

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, research questions, the aim of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and the organisation of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

English has been used with the status of world language, it has been globally used by non-native English speakers as a medium of intercultural communication (Shak, Lee, & Stephen, 2016). In mastering English, learning the four basic language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing is essential. However, those are not sufficient. People are also required to have micro-skills of English, such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and so forth. Speaking skills are the essential skills to acquire both in foreign and second language learning, and they improved as an efficient way of communication (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). To succeed in oral communication, language learners need to master the macro and micro-skills of speaking to comprehend and produce spoken language for proper and effective interpersonal communication.

In speaking skills, there are four aspects that language learners need to give more attention to, namely fluency, vocabulary, accuracy, and pronunciation, which are interrelated to one another (Brown, 2001). Therefore, language learners need to acquire those skills to reach the goal of having good communication skills. One of the essential skills to be mastered is pronunciation. Although language learners correctly used the other aspects of speaking, if the aspects of pronunciation such as intonation, linking sound, and stress are not produced accurately, it may lead to misunderstandings and failures to convey intended messages (Lasabuda, 2017). One of the most impactful skills of speaking that might hinder communication is pronunciation. No matter how good the learner's mastery of the grammar or how rich their vocabulary is, if the sound is unintelligible, they will still need a practical mastery of the sounds in English (Lasabuda, 2017; Ulate, 2008).

Pronunciation is one of the basic elements of language that is essential to be mastered by language learners. It has a vital role in language learning acquisition, especially for oral communication (Lasabuda, 2017). Communication will become

effective when people are effective enough to communicate competently, clearly, and dynamically. Furthermore, to support the effectiveness of communication, people are required to learn how the interlocutor understand their intended messages while they are speaking (Ahmad, 2016). Learners who have good pronunciation will be understood even though they make some errors in the other areas. In contrast, those with unintelligible pronunciation will remain unintelligible.

To some people, native-like pronunciation is desirable for both foreign and second language learners and becomes a plus value (Donal, 2016). However, some experts argue that EFL learners' need is to enhance the intelligibility of their pronunciation to the level that miscommunication does not occur rather than to achieve native-like pronunciation (Kanda, 2016). Furthermore, verbal communication in a foreign language is more important than communication in writing and reading. The competency in spoken English for EFL learners will be achieved if the teachers' goal in pronunciation learning is not to have a native-like pronunciation but to make sure that the student's speech is intelligible by others (Younus, 2020).

Despite the importance of pronunciation in communication, some learners think pronunciation is unnecessary to master, and they mispronounce the words repeatedly (Botley, 2017). In this case, Botley (2017) states that pronunciation is related to perceived intelligence. Making repetitive pronunciation errors are considered a bad value and indicates that someone is lazy or careless. Likewise, numerous teachers are not aware of the importance of pronunciation. Firstly, they emphasise that grammar and vocabulary learning in foreign language acquisition are more essential than the other skills. Secondly, many of them think that teaching pronunciation is too difficult to be taught in the classroom. Besides, they complain about the high quality and suitable methods for teaching pronunciation. They also complain about the lack of time to practise it in the classroom (Lasabuda, 2017).

Pronouncing the English words might be challenging for Indonesian EFL learners because Bahasa Indonesia and English have some differences, especially in the production of the sounds. English has more vowels and diphthongs than Bahasa Indonesia (Achmad & Yusuf, 2014). Bahasa Indonesia is a phonetic language. It means that the language directly links the spelling and pronunciation

(Karlina, Rahman, & Chowdhury, 2020). There are no verb changes in Bahasa Indonesia. It only has adverbs of time but not the rules of tenses. While in English, the words or morphemes are not produced consistently, as English has both adverbs of time and rules of tenses. For example, the word "Read" is pronounced differently in different types of tenses; meanwhile, in Bahasa Indonesia, the sound for the word *Baca* (read) is consistent. However, to make it different according to the rules of tenses, it only uses the adverbs of time.

Gorjian (2014) claims that the main cause of students' errors in their pronunciation is their L1 interference. Along with that cause, age, amount of exposure to phonetic ability, personality, and motivation are the other factors that influence EFL students' pronunciation. Another problem faced by the Indonesian students in pronouncing English words is their lack of knowledge in producing or pronouncing the words in English (Lasabuda, 2017; Riswanto & Haryanto, 2012).

Several previous studies had been conducted focusing on EFL students' problems in pronunciation and indicated that the students have a problem in learning English pronunciation due to the lack of knowledge in producing the English sounds (Amalia, 2010; Alimenaj, 2014; Donal, 2016; Razak, 2010). The other problems are mother tongue interference and teachers' assumption that pronunciation is not necessary to be taught (Lasabuda, 2017). Many previous studies were conducted in senior high school focusing on the pronunciation problems (Razak, 2010; Riswanto & Haryanto, 2012; Susanto, 2017), but few of them were conducted in higher education, especially for the students who take in English Education as their major (Aufa, 2017; Astutik, 2017; Habibi, 2016). Thus, this research was conducted to fill the gap of the previous studies to find out the students' pronunciation difficulties in the English Education study programme.

1.2 Research Question

This research intended to answer the following questions based on the background of the study:

1. How do the Indonesian students produce segmental sounds in a scripted speech?
2. What suprasegmental features are identified from the students' pronunciation?

1.3 Aims of the study

Based on the background of the study and research questions above, the aims of the study can be formulated as follow:

1. To investigate the student's pronunciation difficulty in producing the segmental sounds in a scripted speech.
2. To find out which suprasegmental features that are identified unsuccessful to produce by the students.

1.4 Scope of the Study

Pronunciation covers two aspects such as segmental features and supra-segmental features. This research focuses on the segmental and suprasegmental features analysed by detecting which sounds are difficult to produce and identifying the suprasegmental features from the students' pronunciation. The participants of this research were limited to the fourth-semester students of the English Education Study Programme who took Speaking for Academic Purposes class in the academic year 2019/2020.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The finding of the research was expected to have positive contributions, theoretically and practically. This research was expected to provide insights into the importance of pronunciation in language learning for the theoretical contribution. The result of this research can be used as a reference for those who want to research pronunciation. For the practical contribution, this research will be helpful, especially for English teachers to help their students find out the problems in pronunciation. Therefore, teachers will have proper strategies to teach the students. For the students, this research is expected to help them to be able to know their weaknesses and improve their awareness of pronunciation so that they can solve them efficiently.

1.6 Clarification of Related Terms

To avoid misinterpretation and misconception, a brief explanation of the related terms used in this research is provided as follows:

1. **Students** are defined as people who study or seek knowledge from professional teachers or books (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). The term Students in this research refer to the students who take the Speaking in

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PRONUNCIATION PROFILING OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAMME STUDENTS: AN ANALYSIS OF SEGMENTAL SOUNDS AND WORD STRESS

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Academic Purposes course in English Education Study Program at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia.

2. **Pronunciation** defines as the act or manner of pronouncing the sound of words in a given language (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Two features in pronunciation become a consideration, segmental and suprasegmental features (Arrasyid, 2016).
3. **Sound** refers to the act or manner of pronouncing the sound of words in a given language (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).
4. **English as a Foreign Language (EFL)** is a term to describe the non-native speakers who learn English in certain countries where it is not a dominant language (Nordquist R. , 2020)
5. **English as a Second Language (ESL)** is a traditional term for English used by non-native speakers in an English-speaking environment (Nordquist R. , English as a Second Language (ESL), 2019).
6. **Intelligibility** refers to the capability of being understood or comprehended by the interlocutor. Speech intelligibility is how a speaker speaks to a listener, so the interlocutor comprehends the speech (Coppens-Hofman, Terband, Snik, & Massen, 2016)

1.7 The organisation of the paper

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter provides the basic idea related to the study, including the background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, the significance of the study, clarification of terms and organisation of the paper.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter contains theories, knowledge related to the research and previous studies.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

This chapter provides the research methodology and how the data were collected and analysed by the author.

Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion

This chapter provides the answer to the research question(s) and the result of the analysed data

Chapter V: Conclusion and Recommendation

This chapter contains a summary of findings and discussion. Also, this chapter provides a brief note of recommendation for the next researcher.

1.8 Concluding remarks

This chapter focuses on elaborating the background of the research, research question, aim of the research, scope of the study, the significance of the research, clarification of the terms and organisation of the paper. The following chapter will review the relevant theories and literature of the research.