

Chapter I

Introduction

This chapter introduces several subtopics that will be described in this research. This chapter is divided into four subtopics namely Background of Study, Research Question, Research Objective, and Significance of Research. All of the sub topics are analyzed as follows:

1.1 Background of Study

The gap between the theory of phonological acquisition particularly consonant acquisition and the reality of the difference between English and Indonesian children acquisition are very interesting to explore. The difference goes to the sequence of acquisition and also to the consonants which are produced and are not produced based on the theoretical point of view of phonological acquisition. Some theories explain that the various cases of sequence of phonological acquisition take place because of different factors of background such as family, environment, and also drill (see Dardjowidjojo 2008, Steinberg 2001). The sequence of consonant acquisition theoretically will be passed by children phase by phase, from bilabial sounds to glottal sound. Meanwhile, some children can produce consonants out of the order of acquisition.

Most of studies of Indonesian children language acquisition show that there is a difference between the result of studies and the theory of language acquisition. The result of Dardjowidjojo's research (2008) of children acquisition supports that the phases of language acquisition of each child are different. The difference goes to the sequence of language acquisition. According to the theory and several studies of language acquisition, the phases of language acquisition generally are cooing (6 weeks), babbling-mixture of consonant and vowel

sounds (6 months), first appearance of word is at 12 months (English) or 21 months (Indonesia), and consonant cluster begins at 36 months (Dardjowidjojo, 2008).

Moreover, most of the theory of language acquisition is only based on the acquisition of English children as the participant of research which are different with Indonesian children regarding the biological, neurological, social, and linguistic aspects of language acquisition. The phase of phonological production is different between one child to another. There are several children who can produce sound /r/ at the age of 4 but some children could have produced the sound /r/ at the age of 3. This result of prior research strengthens the gap between the theory of phonological acquisition particularly consonant acquisition and the reality of the difference between English and Indonesian children acquisition. This phenomenon shows that the research of language acquisition particularly the acquisition of consonants is a necessity for us. The research of consonant acquisition can answer the problems of gap between the theoretical framework of consonant acquisition and the reality of the difference between English and Indonesian children's consonant acquisition.

This is the actual phenomenon as reason of the researcher chooses this topic in order to investigate the process of phonological acquisition on pre-school age. Therefore, the research focuses on the process of consonant production in order to know the consonants can be produced by pre-school aged children and consonant cannot be produced by pre-school aged children.

Actually, this research does not cover the whole process of consonant acquisition on all pre-school aged children because this research only focuses on consonant production. This research also only uses five participants which are pre-school aged children. Pre-school aged children or preschoolers on this research are children who are old enough to talk and walk but who are too young to go to school or children who go to a preschool (Meriam Webster 2012,

p.1). Generally, a preschooler is a child with the age of 0 to 3 or 4 years so that research participants are children at the age of 3 to 5 years old.

Regarding the condition of participants, this research will take place in Gorontalo particularly in Gorontalo city and the district of Gorontalo. The site of research is chosen based on some consideration. The consideration are; research participants are the citizen of those regions, research participants do their activities in those two regions, and different environmental background where participants live is also taken as consideration. Those reasons in choosing research site are explained more apparently.

Meanwhile, this research can be used as a basic assumption of language acquisition process. The focus of this research on consonant production is based on the role of consonant as the specific distinctive feature of a language. The function of consonant as the distinctive feature of language makes consonant has an important role in phonotactic construction of language. Therefore, the existence of consonant in language needs to be explored during the period of golden age.

1.2 Research Question

1. What English consonants can be produced by pre-school aged children?
2. What factors can influence English consonant production on pre-school aged children?

1.3 Research Objective

Regarding the problem statement, this study aims to investigate the English consonants which can be produced by children of pre-school age and also to investigate factors which can influence English consonant production on pre-school aged children. The objectives of this study are codified based on the fact that the production of consonants is very important during the

process of language production. The objective of this study is also used as a guide to choose appropriate research methodology. The objective of this study is needed to achieve by conducting this research.

1.4 Significance of Research

A well-planned research will contribute maximally in terms of theoretical development of study or theoretical contribution and brand new invention of study or practical contribution. In terms of theoretical contribution, this research is expected to contribute a great deal benefit for students and lecturers and parents. For students and lecturer in particular, the result of research can be used as the brand new information in studying English consonant production so that the students can learn more about the consonants that can be produced by pre-school aged children. The result of research also can be used as the basic knowledge in teaching language particularly teaching language for children or young learner.

In terms of practical contribution, this research can be used as a guideline and appropriate information of how parents should treat their children during the golden age because this research shows the sequence of consonant production that should have known by parents. The information of sequence of English consonant production will show that children should not be forced to produce the English consonant out of the stage of consonant production. The consonant production should be followed properly in order children can produce the English consonant sounds well.

