CHAPTER II OVERVIEW OF PRONUNCIATION AND RELATED LANGUAGE SKILLS

This chapter discusses general information about the pronunciation - which includes the definition of pronunciation, the features of pronunciation, and the problems of pronunciation. Then, this chapter also discusses the overview of language-related skills - including speaking and listening.

A. Overview of Pronunciation

1. Definition of Pronunciation

"Pronunciation is the way in which a language or a particular word or sound is spoken."¹ Pronunciation not only refers to the speech sounds in the mouth, but also stresses the way how sounds are noticed by hearing.²

Pronunciation refers to the way a word or a language is spoken, or the manner in which someone utters a word. A word can be spoken in different ways by various individuals or groups, depending on many factors, such as: the area in which they grew up, the area in which they now live, if they have a speech or voice disorder, their ethnic group, their social class, or their education. There is no single standard in pronunciation. There are a number of regional pronunciations used in different areas of different countries. It is accepted because cultivated speech can exist in all regions.³

The researcher was interested in examining pronunciation because the pronunciation is the basic of achievement of listening and speaking

¹ Hornby, *Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary, Third edition*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 343.

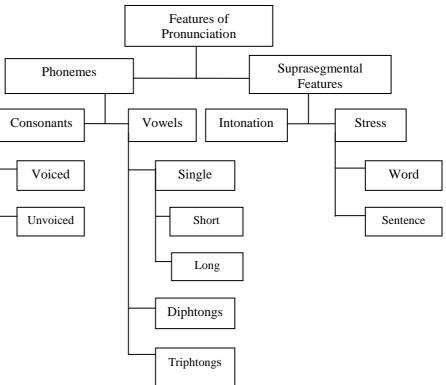
² Jack Richards, et.al., Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, (London: Longman, 1990), p. 232.

³ Abraham and Betty Lass, *Dictionary of Pronunciation*, (New York: The New York Times Book Co., 1976), p. 9.

skills are good. With good pronunciation, someone will be able to speak well with native speakers and will understand what were said by them.

2. The Features of Pronunciation

In order to study how something operates it is often useful to break it down into its constituent parts. The following diagram shows a breakdown of the main features of pronunciation.



Features of Pronunciation

"Phonemes are the different sounds within a language."⁴ Although there are little differences how individuals express their sounds, we can still describe reasonably how each sound is produced. When considering meaning, we see how using one sound of word can change the meaning of the word. It is a principle which provides us the number of phonemes in a particular language.

The set of phonemes consists of two categories: *vowel* sounds and *consonant* sounds. However, these do not necessarily correspond to the

⁴ Gerald Kelly, *How to Teach Pronunciation*, (Edinburg: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), p. 1.

vowels and consonants we are familiar with in the alphabet. Vowel sounds are all voiced, and may be *single*, or a combination, involving a movement from one vowel sound to another; such combinations are known as *diphtongs*. An additional term used is *triphtongs* which describes the combination of three vowel sounds. Single vowel sounds may be *short* or *long*. The symbol /:/ shows a long sound. Consonant sounds may be *voiced* or *unvoiced* (voiceless). Voiced sounds occur when the vocal cords in the larynx are vibrated. If you are producing a voiced sound, you will feel vibration, while if you are producing an unvoiced sound, you will not feel it.⁵

Phonemes, as we have seen, are units of sound which we can analyze. They are also known as segments. *Suprasegmental features*, as the name implies, are features of speech which generally apply to groups of segments, or phonemes. The features which are important in English are *stress*, *intonation*, and how sounds change in connected speech.

Regarding to individual words, we can identify and teach word stress. The stresses in words are usually indicated in dictionaries. Regarding to utterances, we can analyze and teach intonation as well as stress. Stresses give rhythm to speech and can make prominent to the listener. Intonation, on the other hand, is the way in which the pitch of the voice goes up and down in an utterance. Utterance stress and intonation patterns are often linked to the communication of meaning.⁶

The significant choices are available to speakers is in intonation. Intonation serves both to separate the stream of speech into blocks of information (called tone units) and to mark information within these units as being significant. In English, there is a fundamental association between high pitch and new information. Intonation also serves to signal the connections between tone units. Typically, a rise in pitch at the end of the tone unit (that is, after the last stressed word) implies some kind of continuation a fall in pitch suggest completion.⁷

⁵ Gerald Kelly, *How to Teach Pronunciation*, p. 2.

⁶ Gerald Kelly, *How to Teach Pronunciation*, p. 3.

⁷ Scott Thornbury, *How to Teach Speaking*, (London: Longman), p. 24.

All parts that are in the features of pronunciation are much related to one another in expressing a word or sentence. In addition, they greatly affect the meaning in English which has many variations in letters, words, tone and rhythm, which in fact is different with Indonesian, when people say it.

3. Problems of Pronunciation

If someone wants to learn a foreign language, he must be going on meet with all kinds of learning problems. These difficulties have to solve with the learning of the new sound system, the learning of the unfamiliar ways of arranging the foreign words into sentences. Here, we will focus our attention only on the problems concerned with pronunciation. Pronunciation as a sub-component of language skills is one of a number of serious problems faced by the learners of English as a foreign language.

The comparison between Indonesian and English for the most problematic words shows that a factor that may cause the pronunciation problems of English sounds are: (1) There are sounds in English which are phonemic, but they are not phonemic in Indonesian, (2) There are some sounds which do not exist in Indonesian, but they exist in English, (3) There are sounds which are voiced in English but they are voiceless in Indonesian, (4) There are sounds which pronounced with stress and rhythm in English, but not in Indonesian. Another indication of the cause is the unfamiliarity of the students toward the words.⁸

According to Ramelan, the difficulties encountered by the student in learning a second language are caused by:

- a) The different elements found between his language and the target language.
- b) Different elements in sound system between the native and the foreign language.

⁸ Siti Fatimah, *http://karya-ilmiah.um.ac.id/index.php/sastra-inggris/article/view/7231*, on Friday, December 24, 2010.

- c) Sounds which have the same phonetic features in both languages but differ in their distribution.
- d) Similar sounds in the two languages, which have different variants or allophones⁹.
- e) similar sounds in the two languages which differ only slightly in their phonetic features. ¹⁰

B. Overview of Related Language Skills

1. Speaking

Speaking is productive skill consist of verbal utterance production which derives attention both in first and second language, the purpose is to share idea or meaning, speaking also requires some skills like pronunciation and structure. In order to understand speaker's meaning.

"Speaking requires both knowledge and skill."¹¹ It means that not only knowing how to assemble phrases or sentences with particular formula, but also how to produce and adapt them in here and now situation. This means to make decision rapidly, implementing them smoothly and adjusting speech as unexpected problems might appear.

Speaking is a part of integral from overall of person of personality, expressing the speaker environment, strata of social and their additional background. Speaking is the ability to speak, to express articulator sound or words to expressing also submit minds, ideals, and feeling.

Speaking has three common intensions. They are:

1. To inform

When the speaking is used to convey ideas, minds or to inform anything to the listener.

⁹ A conditioned variant of a significant group of sounds which occurs in a fixed and predictable environment.

¹⁰ Ramelan, *English Phonetics*, (Semarang: IKIP Semarang Press, 1985), p. 7.

¹¹ Sumardiyani and Zulfa Sakhiyyah, *Speaking for Instructional Purpose a Handbook*, (Semarang: IKIP PGRI Press, 2007), p. 10.

2. To entertain

When speaking is used to make the listener happy.

3. To persuade

When speaking is used to persuade the listener in order to follow speaker's ideas or minds.¹²

2. Listening

Listening is a fundamental language skill, but it is often ignored by foreign and second language teachers. Listening needs more attention and concentration to comprehend the sounds (listening material). It can be said that listening is not a passive skill; the process of listening is a complex process in which many things happen simultaneously inside the mind. Listening includes comprehension of meaning words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Then, listening activity needs integrating skill of language, such as pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, and grammatical features.

How well you listen has a major impact on your job effectiveness, and on the quality of your relationships with others. The reasons why we should have good listening are to obtain information, to understand, for enjoyment, and to learn.¹³

People need to practice and acquire skills to be good listeners, because a speaker cannot throw you information in the same manner that a dart player tosses a dart at a passive dartboard. Information is an intangible substance that must be sent by the speaker and received by an active listener.¹⁴ So, we can say that listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying.

¹² Martin Bygate, *Speaking*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 5.

¹³ http://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/ActiveListening.htm, on Friday, June 3, 2011.

 ¹⁴ http://www.casaaleadership.ca/mainpages/resources/sourcebook/listening-skills.html, on Friday, June 3, 2011.