

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Rationale

Language is a principal tool for communication in humans' life individually and socially. Individually, language is used to express ideas to other people while socially, language is used to interact one another. The ability of people to communicate using language indicates that they are different from any other creature in the world.

Humans' interactions affect the growth of culture and the accumulation of knowledge and science. On the contrary, humans need language to convey culture, science and technology. Then, a globalization of communication appears. The globalization of communication is affected by the necessity of using language to communicate something they have to other countries or nations.

According to Finocchiaro, language is a system of arbitrary, vocal symbols which permits all people in a given culture, or other people who have learned the system of that culture to communicate or interact.<sup>1</sup> It means that people have to learn and understand the system of a language used in a culture to be able to communicate with the people in that culture. In Webster's New World Dictionary, language is defined as a system of vocal sounds and combinations of such sounds to which

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<sup>1</sup>Mary Finocchiaro, *English as a Second Language: From Theory to Practice*. (New York: Regents Publishing Company, Inc. 1974) p. 3

meaning is attributed, used for the expression or communication of thoughts and feelings<sup>2</sup>

Language is created by Allah The Almighty to show evidence of His greatness as He said in the holy Quran, surah ar-Ruum, verse 22:

ومن ءاياته خلق السموات والأرض واختلاف السنتكم والوانكم ان فى ذلك لأيت للعالمين

One of languages in the world is English; English is a foreign language that used for international communication. It is used as medium to make relations in business, science, education, etc. People also can get more information from the whole world if they understand English well because today, most of information media use English as medium of instructions. Therefore, English is important to learn.

Knowing English language means that we can speak and be understood by people who understand the language. It means that we have the ability to produce sounds which have meanings and we can understand or translate the sounds produced by others. It is important to know the sounds and the pattern of sound in English but it is more important to understand that sounds or sounds order symbolize different concepts or ideas. The ability of knowing and reacting to the sounds is one characteristic of understanding the language.

One aspect of linguistics that discusses about sounds and sounds pattern is phonology. English phonology is a description of the sounds of English and their

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<sup>2</sup>*Webster's New World Dictionary –Third College Edition –* , (New York: Prentice Hall General Reference, 1989) p. 759

relationships and contrast with each other. More concretely, we can view the phonology of English – or of any language or language variety – as the pronunciation patterns of those who speak it. Additionally, phonology can be described as the study of the sound patterns of languages or of the pronunciation patterns of speakers.<sup>3</sup>

According to Stevick, pronunciation is the primary medium through which we bring our use of language to the attention of other people.<sup>4</sup> If our pronunciation is correct, our speaking will be more understandable. Pronunciation is also a primary medium for communication of information about ourselves as individuals and as representatives of different groups. Since it opens the way to a better understanding of how language works and how the different aspects of linguistic and social meaning are interrelated, an understanding of the phonology of a language is a necessary basis for fully effective teaching a spoken language.<sup>5</sup>

Phonemes are the different sounds within a language. Although there are slight differences in how individuals articulate sounds, it can still be described reasonably accurately how each sound is produced. When considering meaning, it can be seen how using one sound rather than another can change the meaning of the word. The set of phonemes consists of two categories: vowel sounds and consonant sounds. Vowel sounds are all voiced, and may be single or a combination, involving a

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<sup>3</sup>Martha Carswell Pennington, *Phonology in English Language Teaching: An International Approach*. (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1996) p. 1

<sup>4</sup>Stevick E W, *Toward a Practical Philosophy of Pronunciation: Another View*. (TESOL Quarterly 12, 1978) p. 145

<sup>5</sup>Martha Carswell Pennington, *Op. Cit.*, p. 2

movement from one vowel sound to another; such combinations are known as diphthong. One characteristic of diphthong is the changes of tongue positions when the diphthongs are pronounced. The changes relate to the height and the lowness of tongue, the movements of parts of tongue, and the stricture between tongue and palate.

English Department as one of Departments of Tarbiyah Faculty provides 45 English subjects besides institutional and educational subjects. The English subjects are designed to produce outputs of English Departments who are competent in four English skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Two of the subjects that relate to this research are Pronunciation Practice subject and Phonology subject.

Based on the writer's pre observation, the writer found that many students of English Department are less familiar with English diphthongs even some of them do not know at all about it. It is important for the students of English Department to master English diphthongs because someday they may become English teachers who must teach their students the correct pronunciation, and also because nowadays, people are emphasized and encouraged to be able to speak English well or at least they can be understood by native speakers of English. Thus, the mastery of English diphthong as one aspect of phonology is important to learn.

Based on the problem above, the writer is interested in conducting a research entitled: **The Mastery of English Diphthong Pronunciation by the Seventh Semester Students of English Department at Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies Banjarmasin Academic year 2007-2008.**

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

1. Mastery is to gain complete knowledge or skill something; to gain control of something; to overcome something; able to control other; dominating; very skillful; great skill.<sup>6</sup> In this research paper mastery means ‘ability’.
2. English diphthong is one form of vowels, it is double vowel consists of two vowel sounds but the sounds produced is single or combined because they are involved in one syllable. These sounds are called glide sounds.

Based on the explanation above, the title of the paper writer means here is a research activity about the students’ ability in pronouncing or producing glide sounds of English diphthong.

## **B. Statement of Problem**

Concerning with the topic, the problem of this research is about the students’ mastery on English diphthong. This problem is formulated as follow:

1. How is the degree of ability of the seventh semester students in English diphthong at English Department of Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies?

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<sup>6</sup>Martin H Manser, *Oxford Learner’s Pocket Dictionary*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) p. 721

2. What factors do influence the ability of the seventh semester students in English diphthong production at English Department of Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies?

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

There are some reasons that make the writer conduct this title, they are:

1. English is an important communication device in the field of science and technology.
2. Mastering English diphthong as one component of phonology is important to be able to communicate to each other easily.
3. It is important to be fluent in pronunciation for the learners of English especially for the students of English Department because the correct pronunciation is the requirement of speaking competence.

### **D. Purposes of Study**

Based on the problem above, the writer has 2 objectives, they are:

1. To find out the current descriptions of the students' mastery in English diphthongs by seventh semester students of English Department.
2. To know the factors which influence the ability of the seventh semester students in pronouncing English diphthongs.

### **E. Significances of Research**

The result of this research is expected to give contribution as follow:

1. Enriching the writer's knowledge and experience in the specific research especially about English.
2. The research can give an input for those who concentrate on improving speaking skill.
3. To be an information, consideration, and as input for educational executors on increasing and improving quality.
4. To be information and comparison for the next researchers.

### **F. Organization of the Content**

This research paper consists of five chapters; they are systematically arranged as follow:

The first chapter contains introduction, which consists of rationale, reasons for choosing the title, statement of the problem, purposes of study, significances of research, and organization of the content.

The second chapter contains theoretical review, which consists of descriptions of speech mechanism, the classification of speech sound, and the factors that influence the mastery of English diphthongs.

The third chapter is method of research which contains object of the research, population and samples, data and source of data, techniques of data collecting, basic

framework of the research, design of measurement, techniques of data processing and analysis, and research procedure.

The fourth chapter is the report of research result achieved in this study that consists of general description of research location, data presentation, and data analysis.

The fifth chapter is closure that covers conclusions and suggestions.