

# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the study

It's a fact that we live in the age of globalization and English language has become one of the most famous languages in the world. It makes more and more people feel the urge to learn English. This has been accompanied by the upgrade of the status and roles of English as a means of communication.

Today English with around 400 million native speakers and 600 million English as foreign language (EFL) speakers has really become a global language (Crystal, 1997; Graddol, 2006).

English has many components: grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Pronunciation is an important part in learning languages, especially in English Education Study Program, students are expected to have accurate pronunciation because they are going to be teachers. Students have to master pronunciation in order to communicate appropriately and fluently. Thus, pronunciation is a very important and needed component.

According to Szynalski and Wójcik ([www.antimoon.com](http://www.antimoon.com)), most learners of English claim that it is not compulsory to study pronunciation. Many of them believed that it is simply a waste of time. They just want to communicate in English and as long as they are understood, little else matters.

Many learners also find out that pronunciation is one of the most difficult aspects of English to acquire, and need some amount of help from the teacher (Morley 1994; Fraser 2000). Surveys of student needs consistently show that

learners feel the need for pronunciation work in class (Willing 1989). Therefore some sort of pronunciation work in class is essential.

However, pronunciation course is often neglected. In Indonesia, the number of pronunciation course is relatively limited. Because of those facts stated above, in this study the writer is interested to know the English Department Students' perception on pronunciation course that they have got in the beginning of the semester.

Pronunciation is related to sound of someone's voice and communication. Since sounds play an important role in communication, teachers must attribute proper importance to teaching pronunciation in their classes. Pronunciation instruction is of great importance for successful oral communication to take place since it is an important ingredient of the communicative competence (Hismanoglu, 2006). Indeed, pronunciation can increase the quality of students' speaking as Harmer stated (2001:183) that pronunciation teaching not only makes students aware of different sound and sound features (and what these mean), but also improve their speaking immeasurably.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

1. What are the perception of English Department students academic year 2014 and 2015 about pronunciation course?

### 1.3 The Objective

Derived directly from the above mentioned problem, the objective of the present study is to find out students' perception about pronunciation course.

### 1.4 Theoretical Framework

Theory about pronunciation:

Pronunciation refers to the making of sounds that we use to make meaning it includes attention to the particular sounds of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual sound, such as intonation, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm (supra segmental aspects), how the voice is projected (voice quality) and, in its broadest definition, attention to gestures and expressions that are closely related to the way we speak a language. (Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D.M., & Goodwin, J.M., 2004)

Fraser (1999) states the fact is pronunciation is the aspect of language that receives least attention. The teacher is not sure as to how best to help learners. Besides, almost all students feel learning pronunciation as a priority and an area in which they need more guidance.

According to Burns (2003), it is more important that English speakers can apply these terms:

- Intelligibility, which means that the speaker has the ability to produce recognizable English sound patterns.

- Comprehensibility, which means that the speaker's utterance is understandable to the listener.
- Interpretability, the purpose of the speaker's utterance is comprehensible to the listener.

Theory about perception:

According to Gibson by detailed analysis of data collected from the environment we may acquire all the essential information about objects — by direct perception of their perceivable qualities. And this is not only information about their size or structure, but also about their importance and potential application. (Perception Theories, Andrej Démuth Edícia kognitívne štúdia, 2012)

### 1.5 Scope and Limitation

The subjects of this study are English Education Study Program of a private university in Surabaya academic year 2014 and 2015. The reasons of choosing academic year 2014 and 2015 are because the students have got the pronunciation course in the beginning of the semester and they are also the last year who got pronunciation course before the pronunciation course is omitted from the curriculum since 2016 up to now due to the curriculum change.

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

This finding of this study is significant to make the lecturers and English Department Program include pronunciation course in the curriculum as the compulsory subject. This finding is also significant to make the writer's peers who is going to be a teacher and English teachers pay more concern on teaching pronunciation to students in class.

## 1.7 Definition of Key-Terms

- EFL is the teaching of English to people whose first language is not English. (based on COBUILD Advanced English Dictionary. HarperCollins Publishers)
- Undergraduate Student is a student at a university who has not yet earned a bachelor's or equivalent degree. (based on Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, Cambridge University Press)
- Pronunciation is the sound of the language, or phonology; stress and rhythm; and intonation and includes the role of individual sounds and segmental and supra segmental sounds. (Penny Ur, 2001 & Jack C. Richard, 2002)
- Perception is an active process as one selectively perceives, organizes and interprets what one experiences. Interpretations are based on the perceivers past experiences, assumptions about human behavior, knowledge of the

others circumstances, present moods / wants / desires and expectations.  
(Steward L. Tubbs & Stylvia Mors, 2018)

- Pronunciation course is a course which is held in semester 1, it is a-2-credit course. This course provides the students with the knowledge of different speech sounds, stresses and intonation. (*Buku Pedoman Akademik Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala, 2015*)