

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a comprehensive description of the research. It includes the background of the study, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, the aim of the research, and significances of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Pronunciation is one of the important aspects that must be learned when someone wants to learn English. This is in line with Plailek & Essien (2021), who stated that good pronunciation is the key to effective oral communication. Proper pronunciation will help people communicate easily and avoid misunderstandings when they talk. Despite mistakes in vocabulary, grammar, and pragmatics, a speaker with excellent pronunciation is understandable; conversely, bad pronunciation makes it exceedingly difficult to understand them, even when they are accurate in other areas (Fraser, 2000). Moreover, Thornbury & Slade (2006) stated that mispronunciation is one of the most common triggers of misunderstanding. Thus, pronunciation mastery is a concern to be learned.

In Indonesia, where English is taught as a foreign language, university students still need some help in mastering pronunciation. One of the reasons is that many students struggle with the interference of their mother tongue when learning English pronunciation (Aulia, 2018). Additionally, according to Moedjito (2016), from the perspective of the students, the most likely cause of the students' difficulty pronouncing some English sounds is that in the students' native tongues some English sounds do not occur. As a result, students require such learning media to assist them in interacting with natives or listening to the target language to produce words or sentences in the target language appropriately.

It is known that technology has become increasingly important in the sphere of education. Putri & Sari (2020) claimed that technological advancement has a positive impact on many aspects of education, including teaching, learning, and research, in which it provides teachers and students with a variety of resources that support autonomous learning. Additionally, students who are motivated to improve their pronunciation could learn on their own by utilizing technological advancements (Aprianti & Ayu, 2020). Further, according to Taqwa & Sandi (2019), Vlogs are a new technological innovation that has recently gained much popularity. It is a combination of the words 'video' and 'blog', it enables users to make, upload, and watch videos that share about lifestyles (Anil, 2016). Hence, Vlog is a learning media that students can use to improve their pronunciation.

In this research, several students in an English Education Department use Vlogs on YouTube as learning media to learn English pronunciation outside of the classroom independently. In their English pronunciation learning process, students watch and listen to English Vlogs made by native speakers or English Vloggers. Further, students learn and practice their pronunciation in their English pronunciation learning through Vlogs to increase their pronunciation mastery.

Previously, other researchers have studied Vlog as a learning media to improve students' English skills. A study in one of the Universities in Indonesia that scrutinized students' perspectives on the use of Vlog and their strategies to improve their speaking skills found that Vlog is good to use in various strategies (Lestari, 2019). She also claimed that students who learn English through video blogs as learning media have good English skills. Moreover, Mufidah & Roifah (2020) examined the effectiveness of applying Vlog as a learning media, specifically on students' fluency and public speaking skills. They discovered that using Vlog as learning media positively affects the students' fluency and public speaking skills. They also asserted that Vlog encourages students to speak up more, can make learning interesting and exciting, and can boost self-confidence. Further, a study by Lingga et al.,

(2021) found that Vlog greatly enhances learners' English-speaking skills. They added that students' abilities in the areas of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and content have improved. Besides, they also found that using video blogging is a fun learning process that can boost students' enthusiasm for learning, encourage good presentations in students' speaking performances, and allow students to interact with their environment to improve their speaking abilities. Although there have been some studies done on the use of Vlogs to increase students' English skills, most of them only focus on using Vlogs to improve students' speaking skills. However, in this study, the researcher focuses on how students learn English pronunciation through Vlogs. Syafitri et al., (2018) explained that pronunciation is a component of speaking that focuses on how people pronounce the words and understand the sound. They claim proper pronunciation is important for effective oral communication because it is a crucial component of communicative competence. Concerning this phenomenon, a thought emerges for the researcher to analyze how students learn English pronunciation through Vlogs. Therefore, the present study aims to find out on how students learn English pronunciation through Vlogs.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem(s)

According to the background of the study above, the problem can be identified as follows:

1.2.1 How do students learn English pronunciation through Vlogs?

1.3 Operational Definitions

To prevent misunderstandings regarding the terms used in this study, the researcher offers the following three definitions in relation to this study:

1.3.1 English Pronunciation : It is how a specific word or sound in English is uttered.

1.3.2 Pronunciation Learning Strategy : It is the act taken by students during their pronunciation learning that can assist them

during the learning process and improve their pronunciation mastery.

- 1.3.3 Vlog** : It is a video that presents a life documentary of someone(s), including sharing information and experiences or giving advice in oral or speech utterance. In addition, English Vlog is usually made directly by native speakers or English Vloggers, which provide information such as talking about their thoughts, personal life, etc.

1.4 Aim(s) of the Research

The research aims to find out on how students learn English pronunciation through Vlogs.

1.5 Significances of the Study

- 1.5.1 Theoretical Contribution** : This research will enrich the literature review of English pronunciation learning, especially Indonesian EFL students on how they used Vlog as learning media to learn English pronunciation.
- 1.5.2 Practical Contribution** : This study is expected to be a consideration for the students in choosing the learning media to learn English pronunciation outside of the classroom and applying the pronunciation learning strategy (PLS) in their learning to help them improve their pronunciation.

1.5.3 Empirical Contribution : This study will provide an empirical understanding of how students learn English pronunciation through Vlogs outside of the classroom independently and the result of students' PLS applied in their learning briefly.