

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

Language is a tool used to communicate. A tool is something we use to perform a function more effectively. This means that language serves as the primary means humans use to convey thoughts, feelings, information, and intentions to others. In this sense, language is the primary instrument of communication in society. Moreover, language is not limited to a single form; it varies across cultures and regions. One such language widely used for International communication is English. In some countries, English is used as the first language, such as Australia, USA and England. On the other hand, in countries like Malaysia, France and Germany, English is often used as a second language.

In contrast, English is considered a foreign language in Indonesia. It is not the native language of Indonesian people, as most Indonesians speak Bahasa Indonesia or a regional language as their first language. English is not commonly used in daily conversation among the general population. Instead, it is mainly taught as a subject in schools and rarely spoken outside of the classroom. This limited exposure makes it difficult for students to learn English. As a result, many students made mistakes in learning this language, both in terms of skills and structural aspects. As we know, English has four core skills, namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It also includes three fundamental components, namely grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

Among these components, pronunciation plays a crucial role. Pronunciation refers to the way a word or language is spoken. It is one of the essential aspects that must be mastered in order to communicate fluently and accurately. This is because effective communication relies heavily on correct pronunciation, which helps avoid misunderstandings and ambiguity. In English, the pronunciation of words is very diverse

and often unpredictable. Consequently, many learners consider English pronunciation difficult. Everyone tends to pronounce words differently, depending on what they hear. Therefore, it is important to be exposed to and practice the correct pronunciation. As Kelly (2000) stated, “pronunciation is organs of speak to create the sounds in particular. Hence, good pronunciation results in good communication as well” (p.1).

Furthermore, English pronunciation is different from that of Indonesian in several ways. English has many sounds that do not exist in Indonesian, such as the “th” sounds in “*think*” [θ] and “*this*” [ð]. English words often include silent letters, like the [k] in “*know*”, which can be confusing for Indonesian speakers. Additionally, English is not always pronounced the way it is spelled, whereas Indonesian pronunciation is more phonetic and predictable. English intonation and rhythm also differ significantly, which may cause Indonesian speakers to sound monotone or unnatural when speaking English. Lastly, Indonesian does not use consonant clusters like “str” in “*street*”, so English words with multiple consonants are often harder to pronounce. According to Fromkin (2013), “When you know a language, you understand its sounds and how to mix them to form of words” (p.189). Based on this statement, we know that the learner’s comprehension of a language is influenced by its sounds. Non- native speakers may struggle with these sound systems, particularly in pronunciation.

One specific challenge in English pronunciation is mastering fricative consonants. Fricatives are sounds generated when air is forced into a small path between two articulations. These sounds are classified according to the point of articulation, such as labiodental, dental, alveolar, palato-alveolar, and glottal fricatives. When learning English as a second or foreign language, fricative consonants are the most difficult to pronounce clearly compared to other manners of articulation in English, especially for Indonesian language learners. Dardjowidjojo (2009) stated that “Bahasa Indonesia does not have all

of the English fricative consonants” (p.41).

As a result, learners frequently made errors when pronouncing fricative consonants. For instance, the sound [v] is pronounced [f] by the students, such as the word *variation* is pronounced [feəri'eɪʃən]. The sound [ʒ] is pronounced [s], such as *casual* is pronounced ['kæsual]. Then, the next errors also occurred in the dental fricative, where the students substituted sound [θ] and [ð] into [t] and [d]. For example, the word *theory* is pronounced [tiori] and the word *their* is pronounced [der].

Related to the explanation above, the most difficult aspect of English pronunciation for Indonesian learners is how the learners produced fricative consonants. Therefore, the purposed of this research is to investigate how Indonesian learners, particularly those enrolled in English Literature use English fricative consonants in Universitas Andalas. Most students have difficulty in pronouncing English fricatives and differentiated between [f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ] consonants. Based on this, the researcher tried to analyze the student's errors in pronouncing English fricatives.

To support this analysis, the researcher used tools such as *Oxford* and *Longman Dictionaries*, as well as Google Translate to help the researcher identified the errors in pronouncing English fricatives. To maintain consistency in checking pronunciation errors, the researcher used an American accent as a reference in analyzing, because most of the students use an American accent in speaking. Errors in pronunciation of sounds in a word can lead to misunderstanding, because different pronunciations lead to different meanings. Thus, identifying students' pronunciation errors is important. When students become aware of their difficulties in pronouncing words correctly, they can improve and avoid repeating these errors in the future.

1.2. Research Questions

According to the explanation above, it is clear that the foreign language learners often

produced errors, especially in speaking. Based on this phenomenon, the writer would like to focus her research on some main problem. They are:

- 1) What types of pronunciation errors in producing fricative consonants as committed by the English Literature students in the comprehensive examination?
- 2) What causes the pronunciation errors in producing fricative consonants as committed by the English Literature students in the comprehensive examination?

1.3. The Objective of the Research

Based on the research question above, the objectives of this research are to describe:

- 1) The types of pronunciation errors in producing fricative consonants as committed by the English Literature students in the comprehensive examination.
- 2) The causes of the pronunciation errors in producing fricative consonants as committed by the English Literature students in the comprehensive examination.

1.4. Focus of the Research

This research focused on the errors in pronouncing words contained the English fricatives, as committed by the English Literature students of Universitas Andalas, the year of 2019. Focus of this research is to examine students' errors in pronouncing English fricatives [f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ]. The errors are divided into two categories: types of errors and causes of errors. In this research, the researcher used the theory from April McMahon's book (2002), supported by Gass & Selinker (2008) and Ulrike Gut (2009), books.

1.5. Method of the Research

In this research, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive method to analyze errors in pronouncing English fricative sounds from the data obtained. The qualitative descriptive method is a type of qualitative research in which the contents are described

based on facts or phenomenon obtained as they are from the research. The researcher's aimed is to apply this method in her research, because the researcher wanted to describe existing phenomenon in such a way that the researcher can find out students' errors in pronouncing English fricative sounds (Arikunto, 2006, p.89).

1.5.1. Data Collection

The data in this research were obtained from 20 selected students of the English Literature in 2019 at Universitas Andalas. The selected students are the students who have completed their comprehensive examination. This research used a purposive sampling as a sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique based on certain objectives and criteria set by the researcher, so that the data obtained is truly relevant to the focus of the study. This technique was chosen because the researcher deliberately selected samples based on certain criteria that were in accordance with the research objectives. The sample criteria include: (1) English Literature students in 2019 who have completed a comprehensive exam, (2) have made and collected English presentation videos, and (3) in the video there are words that contain English fricative sounds. This technique allowed researchers to obtain relevant and in-depth data related to pronunciation errors of fricative sounds.

According to Mackey and Gass (2005), "purposive sampling is the process of selecting participants based on the characteristics of a population and the purpose of the study" (p. 122). This makes purposive sampling particularly appropriate for qualitative studies in applied linguistics, such as those focusing on pronunciation, language acquisition, or learner strategies. Besides, the researcher analyzed the English Literature student's pronunciation based on their presentation videos of comprehensive exam to obtain the data. The duration of each student's presentation videos is 7-10 minutes. To identify and analyze errors in students' pronunciation of English fricative sounds, the

researcher followed a systematic procedure comprising several steps. First, the researcher compiled a list of the students from the English Literature program who had successfully completed their comprehensive exams. These students were considered to have reached an advanced stage of their academic program and were thus deemed suitable for the research. The research participants were then selected using purposive sampling, focusing specifically on individuals whose presentations contained adequate spoken English material for analysis.

Once the sample was determined, the researcher collected video recordings of the students' thesis presentations. The researcher carefully transcribed the audio data, paying special attention to the occurrences of English fricative sounds in their speech. These transcription efforts were accompanied by repeated listening to each utterance, allowing the researcher to compare the students' pronunciation with the correct phonetic transcriptions of each word.

Following transcription, the researcher began the process of error classification. Each fricative sound produced by the students was compared to the correct pronunciation using reliable reference tools, namely the *Oxford Dictionary*, *Longman Dictionary*, and the Google Translate application. These tools helped the researcher confirm whether the students had produced accurate or erroneous fricative sounds. Subsequently, the researcher re-watched the presentation videos while conducting a more focused analysis of the students' pronunciation of English fricatives. This analysis specifically targeted errors involving fricative consonants such as [f], [v], [θ], [ð], [s], [z], [ʃ], and [ʒ].

Finally, the researcher interpreted the findings by identifying the types of pronunciation errors present and analyzing their possible linguistic causes. These causes were then categorized based on common pronunciation issues among English as a foreign language. The interpretation provided insights into the students' difficulties and informed

the overall conclusion of the study.

1.5.2. Data Analysis

Data analysis began by identifying the English sounds produced by the research participants. The researcher would be listening to the student's utterance in the form of video recording and compared the sounds repeatedly with the correct phonetic transcription. Then, the researcher took the phonetic transcription of the student's pronunciation and made the pattern of errors pronounced by the students. The correct pronunciation taken from the *Oxford Dictionary* and *Longman Dictionary*. After identified the error, the researcher classified how many fricatives errors pronounced by the students. The data would be classified and listed by using some tables. The sequences of the numbers were listed in the first column, while the second column consisted of a word list of English fricatives. The third column consisted of the correct' pronunciation, next column filled with participants' pronunciation. The last column filled with type of errors. The causes of their errors' pronunciation would be explained using description based on the phenomenon found in the test. The last step, the researcher made a valid conclusion in the form of a brief description of the errors after did the interpretation of those errors. After the researcher did all the phases in data processed, then the collected data would be analyzed through a descriptive qualitative analysis where the researcher linked it up in written form, it is meant to know the student's error in pronouncing English fricatives.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

- a. Addition, involve the inclusion of unnecessary elements in a sentence. This may include adding extra words, sounds, or morphemes that do not belong (Dulay et al., 1982, p.146).
- b. Contrastive analysis, is a general approach to the investigation of language (contrastive linguistics), particularly as carried on in certain areas of applied

linguistics, such as foreign-language teaching and translation (Crystal, 2008, p.112).

- c. Error analysis, is a sort of linguistic analysis that focused on language learners' errors while producing the target language (Gass et al., 2008, p.102).
- d. Foreign language, a language which is not the native language of large numbers of people in a particular country or region, is not used as a medium of instruction in schools, and is not widely used as a medium of communication in government, media, etc. Foreign languages are typically taught as school subjects for the purpose of communicating with foreigners or for reading printed materials in the language (Richards et al., 2010, p.224).
- e. Fricatives, a term used in the phonetic classification of consonant sounds on the basis of their manner of articulation. It refers to sounds made when two organs come so close together that the air moving between them produces audible friction, or frication (Crystal, 2008, p.199).
- f. Interlanguage, the linguistic system created by someone in the course of learning a foreign language, different from either speaker's first language or the target language being acquired (Crystal, 2008, p.249).
- g. Interlingual transfer, referred to the influences of the mother tongue or learner's first language (Brown, 2000, p.224).
- h. Intralingual transfer, are errors that occurred due to the misuse of certain rules of the target language (Brown, 2000, p.224).
- i. Misformation, occur when the wrong form of a word is used, such as incorrect verb tense, pluralization, or other grammatical forms (Dulay et al., 1982, p.158).
- j. Misordering, happen when the elements of a sentence are arranged incorrectly. This can affect word order in phrases or sentences, leading to confusion or

grammatical issues (Dulay et al., 1982, p.162).

- k. Omission, are occur when a necessary element is left out a sentence. This can include missing subjects, verbs, or other critical components that are required for grammatical correctness (Dulay et al., 1982, p.154).
- l. Pronunciation errors, reflect a speaker's difficulty in producing the sounds of a language accurately, which can affect their overall fluency and confidence (Kelly, 2000, p.13).
- m. Purposive sampling, the process of selecting participants based on the characteristics of a population and the purpose of the study (Mackey et al., 2005, p.122).
- n. Second language, in a broad sense, any language learned after one has learn one's native language (Richards et al., 2010, p.514).

