

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an introductory section of the present research. It covers the background of the research, formulation of the problems, purposes of the research, significance of the research, methodology, clarification of the terms, and organization of the paper.

1.1. Background of the Research

In Indonesia, there are more than 580 languages and dialects spoken in its regional areas (Lamoureux, 2003). With such complex socio-cultural backgrounds, most of the people who live in Indonesia are able to master at least two languages; the regional language and Indonesian, the national language. Indonesian that is used today is a result of a socio-cultural interaction among people of many ethnic groups that created linguistic terms which are understood, developed and acknowledged by the users as *Bahasa Indonesia* (Hikmat and Solihati, 2013).

In such a complex multilingual culture, in which several languages coexist, these languages often influence each other (Arifin, 2011). The process, which is also called as language contact, causes several inevitable linguistic phenomena including language interference (Offiong, 2005; Houmanfar, Hayes, and Herbst, 2005). Language interference refers to “deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language” (Weinreich, 1953).

One of the types of language interference can be found in pronunciation. The phenomenon is particularly apparent in a multilingual society such as in Indonesia since the speakers are exposed to at least two languages that are frequently and simultaneously used in daily activities. It thus creates diverse pronunciation

varieties of the languages. The varieties of pronunciation can cause some difficulties that may be encountered by its speakers. Some Javanese speakers, for example, are often called '*ndeso*' ('villagers') or '*medok*', which have unpleasant connotations, when they speak Indonesian that is heavily influenced by Javanese accent. Another instance is Batak language speakers who are stereotyped as loud or even rude and uncivilized (Bruner, 2006). These stereotypes may discourage the speakers to speak regional languages or Indonesian since the correctness of pronunciation affects the appropriateness of communication.

In general, there are two opposite views regarding effects of language interference. Masinde (2012) finds that interference, especially the knowledge and structure of first language, fosters the learning of second language. On the other hand, Randall (1997), Eltrug (1984), and Richard, Platt, and Platt (1992) find that interference plays a major role in the errors that are produced in one of the languages. Errors are important to be investigated since errors can provide an understanding or evaluation on how someone learns a new language (Corder, 1967).

There have been many studies conducted on language interference. For instance, Alonso (1997) analyzes errors that beginner Spanish students make when learning English as foreign language and it is found that most errors are caused by interference of structures from the Spanish to the English language. Baloch (2013) also conducts a study on how Arabic (the mother tongue) interferes in the learning of English (the second language) in terms of spellings. The author finds that the replacement of 'b' with 'p' and vice versa occurs because of the mother tongue interference. Furthermore, Erwina (2011) conducts a study of language interference in Indonesian context and finds that the errors found are caused by mother tongue i.e. Javanese, slang language and foreign languages such as Arabic, English and Dutch. Unfortunately, there have not been many studies conducted on language interference that occurs in Indonesian context which involves Batak Angkola-Mandailing language.

The present research focuses on analyzing the common characteristics of Indonesian pronunciation deviations made by undergraduate college students from Batak Angkola and investigating the factors that contribute to the interference. This research is expected to enrich the literature of the study of language interference of Angkola-Mandailing language to Indonesian. This research is also expected to give an insight for further researchers on how to conduct a study on language interference by using acoustic phonetics analysis.

1.2. Formulation of the Problems

The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What are the common characteristics of Indonesian pronunciation deviations made by undergraduate college students from Batak Angkola?
2. What are the factors that contribute to the language interference?

1.3. Purposes of the Research

By employing a descriptive-qualitative approach, especially descriptive case study research design, the research aims to investigate the common characteristics of Indonesian pronunciation deviations made by undergraduate college students from Batak Angkola and identify the factors that contribute to the language interference.

1.4. Significance of the Research

This research is expected to provide an analysis regarding interference of Batak Angkola-Mandailing language which will give contribution in understanding the phenomena of language interference in a multilingual community context such as in Indonesia. Although Batak language is one of the most spoken languages in Indonesia, studies which discuss Batak Angkola-Mandailing language, especially comparative studies which employ acoustic phonetics analysis are rarely found.

Therefore, this research is also expected to enrich the literature of the study of language interference and Batak Angkola-Mandailing language.

1.5. Methodology

1.5.1. Research Design

Consistent with the nature of the research questions, the research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, in particular descriptive case study research design. Case study, as a form of qualitative descriptive research, refers to the collection and presentation of detailed information about a particular participant or small group in specific context (Becker, et al, 1994-2012). In analyzing the data, error analysis and acoustic phonetics analysis are employed. The research focuses on analyzing the common characteristics of Indonesian pronunciation deviations made by undergraduate college students from Batak Angkola and investigating the factors that contribute to the interference.

1.5.2. Data Collection

Considering the nature of the research questions, purposive sampling is used as the sampling strategy. Since Batak, as a clan, consists of several sub ethnic groups with their own linguistic and cultural differences, the participants are limited into two Batak Angkola college students. In addition, four other participants from Jakarta and Bandung who are non-active speakers of any local languages are also recruited to compare the results. All of the participants are female and have been staying in Bandung for more than four years. Bandung is chosen as the research site since Bandung is a metropolitan city in which many ethnic groups meet and many languages are used.

The length of stay in Bandung and age are controlled to make sure that the participants have the same level of exposure and fluency to the languages investigated in the research. They are important to maintain consistency in the process of data collection. The data are collected through a reading task and pronunciation tests in the form of word lists.

1.5.3. Data Analysis

Error Analysis is employed to analyze the pronunciation sample of the participants since interference can be seen in spelling and pronunciation that result in differences or variety in pronunciation by segmenting the minimal pairs and phonemic structure in the utterance of the participants (Erwina, 2011). The participants' utterances are analyzed and compared with Indonesian standard pronunciation. The use of error analysis according to Richards et al., (1996:127) as cited in Nzama (2010) is to identify the strategies that are used in learning a language, track the causes of errors and to know common difficulties in language learning. Error or alternation here refers to a systematic and consistent deviation of language, not something that is coincidental or randomly made (Norrish, 1983).

Furthermore, an acoustic phonetic analysis by using software Praat is also employed in the research. It is employed to minimize transcribing error since software built to assist acoustic phonetic analysis can measure the properties of speech sounds produced by the human speech mechanism with a high degree of accuracy. The speech property that is analyzed specifically in the research is duration. By employing acoustic phonetics analysis and literary analysis on relevant studies, it is expected that factors contributing to the language interference can be deduced.

1.6. Clarification of Terms

To avoid ambiguity, these are some terms that are needed to be clarified:

1. Language Interference

Language interference refers to the transfer of elements that may include phonological, grammatical, lexical and orthographical of one language that influences the learning process of another language (Skiba, 1997).

2. Deviation

Deviation or error refers to a systematic and consistent deviation of language; it is not something coincidental or randomly made (Norrish, 1983).

3. Error Analysis

Error analysis is an approach in which strategies which errors of learners are investigated to track the causes of learner's errors, obtain information on common difficulties in language learning (Richards et al., (1996:127 in Nzama (2010))

4. Acoustic Phonetics

Acoustic phonetics is the study which investigates the physical or acoustic characteristics of transmission of sound (Ariyapitipun, 2003).

1.7. Organization of the Paper

This research paper is organized into five chapters with the following structure:

1. CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the research, formulation of problems, purposes of the research, significances of the research, methodology and organization of the paper

2. CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of relevant theories in which the principles and justifications of the research will be grounded. It also provides findings of previous relevant research.

3. CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes research design, data collection and data analysis in the research.

4. CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides results of data analysis.

5. CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter presents conclusions drawn from the research findings and also suggestions for future research.