

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the related literature about background of study, research question, objective of the study, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, variable definition, systematic of writing.

A. Background of Study

English is a foreign language that many people know and can use, but not everyone understands it fully. In English, we learn four main skills; reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Among these four skills, speaking is the closest to our daily lives because we always use this skill when communicating with others. Effective communication in speaking activities requires the presence of both speakers and listeners.¹ In the context of education, speaking skills are essential for teachers to explain or present the material during learning activities. Suitable media and good speaking skills can facilitate students in grasping the material being explained. Speaking skills are often considered the most difficult to master because they involve more than just speaking in English; several important aspects or elements of speaking skills, namely pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Pronunciation is very important in learning English because incorrect pronunciation such as wrong emphasis and intonation can change the meaning

¹ Adib Ahmada and Lailatul Munawaroh, "THE USE OF ROLE PLAY METHOD TO IMPROVE SPEAKING SKILLS," *Darussalam English Journal* vol.2, no. 1 (2022): 59.

of words, such as the word "desert." /'dez.ət/ means *gurun* while /dɪ'zɜ:t/ means *makanan penutup*. There is also a difference in meaning when mistakes are made in segmenting words, such as "sometime" which means *kadang-kadang* and "some time" which means *beberapa waktu*. Therefore, mastering pronunciation is very important for improving speaking skills in English.

Related to pronunciation, researchers have found several findings that many people who use English still make many pronunciation mistakes. Not only in social scope, but even in the educational scope, such as students majoring in English, pronunciation mistakes are still commonly found. Several studies have found that pronunciation is one of the most difficult aspects for Indonesian EFL learners to master. Over 60% of junior high school students struggle with differentiating long and short vowels and using appropriate intonation.² This is largely due to the lack of exposure to spoken English in authentic contexts. Students mostly listen to teacher-read texts or recordings, without engaging in meaningful oral interaction. In psycholinguistic terms, this weakens phonological activation, which is essential for language development.³ One way is by implementing certain methods on low-level students such as at the junior high school level which already uses dialog practice.

Poor pronunciation often results in low speaking confidence among students. Many students fear being mocked due to mispronunciation, which

² Eryansyah E and Yunita W, "The Use of Role Play in Improving EFL Students' Pronunciation Skill," *Al-Ishlah Journal* vol 16, no. 4 (2022).

³ Marianne Celce-Murcia, Donna M. Brinton, and Janet M. Goodwin, *TEACHING PRONUNCIATION: A COURSE BOOK AND REFERENCE GUIDE (2nd Ed)*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

leads them to avoid speaking altogether. Personality traits and social experiences significantly affect EFL learners' oral performance. Poor pronunciation, therefore, is not only a technical issue but also a psychological one.⁴ As such, pronunciation instruction should address not only the linguistic but also the affective domain. Traditional drill-based methods do not sufficiently build learners' confidence or reduce anxiety. In Indonesian classrooms, pronunciation is often treated as an optional skill, leading to missed opportunities for learners to practice. Hence, an instructional approach that incorporates social interaction and emotional support is needed.

A major critique of pronunciation teaching in Indonesia is its overly mechanical and monotonous nature. Teachers commonly use repetitive drills or recordings, which can be demotivating and disconnected from real communication. While these may offer short-term benefits, they do not in still lasting pronunciation habits. On the other hand, communicative approaches like role play allow students to practice pronunciation in authentic social contexts. Students involved in role plays showed greater awareness of stress, intonation, and articulation.⁵ Role play encourages learners to perform language rather than merely reproduce it. It integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, making it more holistic. Thus, it presents a meaningful and context-rich alternative for pronunciation instruction.

⁴ Kim and Hwang, "Anxiety and Pronunciation Performance in EFL Learners: A Correlational Study," *Journal of Applied Linguistics* vol 34, no. 2 (2024): 115–130.

⁵ Pusparini R, Widiawati U, and Susiati A, "Pre-Service Teachers' Beliefs about English Language Teaching and Learning in EFL Classroom: A Literature Review," *Journal of English Educators Society (JEES)* 6, no. 1 (2021).

Role playing has several advantages. First, it enhances students' social skills by encouraging with others. Second, it prepares students for real-life situations by allowing them to practice scenarios and receive feedback for improvement. Lastly, it boosts students' confidence as they demonstrate their skills and abilities in handling situations.⁶ Role play can be applied at my level, provided that it adjusts to students' abilities and the material that has been taught, one of them at the junior high school level. At this level, researchers have not found learning that uses the role play method, especially those with the theme of Indonesian stories, even though this method can be said to be quite effective in honing students' speaking skills, especially in pronunciation.

In the Indonesian context, incorporating folklore into English language learning through role play holds significant pedagogical value. Folklore such as Timun Mas, Malin Kundang, and Bawang Merah Bawang Putih offer dramatic narratives that are ideal for classroom performance. The use of local stories in drama helps students contextualize pronunciation practice while also deepening cultural understanding.⁷ These stories provide rich emotional content, enabling students to practice expressive intonation, rhythm, and articulation. Moreover, this aligns with the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes local wisdom and cultural literacy. Integrating folklore into role play also strengthens national

⁶ Alfina Dwiyantri, Yuri Lolita, "THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ROLE PLAY IN IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILL OF EFL STUDENTS", *Prosodi Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa dan Sastra*, vol. 17, No. 2, (2023): 141

⁷ Susanti A, "Using Folklore-Based Drama to Enhance Pronunciation," *Journal of English Language and Local Culture Studies* 2, no. 1 (2024).

identity and character education. It transforms pronunciation learning from a mechanical task into a culturally immersive experience.

Previous research confirms the effectiveness of role play in improving students' speaking abilities in general. Students participating in role play activities showed notable improvements in pronunciation, fluency, and speaking confidence compared to peers who only engaged in reading aloud.⁸ However, such research mostly focuses on senior high school or university students. There remains a significant gap in research involving younger learners, particularly at junior high schools and Islamic educational institutions. This age group is in a critical period for developing pronunciation habits. Early intervention with communicative methods like role play is essential to prevent fossilized errors. Therefore, research into the implementation of folklore-based role play at the junior high school level is both timely and necessary.

Based on the statement above, the researcher is interested in examining how the role play method in learning can sharpen students' speaking skills, especially in pronunciation aspects within the scope of research at MTsN 8 Tulungagung. In this study, students will be divided into several groups and each group is required to choose one story originating from Indonesia, whether it is folklore, traditional, or modern. The researcher chose to use stories from Indonesia to train students' abilities to correct or adjust words or conversations that are appropriate to the meaning of the story because, as we know, a word in

⁸ Dewi S. A. R and Tarihoran N, "The Role of Podcasts in Enhancing English Language Skills: A Systematic Literature Review," *International Journal of Education and Social Research*, SINTA 2 (2025).

Indonesian can have many meanings in English, depending on the context. By understanding the effectiveness of the use of the role play method in honing students' speaking skills at the junior high school level, especially in pronunciation, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled “The Effectiveness of Role Play with Indonesian Folklore towards the Students’ Pronunciation Proficiency at The Eighth Grade Students of MTsN 8 Tulungagung”.

B. Research Question

Based on the background description, the research problem is formulated as follows:

1. How is the students' pronunciation proficiency before being taught by using Role Play with Indonesian Folklore?
2. How is the students' pronunciation proficiency after being taught by using Role Play with Indonesian Folklore?
3. Is there a significant difference in students' pronunciation proficiency before and after being taught by using Role Play with Indonesian Folklore?

C. Objective of The Study

Based on the background description, the objective of the research is formulated as follows:

1. To identify students' pronunciation proficiency before being taught by using Role Play with Indonesian Folklore.
2. To examine students' pronunciation proficiency before being taught by

using Role Play with Indonesian Folklore.

3. To know whether there is any significance difference in students' pronunciation proficiency before and after being taught by using Role Play with Indonesian Folklore

D. Significance of The Study

The result of this research is predicted to be providing out theoretical and practical significance:

1. Theoretical

The findings of this study are anticipated to contribute to the body of knowledge in English language teaching, particularly in pronunciation pedagogy. By integrating role play with Indonesian folklore, this research supports the theory that contextual and culturally relevant materials enhance language acquisition. It also reinforces the concept that communicative and drama-based learning strategies can significantly aid in developing students' phonological awareness, articulation, and oral fluency.

2. Practical

- a. For English Teacher

This study provides insight for English teachers about the implementation of role play using local folklore as an effective method to teach pronunciation. It can serve as a pedagogical model to make pronunciation learning more engaging, culturally relevant, and student-centered.

b. For Students

The use of Indonesian folklore in role play helps students feel more connected and confident in speaking activities. This method allows students to practice pronunciation in a meaningful context, improves their speaking motivation, and develops both their linguistic and cultural competence.

c. For Further Researchers

This study opens opportunities for other researchers to explore similar techniques in different educational contexts or to expand the approach to other language skills such as intonation, stress patterns, or even storytelling fluency. It also provides a basis for comparative studies between local and foreign cultural integration in ELT.

E. Scope and Limitation of The Study

Based on the research background outlined above:

1. The scope: This study was conducted in one of the selected classes at MTsN 8 Tulungagung by involving all students in the class. The application of Indonesian role play will be carried out during 5 meetings which contain pre- test, treatment, practice, post-test, and evaluation time.
2. The limitation: The limitation of this study is the discussion about the use of the Indonesian role play method which is carried out in one of the classes at MTsN 8 Tulungagung by involving VII A class. It

focuses on four aspects of speaking skills namely: pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, and comprehensiveness. Because of this restriction, the results cannot be generalized in a wider scope.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Independent Variable: Role Play with Indonesian Folklore

This refers to a teaching technique in which students engage in role-playing activities based on Indonesian folklore stories. The method is designed to create a communicative and contextual learning environment that facilitates the development of students' English pronunciation skills

2. Dependent Variable: Students' Pronunciation Proficiency

This refers to the students' ability to pronounce English words accurately, which includes aspects such as articulation, intonation, word stress, and sound clarity. This variable will be measured to determine the improvement in pronunciation after the implementation of the role play activity.

G. Thesis Structure

This final project is organized into several main chapters to guide readers in understanding the research. Chapter I includes the introduction, which covers the background, research questions, objectives, significance, scope, and writing structure. Chapter II presents the literature review, outlining relevant theories, previous studies and theoretical framework. Chapter III describes the research methodology, including the approach, subjects, instruments, data collection, and analysis techniques. Chapter IV include

research findings. Chapter V include discussion. Finally, Chapter VI provides conclusions and suggestions based on the study results.