

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Language plays a great part in our life considering we are people, social human beings, who need to interact with other people by communication. Everybody always deals with the language in everything they do. People use language to express what they mean to others. Every body speaks in different language **or** dialect condition that they deal with. By using language, a person can also understand what other people are trying to say. Therefore, language means a lot **for** communication.

Phonology is an aspect **of** linguistics which studies the sound systems of language (Crystal, 1985). In phonology, pronunciation takes the most important role

represented in phonetic transcription. It is important to study since what we pronounce reflexes the meaning of something. Different pronunciation will have different meaning. If we pronounce some words incorrectly then we cannot communicate with others successfully. The hearer will never get our points. Littlewood, William (1991)¹ said that if we utter an improper word it may create a new utterance which leads to new meaning. If it continues then misunderstanding or miscommunication will not be avoided.

The writer investigates English pronunciation since it is important to learn as a second language in Indonesia. English is used by 750 million people from all over the world and only half of them speak it as a mother tongue. People use English in their activities and communicating with other people especially from different countries (Mc Crum, Cran, and Mac Neil Cited, 1986). In Mc Crum, Cran, and Mac Neil Cited's opinion, it can be seen through the fact that half of the world's technical and scientific periodicals are in English and at the end of 20th century it is more widely spread (Belda, 1995)². However, English is an International language. *So* this importance of English pronunciation stimulates the writer to investigate the problems of pronunciation.

Pronunciation is important for the children considering that childhood is an important and beneficial period to learn language. Crystal said that childhood is a learning time to produce over two hundreds words in an intelligible manner and they are using over a dozen consonants and vowels (1987). He also said that a child learned

¹ Littlewood, William 1991 *Foreign and Second Language Learning*. Cambridge Cambridge University Press

² Belda 1995 *Phonology Process of an Old Indonesian Child Aged Two Years (Thesis)*

to speak by copying the noise-patterns heard around him, and through stimulus and response, trial and error, reinforcement and reward, he would refine his own production until it matched the language of his adult models. It is better to begin second language as early as possible (Johnson and Newport, 1989) because it will be difficult to acquire another language if children have passed their critical period (around puberty). George Yule (1997) in *The Study of The Language*, had the same opinion. Lightbown (1993) and Littlewood (1991) also argued that children learn language by imitating and repetition all the words that they obtain from environment. It snatches songs that they hear through cassette or other audio media as one of the best ways to introduce English and how it is pronounced to children.

However, in this research, the writer will not investigate how the children acquire their language. But she is going to analyze the pronunciations that are produced by the little singers during their learning process of L2 in a cassette containing English children songs “*Seleksi Non Stop-Natal Milenium-Lagu & Dialog*”.

Students in their learning process always make **errors** and this **is also** experienced by the writer herself who usually struggles with errors. Error in acquiring process is unavoidable and making errors is a part **of** learning (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982) as well as **errors** which occur in singers' pronunciation in this cassette. Dulay and friends also stated that one of the factors which cause the error is the influence of first language (L1).

In *Seleksi Non Stop – Natal Milenium – Lagu & Dialog* cassette, the writer notices so many errors which are contributed by the singers in this album, stimulate the writer to make an investigation. They are Indonesian children who try **to** use their

English in singing their songs in the cassette. The writer wants to know about the kind of errors that occur in the singers pronunciation.

The writer used the recorded material in the problems that she finds and analyzes are all in this cassette. Those are the problems **of** pronunciation.

1.2 Research Question

Being curious to **know** about the English pronunciation errors that the children use in their speech, the writer comes up with the following questions:

1. What kinds of error in English pronunciation occur in “*Seleksi Non Stop-Natal Milenium Lagu & Dialog*” cassette in terms of consonant, vowel, and diphthong?
2. What is the frequency of pronunciation errors produced by the singers ?
3. What are the possible causes of the errors?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Based on standard America English phonology, the writer is trying to identify the phonological forms which occur in “*Seleksi Non Stop-Natal Milenium-Lagu & Dialog*”, classify them, and analyzing them by comparing those words that are identified as **a** pronunciation errors viewed from a Standard American English. She identifies the singers’ English pronunciation in the cassette.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Through the thesis, the writer hopes that the readers know about the type of phonological forms that cannot be pronounced correctly **by** the children. The writer

also hopes that the adult must be aware of some words that are pronounced incorrectly by the child who is in the learning process **of** English. The writer's goal in writing this thesis is for the teacher of English to be aware of the words that cannot be spoken by the child in their learning process. It is intended for the teacher in the pronunciation laboratory class **or** in a regular pronunciation class setting. She also hopes that this thesis can give a contribution to other students who are especially interested in linguistic research. She hopes this thesis will be helpful for those who want to study the phonological system of language further and help them to improve their spoken English. The writer in this thesis uses a generative phonology³ which can formulate the sound change. Therefore, this thesis' theoretical significance justifies review the existing theory.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The writer uses two Indonesian singers as main singers in the **cassette** entitled *“Seleksi Non Stop-Natal Milenium - Lagu & Dialog”* as the research subject, considering that many English words are pronounced incorrectly by those children in singing the songs. In this research the writer excluded all supra segmental **features** such as intonation, stress, and tone because in a song, these features are treated in tones and rhythm of the music in order to make it more attractive **or to** emphasize on the meaning of word, phrase **or** sentence in the lyrics. Besides, in a song, the prosodic feature could be used to balance the notation in a song. The writer ignores pronunciation in context,

³ generative phonology is phonology which can explain the nature of sound change adequately (Wahab, 1990)

She only investigates word in isolation which deals with English sound production. The adjustment of violation of sounds is based on the research competence.

In finding the possible causes, the writer also excludes all psychological factors which deal with the emotional of the subjects of research because they simply sing the songs.

She limits her analysis on the aspect of phonology on the assumption that description **of** errors will be analyzed based on the correct articulation. **For** the symbols, she used American dialect standard form variation because it is more common among Indonesian people since it spreads widely among us through electronic media such as television, cinema, VCD, and CD etc. The writer **also** used international Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as phonetic symbols because it is commonly used by scholars.

The singers in this cassette were five and six years old when this cassette was processed. It **was** in years of 1999. They were famous little singers who were borne and lived in Jakarta. A complete information can be seen in appendix. In doing the research, the writers collected the **data** by listening and writing down all improper pronunciations which are contributed by the singers in International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). This thesis is comparative studies which **try** to compare with Indonesian language as their mother tongue.

1.6 Definition of Key Term

Error is the flawed side of a learners speech **or** writing. They are those parts **of** conversation **or** composition that deviate **from** some selected norm **of** language.

Performance error refers to any deviation from a selected norm of language. Performance, no matter what characteristics or causes of the deviation might be⁴.

Phonology is a study or science that deals with sounds and the elements of phonetic sound (their uses and their distribution in distinct unit); how to pronounce⁵.

Pronunciation is way in which language is spoken or way in which a language is pronounced using phonetic transcription".

English pronunciation error is English pronunciation that is spoken improperly because of **lack** of knowledge.

1.7 Organization of the study

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter one, which is the introduction, contains background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, scope and limitation and organization of the study. Chapter two, reviews related literature; the underlying theory and reviews related studies. Chapter three, research methodology, contains research of methodology itself, methods of data collection and data analysis. Chapter four is the analysis of pronunciation error. Chapter five will contain conclusion of research.

⁴ Dulay, Heidi, Marina Burt and Stephen Krashen 1982 *Language Two*, New York Oxford University Press

⁵ Crystal. David 1985 *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* Oxford Basil Blackwell Ltd

⁶ *The American Heritage Dictionary* 1991 Boston New York-London Houghton Mifflin Company