

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Language has many functions in human life. Language is used to express people's hopes, aspiration and thought. Moreover, it is very useful and flexible which can serve human needs in their communication in any situation.

Allah SWT creates different tribes, nations, and languages in the world in order they could know each other. It is said in the Holy Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat : 13 and Ar-Rum : 22

Based on Surah Al-Hujurat above, we have to learn to know other people. One of some ways that we can use is through language. Allah SWT has ordered us to learn and explore about language which can be seen from the first *ayat* that is revealed by Allah to our prophet. Therefore, we must learn about language in order that we can learn and interact with others from different places.

There are many languages used in the world. One of them is English. People use English as the first, second or as their foreign language. In Indonesia, English has been taught as a compulsory subject in educational system. It is taught not only as a subject in elementary school and in high school, but also as a subject in the university level.

Learning English is an obligation for the students. Because many aspects of our life require English as the important tool to do anything we want. For instance, many books, technology and internet use English as the basic language. Moreover, global world competition often requires English as the basic knowledge that must be had. Therefore, the students must master English completely.

As stated by Fauziati (2002, p. 110), there are four skills which have to be mastered by the students in learning English. Those basic skills have the same positions in language learning. They are listening, speaking, reading and

writing. Besides the four skills mentioned above, there are also three components of English. They are pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

Pronunciation is essential part of English that must be paid attention by the students because pronunciation can affect someone's speaking ability and determine its level. Furthermore, mispronunciation can lead to misunderstanding that will make conversation lack off efficiency and accuracy because we have to repeat it to make it clear. Hence, based on its importance, pronunciation must be paid attention in language teaching and learning. It is related to the Holy Qur'an verse Al-Muzzammil: 4, as follow:

Regardless the fact that the students are able to pronounce English word without overt pronunciation teaching, there are still some benefits of a focus on pronunciation in our lessons. Pronunciation teaching not only makes students aware of different sounds and sound features, but can also improve their speaking immeasurably (Harmer, 2001, p.183)

Unfortunately, students often receive extensive grammar instruction (including past tense, plurals, possessive and parts of speech) at the early

stage in our educational system, but the pronunciation aspect of such grammar lesson is not always addressed (Murcia, 1996, p. 266). The result, many students have some problems in pronunciation. They think that pronouncing English words is a difficult thing to do. It is because their tongue is not used in pronouncing some words which are not exist in their mother tongue. One of the difficult parts of learning to speak English is the correct pronunciation of inflectional endings.

Inflectional ending is the grammatically marked form. In inflectional endings there are some regular morphological inflections that English words can take such as: -s (possessive) and -s (plural) are attached to nouns. There are some inflections attached to verbs, -s (third person singular), -ing (continuous), -ed (past tense). There are two inflections attached to adjectives: -est (superlative) and -er (comparative). In English, all inflectional ending are suffixes.

Not like other inflectional endings, the -s inflectional endings create different pronunciation according to last sound of word. There are two types of -s inflectional ending which are -s ending for plural noun and -s ending for possessive.

The way to pronounce the -s ending for plural noun is to pronounce them based on the pronunciation rules. According to Bloomfield in his book

translated to Indonesian by I Sutikno, there are three pronunciation rules for –s ending for plural noun (Language, 1995, p. 203). There are:

-s inflectional ending pronunciation:

Glass : glasses [-ɪz]

Pen : pens [z]

Book : books [s]

Furthermore, this research focuses on –s ending for plural noun. Although it's only a small part of pronunciation, it is difficult to pronounce it correctly. We might lose carelessness and not really pay attention when we speak. Moreover, mispronunciation can lead to misunderstanding which causes inefficiency and ineffectiveness. Hence, knowing how to pronounce –s ending for plural noun is important to be done.

Especially for students of English Department who have learnt about English for many years since Junior and Senior High School. They are regarded as people who have great knowledge about English. Besides, they will be English teachers in the future so that they need required skills of English including how to pronounce the small part of it. Because it will be a problem when they become the real teachers without having good ability in pronouncing English words including the small part of pronunciation such as

pronouncing –s inflectional ending of plural noun. The writer thought that the ability to pronounce -s inflectional ending correctly is important because it will influence the students' speaking ability, for the students usually imitate their teachers' pronunciation. Hence, it becomes important to the department for investigating the students' ability so that both the department and the students can plan further steps forward to improve or maintain the students' pronunciation ability.

Furthermore, there is still another possibility they have a job which make them must convey information to other native speakers, such as teaching assistants, supervisor in business or a job that forces them to speak to the clients by using English. In this case, having good ability in pronouncing English word as well as the accuracy of the word pronounced will be valuable.

Moreover, grammar material about plural noun which consists of –s ending is even given since the students in junior high school but the pronunciation of that aspect is not always focused. However, it is essential to know the ability of English Department students who may be the real teacher in the future in pronouncing –s inflectional ending for plural noun. Thus, they can teach their students well.

Based on these considerations, the writer chose the third semester students of English Department of Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies

who took Pronunciation class at the second semester as the sample of this research.

However, this research is quite similar to some previous researches, such as a research done by Silvia Najemi entitled “STKIP PGRI Banjarmasin Students’ Mastery in Pronouncing the Final Sound –ed of Past Tense and Past Participle” that describes the students’ mastery in pronouncing –ed ending of past or past participle and the most difficult allomorph to be pronounced and another research done by Nurul Muslimah entitled “Students’ Ability in Pronouncing Verb Inflectional Endings at the Eleventh Grade of MAN 3 Rantau Academic Year 2012/2013.”

Nevertheless, there are some different points to this research. For instance, the research done by Najemi focuses on pronouncing ed- ending of past and past participle verb, whereas this study focuses on –s plural noun. Moreover, a research done by Muslimah focuses on both -s and –ed endings of verb. Nor both researches discuss about –s ending of plural noun.

Based on pre observation, the writer found that the students still have difficulties in pronouncing English words. Nevertheless, as future teachers they are required to have good ability in pronunciation aspect including pronouncing –s inflectional ending of plural form. From the cases above, the writer is motivated and interested in knowing about the students’ ability in

pronouncing –s inflectional ending of plural noun and do a research entitled **“English Department Students’ Mistakes in Pronouncing Noun Inflectional Ending.”**

B. Statement of Problem

Based on the background above, the writer investigates and focuses on the following questions:

1. How is the students’ ability in pronouncing noun inflectional ending for plural noun at the third semester in English Department of Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies academic year 2014/2015?
2. What are the common mistakes found in students’ noun inflectional ending for plural noun pronunciation at the third semester in English Department of Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies academic year 2014/2015?

C. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To know the students' ability in pronouncing noun inflectional ending for plural noun at the third semester in English Department of Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies academic year 2014/2015
2. To know the common mistakes of students' noun inflectional ending for plural noun pronunciation at the third semester in English Department of Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies academic year 2014/2015.

D. Significance of Study

Some significances of this study are:

1. As an information for the students to know their ability and common mistakes in pronouncing –s noun inflectional ending for plural noun. Therefore, they can improve their ability.
2. As an input for the writer to enrich knowledge and experience in scientific research.
3. As a consideration for the next research in the some object but different point of view.

4. As an enrichment of Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies Banjarmasin library's literature.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation toward the title, the writer needs to explain some terms in the title in the following explanation:

1. Students

Students in this study are the students of the third semester in English Department of Antasari State Institute for Islamic Studies academic year 2014/2015.

2. Mistakes

Mistakes in this study are the mistakes that the students make when they pronounce noun inflectional ending for plural noun.

3. Pronouncing

Pronouncing is to speak words or sounds, especially in certain way (Chambers, 1998, p. 385). The pronunciation which discussed in this study is related to pronouncing noun inflectional ending for plural noun.

4. Noun Inflectional Ending

Although there are two kinds of noun inflectional endings, this research only focuses on –s inflectional ending for plural noun which might be pronounced in three ways. They are pronounced as /s/, /z/ or /ɪz/.