

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

Pronunciation is "the way in which a word is pronounced" (Oxford Language Online Dictionary) or the act or result of producing the sounds of speech, including articulation, stress, and intonation, often concerning some standard of correctness or acceptability (Dictionary.com). Theoretically, it is the production of sounds and an aspect that produces the sound for making meaning (Gilakjani, 2012:2). Frequently, pronunciation is a problem for every learner, especially Indonesian learners, in pronouncing English words. Some phonemes in English do not exist in Indonesia, making students face pronunciation difficulties because of their mother tongue habits (Program & Linguistiks, 2018:117). This problem is called "Pronunciation Error". William F. Mackey stated that an error in pronunciation may occur when transferring a target language from the native language, an analogy with something that has been learned, guessing inconsistently, and difficulty remembering the right way or lack of language skill (Federation et al., 2013:106). Then Hammerly summarizes that this happens because of the misinterpretation of spelling symbols, and it is primarily systematic and predictable theoretically (2013:106). Pronunciation Error is a mistake that cannot be self-corrected and happens repeatedly without the learner's understanding (Lestari et al., 2020:322). Ellis (1997) also stated that error occurs because of the learner's limitation in understanding what is correct (2020:322). It means that the cause of Pronunciation Error is the learner's incompetence to consider correct and incorrect pronunciation.

Language learners must learn to pronounce a word correctly so the error does not happen again.

Thus, pronunciation is essential in building communication with other people so that the meaning can reach the interlocutor. Willing said that English speakers prioritize understanding sounds and mastering pronunciation (Riadi, 2013:2). Learning and mastering pronunciation is a crucial aspect so that we would avoid making a mistake and misunderstanding the hearer.

English learners, such as students of the English Department, Universitas Andalas, Padang, are expected to pronounce all English phonemes (consonants and vowels) correctly. They have to be able to produce all types of consonants and vowels, both monophthongs and diphthongs, even though the sounds do not exist in their native language. Pronunciation plays an essential role for English Department students in Indonesia because they are expected to master English in reading, listening, and especially speaking.

Many students still need help pronouncing English phonemes correctly. A genuine pronunciation problem exists when the learners have difficulties in making the required sounds to imitate (Riadi, 2013:3). Some students, for example, pronounce the short vowel /ɪ/ in the word *weird* [wɪrd] with long vowel [i:] (Ramadhan, 2019:22). It can be said that the problem exists when English Department students face some challenges when they try to pronounce an English word.

The same problem is found among students in the English Department. My short observation of five students in the English Department shows that three of them could not distinguish short front vowels [ɪ] from long front vowels [i:]. This is observed when they are asked to say the following words: *sit*, *seat*, *pig*, and *peak*.

They also could not distinguish the long back vowels [u:] and short back vowels [ʊ] in *food* and *foot*.

This research investigates pronunciation errors made by twenty students of the English Department, Universitas Andalas, in pronouncing high-closed vowels. The sounds consist of high front vowels (/ɪ/ and /i:/) and high back vowels (/ʊ/ and /u:/). In this research, the writer would use the American accent as a standard for pronunciation. The reason is that the American accent is used primarily in Indonesia. According to Mardijono, students in Indonesia are more familiar with the American accent, which may be influenced by electronic media, TV, and films (Josefa J. Mardijono, 2003:163). In my short observation of the five students of Universitas Andalas, they mostly used an American accent when they pronounced the English high-closed vowel.

In conducting this research, there is a classification for the writer in conducting this research. The writer should understand the topic in this research. So, it needs a good English skill level so that the writer can conduct this research well. Such as in TOEFL prediction, the writer's score is 500. So, the writer believes that can conduct this research well.

The reason for choosing English high vowel sounds as an object of research is that in Indonesian, length is not phonemic and does not affect meaning. The reason for selecting the English Department students' class 2021 is because they have learned phonology, where they studied all English phonemes and practiced pronouncing them. After conducting this research, the students are expected to be able to differentiate English sounds, especially in English high-closed vowels, which mostly have similar sounds.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

1.2.1. Phonology

Phonology is a branch of linguistics that studies how speech sound is produced in language. Phonology is a branch of linguistics that deals with sounds function in a language that relates to each other (Forel & Puskás, 2005:3). An aspect that supports phonological theory is phonetic data, which is the observation of speech sound. Phonetics is an aspect of phonology that deals with how sound is produced, transmitted, and perceived (2005:3). The role of phonetics in phonology is as a tool of language that is necessary to be studied. The purpose of phonology is to understand the unspoken things in the rules of communication that the speaker uses in apprehending and manipulating the sounds (Hayes, 2009:1).

According to McMahon, phonology is a "language-specific selection and organization of sounds to signal meanings" (Rice, 2003:2). It means that phonology is the study of language and how sounds are produced that contain meanings. He also said that Phonetics is an aspect that describes and analyses the range of sounds in a language that is used by humans (2003: 2). There is a complex relationship between phonology and phonetics. Phonology provides information on what the speakers say and what the hearers hear. While phonetics provides the actual information that speakers and hearers thought (2003: 3). For example, when someone says *feet*, *fit*, and *feed* that is actually different, but other people think that someone said the same utterances. Phonology would help students understand how important pronunciation is. In connection with it, pronunciation will be explained in this research.

1.2.2. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is “the way in which a word is pronounced” (Oxford Language Online Dictionary), or the act or result of producing the sounds of speech, including articulation, stress, and intonation, often with reference to some standard of correctness or acceptability (Dictionary.com). It means that pronunciation is the way how we produce a word based on the articulation, intonation, stress that would help us to pronounce a word correctly. According to Otlowski, pronunciation is how we pronounce a word in an corrected manner (Gilakjani, 2012:2). It means that the way we pronounce a word based on the correctness of our utterances. Pronunciation is an important aspect to learn. Hismanoglu said that the role of pronunciation is crucial for oral communication (2012:2). The meaning of communication is to understand and be understood (2012:3). Through pronunciation, learners not only learn the features and distinction of sound but it would also improve their speaking skill (2012:3). That is why in learning a language, especially English, learners must learn pronunciation. Sometimes, pronunciation becomes a difficulty for learners, especially for Indonesian students. Although there are some people who can catch up the pronunciation easily, for most learners need a special practice in pronunciation. (Program & Linguistiks, 2018:117). As a way of learning, there is a method for them to learn pronunciation and improve their skill so that they can pick up the pronunciation easily. This method is called “minimal pairs”. In connection with that, minimal pairs will be explained in this research.

1.2.3. Minimal Pairs

According to Bennett (2007:18), minimal pairs consist of two words that have the same sound and there is only one phoneme that differs the words. Minimal pair aims to prove that in a pair of words, there is a single phoneme that differs from the words (Novarita et al., 2020:247). It means that minimal pair is a pair of words that exactly have the same sound but only differ by one phoneme and the purpose of minimal pair is to give a contrast as a distinction between two or more words. Minimal pairs is a good technique for leaning pronunciation because it will help learners establish the habit of thinking in English and it is also easy for them to recognize a similar pair of sound so there are no misunderstanding in communication (Program & Linguistiks, 2018:117). For example, *she needs a new pen* and *she needs a new pan* (Bradley-Bennett, 2007:20). English vowel sounds often contains of a pair words that similar sound. In connection with that, it would be explained in this research.

1.2.4. English Vowels

The types of vowels are open vocal tract, where the tongue does not raise until the surface of the vocal tract, and the inappropriate place of articulation (Ambalegin, 2021:31). Vowels are different from consonant because it has almost no obstruction. Still, a consonant can give a vowel because, in producing a consonant, the airflow can be more or less obstructed. (Forel & Puskás, 2005:6). For example, if we say *paper*, our mouth will close and utmost obstruction, and if we say *after*, our mouth will open (2005:6). Consonant sounds depend on voicing place of articulation, and manner of articulation. Those aspects are how consonant sounds are produced. Vowel sounds depend on how our tongue is positioned, the

length of a sound, the rounded or unrounded, the nasality, and the diphthongs (2005:13).

In Indonesia, vowels also exist as English does. But there are some differences between them. Some phonemes do not exist in Indonesian phonemes, and this is a problem faced by Indonesian students because of the influence of the mother tongue of their first language (Program & Linguistik, 2018:117). Generally, vowels have five sounds: a, i, u, e, and o. In English, there are long and short phonemes. But it does not exist in Indonesian (2018:118). As a distinction, here is the list of vowels between English and Indonesia:

Table 1.2.2. 1: English and Indonesia Vowels (Program & Linguistik, 2018)

English	Indonesia
/ɪ/	/ɪ/
/e/	/e/
/ʌ/	/ʌ/
/ʊ/	/ʊ/
/ə/	-
/ɒ/	-
/æ/	-
/i:/	-
/ɜ:/	-
/ɑ:/	-
/u:/	-
/ɔ:/	-

In English, there are many types of vowels sound and that would make some similarities when it comes to words. There are long and short vowels in English:

Table 1.2.2. 2: Short and Long Vowel (Ambalegin, 2021:31)

Long Vowels	Short Vowels
/i:/	/ɪ/
/u:/	/ʊ/
/ɜ:/	/e/
/ɑ:/	/ə/
/ɔ:/	/æ/

	/ʌ/
	/ɒ/

Three categories of vowel sounds consist of:

Table 1.2.2. 3Three types of Vowels (Ambalegin, 2021:31)

Closed Vowels	Mid Vowels	Open Vowels
/i:/	/e/	/æ/
/I/	/ə/	/ʌ/
/u:/	/ɜ:/	/ɑ:/
/ʊ/	/ɔ:/	/ɒ/

Theoretically, some methods of pronouncing high-closed vowel sounds are based on lip position and length. In pronouncing high vowels, the part of the tongue is raised towards the roof of the mouth. In pronouncing [ʊ] and [u:], for example, in foot and goose, the position of our tongue is raised in the region of the soft palate, the lips are rounded, and the sound [u:] is more extended than [ʊ]. In pronouncing [I] and [i:], for example, in *beat* and *bit*, the position of our lips is slightly spread, where the part of lips may be in the neutral position, and the sound [i:] is more extended than [I]. Some learners face difficulties in pronouncing these types of vowel sounds. They tend to commit an error in pronouncing them. In case of that, it needs an error analysis to solve the problem.

1.2.5. Error Analysis

English is a language that people worldwide use to communicate with each other. There are four essential skills in learning English: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Speaking is a crucial aspect of building communication. Pronunciation is one of the critical things in speaking. When we have good pronunciation, people would easily understand our utterances. However, if some things could be corrected when we pronounce a word in English, there would be a misunderstanding between the two speakers. It would cause an error or mistake made by the speaker. Errors are mistakes made by learners caused by their

ignorance of something, and they need to learn it consistently. According to Corder, learners make an error because of the result of the existence of mother tongue habits in the new language (Azevedo & Corder, 1983:4). It means that the presence of errors when learning a second language is because of the influence of the learner's mother tongue. That is why an error can happen to the learner and cause a misunderstanding.

So that the error does not happen again, it is necessary to do an Error Analysis. According to Richards (1971:4), error analysis is a term that deals with how people learn a language and speak in different ways. Error analysis is a term that establishes the incidence, nature, causes, and consequences of an error in learning a language (James, 1998:1). It means that error analysis is conducted when a learner commits a mistake and that error contains sources and the result of the error. In executing an error, some types of mistakes happen to students. In connection with it, those types would be explained here based on Stephen Pit Corder's theory.

1.2.6. Types of Error

According to Corder (1974), there are three types of error committed by learners, they are pre-systematic, systematic, and post-systematic. (Maharani et al., 2020:107).

1.2.4.1. Pre-Systematic

This type of error happens when learners are ignorant of a specific guideline in a target language. This situation occurs irregularly, and some learners cannot notice a particular structure.

1.2.4.2. Systematic

This type of error happens when learners have found the standard of the structure but still need to learn how to fix the error they committed.

1.2.4.3. Post-Systematic

This type of error happens when learners know the rules of the target language's structure but still commit a mistake.

1.3. Review of Previous Studies

There have been many studies of error analysis by EFL students in Indonesia. Some of them are research conducted by Frijuniarsi (2018), Ababneh (2018), Gonçalves & Silveira (2014), Daffern & Fleet (2021), Sumarniati (2017), Ramadhan (2015) and Rahmayani (2017). Those studies that observed error analysis done by English Department students are still limited. Some of the studies are mentioned here.

The first study is about *Errors in Vowel Pronunciation Made by Informatics Students* at the University of Indraprastha (Frijuniarsi, 2018). She used the descriptive qualitative method to describe and explain the data. The data were taken from observation and recording from 40 participants who participated in the research. Frijuniarsi instructed the students in the English Course of Informatics Program to read a short reading text and read it individually. She was doing observation and recording it with a smartphone. The data showed that most University of Indraprastha PGRI students mispronounced the words phonetically. For example, describe the word "computer." Most participants pronounced it /kɒmpʊtər/. The actual pronunciation is /kəm "pju;tə/. She concluded that were

1,430 errors made by the 40 students at the University of Indraprastha PGRI. It happens because, in Bahasa Indonesia, it seems to have a strong influence and causes difficulties for students in recognizing, determining, and producing English vowels (Frijuaniarsi, 2018).

The following article is *English Pronunciation Errors Made by Saudi Students* at the University of Tabuk/KSA (Ababneh, 2018). This article discusses how Saudi students pronounce English words with their native accents. The data

were collected qualitatively by listing some results of the research. In the discussion, the data were provided in table form, and the data were collected through a pronunciation sheet and experience of teaching the students. As a result of the data, there are many errors in pronouncing English words, such as *well* become /wIl/ and *would* become /weIl/ (Ababneh, 2018). It can be concluded that the system of their phoneme is different from the English language.

The following article concerns *The Production of English High-Front Vowels by Brazilian Learners* (Gonçalves & Silveira, 2014). This article provides information about Brazilian learners learning English, especially pronouncing high-front vowels. The data was collected by recording the pronunciation of 20 participants, 13 women and 7 men. The participants would pronounce some English high-front vowel sounds provided by the researcher, such as *beat*, *peak*, *seat*, etc. In conclusion, the results of this study revealed that besides varying considerably, English high-front vowels and duration values are produced indistinctively (Gonçalves & Silveira, 2014).

Furthermore, the writer also read an article related to error analysis. The title is *Investigating the Efficacy of Using Error Analysis Data to Inform Explicit*

Teaching of Spelling (Daffern & Fleet, 2021). This article focuses on what function of error analysis improves students' ability in spelling. The data were collected by conducting research involving 572 students in years 3 to 6 from 31 classes across four Australian schools, and 14 teachers participated. The result found that all classes that participated in the research showed a significant spelling improvement, and only one comparison class showed a statistically significant improvement. It means that the role of error analysis in spelling improvement is essential.

The next is a thesis about *Errors in Pronouncing Fricative Consonants Committed by the First Year Students of the English Department, Universitas Andalas* (Jelita, 2017). This thesis focuses on an error in pronouncing fricative consonants committed by the first-year students of the English Department. The sample is taken from around 30% or 11 participants from 36 students from class A. She collected the data by asking them to read a short story entitled *The Appointment in Samara* by W. Somerset Maugham. She collected the data by recording the students' pronunciation when reading the story. There are some objectives in conducting the research. The first is to find the types of pronunciation errors committed by the first-year students of the English Department at Universitas Andalas. The second is to find out the causes of the error. In presenting the data result, Jelita found it and categorized it into three classifications: omission, misinformation, and addition. She found the error like in pronouncing *threatening* /'θretənɪŋ/. The students omit the sounds /-ə-/ and /n/ and pronounce it /treɪŋ/.

This study is reasonably related to the writer's research that also discusses Pronunciation Errors committed by English Department students in Universitas

Andalas. However, the study only focuses on fricative consonants committed by the students. In this research, the writer focuses on Pronunciation Errors in pronouncing English high vowel sounds committed by English Department students in class 2021.

The next is a thesis entitled *Pronunciation Error Committed by Ten Students of Class 2015 at the English Department of Universitas Andalas* (Ramadhan, 2019). This thesis discusses mispronunciation committed by students in the English Department as a data of the thesis. The source data is from ten students, consisting of five female and five male students, in the English Department of the Faculty of Humanity, Universitas Andalas. There are some objectives of the thesis. The first is to find out the types of errors in pronunciation committed by students. The second is to identify the cause of the errors, and the third is to identify the phonological awareness of the participants. In collecting the data, Ramadhan used methods that were divided into data collecting, source of data, and analyzing data, and those data were determined by using convenience or accidental sampling. *Accidental sampling* is a nonprobability or non-random sampling that may be selected if a sample is situated, spatially or administratively, near where the researcher conducts the research (Etikan et al., 2015, p. 2).

The results of the data and the discussion were provided qualitatively. Ramadhan lists some mispronunciations the students' class committed in 2015 in tables. After that, Ramadhan described it and explained the data clearly. In the research, he analyzed the mispronunciation by looking at vowel and consonant sounds. Then, he divided the sounds by putting them in the list of some tables, and he put some words as an example of those sounds. The research participants were

expected to read the example of the words and where the data came from. In the conclusion of the research, it concluded that the students committed 65 pronunciation errors. Ramadhan divided the errors into 3 types: misinformation, addition, and omission. An example of misinformation is that the students produced the /s/ sound become /z/ sound in pronouncing the word wives. In addition, the students put the sound /k/ in the pronouncing plough. So, instead of pronouncing it as [plʊʊ], the students pronounced it [plouk]. In omission, for example, the students removed the front vowel /ɛ/ in embarrassment. So, instead of pronouncing it [ɪm'berəs], they pronounced it [em'brəs].

This study relates to the writer's research explaining Pronunciation Errors in pronouncing an English word. The difference is that the research made by Syahrul Ramadhan focuses on Pronunciation Errors in all aspects of phonology, both vowel and consonant, and it focuses on the students at the English Department class 2015. The writer's research discusses an error senior high school students committed, focusing on high vowel pronunciation.

The next is a thesis about *Speech Errors in Pronunciation among Ten Students of the 2017 Class of the English Department of Universitas Andalas* (Rahmayani, 2021). In this thesis, Rahmayani analyzed speech errors committed by students in the English Department of Universitas Andalas. The students were from the 2017 class, and the researcher chose 10 participants as a sample from the class population as a data source for the research.

The objective of the research was to analyze the types of speech errors committed by the students, to examine the frequency of occurrence of each type of speech error, and to investigate the factors that cause speech errors produced by the

students in the English Department of Faculty of Humanity, Universitas Andalas. The research was using qualitative research as a method of the research. In doing the research, Rahmayani used an instrument to take the data. The instrument was CMC (Computer-Mediated Communication). This instrument was used to collect information through an online interview (Thurlow et al., 20014: 15). There were some procedures in doing the research. First, she requested video access to the student's video, then downloaded it on YouTube. After that, she watched the video and analyzed every utterance produced by the students by using the orthographic transcription. Rahmayani also used Google Docs to transcribe the videos and asked the participants privately for their consent to be the research data source. Rahmayani provided some sheets conducted in the form of Google form, and the transcription was based on English.

In the data analysis, Rahmayani found some types of Pronunciation Error. The errors were silent pause, filled pause, repeat, retracted false starts, unretracted false starts, correction, stutters, interjection, and a slip of the tongue. In silent pause and filled pause, the data was provided by showing the frequency of the recorded voices of the participants. In the frequency of occurrence of speech errors, she found that there were 423 speech errors committed by the ten students in the English Department of Universitas Andalas in the 2017 class, and the most dominating error was filled pause. Rahmayani also explained the factors that caused the speech errors happened to the students. The first factor was cognitive difficulty, which is a factor that makes it difficult for speakers to take a longer time to compose or develop sentences; for example, do not know how to pronounce some words correctly, lack vocabulary, and have grammatical problems that committed by the participants of

the research. The second factor was social factors. This factor consists of situational anxiety and social circumstances (Clark & Clark, 1977). *Situational anxiety* is a situation in which the speakers feel tense in speaking. The situational circumstance is a factor that causes pressure in a speech performance (1977:272-273).

This study can be categorized as good since it deals with pronunciation errors students commit. However, the study has a weakness. The weakness is the data presentation at silent pause and filled pause. In the study, Rahmayani showed a frequency from the recorded voices of the participants. From the writer's perspective, the writer is afraid that the readers cannot understand and do not know how to read the frequency; although they have seen the explanation, they would still be confused about how to read the data. Rahmayani's thesis is reasonably related to the writer's research because both discuss wrong pronunciation made by the students. The differences only affect the participants. In Rahmayani's thesis, the participants were students in the English Department class 2017 of Universitas Andalas. However, this thesis would choose senior high school students to participate in this research. The other difference is that Rahmayani analyzed the Pronunciation Errors in the general aspect of phonology. However, in this thesis, the writer researches a specific aspect of phonology; analyzing an error in high vowel sound pronunciation.

Among those studies that the writer has mentioned, those studies mainly discuss Pronunciation Errors in general scope (both consonant and vowel). Only one study discusses high vowels as students' Pronunciation Errors in pronouncing them. The study is from Gonçalves & Silveira, which discusses "The Production of English High-Front Vowels by Brazilian Learners." The writer believes that this

topic is essential for readers. To prove this is a real problem, the writer takes this topic and provides evidence to English Department students that there are still difficulties in pronouncing English vowels, especially in English high-closed vowels, which is a general problem for students in pronunciation.

The writer's research is crucial because it would increase students' pronunciation ability and understanding of how to pronounce English high-closed vowels correctly. English high-closed vowel is an aspect of English pronunciation that many EFL learners make a mistake, and it is essential for students, especially English Department students, to master English high vowel sounds.

1.4. Research Questions

This research focuses on students' ability to pronounce English high vowel sounds. The question that would be answered in this research is: what are the types of errors committed by English Department students in class 2021 in pronouncing English high-closed vowels?

1.5. Objectives

In achieving the purpose of this research, the writer has an objective so that this research runs appropriately. This research aims to analyze the type errors committed by English Department students in class 2021 in pronouncing English high-closed vowels.

1.6. Scope

As mentioned previously, the English language has two types of vowel sounds. The object of this research is limited to four types of high vowels: /I/, /i:/, /ʊ/, and /u:/. The subject of this research is limited to the English Department students of class 2021. The number of students is 101, regardless of their sex types.

The writer chooses them because they have taken phonology classes in the second semester and must have learned some basic knowledge of phonology, especially in pronunciation. By choosing them, the writer hopes the students would share their knowledge after the research with the other students.

