

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the problems which includes the problems in pronouncing English words and the importance of the solution, also the identification of the problems, limitation of the problems, formulation of the problems, objectives of the research, and uses of the research.

1.1. Background of the Problem

Language is needed by all human beings in order to communicate and to relate each other. But sometimes misunderstanding occurs when people are involved in conversation because the speaker pronounces the words wrongly. It may effect on the communication. In line with the statements above, pronunciation is an important part of speaking. It has role in producing sounds as well as in preventing misunderstanding of meaning. Thus, good pronunciation will lead someone to have good speaking ability, while mispronunciation of a word may lead to communication breakdown.

Pronunciation is one of many aspects of language that sometimes hinder people to make an effective communication in a foreign language. One way to overcome

the difficulty in pronunciation is to begin teaching pronunciation as soon as the students start to learn the language.

Based on the pre-survey at the second grade of SMPN 1 Raman Utara on October 2013, the English teacher said that almost 50% of students had low ability to read aloud, specifically to pronounce words correctly. This might be caused by many factors, such as, the interference of mother tongue and lack of pronunciation practice. For example, the students mostly pronounced the word *very* by /'feri/ instead of /'veri/ since they are not familiar with English fricative labiodental sound /v/ and also in Indonesian there is no /v/ sound. Another example was that they tend to pronounce /seik/ for word *shake* instead of /ʃeik/, whereas the sound /seik/ is for word *sake*. The words *shake* (fricative palato-alveolar) and *sake* (fricative alveolar) are two different words in English which have different meanings and different pronunciations as well. If it occurs continually, the possibility is that when they speak or read those words, the listener may not understand their meaning.

In contrast, for Indonesian language, the sounds /s/ and /ʃ/ do not change the meaning of the words. The example is when someone pronounce /saya/ with /ʃaya/ other people are still able to understand that the meaning refers to himself. There are some words that difficult for students to distinguish and pronounce minimal pair:

Sing /sɪŋ/ —————> Sink /sɪŋk/

She /ʃi:/ —————> See /si:/

Vase /veiz/ —————> Face /feis/

Another possibility that the students are lack of practice was because the teacher when taught English text in class, she still used the conventional technique by commanding the students to read the text and answer the following questions without giving any interesting activity to motivate and tune up students' mood.

According to the problem above, this research was focused on consonants pronunciation. Brown (2001) states that a student can be said to have mastered a second language if he has mastered pronunciation and speaking approaching native-like. Then, it implies that there should be a sort of breakthrough in teaching pronunciation in that school.

Choral reading may help build students' pronunciation, fluency, self-confidence, and motivation, because the students are reading aloud together, those who may ordinarily feel nervous about reading aloud may have built-in support. By doing a group reading, the students may get the practice they need without having to feel anxious or embarrassed about their pronunciation. Giving them more opportunities to read aloud will bring them to position where they find that their pronunciation is better than it used to be.

Concerning those statements, teacher should find an effective way to teach. Choral reading might be a good technique to be applied in teaching pronunciation. For this research, the writer applied choral reading technique in order to help the students improve their pronunciation by reading aloud. Hopefully, this technique might make reading not only beneficial for them but enjoyable as well.

1.2. Identification of the Problems

Based on the background of the problem, the writer identified some problems occurred in pre-survey toward the teacher and students in SMPN 1 Raman Utara.

They are presented below:

1. The students tend to be passive (teacher-centered). During learning process, the teachers only apply the same technique for all types of reading texts. The result is that the students do not speak up their mind or even read aloud the text.
2. The teacher still applies the conventional technique. It makes the students feel bored and uninterested.
3. Most students stated that the teacher used the monotonous technique. The teacher just asks the students to read certain text in the book or students' exercise book without giving model of the correct reading, and then the teacher asks them to do the task following the text.
4. The teacher informed that they rarely read aloud so the students had difficulties to pronounce the English words.
5. Students' ability to read is low. The teacher said that less than 30% of the students in each class could read the English words properly.
6. The teacher stated that students were less motivated and seemed reluctant toward reading English text.
7. Students have negative attitude in learning English. The students are lazy to read a book because their interest of reading a book is very low.
8. The teacher does not use dictionary that provides acceptable pronunciation.

1.3 Limitation of the Problems

In line with the identification of the problems above, the focus of the research was on teaching pronunciation using choral technique. The decision was taken based on the following considerations:

- a. The importance of choral technique that is useful to improve students' pronunciation.
- b. Students' ability to read aloud specifically in pronouncing English consonants.

1.4. Formulation of Problems

Based on the limitation of the problem above, the writer would like to focus on the following research questions:

1. Is there any significant effect of choral reading on students' pronunciation of English consonants at second grade of SMPN 1 Raman Utara?
2. What sounds do the students mostly improve after being taught through choral reading?

1.5. Objective of the Research

In relation to the research questions, the objectives of the research were to find out whether there is any significant effect of choral reading on students' pronunciation of English consonants and which sounds students can improve after being taught through choral reading.

1.6.Uses

The findings of the research are expected to be beneficial not only theoretically but also practically.

1. Theoretically, the results of the research are expected to support the theory about teaching pronunciation using choral reading technique.
2. Practically, the results of the research may be used to inform the English teachers, and students, especially in SMP, about the process of teaching pronunciation by using choral reading technique and may apply it as one of techniques that may increase the students' pronunciation. Hopefully, the results of the research can be used as the consideration policy related to the development of teaching pronunciation.

This chapter has presented the background of the problem which includes the problems of students in pronunciation and the importance of the solution, the identification of the problems, limitation of the problems, formulation of the problems, objectives of the research, and uses of the research.