

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT STUDENTS’
CHALLENGES IN PRONOUNCING VOICELESS CONSONANTS**

THESIS

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**THE CHALLENGES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
STUDENTS IN PRONOUNCING ENGLISH WORDS**

Adalah benar- benar karya saya, kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. Apabila ada kesalahan dan kekeliruan didalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya jadi tanggung jawab saya. Demikian surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya.

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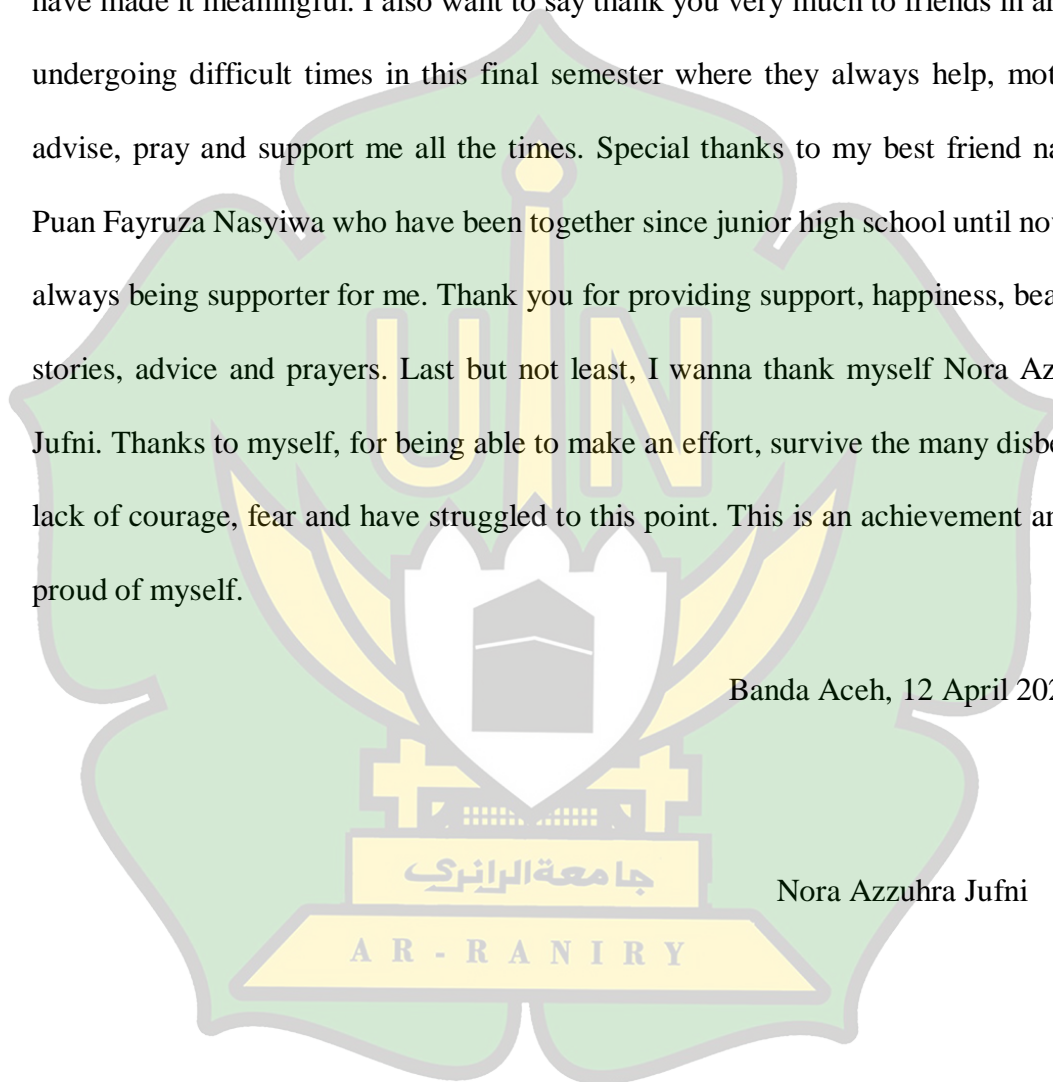
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ABSTRACT

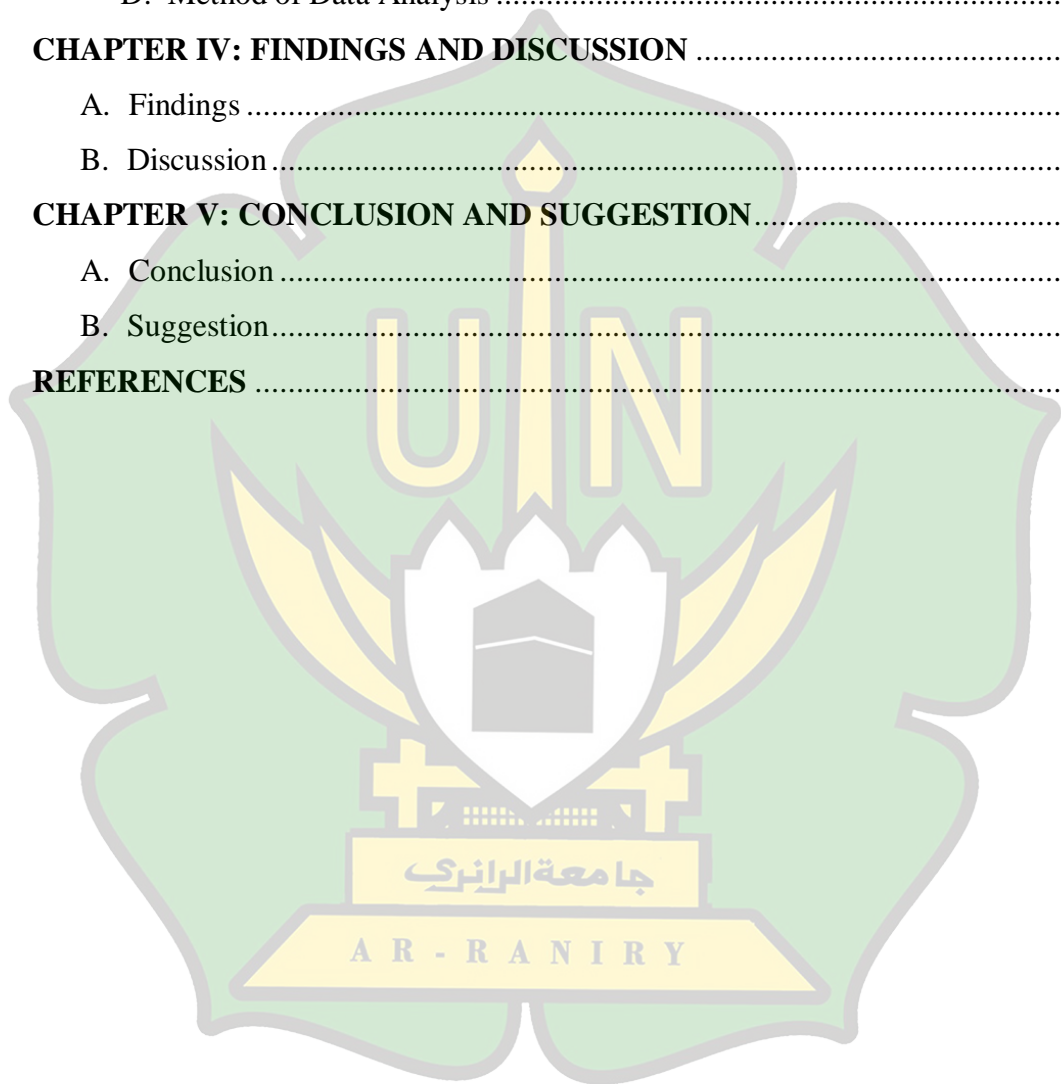
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This study investigates the challenges faced by English Language Education Department students at UIN Ar-Raniry in pronouncing voiceless consonants in English. Using a descriptive qualitative method, the research involved 14 students from the 2021 class who had studied linguistics. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed thematically. The findings revealed four main challenges: (1) phonetic interference from the first language (L1), especially with sounds like /θ/, /p/, /t/, and /k/ that do not exist in Bahasa Indonesia; (2) mismatch between English spelling and pronunciation, which leads to confusion and mispronunciation; (3) emotional and psychological barriers, such as nervousness, shyness, and fear of making mistakes that affect speech clarity; and (4) lack of consistent practice and exposure to real-life English pronunciation. These challenges hinder students' ability to pronounce voiceless consonants accurately and fluently. The study concludes that more targeted pronunciation practice, emotional support, and phonological awareness are essential to help students overcome these difficulties. The findings also offer useful insights for teachers and curriculum designers to enhance pronunciation instruction in EFL contexts.

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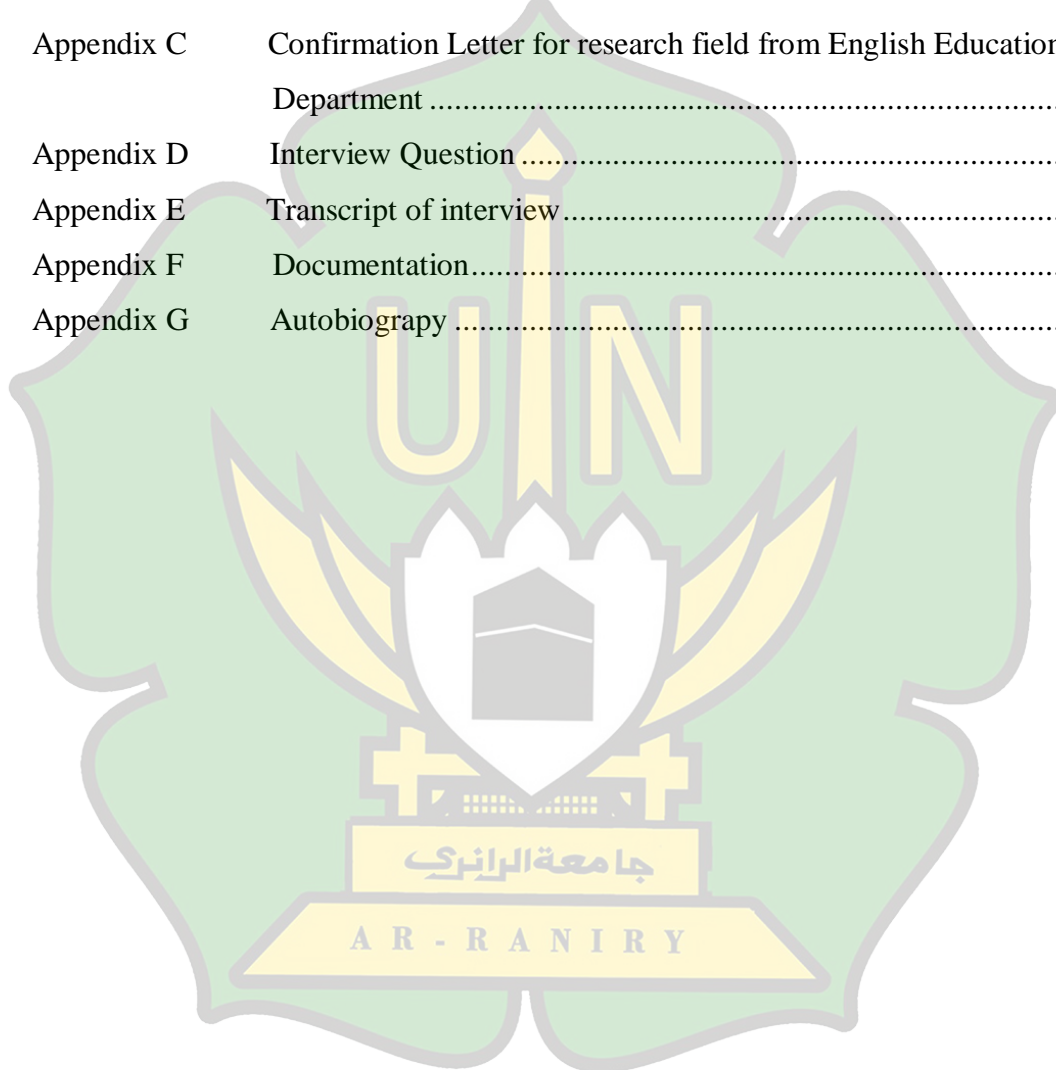
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher has written an explanation regarding five important sections including the background of the study, research question, research aims, significance of the study, and terminologies.

A. Background of The study

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language. Students only learn English in school as a result. They have trouble learning this language as a result. Students consequently make mistakes when learning this language, both in terms of skills and components. Language consists of three parts: grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, and four skills: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Students must be able to pronounce words correctly as one of the language components. In actuality, though, Indonesian students are unable to correctly produce English words (Mulanasari, Basri & Hastini, 2014)

English Pronunciation is one of the most challenging skills to acquire and learn English pronunciation is quite tricky for Indonesian students since they have been used to speaking their mother tongue since childhood. Moreover, English is significantly different from the Indonesia language in its pronunciation system. English Language department students known that there are two aspects in categorizing Alphabet, there are vowel and consonant. Consonant divided into two kinds those are voiced consonant and voiceless consonant Still, English department students sometimes make mistakes in pronouncing.

Pronunciation is a fundamental aspect of spoken language that significantly affects communicative competence, especially for English as a Foreign Language learner. One of the most problematic areas for these learners is the correct production of voiceless consonants sounds produced without the vibration of the vocal cords, such as /p/, /t/, /k/, /f/, /s/, and /ʃ/. These consonants often pose articulation challenges due to interference from the learner's first language (L1), such as Indonesian, where similar phonemes may not exist or differ in pronunciation patterns.

This Voiceless consonant related to the sound in doing pronunciation. According to Kenworthy (2000) learners tend to have difficulties with English sounds that are not present in their native language. Similarly, Krashen (1982) emphasizes that psychological factors like anxiety and low self-confidence can create barriers in mastering foreign sounds. Suwartono (2006) notes that pronunciation is rarely taught explicitly, leaving students with little guidance on difficult sounds like voiceless consonants.

This issue becomes more specific in the context of EFL students in Indonesia. Based on informal observation, many students from the English Language Education Department struggle to articulate voiceless plosives like /p/, /t/, and /k/ correctly, particularly when these appear in the initial position of words. As Ramelan (2003) explains, such plosives require a controlled release of air (aspiration), which is often neglected by Indonesian learners, leading to mispronunciation such as “part” without the aspirated.

Several previous studies have investigated the pronunciation difficulties of voiceless consonants. Azizah (2019) conducted research at UIN Raden Intan Lampung

and found that most errors made by students in pronouncing plosive voiceless consonants (/p/, /t/, /k/) were omissions, particularly the failure to aspirate these sounds in initial word positions. Students often pronounced /p/, /t/, and /k/ as if they were unaspirated, significantly reducing intelligibility. Another study also stated by Minh et al. (2024) the use of the Simplified Verbotonal Approach (SVA) with Vietnamese EFL learners and found that this prosody-focused method significantly improved students' pronunciation of voiceless consonants. The study highlighted the effectiveness of combining segmental and suprasegmental training.

Based on the previous studies, the researcher found that most studies emphasize error classification rather than the underlying causes and perceptions related to these difficulties and limited research has explored the challenges faced by Indonesian EFL learners specifically at the university level in voiceless consonant. So, the researcher felt it was important to conduct a study entitled “English Language education department students’ Challenges in Pronouncing Voiceless Consonant”

B. Research Question

Based on the background explanation above I want to find out “What are the challenges faced by English Language Education Department students in pronouncing voiceless consonants?”

C. Research Aims

In accordance with the research questions above, this study aimed to find the specific challenges experienced by English Language Education Department students in articulating voiceless consonant sounds in English.

D. Significances of the Study

This study gives numbers of significances as the following:

1. For the Students

This research is essential for English language student to lead them to know that it is crucial to understand. This study can help students become more aware of specific pronunciation issues and guide them in practicing correct voiceless consonants production.

2. For the Researcher

This research was an opportunity to deepen understanding about voiceless Consonants in pronouncing English Word, particularly in the context of EFL students. Conducting this study allowed the researcher to explore the theoretical and practical dimensions of Pronunciation, providing insights into what are the student challenges they acquired when Pronouncing Voiceless Consonants. It also strengthened the researcher's ability to critically analyze and combine perspectives on the pronunciation

3. For Future Researchers:

This research is essential for English language student to lead them to know that it is crucial to understand. This study hopefully can be used to improve student speaking ability especially in pronouncing. Moreover, This study contributes to the limited body of research on voiceless consonants and may inspire further investigations on other consonantal features or prosodic elements.

E. Terminology

To avoid any confusion related to terms used in this research, the researcher define several terms for the general public to get insights from this research in its complete state.

a. Challenge

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, "challenge" is a situation where a person is faced with something that requires significant mental and physical effort to be carried out successfully and thus can test one's skills and abilities. It can be said that a challenge is a situation or problem that requires special effort, thought or action to be overcome or resolved. Challenges can be obstacles, difficulties, or difficult goals and often involve extra effort or problem-solving to overcome them. Challenges can arise in various aspects of life, whether in a personal, professional or social context.

As stated by Raharjo (2011) that explains by J. Toynbee's theory, which is known as the theory of challenges with responses, this theory is considered that in every historical movement will arise due to a stimulus, from which there will be a reaction that will give birth to change.

b. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is an essential thing in good communication because the wrong pronunciation will lead to misunderstanding and negative impression with the other person. According to Louma (2010) pronunciation is the sounds speech that can refer to many features of the stream such as individual sounds, pitch, volume, speed, stressing, intonation, and pausing.

c. Voiceless Consonants

Voiceless sounds are types of consonant sounds produced without any vibration of the vocal cords. When pronouncing these sounds, the airflow from the lungs is released with a quick burst of air, often creating a sharp or percussive effect. These sounds contrast with voiced sounds, which involve noticeable vibration in the vocal cords. Common examples of voiceless sounds in English include /p/, /t/, /k/, /f/, /s/, and /ʃ/. To identify whether a sound is voiceless, one practical method is to place a finger gently on the throat while speaking. If the person feels no vibration and only a sudden release of air during the pronunciation, the sound is categorized as voiceless. This physical sensation of a short air explosion without vibration helps distinguish voiceless sounds from voiced ones, which produce a buzzing sensation in the throat. According to Beare (2013), this technique is a simple yet effective way to understand how different speech sounds are formed and to develop better pronunciation awareness.

