CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

Pronunciation is an important aspect to master for second or foreign language learner. Otlowski (1998) defines pronunciation as the way of uttering a word in an accepted manner (as cited in Gilakjani, 2016, p.2). Good pronunciation is very helpful to reach the communicative efficiency because it will make their speech understandable and therefore, not confusing the listerner. In addition, pronunciation is considered as the first thing that is noticed when communicating with native speakers (Hammer (2001) as cited in Gilakjani, 2016, p.3).

However, mastering English pronunciation is considered difficult to acquire. The position of English as foreign language in Indonesia makes the learners have to put more effort in order to acquire the English pronunciation due to the lack of exposure of English in this country. Furthermore, english speaking environment is also hard to find, which makes the learner barely speak and listen to the propper English and consequently contributes to the speaker's pronunciation. It is frequently observed that several deviations of the standard English are often occur when Indonesian English learner use this language. For instance, the learners tend to replace [ʒ] with [z], [ʃ] with [s], [ð] with [d], etc (Mathew, 1997, p.35-70).

Studies that discusses second and foreign language learners' pronunciation and their errors have been conducted in various perspective. The two popular

studies among them are Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and Error Analysis; the former emphasizes the differences of L1 and the target language, and the later focusses on the learners' error and compares it with the target language (Keys, 2001, p.179). However, these approaches were criticized due to its inability to explain the non-interference errors, lack of predictive power and theoritical explanation on the reason of why the error occurs (Rustipa, 2011, p.18; Al-khresheh, 2015, p.123; Keys, 2001, p.160). Markedness Differential Hypothesis, then emerges as the advance model of contrastive analysis which provides the explanation of the nature of the error cross linguisticly.

This study discusses the variation that the learners create in their interlanguage comparing with Standard American English in terms of their pronunciation among the English Department students in Andalas University year 2015. This study analyzes the error and explains its nature or the reason of why the error occurs in order to have a satisfactory explanation on pronunciation errors by second or foreign language learners. By comparing the differences, elaborating the nature of the variations that they use in coping problematic structure of the target language in terms of pronunciation, this research can be used, not only as a model to raise students' awareness of phonology, but also as a consideration in English language teaching to improve learning objects and methodologies in order to help the students to maintain the sufficient level of mutual intelligibility for effective communication.

1.2. Research Questions

Based on the explanation above, this study will focus to answer these following questions:

1. What are the differences between the students' interlanguage and standard American English pronunciation?

2. What are the patterns of phonetic shift from the Standard American English into the students' Interlanguage Pronunciation?

1.3. Objectives of the Research

This study is aimed to find the variation(s) in the students' interlanguage in terms of their pronunciation by explaining the nature of the variation(s) in the perspective of markedness principle (as explained in Chapter II), and the pattern of phonetic change of the students interlanguage.

1.4. Scope of the Research

This study focuses on the variations of the interlanguage in terms of pronunciation among English Department students of the class of 2015 at Andalas University. The students' interlanguage phonology is compared with the Standard American English pronunciation and focus on segmental aspect, especially the English consonants.
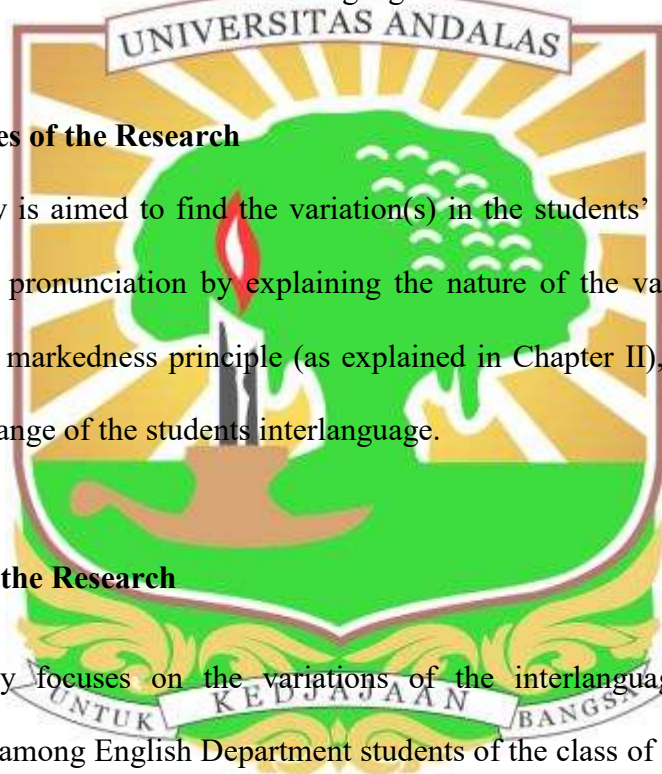
1.5. Methods of the Research

1.5.1. Collecting the Data

a. Data Elicitation

This research analyzes the unplanned speech produced by the participants considering the level of the participants' consciousness of their pronunciation. The level of the participants' proficiency is unidentified.

Picture description task is used as the instrument for the data elicitation, where the students were given a picture and assigned to describe it. Several keywords related to the picture are provided to guide the participants in describing the picture. The description is recorded and manually transcribed into phonetic transcription.

b. Sampling

The participants in this research are the students of English Department Students of the class of 2015 at Andalas University. When the research was conducted, which was on June, 15th 2019 – July 20th 2019, there were only 62 students left who were not dropped out, in furlough, or graduated. For the sake of the level of accuracy in data analysis, stratified random sampling was employed where the population was divided into smaller sub-groups or strata based on certain criteria, and the participants were randomly selected in each strata. This sampling method is used in

order to have a greater precision of the participant as the representative for each criterion.

In terms of the criteria for the sub-group, the population was divided into some smaller groups based on the the students' GPA. This criterion is in accordance with the research conducted by Aydin, et. all (2015, p.233) and Gumartifa (2018, p.215) stating that the perceived English Proficiency were positively accurate with GPA. Following the predicate of graduation based on GPA by the Rector's Decision of Andalas University of the year of 2016, the criteria were divided in to:

1. 2.00 - 2.75

2. 2.76 - 3.50

3. ≥ 3.51

1.5.2. Analyzing the Data

The recorded speech was transcribed into phonetic transcription and compared with the Standard American Language by referring to Meriam Webster Dictionary. Standard American Language is chosen as the comparison due to the high exposure of American English through the spread of their cultural and technical products accross contries, which make American English popular and dominant language in international communication (Xue, 2013, p. 2264). The popularity of American culture through the

widespread of these product accross the world makes American English become popular and therefore affects the non native speaker in learning American English.

Since every participant might give different description and therefore produced different words, the amount of the use of the target sound and the error from each participant is calculated. The frequency of the variations is rated by calculating the percentages, as well as the frequency of occurrence of the errors in general in order to see the pattern of phonological shift of the students' interlanguage.

The nature of the variations is explained in the perspective of Typological Markedness, in which the markedness relation between the correct and the participants' pronunciation is found through markedness reduction by referring to markedness hierarchy as explained in chapter II. The nature of the error is linked with the learners' difficulties by using Markedness Differential Hypothesis that was proposed by Eckman (1977).

1.5.3. Presenting the Result of Analysis

Bernard (as cited in Uprety, 2010, p.117) asserts the importance of visual display in qualitative study. The visual display could be in the form of table (when it comes to data), or

flow chart and map (when it comes to theory) and is a good way to convey the writer's idea to the reader.

In this research, the result of the analysis is presented by using the table as the visual display for the data followed by the description and interpretation. All participants' errors are categorized and put in one table with the frequency of occurrence of each error. The differences are then described from the higher percentages to the lowest one and the nature of the errors in the perspective of typological markedness by using markedness hierarchies. After that, the nature of the error that have been described is paired with the prediction of learner's difficulties by employing Markedness Differential Hypothesis which was proposed by Eckman (1977).