



Lecturer Challenges in Teaching English Pronunciation

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ABSTRACT

A correct pronunciation is very important for mastering English speaking because different pronunciations can have different meanings and can lead to misunderstandings in conversation. For English department students, to help their students to be able to speak English correctly, the lecturers must have good English speaking skills. In addition, with the condition of facilities, students, and themselves, the lecturers may have challenges in teaching pronunciation in class. This paper focuses to describe the challenges might the lecturer face in teaching English pronunciation. The challenges can come from internal and external challenges. Internal challenges in teaching pronunciation such as lack of confidence, lack of knowledge and training, and pedagogical issues. Time constraints, lack of priority, and lack of teaching and material resources included in the external challenges. A pronunciation lecturer at Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat was interviewed to get the data for this research. Furthermore, the result reveals that the lecturer does not have any internal challenges. For the external challenges, it is found that the facilities are lacking and teaching and learning materials focus only on existing books. In addition, there are other challenges that come from the students' side such as students' low concentration and motivation and students' ability in pronouncing word. The results of this study contribute to the literature of English language teaching in response to the conditions of English teaching pronunciation and also to improve or give more attention to better English pronunciation teaching.

Keywords: *Challenge, Pronunciation, Teaching English Pronunciation*

1. INTRODUCTION

The learner must acquire at least four essential skills in order to master English: speaking, listening, reading, and writing in spoken and written form. A correct pronunciation is very important for speaking English well because different pronunciations can have different meanings and can lead to misunderstandings in conversations. As stated by Maniruzzaman [1], he mentions that Pronunciation is seen as an integral part of learning a second language and has an impact on students' communication skills and performance. Thus, communicative competence in language study is closely linked to pronunciation.

In addition, Fromkin [2] states that mastering English pronunciation is very necessary. Because different pronunciations may have different meanings, and because the wrong pronunciation can lead to misunderstandings in conversation, the correct pronunciation is very important. Because of the diversity of cultures and languages that make up the world as a whole, people's native languages have influenced how the English language sounds. Declaring which one is perfect and which one is not becomes

difficult. It may be very important for teachers to be aware of this when teaching English pronunciation and to accommodate all students' pronunciations.

For having good pronunciation, the role of a lecturer is very important, especially for English department students. To help their students to be able to speak English correctly, the lecturers also must have good English speaking skills. With the condition of facilities, students, and themselves, the lecturers may face challenges in teaching pronunciation in classroom. Some challenges are faced by the teachers in teaching English pronunciation. Derwing [3] and Priya, M, Kumar, P [4] state that one of the biggest challenges for teachers in teaching English is the absence of clear guidelines on how to teach pronunciation. Similar ideas are also stated by Scrivener [5] who states that most teachers feel they do not have enough knowledge on how to teach their students and they are unwilling to make lesson plans for teaching English pronunciation. Nair, R., et al. [6] also mention that the lack of attention to teaching pronunciation is due to not being given sufficient training for the teachers on how to teach pronunciation to the students. Even though they had

studied phonology in the past, little focus was given to pronunciation.

Another factor of the lack of attention to pronunciation is that there is an assumption that pronunciation is not too important. Pillai [7] points out that pronunciation tends to be ignored because the teachers are more likely to teach their students other English skills to prepare for their final exam. Brindley [8] also mentions that pronunciation is not tested in the examination. This causes pronunciation not to be a priority compared to other skills. So because of this exam-oriented system, teaching English pronunciation tends to not get enough attention rather than other English skill. Hayati [9] reveals two types of challenges: internal challenges and external challenges. Pedagogical issues, lack confidence, and a lack of knowledge are examples of internal challenges. Meanwhile, time constraints, lack of priority, and lack of teaching materials and resources are the external challenges.

Several studies have done related to the challenges in teaching English pronunciation. A study was carried out by Tahereen, T. [10] regarding the condition of pronunciation instruction in Bangladesh. The difficulties of teaching pronunciation at tertiary levels are the focus of this study. She explained that natives' interference, lack of exposure to English, the English spelling system, lack of concern and awareness for pronunciation, the influence of the local accent, and fossilization in certain pronunciations are the challenges of teaching English pronunciation. Additionally, Norbazila and Noor [11] investigated the difficulties associated with teaching pronunciation in Malaysian secondary schools. The purpose of this study is to investigate the difficulties that teacher trainees face when teaching pronunciation. They agreed that they faced problems related to confident, sufficient knowledge, and pedagogical issues during their practical teaching. The teaching pronunciation does not prioritize in the syllabus, time constraint, and lack of teaching materials and resources. Yousef [12] also conducted a study to investigate the issues and strategies for students in English education who struggle with incorrect pronunciation. The participants of this study were six English education department students. According to the findings, the issues were caused from the incompatibility of the placement, manner of articulation, and language system between English and Bahasa, as well as students' lack of mastery of consonants and vowels using the international Phonetics alphabet. The lecturer taught students how to use audio-visual media to solve problems with learning English pronunciation, how to give oral corrections to students who made mistakes in pronunciation, how to use a mobile phone app to help them learn pronunciation on their own, and how to practice reading English texts a lot.

Furthermore, this study conducted by looking at lecturer challenges in teaching English pronunciation at Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat. This study use the challenges indicator proposed by Hayati A. Majid [9].

The challenges were investigated from the inner and outer factors.

2. METHOD

This research is classified as descriptive research. According to Arikunto [13], the goal of descriptive research is to present an original perspective on a variable, indication, or condition. He also says that descriptive research only describes what is being seen, faced, observed, and known rather than testing the hypothesis. Thus, this design is used to find out the lecturer challenges in teaching English pronunciation. For English teaching pronunciation especially in Padang City, not all the schools and universities have specific pronunciation subjects in their curriculum. It has been integrated with speaking subjects. Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat is chosen for the location because they still have pronunciation subjects taught. The pronunciation course is taught in the first semester. Therefore, an English pronunciation lecturer at Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat is the participant of this research.

For the instrument used of this study is questionnaire. The Likert-Scale instruments have "Strongly Agree (SA)," "Agree (A)," "Neutral (N)," "Disagree (D)," and "Strongly Disagree (SD)" criteria. There are 6 kinds of challenges listed and the lecturer was asked to fill out the questionnaire according to the Likert scale provided. Then, the lecturer was asked to write down the three most common challenges faced by the side of pronunciation lecturers along with the challenges faced which come from the students' side. After getting the data that comes from the response to the questionnaire that has been filled out by the lecturer, then the data is interpreted to describe the lecturer's challenges in teaching English pronunciation.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study were obtained from the results of the questionnaire given to the lecturer. There are two types of challenges: internal challenges and external challenges. Pedagogical issues, insecurity, and a lack of knowledge are examples of internal challenges. External challenges include time constraints, lack of priority, and lack of teaching materials and resources. First, it is about the internal challenges that come from the lecturer. The results showed that the lecturer does not have internal challenges in the English teaching pronunciation. It can be seen from the answers of the lecturers who chose 'Disagree' on "lack of confidence" and "lack of knowledge and training". This proves that the lecturer has high confidence in teaching pronunciation courses and the lecturer understands the material and also how to teach pronunciation in class. However, for pedagogical issues the lecturer chooses the 'Neutral' option.

Table 1. Internal Challenges in Teaching English Pronunciation

Challenges	SA	A	N	D	SD
Lack of confidence				√	
Lack of knowledge and training				√	
Pedagogical issues			√		

Related to the external challenges in teaching English pronunciation, the results obtained are that the lecturer faces the challenges in terms of lack facilities or teaching and material resources (lack of teaching materials and resources). The use of learning materials only focuses on the provided textbooks. So, most of the lecturer in the classroom uses the textbook as the guideline in the teaching. For the practices and exercises also come from the book. Another types of external challenges such as "time constraint and lack of priority", the lecturer chooses the 'Neutral' option. Moreover, difficulty in teaching materials is one of the challenges faced by the teachers. Norbazila M A, Noor A I. [11] found that although the textbook includes a section on phonetics, it is not provided for all topics in the book. The information or explanations contained in the textbooks are also very short and inadequate for the teaching process in the classroom. In addition, the facilities in schools are also inadequate. Although a CD-Room is provided, projectors or LCDs are not available in the schools. The school also does not have a language laboratory that supports the pronunciation teaching process. Thus, Brown [14] also said that the lack of teaching materials could disturb the teaching and learning process of pronunciation in the classroom.

Table 2. External Challenges in Teaching English Pronunciation

Challenges	SA	A	N	D	SD
Time constraint			√		
Lack of priority			√		
Lack of teaching and material resources		√			

Second, it is about the challenges faced by the lecturer from the students' side. From the four challenges provided in the questionnaire, (students' lack of vocabulary mastery, students' low concentration and motivation, students' confident issues, and students' ability in pronouncing words), the lecturer chose 'Agree' on all of these challenges.

There are still students who have limited vocabulary so they are not familiar with the pronunciation of the words that they are learning. This causes them to have difficulty in pronouncing the word. In addition, some students in the class also seemed not enthusiastic or interested during the teaching and learning process. They do not focus on paying attention

to the lecturer's explanation in front of the class and choose to do other activities.

The lack of the student participation in the class is also a challenge in teaching English pronunciation where the students should practice more to pronounce words. However, the students still seem shy when asked to pronounce the word and even reluctant to pronounce the word by themselves. Then, the students' ability in pronouncing the word is also a challenge. The students still mispronounce the words that they have learned before or that they are familiar for a long time. The students are also still confused to pronounce consonants and vowels in English. They pronounce the words in English in the same way when pronouncing words in Indonesian.

Table 3. Lecturer Challenges in Teaching English Pronunciation from the Students' Side

Challenges	SA	A	N	D	SD
Students' lack of vocabulary mastery		√			
Students' low concentration and motivation		√			
Students' confident issues		√			
Students' ability in pronouncing words		√			

From the explanation above, it can be seen that lecturer faces challenges related to the lack of teaching and material resources. There are no internal challenges faced by the lecturer when teaching English pronunciation. The lecturer also added that in general, there might be three common challenges that are most often faced by the lecturers who teach pronunciation such as pedagogical issues, time constraints, and lack of priority from institution. Then, from the students' side, the lecturer faces the challenges such as students' lack of vocabulary mastery, students' low concentration and motivation, students' confident issues, and students' ability in pronouncing words.

4. CONCLUSION

Lecturer may face several challenges in teaching English pronunciation. An English pronunciation lecturer was asked to fill out a questionnaire where there was a Likert scale and the lecturer chose based on his experience as a pronunciation lecturer. The conclusion that can be drawn in this study is that there are no challenges faced by the lecturer that come from the internal challenges. However, lecturer faces difficulties where there is a shortage of materials and teaching resources. Many of the challenges faced by the lecturer came from the students' side, such as students' lack of vocabulary mastery, students' low concentration and motivation, students' confident issues, and students' ability in pronouncing words. For further research,

researchers can examine what are the strategies that can be used to overcome challenges in teaching English

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