CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. English Pronunciation

Pronunciation is one of the most crucial aspects of language learning, especially English. Prashant (2018) defines pronunciation as how words are spoken. Proper pronunciation is a top priority for those learning English as a second language (Kobilova, 2022). Pronunciation is a sub-skill of speaking (Fraser, 2000; A. Gilakjani et al., 2011), meaning it plays a crucial role in fluent communication. Prashant (2018) notes that pronunciation is essential for expressing ideas and opinions. Mispronunciation can lead to confusion and misunderstandings in communication.

When learning English pronunciation is key to delving into the study of phonetics and phonology. These fields aim to describe and explain the sound patterns within human language (Pierrehumbert, 1990). It is important to note that phonetics and phonology are distinct, as Shaw et al. (2020) have pointed out. Phonology refers to the sounds that carry meaning in a given language, while phonetics deals with the sounds that describe speech as a physical phenomenon (Pierrehumbert, 1990). Therefore, students can develop clear and easily understood English pronunciation by incorporating both areas into their studies.

Acquiring fluency in a foreign language can be particularly challenging for non-native speakers (NNS), particularly in English, presenting discrepancies in writing and pronunciation. There is a multitude of factors that contribute to the difficulties of learning proper pronunciation, such as accentuation, stress, intonation, rhythm, motivation, exposure, attitude, instruction, age, personality, and the influence of one's native tongue (A. Gilakjani et al., 2011). For Indonesian EFL learners, NNES's

mother tongue is one of the most influential factors in learning English pronunciation.

2.1.2. A Brief Discussion of Intelligible Pronunciation

Intelligibility has a vital role in learning pronunciation. Munro (2011) thorough analysis explores the significance of intelligibility in pronunciation teaching. The study establishes that intelligibility is a well-established construct with a strong foundation in empirical and pedagogical traditions rather than a fleeting buzzword. The importance of intelligible pronunciation in the ESL classroom is also discussed, as it can seriously impact immigrant language learners who may feel frustrated when they are not understood. Communication difficulties can also hinder educational and career opportunities, as native speakers tend to avoid interactions and conversations that are perceived as challenging. This can lead to isolation from native speakers, missed chances to use the second language effectively, and neglecting the communicative needs of L2 learners. Sweet first introduced the concept of intelligible pronunciation in education (1900 as cited in Munro 2011), and it is defined as the ability to produce sound patterns that are recognized as English Burns (2003 as cited in Gilakjani, 2012), leading to actual comprehension (Murphy, 2014). Field (2005) also explains that intelligibility can be assessed by a judge's ability to transcribe a speech accurately and by an overall evaluation of how easy it is to understand a particular speaker. Hence, intelligibility is the main factor that is taken into consideration when communicating in English.

The notion of intelligibility in learning pronunciation aligns with the guiding principle of mastering pronunciation. As Mohsen and Nirmal (2022) noted, the emphasis on pronunciation learning should be the necessity of global intelligibility and comfort rather than striving for a native-like accent. In light of the shift towards communicative competence as the primary objective of pronunciation learning, intelligible pronunciation has emerged as a crucial aspect. Field (2005) highlights that intelligibility lies at the core of pronunciation teaching, with instructors

setting this as a key target. Similarly, Vančová (2019) reports that the focus of pronunciation learning for non-natives shifts from nativeness to comprehensibility and intelligibility, which allows students to maintain their natural accents. In determining intelligible pronunciation as the primary learning objective, it is assumed that striving for native-like pronunciation is no longer ideal for current pronunciation learning, especially among ESL/EFL learners. Beatrice (2020) emphasized the importance of intelligible pronunciation when communicating verbally. The goal should be to exceed the threshold of intelligibility rather than to sound like a native speaker. However, it is essential to ensure that the intended meaning of the message is not lost due to incorrect pronunciation. Intelligible pronunciation is based on non-native speakers' strategies to communicate with each other rather than imitating native speakers or striving to be understood by them (Henderson, 2021). As Levis (2005) explains, the principle of clarity understands that if a foreign accent is visible or even strong in pronunciation, it is the key to successful communication; an accent does not affect intelligible pronunciation. Murphy (2014) argues that describing intrinsically intelligible pronunciation standards is impossible but states that reducing foreign accents to improve intelligible pronunciation is wrong; intelligible is obtained when NNES can utilize prosodic features effectively, including tone selection. In addition, the appropriate rate of speech (not too fast or slow), utterance length, length, and proper placement of pauses become intelligible standards. In line with that, Levis (2018) also revealed standards for pronunciation features, learners, teachers, teaching and learning contexts, materials, and pedagogical practices to improve intelligible pronunciation. Intelligibility is considered a more reasonable, practical, and suitable goal for learners' communication needs. In this context, intelligible pronunciation is regarded as the learning goal, where non-native students can achieve this comfortably and without difficulty, without the need for native-like perfection.

2.1.3. Teaching and Learning Pronunciation

Teaching pronunciation is not typically a primary focus in the English language teaching curriculum. According to Pennington (2021), pronunciation is usually taught as a supplementary skill to support other oral language objectives rather than as a stand-alone subject. Teaching pronunciation in the EFL/ESL classroom presents a challenge. According to Yoshida (2013), the teacher must act as a role model, guiding, explaining, and demonstrating good pronunciation to students. The teacher's readiness to teach pronunciation is crucial to students' smooth pronunciation learning. Unfortunately, teacher training in English language teaching pronunciation is still rare, leading to decreased confidence in teaching pronunciation (Fraser, 2000). To address this, A. Gilakjani et al. (2011) highlight the importance of increasing training opportunities for teachers through conferences, enabling them to develop professional skills in teaching pronunciation. However, A. P. Gilakjani (2011) emphasizes that teaching pronunciation in EFL/ESL classes requires a comprehensive approach considering curriculum design, suprasegmentals, academic research, classroom experiments, development methods, materials, and teacher training. Therefore, learning pronunciation for ESL and EFL students with thorough preparation is also the right strategy.

Teaching a foreign language can be challenging, especially for non-native language teachers with unique teaching characteristics. According to Medgyes (2020), non-native English teachers (Non-NEST) exhibit traits such as using more formal language, being cautious, empathetic, and committed, and focusing on accuracy and grammar rules. They also tend to favor controlled activities, frontal work, and assign more homework. Conversely, language teachers are expected to meet specific standards as they serve as role models for their students. Morin (2007) explains that foreign language teachers must have language, linguistic, cultural, and literary competence. They need to be able to describe the phonological system of the target language, diagnose pronunciation problems, and

explain the differences between the target language's phonological system and their students' mother tongue. Meeting these standards is crucial for providing a solid example and achieving teaching goals, especially in foreign language instruction.

A series of guiding principles can be followed in teaching pronunciation in ESL/EFL classrooms to produce a balanced approach Levis and Grant (2003). The three principles to follow are focusing primarily on suprasegmentals while not excluding other aspects, maintaining a central emphasis on speaking during class, and fitting pronunciation instruction to the constraints of the speaking task. In line with that, Morley (1991) states that it is essential to integrate pronunciation with oral communication. The focus should shift from segmental to suprasegmental elements. Individual learners' needs should be given more attention. Practice should involve meaningful tasks. New teaching strategies should be developed. Peer correction and group interaction should be introduced. Based on data on the development of English pronunciation materials and data classification by Tergujeff (2010), Pronunciation teaching materials include phonetic training, reading aloud, listening and repeating, rhyme and verse, rules and instructions, awareness-raising activities, spelling and dictation, and ear training. Celce-Murcia et al. (1996) stated that based on a communicative approach, namely, listen and imitate, phonetic training, minimal pairs drills, contextualized minimal pairs, visual aids, tongue twisters, developmental approximation drills, the practice of vowel shifts and stress shifts related by affixation, reading aloud/recitation, recording of learner's production. Hence, teaching pronunciation requires balancing segmental and suprasegmental features and strategies.

Learning proper pronunciation in English as a foreign language (EFL) or non-native speaker (NNS) presents several challenges. According to recent research conducted by Nangimah (2020), these challenges include (a) differences between English and students' native language phonological systems, (b) traditional teacher biases against pronunciation, (c) limited

teaching resources and teacher shortages, and (d) difficulties in achieving confidence when compared to native speakers. In line with that, the study conducted by Abdalgane and Idris (2020) expresses mother tongue interference, lack of knowledge related to language target and language complexity, lack of student motivation, similar sounds, difficulty in placing appropriate intonation, and stress as the challenges in learning English pronunciation. Moreover, Fadillah (2020) argues that students from Indonesia often encounter challenges due to their mother tongue, exposure to the target language, and biological factors that affect their ear perception. However, the most significant obstacles for NNS learners are the lack of background knowledge and insufficient teaching materials, which contribute to an overall perception of pronunciation as a challenging subject. Achieving intelligible pronunciation is the ultimate objective of learning proper pronunciation, but this objective can be hindered by students' perception, slowing down their progress.

Researchers have extensively explored techniques and strategies for improving students' pronunciation abilities in the EFL context. According to Cando et al. (2023), communicating ideas, feelings, notions, and beliefs is crucial when mastering an international language like English. To help overcome these difficulties, Peterson (2000) recommends that students use pronunciation learning strategies (PLS) to improve their pronunciation skills. PLS are students' actions to enhance their pronunciation learning (Griffiths, 2018). To achieve better results, adopt the right Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) that cater to students' unique needs (Marzuki, 2021; Ningrum, 2021; Royani, 2023). According to Astina et al. (2020), a recent study highlights two techniques, drill and visual aids, used by teachers to teach English pronunciation to young learners. The drill technique involves repetition drills, while visual aids rely on pictures. However, there are numerous strategies for language learning, and a few precisely target pronunciation. Given this, Pawlak and Szyszka (2018) suggest that cognitive, memory, and compensation strategies are the most

effective for overcoming phonetics challenges. Therefore, using techniques in pronunciation learning is highly considered to improve students' abilities.

2.1.4. Learning English as EFL

Indonesia has designated English as its national language, also commonly referred to as a foreign language. According to Al-Efeshat and Baniabdelrahman (2020), learning English is crucial for students of all ages as it is a national and international language. Pandarangga (2015) notes that English as an international language has numerous benefits, including its ability to facilitate communication, promote empowerment, and foster global unity. Similarly, Rao (2019) emphasizes the vital role of English as a standard and global language in various sectors such as economics, business, health, and education. Recognizing English as an international language underscores its immense influence and importance in today's world.

Learning English as a foreign language presents a challenge for Indonesian students. Speech production errors and mistakes are common, as the influence of their mother tongue affects language acquisition. (Septianasari, 2019). While the mother tongue can positively and negatively impact English language learning (Denizer, 2017), students' attitudes and motivation also play a significant role in language learning and achievement (Fatiha et al., 2014). Using portfolios as an assessment tool has been found to increase motivation for learning English and EFL (Muho and Leka, 2021). Additionally, social and educational context factors influence students' attitudes toward EFL learning, such as English native speakers, peer groups, learner's parents, English language teachers, and English language learning situations. (Getie, 2020). Therefore, when studying English as an EFL, it is necessary to consider and find solutions to the factors that become obstacles to learning.

Learning English in an outdoor setting can significantly enhance the learning experience for young teenagers, impacting their academic progress positively (Myhre et al., 2023). Technology has also significantly impacted

EFL students' English language learning. Aydin (2014) found that using blogs as a learning tool can increase student motivation, skills, independent learning, perceptions, attitudes, interactions, communication, and awareness of the target culture. Similarly, Rukmana (2021) highlights the effectiveness of using Google Classroom as a learning medium for EFL English. Students have reported that Google Classroom is user-friendly and performs well as a learning platform.

2.2 Study of the Relevant Research

Newton et al. (2020) studied pronunciation learning for EFL at the tertiary level. It was found that pronunciation had been taught at the tertiary level in Vietnam. Still, discrepancies were found based on teachers' confidence in teaching and their teaching practices, where teachers tended to limit pronunciation learning to provide feedback in the form of corrections. More pronunciation learning still needs to be carried out explicitly. This aligns with research conducted by Fadillah (2020), which revealed the challenges experienced in learning pronunciation for EFL. The influence of the mother tongue, exposure to the target language, and biological factors are challenges often encountered by EFL teachers' beliefs, and challenges in teaching EFL are very influential factors in teaching and learning pronunciation.

In another study, Saldıraner and Cinkara (2021) reported research on learning pronunciation using songs. They noted that teaching pronunciation in foreign language classes can increase learning motivation and make it easier for students to remember the material. Similar research was also conducted by (Jessica et al., 2015; Makasoe et al., 2022). They examined the use of English songs by junior high school students, which improved students' pronunciation skills.

Another study by Pennington (2021) was on current pronunciation teaching and found that it was related to the latest trends and steps in today's pronunciation teaching. As the era developed, the focus on learning

pronunciation increased in learning objectives, teaching techniques, and learning media.

Another recent study by Cando et al. (2023) reported on pronunciation learning strategies (PLS) used by third-year high school students and the role of pronunciation in EFL English learning. Students used two PLS: direct type: cognitive, compensation, and memory strategy, and indirect type: metacognitive, social, and affective strategy. The most widely used methods are compensation and memory. Students also expressed the importance of intelligibility as the most realistic goal they can achieve as EFL students.

Previous research investigating teaching and learning focuses on intelligible pronunciation in the EFL classroom is still rare. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap.