreign language distinguish in some types namely language acquirement led such as those which applied in formal schools generally, and the language acquirement naturally which can happen in everyday communication, free from the teaching.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> L.G. Alexander, *Practice and Progress, An Integrated Course For Pre-Intermediate Students, this edition for Indonesia is published by arrangement with Longman Group Ltd. London* (Yogyakarta : Kanisius (anggota IKAPI), 1975), p. vii

<sup>4</sup> Henry Guntur Tarigan, *Pengajaran Pemerolehan Bahasa*, (Bandung : Angkasa, 1999) p.169

Language is acquired in receptive and productive ways. In general people get better language through receptive way. Listening takes a big part in this process, while listening people receive many new things and then process them in their brain. That is why listening is very crucial in processing acquiring language especially English as a foreign language.

In Indonesia, English as first foreign language that included in compulsory subject at formal schooling. It is taught and learned from elementary to university levels. The skill that are emphasized in the language teaching and learning process including listening, speaking, reading and writing. The position of English at school is very important since it becomes one of the four subjects that are examined in *UAN* (Nation Examination).

Among the four language skills, listening tends to get less attention. Quoted from Rost about teaching and learning, he stated that:

Teaching method emphasized production skill, and the relationship between receptive and productive skill was poorly understood. Until recently, the nature of listening in the second language was ignored by linguistic and it was often assumed that listening skills could be acquired through exposure but not really taught. He also point out, listening is vital in language classroom because it provides input for the learner. Without understanding input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin.<sup>5</sup>

Listening is the first skill and has been viewed as a primary vehicle for language acquisition process that gotten by listening. It relates to the revelation of the God in Holy Quran Surah An-Nahl 78, as follow:

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<sup>5</sup> Rost Michael. *Listening in Action* (United Kingdom: Prentice Hall International Ltd, 1991), p.141

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

Listening means to pay attention to sound of the other person, therefore it is sound of spoken language has a meaning. Language is sound may appear natural, because the most common experience all people have of language is in speaking and listening. Every word that human speaks of course makes a sound.

The study of how sound are organized and used in natural languages is called phonology.<sup>6</sup> Phonology is essential description of the systems and patterns of speech sound in a language. Phonology is concert with the aspect of sound in language. The phonological of a language includes rules which specify how sound interact with each other.<sup>7</sup>

Phonetic refers to the study of speech sounds (hearing and producing them), and phonology is the features of sound in a language are systematically structured. They are divided into two main branches 1. The branch of segmental features including consonant and vowels. 2. The branch of supra segmental features including stress, intonation, pause, juncture, and rhythm.

Consonants are opposite of vowel and the meaning of consonants here does not refer to the consonants found in English alphabet, but the word consonant is phonemic. In other word, the consonant are produced orally as sound.

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<sup>6</sup>J. Douglas Wingate, *What is Phonology*. <http://www.sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryOfLinguisticTerms/WhatIsPhonology.htm> (accessed on March, 11 2009 at 21 : 13)

<sup>7</sup> George Yule. *The Study of Language*.( Australia Cambridge University Press, 1985) p.44

Vowels are some letter that is produced by articulation that makes sounds, and the number of vowels are about fourteen that arranges in point of articulation in the mouth and it is pointed to chart of vowels namely: 1. front, central, back, high, mid and low refer to the position of the tongue in the mouth, 2. rounded and rounded refer to shape of the lips and, 2. close and open refer to relative opening of the jaw.

In Indonesian language has six phonemes of vowels. They are /i/, /e/, /ə /, /a/, /u/, and /o/. Although the shape of the lip gives influences to the vowels quality, in Indonesian language, this is not hold an important role.<sup>8</sup>

Since many words of English vocabulary include vowel phonemes, then aspect of vowels has many effects on listening skills. When students do not really understand vowels, it will make their listening skill become low, and then becomes lower if they do not practice much in listening lesson. In some schools, English teachers rarely bring their student to listening laboratory.

Base on a factual expriences was viewed from PPL II (Program Pengalaman Lapangan). The listening section almost had no place in teaching and learning english at school. so the reseacher is interesting to do reseach about listening that releted to fonem between words.

From the statement above, it can be noted that listening plays a small role in the teaching and learning process at the school. It is a not good phenomenon for the students' future in learning English. Particularly because one of component tested in the school final examination (UAN/UAS) is listening.

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<sup>8</sup> Adrian Akmajian, et. al., *linguistics: an Introduction to Language and Communication*, (London: MIT Press, 1979), pp. 75-76

Base on contradiction above, the writer is interested in doing a systematic research with the title: THE STUDENTS' ABILITY TO DIFFERENTIATE SHORT HIGH FRONT SPREAD VOWEL / I / AND LONG HIGH FRONT SPREAD VOWEL /i:/ SOUNDS (STUDY AT MA AL-ISTIQAMAH BOARDING SCHOOL PEKAPURAN RAYA BANJARMASIN).

To avoid any misinterpretation regarding the title, the writer needs to explain some terms in the title as follows:

1. Ability according to oxford dictionary means "The quality of being able to do something, power or skill required to do something"<sup>9</sup>. "The ability" that discussed in this study related to students' ability of students to differentiate short high front spread vowel /I/ and long high front spread vowel /i:/ sounds. (hereafter referred to and abbreviated as SHFSV /I/ and LHFSV /i:/)
2. Differentiate according to oxford dictionary means show the difference between two or more things; distinguish one thing from others<sup>10</sup>. Thus, the writer will look for differentiating vowel sound /I/ and /i:/ by listening.
3. Vowel sounds are a speech sound made with the vocal tract open.<sup>11</sup> the vowel is a speech sound, such as (ē) or (ĩ), created by the relatively free passage of breath through the larynx and oral cavity, usually forming the most prominent

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<sup>9</sup>AS, Horby Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (London: Oxford University Press, 1987), P. 2

<sup>10</sup> Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary, new edition (London : Oxford University Press, 2005), p.120

<sup>11</sup> The Free Dictionary by Farlex, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/vowel+sound> ( accessed on December, 29 2009 at 20:29)

and central sound of a syllable. A letter, such as *a, e, i, o, u*, and sometimes *y* in the English alphabet that represents a vowel.<sup>12</sup>

4. The tenth grade students of MA Al-Istiqamah Boarding School Pekapuran Raya Banjarmasin in academic year 2009/2010.

## **B. Problem Formulation**

Based on the statement above, the writer formulates the problem as follows:

1. How is the students' ability to differentiate SHFSV /ɪ/ and LHFSV /i:/ sounds at Tenth Grade of MA Al-Istiqamah Boarding School Pekapuran Raya Banjarmasin in Academic Year 2009/2010 ?.
2. What factor influence the students' ability to differentiate HFSV /ɪ/ and LHFSV /i:/ sounds at Tenth Grade of MA Al-Istiqamah Boarding School Pekapuran Raya Banjarmasin in Academic Year 2009/2010?.

## **C. Reason for Choosing the Title**

There are certain reasons for choosing this title:

1. English is one of the most popular languages in the world that has become the main communication device in the field of science and technology.
2. People can understand what is spoken if he/she listens to English words.
3. Students' ability in listening to the sounds in English words is very important to avoid misunderstanding in communication, especially with vowel sounds /ɪ/ and /i:/ because not all students at the tenth grade af MA Al-Istiqamah Boarding School Pekapuran Raya Banjarmasin are able to differentiate the sound correctly.

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<sup>12</sup> Dictionary. An Ask.com service, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/vowel> (accessed on December, 29 2009 at 20:34)



#### **D. Purpose of Research**

Regarding the questions above, the purpose of this Research is as follows:

1. To know the students' ability to differentiate SHFSV /I/ and LHFSV /i:/ sounds at Tenth Grade of MA Al-Istiqamah Boarding School Pekapuran Raya Banjarmasin in Academic Year 2009/2010.
2. To find out factors that influence the students' ability to differentiate SHFSV /I/ and SHFSV /i:/ sounds at Tenth Grade of MA Al-Istiqamah Boarding School Pekapuran Raya Banjarmasin in Academic Year 2009/2010.

#### **E. Significance of Research**

The results achieved in this research will provide:

1. Clear information for teachers or lecturer who want to know about the ability of students to differentiate SHFSV /I/ and SHFSV /i:/ sounds.
2. Student's ability to improve their ability in listening to English words and vowel.
3. To enrich knowledge for research and other readers
4. This research presents information to the reader about the ability of students to differentiate SHFSV /I/ and SHFSV /i:/ sounds.

## **F. Organization of the Contents**

This study is divided into five chapters, as follows:

The first chapter contains introduction, which consists of rationale, statement of the problem, reason of adopting the title, purpose of study, significance of study, and organization of the contents.

The second chapter contains the theoretical review, which consists of Definition of phonology, Sound of Language, English Sounds, The Nature of Listening, Types of Listening, Listening in English Teaching and Learning Process and the problem of Listening to Sounds, The Factors that influence the ability in listening.

The third chapter contains the method of research, which consists of population and sample, data and research data, instrument design technique of data processing and analysis and research procedure.

The fourth chapter contains reports of research, results which is consisting of general description about the place of study, data presentation and data analysis, and research result interpretation.

The fifth chapter is the closure consisting of conclusion and suggestions.