

CHAPTER I: Introduction

This chapter presents the basic consideration of the research, concerning to the suprasegmental aspect on students' speech. This chapter also presents the research question, the research objective, the research significances, and the research delimitation.

Background

The study of phonetics and phonology has been a concern of the linguistic study in few years back. Phonetics and phonology as linguistic term is defined as the linguistic feature which concerns with the production, physical nature, and perception of speech sounds (Birjandi, 2005, p. 1). Phonetic and phonology can be defined as a linguistic process on how the sound of certain words or syllables are produced by a speaker. As a set of study, Phonetic and phonology is different in some extent. According to Hickey (2003, p. 2) phonetic is defined as the study of how the sounds are produced by human in general without saying what function which sounds may have in a particular language. He further explains that the term of phonetics is often used with the reference to one language when the emphasis is on the pronunciation of the language. In the other side, phonology is defined as the classification of the sounds within the system of a particular language (Hickey, 2003, p.3). Based on the definition given by Hickey, it can be concluded that phonetic is the study of how the sound is produced, and phonology is the study of how the sound is classified into the structural system of a certain language.

Furthermore, one of the part of phonetics and phonology is pronunciation that cover not only the sounds but also features beyond individual sounds, is an integral component of the language (Brazil,1997; Kingdon, 1958; Tench, 1996) as cited in (Zhang, 2004). In addition, the most crucial aspect in phonetic and phonology study deals with the suprasegmental aspect which moves the analysis beyond individual speech sounds to syllables within a given word or to intonational patterns across words, phrases, and clauses. The term of suprasegmental refers to those properties of an utterance which are not properties of any single segment (Birjandi, 2005, p. 99). It further explains that in suprasegmental, there are five major types or features, those are; (a) stress, (b) tone, (c) intonation, (d) length, and (e) syllable.

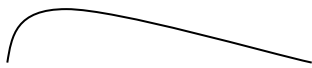
This study focuses on the suprasegmental aspect of intonation with the following reasons. Intonation plays a very important role in the communication, especially in understanding the utterances being uttered by a speaker in a certain language. Different language has different intonation that is usually affected with the suprasegmental aspect of each language (Birjandi, 2005, p. 1). Indonesia and English have distinct suprasegmental aspects that may cause some problems for the Indonesian people when speaking English. The common problem found from this intonation distinction is the misunderstanding between the speaker and the hearer.

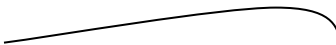
Moreover, in order to avoid misunderstanding, learners of English as foreign language should pay more attention to the matter of intonation. According to

Birjandi (2005, p. 2) there are six different intonations in English, which are identified as falling, rising, falling-rising, rising-falling, take off, and level. Those six intonations with their variations can be used depending on the context. In addition, intonation is closely related to both words and sentences. Word intonation or a sentence intonation is usually applied to single words or sentences and it is held based on some general guidelines about where that intonation will fall depending on the way the word is structured (Birjandi 2005). Problems are inevitable for non-native speakers who speak English to native speakers without using word intonation especially when the native-speakers are speaking fast. On the other hand, native speakers may find it difficult to understand the non-native speakers' utterance if they do not use the proper intonation.

Furthermore, this research focuses on suprasegmental features as a part of pronunciation. Many EFL learners in English Department still neglect their pronunciation study. They spend more time on their study to focus on enriching vocabulary and mastering grammar, in order to support their speech production. Whereas pronunciation is definitely the direct thing that students notice when they are speaking English. A correct pronunciation should be one of the first things that they learn in English. People can live without advanced vocabulary as they can use simple words to say what they want to say. They can live without advanced grammar as they can use simple grammar structures instead. However, there is no such thing as simple pronunciation on the basis of speech production.

A simple example of how intonation helps us in understanding English is that by noticing the place of the intonation; for examples:


a. You got an A on the **test**.


b. You got an A on the **test**?

The example above is an illustration on how important the intonation in speaking or delivering a speech. When the speaker uses the rising intonation on that speech, it indicates a question that the listener needs to give an answer. However, it is different when the speaker uses the falling intonation, which indicates a statement that the respond given by the listener may be something different.

Therefore, the intonation in English can be elaborated as follows. First, it is about understanding between speakers and listeners, meaning that a non-English native speaker will easily understand an English native speaker if he/she understands how to use intonation in English. On the other hand, a native speaker will get difficulties to understand a non-native speaker if the intonation is not used properly when he/she is speaking. The second is about the important rules on how to put intonation in English. It will determine the intention of the speaking in a conversation or in a speech.

Based on the elaboration explained previously, it is believed that a research towards the intonation particularly for the English Department students need to be conducted in order to help the English Department students acquiring or learning

English effectively. It also will reach the goal of the learning language in English Department.

Research question

Something that must bear in mind that suprasegmental aspect is a crucial aspect in the English pronunciation. Thus, it is needed to find out and analyze how the shifted of the suprasegmental aspect affect the students' speech. Based on this assumption, there is a question which is needed to be discussed and answer in order to acknowledge people especially those who put a great interest in the educational side. Thus, the question below will be the corps of this research:

1. How are the use of students' English intonation in their speech?

Aims of research

Based on the research question, this study aims to describe the use of students' English intonation.

Scope of Study

This study is focused to the suprasegmental aspect in students' speech specifically the use of English intonation when they were giving a speech in International Students Conference (ISC) 2016. Furthermore, this study is also delimited to the number of participants as the indicators or the requirements needed for the participants are the English Department students who have passed introduction to linguistics, phonetics and phonology, speaking I, speaking II, speaking III with

satisfied result B+ or above and have 3.5 GPA minimally, also selected as the speaker of International Students Conference (ISC) 2016 in order to support the data.

Significance of Study

The significances of this research are:

Theoretically

On the theoretical contribution, this research is expected to be able to utilize as a reference in phonetics and phonology study, especially on speaking matter.

Moreover, further researcher can utilize this study as a source of new perspective for those who are interested in the same point. For students, this research may urge them to pay more attention to their speaking, especially on how to apply intonation correctly.

Practically

Practically, this study is aimed to help the English Department Study Program, the students as well as the lecturers to evaluate and maximize the study of suprasegmental aspect, particularly the English intonation in speaking. It is also expected that this study could serve as a guide for the educational stake holder on how to improve the quality of the students' ability in doing the proper intonation.

For the Head of the English Department Study Program and the Head of Language Laboratory in State University of Gorontalo, it is expected that this

research could give more valuable input for the development and the improvement of the study of the English, especially when it deals with the intonation in a speech.

For the next researcher, this research is expected to be a guideline for the further researcher and to bring a great understanding about the fundamental aspect of the suprasegmental, particularly the intonation.

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