

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study investigated the factors affecting the English pronunciation of first-semester EFL students at Artha Wacana Christian University through pronunciation tests and semi-structured interviews. The findings demonstrate that students' pronunciation difficulties are influenced by multiple linguistic factors rather than by a single source of error. Four major factors emerged from the data: mother-tongue interference, differences between the first-language and English sound systems, inconsistencies in English vowel pronunciation, and the influence of English orthography on pronunciation.

Among these factors, mother tongue interference was identified as the most influential. The participants acknowledged that their daily use of local languages and Indonesian strongly shaped their pronunciation habits, making it difficult to suppress their native accent and produce English sounds accurately. Their first language continued to influence both segmental features, such as vowel production, and broader aspects of pronunciation, including overall speech patterns. This finding indicates that learners naturally transfer familiar phonological patterns from their first language when speaking English, particularly when opportunities to use English outside the classroom are limited.

The findings also reveal that substantial differences between the sound

systems of the students' first language and English contribute to pronunciation difficulties. Students experienced problems distinguishing English vowel length, recognizing unfamiliar phonemes, identifying syllables, and producing appropriate word stress. Their performance in the pronunciation test further confirmed that several English vowel sounds, particularly /ʊ/ and /u:/, remained difficult to produce accurately. These findings suggest that learners continue to struggle with English phonological features that are absent or function differently in their native language.

Another important finding concerns the complexity of English vowel pronunciation. The participants consistently reported that identical vowel letters often represent different sounds depending on the word, creating uncertainty when pronouncing unfamiliar vocabulary. Likewise, the inconsistency between English spelling and pronunciation emerged as a significant source of difficulty. Many students relied on written forms, dictionaries, Google Translate, or repeated listening to determine the correct pronunciation because they could not accurately predict pronunciation from spelling alone. These findings indicate that English orthography poses a considerable challenge for beginning EFL learners.

Despite these challenges, the study also demonstrates that students employ various self-directed learning strategies to improve their pronunciation. Repeated listening, searching for pronunciation models through digital applications, consulting online dictionaries, and asking lecturers or classmates for assistance were frequently reported as effective learning strategies. These

practices reflect students' willingness to improve their pronunciation through continuous exposure and independent learning.

Overall, this study concludes that English pronunciation difficulties among first-semester EFL students result from the interaction between learners' linguistic background and the complex phonological and orthographic characteristics of English. Consequently, effective pronunciation instruction should extend beyond simple imitation or repetition by explicitly addressing cross-linguistic differences, English vowel systems, spelling–sound correspondences, and the development of learners' phonological awareness. Such instructional approaches are expected to support more accurate pronunciation and improve students' overall oral communication skills.

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions are proposed for English language teaching, student learning, and future research.

First, **English lecturers** should provide more explicit and systematic pronunciation instruction that focuses on English phonological features that differ substantially from students' first language. Classroom activities should include intensive practice on problematic vowel sounds, vowel length contrasts, syllable identification, word stress, and spelling–sound relationships. Pronunciation teaching should also incorporate authentic listening materials, minimal-pair exercises, phonetic transcription, and communicative speaking activities to increase students' awareness of English sound patterns.

Second, **students** are encouraged to develop regular pronunciation practice beyond classroom instruction. They should increase their exposure to authentic English through podcasts, films, audiobooks, online dictionaries, and pronunciation applications. Repeated listening, shadowing techniques, recording their own speech, and seeking feedback from lecturers and peers may help students gradually improve pronunciation accuracy and speaking confidence.

Third, **curriculum developers and language instructors** should integrate pronunciation instruction more systematically into speaking and listening courses, particularly during the early semesters of English language programs. Since pronunciation difficulties are closely related to learners' first language background, instructional materials should explicitly compare English sounds with local language sound systems to minimize negative transfer and strengthen learners' phonological awareness.

Finally, **future researchers** are encouraged to investigate English pronunciation difficulties using larger and more diverse participant groups across different universities and linguistic backgrounds. Future studies may also employ mixed-method or experimental designs to examine the effectiveness of specific pronunciation teaching strategies, digital pronunciation technologies, artificial intelligence-assisted pronunciation training, or phonetic instruction in improving EFL learners' pronunciation accuracy. Longitudinal studies would further contribute to understanding how pronunciation develops over time and which instructional interventions produce the most sustainable improvements.