

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Conversation is an interactive communication. It happens when someone speaks to others and the others listen to understand the message. It requires the participants to give their attention to the speaker's utterances which means, the listener should understand what the speaker said (Clark 2003). Sometimes this activity does not go well due to some impediments, this condition makes the listeners get mishearing. Mishearing is possible to happen in daily or casual conversation.

Mishearing (Connor 2009), slip of the ear (Chiari 2006), and misperception (Bond 2005) are interchangeably term. They are the variation name of misperception. Bond used slip of the ear term and misperception term in her study. She explained the phenomena by using slip of the ear term and used misperception term for some types of slip of the ear, such as vowel misperception. According to Bond, it is no surprise if listeners failed to conceive what speakers said. Instead, a listener perceives, clearly and distinctly, something that does not correspond to the speaker's intended utterance (Bond 2005). It occurs due to the listeners are distracted or ignored of what being said (Wines 2007).

Slips of the ear phenomena can happen to anyone and anywhere. For instance, slip of the ear experienced by a native speaker (25 years old) in perceived an adult bilingual speaker (20 years old) speech.

Example 1:

A : Wow, you look like stylish!  
 B : What? Stylist?

The example above shows slip of the ear phenomenon experienced by a native speaker of English. The listener failed to perceive the sounds intended by the speaker. The word “stylish” was misperceived as “stylist”. The listener misperceived the last consonant sound [ʃ] in word “stylish” as consonant sounds [s] and [t] which lead the listener misperceived the word as ”stylist”.

Example 2, the conversation between a mother (32 years old) and her child (6 years old):

Example 2

Child : Ma, Sari dimana?  
 (*Mom, where is Sari?*)  
 Mother : Sare? Ya di kamar loh dek.  
 (*Sleep? In the bedroom, kid*)  
 Child : Sari ma, bukan sare.  
 (*Sari mom, not sleep*)

The example above based on the writer’s family experience. It shows mishearing experienced by the mother in perceiving her child’s message at home where the situation was quiet. The mother failed to perceive the intended message by her child. She perceived the word *Sari* (name of person) as *sare* (it’s a word in the Javanese language which means sleep). The listener misperceived the last vowel sound [i] as [e]. These words have the same initial sound syllable [sa] and following by the same consonant [r], hence it makes the segment sounds similar. The same initial sound and consonant in some words may lead to misunderstanding if the listener doesn’t hear the speaker utterances carefully.

The example one is experienced by native speakers of English and example two is experienced by bilingual Indonesian and Javanese. It shows that the

occurrence of slip of the ear might happen in the first language of the listener, even they are native speakers and common to use it in daily conversation.

Slip of the ear can be experienced by anyone at every age. The two examples above show that slip of the ear can be experienced by person who has partner conversation either in the same or cross-age. Studies found out that adults still experienced slip of the ear even they can execute more complex language comprehension.

Both of the examples above show that slip of the ear may occur in a quiet situation or no noise sound. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2014), quiet situation is a condition with little noise or no noise within particular places.

Slip of the ear is giving a unique way for the listener to use their linguistic knowledge. In Psycholinguistics, slip of the ear is analyzed under the domain of speech perception (Warren 2013). From this point of view, slip of the ear is a kind of error of misperception by the listeners. It is likely happening because of some causes, such as setting, speakers (native or foreign), and listeners age (younger or older than the speakers). Speech perception explores human beings while the process of in perceiving a language (Gleason and Ratner 1998). Slip of the ear can be investigated through the speech perception process. However, the speech perception processes can be made difficult by two major problems which are segmentation problem and lack of invariance problem (Klueder and Kiefte 2006).

Bond (2005) had researched about slip of the ear. She has collected approximately 1,000 examples of slip of the ear. It was taking place in daily

casual conversation. From the data she had collected, she classified the result into 14 types of slip of the ear. From those classifications, she found that slip of the ear is not equally likely in all positions in a word: consonant substitutions tend to occur word-initially; consonant loss tends to affect the final consonant. Other research comes from Linell (2015), she got 220 slip of the ears in Swedish conversations. She concerned about the authentic slip of the ear and the context. The finding of her research was slip of the ear support a dynamic, dialogical theory, rather than a linear model of perception (and production). However, it is unclear whether the slip of the ear happened in quiet or noisy situations and also the conversation here mostly took the same age between listener and speaker. Besides, Artikah and Syukri (2018) focused to find out the type of slip of the ear experienced by students in grade 4-6 elementary school in noise situation. The researchers found that the most frequent type of slip of the ear experienced by the students was well-formed and ill-formed utterances types. Another study about slip of the ear was conducted by Dewi (2018). She collected the data from 30 students in grade 1-3 in SDN Dr. Sutomo 5 Surabaya. She found there were 56 wrong answers which categorized into 11 types of 14 types of slip of the ear. She found well-formed and ill-formed was the most common happening. Those studies were focused to find out the slip of the ear types experienced by children, while the writer wants to reveal the slip of the ear types experienced by adults in perceive children's speech.

Those studies had the same finding that slip of the ear is a normal thing, not in person with an impairment or disability. It is a normal error in daily

conversation experienced by everyone. Listeners may be in a noisy situation or they do not focus on hearing the utterances, it can lead them to experience slip of the ear. However, most of the previous studies of slip of the ear focused on adult and children within a condition the speakers and listeners are having the same age rate, while the cross-age rates are not common to conduct. Therefore, in this study, the writer focuses on slip of the ear experienced by adults in perceiving children's speech.

The participants are adults because sometimes adults misunderstand children's utterances. It is quite interesting to search more about slip of the ear experienced by adults with children as the speakers because adults have complex linguistics knowledge and more acquiring their language while children have a lack of variance and simple knowledge about their language (Purwo 1997).

The study of slip of the ear is worth to conducts therefore the writer would like to explore more about this issue and this study is part of a research project under Masitha Achmad Syukri, M. Hum. entitled Slip of The Ear Experienced by Indonesian Adults in Perceiving the Children's Casual Speech. This study focused on studying slips of the ear experienced by Indonesian adults in perceiving 4-6 year-old children's speech within quiet situation.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

This study will concern on slip of the ear phenomena, especially experienced by adults in perceiving children's speech. Some problems that will be focused to discuss:

- a. What types of slip of the ear experienced by Indonesian adults in perceiving 4-6 year-old children's speech in a quiet situation?
- b. Which type of slip of the ear mostly experienced by Indonesian adults in perceiving 4-6 year-old children's speech in a quiet situation?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

There are some focus objectives of this study stated below:

- a. To find out types of slip of the ear experienced by Indonesian adults in perceiving 4-6 year-old children's speech in a quiet situation.
- b. To find out type of slip of the ear experienced mostly by Indonesian adults in perceiving 4-6 year-old children's speech in a quiet situation.

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

This study is expected to have both theoretical and practical contributions. As a theoretical contribution, it will give contribution to knowledge in psycholinguistics field that is speech comprehension, especially speech perception. This study can give understanding to people that speech perception matters in conversation because it is initial process of speech comprehension. While a practical contribution, it helps to show the linguistic knowledge of adults in understanding the utterances based on some factors, such as the topic, the

background of the listeners, the knowledge of the listeners regarding the topic, etc.

### **1.5 Definition of Key Terms**

- Types of slip of the ear: The classification of slips of the ear based on listener's linguistic knowledge use the phonetics, phonology, lexicon, and syntax of their language in understanding speech (Bond 2005).
- Slip of the ear: A term refers to the condition where a listener perceived something that does not correspond to the speaker's intended utterance (Bond 2005).
- Speech Perception: The processes of comprehend and decode spoken messages perceived by human being (Gleason and Ratner 1998).
- Quiet Situation: A condition with little noise or no noise within particular places in a range 50-60 decibels (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2019).