

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers five sub-chapters. They are background of the study, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study. Those subchapters are important to help the readers to understand the study deeper.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is a system used to communicate in a social group. Neither human nor any animal can exist without communication. Animal can communicate each communities by sound they make. To get information or express themselves, human communicates spoken or in written form.

The first foreign language to learn for Indonesian learners is English. They learn more about grammar, vocabulary, and common expression for daily use. The important thing is they learn how to pronounce and spell words correctly. It is because they want to improve the accuracy and fluency of their English, so that they can produce the words or sentence correctly. In pronouncing the words, they will learn through imitation. They will learn from their environment. It can be teachers, friends, or even from native speaker.

Pronunciations play an important role in learning foreign language. People assumes someone's ability in learning foreign language from their speaking. If their pronunciation are good, it means they know the language well. On the other hand, it means different if they can not pronounce it well.

While pronouncing the words, it means we make a sound. McMahon (2002) stated that there are two subdisciplines in linguistics which deal with sound, they are phonetics and phonology. Phonetics is a study used to describe and analyze the range sounds of humans while phonology focuses on the characteristics of the sound. The writer is interested in doing research about pronunciation especially in acoustic vowels.

While the consonant sounds are mostly produced via closure or obstruction in the vocal tract, a relatively free flow of air is articulated a vowel sound. Vowel sounds can be described by looking at the way the tongue effects the shape through which airflow must pass. A place of articulation is about the space inside the mouth when producing the sounds which have front back and also high low area (Yule, 2010, pp. 33-34). It occurs when the sound is produced highly with the front part of the tongue, as in the words *heat* in the vowel [i:] and *hit* in the vowel [ɪ], which is called high front vowel. In contrast, the vowel sound called low back vowel as in the words *hat* in the vowel [æ] and *hot* [ɑ] are produced with the tongue in a lower position in a back part of the tongue.

In English, there are 24 consonants. They are [p], [b], [t], [d], [k], [g], [f], [v], [θ], [ð], [s], [z], [ʃ], [ʒ], [h], [tʃ], [dʒ], [m], [n], [ŋ], [l], [r], [w]. While the vowel sounds, there are fourteen vowels. They are [i:], [ɪ], [e], [æ], [ə], [ɜ:], [ʌ], [ɑ:], [ɒ], [ɔ:], [u:], [ʊ], [o:], [ɛ]. The writer only focuses on eight vowels, [i:], [ɪ], [e], [æ], [ɑ:], [ɔ:], [u:], [ʊ]. There are two kinds of vowels in English. They are long vowels and short vowels (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2011, pp. 43-44).

There are vowels which are almost same in pronouncing the word, but they are actually different in length of the pronouncing. For example, the words *heed* in the vowel [i:] and *hid* in the vowel [ɪ] and also *seat* in the vowel [i:] and *sit* in the vowel [ɪ] . To distinguish the length of the vowel, it is shown by adding the symbol [:]. Because the vowel of the word *heed* is longer than *hid*, so the phonemic transcription are /hi:d/ for heed and /hɪd/ for hid.

Ladefoged and Johnson (2011) argued about the different position of the tongue in producing words consists of the high low vowels and the front back vowels. It is called vowel height in articulatory terms which are produced resonant frequencies related to the shape of the vocal tract called the formants of the vowels. There are first formant (F1) and second formant (F2). Acoustic vowels relate with the formants frequencies, so that the writer uses this kind of analysis of her study.

When the writer was in fifth semester, she got phonetics class about acoustic vowels. She found a lot of differences occur in her friends of producing words especially vowels. Some of them did a mistake when pronouncing the words. They cannot distinguish between long and short vowels. They tended to pronounce the words in the same way. Based on her observation at English Department students of Trunojoyo University, the writer chooses ten friends including herself to help their study by giving them some list of words consist of English vowels, so that they produce the words and the writer will record them.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Based on the background of the study above, the main problems that investigated in this study are:

1. What are the characteristics of the vowels produced by fourth year English Department students of Trunojoyo University?
2. How close are the vowels produced by fourth year English Department students of Trunojoyo University compared with the native speaker?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

There are two aims of this study based on the statements of the problems :

1. To find out the characteristics of the vowels produced by fourth year English Department students of Trunojoyo Madura.
2. To explain how close the vowels produced by fourth year English Department students of Trunojoyo University compared with the native speaker.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected to give both theoretical and practical contribution. Theoretically, this study can make an important contribution to the field of phonetic and phonology. It is expected to be a reference for further studies dealing with the same issue; English vowels. It is also expected to enrich the study of English vowels for English Department students of Trunojoyo University. Practically, this study can be useful in giving information to people about pronouncing vowels. It will increase people's understanding about producing English vowels, so that, it can improve people's pronunciation in producing

English vowels. Therefore, they can pay attention how to produce correct English vowels.

1.5 The Scope and Limitations of the Study

To specify and avoid broad investigation, the writer makes some burdens on the study. The scope of this study is phonetics and phonology which focus on sounds production. The writer focuses on acoustic vowel which produced by fourth year English Department students of Trunojoyo University. To make this study more specific, the writer limits the study only on vowels [æ], [ɔ:], [e], [i:], [ɪ], [ɑ:], [ʊ], [u:]. They will be produced by ten students with some list of tokens consist of the eight vowels.