

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter explains theories that underpin the study. The theories are correlated to pronunciation difficulties, the impact of L1 on English pronunciation, factors contributing to pronunciation difficulties, and pronunciation learning strategies, also study the relevant research.

#### **A. Theoretical Framework**

This chapter explains theories that underpin the study. The theories are correlated to pronunciation difficulties, the impact of L1 on English pronunciation, factors contributing to pronunciation difficulties, and pronunciation learning strategies, as well as relevant previous studies. The researcher believes that these theories are essential to explain the real phenomenon occurring among pre-service English teacher students in Indonesia, especially those from multilingual regions. By combining these theories, the researcher can better understand how first language (L1) phonological systems influence the production of English sounds, stress, and intonation patterns. Furthermore, these theories provide a foundation for analyzing students' learning strategies to overcome pronunciation difficulties caused by L1 interference. The theories are not only used to support the research but also to help the researcher interpret the findings more critically within the EFL context.

##### **1. First Language (L1)**

L1, or first language refers to the native language learners acquire naturally during their early developmental years. In language education, L1 denotes a learner's first language, which can be utilized as a pedagogical tool in teaching a second or foreign language (L2) to enhance comprehension engagement (Hermini, 2019). L1 can facilitate comprehension in EFL classrooms by providing a familiar linguistic framework for learners, aiding in the understanding of complex concepts (Wang & Xu, 2023). It also serves as a

means to negotiate meaning, address false cognates, and engage multilingual resources, enhancing overall classroom interaction (Li, 2023).

In language learning, L1 aids in understanding complex concepts, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, acting as a cognitive bridge for learners (Dupont et al., 2023; Luitel et al., 2023). Educators often utilize L1 to check understanding, motivate students, and create an engaging learning environment (Liando et al., 2023). Additionally, in multilingual settings, L1 can help tailor instruction to diverse student backgrounds, fostering inclusivity (Dupont et al., 2023).

Moreover, there are challenges to the use of L1 in language learning. Excessive use of L1 may impede the development of L2 proficiency, leading to dependency on the native language (Tiwari, 2024; Liando et al., 2023). Furthermore, globalization and digitalization also play a big role in the use of L1. The evolving educational landscape necessitates a re-evaluation of L1 education to incorporate digital literacy and diverse cultural contexts (Bax et al., 2024).

Therefore, in this study, understanding the concept of L1 is important because the participants come from different local language backgrounds. Each L1 has distinct phonetic systems and rules, which influence how students produce English sounds. By defining L1, the researcher can explain how students' pronunciation difficulties are directly connected to the sound system of their first language.

## **2. The Impact of L1 on Learning English**

Selinker's Interlanguage Theory (1972) offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how L1 influences the acquisition of L2. The theory suggests that learners develop an interlanguage, a transitional linguistic system that combines elements of their native language and the target language. A central concept in the theory is L1 interference, where phonological, grammatical, or lexical rules from L1 are transferred into L2. Interlanguage is also viewed as a complex, nonlinear system influenced by individual creativity

and social adaptation (Tarone, 2024). It incorporates features from both L1 and L2, resulting in distinct grammatical and lexical structures (Wei, 2023).

In pronunciation, this interference often results in consistent errors when learners apply the phonological rules of L1 to English sounds. Phonological rules from L1 can lead to mispronunciations in L2, as seen in Pakistani ESL learners who struggle with English sounds due to native phonetic systems (Rasheed, 2024). Japanese learners also exhibit over-passivization errors in English, which are influenced by their L1's morphological structures (Tazaki, 2023).

Selinker (1972) also highlights the phenomenon of fossilization, where repeated reliance on L1 features can cause incorrect forms to become ingrained, even after exposure to L2 instruction. Interlanguage fossilization occurs when students reach a plateau, preventing further linguistic progress (Dai, 2023; Geng, 2024). According to Guo (2022), this phenomenon appears due to several factors including negative language transfer, ineffective teaching methods, and overgeneralization of L2 rules. For example, an Indonesian learner might consistently mispronounce English diphthongs or consonant clusters due to differences in phonological structures between the two languages. Fossilization underscores the persistent impact of L1 on L2 learning, particularly in contexts with limited exposure to native L2 pronunciation models (Selinker, 1972).

There are some causes of fossilization. In psychological factors, learners may unconsciously apply L1 rules to L2, resulting in persistent errors (Ahibalova, 2019). Limited interaction in L2 contexts can also reinforce fossilized forms (Wang, 2023). Furthermore, Wang (2023) added that students who are overwhelmed may revert to familiar L1 structures when under pressure.

So, the researcher applies this theory to explore how pre-service English teachers unconsciously transfer elements of their first language into English pronunciation. This theory is highly relevant because it explains the consistent errors and fossilization that appeared in the participants' English pronunciation during interviews. It provides a clear framework for analyzing the influence of L1 interference on segmental and suprasegmental features of English speech.

### **3. EFL Students**

The term "EFL students" refers to people who are learning English as a second language. These are students who are learning English as a second language, and they may even be living in a nation where English is not the primary language. According to Si (2019), EFL is a group of people who study English in places where it is not a commonly spoken language. As a result, English is not a native tongue among Indonesians, making it an EFL nation.

EFL portrayed situations where students were learning English to interact with other English speakers worldwide. Blanche (2004) states that these foreign language scenarios are those in which students are ill-prepared for communication situations outside of the classroom. EFL students are individuals who come from nations where English is not the primary or accepted language, such as China, Japan, South Korea, and Indonesia (Si, 2019). Given that English is not always used in everyday conversation in those nations, it may be said that EFL students are learning in a context where the great majority of people do not use English as their first language.

Additionally, since Indonesia is an EFL country, it may be inferred that EFL students struggle to acquire pronunciation because they do not speak English as well as native speakers. However, pronunciation is not a problem for every EFL student but some of them may still face difficulties in pronouncing English words.

In the context of this study, pre-service English teacher students are categorized as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Recognizing their status as EFL learners is important because it reflects their limited daily exposure to authentic English pronunciation, which contributes to persistent difficulties, especially with unfamiliar English sounds. This definition helps frame the study within the Indonesian EFL teaching and learning environment.

### **4. Pronunciation**

#### **a. Definition of Pronunciation**

An important part of learning oral communication is pronunciation. A letter or word is pronounced according to its sound when we speak. According

to Gilakjani (2012), from the standpoint of speakers' and listeners' hearing, pronunciation is the development of a sound system that doesn't impede interaction. Pronunciation is the proper way to say a word. The appropriateness or accuracy of the spoken vocalizations is often used to discuss this process. In summary, pronunciation refers to the way a language or phrase is spoken.

The way it sounds is greatly influenced by the components of pronunciation. In terms of sound, each component is unique. According to Manik (2015), who cited Kelly (2000), there are two components: segmental and suprasegmental traits. As a result, these two components will be present when pupils are learning pronunciation. The way it sounds is greatly influenced by the components of pronunciation.

Features that are suprasegmental are similar to language words or sentence structures. According to Manik (2015), stress and intonation are considered suprasegmental properties. One of the most important aspects of word recognition in speech is stress. Reed and Levis (2015) define stress as the force or volume applied when a syllable is pronounced in a way that emphasizes it. The change in sound between high and low tones is known as intonation. In a phrase, intonation is the upward and downward movement of tone over different syllables (Reed and Levis, 2015). In conclusion, stress and intonation are critical phrase identities that are included in the suprasegmental feature.

It is clear from the previous explanation that pronunciation is a crucial component of language and phrase utterance. Segmental and suprasegmental characteristics are the two components of pronunciation. The stress and intonation of language words and sentence structure are comparable to suprasegmental properties. Every letter and word, including vowel and consonant sounds, is pronounced according to a segmental characteristic, also known as a phoneme.

#### b. Pronunciation Difficulties

Pronunciation difficulties among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Indonesia refer to the challenges faced by individuals attempting to accurately pronounce English words (Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Fadillah,

2020). These difficulties included shifts in vowels and consonants, mother tongue influence, limited exposure to the target language, and biological factors.

Moreover, EFL students frequently encounter several difficulties in achieving clear English pronunciation, which can be attributed to various factors including the influence of their native language, lack of exposure to authentic English sounds, and limited practice opportunities. These challenges often manifest in specific pronunciation issues, such as difficulties with English phonemes not present in the student's native language or problems with stress and intonation patterns (Nguyen et al., 2021). Pronunciation difficulties as one of the key challenges for EFL learners, and addressing these challenges is crucial for both learners' confidence and communicative competence.

In addition, Simatupang and Tambunsaribu~~—~~(2021) stated that there are some reasons why some L2 learners face some problems related to difficulties in L2 pronunciation, such as:

- 1) Spelling and sound may be related in a student's mother tongue.
- 2) While learning English, an L2 student may be initially used to English sounds associated with the new sound-spelling correlations.
- 3) Some of the sounds of their mother tongue might not be present in English.
- 4) Their mother tongue might not have all of the English sounds.
- 5) The emphasis and intonation patterns in English might be strange and confusing for English language learners.

Students' pronunciation of English is influenced by a variety of factors (Phany & Dara, 2024). According to Begum and Hoque (2016), the primary causes of pronunciation were inadequate utilization of contemporary technologies, ineffective teachers, and social problems. L1 interference, lack of motivation, economic factors, and fewer opportunities to be exposed to the target language were other connected difficulties.

When someone learns English as a second or foreign language, they may have trouble producing sounds that are not present in their native language or

adjusting to the different stress and intonation patterns of English. This means that interference from the first language also makes it harder to pronounce the sounds of the target language (Maiza, 2020; Selinker, 1972). According to Munro et al. (2010), cited in Jihad et al., (2024), "L1 interference is a complex phenomenon that can be influenced by a variety of factors, including the learner's age at which L2 acquisition began, the amount of exposure the learner has to L2, and the similarity between L1 and L2 sound systems."

Therefore, the researcher considers this definition crucial because pronunciation is the core focus of this study. By understanding how pronunciation is structured, the researcher can systematically identify which specific English sounds, stress patterns, or intonation aspects cause difficulties for students. This helps clarify how L1 interference affects different areas of English pronunciation.

## **5. EFL Students' Pronunciation Learning Strategies**

Pronunciation is one of the most important factors in determining whether non-native speakers are perceived as being proficient in English, particularly EFL students. According to research by Pawlak and Szyszka (2018) precise pronunciation can significantly improve understanding and lessen miscommunications between speakers of other languages. EFL students' confidence when speaking a foreign language can also be increased by using proper pronunciation. EFL students who received pronunciation instruction reported feeling more motivated and confident when speaking the language, according to (Abdalla et al., 2020). Consequently, learning pronunciation can help EFL students comprehend more, and while speaking English, it can boost their drive and self-confidence.

For EFL students, studying skills related to pronunciation are essential. Any technique, instrument, or method that students utilize to help, expedite, or enhance their pronunciation learning is referred to as a pronunciation learning strategy. In a nutshell, learning strategies are chosen and used to help students reach their learning goals. The development of spoken English as a second language and English as a foreign language can be greatly enhanced by learning

methodologies. Effective language learners employ techniques to acquire the skills they need (Rokoszewska, 2012). Therefore, it is hoped that if students use pronunciation strategies to learn, the learning process will be more successful.

Additionally, students' own pronunciation skills improve when they employ pronunciation learning tools. According to Szyszka (2015), strategies are tools for self-directed, active engagement that are especially important for language learning and would be essential for developing communicative competence. Improved proficiency and greater confidence are the results of pronunciation learning techniques. Students' intentional actions and thought processes to comprehend and gain greater control over a range of pronunciation-related aspects are known as pronunciation learning techniques. Because it boosts confidence and improves proficiency, a pronunciation learning technique is therefore crucial to improving EFL students' pronunciation expertise.

Another avenue of research has considered the effectiveness of pronunciation strategy use (Kirkova-naskova, 2023). For instance, Osburne (2003) stated that learners employ self-monitoring strategies to repair their mispronunciations using imitation, paralanguage (speed, volume, clarity), voice quality settings, and focusing on individual sounds/clusters or syllables/words, and prosodic structure. Other studies show that high- and low-achieving learners use different pronunciation learning strategies (PLSs), which differ depending on the task (Szyszka, 2021). Szyszka (2021) mentioned that the most frequently used PLSs by learners were checking pronunciation in the dictionary and reading words and texts aloud. Sardegna (2022) in Kirkova-naskova, (2023) conducted a strategy-based instruction and tested its efficacy. She found out that such instruction promotes learner autonomy and self-regulated learning -learners trained to use pronunciation strategy protocols demonstrated: a) greater success when they practiced frequently; b) higher motivation to continue practicing after instruction ended; and c) a high sense of self-efficacy.

Therefore, learning skills for pronunciation are crucial because they help students become more proficient and confident speakers. Pronunciation learning tools make it easier for students to learn pronunciation. For this reason,



EFL students must use pronunciation learning tools to help them acquire pronunciation.

## **B. Study of the Relevant Research**

The researcher reviewed and studied relevant studies before deciding to conduct this study. A lot of studies have investigated EFL pronunciation difficulties. The first study was conducted by Munro, (2018) examined the difficulties EFL learners face in acquiring accurate pronunciation in a second language (L2) and critically assessed the effectiveness of predicting pronunciation errors through contrastive analysis between L1 and L2. This analysis approach aims to identify common pronunciation issues by comparing phonetic differences between learners' native language (L1) and English.

The second study was conducted by Fadillah (2020) that categorized common pronunciation issues among Indonesian EFL learners, highlighting the role of L1 phonological transfer, limited exposure to English, and minimal use of pronunciation monitoring tools like PRAAT. The study identifies several common pronunciation challenges, particularly in the production of certain vowels and consonants that do not exist in Indonesian phonology. Although the study documents these pronunciation issues, it primarily focuses on providing a broad overview rather than proposing specific instructional solutions.

Furthermore, Cholisah et al. (2021) also found factors that influence good English pronunciation among students in an English Language Program in Indonesia. The researchers identified four main factors that contribute to pronunciation proficiency which are education, exposure, environment, and motivation. The study's findings show that supportive environments, like family and peers, as well as educational methods (specifically reflective practices), significant exposure to English through media, and strong internal motivation are crucial for improving pronunciation skills. Moreover, the study aligns with this study that explores factors that impact pronunciation difficulties in EFL learners, making it a valuable reference for considering both the challenges and strategies that contribute to pronunciation outcomes.

This study will fill the gaps in earlier research on EFL pronunciation difficulties. While Munro (2018) critiqued traditional error prediction methods through contrastive analysis, the study lacked actionable solutions for instructional implementation. Similarly, Fadillah (2020) documented common pronunciation issues among Indonesian EFL learners and highlighted the role of L1 interference but provided only a broad overview without proposing specific instructional strategies. Furthermore, while Cholisah et al. (2021) emphasized factors like education, exposure, and motivation in successful pronunciation learning, they did not address why some learners struggle despite these positive influences. By focusing on Indonesian EFL students experiencing persistent pronunciation difficulties, this study will examine the specific impact of L1 interference on their pronunciation challenges. It will also explore deeper causes and propose practical, targeted strategies to help learners overcome these obstacles in the EFL context.