

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Framework

1. Definition of Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the accurate and effective production of language sounds by coordinating the movement of speech organs such as the tongue, lips, and teeth. The smooth and accurate communication that results from this clarity in sound production makes it easy for listeners to comprehend spoken language (Hockett, 1950; Sakinah et al., 2024). Thus, pronunciation means how words are pronounced correctly according to the actual sounds of the language. Octaviani et al. (2024) states that although there is a wide range of vocabulary or how well grammar is used in oral conversation, if someone pronounces it poorly every time they speak, then it will also be difficult for the listener to understand the meaning of their words. Therefore, correct pronunciation must be learned and mastered to make communication easier to understand.

Overall, pronunciation involves not only the production of sounds but also how those sounds are perceived and interpreted to convey meaning (Mohammed & Idris, 2020). Octaviana (2019) also explains that if a person is good at vocabulary and grammar but their pronunciation is incorrect, the reception of the message could become very hard. That is why mastering certain pronunciation patterns is so important, as it helps those who are learning English to communicate more clearly.

Consequently, pronunciation is an essential component of spoken communication because it influences the extent to which messages are conveyed and understood clearly. Even if someone has a broad vocabulary and good grammar, unclear pronunciation can still lead to misunderstandings. Therefore, learning and practicing correct pronunciation is crucial for effective communication, especially for English language learners.

2. Components of English Pronunciation

According to Lasi (2020), there are 2 different types of components in pronunciation, which are:

- a. Segmental features are the pronunciation of individual sounds in language, such as vowels, consonants, and sound combinations (diphthongs and triphthongs). Each of these sounds is produced through specific mouth movements that regulate airflow. Pronouncing sounds correctly is important for clear communication as incorrect sounds can lead to misunderstanding. In English, some important aspects of pronunciation are the place, the way of pronouncing, and whether the sound is produced with or without vocal cord vibration. The sounds included in segmental features can be seen in the following tables (Ambalegin & Arianto, 2019).

Table 1. Vowel sounds

Vowels					
i:	ɪ	ʊ	u:	e	ə
ɜ:	ɔ:	æ	ʌ	ɑ:	ɒ

Table 2. Consonant sounds

Consonants							
p	b	t	d	k	g	ŋ	dʒ
f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ
h	m	n	ŋ	l	r	j	w

Table 3. Diphthongs sounds

Diphthongs							
eɪ	ɔɪ	aɪ	ɪə	ʊə	eə	əʊ	aʊ

Table 4. Triphthongs sounds

Triphthongs				
eɪə	aɪə	ɔɪə	əʊə	aʊə

Each sound has certain characteristics, such as where it is produced in the mouth and how air flows when it is produced. According to Khan (2020), segmental features focus on the accuracy of these sounds, which helps listeners recognize and understand words according to their intended meaning. Besides physical production, the clarity of these sounds can also be influenced by word structure and familiarity. Words that are used more frequently and have simpler structures are typically produced more clearly (Kehoe et al., 2024). This means that both articulation and word characteristics play an important role in how segmental sounds are produced and perceived in spoken English.

- b. Suprasegmental features, on the other hand, includes elements such as stress, tone of voice (intonation), and rhythm. These elements help convey meaning and emotion in conversation. Emphasis on certain syllables or words can affect understanding, while intonation shows the attitude and intent of the speaker. Rhythm makes pronunciation sound natural and fluid. Overall, understanding and mastering these elements helps English speakers sound more expressive and clear.

Suprasegmental features are very important for conveying meaning clearly in conversation. For example, changes in intonation can indicate whether a speaker is asking a question or making a statement. Proper stress also helps to distinguish words and highlight important parts of a sentence (Sakinah et al., 2024). Additionally, natural rhythm makes speech easier to follow and more pleasant to listen to (Octaviani et al., 2024). These features work together to support not only clarity but also the natural flow and expressiveness of spoken English.

In summary, English pronunciation consists of segmental and suprasegmental features that work together to create clear and effective speech. While segmental features relate to the correct production of individual sounds, suprasegmental features shape how those sounds are

used in natural speech and connected. Understanding both aspects helps ensure that spoken English is not only accurate, but also fluent and meaningful in communication.

3. First Language Interference Theory

First Language Interference, also known as L1 interference, is defined as habits in our first language (L1) influencing the use of a second language, which is known as a target language. L1 is first introduced by people from an early age, and people learn it in a natural way, without too much effort (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015; Syafutri & Saputra, 2021). So this language becomes part of their daily lives and thus becomes part of the way they speak. Syafutri and Saputra (2021) also mentioned Dulay et al. (1982), who stated that the automatic transfer from the first language to the second language due to habitual use is the framework of interference. Thus, first language habits can strongly influence second language performance, especially when these patterns are deeply rooted in daily communication.

According to Jendra (2010) in Suadiyatno (2020), several aspects of language interference can cause unique challenges for native speakers based on Weinreich's theory, including:

a. Lexical interference

Lexical interference explains interference that occurs when one vocabulary interferes with another (Syafutri & Saputra, 2021). Putra (2021) also states that lexical interference is when the words of one language are borrowed and changed to sound more familiar in another language. It also happens when the spelling of one language has influence on another. Learners frequently use words or phrases from their native language in their writing or speech when learning a second language (Zuhro & Budi, 2023). Since they are used to the vocabulary and structure of their first language, this happens naturally. As a result, students may unintentionally incorporate linguistic patterns already known from their first language into the new language, which may

affect the way they construct sentences and convey ideas in the target language (Aditia, 2024). This shows that lexical interference is closely related to familiarity with first language vocabulary, which can unintentionally shape word choices and expressions in the second language.

The struggles of EFL learners related to lexical interference can be in the form of various categories of errors. According to Zuhro and Budi (2023), examples of errors that arise due to lexical interference are as follows.

- 1) Borrowing: Learners use words from their first language in the target language. For example, an EFL learner mixes vocabulary from his first language into an English sentence even though the word does not exist in English.
- 2) Calque: Learners translate words or phrases from their first language literally into the target language. For example, an English learner from Indonesia might translate “rumah sakit” literally into “house sick” in English, even though the correct word is “hospital”.
- 3) Misselection: Learners choose the wrong word in the target language because it looks or sounds similar to a word in their first language. For example, an Indonesian learner of English might use the word “nice” to describe something “*enak*” in Indonesian, even though the more appropriate word would be “delicious”.
- 4) Semantic Confusion: Learners use words that have similar meanings to words in their first language, but the words do not fit the context. For example, in expressing “pedas” from Indonesian, they prefer to translate it as “it’s so hot” rather than using the more appropriate word, namely “it’s so spicy”.

b. Grammatical interference

Grammatical interference occurs when elements from the first language affect the structure of the second language, often leading to

errors in spoken and written communication (Fujiyanti et al., 2022). Syafutri and Saputra (2021) explains that this occurs when EFL learners apply grammatical structures or morphemes from the first language to the second or foreign language. According to Manafe et al. (2023), such interference can affect various aspects of language use, including word order, pronouns, conjunctions, subject-predicate agreement, verb forms, singular-plural forms, and prepositions. These aspects of error can lead to miscommunication and difficulties in interaction.

Grammatical interference can be divided into two categories: syntactic interference and morphological interference (Munandar, 2023). Syntactic interference includes errors in word usage, prepositions, redundant words, and word omissions. For example, errors in the use of prepositions such as “Most of people” should be “Most people”. Morphological interference, on the other hand, includes errors in the use of determiners, verb forms, tenses, subject-verb agreement, and singular-plural forms. For example, errors in the use of determiners such as “I got a news” should be “I got news”. Overall, grammatical interference can hinder the development of learners’ language skills.

c. Phonological interference

Phonological interference describes that when someone learns a second language, their first language can affect the way they pronounce the second language (Ambalegin & Hulu, 2019). This happens because second language learners tend to use phonological rules from their first language to pronounce words in the second language, which can lead to pronunciation errors. In the field of pronunciation, this will greatly hinder the process of language acquisition to the fullest. Manafe et al. (2023) also mentions that of the three kinds of interference aspects according to Weinreich’s theory, phonological is the most prevalent interference in the mother tongue.

Additionally, Suadiyatno (2020) also states that this interference is most often found in English learners in Indonesia, who often mispronounce English words. This highlights how first language sound patterns can strongly affect the way second language words are pronounced.

Numerous studies have been conducted on the impact of native language on pronunciation of English as a second language (EFL). The complexity of the phonological acquisition process for non-native speakers was illustrated by a significant study by Wardani and Suwartono (2019), who discovered at least three main cases by which native language can influence the pronunciation accuracy of English words and sentences. First of all, there are the sounds the English language makes that don't exist in the native language. Secondly, although both languages contain the same sounds, their different usages may result in pronunciation mistakes. Finally, sounds which are identical, yet are different in articulation can also create challenges for learners. These cases also align with the three indicators of phonological interference according to David (2003) in Putra (2021) and Hambali et al. (2021), as follows:

1) Sound Addition

Sound addition is a type of error that relates to the addition of some other sound to the correct sound of a word thus deviating from the standard rules of English (Hambali et al., 2021; O. A. Putra, 2021).

2) Sound Omission

Sound omission is a type of error that deals with the omission of sounds from a word. This interference occurs when a speaker omits a phoneme in a word which can change the accuracy of meaning in English (Hambali et al., 2021; O. A. Putra, 2021).

3) Sound Replacement (Substitution)

Sound substitution is a type of error that relates to the replacement of one sound with another sound that occurs due to the replacement

of phonemes in a word. In this interference, speakers usually replace the sound of some words with the wrong sound or even most of them replace words with close or similar words (Hambali et al., 2021; O. A. Putra, 2021).

Overall, first language interference is a natural part of second language development. Through lexical, grammatical, and phonological aspects, this clearly reflects how existing language habits influence the use of a new language. Specifically, lexical interference often arises through direct translation or the use of familiar vocabulary. Additionally, grammatical interference affects sentence structure and word forms by transferring patterns from the first language. Furthermore, phonological interference affects pronunciation, where native sound rules can cause sounds to be added, omitted, or replaced. Ultimately, these types of interference demonstrate that the influence of the first language remains strongly present and continues to shape second language performance both in speaking and writing.

4. Pronunciation Difficulties of Sundanese EFL Learners

The challenges faced by EFL learners from each region must be different, including in learning pronunciation. Based on various studies that have been conducted, such as those from Setyaningsih et al. (2019), Irawan et al. (2023) and Boediman (2023), there are several pronunciation difficulties that Sundanese EFL learners commonly face. Some of the categories of difficulties are as follows.

a. Consonant clusters

Consonant clusters can be defined as a sequence of two or more consonants that appear together in a syllable without an intervening vowel (Anttila et al., 2004; Younis, 2022). English consonant clusters exist in various forms of structure, two, three up to four consonants existing together (Istiqomah & Suprayogi, 2023). They occur in three different positions in the word, namely initial, medial, and final. Initial consonant clusters appear at the beginning of words, exemplified by

“bl” in “blue” or “str” in “street”, medial consonant clusters are found in the middle of words, such as “mp” in “camping” and “nt” in “winter”, and the final consonant cluster appears at the end of the word, as in “st” in “best” and “mp” in “jump”. Thus, the presence of consonant clusters in English shows a complex variety of structures, which can appear at the beginning, middle or end of words.

Due to the complexity of consonant combinations in English words, EFL learners can definitely experience difficulties because of the difference in patterns with their first language. The most common mispronunciation by Sundanese EFL learners found by Irawan et al. (2023) revealed that they often omit some consonants in consonant clusters in some English words. For example, in the pronunciation of “gift” or “camp” they pronounce it with “gif” and “cam”, then pronounce “sound” for “sounds”, jump” for “jumps”, “tex” for “text”, “warm” for “warmth”, and “attempt” for “attempts”. This shows that Sundanese EFL learners tend to omit the last consonant in consonant combinations in consonant clusters, either in two-consonant clusters, or three or four-consonants. According to this finding, it is stated that this phenomenon illustrates the influence of their mother tongue which does not have final consonant clusters.

b. Vowel-consonant inconsistency

One of the most challenging parts of learning English pronunciation is the inconsistency between the spelling and pronunciation of each word. As stated by Ambalegin and Arianto (2019), the relationship between letters and sounds in pronunciation is very difficult to predict. In particular, a single letter can represent various sounds, depending on its context in a word. This can apply to both vowels and consonants. For example, the letter “a” can sound /eɪ/ (as in “face”), /æ/ (as in “hat”), or /ə/ (as in “alone”). This vowel inconsistency can also be found in other letters such as “e”, “i”, “o”, “u”. Likewise with consonants, for example the letter “c” can sound

/s/ (as in “center”), /k/ (as in “coat”), or /tʃ/ (as in “chance”), while “g” can be pronounced as /dʒ/ (as in “gesture”) or /g/ (as in “garden”). As Ambalegin and Arianto (2019) have highlighted, these vowel and consonant inconsistencies pose a significant challenge for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), as it can be difficult to predict how certain letters should be pronounced in different words.

With the many tribes and languages in Indonesia, EFL learners from this country also have various difficulties which are influenced by their first language or native language. Such as the research conducted by Setyaningsih et al. (2019) which shows that there are English language learners who come from one of the tribes in Indonesia, namely Sundanese, who have difficulty in pronouncing English vowels and diphthongs. In this case, Sundanese EFL learners often feel confused in distinguishing long and short vowels, one example is in the word cheese which is pronounced as /tʃɪz/ instead of /tʃi:z/. This happens because their first language, Sundanese, does not have long vowel sounds. In addition, their first language also causes their difficulty in pronouncing diphthongs. For example, when they pronounce make as /mek/, bake as /bek/, and baby as /bebi/, not /'beibi/. This is caused by first language interference, where learners use their knowledge of Sundanese phonology to pronounce different English sounds (Octaviana, 2019). It can also be concluded that first language interference is the biggest factor that causes Sundanese learners to have difficulty in mastering English pronunciation.

In addition, Setyaningsih et al. (2019) also showed that the pronunciation difficulties experienced were also found in consonants such as /θ/ and /ð/. This is also in line with the research results from Boediman (2023) who found that the most frequent pronunciation errors experienced by Sundanese EFL learners are replacing θ (th) with “t”, ð (TH) with “d”, ʃ (sh) with “s”, ʒ (zh) with “s” or “j”, and v with “p”. Therefore, it can also be said that the challenges faced by

Sundanese EFL learners in English pronunciation are not only related to consonant and vowel clusters, but also caused by consonant sounds that do not exist in their native language. On the other hand, research from Boediman (2023) also identified three main factors causing these mispronunciations: limited vocabulary knowledge and understanding of phonetics and phonology (mainly due to the difference in vowel and consonant sounds between Sundanese and English), as well as the influence of Sundanese spelling (orthographic interference).

Findings from the above studies show that Sundanese EFL students face various pronunciation challenges influenced by linguistic and phonological differences between their native language and English. These difficulties include a tendency to simplify consonant clusters by omitting final consonants, confusion due to inconsistencies between spelling and pronunciation in English, and difficulties in producing long vowels, diphthongs, and unfamiliar consonant sounds such as /θ/, /ð/, and /v/. These issues are not only caused by phonological differences but also by the lack of similar sound patterns in Sundanese and the influence of the original spelling system. Overall, L1 interference remains the primary factor shaping how Sundanese learners perceive and produce English sounds, making pronunciation a persistent area of difficulty in their language learning process.

B. Study of the Relevant Research

There are many studies that have been conducted related to EFL learners' pronunciation difficulties, including research from Octaviani et al. (2024), Listyani et al. (2024), and Octaviana (2019).

The study conducted by Octaviani et al. (2024) at Tidar University investigated the impact of Indonesian students' native languages on their pronunciation of English. Five fourth-semester students from various Indonesian parts (Java, Sunda, Sumatra, and Jakarta) were involved. Pronunciation errors differed by region, according to data from interviews and pronunciation tests. Vowel misunderstanding was common among Javanese

speakers, who confused the long vowel /i:/ in “teams” with the short vowel /ɪ/ and the vowel /ə/ in “oxygen” with /ɛ/. Consonants were often substituted by Sundanese and Batak speakers, who would pronounce /ð/ in “with” as /t/, creating /wɪt/, and replace /z/ with /s/ in “easily”, creating /'isəli/. Even students from Jakarta, whose pronunciation was clearer, kept some aspects of the local accent. The study demonstrated that native language strongly affects English pronunciation, resulting in accents and non-standard pronunciations.

A similar study is carried out by Listyani et al. (2024) at a private institution in Central Java, which revealed that the participants’ first language (L1) significantly affected their English pronunciation, leading to various errors. Specifically, the research identified three primary categories of pronunciation errors: the omission of sounds, particularly fricatives like /dʒ/, /ð/, /θ/, and /ʃ/, along with final consonants such as /d/ and /z/; vowel substitutions, exemplified by the mispronunciation of “boat” as “bot”; and incorrect stress placement in multi-syllable words. These pronunciation difficulties are mainly due to the habit of pronouncing words in Indonesian and the lack of exposure to ideal English pronunciation. As a result, students tend to use their mother tongue accent when speaking in English, even though they have been taught the correct pronunciation.

Moreover, Octaviana (2019) conducted an analysis of Sundanese English learners’ pronunciation errors at Garut High School, West Java. The study revealed that the primary causes were both internal, such as a lack of practice, self-confidence, and exposure to English, and external, such as differences between Sundanese and English pronunciation systems and differences between English writing and pronunciation. This research builds on some of the errors, particularly on vowel sounds like diphthongs and long and short vowels, primarily because Sundanese does not possess the corresponding sounds. These included mispronouncing /æ/ to /e/, reducing long vowels like /ɔ:/ to shorter forms, and substituting /θ/ with /t/. The learners also had difficulties with triphthongs, such as /aʊə/ in the word “hour”, and diphthongs, such as /eɪ/ in the word “wait”, which were phonological variations. The major

challenges include the difficulty of producing long vowels and diphthongs, and not being able to hear and distinguish sounds that do not exist in Sundanese, such as /æ/ and /θ/. In addition, there is a tendency to pronounce words as they are written, and this leads to errors, especially in instances of complex diphthongs that are required for proper pronunciation.

These three studies have provided evidence showing how much EFL learners' mother tongue can affect their ability to pronounce words in the language they are learning correctly. From the research of Octaviani et al. (2024) and Listyani et al. (2024) it can be seen that regional language differences and first language influences can cause problems such as mixing vowel pronunciation, consonant mispronunciation, as well as the use of improper intonation when pronouncing English words. Octaviana (2019), who investigated Sundanese speakers, also showed that the difference between Sundanese and English sounds can be a challenge for them when learning English pronunciation. The findings from these studies emphasize that EFL learners need to have sufficient exposure to English pronunciation to reduce the influence of their first language. To understand these challenges in more depth, more detailed research is needed that focuses on EFL learners' pronunciation difficulties based on their language background. Therefore, this study focuses on finding out the specific pronunciation challenges faced by EFL learners whose first language is Sundanese and finding out the details of the difficulties they face.