

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

In communication, people definitely are required to use the two natural language skills, which are listening and speaking skills. The first and the most important skill is listening. People should master this listening skill before the other skills. Listening is an important process in communication. It is an essential for the listener to perceive the sound which leads to the absolute meaning or message which the speaker gives. Even though listening is really important and the delivery of messages when communicating to each other depends on this skill, sometimes people experience an error when listening to other's speech. In daily conversations, misunderstanding is commonly found between two people when they talk to each other. Mostly, it happens because listeners do not receive the message from the speaker perfectly. This phenomenon is called slips of the ear. Slips of the ear could happen in various age. Everybody is possible to experience this phenomenon, starting with children, teenagers, adults, and also elderly.

Here is an example of slips of the ear experienced by a teenager while using Bahasa Indonesia as their first language. It happened between father and a daughter within a quiet situation.

A: *"Dek tolong ambilin kopinya Bapak di meja."*

B: *"Di meja gak ada topi, Pak."*

A: *"Kok topi? Kopi, Dek."*

B: *"Oh, kopi."*

The conversation above is the example of slips of the ear that happens in daily conversations. In this conversation, the father asked his daughter to take his 'kopi' (means coffee) on the table. Instead of 'kopi', the daughter perceived it as 'topi' (means cap). Those two words have different initial sounds, which are [k] and [t], and the remaining sounds are the same, which are [ɔpɪ]. In this case, slips of the ear occurred when she misperceived 'kopi' as 'topi'. She changed the initial sound of the word from [k] to [t] while the remaining sounds were perceived correctly. This slip of the ear leads to misperception, and it confuses the listener when determining the word in a sentence that it causes misunderstanding.

Slips of the ear is an appealing phenomenon to be studied since it often occurs in everyday life. For example, words that are often mistakenly heard in English are "she" and "sea", both words have similar pronunciation but they have different meanings and are used in different contexts. Here is the example of slips of the ear in English.

A: "The sea was calm."

B: "I think she was angry."

A: "I said 'sea' which means ocean, not 'she' as a girl."

This example of slips of the ear involved a teenage English as a foreign language speaker having a conversation with his sister. In the example, his sister (B) as a listener misperceived 'sea' as 'she'. Those two words have different meanings, so it can lead them to a misunderstanding. Sea [si:] means ocean, while she [ʃi] refers to a girl. The listener can make an error because the sounds of those two words are almost the same. The difference is in the initial sound, in the word

'sea' the initial sound is [s], while in the word 'she' the initial sound is [ʃ]. Meanwhile the final sounds of those two words are identical, which is [i].

Slips of the ear can occur because of some factors. One of the factors is the situation when the conversation happens. If there is a lot of noisy distraction, there will be more possibility for slips of the ear to happen. Noise might be the main cause. However, even in a quiet situation, this phenomenon also happens (Dewi and Syukri 2018). Although not as many as found in a noisy situation, slips of the ear are also found in a quiet situation. Misperception in quiet settings occurs spontaneously, with no obvious indication that because of the smoothness of conversation, someone misperceives the intended utterances (Dharmawan 2020). The other factor is what language people use in their daily conversations. People who use their second language experience slips of the ear more often compared to people who use their first language. For instance, Indonesian people experience slips of the ear more when they use English to communicate, rather than when they use Bahasa Indonesia. Nevertheless, it is still possible that slips of the ear will happen when people communicate using their first language.

Slips of the ear happen when people cannot perceive an utterance accurately. When a speaker speaks too fast, it may affect the process of receiving the ideas which is done by the listener. Slips of the ear is a condition where a listener fails in interpreting messages and how the listener recognizes words (Bond 2005). According to Bond's (2005) theory, there are fourteen types of misperceptions based on the use of five types of linguistic knowledge. Based on the use of phonetic knowledge, there are three types of slips of the ear, which are vowel misperception,

consonant misperception, and segment order. Based on the use of phonological knowledge, there are also three types of slips of the ear, which are phonological reduction, phonological word-formedness, and language varieties. Based on the use of lexical knowledge, there are four types of slips of the ear, which are non-word misperception, word boundary misperception, content and function word, and also morphological misperception. Meanwhile, well-formed and ill-formed utterances, constituents, and argument structure and function are types of slips of the ear based on the use of syntactic knowledge. Lastly, based on the use of the semantic and pragmatic knowledge, there is one type of slip of the ear, namely semantical misperception. Mondegreen, that is another term of slips of the ear, was first introduced by Sylvia Wright in 1954. Slips of the ear (SOE) is one of the misperceptions that may be a source of understanding loss in listening.

Slips of the ear are an interesting topic to explore, and there are several research that have been conducted on this topic. Vitevitch (2002) examined slips of the ear toward adult native speakers. Vitevitch analyzed word-frequency, neighborhood density, and also neighborhood frequency using a computer-readable transcription database of approximately 20,000 words from *Webster's Pocket Dictionary*. Another study conducted by Widayanti (2015) used Bond's (2005) theory to analyze slips of the ear, and this research focused on how the students of English Education Department in UPI perceive song lyrics. This research found that the most frequent errors occurred in lexical knowledge level and the most common errors in all categories was ill-form utterances. Risvia (2019), found that slips of the ear only occurred based on the use of three types of linguistic knowledge, which

were phonetic knowledge, phonological knowledge, and lexical knowledge. Her research also concluded that slips of the ear were caused by two factors, which are interlingual and extralingual. The other study related to this research is the study conducted by Nazarudin (2020), which discussed about slips of the ear by teenagers in noisy situation. Nazarudin investigated that speech perception error occurs at 11 types out of 14 types classified by Bond (2005) which are vowel misperception, consonant misperception, phonological well-formedness, language varieties, non-words misperception, word boundaries misperception, content and function words, morphological misperception, well-formed and ill-formed utterances, argument structure and function, and also semantical misperception. The most frequent slip of the ear is consonant misperception, with the percentage of 26.04%. The research also mentioned that beside the noisy situation, bilingualism might be another factor that can influence the process of perceiving utterances.

All of those previous studies discussed above examined slips of the ear phenomenon using Bond's theory (2005). On those four previous studies, none of them specified in slips of the ear during a quiet situation. Vitevitch (2002), Widayanti (2015), and Risvia (2019) did not specify in what situation, noisy or quiet, what the slips of the ear that happened. Meanwhile Nazarudin (2020) conducted the research focusing on a noisy situation. For this research, the writer decided to focus on slips of the ear that happen in a quiet situation because even though not as many as found in a noisy situation, slips of the ear may be found in a quiet situation, for instance the study conducted by Dharmawan (2020), *Slips Of The Ear Experienced By Indonesian 4-6 Years Old Children In Perceiving Adults'*

*Speech Within Quiet Situation*. Nevertheless, all findings that were already figured out in those four previous studies provide more understanding and important details about slips of the ear phenomenon.

This research focuses on exploring what types of slips of the ear is experienced by Indonesian teenagers, then categorizing them using Bond's (2005) slips of the ear theory as the main theory to analyze this phenomenon. From the previous explanation, it is shown that the purpose of this research is to investigate the phenomenon of slips of the ear experienced by Indonesian teenagers in perceiving 12-14 years old teenagers' speech in a quiet situation.

### **1.2 Statement of Problem**

Based on the background of the study explained above, this study attempts to examine the types of slips of the ear experienced by Indonesian teenagers in perceiving 12-14 years old teenagers' speech within a quiet situation. The writer formulated the problems as follows:

1. What types of slips of the ear is experienced by Indonesian teenagers in perceiving 12-14 years old teenagers' speech within a quiet situation?
2. Which type of slips of the ear is the most frequently experienced by Indonesian teenagers in perceiving 12-14 years old teenagers' speech within a quiet situation?

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

1. To identify the types of slips of the ear experienced by Indonesian teenagers in perceiving 12-14 years old teenagers' speech within a quiet situation.

2. To determine which type of slips of the ear is the most frequently experienced by Indonesian teenagers in perceiving 12-14 years old teenagers' speech within a quiet situation.

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

This study is expected to give both theoretical and practical contribution for the readers. It is expected that the result of this study may contribute some new insights in speech perception, which is the initial stage of speech comprehension. Theoretically, this study is expected to provide the reference for other English department students who are interested in conducting research about slips of the ear phenomenon in teenagers. By reading this study, it is expected that they can get some new information about language understanding performed by teenagers in perceiving utterances. Since slips of the ear occur very often in daily conversations, this study might give the practical contributions for the readers. Practically, this study is expected to give contributions for parents and teachers regarding the ability of teenagers in listening and understanding utterances in a quiet situation. Regarding the findings of the study, it may help parents and teachers to know the difficulties faced by teenagers in the process of language acquisition.

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

Speech Perception : Speech perception is a mechanism that decode speech messages (Gósy 1999).

Slips of the Ear : Slips of the ear is a phenomenon where a hearer fails in perceiving messages and how the hearer recognizes words (Bond 2005).

- Quiet Situation : A situation where there is no excitement, activity, or trouble. Only a small amount of noise. (Manser 1991).
- Teenager : Adolescence or teenager is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood growth and development. (Kaplan 1995). World Health Organization (WHO) defines teenager as any person between 10 and 19 years old.