

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents the background of the research, formulation of the research, significance of the research, scope and limitation, and definitions of key term.

A. Background of the Research

English is one of the world languages that has an important role in global communication in this modern era. English is one of the basic competencies that must be mastered by the younger generation to achieve success in the era of globalization. One of the countries that introduced English and taught it in the world of education is Indonesia. The introduction and teaching of English in Indonesia starts from early childhood education, elementary school, middle school and even university level (Santoso, 2014). The introduction of English at various levels becomes capital for students to be able to compete internationally. Therefore, it is important to introduce English from an early age.

Introduction to English in early childhood is very important to provide them with provisions for later life. According to Pinter cited by (Astari et al., 2020) the standards for early childhood education (ages 3-6 years) in English language learning focus on developing listening skills and vocabulary for speaking skills using real and familiar objects. Apart from that, childhood is a golden period for the development of a child's brain and language skills. In early childhood, children have a good ability to absorb new information and language. This period is also a period that is often called the linguistic period. The linguistic period is a golden age for young children to learn English without using other developmental aspects that are very important in their lives. Apart from that, during this period it is easier for children to learn other than their mother tongue compared to adults. Early childhood children who enter the linguistic period are able to use a vocabulary of approximately 2500 words and understand around 6000 words and are able to interact with complete sentences (Ikhsania, 2020).

Language development in preschool usually includes regional languages, Indonesian and even foreign languages. One of the foreign languages taught at an

early age is English. For young learners aged 3, 4, and 5 years who are nonnative speakers ideally master around 500 English vocabulary (Thamrin & Yuniarni, 2017). English for early childhood who are non-native speakers at the age of 3, 4, 5 years the children begin to learn basic vocabulary such as alphabet, colours, part of body, animal, fruits, food and drinks. In addition to learning vocabulary, children also learn simple expressions.

Children understand and process the language they acquire most quickly during this phase if they receive frequent training and exposure to English. The early childhood is a time when children have easy to absorb are called absorbent minds. Early childhood is a time when children easily absorb information. Especially through language in their environment. Montessori states that the early children have sensitivity to language or are called sensitive of language (Jetti et al., 2018)

The early children have high language sensitivity, which means they easily absorb and imitate the language they hear. According to NEACY (*Neacy Association for the Education of Young Children*) as cited by (Etnawati, 2022) children who are in the age range of 0-8 years are called early childhood who are in a sensitive period. This period is often called the golden period because at that time the development of brain intelligence develops rapidly. So that it is necessary to have educational stimulus from teachers and parents around the child to greatly help in the growth and development of the child. This makes it easier for them to learn English than adults.

At an early age, children are taught the basics of English. When English is taught in preschool, of course it has different outcomes as seen from the speaking. Speech produced by children when speaking English. The science that studies sound in linguistics is called phonology. According to (Ayriza, 1997) in the study of linguistics, the study of language sounds is called phonology. Phonology in an outline sense and a narrower sense. Broadly speaking, phonology is a sub-discipline in linguistics that talks about "language sounds", while in a narrow sense, phonology purely talks about the function, behaviour, and organization of sounds as linguistic elements. Thus, phonology in general can be interpreted as

the study of language sounds by paying attention to the functions and linguistic elements in it.

Phonological processes are systematic rules that children apply to simplify the production of complex sounds or words. According to (Sutomo, 1994) English phonological process happens both in word and phrase level. In the word level, it occurs when a morpheme is combined with another morpheme. One of the sounds will experience a change because of the influence of another morpheme. These processes are common in both L1 and L2 acquisition and can influence the pronunciation of words in various ways. Some common phonological processes include: assimilation process, substitution process and syllable structure process. Assimilation process describe change in which a sound becomes similar to or influenced by a neighbouring sound of an utterance. Substitution process describe that sound change in which one sound class is replaced by another. Meanwhile syllable structure process describes that sound change that affect the structure of the syllable. This thesis aims to investigate the phonological processes employed by young learners in the early linguistic periods at Khalifah Kindergarten when they are producing English.

When conducting pre-observation. Some children aged 3, 4 and 5 years in Khalifah Kindergarten Tulungagung have advantages such as being able to pronounce English vocabulary well, having more English vocabulary than others, and there are 3-year-old children who use English as their mother tongue or everyday language. In the pre-observation at Khalifah Kindergarten, during extracurricular English learning. The children who learn English in kindergarten are aged 3, 4, 5 years. The children are taught basic vocabulary to understand English such as various foods, drinks, vegetables, fruits and so on. After that, the child is instructed to pronounce the vocabulary that has been taught. When children pronounce the vocabulary, there are differences in each child's pronunciation. When pronouncing vocabulary, there is a phonological process. This is evidenced by several types of phonological processes in children aged 4 and 5 years such as deletion of final consonant (/Star frut/→/sta fut/), cluster simplification (/Star frut/→/sta_fut/), syllable structure (/ˈwɒtər,mələn/→/meon/), addition of consonant and syllables (/Star frut/→/setar fruit/), stopping of

fricatives and affricatives (/pitf/→/pis/), decentralization(/'lemən/→/lemən/), medial devoicing 'wɒdər, mɛlən/→/'wɒtər, mɛlən/), monophthongisation (/bə'nænə/→/ bənənə/), and vowel alteration (/paɪ,næpəl/→/'paɪ,næpɒ/). From these processes, children age 3 years old have the most phonological processes followed by children age 4 years old and the least phonological processes are experienced by children age 5 years old.

Some previous studies were conducted related to phonological process for young learners. Some previous studies were conducted related to phonological processes in early childhood for early childhood levels. (Soraya, 2017);(Raja, n.d.);(Umara et al., 2021);(Piper, 1984) In the study, common phonological processes were found, such as reduplication, final consonant, stopping affricative and fricative. Further research focused on phonological processes at school age level (7-12 years): (Diani & Azwandi, 2021);(Aliah et al., 2023). In addition, the research focused on adults (Andika & Abdullah, 2019); (Nur'ahdiani, 2010);(Yuliana Silvia, Tobing, Kammer, 2023);(Maharani et al., 2022) in this study explains about the interference of mother tongue (L1) phonology to a foreign language, namely English. This interference is found in vowel phonemes and semivowel phonemes. Several factors that cause language interference such as age, motivation, aptitude, and language use which is specified into oral communication or speaking skill.

Next, study on phonological process of pronunciation (Mohamad et al., 2021) the result of this research, there are four categories of English phonological process as a mother tongue including assimilation, dissimilation, deletion and insertion. This study investigated phonological errors without investigating the underlying phonological rules that might contribute to these errors. other studies (Sidabutar, 2020) this research identifies common mispronunciations of consonant and vowel particularly highlighting errors with voiceless dental fricative and affricative consonants. Research about English phonological processes produced by young learners crucial, given the scarcity of studies exploring the specific types of phonological errors experienced by children in the early linguistic period, namely at the ages of 3, 4, and 5 years, and how English exposure affects their phonological aspects. Some previous studies have discussed general types of

phonological processes and the factors influencing them, but none have specifically examined phonological processes in early childhood. Research on the characteristics of phonological processes at this age is still relatively rare. As a result, there is a lack of information regarding the patterns of children's phonological development at this stage, especially when learning English. This information is crucial for understanding how Indonesian children acquire language and for developing appropriate intervention programs for children who struggle with language learning. This study aims to bridge that gap and provide deeper insight into the phonological processes that occur during the early stages of language development in children.

Next, study on phonological awareness (Susanto & Nanda, 2023); (Aruan, 2023); (Buana & Irawan, 2021) discusses students' phonological awareness in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes and its relationship to reading ability. Phonological awareness is important in reading ability, and phonological awareness tasks can help improve students' reading ability.

Based on the research that has been described above, the researcher will examine the pronunciation of Khalifah Kindergarten students. It will focus on phonological processes of English spoken by young learners in the Linguistic period. This research has benefits for English language comprehension in the early linguistic period, developing more effective English language teaching methods for young learners, helping in early identification and intervention for young learners who experience difficulties in phonological processes.

B. Formulation of the Research

1. What are the contributing factors that influence the phonological development of English pronunciation in young learners aged 4 to 5 years?
2. What types of phonological processes do young learners aged 4 to 5 years exhibit when pronouncing English vocabulary as a foreign language at Khalifah Kindergarten?

C. Purpose of the Research

1. To identify contributing factors that influence the phonological development of English pronunciation in young learners aged 4 to 5 years.

2. To analyse the types of phonological processes produced by young learners aged 4 to 5 years when pronouncing English vocabulary as a foreign language at Khalifah Kindergarten.

C. Significant of the Research

1. For Students

The results of this research can help young learners' students to better understand the English sound system. This can improve their ability to pronounce words correctly and understand subtle sound differences. Apart from that, by understanding the characteristics of English phonology, students can improve their ability to speak English more clearly and easily understood and increase students' self-confidence.

2. The teacher

The results of this research can be used as a reference for analysis of student needs and can help teachers understand the learning needs of young learners in terms of English phonology. And can improve the quality of learning and can create innovations and learning strategies that suit students.

3. The Researcher

The results of this research can be useful for researcher such as:

- a. Increasing knowledge about: This research can increase knowledge about phonological process produced by young learner
- b. Helping other researcher: The results of this study can help other researcher to conduct further research about phonological process produced by young learner.
- c. Developing new theory: The results of this research can be used to developed a new theory of English language acquisition in children.

D. Scope and Limitation

This research aims to describe and analyze the factors influencing phonological development in English vocabulary pronunciation in children aged four to five years old, as well as the types of phonological processes that occur in early childhood at Khalifah Kindergarten. This research will only analyze the phonological processes of substitution, assimilation, and reduction. The limitations of this study include the limited number of subjects. Therefore, the

results cannot be generalized to the wider population of early childhood children, and the phonological types found are less varied.

E. The Definition of Key Terms

1. Phonological Process

Phonological processes are the ways that young children change or simplify the sounds in words as they learn to talk (Vollmer, 2023).

2. Early Linguistic Period

According to (Chomsky, 1965): The early linguistic period is a critical period for children's language development. In this period, children have an innate ability to learn language.

3. Young Learner

According to Ersöz as cited by (Ikawati, 2017) young learners are categorized into three sub categorization. They are very young learners, young learners, and older/late young learners. Very young learners are between the ages of about 3-6 years old; young learners are about 7-9 years old; and for older/late young learners are about 10-12 years old.