THE PERCEPTION OF SIXTH-SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM OF SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY ON ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION AFTER TAKING PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY COURSE

A Thesis by

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Language and Arts Educational Department



FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY PALEMBANG 2021

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DECLARATION

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Certify that thesis entitled "The Perception of Sixth-semester Students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University on English Pronunciation after Taking Phonetics and Phonology Course" is my own work and I did not do plagiarism or in appropriate quotation against the ethic and rules commended by Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia No. 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserved to face the court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Palembang, 30 July, 2021

The Undersigned,

Fadila Ayu Safitri

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THESIS DEDICATIONS AND MOTTO

I sincerely dedicated this thesis to:

Almighty God, Allah SWT who has given me strength, health, and spirit to finish this thesis. I also would like to say thanks to my beloved family who always support me in any condition, especially for my mother, father, and youngest brother, thanks for all the prays for me. The most thankful to myself who already survived and took any risk in finishing this thesis.

Motto

"Believe that Allah is always by our side in every situation"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would never be finished without the blessing of the Almighty God, ALLAH SWT. This thesis is conducted to finish and fulfill one of requirements to acquire S-1 Degree at English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University.

Therefore, the writer would also like to express her greatest love to:

- My parents and brother, Ririn Handayani as my mother and Antoni as my father, thanks for your praying, support, and love, as well as my brother Tio Rifando Syahrial who always helped me and cheered me up.
- 2. My great advisor, Ibu Dra. Zuraida, M.Pd., thanks for your advice, help, and guidance, I can't finish this thesis without you.
- My beloved cousins Ayuk Lia, who always supports
 me, as well as Nadin, Aurel and Zelo, and also my
 elder aunty Makwo Yulisma who has helped me in
 many things.
- 4. My beloved friends Tempe Kering Squad (Mulia Zalmetri, Cris Try Cania Putri, and Rani) thanks for your togetherness, support, and your help in college to make every single I spent in college colorful and unforgettable.
- My classmates, Kpopers Squad (Krisda Yulianti, Tiur Mauli Grace, Verensia Milenia, Annisa Luthfia Dayu Rahmah, and Nadya Maulina) as well as Wonwoo,

- Joshua and SVT who always support me and cheer me up, I'm so grateful to know you guys.
- My buddies, Pudja Hermana, Rizki Utami Putri, Muthia Zahranisa, Liza Aprilia, Dino, Jaehyuk, and Treasure, as well as AHK Squad.
- 7. SEESPA UNSRI 2017, Thanks for their support, help, and best memory during study at Sriwijaya University.
- 8. Myself, who've struggled in finishing this thesis.

Palembang, 30 July, 2021

The writer,

F2C1AAHF1651Z037

Fadila Ayu Safitri

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THE PERCEPTION OF SIXTH-SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH

EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM OF SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY ON ENGLISH

PRONUNCIATION AFTER TAKING PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY COURSE

ABSTRACT

English pronunciation involves the production of each sound and pronunciation of

words, phrases, and sentences with correct spelling and intonation. This study aimed to find out

sixth-semester students' perception on English pronunciation improvement after taking

Phonetics and Phonology course. This study conducted at English Education Study Program,

Sriwijaya University. There were 74 participants of sixth-semester students of English Education

Study Program participating in the study. To answer the formulation of this problem, the writer

used convergent mixed-method approach. The data of this study obtained from close-ended

questionnaire and interview. The results of this study indicated that the students have the same

perception that the students greatly assisted by the lecturers in improving their English

pronunciation. The students were eagerly participated in the course and motivated learning in

Phonetics and Phonology course. In addition, students also have ability to read phonetics symbols

on dictionary and they are aware to check the pronunciation more often to avoid any

pronunciation errors.

Keywords: Perception, Pronunciation, Phonetics and Phonology Course

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents: (1) background of the study, (2) problem of the study, (3) objectives of the study, and (4) significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

As the global language, the people need to be able in speaking English or at least understand English, because it covers various aspects and diverse settings. Ahulu (1997) coins it, "General English", McArthur (1987) says it, "World Standard (Spoken) English", instead Crystal (1979) invents a phrase, "English as a global language" as well as House (1999), Gnutzmann (2000), Seidlhofer (2001) and Jenkins (2007) name it as "English as a Lingua França". In the other hand, Widdowson (2001) and Jenkins (2000) coined another phrase, "English as an International Language". Rao (2019) mentioned that in business matters or business organizations, most of native and non-native speakers of English are using English as their mode of communication. It means that English is the most widely spoken and most widely used in almost all the major fields around the world, for example, economics and business, International relations, the media – current information and popular culture, education, communications, and international travel and safety. According to Lyons (2017), out of the world's approximately 7.5 billion inhabitants, 1.5 billion people or 20% of the Earth's population speak in English. In Asia, people use English as a second or foreign language and the most English speakers come from India (125 million), followed by Pakistan (94 million) and Philippines (90 million). As it is known, Indonesians are still lack of English skills, because of their lack of knowledge or the application of English in the school isn't optimal. Based on the data from English First (EF) (2020) on its survey of English Proficiency Index (EPI), Indonesia ranks 74th from a total of 100 countries in the world, and ranks 15th from 24 countries in Asia – with a score of 453 points, which is categorized as low proficiency. It is proved that Indonesia English educational system isn't optimal, moreover English isn't learned and applied in the curriculum of elementary school. The English subject needs to have equalization among other subjects, which is English is also important to be learned.

Based on the English Proficiency Index (EPI) in Indonesia is lack, so students are expected to improve their English skills in order to gain EPI in Indonesia. In studying English, there are four skills being considered, such as, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Reading in L2 context can be defined as a combination of skills and abilities that individuals bring to bear as they begin to read, as well as the purposes of reading can include to find the information by scanning and searching, learn, critique, evaluate, and comprehend the basic comprehension (Grabe, 2010). The other skill is writing, Hedge (2005) defines that writing is about guiding students to produce whole pieces of communication, to link and develop information, ideas, or arguments for a particular reader or group of readers. Instead of reading and writing, listening is the process of receiving, constructing meaning from and responding to spoken and/or non-verbal messages (Brownell, 2002). Researchers have revealed that listening is not a passive skill but an active process of constructing meaning from a stream of sounds. Listening can be considered the fundamental skill to speaking because without understanding the input at the right level, any learning cannot begin (Solak, 2016). Richards (2008, p. 19) states that the mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many second language or foreign language learners. In conclusion, the English learners should be mastered in all English skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), in which to improve their English to be native-like.

Among four English skills; speaking, reading, writing, and listening, speaking is the most difficult and needs some aspects to be considered in order to improve speaking skills quality (Ahmad, 2018). Based on his statement, Ahmad has found on his previous research that students have difficulty in speaking, because of some aspects need to be considered. As stated by Hormaililis (2003), he mentioned that there are four aspects have a great influence in speaking skill, they are: vocabulary,

grammar, fluency, and pronunciation. Vocabulary is one of the extreme aspects that support speaking activity which deals with the right and appropriate words (Hormailis, 2003). According to Brown (2009), grammar is the rule by which put together meaningful a part of a language to communicate messages that are comprehensible. Communication runs smoothly if its grammar can be understood. Therefore, the speakers need to be aware in the use of grammar. Instead, fluency is the quality or condition of being fluent (Hormailis, 2003). In speaking, the fluency is needed to make the conversation more alive as well as to make the speaker more confident in speaking without undue pauses and hesitation. Furthermore, Hornby (2005) stated that pronunciation is defined as the way how a language is spoken. It means that pronunciation is a crucial, because it creates the meaning, if the pronunciation is wrong then the meaning is changed.

According to Ahmad (2018), pronunciation and vocabulary mastery are the most difficult in speaking. Ahmad (2018) also mentions that mastery in speaking English requires good pronunciation, in case some words have similarities in writing but how to pronounce it will be different. The non-native speakers mostly have problem in pronouncing the English words because their mother-tongue impact the pronunciation. As the example, Indonesian people are impacted on their mother-tongue in speaking English, mostly in pronouncing /r/ in a word as well as their accent.

English pronunciation involves the production of each sound and pronunciation of words, phrases, and sentences with correct spelling and intonation. According to Harmer (2001), the areas of pronunciation which we need to draw the students' attention to include individual sounds they are having difficulty with, word and phrase/sentence, stress and intonation. Pronunciation is a part of phonological, which is related to the speech sound. According to Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, pronunciation is defined as the way of how a language is spoken (Hornby, 2005). It means that people can communicate with others in a particular language. Pronouncing the word inaccurately might jumble sound and cause different meanings

(Dardjowodjojo, 2009); for example, the word *beat*, contains the sounds [b], [i], and [t], when the sound [i] is pronounced [I] that becomes /bIt/, the meaning is changed because /bIt/ interprets bit. Then, it produces mispronunciation. By understanding the pronunciation, the speakers expect that will decrease misunderstanding in conversations. Furthermore, there is way to read the word correctly by 'phonetic transcription'. Phonetic transcription describes the way we pronounce the word (Davenport and Hannahs, 2005); for instance, 'thin' / θ In/ and 'than' / δ en/, the writing is almost the same, however while looking at the phonetic transcription both have different pronunciation.

In speaking, there are two parts of linguistic that need to be considered, Phonetic and Phonology. According to Dodd & Mills (1996) as cited in Ladefoged (1982, p. 23), phonology is concerned with the description of the systems and patterns of distinctive sound that occur in specific languages. Whereas, phonetic is defined as the science which studies the characteristics of human sound making, especially sounds, and not directly with their linguistic status (Dodd & Mills, 1996). Phonetic and phonology are the aspects which are correlated each other. Based on his study, Chang (2012) concluded that the validity of phonology – phonetic interface is enhanced by the fact that there is no flip of tones between phonology and phonetics as well as implied that the nature of phonological features is circumscribed by phonetic facts. Whereas he mentions the relationship is shown that perception and production data are valid when they are used as phonetic evidence to resolve phonological controversies (Chang, 2012).

Previous study conducted by Ahmad (2018) who got involved university students found that the perceptions of research subjects after completing the course of phonetics and phonology able to reduce errors in English pronunciation. In English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University, students learn Phonetic and Phonology course in the fifth semester. By studying this topic, the students are

expected to gain phonological awareness in terms of speaking, especially in pronunciation.

According to the explanation about English pronunciation towards phonetics and phonology, the writer would like to conduct the research about students' perception on English pronunciation after taking Phonetics and Phonology course in English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University.

1.2 Problem of the Study

The problem of the study is formulated in the following question "what does sixth-semester students of English education study program of Sriwijaya University perceive on English pronunciation after taking Phonetics and Phonology course?"

1.3 Objective of the Study

This study is aimed to find out sixth-semester students' perception of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University on English pronunciation improvement after taking Phonetics and Phonology course.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected to help teachers/lecturers, the students, the researchers, and others by giving valuable information about English pronunciation in Phonetic and Phonology course. The writer hopes that will give valid information for the lecturers about the result and the information of students' perceptions on English pronunciation toward Phonetics and Phonology course. For the students, the writer hopes that this study will boost their desire and focus in learning Phonetics and Phonology course and their awareness in terms of pronunciation while speaking. The writer also hopes that the other researchers will find more information for their further studies related to these variables, and also develop this study based on more studies and further research.

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