

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of this research paper. The chapter are divided into several parts namely background of the study, research questions, scope of the study, aims of the study, significance of the study, clarification of terms and organization of paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

Mispronunciation in English word pronunciation can create misunderstanding and miscommunication. It is often found among Indonesian learners who learn English as a foreign language. This is illustrated by an example, the word 'paper' is pronounced as 'pepper', the meaning of the 'pepper' is powdered berries of a certain plant that is used for seasoning food which is different from 'paper'. Another example is the word 'ship' that is pronounced as 'sheep', it will create the meaning of a kind of grass-eating animal whose flesh is used as food and wool is used as clothes (Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary, 2005).

Dardjowidjojo (2009) claims that stress in sound system as a part of pronunciation has been debated for some time. Many Indonesian linguists believe that stress in Indonesian sound system is not too important (Dardjowidjojo, 2009: 56). Meaning of words will not change, even though Indonesian learners put word stress anywhere. Meanwhile, word stress has very important roles in English. A

wrong position word stress in English word can change the meaning. This is described by an example, word 'import' as noun has stress position in the first syllable, if we put stress in the second syllable, it can be a verb (Dardjowidjojo, 2009: 56). Relating to this, Indonesian learners often face this problem in English learning. Learners must practice and learn more how to pronounce the words correctly in order to minimize the problem in English pronunciation.

It is obvious that pronunciation is a very important thing in English learning. The importance of pronunciation in English is in accordance with aim of the school based curriculum, especially on the aspect of speaking skill which is stated in Competence Standard and Basic Competence. In this curriculum, students are expected to be able to communicate the meaning in monologues in daily life context accurately and fluently. Hence, pronunciation is required by the students in order to express the meaning accurately and fluently in their communication and to achieve good communication.

There are several studies said that in the context of English language teaching in Indonesia, pronunciation has not received sufficient attention. However, teaching pronunciation is very difficult because no people pronounce exactly alike (Kenworthy, 1988; Tominaga, 2009). How to teach pronunciation is still become one of the debatable areas in teaching pronunciation (Moedjito, 2008). Moreover, Haycraft (1978) states that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are often mispronounced words. It is caused by the differences between learners' mother tongue and English sounds. In line with this, Harmer (2001) states that English is a language in which the sounds and spelling are different.

Brown (2001) also affirms that English pronunciation is as an essential component of communicative competence and should be given preferential treatment.

Regarding the importance of the teaching pronunciation, the teachers should consider period time when they teach pronunciation to students. Pronunciation should be taught in earlier years of the schooling. Its purpose is to familiarize and encourage students to speak English fluently. When pronunciation is learnt and taught in early of the schooling, the pronunciation mistakes in their adolescent can be decreased (Brown, 2001; Saville and Troike, 2006). The teachers can start to teach the correct pronunciation since the student is in young age. It is learners are those under 14 years old (Cameron, 2005). Further, Cameron (2005) believes that students who are in young age, they have some strengths and characteristics in their learning. She continues to say that children can be quick learners of the whole thing that teachers teach and children can learn anything in around them. Children also focus sensitively on the teachers in the classroom (Brown, 2001). Thus, teaching English pronunciation is expected to go effectively when the teachers teach a correct pronunciation to students in the young age.

Referring to preferential treatment in teaching pronunciation, the teachers should know methods and strategies applied in teaching English pronunciation to young learners. The teachers also have some roles in learning process to support learning activity in the classroom. Being a model is one of the teachers' roles in teaching learning activity (Harmer, 1995). The teachers as a model for students so that they must have good knowledge of pronunciation, must be able to pronounce

the words correctly, and must be able to revise the errors in pronunciation which the students made. Since the teachers perhaps cannot provide appropriate and effective strategies in teaching pronunciation, it can also affect student's error pronunciation. For that reason, the teacher should know methods and strategies applied in teaching pronunciation to young learners including the activities, media, and assessment.

There are some previous research studied about teaching pronunciation through the use of the media as a tool of the instructional learning. Mardliyaton (2007) states that teaching learning process by using English children songs can improve the students' ability in English pronunciation. It is pleasing to use English children songs in teaching pronunciation. In addition, Yustiana (2009) also shows that the teaching pronunciation to young learners by using song is successful. It is obvious that teaching pronunciation through songs as the media can improve children's ability in pronouncing English words. Unfortunately, these studies only focus on the use of the song to improve children's ability in pronunciation. However, other methods and strategies applied in teaching pronunciation to young learners including the activities, media, and assessment employed in teaching pronunciation are rarely investigated.

Considering the importance of teaching pronunciation to young learners, the writer conducts the research that is aimed at giving description of how teachers teach English pronunciation to young learners. It includes the activities applied, media used, and assessment employed by the teachers in teaching English pronunciation to young learners.

1.2 Research Questions

The problems of the research can be stated as follows:

- 1) What activities are applied by the teachers in teaching English pronunciation to young learners?
- 2) What media are used by the teachers in teaching English pronunciation to young learners?
- 3) What assessments are employed by the teachers in teaching English pronunciation to young learners?

1.3 Scope of the Study

The research focuses on describing the teaching of English pronunciation for young learners. It also investigates the activities, media, and assessments employed by the teachers in teaching English pronunciation to young learners, especially in the elementary school.

1.4 Aims of the Study

Regarding the three research questions point 1.2, the researcher also has to consider the aims of the study. The aims of this study are to find out what the activities are applied, trying to find out what the media are used, and trying to find out what the assessments are employed by the teachers in teaching English pronunciation to young learners.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits as follows:

1) Theoretical

The research finding can be used to enrich the literature on the teaching English pronunciation and also gives beneficial reference for future research on increasing pronunciation ability and teaching effectively pronunciation for young learners.

2) Practical

In this perspective, the teacher and policymaker are expected to get benefit from the research finding.

a. The Teacher

The research finding can give some benefits for the teachers in order to decide the appropriate activities, media, and assessments in teaching English pronunciation, especially for young learners.

b. Policymaker

This study can lead to release of a policy in providing appropriate learning activities, media, and assessments in order to support teaching learning process, particularly in teaching English pronunciation to young learners.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, several terms are clarified as follows:

a. Pronunciation

According to Howe (2010), pronunciation is the act or result of producing the sounds of speech, including articulation, stress and intonation, often with reference to some standard of correctness or acceptability. Pronunciation in this study means the way of English teachers in elementary school in which a particular word or sound is pronounced and taught to young learners.

b. Young Learners

The definition of 'young learners' is children between the ages about 5 years old to 12 years old (Rixon, 1999). In line with this, Cameron (2005) believes that young learners are those under 14 years old. The term 'young learners' in this study refers to those who are in the grade four of elementary school, aged nine to ten years old.

1.7 Organization of Paper

This research paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter I is about introduction. Chapter II is theoretical foundations. Chapter III is the research methodology. Chapter IV is the findings and discussion of the research. Last, chapter V is the conclusions and suggestions.

Chapter I Introduction provides the background of the study, research questions, scope of the study, aims of the study, significance of the study, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

Chapter II contains some theoretical foundations. It consists of the overview of English pronunciation, teaching English pronunciation in EFL classroom, young learners' characteristics, activities, media, and assessment in teaching English pronunciation, and the overview of English pronunciation.

Chapter III presents the methodology conducted in conducting the research. It includes the formulation of problem, the research design, site and respondent, data collection, data analysis, and validity of the study.

Chapter IV consists of findings and discussions which present the result of the research. Last, chapter V concludes research result and recommendations for teaching process and future research.