

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This introductory section provides a comprehensive overview of the basic elements of this research. It begins by presenting the background of the research that underlies the importance of this study, followed by the research question that guides it. Furthermore, the purpose of the study is to clarify the expected results, and finally, the contributions are highlighted in this research.

A. Background of the research

Pronunciation plays a crucial role in learning English because it directly affects communication effectiveness. However, it remains a significant challenge for many students, particularly those who are non-native speakers. One of the students learning pronunciation problems in understanding the English sound system. The lack of students' understanding of the English sounds process makes their pronunciation less precise and clear. For example, when the /v/ sound is replaced with /f/, as in “I bought a new van” into “I bought a new fan”, this situation will create confusion, misunderstandings, or even embarrassment in communications with interlocutors. This shows that pronunciation errors are not just a linguistic problem but a barrier to effective interaction.

The pronunciation problem in students is also a challenge for teachers, especially in teaching strategies. Teachers need effective pronunciation teaching strategies that can be applied in the classroom. Most teachers have only relied on repetition and imitation methods in teaching pronunciation since 1663 (Ghazi-Saidi & Ansaldo, 2017). However, repetition and imitation methods are ineffective in helping students' development because these methods are old and are heavily criticized, as well (Ghazi-Saidi & Ansaldo, 2017). In addition, Messum (2012) also said that most teachers only rely on the listen and repeat method, but the results are disappointing because it does not train students' motor skills. According to Stubna, (2020), the use of the listen and repeat method in Slovakia. The results show that

EFL teachers still rely on the drilling method (listen and repeat), but this approach is considered a monotonous and ineffective approach in teaching pronunciation. Traditional methods involving direct teacher interaction and feedback in pronunciation teaching are ineffective because of the lack of training teachers receive and lack of confidence, especially in non-native speakers (Kusz, 2022). This finding shows a gap in pronunciation teaching, although the need for effective teaching strategies is widely recognized, many teachers still rely on ineffective approaches.

One of the teaching strategies that can be employed is utilizing students' existing linguistic knowledge, especially other commonly known languages. According to Berthelsen et al., (2021), similarities in phonological elements across languages can facilitate easier transfer to other languages. This means that using other languages can be a strategy for learning pronunciation. EFL Teachers can utilize students' linguistic abilities in other languages. Indonesians, as a Muslim-majority country, are familiar with Arabic sounds because they have learned to recite the Quran and memorize prayers in Arabic from an early age. In a *Pesantren* (Islamic boarding school), Arabic sound or *Makharijul Huruf* which are more often applied in various students' activities, such as practicing *Tahsin* (perfecting recitation), *tahfidz* (memorization), and *tadarus* (collective recitation). Activities and frequent learning make students naturally more aware of sound positions that can be effectively transferred into English sounds, especially fricative sounds that have many similarities with Arabic. The English fricative sound is one of the sounds that students find difficult because it does not exist in their first language. There are many similarities between the English fricative sound and the Arabic *Makharijul Huruf*. In this case, EFL teachers can design a learning strategy that is more meaningful and contextually relevant. Additionally, this approach enhances the effectiveness of learning in a *Pesantren*-based environment.

In the context of a *Pesantren*-based school, students prioritize learning the Quran over English, which is taught only two hours a week. *Pesantren* students

have good skills in Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* because they are trained and do practices consistently every day. The ability of Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* can be a bridge to learn English pronunciation because there are similarities between Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* and English fricatives that students have properly learned, for example, the /θ/ sound and ث, which helps students understand how to produce that sound. Previously, /θ/ was considered a challenge to pronounce by students because it was not present in their mother language, but when they know a sound similar to ث, they will naturally adapt their knowledge regarding the position of the ث sound that they frequently learn. Although they practice *Makharijul Huruf* routinely in activities such as *tahsin*, *tahfidz*, and *tadarus*, they often have difficulty pronouncing English sounds such as /θ/, /ð/, /f/, and /v/. For example, /θ/ and /ð/, which do not exist in their native language, are usually replaced by /t/ and /d/. In addition, English is usually taught for only two hours a week in pesantren, therefore time for pronunciation practice is very limited. As a result, many students lack confidence and accuracy in pronouncing English words, leading to misunderstandings and decreased communication skills. By phonological similarity in pronunciation learning can support English pronunciation learning. As Bouchhioua, (2016) states, when there is a typological similarity between L2 and L3, there is a high probability of feature transfer or the process of elements' characteristics from L2 or L3 transferring to affect the way someone learns or acquires another language, especially when there are structural similarities between the languages.

Regarding potential phonological transfer from Arabic to English, especially for students in *Pesantren*-based schools, there is a need to explore innovative teaching strategies that integrate students' existing phonological knowledge. This integration provides a foundation for more meaningful pronunciation teaching, especially for sounds absent in their first language. In addition, this strategy is important because teaching pronunciation remains a challenge in *Pesantren*-based schools therefore, EFL teachers require innovative approaches to teach pronunciation more effectively, especially in *Pesantren*-based schools. Arabic

Makharijul Huruf can help students improve their pronunciation, especially of fricative consonants. According to Luthfianda et al., (2024), many non-native English learners, including students in Indonesia, face significant difficulties in learning fricative consonants. These include sounds such as /θ/ and /ð/, which are frequently replaced with /t/ or /d/, and /f/ and /v/, which are often mispronounced as /p/. These shifts of sounds can create misunderstandings in communication and become an obstacle to the development of pronunciation in students. Therefore, utilizing students' familiarity with Arabic sounds that they know and have similarities with English, such as ث for /θ/ or ذ for /ð/, can be a culturally relevant approach and teach English phonemes that they find difficult to understand.

Some previous research has examined the integration of Arabic phonology towards English pronunciation learning, specifically among Indonesian students, such as Hasani & Sujarwati (2024), who examined the contribution of Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* to English consonants in Madrasah Aliyah Ladang Panjang. This research used oral tests and statistical analysis. The results of the analysis showed that Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* could help improve English consonants by up to 97% in students' pronunciation accuracy after the intervention. In their research, they also revealed that students with a strong background in Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* tend to acquire English pronunciation more easily. In contrast, students lacking in Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* need to be more trained and prioritized in learning.

Another study conducted by Ismayoeng Gusdian & Lestiono (2018) focused on the role of Arabic consonant sounds ث, ذ, and ش to help English pronunciation. This research was conducted on students of Muhammadiyah Malang using qualitative methods, including text reading, games, imitation, and drill pronunciation. The results of the research showed that Arabic consonant sounds ث, ذ, and ش were effective in helping students' English pronunciation. The students also became more aware of consonant sounds such as /θ/, /ð/, and /ʃ/.

Furthermore, Nurabianti & Farah (2024) developed a pronunciation learning tool using *Hijaiyah* flashcards as media for learning pronunciation of students at

SMP Muhammadiyah Malang. The research was conducted using the research and Development (R&D) method. Data was obtained through observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The results showed that the effectiveness of using *Hijaiyah* flashcards was 82.5% from media experts, 100% from teachers, and 84.25% from students. Generally, the findings highlight the growing potential of Arabic phonology strategies for English pronunciation learning, especially in contexts where students are already familiar with Arabic articulation.

Despite these findings, most previous studies have focused more on pronunciation improvement in general or on a limited group of Arabic consonants. However, they did not highlight fricative sounds specifically, and didn't explore the unique learning environment in *pesantren*-based schools, where students' mastery of *Makharijul Huruf* is intense. This leaves a research gap in exploring how *Makharijul Huruf* Arabic can be utilized specifically to improve the pronunciation of fricative sounds in a *pesantren* context. Therefore, this study attempts to bridge the gap by integrating Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* into English pronunciation practice, with particular emphasis on fricative sounds such as /θ/, /ð/, /f/, and /v/. By utilizing students' strong foundation in Arabic phonetics acquired through *Pesantren*-based schools, this study aims to propose a linguistically and culturally based strategy to improve English pronunciation. It is expected that this approach will provide a more suitable and efficient way of overcoming the pronunciation problems often experienced by Indonesian students in *Pesantren*-based schools.

However, the current study focuses on fricative sounds without discussing other sounds more extensively, which can also benefit from phonological transfer. In that way, this study cannot be generalized to all aspects of English pronunciation. It is suggested that other researchers can investigate other sounds, including plosive, affricative, and vocal, to provide a broader understanding of how Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* can encourage the learning of English pronunciation, and students can easily learn pronunciation, and teachers will have more motivation in teaching English pronunciation.

B. Research Questions

This research investigates the use of Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* to enhance English fricative consonants. English pronunciation is challenging for students, especially non-native speakers. Due to the fact that English learning is limited in time allocation, especially in *Pesantren*-based schools. *Pesantren*-based school emphasizes religious values such as reading the Quran, *tahfidz*, *tahsin*, which are all related to the daily practice of Arabic *Makharijul Huruf*. Therefore, pronunciation becomes challenging among students, especially with sounds that are not found in their first language.

In this case, students' understanding of Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* can serve as a basis for learning English pronunciation. By utilizing the similarities between Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* and English sounds, a positive transfer of phonology is possible. Therefore, this study examines how students' understanding and ability in Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* contribute to improving English pronunciation.

This study formulates the following questions:

1. What is the EFL students' ability in pronouncing fricative sounds before the implementation of the adapted Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* pronunciation lesson?
2. What is the EFL students' ability in pronouncing fricative sounds after the implementation of the adapted Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* pronunciation lesson?
3. How significant is the improvement of EFL students' ability in pronouncing fricative sounds before and after the implementation of the adapted Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* pronunciation lesson?
4. What underlying factors influence the degree of effectiveness in the implementation of the adapted Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* pronunciation lesson?

The research questions above not only aim to explore the practical outcomes of using Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* in teaching English pronunciation but also have a broader pedagogical implication by integrating religious and culture-based phonology into second language acquisition. These questions are expected to reveal how students' background knowledge supports the process of improving English pronunciation learning, especially in a *Pesantren*-based school environment. The findings of this study are also expected to develop English learning strategies that are culturally and contextually relevant to Islamic educational environments such as *Pesantren*-based schools.

C. Purposes of the study

Based on the research questions, this study formulates four main objectives.

1. To determine the initial ability of students in pronouncing English fricative sounds before the implementation of pronunciation learning adapted from the concept of Arabic *Makharijul Huruf*. This objective serves to determine the pre-test or basis of comparison in assessing the effectiveness of learning English fricatives through Arabic *Makharijul Huruf*, considering that students are accustomed to the pronunciation of Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* in reading the Quran, so that this study wants to see the extent to which these skills affect students' English pronunciation skills.
2. To determine the students' ability to pronounce English fricative sounds after the treatment of pronunciation learning adapted from the concept of Arabic *Makharijul Huruf*. This aims to see the post-test results to what extent the teaching strategy is able to improve students' pronunciation.
3. To analyze the significance of students' English fricative pronunciation ability before and after the implementation of Arabic *Makharijul Huruf*-based learning, especially in consonant sounds that students find challenging because it is not found in their first language, such as /θ/, /ð/, /f/, and /v/. Those sounds are often shifted to other sounds that are close to their first language. This objective

focused on a quantitative analysis of the difference in scores between the pre-test and post-test.

4. To analyze the factors that contribute to the improvement of English fricatives in students through Arabic *Makharijul Huruf*. The factors are seen from both internal and external perspectives, such as: (a) the motivation of students in improving their pronunciation, (b) the contribution of teachers and friends in improving the pronunciation of English fricatives, and (c) the influence of the environment on learning in students. The identification of these factors is crucial for providing recommendations to EFL teachers in pesantren to optimize the use of Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* as an approach to learning English pronunciation.

These objectives can provide an understanding of how the phonological transfer of Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* and English fricatives can be effectively applied in classroom learning, especially in *Pesantren*-based schools. By utilizing Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* in improving English fricative pronunciation, this research also aims to provide a contextual approach to teachers in teaching English pronunciation in classrooms that are considered quite difficult. Furthermore, this research can contribute not only to the pedagogical aspect but also to inclusive and culturally responsive language teaching. Therefore, this research can be a reference for teachers in the teaching process in *Pesantren*-based schools according to students' knowledge background and daily linguistic exposure.

D. Contributions of the study

The study on exploring the role of Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* in enhancing English Fricative pronunciation skills offers some significant contributions to language learning, especially pronunciation improvement strategies. The contributions in this research are classified into three categories: theoretical, empirical, and practical.

Theoretically, this study contributes by expanding the application of interlanguage transfer theory. The phonology of Arabic, or Arabic *Makharijul*

Huruf in English, suggests that phonology in other languages can be utilized to overcome pronunciation difficulties. Transfer language theory usually discusses more about the influence of the first language (L1) but also discusses how the influence of the second language (L2) and the third language (L3), in this research emphasizes the second language (L2) and the third language (L3) that reflect the reality of complex language in the field of education, especially in Indonesia. The effectiveness of using Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* in learning English pronunciation provides a new dimension to transfer language theory research and provides insight into linguistic knowledge of religion and culture that benefits pedagogically.

The second is empirical, this research provides concrete evidence of the effectiveness of utilizing Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* to improve English fricative pronunciation for students in *Pesantren*-based schools. According to the Classroom data and student responses, they were able to transfer their knowledge of Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* to improve their pronunciation of English fricatives, which is considered challenging. Thus, this empirical contribution integrates the culturally relevant linguistic resources in language teaching, while also contributing to provide an opportunity for further research on pronunciation learning strategies that are aligned with the competence of the students.

Finally, practically, this research contributes innovative approaches for English teachers, especially in *Pesantren*-based schools. Learning English pronunciation by utilizing the students' Arabic *Makharijul Huruf* skills makes learning activities easier and more engaging for students. Using the method helps to bridge the gap between religious learning and English education, making the learning environment more relevant and holistic. Using articulation methods that students are already familiar, makes teaching effective and enhances students' motivation in learning. In addition, this research can be an innovation for teachers and curriculum developers by including language and cultural values in English pedagogy.