CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1.   Background of the Study

Learning to pronounce the English words is not an easy task. This big problem is the problem for the language learner. It is not an outstanding thing to know that there are still many mispronounced words that the language learner makes. According to Fries in Lado (1957:2), individuals tend to have the language transfers of forms and meanings of their native/mother language to the target language or second language. It means that there is obstruction that can make us difficult to pronounce some of the English words because of the interference of the first language. For example, when Indonesians want to pronounce the word 'thank' [θæŋk], Indonesians tend to pronounce it as [tæŋk] because there is no sound [θ] in Indonesian. It is important to know that when we mispronounce a word it can cause a different meaning.

Chinese people who learn English will have some problems too, because the English and Chinese sound systems have a big difference. For example intonation system in Chinese uses 4 kinds of tones in which each word has its own tone, so Chinese speech is controlled by the 4 tones. That is why when we speak Chinese we have to "sing" using the 4 tones in Chinese.

Since the writer is interested in learning the Chinese language, the writer compares the English language with the Chinese language in her study. She wants to find out what problems happen in the Chinese people's process of English pronunciation acquisition. Because based on her experience, the writer could hear that there were some mispronounced words made by the Chinese respondent because of the influences of their mother tongue especially in pronouncing the English consonants. That is why the writer is eager to find out the basic problem that becomes the big obstacle for the Chinese in learning the English pronunciation which is about the interference of Chinese consonants in English pronunciation.

1.2. Statement of the Problems

With reference to the background of the study, this study is designed to answer these questions:

1.2.1. What Chinese consonants interfere in the English pronunciation?

1.2.2. What are the causes underlying the Chinese consonants interference in English pronunciation?

1.3. Objective of the Study

This study is intended to find out:

1.3.1. The Chinese consonants that interfere the English pronunciation.

1.3.2. The causes underlying the Chinese consonants interference in English pronunciation.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give some contribution to the study of pronunciation subject at Widya Mandala Catholic University for teaching the Chinese who study in the English Department since the effects of the mother tongue have become the obstacles of the Chinese L1 speaker in their process of English pronunciation acquisition. And also regarding the graduated students who want to teach English to Chinese people living in Surabaya or China, this study could be a good preparation for them.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

Because of the limited number of the Chinese L1 speakers in the campus, the writer chose one of the 7th semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University. The writer chose her because she is a Chinese native speaker. The writer focused on Chinese and English consonants only.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding, there are several key terms used in this study to be defined before further discussion is proceeded. They are as follows:

a. Consonant: Sound formed by interrupting, restricting or diverting the airflow in a variety of ways (Kelly, 2000:47).

b. Interference/negative transfer: Result of the dissimilarities between native language and the target language (Lado, 1957:2).

1.7.   Theoretical Framework

There are four theories underlying this study, the first is English vs Mandarin consonants, the second is the contrastive analysis hypothesis, the third is the language transfer, the fourth is the error analysis.

1.8.   Organization of the Study

Chapter I is introduction which is divided into eight sub topics, background of the study, statement of the problems, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, definition of the key terms, theoretical framework, and organization of the study.

Chapter II discusses the review of the related literature which is divided into two sub topics, previous study and underlying theories.

Chapter III is research methodology which is divided into five sub topics, design of the study, subject, instruments, procedure of the data collection, procedure of the data analysis.

Chapter IV discusses findings, and causes underlying the Chinese consonant interference in English pronunciation.

Chapter V is the conclusion and suggestions.