INESTIGATING THE FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE THE PRONUNCIATION ERROR OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS IN UNISLA

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ABSTRACT

Pronunciation is considered very essential for language learners since it can influence their communication process. Nevertheless, learning pronunciation becomes a complex aspect to master a language, especially English. Therefore, there are many errors and mistakes committed by English learner in pronunciation. This study tries to investigate the factors which contribute to students' error in pronunciation. The factors needs to be indicated since it can avoid the students in making more error, help the students to be more aware of the issue, and help the students to overcome their pronunciation error earlier. A descriptive qualitative approach is used in this study to investigate the pronunciation error produced by the English department students of UNISLA. The researcher observed the first semester students as they had pronunciation practice course. The researcher used some kinds of instruments to collect the data. The main data was gained from the result of interview and field note.

Keywords: error, pronunciation, factors

1. INTRODUCTION

In learning any languages, including English, there are three components of language which should be mastered by the students; they are pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. The three components integrated and cannot be separated to make a comprehensible communication. However, pronunciation is considered very important for language learners as it can be an aspect which is able to affect the meaning of their communication. Unfortunately, it has often been overlooked and sometimes neglected in favour of grammar and vocabulary in SLA research (Neri, Cucchiarini, Strik, & Boves, 2002). Consequently, learning pronunciation becomes a very problematical aspect to master a language, especially English in this case. In line with the idea, pronunciation can be one of the most difficult parts for a language learner to master and one of the least favourite topics for teachers to address in the classroom (Gilakjani, Ismail, & Ahmadi, 2011). Furthermore, it may be a difficult task to incorporate teaching pronunciation in language classroom, yet it is important to do (Velji, 2008). Thus, error in pronunciation or phonological error tends to occur in language learning process, but the issue needs to be settled down.

Error in pronunciation may exist in every level of education system, starts from elementary school level until university level. In university level, English is taught to both English department and non-English department students. In this case, English department becomes the spotlight since the students deal with English Language Teaching for the rest of their study program. One of universities which has English department in its program is Islamic University of Lamongan (UNISLA). In the English department of UNISLA, most of students in the first semester committed pronunciation error in their communication for their courses. The error may cause some problems in their performances in classroom activities, especially in speaking practice subject. Nevertheless, the students need to learn pronunciation correctly, regardless of the difficulties that may come up. For that reason, a suitable investigation or study is very essential in overcoming students' error in pronunciation.

In order to avoid the student of making the pronunciation error or mistake, it is considered important to investigate the factors affecting their error or mistake in pronunciation.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

A descriptive qualitative research design is used in this study. According to Angrosino (in Latief, 2012), qualitative research is a process of inquiry aimed at understanding human behaviour by building complex, holistic picture of social and cultural settings in which such behaviour occurs.

Hence, qualitative approach is appropriate to be implemented as it investigates human behaviour and complexity.

Furthermore, for the method, case study is considered suitable for the study. A case study probes deeply and analyzes the interactions between the factors that explain present status or that influence change or growth (Latief, 2012). Therefore, the research method is appropriate for the objective of the study.

The researcher observed the first semester students of English department in UNISLA. The total students who participated in this study were 50 students. The class was selected since there are lots of mistakes or errors in pronunciation there.

In this study, the researcher used Triangulation because there were three data used. The researcher used observation, interview and documentation in research. The way of analyzing the data was combining all the data that had been obtained when investigators conducting research in the field.

3. RESULT
3.1 The Factors of Pronunciation Error

In the error of pronunciation or phonological error, there are many factors that may affect the students' learning process. According to Stemberger (1989), phonological errors are assumed to have two different causes: perceptual misidentification of sounds, and accurate perception but inability to reproduce the sound, which leads to substitution of an unpronounceable syllable for a friendlier one. Therefore, it can be inferred that the factors can be from the learners' misinterpretation or their disability to reproduce the sounds.

Based on the explanations afore, there are various factors which may affect students' pronunciation error. Based on the interview to the first semester students, it can be inferred that the errors they committed are affected from some particular aspects. Some aspects that the students mentioned were: 1) Imitating wrong pronunciation of people around them or public figure on TV; 2) Having different system of sounds between their mother tongue and their target language; 3) Having low intensity in using and practicing the target language; 4) Getting low motivation to consult their dictionary; and 5) Facing some difficulties in recognizing and pronouncing the phonetic symbol.

It can be concluded that there are various aspect affecting students' error in pronunciation,

and most of them are interlingual error. Interlingual error is used to be called as transfer error. When the students are lack of essential information on the second language or lack of attention capacity to trigger the appropriate second language routine, the error may occur in their communication (Kavaliauskienė, 2009). In other words, interlingual error is an error which comes from students' lack of knowledge.

3.2 How to Overcome the Factors of Error

There are some alternatives which will probably help the students to overcome the cause of error.

3.2.1 Motivation

Motivation becomes one of the most powerful boosters for the language learners in practicing their target language. The students' motivation should relate to their self-efficacy and anxiety. It is usually related to their chance of being succeed, how good they think their pronunciation is. Pronunciation module is positively influenced by the factors of motivation in pronunciation construct (Smit, 2002). Therefore, there is a need for a module or text book to increase the students' motivation and gain their confidence.

3.2.2 Social Components

Based on the result of the interview, there are many factors related to the learner's environment or social components which influence their pronunciation error and mistake. Social components have to be accorded more importance in pronunciation learning than with regard to motivation in language learning more generally (Smit, 2002). Therefore, a better social engagement and supportive environment will surely help the learners in getting the better pronunciation in their practices and communication.

3.2.3 Students' Awareness

Based on the students' response, they do not put more attention and awareness in pronunciation. They tend to be passive in learning the pronunciation and do not have any eagerness in checking the correct pronunciation in their dictionary. Therefore, the learners need to be ready in learning English, especially pronunciation, seriously and carefully. The most central classroom-related factor was found to be students' readiness to learn proactively and self-dependently (Smit, 2002). In conclusion, the language learners are expected to be autonomous learners who are able to be active and gain their critical awareness in learning their target language.

3.2.4   Teachers' Qualification

The learners need not only motivation, social support, and awareness in learning their target langue but also a good model to be imitated. In this case, the English teacher has a great role to guide and give examples of how to pronounce English word correctly. The teacher's personality, qualifications, knowledge and pedagogical skills together with the properly set teaching goals (as well as the aim of the course, the duration, the materials chosen, teaching techniques etc.) may greatly contribute to the learners' success (Pospieszyńska-Wojtkowiak, 2016). A person who is trained to be an English teacher should be both good at foreign language using and at interpreting particular phonological rules and principles (Pospieszyńska-Wojtkowiak, 2016). In conclusion, English teachers have a big responsibility to take since they have to master the language rules and principles and be the role model for their students.

3.2.5   A Suitable Material

There is an aspect that will complete the effort of avoiding the students in making mistake and error; it is a suitable material. The materials can be in the form of text book, media, etc. The materials should be contextual to support the learning process of the students. English is taught as a foreign language and is practiced within a contextrestricted environment in which the textbook and classroom teacher play the main role (Ghorbani, Neissari, & Kargozari, 2016). It means that the collaboration of the suitable materials and a qualified English teacher will unquestionably help the learners and prevent them in making any mistakes and errors. Moreover, other researchers believe that experienced teachers using appropriate materials, stressing teaching suprasegmentals, and following a communicative language programme can improve students' pronunciation (Pospieszyńska-Wojtkowiak, 2016). In conclusion, a good collaboration among teacher, material organization, and the language learners are related to and complete each other in acquisition process.

4.   CONCLUSION

Some aspects that the students mentioned were: 1) Imitating wrong pronunciation of people around them or public figure on TV; 2) Having different system of sounds between their mother tongue and their target language; 3) Having low intensity in using and practicing the target language; 4) Getting low motivation to consult their dictionary; and 5) Facing some difficulties in recognizing and pronouncing the phonetic symbol. It can be concluded that there are various aspect affecting students' error in pronunciation, and most of them are interlingual error.

There are some proposed alternatives in dealing with the problems. There is a need to elevate the students' motivation, create better social components, build students' awareness in learning and error, provide a good and qualified teacher, and also give the students suitable and appropriate learning materials.

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