

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

English language is one of compulsory subjects in Indonesia. Moreover, this subject starts when children are on the childhood level. Some of them need some time to understanding the basic English, which is speaking. As they grow older, they start to learn how to speak English correctly. This chapter contains the Background of Study, Research Question, Research Objective, Significance of the Research, Scope and Limitation and The Definition of Key Terms.

1.1 Background of Study

There are four basic skills in English: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. And has 3 components such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Pronunciation is one of the difficult components to learn because so many students do not understand how to pronouncing correctly. Pronunciation helps students to communicate each other in English (Kurniawan, 2016). Without the correct pronunciation, the other students may find it difficult to understand the word that has been spoken. Therefore, students must have this ability to at least be able to understand the basic of pronunciation. Pronunciation is related to phonology. According to Suherman (2020), phonology is one of linguistics that study of the sounds of language in general. Phonology related to speaking skill to make students more convenient to master this ability. Pronunciation has been taught and introduced with manner of articulation, place articulation, visual transcription, and all supra segmental features in sounds (Saadah and Ardi, 2020). When students cannot master this skill, they will have difficulty pronouncing some complicated

words. Analyzing students' difficulties is exceptionally critical, students will know their difficulty in pronouncing words accurately, and they also will realize their deficiency, so for further they will not reiterate mistakes in pronouncing English words. The English pronunciation components are divided into segmental phonemes and supra-segmental phonemes. Segmental phonemes consist of vowels and consonants. And supra-segmental phonemes consist of stress and intonation (Hadi, 2015).

Related to the clarification over, the reason researcher chooses this, researcher found that students often face difficulties when producing English fricative consonant sounds. Most of them to pronounce English fricatives between [f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h] consonants. Some commonly encountered ones are when students try to pronounce [ð] this as [dis], word [θ] thought as [thot], word [ʃ] show as [sow], word [ʒ] pleasure as [plesur].

To address students' difficulties in learning English pronunciation, several practical and educational solutions can be applied. One effective approach is the use of audiovisual media such as videos, pronunciation applications, and native speaker recordings. These resources provide authentic models of pronunciation, including stress and intonation patterns, which help students improve their articulation and listening comprehension. As Kurniawan (2016) notes, audiovisual media significantly enhance pronunciation instruction by offering real-life pronunciation exposure. In addition, structured instruction in phonetics and phonology—including topics such as manner and place of articulation and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)—can deepen students' understanding of how

sounds are produced. Saadah and Ardi (2020), as well as Hadi (2015), emphasize that mastering both segmental (vowels and consonants) and suprasegmental (stress and intonation) features is essential for accurate pronunciation. Furthermore, fostering phonological awareness through problem-based learning and error analysis can help students identify and reflect on their pronunciation weaknesses. Techniques such as recording their speech or engaging in peer feedback encourage students to recognize errors and take corrective action. Repetitive pronunciation drills combined with direct feedback from instructors also play a crucial role in developing muscle memory and reinforcing correct pronunciation patterns, as supported by Paulston and Burder (1976). In addition, shadowing, and mimicking techniques, where students imitate native speakers' speech in real-time can improve fluency, rhythm, and intonation. Lastly, creating a supportive classroom environment that minimizes anxiety and fear of judgment is essential. According to Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis, emotional comfort significantly influences language acquisition. Ristati et al. (2024) similarly highlight the impact of emotional factors on pronunciation proficiency. By integrating these strategies, educators can better support students in overcoming pronunciation difficulties and fostering more effective English communication.

Students' difficulties in English pronunciation stem from a lack of phonological awareness, L1 Interference, and Psychological Barriers. To overcome these issues, research suggests integrating audiovisual media, structured phonetic instruction, and interactive methods such as shadowing and self-correction. These approaches not only provide clear articulation models but also promote deeper

understanding of sound production and improve student confidence. Emotional factors also play a key role; therefore, fostering a supportive learning environment can reduce anxiety and encourage active participation. Collectively, these strategies form a comprehensive framework to enhance students' pronunciation proficiency and communication effectiveness in English.

Although numerous studies have explored the role of pronunciation in English language learning, most have focused broadly on general pronunciation skills without investigating specific types of sounds that students find problematic. For instance, studies by Adhani et al. (2021) and Andyani (2022) examined the use of media and learning strategies to improve pronunciation, while Armelia et al. (2024) and Saadah and Ardi (2020) identified common pronunciation challenges among students. However, there remains limited research that specifically analyzes students' difficulties in producing English fricative consonants particularly dental fricatives such as /θ/ and /ð/ at the tertiary level. These sounds are often absent in students' first languages and require a high level of phonetic awareness to pronounce accurately. Furthermore, few studies have examined these issues in the context of Indonesian EFL students, whose native phonological systems may not support the articulation of these unfamiliar sounds. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by analyzing students' specific difficulties in pronouncing English fricatives and identifying the underlying linguistic and psychological factors contributing to these difficulties.

1.2 Research Question

A research question is a specific and well-defined inquiry that serves as the foundation for a research project. It identifies the core difficulty or subject that the researcher intends to explore or examine in a structured and systematic way. A strong research question provides direction for the study, including the choice of research design, data collection, and analysis. The research questions are:

1. What factors in pronouncing fricative consonant sounds encountered by the fourth-semester students of English Language Education at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang in pronouncing English fricative sounds?
2. Which fricative consonant sounds are the most difficult for students to pronounce?

1.3 Research Objective

Research objective for this research is to identify the kinds of difficulties encountered by the fourth-semester students of English Language Education at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang in pronouncing English fricative consonant sounds, and to determine which English fricative consonant sounds are the most difficult for the students to pronounce.

1.4 Significance of the Research

This study is expected to assist students, teachers or lectures, and researchers:

1. Students

Students are anticipated to be able to face the ability of pronouncing fricative consonant sound and be able to overcome their mistakes and rectify them.

2. Teachers or Lectures

To grant clear information for English teachers or lectures to overcome students' difficulties so they will not mispronouncing the fricative consonant sound.

3. Researcher

Increase the researchers' information and involvement within particular study. Particularly, around pronouncing English fricative.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this research focuses on analyzing the difficulties encountered by the fourth-semester students of the English Language Education Program at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang in pronouncing English fricative consonant sounds. The fricative consonant sounds discussed in this study include: /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, and /ʒ/.

1.6 The Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and to clarify the concepts used in this research, the following key terms are defined:

1. Pronunciation Difficulties

In this study, pronunciation difficulties refer to problems encountered by English Language Students in producing certain sounds accurately.

2. Fricative Sounds

Fricative sounds are consonant sounds produced by forcing air through a narrow constriction, creating friction. In this research, the fricative sounds include: /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, and /ʒ/.

3. Students of Fourth Semester of English Language Education at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang

This term refers to students who are currently enrolled in the fourth semester of the English Language Education Program at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang during the academic year 2024/2025. These students are the participants of this study.

