

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

People need to communicate with each other, and this is why language is so important in human communication. A language is a form of human communication that allowed people to experience, explain, and share knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors. Word structure (morphology), grammar and sentence structure (syntax), word meaning (semantics), and social appropriateness (pragmatics) are all rules in a language. The importance of English as a foreign language has been proven around the world. In addition, English is very important as an international language to understand science and technology.

Pronunciation is extremely important to acquire because it is a vital type of communication. The production of sounds, particularly in speaking being used to express meaning is known as pronunciation (Cook cited in Gilakjani, 2016). Pronunciation is important since it is the first thing that people notice about a person's ability to communicate (Zimmermann cited in Kurniawan, 2016). Pronunciation is necessary for effective communication since it determines how people understand what they were saying. The pronunciation pattern for English words is also unique. If the pronunciation is incorrect, the recipient will misunderstand the message. The stress of syllables on parts of a word, as well as the pronunciation of the sounds of the letters in a word, frequently impact the meaning and context of the word, permanently affecting the meaning of the communicated statement.

English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesia, and the students only learn it in school. As a result, many students claim that pronunciation in English is tough for non-native English speakers. Due to the phonetic differences between English and Indonesian, the students have difficulty pronouncing English words (Mauludin, 2015). In Indonesian, there are only two types of vowels; monophthong and diphthong, however in English, there

are three types of vowels; monophthong, diphthong, and triphthong (Candra & Sukma, 2020). According to this theory, there is a significant phonetic difference between the first and target languages in terms of the number of vowel sounds. Triphthong is a gliding of three vowels continuous and in English, there are five triphthong sounds namely /eɪə/, /aɪə/, /ɔɪə/, /əʊə/ and /aʊə/ while the Indonesian language has no triphthong itself. Based on the problems and statements above, the students' background affect on how well the students pronounce the foreign language.

Based on the researcher's preliminary research, the researcher had an informal discussion about pronunciation with several of the third-semester students of the English Education Department in academic year 2021/2022 at IKIP PGRI Pontianak. While having the discussion, the researcher detected that one of the student pronounced lower as [lowə:r], it should be [ləʊə]. This word belongs to triphthong sound, moreover the students also claimed that they have difficulties in pronouncing words. To prove the students' statement, the researcher asked the students to pronounce five triphthong words, and it is proven by three words that pronounced wrongly which mean they have difficulties in pronouncing triphthong words such as bayonet [beɪə(ʊ)net] they pronounced as [beɪounet], annihilate [ənaiəleɪt] pronounced as [ænhileɪt], and flour [flaʊə] they pronounced as [flɔ:rʰ].

Studies done previously that looked at students' pronunciation errors. First, (Sulaiman & Putra, 2017) find that students' ability to pronounce words was rated as "fair," with some pronunciation issues including long and short vowels caused by issues with the learning process and social elements. Second, according to (Octaviana, 2019), both internal and external influences have a major role in the students' English pronunciation errors. Third, according to (Arisna, Saliha, & Mahmud, 2019), stated students as respondents ignores the phonological component and results in changes to the two major phonemes /eɪ/ and /aɪə/. According to (Kayyis & Sari, 2017), influences from students' native languages, their age when learning English,

and variances in phonetic transcriptions all contributed to students pronouncing English words incorrectly.

According to the explanation above, the researcher inspired to research at the sameness topic and the researcher focus on the triphthong sounds. Analyzing the errors can assist pronunciation teaching by providing insight into what needs to be improved and, eventually, a more effective strategy for teaching it. Thus, the researcher is interested in determining the pronunciation errors of the English triphthong sounds which do not exist in the Indonesian sound system.

B. Research Problems

Based on the background above, some problems that need to be answered from this research are:

1. Which English triphthong sound is the most mispronounced by EFL students?
2. What are the factors of pronunciation errors of triphthong sounds produced by EFL students?

C. Research Purposes

The purposes of this research are:

1. To find out the most mispronounced of English triphthong sound by the EFL students.
2. To describe the factors of pronunciation errors of triphthong sounds produced by the EFL students.

D. Benefits of Research

There are theoretically and practical benefits from this research as follows:

1. Theoretical Significance

This research can give a better insight for developing knowledge and a source of reference for future studies on EFL students' pronunciation errors, particularly in triphthong sounds.

2. Practical Significance:

a. To the students

The idea of this research is to increase students' awareness of their errors. Then, they can avoid it and speak English fluently with proper pronunciation.

b. To the teachers

This research will assist teachers to remain aware of the various types of pronunciation errors made by students. The outcome of this research will increase a teacher's motivation to teach students more effectively.

c. To the other researchers

This research can be used as a model for future studies investigating a relevant event utilizing a different research strategy or approach.

E. Scope of Research

1. Research Variable

A variable is a characteristic of an individual or organization that can be measured or observed by researchers (Creswell, 2012). As a result, this study contains a single variable, namely the pronunciation errors of English triphthong sounds.

2. Research Terminologies

a. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the process whereby the words are transformed into sound which includes phonation that is concerned with the way words and phrases are pronounced as well as the way pitch, loudness, and duration play a role in determining rhythm and intonation.

b. Error

An error occurs when something is performed incorrectly or wrongly and a learner is unsure of what is true because the learner does not

have a background in that subject so the learner are unable to correct it themselves.

c. Triphthong

Triphthong is a part of vowels and is represented by three symbols which are gliding from one vowel to the next and then to the third, there are: /eɪə/, /aɪə/, /ɔɪə/, /əʊə/ and /aʊə/.

d. EFL student

EFL student is a student who learns English as a Foreign Language who lived in a country that does not speak English as their main or second language, such as in Indonesia. EFL students in this research are third-semester students of the English Education Department in academic year 2021/2022 at IKIP PGRI Pontianak.