

Chapter One

Introduction

In this study, the researcher explains several points that are discussed in this chapter. First, the research background explains the general information related to the topic of this study. Subsequently, in identification of the problem, the problems occurring in research site are discussed. The research scope and focus are then presented in the delimitation of the study. The research questions that guide the analysis are presented in the next section. This is followed by research objectives which identify specific goals. Next, the importance of the study for several parties is highlighted. Lastly, an overview of each chapter is provided by the chapter organization.

Background of the Research

English is spoken almost all over the world. Since English is a lingua franca, the majority of English speakers, both native and non-native, use it as their primary language while communicating with one another (Rao, 2019). It is well acknowledged that the English language holds a prominent position in the realm of education on a worldwide basis. The acquisition of English language skills has become a necessity due to the wide use of English as the primary language of instruction in higher education literature. The English language is extensively utilized by both students and educators. Academic inquiry and scholarly communication also use the English language. The global community of scholars and researchers widely employs the English language as the primary means of communication across diverse disciplines and areas of study.

English is widely spoken throughout the world, and English speakers have different accents. The term “accent” refers to a person's speech patterns that are considered to differ from regional variations and how these differences affect the listener's understanding when accents are recognized as regional variations (Ockey & French, 2014, as cited in Syrine, 2022). The common accents in English are American and British accents. American English accent is a language introduced to America after 1500 and is more widely used than British English due to its ease of use (Widarso, 2002, as cited in, Sulaiman & Yuliani, 2017). British English accent is derived from the United Kingdom, including Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, where English is widely spoken, while some may find the term misleading, it accurately describes the English spoken in the UK (Sulaiman, 2015, as cited in, Sembiring, 2021). Then there are more English accents in other countries too.

Accent is formed from the first language (L1), and the first language plays an important role in English pronunciation. The phonological patterns of the learner's native language are transmitted to the second language, which is likely to result in the development of a foreign accent (Gilakjani, 2011). In Indonesia, first language can be the regional languages or Bahasa Indonesia, the national language. Regional languages cause some EFL students to have an accent when speaking English. English continues to be influenced, for example, by Javanese, the first language, in the learning environment (Saddhono & Rohmadi, 2014, as cited in Khusna & Aliyah, 2021).

There are several problems that exist for EFL students in speaking English regarding accent. In some cases, students with accents when speaking English will find it challenging to learn English because of the different pronunciation between their local language and English. Furthermore, intonation also dramatically affects the learning of EFL students. They will need help to equate English pronunciation with their regional accent, which is still attached. Their specific grammatical sound and strong accent frequently make learning a new language difficult for them (Nasir, 2016, as cited in Harun et al., 2019). Their first language, commonly called L1 significantly affects EFL's regional accent when speaking.

Second, accent affects EFL students when speaking English because when they speak, they will follow the pronunciation of their first language (L1). This research will discuss EFL students' self-perception and problems regarding the regional accent they have when speaking English. This research aims to examine self-perceptions and problems that exist when students have regional accents when speaking English.

Speaking English using an accent has been widely studied in several studies. Some of these studies examined the perceptions and attitudes of teachers and students towards accents in speaking English. This research produces several conclusions. First, the things that influence the presence of regional accents when speaking English are phonemes and word pronunciation (Burky, 2021). Another research found that the regional accent used by the teacher makes it difficult for students to understand what the teacher explains (Baratta & Halenko, 2022). On the other hand, it is possible that people of different ethnicities pronounce certain

words differently (Buyukahiska & Uyar, 2019). At the same, it found that instructors should present numerous pronunciation models in addition to British and American ones so that students can hear, contrast, and evaluate various forms of the language (Candan & Inal, 2020). Lastly, the accents of the speakers influence the Japanese EFL learners' views of grammaticality (Ito, 2019).

Although there are several studies regarding the influence of regional accents when speaking English, there needs to conduct some research to investigate the perceptions and problems of students who have regional accents when speaking English. This research is different from other research because it examines students' perceptions of accent when speaking English. Only a few studies have investigated EFL students' perceptions of regional accents.

Identification of the Problem

The researcher has conducted initial interviews with several EFL students at private Islamic universities in Yogyakarta. The researcher learned that regional accents when speaking exist in some EFL students. Some of them will speak English using their native accent. For example, Javanese, EFL students from Central Java, will have their Javanese accent when speaking English. Several EFL students at a private university in Yogyakarta who the researcher interviewed also mentioned that they had a little difficulty speaking English with a regional accents. The problem that is often encountered is that they need help to pronounce some words when learning to speak English.

EFL students who have regional accents when speaking may not have confidence when speaking English, and they say that they have difficulty talking

to classmates and even telling stories in front of the class. EFL students cannot immediately change their accent because this accent has been attached to them since childhood. Some EFL students said that they were worried when the person they were talking to did not understand what they were saying. According to researchers, this problem needs to be discussed because EFL students who feel afraid of speaking in front of the class with their accent should speak English confidently. EFL students' perceptions are needed because with the perceptions they provide, this research can provide the right solution for teaching English in accordance with difficulties speaking using an accent.

Delimitation of the Research

The scope of the research is related to regional accents which are broad in scope. Therefore, to be more focused, this research limits the research focus, research location, research participants, and research methods. First, this study limits the research focus. There are two focuses of this research, self-perception about EFL students accent and the problems EFL students face when speaking English while having an accent. This research was conducted at a private university in Yogyakarta with a focus on EFL students in the English language education study program. A limitation that also occurred was that some of participants were English Department students who had very minimal access to communication with native speakers.

Research Question

Based on the background above, this research formulates two research questions about student's perceptions of using accents when speaking English in higher education:

1. How do the EFL students self-perceive their accents?
2. What are the problems faced by students when speaking English in regional accents?

The Objective of the Research

Based on the research question above, this research is the purpose as follows:

1. To find the EFL students perception about their accents
2. To find out the problems faced by EFL students when speaking English with regional accents.

The Significance of the Research

The research is expected to provide more benefits and knowledge for students, teachers, and future researchers.

Students

This research will examine students' perceptions of speaking English when they have a regional accents. Students can use this research to increase their understanding of the perceptions and problems of learning English if they have a regional accent.

Teachers

Regional accents are prevalent among EFL students. Regional accents are prevalent among EFL students. Teachers can use this research to improve students' understanding of regional accents in English language learning. Teachers

can also use this research to increase awareness about regional accents in English language learning .

Future researchers

The results of this study can be used by other researchers or new researchers who want to research accents. They can use it for reference data or other points of view about the problems and EFL students self-perceived their speaking English with an accent.

Organization of the Research

There were five chapters in this research. The first chapter contains the background of the study, problem identification, delimitation of the research, research questions, purpose, significance, and organization are included. This chapter covers the topic's facts and the researcher's reasoning. Identifying challenges and delimiting the issue follows the discussion of the research problem.

In the second chapter, the researcher discussed many theories, citing books, journals, theses, and other formal publications. This study examined the definition of accents, the definition of regional accents, accents in foreign language learning, and the problems faced when speaking English with regional accents. To highlight what was known about this issue, this study also presents related research that has been conducted previously.

The third chapter covers methods. The researcher explained qualitative research. The researcher also described the study's location and timing. Later, the researcher shared further study participant details. Interviews will help the

researcher obtain data. Finally, data analysis was concluded in this research's third phase.

The fourth chapter has described the findings and discussion. Here, the researcher wrote down the results of the answers to the research questions. The research questions were regarding the EFL students' self-perceived about their accents and the problems faced when speaking English with regional accents. Then the discussion was also supported by other studies that have similar topics.

The fifth chapter explained the conclusions and recommendations. The conclusion was a summary of the findings and discussion. Furthermore, in the recommendation, the researcher wrote down the benefits and advice that could be obtained by a certain group of people.