

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

According to Yates (2002), pronunciation can be defined as the production of sounds that we use to make meaning, on how students and teacher pronounce some words. Sebestova (2007) stated that pronunciation is a very complex language component. Therefore, in his study of pronunciation he defines some role of teacher as their task in pronunciation. The First task of teacher is helping learners hear and produce sounds from their native language point of view. Secondly, it is establishing what to concentrate on. It is advisable to set out priorities according to the acceptability to the English speaker as well as to what is beyond good intelligibility and is not necessary to take one's stand on. The third task are devising activities, adjusting them for different learning styles, and according to the aspects, which influence pronunciation learning. The last important task is providing feedback and assessing learners' performance and progress. "Teachers should incorporate pronunciation into their courses and expect students to do well in them because intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communication competence" (Hismanoglu, 2006).

The writer believes that the existence of pronunciation in the communication process is essential since it is being one of the considerations on judging someone's speaking ability. According to Hismonaglu (2006), without adequate pronunciation skills, the learner's ability to communicate is relatively limited. Learners with a good pronunciation in English are more likely to be

understood even if they make errors in other areas, whereas learners whose pronunciation is difficult to understand will not be understood, even if their grammar is perfect (Yates, 2002). Moreover, Varasarin (2007) found that correct and clear pronunciation is considerably important in language learning.

Pronunciation becomes important because learners or speakers may not be understood by other English speakers when their pronunciation is incorrect and unclear. Good pronunciation may make the communication easier, more relaxed and more useful (Varasarin, 2007). In addition, Yates (2002) stated that we also often judge people by the way they speak, and so learners with poor pronunciation may be judged as incompetent, uneducated or lacking in knowledge, even though listeners are only reacting to their pronunciation. "Pronunciation is a key element of the learning of oral skills in a second language" (Varasarin, 2007).

However, Baker and Murphy (2011) found that several teachers commented that in comparison with other skill areas, pronunciation was a relatively neglected area in English teaching and learning process. Teachers prioritized diverse features of pronunciation in their courses and teachers still seemed to lack confidence in teaching certain aspects of English pronunciation (Baker & Murphy 2011). Most programs highly lead the learner into grammar and vocabulary learning, but their attention in pronunciation was low (Beh-Afarin and Monfared, 2009).

McDonald (2002) in Baker and Murphy (2011) found that after interviewing eight ESL teachers in language centers in Australia, the result shows that teachers were lack of motivation to teach pronunciation. "They were lack of motivation due to poorly articulated center policies and curriculum objectives, on

which teachers reported that they depended to know how to address pronunciation in their classes.” This condition is relatively same with the fact in EFL of Indonesia context. In fact, it is rare to find a specific and special hour to teach pronunciation in EFL class. It is also influenced by the curriculum objective in Indonesia where the focus on teaching English is only on the four skills has been defined. Another reason of why pronunciation is often to be neglected is found by the writer in the Beh-Afarin and Monfared study who found that teaching speaking and listening, it involved teaching pronunciation too. As in any form of spoken language, all aspects of pronunciation are present at the same time while teaching speaking and listening. “Many teachers addressed pronunciation issues only when intelligibility was compromised” (Baker & Murphy 2011). Moreover, Hismanoglu (2011) found that the demand of global competence and international communication and collaboration has been increasing. This condition causes attaining proficiency in a second or foreign language more important. However, this proficiency should cover not only vocabulary and grammar, but also good pronunciation.

Those explanations above show that there was a contrast condition between the need of pronunciation with the real practice of pronunciation. Although good pronunciation is not equal to good speaking ability, it contributes to the intelligibility of oral communication since listeners rely on distinguishable vowels and consonants and appropriate intonation contours to understand speakers’ talking (Huang & Radant 2009). Morley (1998) in Varasarin (2007) stated that pronunciation plays an important role in helping the learner become an comprehensible speaker.

Beh-Afarin and Monfared (2009) found that it has been strongly suggested that pronunciation be taught as an integral part of a language learning course. Luchini (2005) stated that because of the effects of globalization in international relationship, there has been a steady growth in the attention to the level of pronunciation. To establish successful communication, spoken language should be used effectively. It means that pronunciation is important since this globalization era because by learning good pronunciation learners can have good communication with another people around the world because they have good pronunciation that easy to be understood. When they have good pronunciation, their information in communication will be delivered well because the focus of communication is the information. When they have pronunciation that difficult to understand, it can disturb the content of their information that will be delivered then people around them cannot catch the information as well. These reasons of why pronunciation being the important factor of speaking skill make the writer to focus on pronunciation as the area to be investigated.

However, pronunciation to EFL learners is not easy such the fact found by Huang & Radant (2009) who stated that “EFL language learners are likely to encounter difficulties when pronouncing sounds that do not exist in their first language from an interlinguistic point of view”. “Another general problem in pronunciation pedagogy is the nature of limited training time, and the difficulty of assessment” (Beh-Afarin and Monfared, 2009). It is supported by Hayati (2010) who stated that the assigned time for English classes through an academic year is so short that the teachers may not be able to cover the whole textbook. In addition, the inadequate knowledge of some teachers of English about linguistics and

methodology has also caused many problems for both teachers and their students (Hayati, 2010). For instance, an English teacher pronounces a word in his/her class but the year after, the same students may hear the same word with a completely different pronunciation. Confused with the two diverse pronunciations, the students suggest that they have been taught to pronounce that word in a different way by their previous teacher. It is obvious that one of the teachers is making a mistake because the difference between the two pronunciations suggested for the same word is so big that it is rarely justifiable by dialectal variations, i.e. British, American, Australian, etc (Hayati, 2010). Dialect is variety of spoken language according to the regional place of certain group of people. While, accent is variety of spoken language according to speaker's background.

While, Otlowski (1998), in his study discussed about the existence of pronunciation found that some researchers have their different belief of pronunciation existence in class. "Some of the current research would suggest that teachers can make little or no difference in improving their students' pronunciation." In contrast, there is research that indicates that the teacher can make a noticeable difference if certain criteria. Such as, the teaching of suprasegmentals and the linking of pronunciation with listening practice (Otlowski, 1998).

Moreover, Otlowski (1998) also showed two contrast opinions of some researchers about pronunciation, such as Morley (1991) believed that "pronunciation programs were viewed as meaningless noncommunicative drill-and-exercise gambits," then another researchers who disagree with this statement

were and Suter and Purcell (1980).”They concluded that pronunciation practice in class had little effect on the learner's pronunciation skills, moreover that the attainment of accurate pronunciation in a second language is a matter substantially beyond the control of educators” (Otlowski, 1998).

The writer believes that since teacher is the one of pronunciation source of EFL learners and the direct model to be adapted for EFL learners, the example given by the teacher to the students indirectly will effect on students’ pronunciation. As the writer believes that when the teacher is the only model of students to imitate the pronunciation, it means that the accuracy of students’ pronunciation is influenced by the teacher pronunciation accuracy itself. In other word, the writer assumes that when the teacher has good accuracy in the pronunciation then the students will also have good pronunciation accuracy. This assumption is supported by the study conducted by Fareh (1986) who investigates the how far the English language teachers’ pronunciation affect their students’ pronunciation. In this study, Fareh (1986) also assumes that the English language teachers’ pronunciation have a positive influence on that of their students. The result of this study also supports the assumption of the writer that the influence of most of the teachers’ pronunciation has been found significant in their students’ pronunciation. It is showed by the degree of similarity between the pronunciation both the teachers and students in certain areas. “ESL teachers’ English models have an extremely important effect on the ways in which the learners relate to learning pronunciation” (Kang, 2010)

Therefore, by conducting this study, the writer will correlate whether or not if the teacher has good pronunciation, the students will have good

pronunciation also. The result of this study can be used to determine whether or not teacher's pronunciation influence the speaking ability of the students especially in term of their pronunciation.

The other variable that the writer wants to focus on is the interest of the students to improve their pronunciation through the teacher's role. Current research confirms that there is still a strong desire among teachers and students to aim for native-like accuracy instead of intelligibility (Peralejo, 2007). Cathcart and Olsen (1976) in Baker and Murphy (2011) found that "students held a strong preference for error correction, especially in regard to pronunciation and grammar." Students also wanted teachers to correct them even more frequently. By these studies, the writer can state that basically, students have strong interest in the pronunciation. When the teacher did not give a good example of his/her pronunciation accuracy for the students, it can affect the level of students' interest also. "Teachers' attitudes toward varieties of accents can play a critical role in shaping learners perspectives and expectations of language learning particularly in pronunciation" (Kang, 2010). These are the reasons why the writer wants to prove if the level of students' interest in pronunciation is affected by the accuracy of teachers' pronunciation itself and if the good pronunciation accuracy of the teacher can improve the students' interest of pronunciation.

Then, as the empirical background of this study, the writer focuses on the second grade of SMK NU Gresik. It is because the writer believes that in senior high school level, the students have their enough awareness of the way the pronounce words in English. The writer choose vocational school than regular senior high school because the writer believes that this school has more specific

words that usually used for the English teaching-learning process. Second grade of vocational school is a level of students when they should have enough input of pronunciation as their basic knowledge because they have accepted input from their teacher in range of two years.

As the previous explanation that found the importance of pronunciation, the writer believes that this study is needed to be conducted. As individuals, we all learn to speak before we learn to read and write; that is to say, people learn the language by hearing the sounds spoken in their environment (Senel, 2006).

## **1.2. Problem statements**

Based on the research background, there are two problem statements of this research. They are:

1. What is the correlation between teacher's pronunciation accuracy with students' pronunciation accuracy?
2. What is the correlation between teacher's pronunciation accuracy with the students' interest of pronunciation?

## **1.3. Purpose of the study**

Based on the problem statement of this study, the purposes of this study are:

1. Examining the correlation, if any, between teacher's pronunciation accuracy with students' pronunciation accuracy
2. Examining the correlation, if any, between teacher's pronunciation accuracy with the students' interest of pronunciation

#### **1.4. Significance of the study**

Theoretical significance of this study is contributing a literacy source of pronunciation introduction for everyone who wants to learn about pronunciation. Moreover, they can use it as a literacy source of teaching pronunciation for English Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

Practical significance of this study: for teachers, this study can be used as a guide for them on how to teach pronunciation to EFL learner. For learners, this study can be used as a guide for them to practice their pronunciation.

#### **1.5. Hypothesis**

The working hypotheses for this study are:

1. The teachers' pronunciation accuracy is positively correlated to the students' pronunciation accuracy.
2. The teachers' pronunciation accuracy is positively correlated to the students' interest of pronunciation.

#### **1.6. Research Assumption**

Based on the general hypothesis, the writer's assumptions of this study are:

1. Teacher is the main model for the students in term of pronunciation in the school.
2. Students tend to imitate their teacher's behavior as their belief that their teacher is the model for them.

3. Students have strong interest on pronunciation because the teacher has good pronunciation accuracy that can motivate them to learn more about pronunciation.

### **1.7. Limitations of the Study**

The following limitations defined the interpretation of results, conclusions, and recommendations of this study:

1. The sample is limited to students in second grade of SMK NU Gresik who is taught by same teacher in their first grade.
2. The sample is limited to the teacher who teaches the students in their first and second grade.

### **1.8. Definition of key terms**

There are three keywords in this study. They are:

1. Pronunciation refers to the production of sounds that we use to make meaning, on how students and teacher pronounce some words. In this study, pronunciation focuses on the segmental pronunciation of some vocabularies they learn.
2. Accuracy refers to the teacher and students' pronunciation toward some words, whether they pronounce it correctly or not based on the dictionary.
3. Pronunciation interest is a kind of willingness that has by student to involve more in their pronunciation betterment.