CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Mouth / 'maʊθ / pronounced as / 'mot / or / 'maut /
Stomach / 'st mək / pronounced as / 'stomeIʃ / or / 'stɔmeIʃ /
Tomato / tə'meIteu / pronounced as / 'tomʌto /
Potato / pə'teIteu / pronounced as / 'poteto / or / 'potʌto /
Blouse / 'blaus / pronounced as / 'blus /
Shampoo / ʃæm'pʊː / pronounced as / 'sʌmpo /

The above words were some of the words pronounced by teachers during the writer's initial observation at Preschool X in Surabaya, East Java. This preschool was owned by a private Foundation running ten branches of preschools in Surabaya, Sidoarjo and Malang, East Java. At least, approximately three hundred and fifty preschoolers graduated from these preschools of the same Foundation in average every year. Additionally, the school claimed that it was a bilingual school, thus, English was also used as one of the mediums of instructions there. It surprised the writer so much after having heard the way the teachers pronounced the words. From the examples as shown in the beginning, it seems their first language (L1) is so strongly influenced their pronunciation. Instead of / **'maʊθ /** for *mouth*, they pronounced it as / **'mot /** or / **'maut /**. Secondly, the absence of correct word stress also appeared as *Tomato* / tə**'meIteu** / was pronounced as / **'tomʌto** /. This might happen due to their lack of knowledge regarding the English word stress. Unfortunately, such a model of sound and stress has been taught to the children for many years.

In relation to that condition, apparently, preschool teachers do not realize how their pronunciation influences their students' pronunciation. In this case, they are supposed to be a good model for the students in giving a good example of pronouncing

English sounds correctly. In the educational context, especially in the language learning, teachers are perceived as models by the students. Since language is a set of habits, the presence of teachers in giving example of how language is used, how sounds of English are produced is extremely important. The role of teachers becomes inevitably significant when the students are in the beginning of learning the language. It is the first time for them to learn oral language for intelligibility. Oral language is important to notice since it becomes the foundation for literacy (Fillmore, 2000). Harmer (1998) stated that one of the teacher roles is to facilitate learning. This also means that they have to help students to acquire the language by giving a good language model. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment in Europe (NCCA, 2001) stated that the teacher's role is of the utmost importance in the language class. It is important that the child has a good role model. In order to ensure that the child experiences a positive introduction to the ''new'' language, the use of the target language throughout the class gives the child an opportunity to become accustomed to the sound of the language (p.13). If teachers are able to become the language model, they have facilitated their students' learning (Harmer, 1998).

Some researches revealed the important role of teachers in teaching pronunciation. Brno (2012) who focused on the teaching secondary school students to produce the sounds of voiced and voiceless *th* consonants /ð/ and /θ/ admitted that in the pronunciation teaching, teachers as models carried a huge responsibility in their classroom. In regard with this responsibility, Kenworthy (1990) offered several ways of teacher's roles in pronunciation learning process. Two of which were to help learners hear and assist learners to make sounds. Another research conducted by Moedjito (2008) involved 37 Indonesian EFL teachers of Public junior high school. In the part of teaching pronunciation, one of the findings from the participants was that they admitted

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the role of the teachers in demonstrating sounds discrimination was helpful for Indonesian EFL learners.

Realizing the importance of teachers' role, Hismanoglu (2006) stressed out the current perspectives on pronunciation learning and teaching. In his paper, he advocated teachers to conduct reflective pronunciation teaching and learning where their own pronunciation lesson should be video-taped or audio-taped which later it could be evaluated by their colleagues. The ultimate purpose of reflection is to make them a good model of pronunciation for their students. It is expected that when they teach pronunciation to the students and find errors in it, they can give corrective feedback (Laroy, 1995) during students' learning process.

Chan (2007) reported that Cantonese ESL learner's speech production and speech perception had great impacts on their learning of English pronunciation. It was suggested that observable articulatory features should be highlighted, subtle differences between confusable sound pairs should be focused on and mother-tongue interference should also be tackled. To cope with the goals, teachers of English, in this case, should provide the model.

In order to be a good role model, teachers of English need to have a good proficiency of English, too. One of the proficiencies is oral proficiency (Benati, 2009). This proficiency is so much relevant since preschool teachers, in the writer's study, have to teach simple English words and simple expressions to the students. The teachers' oral proficiency might become a main priority. In line with the idea, one important element of communicative abilities is the extent to which learners' production is understood by a listener; what is referred to as intelligibility (Isaac, 2008). Such a requirement might not be debatable since L2 learner who is frequently intelligible to most listeners cannot be considered proficient in the L2. Thus,

intelligibility can be seen as a fundamental element of L2 proficiency and teachers who wish to help students increase their L2 proficiency may also need to focus on improving learners' intelligibility (Hoekje, 2007). One element that teachers may focus on to increase intelligibility is pronunciation.

Senel (2006) who discussed the pronunciation of EFL learners in Turkey stressed out that teaching pronunciation was one of the significant aspects of foreign language teaching and it should be studied in the early stages of the language teaching program in order to eliminate the factors affecting the learners' pronunciation. He stated further that language teachers must be aware of techniques/methods in teaching pronunciation since teachers were the models for their learners and for this purpose, they all should have good pronunciation.

To raise more awareness on the importance of pronunciation, many researches have been done respectively. Those researches revealed pronunciation difficulties/errors encountered by different participants involved in the research. First, a research reported by Tiono and Yostanto (2008) aimed at finding out the kinds of English phonological errors produced by English department students, particularly English consonantal sounds that do not exist in Indonesian phonetics system – /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /ʒ/, /dʒ/, and /tʃ/ – and the patterns of those errors. It was found out that first, the students made phonological errors in all of the pronunciation of the six English consonantal sounds being observed in this study. Secondly, the students made thirty-four kinds of deviations in all. The thirty-four kinds of deviations included the replacement of /v/ with /f/, the replacements of /ð/ with /d/, /t/, /θ/ and /th/, the replacement of /θ/ with /t/, /d/, /th/, /ð/ and /s/ and the deletion of /θ/, the substitution of /tʃ/ with /c/, /h/, /s/, /ʃ/ and /kh/, the replacement of /dʒ/ with /g/, /j/, /d/, /tʃ/, /ʃ/, /k/, /s/ and /f/, and the replacement of /ʒ/ with /d/, /z/, /s/, /j/, /tʃ/, /ʃ/, /dʒ/, /g/ and /k/ and the deletion of /ʒ/. Then, it could also be

figured out that one particular English sound, namely the sound of voiceless palatal affricate, /ʒ/, created many difficulties for the students if compared to the other five English consonantal sounds observed.

Another research was conducted by Prananingrum and Kwary (2004). The research aimed at investigating what English consonant and vowel sounds which were pronounced incorrectly by the students of the English Diploma program, Airlangga University, Indonesia. As results of the research, first was Segmental Transfer of English Consonants and second was Segmental Transfer of English Vowels. Another research in Indonesian context, Fadloeli (2008) reported some problematic English sounds encountered by Indonesian learners. He suggested using contrastive analysis on distinctive phonological features. He also advocated teachers to be aware of phonological features and help learners learn them as he believed that mastering English sounds and the Indonesian ones were crucial so long as the goal of second or foreign language teaching was to achieve the teachers' and students' communicative competence. In short, pronunciation awareness is always related to intelligibility in oral communication. The intelligibility can be seen in some elements such as segmental and suprasegmentals (Pennington, 1996; Jenkins, 2000).

For different participants in the research, Al-Saidat (2010) conducted a study on phonological analysis of English phonotactics. The study used a case study involving Arab learners of English. The study aimed at determining the types of pronunciation difficulties Arab learners encountered. The results of the study demonstrated that Arab learners of English unintentionally inserted an anaptyctic vowel in the onset as well as in the coda of certain English syllables. The paper finally suggested an approach for teaching and learning L2 syllable structure system. Another study with the same participants, three Arabic learners, was conducted by Arnold (2010). Employing the

same approach, case study, the research aimed at determining whether or not pronunciation training results in a decreased use of the following consonant cluster simplification strategies--articulatory feature change, consonant cluster reduction and substitution--when pronouncing words containing final three-segment consonant clusters. The results from this study showed that pronunciation training yielded more target-like pronunciation of final three-segment consonant clusters.

Zhang and Yin (2009) discussed some frequently occurring problems concerning pronunciation of English learners in China. They stated that in the case of some senior students at the university, a reasonable accuracy in the pronunciation of individual sounds should certainly have been achieved; however, many students still failed to attain perfection. In their analysis, some factors seemed to influence their pronunciation such as the first language interference by interference of mother language, learner's age, learner's attitude and psychological, prior pronunciation instruction, and the insufficient language knowledge of English phonology and phonetics.

Furthermore, some researches that discussed factors affecting pronunciation have also been done. One of which was a research conducted by Liu (2011). She investigated the influence of three factors on pronunciation accuracy of Chinese adult foreign language learners. From the experiments, she found that /v/ and /θ/ are two phonemes which caused mispronunciation. It was attributed to the similarity of the two sounds with Chinese /w/ and /s/. /æ/ which was not quite satisfying for this phoneme was often replaced by /e/, /a/ sound that is close to Chinese /ai/, and thus 'happiness' was mispronounced by many participants.

In short, all studies described above have explicitly shown that problems in pronunciation and factors affecting it exist. The studies are drawn not only from

Indonesian context, but also other countries' contexts. This shows that pronunciation should not be neglected. Therefore, teachers ought to be aware of those problems and should at least put more conscious efforts to minimize their students' pronunciation errors.

Due to the existence of pronunciation errors as discussed in previous researches above and the importance of being good models in English pronunciation, teachers need to have a model of pronunciation to which they refer. ESL teachers are concerned about the falling standard of English pronunciation. Lingua Franca core is now the concern of the world now (Howlader, 2010). In his paper, Howlader argued that due to the issue of lingua franca, an international intelligibility should be encouraged since intelligibility ensured the hearer understand the speaker's message clearly. In response with the issue of intelligibility, most respondents agreed that there should be models of pronunciation to maintain a standard. The models of Standard Southern British (SSB) and General American (GA) should not be ignored in learning and teaching pronunciation since these two models are the foundation stones of English pronunciation (p.242) and they are the two common models in the teaching of English as a foreign language (Giegerich, 1992). In Asian context, ESL teachers are encouraged to teach General American English : http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_American (27/07/2009). Howlader also raised the issue of comprehensibility in oral communication. The comprehensibility has become an important issue since there has been an increasing demand of communication among non-native speakers (NNS). In this case, phonological awareness is the emphasis.

Mompean (2004) critically argued that it was often not explicit or sufficiently clear why a given pronunciation model was chosen by textbook authors, teachers, institutions, etc. although the features of the proposals available in the literature were

generally well known (e.g. they were those described in works on the phonetics/phonology of English accents or in reports on the results of analytical – occasionally empirical- research). Therefore, the EFL teacher were interested in making a more or less informed decision needs a set of clear criteria to consider and apply in order to arrive at a decision that is not completely arbitrary. The criteria that have been put forward throughout the years are different and they can be described as communicative, geo-cultural, (linguistic) political, social psychological or linguistic phonetic (p. 960). The suggestion for this issue would be to draw attention to the similarities and differences between the model chosen and accents the teacher knew students were interested in. For instance, if an American accent (e.g. GA) are chosen as model, comparisons should be made when possible or appropriate between the model or reference accent and other models (e.g. a British model like RP) that act then as models for comparison.

For other models of pronunciation, Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo (1998) suggested the two most widely published accents of English. They refer to the Standard Southern British (SSB) and General American (GA). Poedjosoedarmo (2003) argued that SSB was used more widely rather than the traditional Received Pronunciation (RP). Meanwhile, General American was simply the collection of most commonly occurring pronunciation features in American speech. Further, she argued that the inventory of English consonants was almost the same for all native speaker varieties. It is unlikely that any English teacher would object to the list of English consonants or consonant phonemes in the International Phonetics Alphabet (IPA) model (p.7).

After knowing models of pronunciation, teachers' responsibility, then, is to teach students good pronunciation to prevent them from fossilization (Odisho, 2007) and to create a conducive environment for them to learn (Wrembel, 2001). These two

responsibilities at least become the parameter of teachers' professionalism. Being professional is also a matter of how to be aware of their drawback. The drawback in the writer's case is the preschool teachers' English pronunciation. Realizing the teachers' drawback, professional efforts to make their pronunciation better should be done. However, any professional efforts related to improve their pronunciation have not been done individually or institutionally. Such situation extremely contradicted to the writer's presumption in his beginning of observation that their English would be as good as their school title as bilingual preschools. This is significant to notice since these preschool teachers put very basic foundation of foreign language to the students.

Foreign language acquisition in children, meanwhile, has become a paramount matter for the past few years in the early age education. In Indonesia, English becomes the first priority of foreign language that is taught to children. This fact is not surprising at all due to the current needs of today's world for future investment such as entering an international schools or universities and being competitive in job markets-which is getting harder and harder from time to time if someone does not have an added value within himself/herself. Being able to communicate in English then has been the concern of many educators especially young learner teachers.

In response to such a demand, consequently, preschools including English in their curriculum have mushroomed for the past decade. The levels in which English introduced are started from Playgroup and Kindergarten level; teaching them from individual words/simple English vocabularies to simple English expressions/sentences. The reason English is given in the early age since most experts state that children have a flexible brain from the age of 2 to 10 years old (Ellis, 1986). Because of their brain flexibility, children can easily adapt and adopt their second language; English (Penfils *et.all*, 1959).

As further impacts, teaching the first (L1) and second language (L2) at the same time to children lead to the bilingual education system which has been adopted by many preschools in Surabaya. The goal of this effort is actually to make children able to speak both Indonesian and English equally well (Oxford, 2002). In order to achieve the goal, a teacher's role is really significant to make the children better in their English proficiency. In this case, the teacher's English proficiency undoubtedly influences the expected outcomes in the future. Meanwhile, introducing new words of English to preschoolers also means that preschool teachers introduce English sounds to the children. Furthermore, accurate pronunciation is very important to avoid miscommunication among others (Badian, 1998). Therefore, like or not, teaching English words also teach phonetics. This is in line with Chen's statement saying that accurate pronunciation entails pronunciation awareness (Chen, 2011). In relation to it, according to Hismanoglu, pronunciation is an important aspect to achieve in communication (Hismanoglu, 2006) and becomes inseparable from oral communication (Morley, 1991). Without good pronunciation, the children's ability to communicate will be limited (Morley, 1991). Although teachers cannot be like a native, it is recommended that they put efforts to be as closed to the native's sounds as possible.

Knowing more teachers' responsibility, having an awareness of continuously learning and updating the language competence as well as being an autonomous learner are extremely important. If they do not do any teacher professional development, surely, it will give impacts towards the output of the school. They might not be able to compete with others from different preschools and, in the end; it also affects the image of the school and trust from parents. What becomes another paramount issue to notice from these preschools are they graduate quite a lot of

number of preschoolers in which there are three hundred (300) to three hundred and fifty (350) in average every year. Later on, those preschool graduates will be going to many different primary schools in Surabaya and they will be carrying such quality of English competence. Surely, preschool teachers should be the responsible ones for the preschoolers' English competence.

Due to their significant role, these teachers have to be a good pronunciation model for them to prevent from global errors which can hinder communication in the future. Unfortunately, the errors found in the initial observation have indicated problems on some types of English sounds and eventually have triggered this study to be conducted. The study aims at finding out much deeper information concerning errors they produce, reasons they commit errors and strategies they made to overcome it.

The Research Questions

Based on the above background, the research questions which can be drawn are as follows:

(a) What pronunciation errors do English teachers of preschool X produce?

(b) Why do English teachers of preschool X produce pronunciation errors?

(c) How do English teachers of preschool X cope with their pronunciation errors?

The Purposes of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem, the objectives of this study are:

a. To find out errors of pronunciation that the preschool X teachers produce.

b. To find out reasons preschool X teachers produce errors in their English pronunciation.

c. To gain information about the efforts done by the preschool X teachers in overcoming their pronunciation errors.

Significance of the Study

First, these research findings reveals English pronunciation errors produced by the preschool X teachers and show the correct pronunciation of individual words tested based on some models of pronunciation proposed in the study. Secondly, it is significant since it also reveals causes the teachers produce errors. As causes of errors revealed, then sources of errors can also be traced.

Finally, the study is significant since the teachers' efforts to overcome the difficulties are also investigated. That information can contribute to a more complete profile concerning the teachers' English proficiency. Additionally, this profile might become a reference for the Foundation to take further strategic steps to improve the teachers' quality on their English proficiency. Furthermore, the results of the investigation may give other significance in the sense that it may become a basic reason to make professional development trainings for the preschool teachers in the near future. The results of the study might also become an additional reference for others who have the same interest in investigating pronunciation errors.

Scope and Limitation

Since the research is using a single-case study, thus, the participant is limited to one foundation. The foundation has ten (10) branches of preschools in Surabaya, Sidoarjo and Malang. From those ten preschools, there are fifty (50) preschool teachers involved as participants and they are all female teachers with different years of teaching experience.

This study investigates English teachers' pronunciation errors on 40 individual words drawn from their syllabus. Those words are considered as words which receive the most frequently occurring errors. Due to those individual words,

the focus of the investigation is on the vowel sounds, consonant sounds and word stress. The model of pronunciation refers to the Southern Standard British (SSB) and General American (GA). For phonetic transcriptions, the International Phonetics Alphabets (IPA) is applied. The reasons for using the SSB and GA models are because the two models are the most common and widely used in the teaching of English as a foreign language. Meanwhile, the symbols in IPA represent the English pronunciation in most good dictionaries.

Besides the pronunciation errors on 40 individual words, the study also finds the reasons why they produce pronunciation errors as well as how they overcome the problems. To investigate them, recording, a 29-item questionnaire and an interview are used. The study approximately takes 3-4 months of completion on data gathering, data analysis and discussions on findings.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the theory of contrastive and error analysis. The purpose of the analysis is to identify the similarities and differences between the learners' native language and the target language. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) pointed out that the differences of two languages accounted for the majority of L2 learners' errors. Lado (1957) stated that elements similar to learners' native language will be facilitating and those which are different will be difficult.

Due to the differences, deviations/errors take place. According to George (1972), errors refer to consistently and repeatedly deviated forms of learners' language form from the normal adult speech. Further, the errors can neither be detected nor corrected by the learners. For this purpose, error analysis is needed to reveal the difference of speech of both learners' native language and the target language. In

order to categorize errors, source of errors should be determined. Mainly, source errors can be divided into interlingual transfers and intralingual transfer (Dulay and Burt, 1972). To support the analysis, phonological differences between English and Indonesian (Swan and Smith, 2001) are also presented. What impacts or common problems likely to occur from the phonological system differences between those two languages are mainly because of the shift of manner of articulation, place of articulation, voicing features.

To minimize errors, teachers should be aware of their role as pronunciation model for the students (Harmer, 2000) and therefore this study will also based on two suggested models of pronunciation: General American and Standard Southern British (SSB). Those models are suggested by Deterding and Poedjoesoedarmo (1998) for their most widely published accents and most commonly occurring pronunciation features. Giegerich (1992) also pointed that the models are the most widely used in the teaching of English as a foreign language. Besides being aware of the existence of pronunciation models which can be applied, awareness of pronunciation difficulty (Brown, 1991; Poedjosoedarmo, 2003), factors affecting pronunciation as well as pronunciation learning and teaching will also be other theories which will be the framework of this study. Once the awareness and followed by sufficient efforts to improve pronunciation through pronunciation learning (Fraser, 2002) are raised, teacher's language proficiency is expected to improve. Benati (2009) stated that one of the proficiencies which should be owned by teachers is oral proficiency.

Due its difficulty, there should be strategies to learn pronunciation since many experts admitted that it is the least attention given in speaking. Drilling sound production is suggested for its fun nature (Penfills and Roberts, 1959). Celce Murcia and Godwin suggested minimal pairs and short conversation so learners get familiar

with sounds and can practice it into simple contexts. Furthermore, Celce Murcia (1991) and Ngadiman (1979) also gave the same strategy; promoting aural receptivity and actual production. Such strategy is applied in listen and imitate activity.

Assumption

The study on Pronunciation Errors Encountered by Preschool X Teachers in Surabaya, East Java is conducted under some following assumptions. First, teachers of preschool X speak English and use it in the classroom. Secondly, they introduce English words to the students orally.

Definition of Key Terms

English Pronunciation : sounds of English words (vowel, consonants and word stress) based on two pronounciation models: Standard Southern British (SSB) and General American (GA) uttered by preschool teachers

Pronunciation errors : Deviation in pronouncing sounds of English vowels, English consonants and word stresses from the two models of pronunciation: Standard Southern British (SSB) and General American (GA) models

Pronunciation awareness : Having a knowledge of the existence of two English pronunciation models: Standard Southern British (SSB) and General American (GA) in English teaching and learning process

Preschool : an early childhood program in which children learn and play in a program run by

professionally trained adults.

Preschool Teacher : a type of early childhood educator who is responsible for

early education of children from 3 to age 5