

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

This research aims to explore the phonological interference of EFL students (Serawainese) in pronouncing English words and investigate kinds of phonemic features which become problems for Serawainese to pronounce the words. In the current era of development, the use of language as a unifying tool and communication tool is very important. Language is a tool of communication between people that use to convey what they think to others. Language employs word combinations to convey ideas in a meaningful manner. It means that languages as a medium of their communication (Wardhaugh:1986).

Indonesia has many languages. According to a report on the results of research conducted by the Language Development and Development Agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia in 2017, there are 652 regional languages in Indonesia that have been identified and validated. The number of findings of regional languages in Indonesia was obtained based on observations made in 2,452 regions. Meanwhile, when referring to the accumulated distribution of regional languages per province, it turns out that Indonesia is recorded to have 733 regional languages.

However, nowadays a number of people who learn English find it difficult to utter or pronounce all English words and cannot be understood by others based on

English pronunciation standard (James,2010). This issue caused by many reasons, one of them is due to their first language interference , Interference is the change of language system used in other element of language which is regarded as a mistake because it deviates from the rules of language used (Chaer and Agustina, 1995: 158). Much attention to English pronunciation indicates that pronunciation has a key role in learning English. If teachers do not present the general rules and principles toward comprehensible pronunciation to their EFL learners, nobody will certainly do it. This is the responsibility of EFL teachers to do this by teaching the new sounds, words, sentences, and phrases and arranging appropriate materials for understandable pronunciation in their EFL classes. EFL teachers should explore new ways of indicating, practicing, and giving feedback on English pronunciation that are actually appropriate for learners to learn English pronunciation easily and effectively.(Yates & Zeielinki:2009).

Language interference is the effect of language learners' first language on their production of the language they are learning. It means that the speaker's first language influences his/her second or and his/her foreign language (Dwinastiti:2013). Lott (1983) defines interference as errors in the learner's use of the second language or foreign language which can be traced back to the mother tongue or first language. In Indonesia itself language interference is becoming one of the main problems faced by EFL students. Interference occurs to the level of bilingual interpreter especially oral interpreter, how far he or she knows and master source of language and target language well and correctly, and how often he or she uses and changes from one language into another it causes interference. The main factor of

interference is because of the difference of grammar or structure between source of language or first language and target language(Yusuf, 1994).

In daily activity, Indonesian people use many local languages where the Indonesian language as a unifying language of the nation and the local language as a daily language, to keep up with the current developments and in order to obtain information and connections that can connect us with the outside world. English is present in this solution, English has been the most important language in the world. Accordingly, English is considered a universal global lingua franca so that English is used in almost every field such as education, politic, economy and many other fields in the world. Furthermore, David (2003: 10) states that English is the center of the global knowledge so that English has been learned by people to get good prospects in the international community. Basically English has been learned since childhood starting from the elementary school level.

The purpose of learning English pronunciation is to be more intelegible not to sound like an English native speakers. There have been several studies conducted related to explore the effect the first interference to the second language acquisition or learning.

In the same way with those studies above research study conducted by Student of IAIN Bengkulu (Ori,2020), the similarity on the topic is about native language interference in English pronunciation. Nevertheless, in this study, the researcher chooses Kaurnese and Rejangnese language. Phonologically, Kaurnese has uniqueness, can be seen from its phonological system. It has four vowels and nineteen consonants, having the system of four vowels and nineteen consonants have

made Kaurnese unique enough if compared to the other languages (Hadi et al., 2012, p.3). Thus, Kaurnese language has a dialect that is quite difficult to pronounce. On the other hand, Rejangnese is one of the oldest languages in Indonesia spoken by Rejangnese tribe living in Bengkulu Province (Sudarmanto et al., 2020, p.304). This language has a unique dialect and is difficult to pronounce, and has its own script named Ka Ga Nga. Phonologically, Rejangnese has seven vowels and nineteen consonants sounds. As described, both native languages (Kaurnese & Rejangnese) have unique pronunciations that are completely different from Indonesian and English.

Moreover, the phenomenon of native language interference in English pronunciation is also found in English Education Department of IAIN Bengkulu. Based on questionnaires that recorded students' native languages, the result showed that Rejangnese language had the highest speakers with a total number of 21% (17) out of 81 respondents. On the other hand, approximately 16% (13) respondents were Kaurnese speakers. Hence, there are a lot of speakers in both native languages (Rejangnese & Kaurnese) in this department. It can be seen from 9 the observation, it was found that the native languages influence the English sound. For example, students often mispronounced certain English words such as „water“. Both Kaurnese and Rejangnese students tended to substitute sounds [ɔ:] and [ə] into sounds [ʌ] and [e]. As a result, it sounded like /wʌtər/ whereas the correct pronunciation is like /wɔ:tə(r)/. By knowing this fact, it is very important to explore this issue. In this study, the interference of students' native language in English pronunciation was examined.

The factors which contribute to the results are deduced, so that appropriate solutions can be explored to solve the issue.

Based on observation, this issue always being problem with students, and the majority student at English Education Program were from Serawai Ethnic especially on 2nd and 4th grade semester, and some of students had problem with some words when study English, 2nd semester had been study for the first time and 4th semester had been study for 1 year, and of course it has experience for studying english pronunciation, and the researcher want to know more and find the solution about this issue for students especially Serawainese can study English Foreign Language (EFL) better.

This current research that the researcher will be conducted is to investigate why Serawainese (one of local tribes which use one local language in Indonesia) find it difficult to convey their message when they use English. This research is rooted based on the researcher's personal experience finding some peers who find it difficult to deliver a message or communicate using English. Based on some studies this happens due to their phonological interference of their first language. Moreover, there has been still a handful studies which investigate this issue. Therefore, the researcher intends to conduct the current study. It is hope by doing this research study, the researcher will contribute the leaning and teaching English world of how to treat or suggest students who are dealing with this issue, so that Serawainese can communicate using English without making any misunderstanding.

B. Identification of Problem

Based on the background of the research above, the problems in this study can be classified as the following problems:

1. First language interferes the second language acquisition.
2. Students have lack of knowledge about English pronunciation.
3. The lack of pronunciation practice due to English is rarely used in the outside of classroom context.

C. Limitation of the Study

The research aims to explore the interference of EFL students' native language in English pronunciation. The focus point is the phonological interference in students' pronunciation. The respondents of the study are composed Serawainese EFL students. Even though the study has reached its purposes, there are some unavoidable limitations. The study is conducted on a small size of a population and it is merely involved the respondents from a certain university. This limitation may lead to an unrepresentative result.

D. Research Questions

Based on the explanation above, the researcher formulated the research question as follow:

1. Is there any Interferences for Serawainese towards study in pronouncing English words?
2. How does the Phonology Interfere the EFL students in Pronouncing English words?

E. Significance of the Study

The results of this research are expected to be useful for everyone, especially for people involved in English education. The significance of the research are described as follows :

1. For Students

This research helps students to know more and learn about new words for the interference of Serawai languages in English pronunciation. Thus students can avoid native language interference when speaking English.

Moreover, from this research, it is able to improve students pronunciation for better academic communication, and this research can be a references for the next Researcher.

2. For Lecturers

The research is expected to help lecturers in order to get information in knowing the issues faced by students so they can give appropriate solutions for solve the issues. Furthermore, the information of native language interference may help the lecturers in determining the teaching strategies.

F. Definition of Key Terms

There are some significant terminologies in this research that need to be explained to give clear meaning for the real terms. The terms can be described as follows:

1. **Interference** is the errors in the second language acquisition that is influenced by the first language of learners (Ellis, 1997, p.47). Indeed, interference is the effect that occurs in the second language learning process due to the background of the learners language.
2. **Phonology** is the study of sounds system of the language (Odden: 2005). Sounds or phonemes of a language are often different with other languages. For example, the sounds of English are different from sounds of Indonesian. The differences can be found in every segment of phonemes, such as: vowels, consonants, diphthongs (segmental phonemes); stress, intonation and juncture (supra-segmental phonemes). To have better understanding on what we are going to discuss in phonology, it is better to make a clear definition of what phonology concerns such as sound and phoneme. From

the definition, we know that phoneme must be sound, but sound may not be a phoneme (except it can change meaning).

3. ***Native language*** is the first language a person learns from birth or critical period (Bloomfield, 1933, p.43). It is a language that people acquire at an early age due to the influence of their family or is the language of the region in which they live.
4. ***Serawainese language*** Serawai language is the language used by the tribal region. Serawai majority live in the southern Bengkulu. Serawai populations on 2nd and 4th semester is about 10 population especially at Seluma regency, spread across the district Seluma and South Bengkulu. In City of Bengkulu, Serawai population is 41,841. (source: BPS Bengkulu: results of population census).
5. ***Pronunciation*** is a knowledge used to pronounce words in a language (Hamer, 2001, p.26). It means that pronunciation is a way of uttering a word based on the rules such as rhythm, stress, intonation, and pitch, in order to make communication better.