

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background of Study

In having an effective conversation, sometimes there are some obstacles such as vagueness or ambiguity while people speak to each other. This phenomenon could cause the listener fails to comprehend the speaker's utterances. In order to get the intended message, the listeners need to pay more attention to the speaker. The listener might get distracted while having a conversation, it happens because sometimes they are too engaged with their own thoughts. Therefore, it is possible to make listeners fail to understand what a speaker has said. This situation can lead to a misperception of the message by the listeners.

In general terms, misperception is a process of aberration between actual meaning and perceived state in finding information (Akashi 2002). In some errors, the listener misperceives a single segment so that the speaker's utterance and the listener's utterance differ only in one segment. In this case, consonants mostly have misperceptions more often than vowels. These phenomena happen because misperceptions that are experienced by listeners belong to wrong perceptions of a single segment (Pisoni 2005).

The phenomenon of misperception can be found in everyday conversation and it happens spontaneously, even under the consciousness of the listener. Bond emphasizes that among the meaning of the message and what the listeners have

perceived can be considered as a misperception. Misperception in perceiving messages can be called as “Slip of the Ear”. Here is the example of Slip of the ear experienced by an English native speaker.

Example 1:

A: “Lia, do you know about Slip of the Ear?”

B: “Ha? What? Sleep of the Ear?”

A: “No, it is slip not sleep, S L I P.

This example involved adolescence of the English native speaker having a conversation with the researcher. In the example, the listener (B) misperceived “slip” as “sleep”. This error can lead to the change of meaning from “slip” to “sleep”. The listener may make such a mistake because these first and final sounds have a similar sound, first initial sound [s] and the final [p]. She failed to perceive sound [i] becoming [e].

Another example comes from Indonesian native speaker in daily conversation and it was got when the researcher was in her relatives’ house.

Example 2:

C: “Bapak sudah makan pagi?”

D: “Ibuk ini gimana to, ya bapak makan nasi lah masak ya makan padi kan gak bisa dimakan buk.”

C: “Ih bapak gimana si, padahal ibuk tadi nanya “bapak sudah makan pagi belum?” ya masak bapak ibu suruh makan padi.”

D: “Iya maaf bu tadi bapak dengarnya “padi” bukan “pagi.”

Those slip of the ear phenomena happens in a noisy situation. This conversation takes place in the speakers’ kitchen, with a noisy situation. Mother (D) is cooking and father (C) walks to the kitchen area. The mother (D) was cooking in the kitchen, making noise from the pan, causing the father (C) had slip of the ear. In example 2 the listener misheard the word “Pagi” as “Padi”. The

listener misheard the middle sound [g] hence it makes the segment sound similar. The father (C) might make such a mistake because the two words have a similar beginning and final sound [p] and [i]. He failed to perceive sound [g] becoming [d]. Words with similar sounds can lead to misperception if the listener does not listen carefully to the speaker's utterances.

In the study of psycholinguistics, it is stated that Slip of the Ear has been considered as an error in perceiving certain messages from one speaker affected by the human mind and language. Psycholinguistics illustrate the complicated process inside the human brain, which may lead to Slip of the Ear. This phenomenon is also known as “mondegreens”. It was a famous phenomenon of slip of the ear from a ballad experienced by Sylvia Wright, when she heard the lyrics of the Scottish folk song entitled “The Bonny Earl of Morray” (Vitevitch 2002):

They hae slain the Earl Murray.

And laid him on the green → And Lady Mondegreen.

Surprisingly, this phenomenon, an error in perceiving message, is likely to occur in the first language or mother tongue. Based on the two examples above, it shows that there is an error in perceiving a message from the speaker. The native speaker that uses the mother tongue is also possible to experience slip of the ear, even though they use their language in everyday conversation. Slip of the ear is likely to happen due to certain situations such as when the moment a conversation take place and it is considered as noisy or quiet situation, the existence of noisy situation can cause slip of the ear. The age and background of the listener may

also affect the perceiving utterances, whether the speaker is a native or foreigner of a particular language and whether the listener is an adult or child (Dewi and Syukri 2018).

The phenomena of slip of the ear can also be experienced by people in various ages. It is possible that it can be experienced by children, teenagers, and adult people. According to Purwo (1997), children at an early age still have difficulty in perceiving cause-effect utterances, and still tend to observe what adults talking about. This phenomenon is very natural to occur because of segmentation problem and lack of invariance problems experienced by children.

Segmentation problem and lack of invariance problem discussed under the field of speech perception. According to (Jean Berko Gleason 1998), speech perception explores human beings while processing and decoding the message. In the speech perception has been focused on problems concerning segmentation problem and lack of invariance problem (Keith R.Kluender 2006). The segmentation problem deals with how to identify and label phonetic segments (Field 2004). Thus, the writer would like to focus on the slip of the ear experienced by adult age. This is quite interesting to examine the phenomenon about slip of the ear experienced by an adult where adults have more variations vocabulary than children.

Unconsciously, slip on the ear provides some awareness on how the listener relies on their linguistic knowledge to understand messages. Bond (2005) classified slip of the ear based on the linguistics knowledge used by the listener in perceiving the utterances, those are: (1) Phonetic knowledge (vowel

misperception, consonant misperception, segment order); (2) Phonological knowledge (phonological reduction, phonological well-formedness, language varieties); (3) Lexical knowledge (non-words, word boundaries, content words and function words, morphology); (4) Syntax (well-formed ill-formed utterances. Constituents, argument structure, and function); and (5) Semantics and pragmatics. Slip of the ear based on the use of linguistics knowledge are divided further into 14 types that will be explained further in chapter 2.

Bond (2005) has found some data about slip of the ear. She has collected approximately 1,000 examples of slip of the ear. From the data she collected, she classified the data based on linguistic knowledge, including phonetic knowledge, phonological knowledge, lexical knowledge, syntactic knowledge, and semantic knowledge. She found that examples of slip of the ear taken from casual conversations in English. Besides, Linell (2015) found a 220 slip of the ear in Swedish conversation. The result of Linell's study is that slip of the ear happens because of the context.

Another study about slip of the ear was conducted by Fia (2018) with titled "Under Graduate Thesis Slips of the Ear Experienced by Indonesian Elementary Student Grades 1-3 from SDN DR.Sutomo 5 Surabaya in Quiet Situation." Slip of the Ear experienced by Indonesian student grades 1-3, but it is under quiet situation. While in this study, the writer focusing on the noisy situation. Meanwhile, Dwi (2018), whose undergraduate thesis titled "Slip the Ear Experienced by Indonesian Students in Grade 4-6 of SDN Mojo VIII Surabaya in Noisy situation," conducted her research within noisy situation. However, in this

study the participant are students in grade 4-6, while the writer focusing in the adult age.

The objects in each previous study above all belong to the same type of age. Therefore, in this study, the writer would like to focus on the slip of the ear experienced by adult with the speaker is a child in the noisy situation. The study slip of the ear phenomena is worth to conducts therefore the writer would like to explore more about this phenomenon. The focus of this study is listeners age 18-60 years old and in a noisy situation. The writer would like to select adults as the participants because adults sometimes misheard children's utterances, although adult age has a better understanding of language. According to Pichora-Fuller (2003), stored knowledge and expertise is well preserved in adult age.

Furthermore, this study is part of an ongoing research project under Masitha Achmad Syukri, M. Hum, a lecturer at the English Department, Universitas Airlangga, entitled "Slip of the ear experienced by Indonesian Adult in the Perception of Children Casual Conversation". The research project would discuss about slip of the ear experienced by Indonesian adults in perceiving 4-6 years old children's speech within noisy situations.

## **1.2. Statement of Problem**

Considering Bond's classification (2005), this research is related to the slip of the ear phenomenon, especially experienced by adults to children of speakers within noisy situation. The writer generates the statement of the problem as follows:

1. What types of slip of the ear experienced by Indonesian adults in perceiving 4-6 years old children's speech within noisy situation?
2. What is the most dominant type of slip of the ear experienced by Indonesian adults in perceiving 4-6 years old within noisy situation?

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

From the statements of the problems mention above, two objectives have been proposed in this study. The first is to reveal the types of slip of the ear experienced by Indonesian adults in perceiving children's speech within noisy situation. The second objective is to find out the dominant types of slip of the ear that occurred by Indonesian adults in perceiving 4-6 years old children's speech within noisy situation.

### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

By conducting this study, the writer expects that it could provide a theoretical contribution to the linguistics field especially in the psycholinguistics area. In addition, this study focuses on the speech perception as the initial process of speech comprehension. This study may offer opportunities for other researchers to conduct studies within the same topic but different object of the study. The writer also expected that this study could be useful for broadening the knowledge of slip of the ear others researcher in the psycholinguistics area. This study is conducted to contribute a new variation about slip of the ear under the study of psycholinguistic. On the other hand, this study is expected to stimulate awareness in perceiving utterances in the daily conversation.

### 1.5. Definition of Key Term

- Slip of the ear: A phenomenon refers to the various reduction and simplification of the utterance that occurs in a conversation when the listener comprehends the utterance using their linguistic knowledge (Bond 2005).
- Types of slip of the ear: The classification of slip of the ear based on the five different linguistic knowledge, namely: phonetic knowledge, phonological knowledge, lexical knowledge, syntactic knowledge, and semantic and pragmatic knowledge (Bond 2005).
- Speech Perception: The process of the comprehend and decode spoken message perceived by a human being (Jean Berko Gleason 1998).
- Noisy situation: A situation where there is an unwanted signal that interferes with the process of communication in range 60-80 decibels (Vaseghi 2008).