CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

English as a foreign language in Indonesia has been taught since students were in elementary school until now. However, many Indonesian people still have difficulties conversing in English even though they have been learning it since they were children. It is found that language learners still pay no heed to the importance of pronunciation according to Gilbert as cited in Abimanto (2020). Mispronunciation is errors in phonological level when conversing in foreign language (James 2013). Mispronunciation could happen because language learners do not have enough knowledge about the linguistic rules of the target language (Rahman, Asmaradhani and Sutarto 2020). Considering pronunciation is a speaking skill, it needs to be continuously repeated as it is more of a neuromuscular rather than a process of thinking (Krebt 2017).

A clear pronunciation is important as it is the first noticeable thing when we converse, then the content, interaction with the listener, gesture, expression, articulation, pitch, and voice as in volume, pace, and intonation according to Collins, Gelula, Grez, Valckle, and Roozen, and Capecce as cited in Megariani, Lisyantari and Bram (2020). There are some examples of words which people often pronounce are 'heard' and 'hurt' the same way when they have different meaning and does not related to each other. The correct way to pronounce heard is /ˈhərd/ while hurt is /ˈhərt/. Yet, people often use /t/ to end both words. Another example can be found in word 'another'. Indonesian people tend to

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pronounce it as /ənʌdər/ when it should have been /ənʌðər/. This phenomenon happened because there is no /ð/ sound in Bahasa Indonesia, so people opted to replace it with sound that they deemed similar which is /d/.

There are various reasons as to why it is difficult for language learners to have a good pronunciation skill. The interference of one's' mother tongue is one of them. Language learners in Indonesia tend to pronounce English words like they do in Bahasa Indonesia (Abimanto 2020). Bahasa Indonesia has different phonological system from English, so language learners' speech organs are unprepared to pronounce unfamiliar sounds. Consonants are produced with obstruction in the speech organs while vowels are produced without any obstruction in the airflow according to Delahunty and Garvey (2010) as cited in Silalahi (2016). Sounds which are not available in Bahasa Indonesia sound system are /ð, æ, ʌ, v, θ, ʒ/. Moreover, in Bahasa Indonesia word's final positions /b, d, g, z, s, ʤ, ʧ/ do not exist (Pallawa and Alam 2013). As it turns out, every individual has different phonetic ability. Which means, there are people born with good ability of creating or imitating sounds accurately (Ambaleign and Hulu 2019). This statement proves that difficulties in pronouncing English words is more cognitive than physical (Gilakjani and Ahmadi 2011).

The sounds are represented with symbols known as the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The IPA is needed in order to have a consistent method to represent sounds in written form (Cambridge University Press 1995). IPA can be used to describe the correct pronunciation in dictionary, to act as the base for a writing system in a language, or to even analysed speeches. It is based on Roman alphabet

which consisted of not just letters but also symbols. This is why the IPA is used as the standard of correct pronunciation as it covers wide variety of sounds in different languages. If the IPA is only consisted of Roman alphabet, it will not cover every sound in variety of languages as it is greater than the letters in Roman's alphabet (Cambridge University Press 1995). The IPA also helps in transcribing distinctive phonetic condition which related to English spelling, but it does not help in unravelling extralinguistic factors (Cambridge University Press 1995).

The goal of communicating in English done by Indonesian students is mutually intelligible. So, the focus is not in how to pronounce English words, especially the English consonants, in a right way. Exposure helps learners to feel more familiar and gives them the chance to practice other skills as well. Moreover, pronunciation practice also helps in developing listening comprehension and segmentation skills (Darcy 2018). Thus, in this research the writer tried to find out the English consonants which are often mispronounced by English Department students in batch 2018 of Universitas Airlangga.

Some of the studies had been done regarding consonants mispronunciation. Here, the writer would like to describe from the most relevant up to the least relevant studies. The first study was conducted by Lestari (2019). The aim was to identify and categorize types of deviation in producing English alveolar and post alveolar strident and the factors affecting it. Lestari found 12 types of phonological process in producing strident fricative English consonants. It was found that the critical factor is distinct phonological rules in English and Bahasa Indonesia. The second study was conducted by Simangunsong (2018) about mispronunciation of

English front vowels in Sanata Dharma University. The results showed that there are 140 mispronunciations. The main cause was that students often substitute unfamiliar sounds with similar sounds that exist in Bahasa Indonesia sound system.

The third study was conducted in 2018 by Ambaleign and Arianto about English vowels and consonants mispronunciation in official English speeches. From the research, it was found that the President made five mispronunciations on consonant, four on diphthong, and six vowels were pronounced inconsistently. They found that the causes of mispronunciation were interferences of mother tongue and different sound system between Bahasa Indonesia and English. The fourth study was about an error analysis on English plosives and fricative consonants conducted by Putra in 2019. The aim of the study was to identify the problems encountered by students when producing mispronunciation and to find the dominant sounds. Putra found that fricative sounds are more prone to be mispronounced and [θ] is the mostly mispronounced. The fifth study was a case studies conducted by Shak, Lee, and Stephen in 2016. It is concerning pronunciation problem in low proficient students. They found the common mispronounced English sounds in the form of three types of vowels which are pure short vowels, pure long vowels, and diphthongs. Other commonly mispronounced sounds were silent letters, '-ed' form and consonants such as plosives, fricatives, and affricates.

The previous studies mentioned above have similar purposes with this study which is identifying what English sounds are often mispronounced and the affecting factors. However, what makes this study distinguished is that the writer used

recordings of short conversation between the writer and the respondents and the recordings of the respondents when they read aloud the excerpts of John Green's *Looking for Alaska* novel. In this study the novel was chosen as it is composed with a relatively easy vocabulary and targeted towards young-adult readers.

The researcher deemed that pronunciation is a paramount factor to communicate effectively in English. Thus, the topic of mispronunciation in English consonants was chosen in order to find out what consonant sounds are commonly mispronounced and the factors causing it. This study hopefully would help language learners and teachers in realizing just how equally important pronunciation is alongside other skills in learning a foreign language.

1.2. Statement of the Problems

Based on the background of the study, the writer formulates the problems as follows:

1. What types of the English consonants are often mispronounced by English Department students' batch 2018 Universitas Airlangga?

2. What factors which may affect mispronunciation of the English consonants produced by English Department students' batch 2018 Universitas Airlangga?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Based on statements of the problems, the objectives of this study are:

1. To identify what types English consonants that are often mispronounced by English Department students' batch 2018 Universitas Airlangga.

2. To discover factors that affect the mispronunciation of English consonants produced by English Department students' batch 2018 Universitas Airlangga.

1.4. Significance of the Study

In theory, the finding from this study is expected to provide contribution in second language acquisition field especially speaking and pronunciation area. Moreover, the result of this study could discover more factors which cause mispronunciation on language learners. Lastly, this study can be used for future references for other researchers who wants to conduct research in this area and perhaps helps in creating new method of mispronunciation diagnosis.

As for the practical side, this research is expected to help both language learners and teachers in realizing the importance of pronunciation in learning a second or foreign language. More so, this research can be informative for language learners in acknowledging which English consonants need to be paid more attention on when pronounced. As for teachers, this study could be helpful in creating new and more creative ways of teaching pronunciation skill. The writer also gains new information about the correct way to pronounce certain sound, mispronunciation, the causes, and ways to avoid misunderstanding.

1.5. Definition of Key Terms

Consonants : produced in vocal tract by restricting the air stream (Rogerson-Revell 2018)**.**

IPA Symbols : a number of symbols to represent phonetic elements of a language (Cambridge University Press 2009).

Mispronunciation : is one of the types of error in pronunciation when speaking foreign language (James 2013).

Different phonological rules: generalizations on ways different sound be pronounced according to the environment (Hayes 2009).