Chapter One

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher mainly discusses the background of the research, statement of the problem, the limitation of the problem, the research question, the objectives of the research, significance of the research, and the outline of the research.

Background of the Research

Learning English is not only about understanding the meaning of words and structures, but also knowing about how to pronounce those words. Since the relation between a sound and meaning is subjective (Fromkin, Rodman, Hyams, Collins, Amberber, & Cox, 2009), it is possible to have words with the same sound but different meanings, for example the word 'there' as [ðeə] which means a place and 'their' as [ðeə] which means belong to them. Another example is words with the same spelling, different meaning and different sounds such as 'minute' as [ˈmɪˌnɪt] which means equal to 60 seconds and 'minute' as [maɪˈnjuːt] which means extremely small. Therefore, different pronunciation may have different meanings and the wrong pronunciation can lead to misunderstanding in conversation.

With the previous explanation, it can be said that learning English pronunciation is not easy, especially for Indonesian students because in Indonesia, English language is neither the first language (L1) nor the second language (L2). Therefore, it will make many learners find pronunciation as one of the most

difficult aspects of English to acquire, and need explicit help from teachers (Gilakjani, 2012).

Indonesian English learners belong to one of non-native English speakers. Thus, Indonesian students might find difficulties in pronouncing the English sounds. This statement is explained in detail by Liang (2014), who stated that non-native speakers from different first language find various problems when learning English speech sounds. Fromkin et al. (2009) asserted that speech sounds are sounds waves created in a moving stream of air. Thus, they may find difficulties in pronouncing the English speech sounds namely consonants and vowels (monophthongs and diphthongs).

To see all the English sounds, there are twenty four consonants and twenty vowels sounds. Then, twelve of English vowel sounds are monophthongs, and then eight of vowels sounds are diphthongs (Kelly, 2000). Based on the earlier statement, although English has only eight diphthongs, the diphthongs are challenging for Indonesian learners to pronounce since while pronouncing diphthongs, the tongue moves between two positions, whereas when pronouncing monophthongs the tongue holds just one position (Alan, Bradshaw, Finch, Burridge, & Heydon, 2010). Then, Hosseinzadeh, Kambuziya, and Shariati (2015) mentioned consonant is articulated with complete or partial closure of the vocal tract, for example [p] is pronounced with the lips, and [t] is pronounced with the front of the tongue. It means that pronunciations of diphthongs are more challenging than pronouncing of consonants and monopthongs. In addition, Kelly (2000) mentions that in the articulation of pronouncing vowels, the lips position

must be rounded, spread, or neutral. So, it means that the error of lips position can change the pronunciation.

The Indonesian students find it difficult to pronounce diphthongs because of the differences of English and Indonesian language. For instance, the differences of diphthongs, Kelly (2000) argued that there are eight of English diphthongs; they are [ɪə], [ʊə], [eɪ], [eə], [aʊ], [aɪ], [ɔɪ] and [əʊ]. Whereas, Sumbayak (2009) mentions in Indonesia there are only three diphthongs, it can be found in the Indonesian words like *danau* for diphthong [aʊ], *pantai* for diphthong [aɪ] and *sepoi* for of diphthong [ɔɪ]. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are possibilities for the Indonesian learners to have problems in pronouncing diphthongs which are not found in Indonesian language, namely [ɪə], [ʊə],[eɪ], [eə] and [əʊ].

Beside that, the other differences in diphthongs are based on the learners' way to pronounce each word from L1 and L2. Djatmika (2013) mentioned that in Indonesian language, diphthongs are clearly spoken like the written letters. Hence, the Indonesian learners pronounce the diphthongs only by reading the letters. As English diphthongs have centering and closing diphthongs, the learners should pronounce the words by referring to the phonetic transcription. Based on the earlier statements, it can be assumed that Indonesian students might have difficulties in pronouncing diphthongs.

Based on the researcher's experience in EED UMY on the 3rd semester, the researcher once had a subject called Capita Selecta on Grammar 3. There, the researcher had materials about phonetics. Based on the researcher's experience on

her study, the researcher and her friends often made errors in pronouncing several words. For example, when the researcher pronounced the word "remain" as [rɪˈmaɪn], then the teacher corrected the error by pronouncing the word "remain" as [rɪˈmeɪn] clearly. After that the researcher repeated to pronounce "remain" as [rɪˈmeɪn]. However, when the researcher repeated to pronounce the word "remain", the researcher still often pronounced it as [rɪˈmaɪn], it seems that the shape of mouth and the mindset of sounds [aɪ] in the word influenced the pronunciation of the word.

The researcher becomes curious about this problem. Do her friends have the same problem in pronouncing other English words? In fact, on the sixth semester when she took the research methodology course, the researcher did a survey and interviewed fifteen students of EED UMY, the researcher checked their friends randomly in pronouncing the word "find" as [faɪnd]. Then, it turned out that only three out of fifteen students could pronounce the word "find" correctly. In fact, the others pronounced the word "find" as [fʌɪnd] and [fɪ n]. It shows that the position of tongue and shape of mouth opening of their friends in pronouncing "find" is incorrect all this time. The researcher thinks that they did not realize that they did mispronunciation.

With these phenomena, the researcher is interested in finding how learners pronounce English diphthongs, because some of students still mispronounce when they pronounce the words that contain diphthongs. Hence, the researcher feels that to pronounce diphthongs well is not easy. Therefore, from those experiences the researcher is interested in exploring more about diphthong pronunciation. The

researcher is interested in discussing "Pronunciation of English Diphthongs by Indonesian Freshmen Students".

Statement of the Problem

Pronunciation of English sounds is classified into consonants and vowels. Thenthe English vowels are divided into monophthongs and diphthongs. English diphthongs are divided into eight sounds. Moreover both Indonesian and English also have different diphthong pronunciation. However there are only three Indonesian diphthongs (Sumbayak, 2009) and eight English diphthongs (Kelly, 2000). Pronouncing the Indonesian diphthongs is clearly spoken like the written letters, but in English diphthongs the learners have to read differently from the written forms. In the researcher's observations, the researcher found the problems for pronouncing diphthongs, and then the students sometimes still mispronounced diphthongs.

The Capita Selecta on Grammar 3 course requires that students to be able to pronounce correctly in English and students can write phonetic symbols correctly. However, in reality many students still make errors when pronouncing English sounds. Some of students have some errors with some pronunciation either the ones that exist in Indonesian language or the ones that do not exist in Indonesian language. For example diphthong [ʊə] in "mat<u>ure</u>" [məˈtjʊə] then was pronounced [ur] as [mətjur]. Moreover, they do not differentiate between diphthongs and monophthong sounds, for example [aɪ] sound, then they replace it with [ɪ] sound, as in words "bite" [baɪt] become "bit" [bɪt]. Therefore based on the

researcher's observations, when the researcher finds the word with diphthong pronunciation, they mostly read to sound like monopthongs.

The Limitation of the Problem

In writing this research the writer emphasized on pronunciation of English diphthongs by Indonesian freshmen. Here, the writer analyzed and described the students' pronunciation of English diphthongs. The diphthong for the limitation was based on Kelly (2000) in his book "*How to teach pronunciation*", he classified that the diphthongs are [eɪ] [ɔɪ] [əʊ] [eə] [aɪ] [aʊ] [ɪə] and [ʊə].

The Research Question

This point of this research is to investigate how the Indonesian freshmen pronounce English diphthongs. Based on the problem that is stated in previous section, the researcher has formulated a question for theresearch,namely: How do Indonesian English freshmen pronounce diphthongs?

The Objective of the Research

Based on the problem of the research question, the researcher presents the aim of this research which is to reveal the Indonesian English freshmen's pronunciation of English diphthongs.

The Significance of the Research

Based on the research question above, the significance of this research is pointed out into three substances. Those are for teachers/lecturers, students and the future researchers. The significances of this research are:

The Teachers/Lecturers. This research gives the description of pronunciation of English diphthongs by the Indonesian English learners.

Therefore, the researcher expects that from the result of the study, teachers can understand the students' pronunciation of diphthongs then they can reflect their teaching of pronunciation from the result of this study.

The Students. It is expected that the students would take the advantages of the research result to learn how to anticipate errors in pronouncing the English sounds, especially diphthongs. This research also can be material for students' evaluation.

The Future Researchers. The researcher hopes that this research is beneficial for other researchers, and the result of the research can be used to be reference for similar research. In addition, it can give information for other researchers who will conduct the research with the same themes in different topic.

The Outline of the Research

This research consists of five chapters. Chapter one is introduction that consists ofbackground of the research, statement of the problem, limitation of the problem, research question, objective of the research, significance of the research, and outline of the research proposal. Chapter two is literature review that consists of studies about pronunciation of diphthong. In this chapter the researcher gives explanations about theories of the study. Here, the researcher describes more the description of pronunciation, describes the diphthongs, difficulties in pronunciation and explanation about freshmen at EED of UMY. This chapter also presents the previous related study and conceptual framework. Chapter three explains the methodology. This chapter contains of the research design, research setting, data collection procedures, and data analysis. Chapter four explains the

finding and discussion. The last is chapter five. This chapter explains conclusion and recommendations.