

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

There are a lot of languages in the world, which have different sound systems. Language is the form of communication used by human beings and it is defined as ‘manner of expressing oneself’ (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 700). People in the world learn a number of languages because they need them for different purposes in everyday interactions. Through language people can communicate with one another and they can also socialise with others. People in the world need language as a means of expressing or communicating their ideas, feelings, and needs with others, be they from the same country or different countries. Without language we cannot communicate with other people.

In this globalisation era, people start to learn other languages as their second language (L2) in order to enrich their knowledge and to communicate with people from other countries. In learning their second language, one may face problems. One of the problems is the influence of their native

language (L1). The problem can come from the different systems of the language itself, including grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

In my thesis, I am going to analyse the pronunciation influence of L1 that can create problems or give advantages in learning the pronunciation of English as a second language. The topic of my thesis is *Analysis of the Language Transfer of Mandarin Pronunciation in Learning English Pronunciation*. Pronouncing words in L2 correctly is important, so that the hearer will understand what the speakers are talking about, and I am going to take the data from those whose first language is Mandarin and their second language is English. China is a huge country, with the biggest population in the world. Many Chinese learn English as their second language. In learning English, they may find difficulties when they are pronouncing the English words, because English and Mandarin have so many different sounds.

In this thesis, I am trying to find out how Mandarin pronunciation influences a person in learning English pronunciation. I would like to find out whether the same sounds existing in both Mandarin and English are advantages, and whether the different ways of producing similar sounds and the non-existence of Mandarin sounds in English are disadvantages. These problems are interesting to discuss, because in my opinion, in addition to knowing the difference between Mandarin pronunciation and English pronunciation, we can also know about the positive and negative impacts on people whose L1 is Mandarin in learning English as a second language. Another problem which is interesting to discuss is how far the factors of aptitude (learner's ability), attitude (person's behavior), and motivation (learner's intuitive appeal or inner spirit) influence a person in learning a second language. I

am sure that people with Mandarin as their first language will find this thesis beneficial as they learn English as the second language.

In analysing the topic, I use Psycholinguistics and Phonology (English Phonology and Mandarin Phonology) as the supporting theories. “Psycholinguistics is concerned with the acquisition, perception, and production of language” (Garnham 30) and “Phonology is the study of how sounds are organised and how they function in language” (Hymann 3). To be more specific, I am going to use a branch of Psycholinguistics, namely Second Language Acquisition (SLA). “It is the study of how learners learn an additional language after they have acquired their mother tongue” (Ellis 5). In Second Language Acquisition theory we will be introduced to a term called language transfer, which “studies the use of the first language (or other languages known) in a second language context” (Gass 333).

To find the truth about why most Chinese have problems when they are learning English as a second language, I am going to take the data from the native speakers of Mandarin in Bandung by interviewing them one by one. Some respondents are taken from several Chinese courses, my cousins, and lecturers from Chinese Department in Maranatha Christian University. During the interview, they are recorded as they read several English words, containing all the sounds existing in English.

(715 words)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In this thesis, I would like to analyse the following problems:

1. How does Mandarin pronunciation become a language transfer for the respondents in producing English sounds?
2. How do other factors such as aptitude, attitude, and motivation, influence the success or failure of people whose L1 is Mandarin in learning the English pronunciation?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

In this thesis, I would like to find out:

1. How Mandarin pronunciation becomes a language transfer for the respondents in producing English sounds.
2. How other factors such as aptitude, attitude, and motivation, influence the success or failure of people whose L1 is Mandarin in learning the English pronunciation.

1.4 Method of Research

First, I ask twenty people whose L1 is Mandarin to be my respondents and I ask them to read several English words. In the meantime I record their voices. After gathering the data, I listen to the recording by focusing on the pronunciation of English individual sounds. Next, I analyse the data, classify each sound into two parts: the positive transfer or the negative transfer. If there is a peculiarity in the

pronunciation of the sounds, I classify them into the peculiarity part using the aptitude, attitude and motivation factors. Finally, I draw a conclusion based on the analysis.

1.5 Organisation of the Thesis

I divide this thesis into four chapters. The first chapter starts with the Introduction, which includes the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organisation of the Thesis. The second chapter is the Theoretical Framework, which contains theories supporting my analysis. The third chapter is the Analysis of Data, which leads to the result of my analysis. The last chapter is the Conclusion, which explains what has been achieved from the analysis. I also enclose the Bibliography, which contains the sources of the theories and Appendices, which contain the list of English vowel and consonant sounds.