

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a discussion on the background of the study, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, the aim of the research, and the significance of the research.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The importance of pronunciation in successful communication is being able to speak English of course, which includes several sub-skills, involving vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics, etc. However, by far, the most important of these skills is pronunciation. With good pronunciation, a speaker is intelligible despite other errors, with poor pronunciation, a speaker can be very difficult to understand despite accuracy in other areas. Pronunciation is the aspect that most affects how the speaker is judged by others, and how they are formally assessed in other skills. (Fraser in Gilakjani 2016).

English pronunciation is one of the most difficult skills to master, and learners should devote a significant amount of effort to it (Gilakjani, 2016). Teachers are left without clear guidelines and are faced with contradictory practices for pronunciation instruction. There is no well-established systematic method of deciding what to teach, when, and how to do it. As a result of these problems, pronunciation instruction is less important and teachers are not very comfortable teaching pronunciation in their classes. One of the most basic prerequisites of learners' competency is comprehensible pronunciation. It is one of the most significant elements of intelligible language teaching practices. Intelligibility helps language acquisition, while unintelligibility creates language learning issues (Gilakjani, 2016).

The goals of teaching pronunciation, according to Butler-Pascoe and Wiburg in Gilakjani (2016), are to produce English that is clear and easy for listeners to understand, English that satisfies individual needs and leads to communicative

competence, assist in making learners feel more at ease when using the language, development of positive self-awareness as non-native speakers in oral communication, development of speech consciousness, personal speech monitoring skills, and speech adjustment strategies that support learners both inside and outside of the classroom. According to James in Gilakjani (2016), a speaker is considered "comfortably intelligible" if and only if other people can comprehend what they say and their English is palatable. The researchers continued to say that speaking like a native speaker is the aim of pronunciation learning for certain students. While this might be a worthwhile objective for students, teachers who wish to help their students pronounce words correctly and feel more confident should not set this as their goal. As a result, teachers should encourage their students to speak English clearly and understandably rather than pressuring them to adopt an American or British accent.

English pronunciation course is included in the curriculum of the English Education Department of a university in Tasikmalaya, Indonesia. It allows students to learn to speak English intelligibly and improve their aural sensitivity to the rhythmic quality of English by focusing on rhythm, stress, and intonation. The course will use a variety of pronunciation, linguistic texts, related listening materials, and pre-recorded samples of both native and non-native speech. Also, it includes role-play and presentations. Technically instructional methods include class exercises and drills that target specific sounds, as well as laboratory work which allows students to record and compare their pronunciation to the recorded voice on the tape or any other technology sources. Students also practice these skills in listening and speaking in the classroom and homework assignments in individual, and small group work during class, recorded and written homework, or group presentations. The goal is for students to develop sufficient confidence and skill in the use of English to enable them to communicate effectively in the classroom (Syllabus).

There have been many studies examining pronunciation (Ahmad, 2018; Warchol, 2020; Quoc et al. 2021). As an example, Ahmad (2018) focused on

technique and activity in teaching English pronunciation on suprasegmental features (intonation and stress). He found that students learned combinations of words, adjectives, and nouns that are generally stressed in the first place. Students were taught about the prefixes, and words with suffixes, and students were also given exercises with compound words. In another study, Warchol (2020) focused on the basic views and recommendations of some teaching techniques in the pronunciation instruction of adult ESP learners. The findings revealed that the key objective of learning English is not only to gain access to educational perspectives but also to achieve technical, professional, social, and personal goals. In that case, integrated instruction has to address a range of L2 skills simultaneously. For instance, teaching reading can be easily tied to writing and vocabulary instruction, and oral skills to teaching pronunciation, listening, and cross-cultural pragmatics. Since sounds play a significant role in communication, foreign language teachers should attribute proper importance to teaching pronunciation in their classes. Furthermore, Quoc et al. (2021) focus on how English pronunciation is taught at an English center and, accordingly, what teachers think about their pronunciation teaching in terms of the role and goal of pronunciation, time allocation, and techniques. The findings indicated that the unintelligibility of Vietnamese learners' English pronunciation has caused hindrances to their academic and career goals. However, there are still a few that focus on investigating how the teacher teaches English pronunciation to higher education students in the classroom. This study aims to fill the gap.

## **1.2 Formulation of the Problem**

The question of the research is formulated as follows: How does the teacher teach English pronunciation to higher education students in the classroom?

### 1.3 Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding the terms set out in this study, the researcher provides three definitions related to this study as follows:

**a. English**

**pronunciation :**

English pronunciation is how a language is spoken, how a word is pronounced, and the way a person speaks the words of the language that allows students to learn to speak English intelligibly and improve their aural sensitivity to the rhythmic quality of English by focusing on rhythm, stress, and intonation.

**b. Implementation :**

Implementation is the execution or practice of a plan, a method, or any design, idea, model, specification, standard, or policy for doing something. As such, implementation is the action that must follow any preliminary thinking for something to happen. In this study, researchers found several techniques that a teacher used when implementing English pronunciation, such as imitating and drilling, corrective feedback, phonetic training, and the use of tools and, technology in teaching English pronunciation.

### 1.4 The Aim of the Research

This study aims to investigate how the teacher teaches English pronunciation to higher education students in the classroom.

## **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

**1.5.1 Theoretical Contributions:** This study will contribute to the existing theories on teaching English pronunciation in EFL contexts.

**1.5.2 Practical Contributions:** The result of this study, students can find the implementation of learning English pronunciation so that students know how to learn pronunciation from the techniques implemented in this research.

**1.5.3 Empirical Contributions:** This study gives insight into collecting and analysing data regarding the implementation of teaching English pronunciation in higher education.