CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Research

The students of English in Senior High Schools in Indonesia often speak English with incorrect pronunciation. This may be caused by many aspects. One of them is the status of English as a foreign language in Indonesia. It is not a major language in our country. People speak English merely in a certain situation, such as in an international seminar or press conference. Although some boarding schools may create a situation in which the students must speak English in order to help them communicate fluently and comprehensibly, but they still have a problem in correctness of pronunciation.

Most of the students in Senior High Schools produce the pronunciation errors, especially in pronouncing the words containing the speech sounds that do not exist in Indonesian or in their mother tongue. English has more consonants and vowels than Indonesian or Minang language. The consonants like [ʒ], [θ], [ð], and [v] do not exist in Indonesian phonological system. Therefore, they find it difficult to pronounce them. The correctness of pronunciation is important in order to help them communicate with other people especially with native speakers.

English is a compulsory subject that must be studied at schools. Students learn about reading comprehension, types of the English genre, structures, vocabulary, and daily conversation. They are designed to improve their cognitive knowledge of English, but they tend to lack of the speaking skills or psycho-motor

skills, especially pronunciation. This problem arises because some teachers focus on the cognitive aspects in their syllabus without concerning with how to pronounce the words correctly. It happens presumably because most of the teachers lack of the knowledge of the phonological rules governing and the phonological structures governing in English speech sounds.

There may be some causes of the students' difficulties in pronouncing the English words correctly. One of the causes is they are not exposed to the English speaking communities. They rarely hear people speak English in their daily lives. People do not speak English at home, in the market, at schools, (except in English classes), at Parliaments, at the offices, in a meeting, in a national seminar, let alone in the mosques. Even in the English class rooms, the teachers teach English in Indonesian language. Sometimes they also speak English with poor pronunciation. The word such as 'method' is often pronounced ['meθɒd] or ['metɒd] instead of ['mɛθəd]. The incorrect pronunciation has been fossilized in the teachers' mind. They pronounce it that way again and again so that the students have acquired the poor pronunciation of English words due to the fact that they learn English by a combination of copying what they hear, and building up mental generalizations based on their experiences.

On the other hand, the students may pronounce the English words based on their perception. They perceive the pronunciation of any words based on their experience. They experienced the pronunciation of the words like 'mine' [maɪn], 'fine' [faɪn], and 'line' [laɪn] ends in [-aɪn], then they overgeneralize them by

pronouncing the word such as 'determine' as [dɪˈtɛːmaɪn] instead of [dɪˈtɜːmɪn]. They may also mispronounce English diphthongs such as [eɪ] and consonant [z] in 'ladies' [leɪdɪz]. The word may be pronounced [ledis], in which [eɪ] is changed into [e] and [z] into [s]. The suffix is pronounced [-s] because the allophone [-z] is not realized in the written language. They tend to be influenced by the spelling.

Based on the writer's perception, the basic problem faced by the students is the voicing contrasts. They find it difficult to distinguish the consonant [ʃ] from [ʒ] in the suffix '-sion'. The word 'comprehension' is pronounced [kɒmprɪˈhɛnʃən] and most of them pronounced it correctly, but when they pronounced the word such as 'conclusion', with the same suffix '-sion', they often pronounced it as [konˈkluːʃn] instead of [kənˈkluːʒən]. They pronounced it [konˈkluːʃn] just because the suffix in 'comprehension' is pronounced [-ʃn].

This is due to the fact that most of the Junior or Senior High Schools do not have speaking class or pronunciation practices to improve their pronunciation skills. The duration of the English subject offered is merely two or three hours per week. They speak English merely when they are in the English class with very limited times to practice pronunciation. Besides, the teachers are not very confident to improve the students' pronunciation because they often speak with pronunciation errors.

This problem also happens at Pasaman Senior High School 1. Pasaman is located in the northern part of West Sumatra. Based on this phenomena stated above, the researcher would like to analyse the acquisition of voicing contrasts as

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produced by the third graders at Pasaman Senior High School 1. This research will focus on how the students produce the voicing contrasts in speaking English as foreign language and what causes pronunciation errors.

1.2   Research Question

Based on the description above, some research questions can be formulated as follows:

1. How do the 3rd graders of Pasaman Senior High School produce the voicing contrasts?
2. What are the causes of the pronunciation errors of voicing contrasts committed by them?

1.3   Objectives of Research

1. To analyze the way the 3rd graders of Pasaman Senior High School 1 produce the voicing contrasts.
2. To identify the causes of pronunciation errors in voicing contrasts committed by them.

1.4   Scope of the Research

This research will limit to find out the acquisition of voicing contrasts by the third graders at Pasaman Senior High School 1. There are a lot of aspects dealing with the pronunciation errors in second language acquisition studies, such as errors in producing vowels, consonants, semivowels, and prosody (including stress, intonation, tone, etc.) In this research the writer would like to limit the

study and focus on problematic of speech sound, they are consonant and vowel. In addition, the researcher will analyse the consonant such as [ʃ] from [ʒ], [-s] from [-z], [θ] from [ð], [f] from [v] and the vowel such as [e] from [æ], [ɪ] from [i:], and [ʊ] from [u:].

1.5   Methods of Research

In conducting this research, the methods used Convenience Sampling (also known as Accidental Sampling or Haphazard Sampling). According to (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2015), this method is a type of non-random sampling where members of the target population available to give a time.

1.5.1   Informant

10 students in third graders participated in this research. They are consisted of 5 male and 5 female for support and get the accurate data from different gender. The subjects were chosen because they were in the highest level at Pasaman Senior High School 1 who learns English as a Foreign Language. They had learned English since they were at the Elementary School. In English class, however, the teachers just pushed their students to answer the question from a course-book without taking care of how to pronounce the English words correctly. Furthermore, the teachers were not very confident to improve the students' pronunciation because many of them speak English with pronunciation errors too.

1.5.2 Data collecting procedure

The data collecting was started when the school time was finished. The participants were tested in a quiet room at the school. First, the researcher and participants get to know each other and make little bit conversation. After that, the researcher gave instruction about what the participants need to do and gave some simple question for learners with English. Then, the researcher gave the list of sentences and then suggested them to read the list one by one. The researcher recorded the voice by using recorder.

1.5.3 Analysis of data

The data analysis was presented in the tables and spectrograms. First, the researcher found and classified the pronunciation errors of voicing contrasts that participants made. The writer classified them into two main classifications: voice and voiceless. Then, the writer will divide between the mispronunciation and correct pronunciation with phonetic transcription in the table.

To check the accuracy of the data analysis, the writer uses the phonetic transcription with an application named *ToPhonetics Free.* The researcher also used manual dictionary named Oxford dictionary to compare of validity of the data. The data were analyzed manually by using PRAAT. PRAAT was used for measurement of duration of word especially for vowel length. PRAAT can be downloaded in

www.praat.org. The voices that had already been recorded in a tape recorder were input into the PRAAT and produced the spectrogram for the duration.