

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Language helps people in the world to communicate and express sense from one person to another. It uses to speak each other, write and text. According to Oxford dictionary (2008:247), language is system of communication in speech and writing used by people of particular country. Language is vital, not just to communicate but it is an essential skill, enabling individuals not only to survive, but to participate and engage constructively in political, social, cultural, art and economic life. Especially for globalization era right now. The existence of languages makes people to be a "community of human being". It is produced, built and developed by language as society unifier (Kruschwitz, 2011).

The fact said that language becomes important thing for people. Language is a gift from the God for human, He created different language, so that language is a part of his power, it is written in Holy Qur'an Surah Al-Hujarat verse 13 as follows:

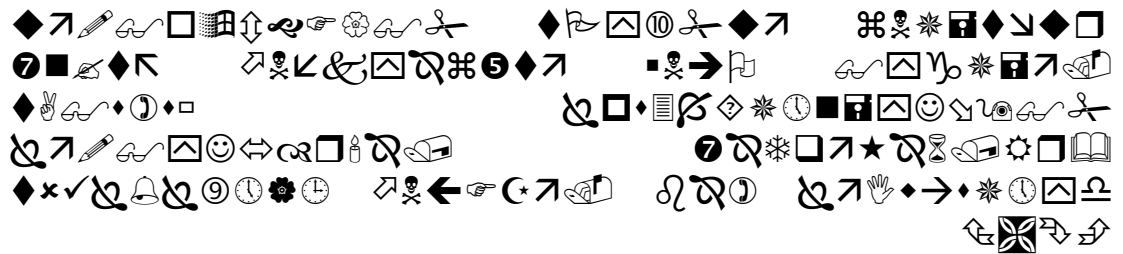




The verse describes us that Allah the Almighty creates human from man and woman, and then makes us into nations and tribes in order they know each other. From this verse it is known that every nation has its own language which is used to communicate among them.

To communicate with other people we have to be good in pronunciation, so that they can understand what we say and the meaning. Talking about pronunciation, it is the way how to pronounce the words or how to pronounce the correct words.

Pronunciation is one of the most important things in the learning in second language. Pronunciation is one of the components that are generally recognized in analysis of speech process. This is appropriate with the holly Qur'an Al Baqarah:31



The verse describes that there is a command from Allah the almighty to pronounce the name of things.

Thurnbury, (2006) states that pronunciation is the general term for the part of language classes and course that deals with aspect of the phonology of English. This includes the individual sounds (phoneme) of English, sound in connected speech, word and sentence stress, rhythm and intonation. Joan (1994:6) explains that

Pronunciation is important for students because the competency of pronunciation is one aspect that determines the level of someone speaking ability. A mistake that is made in pronouncing sounds may raise misunderstanding in communication. Because of its important, pronunciation must be paid close attention in language teaching and learning. Every word, every syllable, every sound uttered by the teacher may contribute to the learning of pronunciation. However, English pronunciation is still difficult to learn by students.

Pronunciation is very urgent to learn. When we speak, we must use a good pronunciation to make clear the meaning of our mean or understand what we said. Smith, (2012) states that Bad English pronunciation may confuse people even if you used advanced English grammar structures that make people understand you but we cannot use "simple pronunciation". On the other hand, good English pronunciation will make people understand you easily and be willing to listen to you.

Pronouncing the sounds of a language well is important, even early on in the learning process. There have been studies in which native speakers were asked to rate speech by learners, and while correct grammar and structure appear to be more significant in how high speech is rated, pronunciation is still a factor (Smith, 2012).

Furthermore, understanding phonetic rules and tendencies can help with the process of acquiring new vocabulary. Pronouncing words is often a part of memorizing them in second-language learning, so getting a strong, basic foundation in correct pronunciation early on will equate to more effective learning overall

(Smith, 2012).

Even if we have already studied English for some time, we can always improve our speech and reduce our accent. In any case, research has shown for decades that second-language learning is different from how one acquires one's native language. Pronunciation in a second language is especially resistant to improvement and it is rare that a second-language speaker can lose an accent entirely. However, this shouldn't discourage language learners from studying pronunciation and making an effort to improve their speech. The difference with second-language learning is that it requires explicit learning of vocabulary, rules, and structures, with repeated practice to commit these to long-term memory and to make access more automatic, or "fluent" (Smith, 2012).

In pronunciation there are some words that have similar sound and it is difficult to be pronounced, it's called minimal pairs. In phonetics, minimal pairs are pairs of words or phrases in a particular language, which differ in only one phoneme and have a distinct meaning. They are used to demonstrate that two phones constitute two separate phonemes in the language (Minimal Pair Definition, 2010).

Each set of words varies by only one sound. Words with different meanings that vary by only one sound are called minimal pairs. The varying sound can be either a consonant or a vowel (Claire, 2007). In simple meaning, minimal pairs are pairs of

words that have one phonological element that is different (Pronunciation, Minimal Pairs, 2012).

According to Advanced Teacher Training (2007), Minimal pair is a set of two words that are only differently by one tiny sound. If we can distinguish these tiny sounds, it will help us with pronunciation and comprehension. Minimal pairs consists of two categories, vowel and consonant. Minimal pairs are difficult to pronounce because they have similar sound. Further in the vowels sound. Sometimes we are confuse or get accidently exchanged in pronouncing the minimal pairs words.

Ladefoged (1982:27) said that the transcription of the constracting vowels in English is more difficult than the transcription of consonants for two reasons. First, dialects of English differ more in their use of vowels than in their use of consonants. Second, authorities differ widely in their views of what constitutes an appropriate description of vowels.

English has more vowels than Indonesia there are about twenty vowels, may be single vowels (like i, I, u:, ʊ, e, ə, ɜ:, ɔ:, æ, ʌ, ɑ, ɒ), or combination vowels (diphthongs) (like eɪ, ɔɪ, aɪ, Iə, ʊə, eə, əʊ, aʊ) in English (Kelly, 2001:2). As we know Indonesia has eight vowels like; (ɑ, ə, ε, e, i, o, ɔ, u), (Whiteman, 2013). In the fact, English vowels more complex than Indonesian vowels and also the English vowels more difficult to be pronounced than Indonesian vowels.

According to Free Dictionary (2012), “Mastery is Possession of consummate skill or full command or understanding of a subject”. Mastery of English

pronunciation is very monumental further in minimal pairs to communicate each other, because minimal pairs are more difficult than other word in pronouncing. The student's mastery in pronouncing vowel in minimal pairs is very important in their learning activity. It can help them more understand about what are they speak or learn. Different pronunciation is different meaning.

The researcher also has done the prior observation about pronouncing vowel in minimal pairs. The researcher observed and asked some of the sixth semester students of English Education Department of Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies Academic year 2012/2013 to pronounce some vowel in minimal pairs. The fact, the researcher found that they are difficult in pronouncing vowel in minimal pairs.

As we know the students of English Department who will become as English teachers, they are expected to have good English and capable of proficiently using each of the four language skills. They have to good in pronouncing words especially in pronouncing minimal pairs words consonant and vowel. Minimal pair is a set of words that have distinct meaning so, if we miss pronounced it may confuse the people and don't understand what you mean. Because of the vowel in minimal pair more confused than consonant in pronouncing, so the researcher more interest to do research in pronouncing vowel in minimal pairs.

Realizing from the reasons above and the difference vowels between English and Indonesian also based on the prior observation, so the researcher interested to

know how is the English Education Department students' mastery in pronouncing vowel in minimal pairs, especially the sixth semester students.

B. Statement of Problems

The problems of the study can be formulated as follow:

1. How is English Education Department students' mastery in pronouncing vowel in minimal pairs?
2. What are English Education Department students' problems in pronouncing vowel in minimal pairs?

C. Objective of Study

The objectives of study in this research are:

1. To know the English Education Department students' mastery in pronouncing vowel in minimal pairs.
2. To know the English Education Department students' problems in pronouncing vowel in minimal pairs.

D. Significance of the research

The result of this research is expected to contribute to the field as follow:

1. Enriching the write's knowledge and experience in this specific research.
2. Giving information and knowledge regarding importance of minimal pairs to understand speak natural English.
3. Providing information and considerations for future researchers.

4. Enriching literary source of the IAIN Antasari's library.
5. Providing information about the students' mastery in pronouncing vowel in minimal pairs in the effect of improving the students' pronunciation skill.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding the researcher needs to clarify the title as follow:

1. Mastery is great skill or knowledge (Oxford Dictionary, 2008:271).
2. Pronunciation is way in which a language or particular word or sound is spoken (Oxford Dictionary, 2008:352).
3. Minimal pair is a set of two words that are only differently by one tiny sound. If we can distinguish these tiny sounds, it will help us with pronunciation and comprehension (Advanced Teacher Training, 2008).
4. Minimal pairs are consists of two categories, vowel and consonant. But researcher make a decision to search only on vowel in minimal pairs. There are 10 types of minimal pair in vowels that researcher takes are (/i:/,/I/), (/æ/,/e/), (/u:/,/ʊ/), (/oʊ/,/ɔ:/), (/e/,/ei/), (/ɒ:/,/aʊ/), (/ei/,/æ), (/Ie/,/eə/), (/ɒ/,/ɔ:/), and (/æ/,/ʌ/).
5. The sixth semester students of English Education Department of Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies Banjarmasin mean the students who are sitting at the sixth semester of English Education Department of Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies Banjarmasin academic year 2012/2013.