

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will outline Research Background, Research Questions, Research Purposes, Research Significances, Conceptual Framework, and Previous Study

A. Background to the Study

This study tries to investigate EFL students' perceptions about problems encountered in learning pronunciation and the strategies used by students to cope with them. Pronunciation is essential in speaking skills and helps communicate easily (Azlina et al., 2015). Pronunciation is considered an essential skill for communicating in any language. Fraser (2000) argued that with good pronunciation, the speaker is intelligible despite errors in the other-speaking sub-skills (vocabulary, grammar, and pragmatics). However, with poor pronunciation, it will be difficult to understand the speaker, despite the accuracy in other areas. Usually, even if the speaker is accurate in other fields, with less pronunciation, the speaker will be difficult to understand.

EFL students commonly have problems when learning pronunciation mainly since several factors affect EFL students, which raises many of the problems that students face in learning pronunciation. According to Gilakjani et al. (2020), several factors influence EFL students in learning pronunciation, such as motivation, native language, exposure to the target language, and pronunciation instruction. All of the factors cause problems for EFL students in learning pronunciation. Therefore, the problems make EFL students confused and make them prone to mispronouncing.

Based on limited observation at one of Islamic state universities in Bandung dealing with the accuracy of English pronunciation among the students of English Education Department of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, shows that they still have problems and difficulties in correctly pronouncing English words, even those who have seriously studied English. For example, the word: DETERMINE /dɪ'tɜːmɪn/ is pronounced /ditermain/. It means they have a problem in pronouncing

the word. If the speaker cannot pronounce English words correctly, the communication will be ineffective. According to Sartika (2019) communication success is largely determined by how words or phrases are pronounced. Therefore, the researcher will try to investigate the problems encountered by EFL students in learning pronunciation, as well as students' strategies to cope with the problems based on their perceptions.

There are several studies examining pronunciation problems among EFL learners. The first was conducted by Al-Zayed (2017); this paper aims to analyze some common pronunciation problems among English learners in Jordan. The second was conducted by Nurlaili and Susanti (2019); this research aimed to identify the problems of Javanese students pronouncing certain consonants in English and the possible causes of the problems. The third was conducted by Elmahdi and Khan (2015); this study explored the English pronunciation difficulties Saudi high school students faced when they spoke English consonants. It also attempts to identify areas of the English Consonant Cluster System. Meanwhile, this present study is different from the studies above. The present study focuses on the problems faced by students and their strategies to cope with them in learning English pronunciation. Thus, researchers conducted a study with the title " LEARNING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION AMONG INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF PROBLEMS AND COPING STRATEGIES".

B. Research Questions

From the outline above, this research is intended to reply to these two following questions:

1. What are students' perceptions of the problems they face when learning English pronunciation?
2. What are students' strategies to cope with the problems encountered in learning English pronunciation?

C. Research Purposes

The goal of the research questions above is to obtain the following two purposes:

1. To investigate the problems encountered by students in learning English pronunciation based on students' perceptions.
2. To describe the strategies used by students to cope with the problems.

D. Research Significances

Two elements of the study findings are expected to benefit as follows :

Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of knowledge, especially in the pronunciation of linguistic studies. In addition, this study can also provide an overview of the problems encountered by students in learning English pronunciation.

Practically, this research is expected to give students and teachers an understanding of the problems encountered in learning pronunciation and as input for teachers in teaching English, especially in teaching pronunciation. This research can also provide knowledge of English pronunciation for EFL students. Students should be aware of their mistakes to reduce their mispronunciation.\

E. Limitation of Research

This study only focuses on the problems that students face when learning pronunciation, as well as their coping strategies based on students' perceptions, and the size of the sample and data collection methods are limitations in this study.

F. Conceptual Framework

This study aims to investigate the problems EFL students face in learning pronunciation and students' strategies to cope with the problems. By knowing the factors that influence students in learning pronunciation based on their perceptions, it will be possible to investigate the problems students face in learning English

pronunciation. According to McDonald (2011), perception is an individual's point of view, which can be a powerful incentive for action. Perception refers to how we perceive things based on our beliefs or personal preferences and our opinion of someone or something (Zafary, 2021). Furthermore, to find out what students' strategies to cope with the problems encountered in learning English pronunciation based on a problems-focused coping strategy. A problem-focused coping strategy is an action directed toward problem-solving (Maryam, 2017). In the context of this study, students' perceptions refer to their understanding or perspectives on the problem they face in learning English pronunciation and the strategies they use to cope with the problems. Therefore, students' perceptions are needed to find out the problems faced and strategies used by students in learning English pronunciation.

According to Senel (2006), the problems faced by EFL students in learning pronunciation are influenced by native language, amount of exposure, and motivation. Furthermore, Sahatsathatsana (2017) stated that pronunciation instruction influences the problems that EFL students face in learning pronunciation. According to Al-Ahdal (2020), most learners face challenges with foreign language pronunciation due to interference from their mother tongue. The most common cause of problems with pronunciation is the difference between the mother tongue and target language. Furthermore, one of the essential skills that EFL students must develop is pronunciation to communicate effectively (Al-Ahdal, 2020). Incorrect pronunciation can lead to ineffective communication when communicating with interlocutors. Therefore, the problems EFL students face in learning pronunciation are caused by several factors.

According to Kelly (2001), incorrect pronunciation of phoneme production can lead to misunderstandings, even if students already have good grammar and vocabulary. The primary function of language is as a means of communication and interaction between humans. Pronunciation significantly impacts speaking abilities; therefore, pronunciation becomes very important to learn.

G. Previous Studies

Several studies have been conducted that relate to this study. The first was conducted by Al-Zayed (2017), the purpose of this paper is to analyze some common problems of pronunciation among English learners in Jordan. The factors causing these problems are Jordanian interference, learners' age, attitude, and an insufficient knowledge of the English language's phonology and phonetics systems. The oral interview is a method for data collection because the sound is best understood when it is pronounced. This includes the active participation of the interviewer (researcher) and interviewees (respondents). The study's sample included 30 Jordanian students majoring in English language and literature at two private universities. The results showed that sounds that were not in Arabic and were in English caused some confusion for students, which made them tend to pronounce the closest sound from Arabic phonemes to English phonemes. The difference between previous and current research is that the current research focuses on the problems that students face when learning pronunciation as a result of the factors that affect them.

The second was conducted by Nurlaili and Susanti (2019), this research aimed to identify the problems of EFL students in Java when pronouncing certain consonants in English, as well as the possible causes of those problems. This study is classified as qualitative. The participants in this study were thirty Ahmad Dahlan University non-English majors in their fourth semester who spoke Javanese as their first language. The data was collected using the reading aloud task. The findings of this research have shown that Javanese students have had some difficulties pronouncing some consonants in English. The consonants are [θ], [ð], [ʃ], [ʒ], [dʒ], [tʃ], and [v]. These problems are indicated as interlingual errors and intralingual errors. The difference between the previous and current research is that the current research focuses on the problems that students face when learning pronunciation based on their perception and experience in learning pronunciation.

The third was conducted by Elmahdi and Khan (2015), this study explored the English pronunciation difficulties faced by Saudi high school students when they spoke English consonants. It also attempts to identify areas of the English Consonant Cluster System. In this study, the descriptive and statistical methods were used to describe, classify, analyze, and explain the research data as it is, and then to render relevant recommendations. Participants in the study were first, second, and third graders at Al-Ehsan secondary school (private school) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's capital and the English teacher (EFL or ESL) from the same school. The findings showed that the participants had trouble in pronouncing eleven consonants. There are consonant and consonant group mistakes, some of which occur more frequently. Namely, they are the substitution of /p/ by /b/ in all word positions, the substitution of /ŋ/ sometimes by /n-k/ and sometimes by /n-g/, the substitution of final /z/ by /dʒ/, /v/ replaced by /f/ and the confusion of /ʔ/, the dark with /l/ the light. Interference from the mother tongue appears to be the most significant factor contributing to pronunciation issues. The difference between previous and current research is that current research focuses on the problems that students face when learning pronunciation and their strategies to cope with them.

Previous research investigated some pronunciation issues that arise as a result of sounds that are foreign to them as well as sounds that are not in the student's mother tongue, causing confusion and difficulty. Meanwhile, this research differs from the previous studies. This researcher focuses on the problems encountered by EFL students in Indonesia, especially Sundanese EFL learners when learning English pronunciation as a foreign language, as well as coping strategies preferred by EFL Sundanese learners based on students' perceptions.