Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter presents the introduction of the research. It includes the background of the research, limitation of the research, questions of the research, objectives of the research and significances of the research.

Background of the Research

Indonesia is entering the AEC (Asean Economic Community) in 2015, this is when Indonesia and other ASEAN countries unite into one big free trade. This circumstance emerges some challenges for Indonesian to survive. One of them is communication challenge using English. To communicate with ASEAN countries, which have various English nativised varieties, Indonesian should have a comprehensible and acceptable English pronunciation in order to achieve mutual understanding.

According to Kachru's circle theory, Indonesia is categorized into the expanding circle country (as cited in Gilsdorf, 2002) which puts English as a foreign language. Consequently, English is just learned as a foreign language which is not frequently used by most people in a daily basis. Naturally their English skill is different from those who live in the inner and the outer circles.

English skill of Indonesian people, who are living in outer circle country is different from the native spreakers of English. Pallawa & Alam (2013) found that although Indonesian English learners have already had experience in learning English, they still have big problems in pronouncing English words.

According to Ellis (1998), English pronunciation of non-native speakers of English is influenced by their native language. As a result, the way Indonesian people pronounce English words is influenced by the Indonesian language. For example the word *measure* [meʒə] is often pronounced [mezə], because Indonesian language does not have [ʒ] in their language, so it is easier for Indonesian to pronounce [z].

In line with the example above, non–native speakers of English who do not have certain English sounds in their native language will not have the notation that refers to that English sound in their alphabetical system. Moreover, some countries do not apply Roman alphabet as the national alphabet, for example Thailand uses Thai alphabet, Myanmar uses Burmese alphabet, Laos uses Lao alphabet, and Cambodia uses Kmer alphabet. To solve this diversity, the sound has its own alphabet which is always pronounced in the same way in all over the place in this planet, it is called the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). These alphabets help people in learning the pronunciation to be commonly and comprehensibly produced because one letter only represents one sound.

At last, to have a comprehensible and acceptable English pronunciation, learning about sounds is definitely needed. This material is explored in one of the linguistic branches, namely Phonetics. Phonetics is learned in Capita Selecta on Grammar 2 by the students of English Education of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. However, based on the researcher's experience at the English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, most of students who have learned Phonetics admitted, that they found the difficulties in learning Phonetics. It is also proven by the data of students' score in the phonetic transcription test which is taken from the lecturer. In this test, they were given ten simple English words to be transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet, but the result confirmed that most of students' correct answers were less than 50%. From the explanation above, it is indicated that the Phonetics is commonly a complex learning material for the English Education Department students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta.

From the explanation that has been mentioned earlier, the researcher is interested in conducting a research under the title "Students' Difficulties in Learning Phonetics at the English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta" to find out what difficulties faced by students in learning the Phonetics, and what factors causing students' difficulties in learning Phonetics.

Limitation of the Research

This research aims at revealing students' difficulties in learning Phonetics and the factors causing the difficulties of Phonetics for students of English Education Department batch 2014. There is a need to explore this issue because the *Dokumen Kurikulum 2013* shows that the Phonetics is not included in the English curriculum of school. In other word, Phonetics is only learned in English Department in higher learning, consequently it is rarely used by most students, whereas Phonetics is very helpful in having a comprehensible and acceptable pronunciation. As a result, most students of English Education Department admit that Phonetics is difficult based on the researcher observation.

Phonetics is still broad, so the researcher needs to limit this material. This research will only elaborate students' difficulties on learning Phonetics in Capita Selecta on Grammar 2, especially the articulatory Phonetics and the factors causing the students' difficulties in Phonetics.

Questions of the Research

Considering the explanation above, the problems of the research can be indentified in two research questions, they are:

1. What are the difficulties faced by students of the English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta in learning Phonetics?

2. What are the factors causing the students' difficulties in learning Phonetics?

Objectives of the Research

This research is conducted to answer the research questions, they are :

1. To discover the difficulties faced by students of the English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta in learning Phonetics.

2. To reveal what factors causing the students' difficulties in learning Phonetics are.
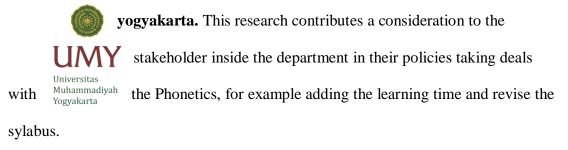
Significance of the Research

This research will donate some advantages for:

Students. This research is helpful for students who are on the process of learning Phonetics or the students who will learn it. They can take this reaserch into account to anticipate the difficulties that are often faced by students in order to anticipate the learning strategy that fit with them in learning Phonetics.

Lecturers. This research is useful for lecturers to consider the difficulties of Phonetics that are faced by students and the factors causing the difficulties to prepare

the fittest teaching strategy in order to increase their teaching quality of the related

course.

English education department of universitas muhammadiyah

yogyakarta. This research contributes a consideration to the

stakeholder inside the department in their policies taking deals

with   the Phonetics, for example adding the learning time and revise the

sylabus.

Future researchers. This research will lead the future researchers who

conduct research dealing with the Phonetics, especially the difficulties and the

factors causing the difficulties.

The researcher. The researcher is the student of English Education

Department so she will get benefit from this research finding because it will bring

some insights about the material. Therefore, she will become more aware on learning

Phonetics.