

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains some topics as follows: Background of the research, Research questions, Objective of the study, Limitation of the research, Significance of the research, and Definitions of the key terms.

1.1 Background

In the era of globalization and communication, learning English gives students many advantages to improve their background knowledge. Many students are studying English as part of their current studies, including students in the English study program at the University of Jambi, which is the subject of this research. English is a universal international language. English is one of the most spoken languages in the world. Therefore, if you are good at English, you can easily communicate with people from different countries. Rao (2019) states that English is a global language. This statement represents the meaning that various nations use English to communicate with governments worldwide. So, English is an international language as well as a global language.

In the English language, four skills must be mastered when learning English; speaking plays an important role in connecting people with different mother tongues. According to Richards (2013), speaking is an instrument action the speaker says to cause an effect on the listener. Furthermore, he also states that a person's speaking success or failure is measured by a person's ability to carry out a

conversation in that language. Thus, it can be concluded that speaking is a way for someone to communicate with other people for a certain purpose.

In all aspects of speaking, pronunciation is the most important aspect of speaking to learn as a second language learner. Wang (2022) stated that pronunciation is a way of producing language sounds. Meanwhile, Horwitz (2017) said that pronunciation is a way of pronouncing word for word. From the explanations mentioned above, it can be concluded that pronunciation is how a person says words to produce the sound of language that will be used to communicate.

Articulating a word or sentence clearly and accurately is crucial to achieving effective communication. Proficiency in pronunciation can assist students in understanding and producing sounds that are clear and easily understandable to others. However, students often need to pay more attention to pronunciation skills in learning English, resulting in various communication problems. As stated by Brown (2014), one common issue in learning English pronunciation is that students encounter difficulty in pronouncing certain sounds such as "th" and "r." The challenging words to pronounce are "th" and "r" because students often use an accent unsuitable for the actual English accent. Other issues include improper intonation usage and stress on particular words. Even though these problems are considered relatively simple, many students still face them. These issues can affect the listener's comprehension of what is being discussed and hinder students' communication.

Based on the issues, this research aims to describe the views, understanding, and challenges faced by students in English pronunciation skills, both in terms of intonation and word stress, as well as from the point of view of pronouncing individual letters. By knowing students' perceptions of the pronunciation element problems they experienced, this study also identifies strategies that have been applied to improve their pronunciation skills. Therefore, the researcher intends to conduct this research, entitled " Students' Perception of Pronunciation Elements in the English Study Program: Jambi University," focusing on the problems and strategies in pronunciation. The results of this research are expected to provide a deeper understanding of the pronunciation barriers students face and provide valuable insights into effective strategies to overcome these problems.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background that has been described, this study will propose several problem formulations as follows:

1. What challenges do students face in English pronunciation elements: consonants, vowels, diphthongs, word stress, rhythm, and intonation?
2. What are their strategies to deal with their problem?

1.3 Objective of Research

Based on the formulation of the problems that have been proposed, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To describe how students' perception of pronunciation elements problems in speaking English.

2. To describe the students' strategies to deal with their problems.

1.4 Limitation of Research

The researcher limited the research by focusing only on students' problems with the elements of pronunciation when speaking English, not on aspects, components, or other factors. The author limited the participants to English language learners in the English study program at Jambi University. Participants' opinions and experiences regarding pronunciation are the main results of this research.

In this research, the findings are also limited to discussing what problems they faced in the pronunciation element and how they overcame these problems. The researcher only describes the data and relates their findings to previous research.

1.5 Significance of Research

This research briefly discusses students' perceptions of pronunciation problems in speaking. The study is expected to provide useful insights into English language learning. The study's theoretical and practical foundations are expected to be beneficial in two ways.

1. Theoretically, the research aims to enrich and expand the knowledge scale for English language learners.
2. It can benefit students, teachers, schools, and other researchers in several ways.
 - a) For students, it can enhance their English-speaking skills and enable them to communicate effectively.
 - b) For teachers, it can be a reference for effective teaching practices to improve students' oral English proficiency.

- c) The research findings can help improve the quality of English language instruction in schools.
- d) Lastly, other researchers can use this study as a reference for future research.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

The researcher defines the key terms used in this research to avoid misunderstanding the important terms used; the researcher defines some keywords.

1. Perception

Pride and Ferrell (2013:45) said, "Our perception of something can be different depending on our point of view."

2. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the way a particular sound or sounds are produced, and pronunciation stresses the way sounds are perceived by the hearer more (Richard and Schmidt, 2002, p. 429).

3. Speaking

Bailey (2005) states, "Speaking is a skill that involves producing a systematic verbal expression of language to convey meaning." (p.1).