

# **CHAPTER I**

**PHONOLOGICAL PROBLEM  
ENCOUNTRED BY SIXTH -  
SEMESTER STUDENTS OF  
ENGLISH DEPARTEMENT  
OF WIDYA MANDALA  
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY  
SURABAYA**

**CHAPTER I**  
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**CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY SURABAYA**

**1.1 Background of the Study**

Nelson Francis (1958:13) states, "language is an arbitrary system of articulated sounds made use by a group of human as a means of carrying on the affairs of their society. It can be said that language is a very important means to communicate with others. There are various kinds of languages in this world. English is one of them and becomes the international language. As an international language, it is used all over the world mainly for business transactions, formal meetings, teaching medium, etc.

English in Indonesia is a foreign language. Even though it is not the second one, it becomes the requirement in almost every job application nowadays. Therefore, many people start to learn this language. English is taught in Elementary up to Senior High School. English Departments are also available in some universities, so that the students can deepen their mastery of English and the linguistics.

Learning English is not as easy as some people thought. Sometimes, the learners have problems in the pronunciation. It is because some of the sounds of English phonemes do not exist in the Indonesian Phonological System. Therefore,

the vocal organs of the learners are not used to pronounce the words. Moreover, the characteristic of Indonesian Orthographic System is phonemic that is every symbol represents only one sound. Only a few consist of two symbols that represent one sound, such as ng, ny, kh, and sy.

Because of the fact, the writer thinks that when the students want to learn English, they should also learn the English Phonology. It is supported by V. Fromkin and R. Rodman (1981) that the understanding of phonology makes a speaker able to produce sounds that have meaningful way of speaking. It is also considering that because every different sound in English results in differences in meaning. Therefore, it is a must for the learners to be able to pronounce the words correctly. It is only by correct pronunciation can we be understood and can we understand others (Libbich, 1964).

The writer found that most students of English Department are facing phonological problem. There is a symptom that they still make errors in pronouncing English words even they have been in the last semester. This fact triggers the writer to take this topic for her thesis.

Her claim that there is a symptom that most English language learners make errors in pronouncing the words is supported by an interview with one of the student of Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA). She is a student of Fakultas Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni English Extension and in semester 3 now. She said that most of the students in her university have difficulties in pronouncing English words. Some of them, she added, admit that their tongue is not used to

pronouncing the words. As a consequence, the words are pronounced incorrectly. Based on the previous statements, the writer would like to observe the phonological problems faced by the students, especially the sixth-semester students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya considering that the writer herself is the student of the university. The writer is interested in taking this study because in much presentation done by the sixth-semester students observed by her, she found that most of them make many errors in pronouncing English words. Moreover, the writer also wants to know the phonological problems in terms of vowels, consonants, diphthongs, and clusters we do not have in our first language.

In conclusion, through observing the presentation of the students, the writer would like to find out what phonological problems most of the sixth-semester students have in pronouncing English words and what phonological problems in terms of vowels, consonants, diphthongs, and clusters that they have.

## **1.2 Statements of the Problems**

Considering the explanation given in the background of the study, this study has some research questions as follow:

- a. What phonological problems do most sixth-semester students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya encounter in pronouncing English words?
- b. What phonological problems in terms of vowels, consonants, diphthongs, and clusters do most the sixth-semester students of English

Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya have in pronouncing English words?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

- a. To find out the kind of phonological problems encountered by the sixth-semester students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya in pronouncing English words.
- b. To find out the kind of phonological problems in terms of vowels, consonants, diphthongs, and clusters that the sixth-semester students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya have in pronouncing English words.

### **1.4 The Significance of the Study**

By doing this kind of research, the writer expects that the findings will be useful to enrich EFL learners' knowledge about the phonological problems. Therefore, they can be aware and learn more. As a result, they won't make many errors in the future. For EFL teachers, this findings can be a consideration for them to create teaching strategies to encourage the students to speak correctly.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

The writer restricted to the phonological problems mainly vowels - long, front, back, and center-; consonants: consonants seen from place of articulation - bilabials, labiodental, denta, palato-alveolar; from manner of articulation - stop, fricative, affricate, nasal, trill; diphthongs; and clusters that consist of 2 and 3 consonants clusters in initial and final positions. The writer refers to the

description of phonology introduced by Daniel Jones (1975). The subjects of this study are the sixth-semester students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.

## **1.6 Operational Definitions**

The following definitions of key terms are important throughout the research. The terms should be defined clearly in order to give the readers better understanding.

1. Phonology is the study of the system that becomes the basis of the choosing and usage of sounds in the all languages (M. Kenstowicz and C. Kisseberth, 1979).
2. Phonological problem is a problem concerning with the sound systems.
3. Vowel is a sustainable vocal sound made without audible stoppage of the breath in its passage out through the mouth.
4. Consonant is a speech sound produced by a complete or partial stoppage of the breath.
5. Clusters are number of consonants in a small close group.
6. Diphthong is a union of two vowel sounds or letters.

## **1.7 Organization of the Study**

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I discusses the introduction of the thesis which includes the background of the study, the statements of the

problem, the objective, the significance, the scope and limitation of the study, the operational definitions, and the organization of the thesis.

The next chapter, that is Chapter II, concerns about the review of related literature. Then Chapter III explains about the methodology used in the writer's research. After that, Chapter IV discusses the result of the study, that is the data analysis and the interpretation of the findings. In Chapter V, there are some suggestions for EFL students and teachers and the conclusion of the study.