

Chapter I

Introduction

A. Background of The Study

“*Isin lah Miss. Anu (the pronunciation) kaya lenjeh*”
(1/M)

(I am shy, Miss. The pronunciation of English is a bit ‘too much’ in expression of the sounds and mouth)

The sentence above was an argument of 1/M as a student of a hospitality marine college in Cilacap, that is Excellent Hospitality College, that studied English for the specific purposes. That sentence may describe his perception about the English pronunciation. It was stated when he mispronounced a few words such as *she*, *assignment*, *water*, and *home*. The teacher asked him to repeat after her to pronounce the words correctly. Instead of repeating, he stated his argument above. When, the teacher asked him to do so, his pronunciation of the words was far from intelligible English of those words since he pronounced *she* as /si/ like the pronunciation of *sea*, *assignment* as /asigemen/, *water* as /water/, and *home* as /hɒm/.

His pronunciation may be an effect of his perception that considering English pronunciation as ‘*lenjeh*’. In spite of pronouncing well, he chose to pronounce them as how they are written. Perception after all is one of the basic ways of meeting reality and for many it actually is the reality (Demuth, 2013: 7). Here, the reality that might be faced by him is that the pronunciation is difficult and it becomes that difficult because he convinced himself as it is a difficult one.

The personal perceptions of the pronunciation of English may affect the pronunciation of the learners. It lays at the foundation for the emotions and thoughts (Belling and Mangalaars, 2004). This perceptions may create the nature of the learners in learning the language. The different perceptions may result different success of language learning. The perceptions of the learners of the pronunciation of English may determine the way they learn it especially for the adults learners.

The perception of (1/M) determined his confidence in speaking English and may block him to speak intelligible pronunciation even more the native-like accent. It has been a common concern among the L2 learners with regard to their confidence in oral communication (Bang in Abu Bakar and Abdullah, 2015: 143). The positive perceptions of the learners in speaking English and pronouncing the words intelligibly may give an impact to their learning process of pronouncing the words even though the accent of the native-like could not be achieved. Adult L2 learners rarely achieve native-like speech patterns (Moyer (2004) and Scovel (2000) in Kang, 2010: 106), and native-like pronunciation among those who acquire an L2 after early childhood is difficult to achieve in typical ESL classroom (Kang, 2010: 106).

As stated by de Saussure, language divided into *langage* which is the language in general, *langue* which is the underlying set of rules of a language (a series of phonetic differences matched with a series of conceptual differences), and *parole* which is the individual instances of speech (Castle, 2013: 181). To be able to obtain *parole*, a speaker needs to acquire the *langue*. This *langue* deals

with the vocabularies, grammar, and the pronunciation of a language. These are the important aspects of someone to produce *parole*.

The pronunciation of English and Bahasa Indonesia which is the mother tongue of (1/M) performed its own system. There are several differences of the sounds of the consonants and vowels between English and Bahasa Indonesia which affect the Indonesian learners of English in producing the sounds of the English words (Wenanda & Suryani, 2016: 153-154). For the Indonesian EFL learners, and (1/M) was one of them, these differences are caused by the different segmental and supra-segmental aspects of the pronunciation of the languages. The segmental aspect consists of the availability of the vowels and the consonants in a language while Norton in Burns and Claire(2003: 13) argued that the supra-segmental aspect relates to stress, intonation and others which may vary based on the context and situation. In Bahasa Indonesia, the sounds of alveopalatal like /ʃ/ or the interdental *th* voiceless and *th* voiced, and the long vowel sounds like /i:/, /a:/ do not appear while they could be easily found in English (Wenanda and Suryani, 2016: 146-152).

Another example of pronunciation of a female student of Excellent Hospitality College that was (3/F) is as follows:

Teacher: “Is she going to the seashore?” [/is/ /ʃi/ /goiŋ/ /tu/ /ðe /siʃo(r)/ /?/]

Student : “I think she is not going to seashore, Miss” [/ai/ /tiŋ/ /si/ /is/ /not/ /goiŋ/ /tu/ /sior/, /mis/]

Both the teacher and the student are Indonesians and the words *she* and *seashore* are pronounced slightly differently. The student did not pronounce the *sh* as what the teacher did. It might be caused by the sound /ʃ/ which is usually

pronounced /s/ in Bahasa Indonesia like in a word *syukur* which is mostly pronounced as /sukur/ by the Indonesians. Meanwhile, the pronunciation of *th* in *think* that is /θ/ was pronounced /t/ by the students since there is not /θ/ sound in Bahasa Indonesia. In Bahasa Indonesia, there are six phonemes of vowels which are usually pronounced as the alphabets such as *a* is sounded as /a/, *e* is sounded as /e/, *i* is sounded as /i/, *o* is sounded as /o/ and /ɔ/, and *u* is sounded as /u/ while the consonants are also sounded as what the consonants are, i.g *t* is sounded as /t/ which is the voiceless dental sound (Kridalaksana in Peishi, 2018: 11). The English pronunciation of *a* vowel has many phonemes and in the word *water* is /ɔ/ and the /θ/ is voiceless, dental fricative sound (Dhillon, 2016: 124). The *parole* of (1/M) and (3/F) may be influenced by these different systems of English and Bahasa Indonesia.

To pronounce English words does not mean to be the native-like speaker's pronunciation but to be intelligible that the sounds patterns are recognisable as English; to be comprehensibility that the listeners understand to what is said; to be interpretability that the listener obtains the message of the utterances (Burns and Claire, 2003: 5). However, to have the native-like pronunciation is almost impossible for the adult learners of a second language because of the term 'critical period' which believes that native-like accents could be acquired by the before puberty-learners, not the after puberty-learners (Lenneberg in Thu, 2009: 3). From those statements, it can be highlighted that the main purpose of learning pronunciation for the adults is not to speak like the native speakers but to have an intelligible pronunciation and being understood by the listeners.

Again, the different systems of pronunciation of both languages trigger the students' perception of English pronunciation. There are many linguists and researchers investigating the issues. The study of Abu Bakar and Abdullah (2015) shows that their perception towards the intelligible pronunciation is positive but they have negative responses in the confidence of speaking the English with lack of correct pronunciation. However, this study triggers the writer to seek the perception of her students of Excellent Hospitality College Cilacap especially in their pronunciation accuracy.

Why is the pronunciation as the main issue of this research? Because the students will be as the members of an international community that is used English as their means of communication. They are projected to be the Cruise Ship crews that English oral communication will be met in their future carrier. When the speakers of a language act an oral communication, pronunciation is a crucial part to make an effective communication (Gilakjani, 2016). He continues that the role of grammar and vocabulary could not be elicited well without the role of accurate pronunciation (*ibid*). This statement confirms that the key of oral communication is the good pronunciation of the words which aims to deliver the messages clearly.

Talking about vocabulary, according to Aziez and Aziez (2018), the students of senior high school learn at least 2000 words of English in their English textbooks. They stated that the textbooks are in Level K-4 and K-5 of Vocabulary Level which means the lexical domain carries 4000-5000 words of English which might be taught by the teachers to the students. It implies that students of

Excellent Hospitality College are familiar with at least 2000 words of English both in their spellings and pronunciation.

Since English is spoken by many people, the world Englishes is the main issue of this study. It is about the English that emerges to be localized due to the use of the local variations language system. The researcher tries to figure out the pronunciation accuracy of the students that related to their perceptions. The questions of ‘Is the learners’ pronunciation similar to each other?’, “Is there any difference between the pronunciation of adult male learners and adult female learners?” follow them.

The study of Abu Bakar and Abdullah (2015) reveals that the L2 learners’ perception towards the intelligible pronunciation is positive but they have negative responses in the confidence of speaking the English with lack of correct pronunciation. But, the study does not reveal the pronunciation accuracy of the L2 learners while in this study, the researcher tries to figure out the perceptions of the students of a hospitality marine college that is Excellent Hospitality College Cilacap that leads to their pronunciation accuracy.

This college projects its students to work abroad that is in the cruise lines or abroad hotels that learn English for Specific Purposes. In working overseas especially in the Hospitality Marine Industry, the students should fulfill the demands of this industry which are to be skillful not only in the service skills but also in the communication skills. The demands of the industry force the hospitality colleges to prepare the students to be good workers. In other words,

there is a big responsibility of the colleges to provide the good education for the students both the skills of hospitality and the language use.

Chang & Hsu in Hui Lin et.al (2013: 5) stated that for hospitality professionals, the professional English is essential that it leads us to the argument that the existence of it is not only the vocabulary and grammar but also intelligible pronunciation that is to be acquired by those pre-service hospitality workers in aimed to be able to communicate to other foreign people clearly and effectively.

The range of age of the students of this college is between 18-30 years old. This range of age consists of two stages that are the young adults whose ages are around 18-24 year-old (Teipel, 2019) and the adults who are over 24 year-old. These students are good samples of this study to understand about perception and their accuracy of pronunciation since they fulfill the term of the exceptional learners who use the language in their social life such as in their outside-classroom interaction where they stay in the same dormitory to improve their skills. They are accustomed to use English in their daily lives.

The difference of English pronunciation accuracy of the male and female students of this college is also considered as one of the issue. The background of the difference is also important to be investigated. This study also tries to figure out whether there is any relationship between their perceptions and their pronunciation accuracy. To conduct the study, the researcher compose the problems of the study into questions as below.

B. Problems of the Study

1. What are the perceptions of the students towards English pronunciation accuracy?
2. What is the pronunciation accuracy of the students?
3. Is there a relationship between their perception and their pronunciation accuracy?

C. The Purpose of the Study

1. To investigate the perception of the students towards the pronunciation accuracy
2. To figure out the pronunciation accuracy of the students
3. To seek the relationship between their perception and their pronunciation accuracy

D. Limitation of the Study

This Study is about the perceptions of the students' pronunciation and their pronunciation accuracy. The main focus of this study is their perceptions and the segmental aspects of their pronunciations. The supra-segmental and the grammar are not included in this study.

E. The Significance of the Study

1. Theoretical Significance

The study can be used as an additional reference for the next researchers who are interested in investigating the perception and its relationship to pronunciation accuracy of the students in English and the background which may follow it. Furthermore, since this study is about the students'

English pronunciation, it can be used as an overview of the influence of their mother tongue to their English pronunciation. This study is also about the impact of the gender to their pronunciation accuracy which is expected to give more information about it.

2. Practical Significance

1. Through this study, the teachers of the ESP program especially in BARLINGMASCAKEB could understand about the localized English pronunciations of the students that could be the concern of their pronunciation instructions. The students who are the subjects of this study are mostly from Cilacap which have the emotional and cultural closeness as well as language to people in BARLINGMASCAKEB.
2. This study may give the teachers an extra knowledge about the students' perception of English pronunciation. Their perceptions carry their thoughts and feelings in learning it which may lead the teachers to their pronunciation accuracy that may elaborate their difficulties in pronouncing some sounds of English which can be used to determining the material of English pronunciation instruction. It may be helpful to prepare the strategy in teaching pronunciation in their classes. Remali et.al (2015: 1) stated that teaching method which is deliberately based on the students' perception is more crucial than the method chosen based on what teachers desire to use in delivering the material to improve the students' ability in understanding what is conveyed by the teachers.

3. Operational Definition

3.1 Perception

Perception is a judgement of someone, here means the students, towards the English pronunciation in which this perception determines their judgement whether the English pronunciation is difficult to do or not. Walgito in Sugiyanti (2014: 15) argues that perception is the process of human thinking about certain phenomenon that is preceded by the sensory organs. In other words, perception is the result of the brain process in understanding or judging a thing that happens in the environment.

3.2 Pronunciation

Based on Burns in Burns and Claire (2003: 5) pronunciation is the phonology of the language that is related to the production of the sounds of the language and the perception of both the speakers and the listeners to convey the messages of their communication. It tells that an oral communication is understandable if the pronunciation conveys the message of the speakers to the listener clearly.