

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we discuss several pieces of information that form the basis of this research. About the background explanation of the research, problem formulation, research objectives, and research benefits.

A. Background Research

According to Rouch, fricatives are a type of continuous consonants; as long as the person has enough air in a lung, he/she can continue to make a sound without interruption. When a consonant sound called a fricative is made, air can escape through tiny gaps and cause singing. Put differently, fricatives are spoken sounds that originate from the air currents leaving the lungs because of friction. The upper teeth and lower lips are two articulators that are near to one another but not close enough to totally obstruct airflow, which is why this occurs.

Many students still struggle with the pronunciation of words that have similar sounds, particularly those with consonants and vowels that are alike in articulation. Errors often occur with letters that involve similar tongue positions, airflow, and resonance with the issues mentioned. This study found that first-grade students at KMI already have a good grasp of the pronunciation of fricative consonants with the help of vocabulary provision. However, the students still face difficulties in pronouncing the sounds of fricative consonants.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the pronunciation of fricative consonants among first-grade KMI students and to identify the factors that contribute to their pronunciation errors. By understanding these aspects, the researcher hopes to provide insights that can help improve the teaching of pronunciation and support students in developing better speaking skills.

A consonant sound is produced when the airflow is constricted or blocked by parts of the speech organs. Consonant sounds involve the interaction of speech organs such as the lips, teeth, tongue, alveolar ridge, hard palate, and soft palate,

which come into contact when producing sound. From this, it can be concluded that the factors affecting consonant pronunciation are crucial for students' speaking ability. Therefore, the researcher will analyze the issues related to the pronunciation of fricative consonants in first-grade students at KMI.

The most important skill in learning a foreign or second language is speaking; by speaking, Rao. We can communicate with others. Brown and Yuke (1983) "Speaking is the skill that the students will be judged upon most in real life situations". In this case, the ability to speak is directly assessed by how they communicate with others, because speaking is an effective communication.

Learning English is not only about learning words or vocabulary, phrases, and grammatical features, but it also helps students to develop their ability to communicate both in oral and written form with confidence to solve everyday problems. Learning English helps students improve their confidence in their ability to communicate both orally and in writing, as well as their capacity to solve everyday problems. It is not just about memorizing words, phrases, and grammar rules.

There are five categories of fricative consonants: labiodental fricative, alveolar fricative, palatal fricative, and dental spirant. And counterpart. The writer gives the exam fricative, and Imanola. fricative consonants: [f] (fish), [v] (live), [s]] (snake), [ʃ] (ship), [z] (zero), [tʃ] (Tuesday), [dʒ] (gentle), [ʒ] (vision), [θ] (thumb), [ð] (this). These examples illustrate how different fricative sounds are produced in various parts of the vocal tract, with each type having distinct characteristics based on the articulatory position.

Phonetics is to represent sounds and other phenomena of speech. Phonetics is more important in speaking. In phonetics, we learn about the sound of each word. Phonetics is used for the study of any of these aspects of the subject using physical devices, such as devices for measuring airflow or for analysis of sound waves. ¹

¹ David Crystal and Alan C. L. Yu, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (John Wiley & Sons, 2023).

Phonetics is the study of speech sounds and other related phenomena in spoken language. It plays a crucial role in speaking skills because it helps us understand how each word is correctly pronounced. In phonetics, we learn how to produce speech sounds accurately. This field often uses physical tools to support the study, such as devices that measure airflow during speech or analyze sound waves produced by spoken sounds.

One component of this subject can be studied using physical tools, such as sound wave analysis or airflow measuring devices, in phonetics. Pronunciation of a word must also produce a sound that can make the sound of the word a clear word. Pronunciation is one of the most often overlooked in English language teaching. In fact, almost all English teachers still make students teach only grammar and vocabulary, practice functional dialog, take part in productive skills activities, and become competent in listening and reading.

“Speaking is a productive aural/oral skill that consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning.”² The ability to speak is not just saying a word, but speaking is also a systematic verbal utterance to convey meaning in oral speaking. Speaking skills are an important part of the curriculum in language teaching.³ Speaking is a verbal skill that involves the ability to express words in an orderly and meaningful way. In other words, speaking is not merely about saying words but about arranging them systematically to convey ideas or messages. Therefore, speaking skills are an essential part of the language learning curriculum, as they form the foundation for effective communication, both in academic settings and everyday life. Without mastery of speaking skills, students will struggle to express themselves orally, which can hinder the primary goal of communication from being achieved optimally.

² Tiara Azzahra Marpaung, Syafrizal Sabarudin, and Mulyadi Mulyadi, “Pronunciation Errors of Fricative Sounds Made by English Students,” *Journal of English Education and Teaching* 5, no. 3 (September 13, 2021): 368–80, <https://doi.org/10.33369/jeet.5.3.368-380>.

³ Ratni Juliani, “IMPROVING STUDENTS’ SPEAKING PROFICIENCY BY USING STORY COMPLETION METHOD AT TENTH GRADE OF MA AT- TAHZIB KEKAIT IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/2020,” n.d.

Language is one of the means of communication between humans and one another. With the existence of language, communication can run smoothly because with language, what we want to convey can be understood properly by the interlocutor. Henry Sweet an English phonetician and language scholar, stated, “Language is the expression of ideas using speech sounds combined into words.”⁴

“Words are combined into sentences, forming a structure that reflects the organization of ideas into thoughts.”⁵ In this sentence, Henry Sweet, an English phonetician and linguist, says that language is one or more sounds that are arranged together into a word that forms a thought that will be conveyed.⁶ In other words, language is not merely a collection of meaningless sounds, but a tool for organizing ideas into verbal form so that they can be understood by others. This statement emphasizes that the primary function of language is as a medium of communication, where each sound and word spoken plays a role in conveying messages clearly and systematically. Therefore, understanding the fundamental elements of language—such as sounds and pronunciation—is essential in the language learning process, particularly in improving speaking skills.

According to Kelly “the fact that pronunciation tends to be neglected may not be because teachers lack interest in the subject, but rather because there is doubt about how to teach it.”⁷ Because teachers think that grammar is more important, and teachers assume that when students can use the grammar, they can pronounce the word. The neglect of pronunciation instruction is not due to a lack of interest from teachers, but rather to uncertainty about the appropriate methods for teaching it. Many teachers tend to prioritize grammar instruction because they assume that once students master the structure of grammar, their pronunciation skills will

⁴ Henry Sweet and Henry Cecil Kennedy Wyld, *Collected Papers of Henry Sweet* (Oxford, The Clarendon press, 1913), <http://archive.org/details/cu31924026804645>.

⁵ “Language | Definition, Types, Characteristics, Development, & Facts | Britannica,” June 17, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/language>.

⁶ Sweet and Wyld, *Collected Papers of Henry Sweet*.

⁷ “How-to-Teach-Pronunciation-Kelly-Gerald.Pdf,” accessed December 16, 2024, <https://andrianilina.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/how-to-teach-pronunciation-kelly-gerald.pdf>.

naturally improve as their language proficiency increases. This assumption reflects the belief that mastering grammar can encompass or support the acquisition of other aspects of language, such as pronunciation.

English pronunciation mastery is very important in the process of transfer through oral activities with the application of proper English⁸. In this process carried out through speaking activities in good English, an understanding of English pronunciation is important. In the process of transfer through oral activities with the use of good English, understanding of English pronunciation is crucial.

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Therefore, this study aims to analyze the pronunciation of fricative consonants among first-grade KMI students and to identify the factors that contribute to their pronunciation errors. By understanding these aspects, the researcher hopes to provide insights that can help improve the teaching of pronunciation and support students in developing better speaking skills.

Most studies on English pronunciation errors among EFL learners in Indonesia have primarily focused on high school or university-level students. In contrast, research on beginner learners—such as first-year KMI students (equivalent to junior high school level) who are just beginning formal English instruction—remains very limited. In fact, this early stage is crucial for establishing phonological foundations and correct pronunciation habits. Furthermore, previous studies tend to address pronunciation errors in general, without specific attention to

⁸ Bowo Imanola, "AN ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENT'S PRONUNCIATION PROBLEMS OF ENGLISH FRICATIVE CONSONANTS AT THE ELEVENTH GRADE OF SMA N 1 KIBANG EAST LAMPUNG," n.d.

fricative consonants, which are articulatorily more complex and absent in the Indonesian sound system. The context of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), where Arabic is the dominant language, has also been underexplored, despite its significant influence on students' pronunciation development. This study seeks to fill that gap by analyzing fricative pronunciation errors and the contributing factors at the early stages of English learning within a trilingual pesantren environment.

A consonant sound is produced when the airflow is constricted or blocked by parts of the speech organs. Consonant sounds involve the interaction of speech organs such as the lips, teeth, tongue, alveolar ridge, hard palate, and soft palate, which come into contact when producing sound. From this, it can be concluded that the factors affecting consonant pronunciation are crucial for students' speaking ability. Therefore, the researcher will analyze the issues related to the pronunciation of fricative consonants in first-grade students at KMI.

The most important skill in learning a foreign or second language is speaking; by speaking, Rao. We can communicate with others. Brown and Yule (1983)⁹ “Speaking is the skill that the students will be judged upon most in real life situations”.¹⁰ In this case, the ability to speak is directly assessed by how they communicate with others, because speaking is an effective communication.

Learning English is not only about learning words or vocabulary, phrases, and grammatical features, but it also helps students to develop their ability to communicate both in oral and written form with confidence to solve everyday problems.¹¹ Learning English helps students improve their confidence in their ability to communicate both orally and in writing, as well as their capacity to solve everyday problems. It is not just about memorizing words, phrases, and grammar rules.

⁹ “Gillian_Brown_and_George_Yule_Discourse.Pdf,” n.d.

¹⁰ Parupalli Rao, “THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH CLASSROOMS” 2 (March 1, 2019): 6–18.

¹¹ Muhammad Lukman Syafii, Slamet Santoso, and Sri Hartono, “Story-Telling Technique Utilizing Puppets to Enhance the Learners’ Speaking Competence,” *International Journal on Social and Education Sciences* 3, no. 2 (2021): 304–41.

The final purpose of conducting this research is to analyze the pronunciation patterns of English fricative consonants among first-grade students at KMI Gontor Putri 1 and to identify both internal and external factors that contribute to pronunciation errors. Through this study, the researcher aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phonetic challenges students face in producing fricative sounds and to propose pedagogical recommendations for English teachers in improving pronunciation instruction. Ultimately, this research is expected to support the enhancement of students' speaking skills by emphasizing the importance of accurate pronunciation in effective oral communication.

B. Formulation of the Problem

a. Research Question.

1. How do first-grade KMI students pronounce words containing fricative consonant vowels?
2. What factors become the causes of student's problems in pronouncing fricative consonants among the 1st Grade KMI?

b. Significance of Study

- Students, by increasing their awareness of pronunciation issues and encouraging more accurate speech production.
- Teachers, by providing relevant information on common pronunciation errors and offering suggestions for improving phonetic instruction in the classroom.
- Future researchers, as a reference for further studies in the field of phonetics and pronunciation within second language acquisition contexts.

Speaking is one of the skills in English language teaching; without speaking, students can have difficulty pronouncing vocabulary; therefore, speaking is one of the most important skills that must be done or taught to students. Speaking skills are the most important skills to acquire for learning foreign or second language

learning ¹². Speaking is a fundamental skill in English language teaching, as it plays a crucial role in helping students pronounce vocabulary correctly. Without the ability to speak, learners may struggle to express themselves and apply what they have learned in real communication. Therefore, speaking should be prioritized in the teaching process. In the context of learning a foreign or second language, speaking is considered one of the most essential skills because it directly reflects students' ability to use the language in real-life situations. Developing speaking skills enables learners to actively engage in conversation, improve pronunciation, and build confidence in using the target language.

This study emphasizes the importance of integrating phonetic knowledge into the English curriculum, especially at the beginner level, to build a strong foundation in pronunciation that supports overall speaking competence. This study uses a qualitative research design to collect data through observations, interviews, and analysis. It is hoped that this research can contribute to the existing literature regarding consonant vowel pronunciation in English language teaching and provide insight into best practices for introducing speaking skills to students in the classroom.

C. Research Objectives

- a) To identify and describe the common mispronunciations of fricative consonants among first-grade KMI students.
- b) To explore the internal and external factors that contribute to students' difficulties in pronouncing English fricative consonants.

¹² Parupalli Rao, "THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH CLASSROOMS" 2 (March 1, 2019): 6–18.