CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This section introduces and elaborates six elements: research background, research questions, research purposes, research significances, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

A. Research Background

Pronunciation represents a fundamental aspect of verbal ability that enables people to speak a target language, including English, more fluently (Atli & Bergil, 2012). It helps the speaker producing sounds that convey meaning to create comprehensible communication (Susanti & Dewanti, 2017). Furthermore, previous studies have found that correct pronunciation is the most significant factor in interacting with others (Seyedabadi et al., 2015). Correct pronunciation defines an utterance context and makes it easier for the interlocutor to understand what the speaker is saying (Mirzaei et al., 2015). In particular, the correct pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation are part of supra-segmental features that help the speakers express the meaning of utterances (Varol, 2012). On the other hand, poor pronunciation can lead to misunderstandings and a communication breakdown. Consequently, pronunciation is the most challenging speaking skill for beginners to master (Chen, Chang, & Yen, 2012).

Nowadays, students are more interested in using their phones than learning new information. Most students use their mobile phones for communication and entertainment (Zou & Li, 2015). It demonstrates that teachers must develop effective learning methods to reap the advantages of using smartphones in the English learning and teaching process. It is fascinating to teach and practice English pronunciation using technology (Gilakjani, 2018). In this era, technology is advanced and incredible. It has progressed and made human life easier in every way, especially in education. Moreover, utilizing technology to improve learning is one of the most significant aspects of teaching (Jafari et al., 2015; Levin and Wadmany, 2006; cited in Gilakjani, 2018).

The learning policy changes in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic affected the challenging situations in the teaching and learning activity. In pronunciation learning, teachers need to help students find an appropriate method that can be applied anywhere. Furthermore, mobile learning is a modern way to happen anywhere (Mehdipour & Zerehkafi, 2013). The use of the mobile phone in the classroom can assist students in English pronunciation lessons quickly. For Agussalim et al. (2014), teachers can use an android-based mobile application to help students learn. For instance, using Poro[1] English as an android-based mobile application helps students learn English pronunciation by listening and imitating native speaker audio. The research's significance is it will assist teachers in developing pronunciation learning media, and students create their self-learning media.

Based on a brief interview with an English teacher at SMPN 3 Pancatengah, seventh-graders have difficulty pronouncing English terms. They demonstrated their errors as they pronounced words like introducing somebody, asking for help, and so on. Furthermore, several issues with learning English in the classroom have been identified, including lack of language practice both within and outside the school and student motivation. Considering their speaking habit in their native language, students rarely use English in their everyday activities, except in short greetings. Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016) mention several problems that make pronunciation neglected in the English lessons, such as lack of time, teachers' motivation, resources, materials, and other educational facilities. Therefore, Poro English in English lessons intends to assist teachers and students in pronunciation teaching and learning.

Several previous studies discussed the topic of using the application to teach English Pronunciation. First, Gilakjani (2018) explored the lecturer's perception of teaching English pronunciation using computer technology. Next, Haryadi and Aprianoto (2020) examined the integration of using English pronunciation applications to increase college students' participation and self-learning in

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[1] *Poro English* is a free application that developed by Poro Studio for learning English by practicing listening and speaking.

pronunciation classes. Finally, Suryani et al. (2019) investigated university students' pros and cons using the ORAI[2] application in learning pronunciation. While the previous study focused on teacher and students' perception of using an application in pronunciation class, this research centralizes on investigating teaching English pronunciation and how students perceive using Poro English at the junior high school level.

B. Research Questions

Two following questions arise based on the background above:

1. How is Poro English applied in teaching English Pronunciation in the classroom?
2. What are the students' responses toward learning English pronunciation by using the Poro English application in the classroom?

C. Research Purposes

Based on the questions above, this research intends to:

1. Explore the process of teaching English pronunciation by using the Poro English application in the classroom.
2. Find out the students' responses toward learning English pronunciation by using Poro English in the classroom.

D. Research Significances

This research intends to teach English pronunciation using Poro English and how the application works for junior high school students in the classroom. Theoretically, this research highlights the benefit of utilizing Poro English as a learning media in teaching English pronunciation. Practically, the findings of the study give significance to teachers and students. Teachers will benefit from the research by incorporating educational technology, such as the Poro English app, as a learning media in the English classroom, especially pronunciation. Moreover,

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[2] *ORAI* is an android mobile application that developed by Danish Dhamani to help teachers in pronunciation teaching and learning process.

the study aims to motivate junior high school students to learn English pronunciation by engaging with the Poro English application's learning process.

E. Conceptual Framework

Pronunciation is considered one of the essential aspects of speaking, and it provides effective and consistent communication by conveying meaning and transmitting a message (Seyedabadi et al., 2015). The speaker who transfers the utterance should have a correct pronunciation to enable the listener to understand what the speaker says. Thus, the correct pronunciation is a vital element in assisting the speaker in communicating effectively and enhancing intelligibility (Varasarin, 2007, as cited in Seyedabadi et al., 2015). On the other hand, incorrect pronunciation leads speakers to fail to communicate their meaning clearly (Cavus, 2016). Moreover, incorrect pronunciation contributes to poor communication, including misunderstandings, negative impressions, and inadequate communication. Therefore, Indonesian EFL students need to learn English pronunciation to improve stable pronunciation and communicate in meaningful and understandable communication.

Furthermore, to support the learning process, the Poro English application can assist students in improving their correct pronunciation through the application features. This research uses the *Learn English – Listening and Speaking*[3] version to teach English pronunciation, providing written and oral pronunciation examples. The app can download freely from the Google Play Store, is easy to use, and is compatible with junior high school students who learn English pronunciation. The Poro English offers a range of audio clips that students can listen to as pronunciation examples. Students can also learn pronunciation, listening, and speaking skills simultaneously by using Poro English. Besides, the text and phonetics of the audio can be adaptable to appear or disappear by students. As part of a technology tool, the Poro English application aims to assist

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[3] *Learn English – Listening and Speaking* is one version of Poro English application that used in Listening and Speaking practice.

teachers and students in English pronunciation learning and teaching (Yoshida, 2018).

Moreover, the use of Poro English in learning pronunciation involves the use of mobile phones. The Poro English application is an android-based mobile application that students can use by operating their mobile phones in the classroom to practice pronunciation lessons. For Cavus (2016), mobile devices such as mobile phones in learning English gain positive feedback from teachers and students, increase students' motivation and performance and provide a more exciting learning process. Thus, using the Poro English application in mobile phones creates something new in the teaching and learning process to gain a positive impact by managing their interest and skill requirement.

For adapting the learning media to the learning technique, the research employs *listen and imitate techniques* for Celce-Murcia et al. (1996). The Poro English app provides audio examples to hear. Then, it imitates what they have heard and repeated them to enhance their pronunciation. The audio sample of the app is used to train students' listening ability. For Harmer (2007), listening is good to teach students pronunciation, and listening texts are good models in pronunciation. In this regard, the listening ability help students to enhance their pronunciation ability. In brief, the more learner listen to the model, the better they understand the pronunciation. Thus, this research implements listen and imitate technique through the Poro English application to develop pronunciation teaching and learning for junior high school students.

F. Previous Studies

Gilakjani (2018) investigated the lecturer's perception of teaching English pronunciation using computer technology. The research used the qualitative method and implemented interviews and questionnaires for collecting the data. The instruments were distributed to 15 teachers from two different universities in Iran. The research findings showed lecturers agree the implementation of computer technology in teaching pronunciation is interesting. It helped the

lecturers teach pronunciation effectively, raised lecturers' confidence and motivation to give the instruction.

Haryadi and Aprianoto (2020) investigated the integration of using English pronunciation applications to increase college students' participation and self-learning in pronunciation classes. The research used a quasi-qualitative design and collected the data in two ways: observation and interview. The research participants comprised 48 English students of the first year and were divided into two groups. The research findings showed that integrating English pronunciation apps in teaching pronunciation increased the students' involvement and positively affected students' self-learning.

Suryani et al. (2019) investigated the pro and cons of University Students using the ORAI application in learning pronunciation. The research implemented qualitative methods and collected the data by using two instruments, observation and interview. There were 35 English students of the third semester in IKIP Siliwangi as research participants. The findings showed four categories of agreement using the ORAI application: accessibility, comfortability, technicality, and integrated learning. On the other hand, the students agree that the application has weaknesses such as topic difficulties and technicalities in practicing English pronunciation. However, overall, students give positive feedback using the ORAI application to trigger them to practice and improve their pronunciation.

Those research have the same focuses on teaching pronunciation using technology applications. However, Poro English application in teaching pronunciation is the study gap that differs from the previous studies.