

The portrait of ed
students
pronunciation
education essay



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Introduction

This chapter reveals the background of study, problem statement, purpose of the study and the benefit of the study. The explanations of these parts are presented below;

Pronunciation is one of the most important things that students have to master in order to communicate appropriately and fluently. According to Fangzhi (1998: 39), that it is important to pay attention to pronunciation since it results in whether or not someone's message can be passed or not by other people. More over, Gilbert (cited in Otlowsky, 2004: 3) stated that if someone cannot hear English well, she or he is cut off from the language. And if someone cannot be understood easily, she or he is cut off from conversation with native speakers. We can conclude from the statements above that pronunciation gives a significant effect to the meaning of what someone says.

However, almost all English teachers make little attempt to teach pronunciation in any overt way and only give attention to it in passing.

In ideal condition, students in ED seem to have good pronunciation because they are taught by using English as their language. As cited in Buku Pedoman Akademik FBS 2005/2006, students in English Department are expected to be able to speak and write English correctly.

But in fact, based on the observation and informal talks both with lectures and students done by the researcher, students still have bad pronunciation.

For example, it is hard to find MC with good pronunciation in ED. Many

students speak incorrectly when they are in their thesis examination and so on.

Considering this situation, the researcher is interested in conducting this study to find out ED students' pronunciation portrait and its implication to the teaching and learning of English.

1. 2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the background of the study above, the research questions are divided into two, they are:

Major questions:

- 1.) What is the portrait of ED students' pronunciation?
- 2.) What is the implication of students' pronunciation portrait towards the teaching and learning of English?

Minor questions:

How do ED students learn pronunciation?

Does the students' mother tongue affect students' pronunciation?

What are general mistakes that students often make?

What are the causes contribute to the mistakes of the students' pronunciation?

Is students' pronunciation influenced by American English or British English?

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purposes of the study based on the research questions above are divided into:

1. Major purposes:

The major purposes are 1.) to describe the portrait of ED students' pronunciation, 2.) to find out the implication of students' pronunciation portrait towards the teaching and learning of English;

2. Minor purposes:

The minor purposes are 1.) to investigate the way ED students learn pronunciation, 2.) to analyze whether the students' mother tongue affect students' pronunciation or not, 3.) to figure out the mistakes that students often make in producing sounds, 4.) to investigate the causes that contribute to the students' pronunciation mistakes , and 5.) to analyze whether students' pronunciation is influenced by American English or British.

1.4 BENEFIT OF THE STUDY

The results of the study are hoped to give an input for the institution, to enrich the research in pronunciation field. And it can help ED students who are interested in conducting the related research.

1.5 PREVIOUSLY RELATED STUDY

The previously related study was done by Ros Dwi Wahyuni whose thesis' title was The Pronunciation of Second Grade Students of SMU 77 in 2005. She conducted her study using a case study as her approach, thus the

results of her study can not be generalized for the entire population. The data were gathered by using interviews and pronunciation test from December 2004 until January 2005 and processed using rank order correlation formula. The results of her study showed that most participants were intelligible in recognizing the words in their speech and the participants also had positive attitude towards pronunciation and the teaching of pronunciation.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of the definition of pronunciation, related issues on TEFL and pronunciation, background of teaching pronunciation, principles for pronunciation teaching, the areas of English pronunciation, pronunciation teaching, and factors affecting students' pronunciation.

2. 1 Definition of pronunciation

Pronunciation is the most important thing that we have to master.

Otherwise, people cannot receive the message we say. According to Penny Ur (2001), Jack C. Richard (2002), Pronunciation is the sound of the language, or phonology; stress and rhythm; and intonation and includes the role of individual sounds and segmental and supra segmental sounds. Moreover, Otlowski (2004: 1) stated that Pronunciation is a way that is accepted or generally understood. From those statements above, we can conclude that pronunciation is the way of someone produces segmental and supra segmental sound that is accepted or generally understood.

2. 2 Related Issues on TEFL and Pronunciation

There are several problems that related to pronunciation and TEFL, such as; in ED there is no subject that focuses on pronunciation. Indeed, there are some simple and enjoyable exercises to practice pronunciation. According to Jenkins (2007) mentioned on her article, Global English and Teaching Pronunciation, that an implication global English for pronunciation teaching that is students should be given plenty of exposure in their pronunciation classrooms to other non-native accents of English so that they can understand then easily even if a speaker has not yet managed to acquire the core features. For EIL, this is more important than having classroom exposure to native speaker accents. It means that students should have non-native accents of English in order to help them understand what the speaker means even though he or she can not get the RP pronunciation.

Moreover, Griffiths (2007), Integrating Pronunciation into Classroom Activities, found that addressing issues (pronunciation) regularly during the language feedback or group correction stage of lesson helps to focus learners' attention on its importance and lead to more positive experiences. He also described that pronunciation work can be kept simple and employ exercises which are both accessible and enjoyable for students, whatever their level is. Whenever students do a freer speaking activity, the main aim is usually at developing their spoken fluency in the language. However, the activity also serves to work on students' accuracy through the feedback we give them on their use of language. It means that lecturers should give the feedback on students' pronunciation regularly so that students will have positive attitude towards the pronunciation.

Based on those statements above, Okita (2007), Teaching Pronunciation, concluded the activities that can be passed in teaching pronunciation are: 1.) explaining Daniel Jones' phonemic symbols, using a chart of English vowels and consonants; 2.) using minimal pair exercises; 3.) getting learners to memorize pronunciation patterns to predict on which vowel the primary stress is placed in a word, and; 4.) distinguishing the differences in the sounds of a vowel or consonant in a given word.

2. 3 Background to the teaching of pronunciation

There are three main orientations proposed by Nunan (2003, p. 112-113) in pronunciation teaching:

“ Listen carefully and repeat what I say” (1940s-1950s). In this orientation, the activities are students are to repeat the words said by their teacher for several times. The problem that can be raised in this orientation is that students differ in how effectively they are able to really listen to and discern the sound system of anew language;

“ Let's analyze these sounds closely to figure out how to pronounce them clearly” (1960s-19701s). The teacher compares features of the sound system of English with features of their native languages. It is done in order to get students accustomed to International Phonetic Alphabet;

“ let's start using these sounds in activities as soon as we can while I provide cues and feedback on how well you're doing” (1980s and beyond). The teacher gives chances to the students to use the sounds which they are right in producing.

2. 4 Principles for Teaching Pronunciation

In the teaching of pronunciation, there are five principles, according to Nunan (2003, p. 115-117) , which are: stated five principles of pronunciation teaching, they are:

Foster intelligibility during spontaneous speech. Teachers need to keep fostering the students' intelligibility to get them concentrate to pronounce words while they are doing the spontaneous speech.

Keep affective considerations firmly in mind. Teachers need to give affective support to their students in order not to make them have feared to develop new pronunciation habits.

Avoid the teaching of individual sounds in isolation. Giving students chances to communicate meaningfully with their friends are more interesting, enjoyable, and memorable activities. If the teachers provide such activities, in the long run, have more impact on improving students' speech intelligibility.

Provide feedback on learner progress. Teachers should support students' efforts, guide them, provide cues for their enhancement. Unless, students would unaware where they need to place their energies.

Realize that ultimately it is the learner who is in control of changes in pronunciation. According to Morley (1994, p. 89), teacher is only as a " language coach" who " supplies information; gives models from time to time; sets high stands; provides a wide variety of practice opportunities; and encourages the learner."

2. 5 The Areas of English Pronunciation

The areas of English pronunciation are categorized into two, they are: segmental (e. g. English consonant and vowel sounds) and supra segmental (e. g. stress, linking, weak forms, intonation), Rajadurai (2001: 25). Parker adds (2000: 25) rhythm, reduction, and deletion are included as supra segmental features.

The controversial issues about which areas of pronunciation are important to be taught came arise. According to Rajadurai (2001: 13) teaching supra segmental is less valued than the teaching of segmental areas. However, Harmer (2002: 183) disagrees with what Rajadurai stated. He claims that overt teaching of supra segmental areas particularly gives improved comprehension and intelligibly. Wahba (1998: 32-33) supported this statement, he claimed that that if learners are aware that there is a stress pattern in English words, and the pitch of the voice can convey the meaning, they will know what to pay attention to and can build basic awareness. In conclusion, both of segmental and supra segmental areas of teaching give significant effect in affecting students' pronunciation.

2. 6 Pronunciation Teaching

Pronunciation teaching is important to ED students, but in fact there is no lesson which focuses on pronunciation. Indeed, pronunciation can increase the quality of students' speaking as Harmer stated (2001: 183) that pronunciation teaching not only makes students aware of different sound and sound features (and what these mean), but also improve their speaking immeasurably.

In order to teach pronunciation, here are the three kinds of pronunciation practices which are most widely used by English teacher to help students improve their pronunciation:

Minimal pair drills. This is a pair of utterance-usually short- which differs in meaning, but which are exactly alike in sound except in one point. The students are to pronounce pairs of words which differ in pronunciation only in one respect, such as bid/bld/; big/blg, and sound/saund/; round/raund; (Deterding and Pudjosoedarmo 1998: 77)

A series of isolated sentences. These have concentration of the sound to be practiced, but they are not sentences frequently used in everyday conversation, Fangzhi (1998: 38). For example: ai:

“ Mike tried five times to get the prize”

“ Five times five is twenty-five”

Tongue twisters. Playing with words is particularly useful for the students who have unique pronunciation problems.

Ball (2003: 8) gives examples of tongue twisters:

She sells seashells on the seashore;

Red lorry yellow lorry;

If a dog chews shoes, whose shoes does he choose?

They think that it is Thursday's the thirtieth;

Fangzhi (1998: 38) concluded that the practices above are good for introducing English sound to beginners and also good for building a strong basic pronunciation. These pronunciation practices might be succeeded in helping students to improve pronunciation but not in sequence. Students who are trained in these ways tend to make more pronunciation errors when speaking spontaneously.

Not only that, Celce Murcia, et. al. (1996: 2) introduced two approaches that can be applied in helping students' pronunciation improvement, they are:

An intuitive-imitative approach. It talks about the students' ability to listen to and imitate sounds of a target language. He or she also can make imitate the pronunciation of other people in television, radio, songs, and so forth;

An analytic-linguistic approach. It recognizes the importance of intervention of pronunciation in language acquisition. Using this approach, teacher is to identify students' problem in pronouncing the foreign language by providing pedagogical aids;

Beside that, Nunan (2003) also gave us teaching strategies to teach pronunciation that consists of:

Openness to change. Teacher ask learner to discuss problem areas that are faced. It is important to build learner's self-confidence and attend their emotional needs as a non-native speaker;

Contextualized minimal pairs. Teaching pronunciation by distinguishing between specifically targeted sounds, stress patterns, or intonation patterns through the use of minimal pairs;

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Gadgets and props. Learners are to analyze the words on their own, and to practice saying words by using their tools in coordination with their pronunciation stress syllables.

Slow motion speaking (SMS). SMS allows learners to view close up, and to imitate, the teacher's way of producing specific sounds in context;

Tracking. Language's learner are not being asked to repeat after the recorded voice, but to try to say the words presented in the transcript concurrent with the voices they are listening to.

Techniques from drama and theater arts. Popular plays and screenplays can be interesting sources of pronunciation work;

Pronunciation teaching is not as easy as the stated statements above, it has obstacles too. Because of that, Otlowsky suggested:

pronunciation should be integrated into other subjects orienting to communicative competence than linguistic skill especially in segmental and supra segmental phoneme , Morley (1991, p. 481-520);

listening comprehension and pronunciation have close relationship , Gilbert (1984, p. 1) and Nootboom (1983, p. 183-194) stated that there is a strong impact of speech perception to speech production;

the best technique should involve teachers and students as speech trainer or trainer, Morley (1991, p. 507);

intelligible pronunciation is seen as essential component of communicative competence, Morley (1991, p. 513);

2. 7 Factors Affecting Students' Pronunciation

Sometimes we, as the non-native speaker, made mistakes in pronouncing words. It is because the several things, such as the differences in pronunciation area so that we are not accustomed to produce the sounds. As stated by Ur (2001, p. 52) that some causes affect pronunciation mistakes: 1.) substitute second language with first language sound because there is no in first language; 2.) create wrong perception on second language sounds because the sound is an allophone in first language; 3.) use a stress pattern and first language intonation when pronouncing second language in order to create a strange accent;

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter reveals the methodology used by the researcher, including research design consists of time, place, and the subjects of the study; data collection process; and data analysis.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Since the study focuses on describing the portrait of ED students' pronunciation and analyzing the implication of students' pronunciation towards the teaching and learning of English, the method will be used in this study is descriptive analytical interpretive.

This research does not make any intervention and judgment. It only describes the portrait of ED students' pronunciation and analyzes its implication towards the teaching and learning of English. This study also describes how ED students learn their pronunciation and whether their mother tongue affects their pronunciation or not.

This study applies two methods of data collection that are by recording the test of English phoneme and doing the interview. The test of English phoneme consists of the list of words; those are vowels, diphthongs, trip thongs, consonants, consonant clusters, stress, and intonation. The interview is designed to get more specific information to answer the research questions. Both data collected by means of test of English phoneme and interview will be analyzed with descriptive analysis interpretive.

Descriptive analytical interpretive

The study used a descriptive analytical interpretive method. Yin cited in Tunisa (2008) and Ardi (2009) mentioned that descriptive cases require that the writer begins with a descriptive theory, or face the possibility that problems will occur during the project. Surakhmad (1990: 140) stated two features of descriptive study:

Memusatkan diri pada pemecahan masalah-masalah yang ada pada masa sekarang, pada masalah-masalah aktual

Data yang dikumpulkan mula-mula disusun, dijelaskan dan kemudian dianalisa (karenaitu metode ini sering pula disebut metode analitik.

Surakhmad (1990: 140)

It can be concluded that to implement descriptive study, the study has to (1) focus on solving the past and actual issues then (2) the collected data is ordered, explained, and then analyzed (that is why this is often called an analytical method).

Geoff Walsham said on his presentation that according to Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) interpretive studies assume that people create and associate their own subjective and intersubjective meanings as they interact with the world around them. Interpretive researchers thus attempt to understand phenomena through accessing the meanings participants assign to them.

This definition is based on the ground that:

The interpretive research approach towards the relationship between theory and practice is that the researcher can never assume a value-neutral stance, and is always implicated in the phenomena being studied.

There is no direct access to reality unmediated by language and preconception.

Walsham (1993) himself states that interpretive methods of research start from the position that our knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, is a social construction by human actors and that this applies equally to researchers. Thus there is no objective reality which can be discovered by researchers and replicated by others, in contrast to the assumptions of positive science.

Population

The population of the study was the whole of ED classes at State University of Jakarta.

Sample

The samples of this study were the students from 2005, 2006, and 2007 both from educational and non-educational students.

Site and place

The study was conducted at English Department of State University of Jakarta from December 2008 to April 2009.

Instruments

Two kinds of instruments are designed for data collection. They are test of English phoneme and interview list.

1.) Test of English Phoneme

The test of English phoneme is consisted of the list of words that are categorized into vowels, diphthongs, trip thongs, consonants, consonant clusters, stress, and intonation. Then, students are asked to pronounce them using tape recorder.

2.) Interview list

The interview for this study is designed as a structured interview. The questions in the interview list are designed based on the research questions in chapter I.

3. 2 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The data collection was conducted on December 2008 until April 2009. The data in this study consisted of information collected by using test of English phoneme, and interview list. The collected data using an English test phoneme was conducted on December 2008 until April 2009. Meanwhile, the data from interview was done by taking notes (face-to-face individually) and sending via e-mail.

DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher analyzed the data by the following steps. The first was checking data completeness; the data taken were the recorded ED students' pronunciation. The recorded data contains vowels, diphthongs, trip thongs, consonants, consonant clusters, stress, and intonation. To classify the data, the writer analyzed the pronunciation into the transcript based on the participants' entrance year. The second was grouping data by making them in the table presentation based on the data source. The third was comparing the data in each category; by comparing the data, the writer would find the dominant and the less dominant made by students in pronouncing the sound. The forth was putting groups of data in order from the more dominant data to the less ones. The last was the taken data was interpreted based on the findings.