

CHAPTER I

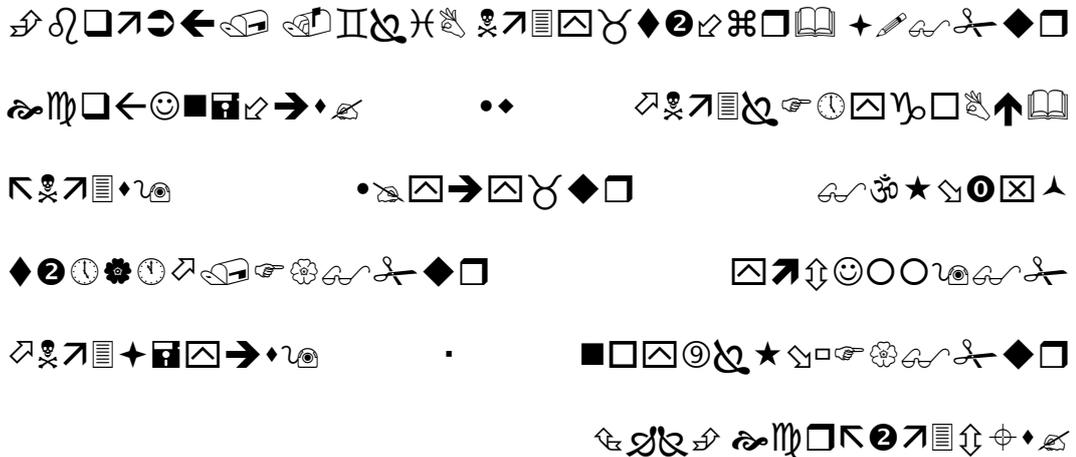
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Language is the component of communication that is used by people of the world to tell what in their minds to others such as opinions, ideas, information, etc. by using language; we can easily communicate with other people in getting the best interaction. Badadu said that language is “*interest, opinion, intelligence, mind, spoken, speech, and babbling*” (Badadu & Mahmud, 1996)

Language learning is largely a process of developing automatic cognitive process. Teachers should well be aware of the cognitive process involved in listening and provide learners with an opportunity for meaningful practice. Students are required to be able to master English. They have to study English from elementary school until university level. It becomes one of compulsory subjects in all education levels. Learning English as a foreign language is an integrated process that the learners may not ignore one or more aspect of four basic skills, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Harmer in his book said that one language skill should not be performed without another skill. It is impossible to speak without listening to the speaker and impossible to write without reading the sources (Harmer, 1991). Because of that, for the first process people study something through listening then speaking next to reading and the last to express the ideas with writing. It is

related to the revelation of the God in Holy Qur'an Surah An-Nahl: 78, as follow:



The verse explains that sense of hearing is the main process for humans to receive some information around their environment in the world.

Listening is communicative behavior, in which listeners try to construct a reasonable interpretation of a text for some communicative purposes. Listening is an active, purposeful process of making sense of what people hear (Nunan, 2003). This means that listening has an important role to build a good communication. Listening is the absorption of the meaning of the words and sentences by brain. It is a skill in a sense that it is a related but distinct process that hearing which involves merely perceiving sounds in passive way while listening occupies an active and immediate analysis of the streams of sound (Mili & Reznawan, 2011). It means that listening has a receptive process between sound and meaning and it has to be active analyze.

Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent of pronunciation, his

grammar and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning (Howatt & Dakin, 1974).

In listening we can identify the difference of sounds in English, such as vowel sounds, consonant sounds and minimal pairs, for them we can identify the sounds which are nearly in the same sound. Minimal pairs are pairs of words which differ in the pronunciation of one sound only. An example for English is the pair *ship* and *sheep*, where the distinguishing sounds are /ɪ/ and /i:/ (Brown, 1993).

Students in collage must have ability in minimal pairs through pictures, because identify minimal pairs it is not only to by using words but also by using pictures. Students must have ability to differentiate minimal pairs through pictures, because it is very important to improve their ability in English. Minimal pairs are difficult for the students who have less attention to what they have heard or lack vocabularies. Minimal Pairs exercises are used to help students practice and improve their pronunciation of distinct sounds in English. Because some English phonemes are difficult to hear and pronounce, minimal pairs exercises can be used to provide extra practice with particularly difficult phonemes. There are different ways that minimal pair exercises may be used, one of them by using pictures. Using pictures not only improve and practice students' pronunciation but also improve their vocabulary. The writer chooses the fourth semester in the research because the students have learned pronunciation and basic listening before. Moreover, they have not got an exercise of minimal pair through pictures.

The writer argues listening is one of the skills in English that is harder to understand. It was supported by Rost (1994) who stated that 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. Also, the writer assumed that listening to minimal pairs through pictures is important to master English because it will help the students in their listening skill especially by pictures. In this case, students must have a good ability in listening and vocabularies that related to pictures.

Based on the statement above the writer is interested in choosing the title : 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.

B. Statement of Problem

Based on the explanation above the writer investigates the following problems:

1. How is the students' ability in listening to minimal pairs through pictures at the fourth semester of English education department at Antasari State Institute for Islamic studies Banjarmasin academic year 2014/2015?

2. What is the most difficult minimal pair to listen through pictures at the fourth semester of English education department at Antasari State Institute for Islamic studies Banjarmasin academic year 2014/2015?

C. Objectives of the Research

Based on the statement of the problems, the objectives of this research are:

1. To know students' ability in listening to minimal pairs through pictures at the fourth semester of Antasari State Institute for Islamic studies Banjarmasin academic year 2014/2015.
2. To find the most difficult minimal pair to listen through pictures at the fourth semester of Antasari State Institute for Islamic studies Banjarmasin academic year 2014/2015.

D. Significance of the Research

The benefits of this research are expected to give contribution as follow:

1. For lecturer as alternatives in choosing method in teaching listening minimal pairs using pictures.
2. For students; as motivation in learning English especially in listening to improve their skill.
3. For researcher; enriching the writer's knowledge and experience in this research.

E. Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding about the title, certain terms should be explained as follows:

1. Ability according to oxford dictionary means “The quality of being able to do something, power or skill required to do something (Hornby A S. 1987: P. 2). The ability discussed in this study is related to students’ ability in listening to minimal pairs using pictures.
2. Listening is a communicative behavior in which listeners try to construct a reasonable interpretation of a text for some communicative purposes. Listening is ability to identify and understand what others say. This involves understanding an accent of pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning (Kral, 1993)
3. Minimal pair consists of two words that differ in pronunciation by only one sound or feature that ultimately changes the meaning of a word (Hutton, 2008). Minimal pair is two speeches sound that are alike in a language that distinguish one word from another.
4. Picture according to oxford dictionary is a painting, drawing that shows a scene, a person or a thing. ’Picture is an image or likeness of an object, person, or scene produced on a flat surface, especially by painting, drawing, or photography (Michael and Jack, 1987).
5. The fourth semester of Antasari state institute for Islamic studies Banjarmasin academic year 2014/2015 means the students who are studying in the fourth semester of English education department

