CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a description of the study. It consists of the background, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, aim of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Pronunciation is a highlight point in the language learning curriculum, including in the EFL context. As Nixon and Tomlinson (2005) consider that in the context of language development, students learning pronunciation correctly at an early stage is easier than waiting for them to make a mistake and then improving it. However, the fact in the Indonesian context shows pronunciation learning is starting to be focused at the university level (Abrar et al., 2018; Furaidah et al., 2015). It makes students have a weak pronunciation characterised by mispronunciation which is often produced by them. As Luke et al. (2022) emphasised that people who start learning English after high school are the most difficult group to pronounce words properly and the difficulty increases significantly with age. In fact, an individual's sound should be articulated to be heard and become messages that can be communicated and understood by listeners (Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019). Thus, in order to ensure that listeners get the content and message correctly, students need to highlight more on the way they pronounce English sounds and words.

Practically, students' pronunciation implemented in class can be achieved through various methods and techniques, such as drilling and taping techniques as they help students achieve proper pronunciation of language and remember new items (Kelly, 2000). Nevertheless, students of the Department of English Education stated that they still experienced difficulties in pronouncing English words. For example, Motair and Mahmed (2022) showed that EFL students' pronunciation problems in Yemen lie in the pronunciation of segmental

feature especially in consonants and they tend to insert vowel sounds in English syllables into separate clusters.

Similarly, by means of preliminary study, it captured pronunciation difficulties experienced by English Education Department students in Tasikmalaya. Students used a drilling technique where they listen to a native speaker's audio and highlight the way they pronounce words and then repeat it. Besides, they also use taping technique to record their voices and compare the results repeatedly until they feel the pronunciation is better. However, they admitted that even though they get pronunciation stimulus through various techniques, they still struggle with difficulties in pronouncing English words, particularly in segmental features of vowel and consonant sounds. Therefore, this may allow their English pronunciation performance to be low during pronunciation class. However, the students took various strategies to overcome the pronunciation difficulties such as the utilisation of learning tools, platform media, and implementing several strategies. By this phenomenon, the idea arises for the researcher to scrutinise EFL students' difficulties in pronunciation learning and strategies used in pronunciation class.

In connection with this phenomenon, in recent years, there have been plenty of studies investigating pronunciation difficulties and strategies to overcome it. The studies showed the common difficulties faced by the students in learning pronunciation are consonant and vowel sounds (Motair & Mahmed, 2022; Lestari et al., 2020). However, the studies are limited as they are not involving strategies to overcome the difficulties simultaneously.

Therefore, to fill the gap, the present study focus on EFL student's segmental feature difficulties in pronunciation learning and strategies used during pronunciation class using qualitative descriptive case study.

1.2 Formulation of the Problems

Based on the background of the study, the writer formulated the following questions as the formulation of the problems:

1. What are the Department of English Education students' segmental feature difficulties in pronunciation learning in pronunciation class?
2. What are the Department of English Education students' segmental feature strategies to overcome the difficulties in pronunciation learning in pronunciation class?

1.3 Operational Definitions

The writer provides three definitions related to this study to avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study as follows:

1.3.1	**Students' Pronunciation Difficulties**	Difficulties experienced by the students in pronunciation learning of pronunciation segmental feature.
1.3.2	**Students' Pronunciation Strategies**	Number of ways to overcome difficulties faced by the students in pronunciation learning. In this context, the students applied several learning strategies to make their pronunciation segmental feature better.
1.3.3	**Pronunciation Class**	One of the online classes, namely Advanced English Pronunciation class by focusing on segmental features through the implementation of techniques and class activities to enable them to communicate effectively in the classroom and elsewhere.

1.4 Aim of the Study

According to the formulation of the problems, the study aims to scrutinise the EFL students' segmental feature difficulties in pronunciation learning and strategies used in pronunciation class at the Department of English Education.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

The research will expand and enrich the literature of English pronunciation difficulties faced by the EFL students along with the strategies to overcome the difficulties in pronunciation class.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

Practically, the research aids other writers to conduct some related studies as additional sources and references to find EFL students' difficulties and the best strategies used to overcome the English pronunciation difficulties in pronunciation class. In addition, it helps students who relate to pronunciation difficulties to cope with by implementing the strategies offered.

1.5.3 Empirical Significance

The research will offer empirical insight and understanding related to how to collect the data and analyse the data dealing with the EFL students' difficulties and strategies of English pronunciation in pronunciation class and motivates students in pronunciation learning.