

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Dictionary is the most possible solution for language users to enrich their vocabulary. Dictionary is not only very useful for a second/foreign language learner but is also very useful even for a native language user. Douidi (2016) also claims that “dictionary is the best primary source that can provide maximum useful information about words from spelling to pronunciation to meaning and use” (p. 5). In other words, a good dictionary will at least provide three kinds of information relating to the vocabulary of a language, those are syntactic information (the part of speech), semantic information (the meaning), and phonological information (the pronunciation) of the word.

Apart from the syntactic and semantic information, the phonological information of a word in dictionary is the most important and most crucial one. It is because language users will not be able to use the language verbally by knowing only the part of speech and the meaning of the word and without knowing how to pronounce it. Hence, the information of how a word should be pronounced in a language should be precisely transcribed.

The pronunciation of a word in a language is represented by phonetic transcriptions. The term *phonetic transcription* refers to the process of writing down spoken language in phonetic symbols as well as to the resultant written text (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005). And the most common symbols used by lexicographers to represent the pronunciation of a word in dictionary are the

International Phonetic Alphabet symbols (hereafter it is abbreviated as IPA). IPA symbols are set of language-independent characters used to represent speech sounds of all languages.

The IPA symbols are also employed by Madurese lexicographers in transcribing the pronunciation of Madurese words in the Madurese dictionaries. However unlike any other languages, Madurese has a unique phonological feature. Madurese becomes a language among the millions which exhibits two consonantal sounds which acoustically almost similar and often conflated, those sounds are dental and alveolar plosive sounds.

According to Ladefoged and Maddieson (1996), the difference between the acoustic properties of dental and alveolar plosives only relies on their second formants transition; the locus of the second formant is lower for dental stop. While the frequencies of the third and fourth formants of the two sounds are very identical. Meanwhile Jongman, Blumstein, and Lahiri (1984) suggest and it is agreed by O'Grady and Bekker (2011) that dental plosive productions have bursts (of sound after the release of the oral closure) which are smaller in amplitude than alveolar productions. After conducting an acoustical analysis on the three series of coronal stop (dental, alveolar, and post alveolar) of Tiwi (Australian aboriginal language), Anderson and Maddieson (1994) found that "the alveolar phoneme appears as the least distinctive, as it often grouped with one or more of the other categories" (p. 158). Anderson and Maddieson (1994) also claimed that dental can only be distinguished from alveolar by a lower amplitude burst.

Dental and alveolar plosive sounds are very identical and it is very rare for a single language to have both types of the sound. There are very few languages which have phonologically contrastive pairs at the alveolar and dental places – they will have one or the other (Henton, Ladefoged, & Maddieson, 1992). However, both alveolar and dental plosives are used in Madurese. The following are the examples of dental and alveolar plosive sounds in Madurese words: voiceless un-aspirated dental plosive /t̪/ in *bhântèng* [p^hɲt̪ɛŋ] ‘throwing down’ vs. voiceless un-aspirated alveolar plosive /t/ in *bhântèng* [p^hɲtɛŋ] ‘bull’, voiceless aspirated dental plosive /t̪^h/ in *ghândhing* [k^hɲt̪^hɪŋ] ‘fisherman’s food box’ vs. voiceless aspirated alveolar plosive /t^h/ in *ghândhing* [k^hɲt^hɪŋ] ‘compare’, voiced un-aspirated dental plosive /d̪/ in *bidâk* [bɪd̪ɔk] ‘the sixth multiple of ten (sixty)’ vs. voiced un-aspirated alveolar plosive /d/ in *bidâk* [bɪdɔk] ‘pion’.

When a language involves dental and alveolar plosives in its coronal stop series, there are three basic possibilities and one additional possibility which can be found: contrastive in both dental and alveolar places, contrastive only for dental place, or contrastive only for the alveolar place and another possibility is that in which both dental and alveolar places are used but not contrastively (Donohue, 2009). The last possibility is very rare, only 1% of the world languages show this pattern – one of these is Sundanese (Malayo-Polynesian), the Madurese neighboring language (Donohue, 2009). And in the case of Madurese, alveolar and dental plosives are two contrastive sounds even though the number of the minimal pairs between the two sounds is not quite much in the Madurese words.

Since dental and alveolar plosive sounds are treated as similar sounds acoustically and it is very rare for a single language to have both sounds, the International Phonetic Association still does not provide us separate symbols for both sounds. In the latest version of IPA chart, the International Phonetic Association only provides symbols for alveolar plosive sounds but not with the dental plosive sounds.

Wikipedia (2014) also points out that:

Dental and alveolar plosive are often conflated. Acoustically, the two types of sounds are similar, and it is rare for a language to have both types. The International Phonetic Alphabet does not provide separate symbols for dental plosives, but simply uses the diacritic [[̪]] attached to the corresponding alveolar symbol. As a result, it is common for researchers working in the majority of languages with only one type or the other to simply use the alveolar symbols indifferently for both types, unless they specifically want to call attention to the distinction.

The absence of the separate symbols for dental plosive sounds in the IPA chart has generated some variation in transcribing dental and alveolar plosive sounds of Madurese. There are some linguists whose works dealing with Madurese phonology use some variety of symbols in representing the two sounds. For example, Kiliaan (1897) as cited in Cohn (1993) uses [t̪ d̪ t̪^h] for dental plosives and [ɖ ɖ t̪^h] for retroflex plosives and implicitly claims that Madurese does not have alveolar plosives; Stevens (1994) uses [t d t^h] for dental plosives and [t̪ d̪ t̪^h] for alveolar plosives and implicitly claims that Madurese does not have retroflex plosives; Cohn and Ham (1998) use [t̪ d̪ t̪^h] for dental plosives and [ɖ d̪ t̪^h] for retroflex and alveolar plosives; Nothofer (2006) uses [t d d^h] for dental plosives and [ɖ d̪ d̪^h] for retroflex plosives and implicitly claims that Madurese does not have alveolar plosives; Sofyan (2007, 2010) uses [t d d^h] for dental

plosives and [T D D^h] for alveolar plosives and implicitly claims that Madurese does not have retroflex plosives; Davies (2010) uses [t d t^h] for dental and alveolar plosives and [ɖ ɖ t^h] for retroflex plosives; and Misnadin (2016) uses [t d t^h] for dental and alveolar plosives and [ɖ ɖ t^h] for retroflex plosives of Madurese.

Considering the existence of dental and alveolar plosives in Madurese, and considering the fact that the absence of the separate symbols for dental plosive sounds in the IPA chart has generated some variation in transcribing dental and alveolar plosive sounds of Madurese, this present study attempts to investigate how dental and alveolar plosive sounds are represented phonetically in the Madurese dictionaries.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

In line with the description of the background of the study above, the problems of this study are formulated as follow:

1. What IPA symbols used by Madurese lexicographers to represent dental and alveolar plosive sounds in Madurese dictionaries?
2. Why are the symbols used to represent dental and alveolar plosive sounds in Madurese dictionaries?
3. How well do the symbols represent dental and alveolar plosive sounds in Madurese dictionaries?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with statement of the problems, this study is conducted with the following objectives:

1. To identify the IPA symbols used by the Madurese lexicographers to represent dental and alveolar plosive sounds in Madurese dictionaries.
2. To identify the reasons which make such symbols are selected to represent dental and alveolar plosive sounds in Madurese dictionaries.
3. To identify the appropriateness of the symbols in representing dental and alveolar plosive sounds in Madurese dictionaries.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The research findings of this study will be very useful and helpful either practically or theoretically for Madurese learners, lexicographers, linguists, phonologists, and the readers in general.

Theoretically, the findings of this study will give the readers more information and broader understanding on the issue of phonetic transcriptions (primarily the phonetic representation of dental and alveolar plosives sound) in Madurese dictionaries.

Meanwhile in terms of practical matters, the findings of this study will be very helpful for:

1. Madurese learners to interpret the IPA symbols for dental and alveolar plosives in the Madurese dictionaries more precisely.
2. Madurese lexicographers to use/make the standard IPA symbols for dental and alveolar plosives in Madurese dictionaries more consistently.
3. Madurese linguists (especially Madurese Phonologists) to use/make the IPA symbols for dental and alveolar plosives more uniformly.

4. The next studies, especially those who are dealing with the study of phonetic transcriptions in Madurese dictionaries.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is on phonology. The discussion of this study focuses and limited only on the analysis of the IPA symbols used by Madurese lexicographers to represent the dental and alveolar plosive sounds in Madurese dictionaries.