

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English is one of the most used languages in the world. In many schools around the world, English is being learnt as a first language, a second language or a foreign language. In Indonesia, English is being learnt as a foreign language. In learning English, students should learn the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing and also the three language components: grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

Pronunciation, one of the language components in learning English, becomes one of the most important things students need to learn in order to master English well and become fluent in communicating in English with others. Pronunciation plays an important role in communicating with others because when people cannot pronounce English words accurately, their messages will not be well delivered. However, recently, "...there has been a tendency to place less and less importance on the teaching of pronunciation" (Curtenden: 2014).

In reality, sometimes it is not easy for Indonesian learners to pronounce English words properly since there are English sounds which do not exist in their native language. It is common for many of them to make mistakes while pronouncing English words containing these sounds. One of the English sounds that do not exist in Bahasa Indonesia is the

English [ʃ]. It seems that this sound is a problem for many Indonesian learners to pronounce.

Thus, the writer is interested to find out what problems are encountered by the eighth semester students who have already taken the pronunciation class and have studied English for about three and a half years at the English department at a private university in East Java in pronouncing the sound [ʃ].

1.2 Statements of the Problems

In line with the background of the study, this study tries to figure out the problems that appear in pronouncing the English [ʃ]. The study is intended to answer a major problem: “What problems in pronouncing the English voiceless palatal fricative consonant are encountered by the eighth semester students of the English Department at a private university in East Java?”

1.3 Objective of the Study

Derived from the above questions, in general the purpose of this study is to find out the problems in pronouncing the English voiceless palatal fricative consonant which are encountered by the eighth semester students of the English Department at a private university in East Java.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The study is discussing the problems in pronouncing the voiceless palatal fricative consonant. Thus, the writer supplies some related theories that help her in doing the analysis. The theory of contrastive analysis stated by James (1980) is one of the underlying theories in the study. He states that if two languages are similar, there will be a positive transfer; if two languages are different, there will be a negative transfer or intervention. Therefore, contrastive analysis is used to predict points of difficulty and some of the errors that learners will make. In addition, the writer also puts the linguistic theory of consonants and phonemes elaborated by Yule (2006), theory of the second language acquisition by Krashen (2013), and a review of three related studies.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give some contributions to the following readers:

- a. For the lecturers of the English department, this study is expected to give information about the students' problems in pronunciation, so that they can give feedback to the department's head to give a course or program to accommodate the students' need related to pronunciation.
- b. For the students of English Department, it is hoped that this study will make them realize their weakness in pronouncing English sounds and it will encourage them to learn more. Also, they are supposed to be more

aware of their weakness, and as a result, they will try to improve their pronunciation.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

For having a specific discussion about this study, it is important for the writer to limit the points that are discussed. The writer decides to focus on the English voiceless palatal fricative consonant [ç]. The writer tries to find the problems of pronouncing the voiceless palatal fricative consonant both in its distribution and cluster. The data taken are from the eighth semester students of the English department at a private university in East Java. The data are in the form of sounds.

The writer only transcribes words containing the voiceless palatal fricative consonant [ç] as the target consonant. In analyzing the errors, the writer only analyzes the errors in words containing the target consonant and does not count the errors in other words.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid any misinterpretation toward this study and also to enable the readers to understand this study, the writer tries to give clear definition of the significant terms used. The significant terms are:

1. Consonant : A speech sound produced by restricting the air flow in some way (Yule, 2006).
2. Contrastive Analysis : A linguistic enterprise aimed at producing inverted two-valued typologies and founded

on the assumption that languages can be compared (James, 1980).

3. Fricatives : A consonant produced by almost blocking the air flow (Yule, 2006).

4. Voiceless Palatal Fricative: A sound that is formed because the blade and front of the tongue are used to direct a somewhat wider stream of air against the alveolar ridge, rather than the teeth. (Francis, 1958)

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter discusses the background of the study, statements of the problem, the objective of the study, theoretical framework, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, the definition of key terms, and organizational pattern of the study. The second chapter discusses review of the related literature and the previous studies. The third chapter discusses the research method used by the writer in doing her study. The fourth chapter discusses the data analysis, the research findings discussions. The last chapter gives the conclusion of this study and suggestions related to this study.