

Analyzing the Correlation Between Students' Motivation and Error Pronunciation of Voiceless θ Words: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract. Pronunciation can be considered as one of the most difficult aspects to acquire in second language acquisition. Analyzing pronunciation errors may provide teachers and researchers on the best approaches to teach pronunciation. In addition, it has been suggested that students who are interested in correcting their pronunciation errors can be more motivated to acquire the target language. Thus, the present study aims to analyze the relationship between pronunciation errors of voiceless θ words and students' motivation. The present study applied a descriptive qualitative approach by interviewing 15 students from a senior high school in Bekasi, Indonesia. The results of present study suggest that the majority of the respondents found it difficult to pronounce voiceless θ words. However, their difficulties to pronounce voiceless θ words might not correlate with their motivation to learn English as the majority of the respondents are motivated to learn English despite finding difficulties to pronounce voiceless θ words. Furthermore, the majority of the participants are motivated to improve their pronunciation due to extrinsic factors. Implications and further studies are also discussed in the present study.

Keywords: *Motivation, Pronunciation Errors, Qualitative Study, Voiceless θ Words*

<https://ojs.unm.ac.id/eralingua>



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INTRODUCTION

One of the difficulties in mastering English as a foreign language is mastering pronunciation. As the language of instruction or the lingua franca used in various fields such as education, trade and aviation (Crystal, 2003), the mastery of English is important for those who want to be involved in the crucial fields as above. However, one of the difficulties in mastering English especially for English as a foreign learners (EFL) in Indonesia is mastering pronunciation skills (Lasabuda, 2017). Regardless of the time spent learning English or the educational level of the learner, pronunciation is still one of the most difficult aspects to master as pronunciation is related to a cognitive skill in which natural aptitudes are needed (Gilakjani et al, 2011). In this sense, learners with less natural aptitudes toward language may find it difficult to pronounce words in a foreign language correctly. In addition, the lack of exposure to the native speakers of the target language can be attributed to learners' difficulties to grasp correct forms of pronunciation (Ercan & Gilanlioglu, 2022). The points above show reasons why pronunciation is difficult to be mastered by some foreign language learners.

Pronunciation has been viewed in both narrow and broad senses. A narrow view of pronunciation regards it as a mere production of individual consonants and vowels of a language (Brown, 2000). Similarly, Gilakjani (2016) defines pronunciation as the production of language sounds and is learned by repeating the sounds and being corrected when they say words that do not match the sounds of the language. On the other hand, a broader view of pronunciation regards it as all aspects of the oral production of consonant and vowel sounds as well as stress, rhythm, and intonation (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Setter & Jenkins, 2005). The latter view involves an idea that intelligibility should be an achievable goal of L2 pronunciation instruction instead of accent reduction. It can be said that pronunciation skills entail producing intelligible sounds that can be understood by both speakers and hearers.

It has been suggested that pronunciation skills can be considered as the most important skills to be taught by teachers (Nguyen, 2019). Following paragraph will discuss the reasons behind the importance of pronunciation skills. Pronunciation is perceived as fundamental for building communicative competence (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Jones, 2018) as pronunciation infiltrates all aspects of people's lives (Nguyen et al, 2021). When one speaks, correct pronunciation helps the hearer understand what the speaker says better (Foote & Trofimovich, 2018). In addition, pronunciation helps learners improve their communicative skills in the target language. As suggested in several studies, pronunciation skills boost learners' ability to understand spoken English better (Adams-Goertel, 2013; Seyedabadi et al., 2015). When a learner begins to learn the sounds of a language or its pronunciation, he/she creates new habits in overcoming the difficulties caused by the first language. It is why learners with pronunciation problems find it more difficult to communicate in oral communication (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Thomson & Derwing, 2014). Several studies also suggest the benefits of pronunciation skills toward the improvement of listening skills (Ahangari et al., 2015; Kissling, 2018). The weight of evidence suggests the importance of pronunciation skills toward the enhancement of listening and speaking skills of learners.

Due to its importance in foreign language learning, pronunciation errors have been investigated in numerous studies ([Purwanto, 2019](#); [Maiza, 2020](#); [Saadah & Ardi, 2020](#); [Thompson & Renandya, 2020](#)) in order to find the most suitable approaches to teach pronunciation skills for specific learners. In this sense, pronunciation errors can be defined as mistakenly pronounced words ([Eslami et al, 2014](#)). It has been suggested that different types of learners might make different pronunciation errors. [Doremalen et al \(2013\)](#) argue that the L1 phonology and orthography might affect the pronunciation of L2 sounds. In addition, they remark that patterns of pronunciation errors in the target language might vary depending on the type of speech elicited. The latter point might be the reason why the researchers analyze pronunciation errors made by different types of learners. A study of [Rehman et al \(2022\)](#) suggests constant pronunciation errors of Arabic learners of English. Their study shows that the majority of the respondents made segmental errors (consonant and vowel sounds). Similarly, [Mahzarul Islam's \(2020\)](#) study finds that non-native speakers of English make segmental errors while pronouncing English words. On the other hand, the results of [Hasan's \(2014\)](#) study on pronunciation errors made by Sudanese English learners indicate pronunciation errors made by the respondents when they pronounced words with /s/ sound. In contrast, a study of [Shak et al \(2016\)](#) on pronunciation errors made by a group of Malaysian English learners discovers vowels, silent letters and 'ed-' forms as the most mispronounced words by the respondents. In regards to EFL learners in Indonesia, the results of numerous studies suggest that voiceless θ words are considered as the most difficult to be pronounced ([Elvionita, 2019](#); [Komariah, 2019](#); [Salwa, 2017](#)). The results of the aforementioned studies suggest different pronunciation errors are made by different types of learners. The implications of those differences will be discussed in the following paragraph.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the implications of the results of those studies suggest that different types of learners need different approaches in order to fix their pronunciation errors. For instance, Arabic EFL teachers may focus on giving extra attention when teaching pronunciation skills of segmental words. On the other hand, a study of [Nogita \(2010\)](#) shows that Japanese EFL learners tend to mispronounce vowels followed by /ɹ/ because the lack of knowledge toward basic English phonological and orthographic systems. [Nogita \(2010\)](#) suggests EFL teachers in Japan to focus on giving understanding toward target sounds and the phonological system of the target language instead of only what learners produce. It can be said that teaching pronunciation needs to be suited with what learners actually need so that they can pronounce correct words. Related to Indonesian EFL learners, more focus seems suitable to be given to teaching correct pronunciation of voiceless θ words. It can be attributed to the fact that Indonesian language does not have dental fricative consonants θ which exist in the English language ([Trysnawati et al, 2020](#)). In addition, Indonesian EFL learners tend to pronounce dental fricative sounds θ as /t/ ([Merrita, 2021](#)). The latter point makes the present study imperative as it may analyze the possible pronunciation errors of voiceless θ words among Indonesian EFL learners.

Regarding pronunciation difficulties, several studies have shown words with voiceless θ words such as bath, both, cloth, death, eighth, fifth, fourth, and ninth

might be difficult to be pronounced by English learners in Indonesia (Elvionita, 2019; Komariah, 2019; Salwa, 2017). Such difficulties in pronouncing voiceless θ words can affect the mastery of English as explained in the previous paragraph. It has been argued that motivation to learn English can improve learners' pronunciation skills (Sardegna, Lee & Kusey, 2014). In this regard, the desire to practice and improve English pronunciation has a correlation with students' motivational factors. In this case, students who are extrinsically and intrinsically motivated to learn English show better pronunciation skills than students who are not motivated (Cahya Ningrum, 2017; Guinn-Collins, 2011). Furthermore, the results of several studies indicate motivation as one of significant factors that affect students' pronunciation skills (Maiza, 2020; Nurmila et al, 2023). Without sufficient motivation, students might find improving pronunciation skills challenging. It can be inferred that motivation has a relatively crucial position to increase students' pronunciation skills.

However, the studies mentioned in the above paragraph have not explained the motivational aspects that enable students to improve their pronunciation skills. It can be concluded that motivation can be an aspect that improves English pronunciation skills but there seems to be some vagueness related to specific motivational aspects that make students motivated to improve their pronunciation skills. For instance, there seems to be a lack of information on whether students are motivated to improve their pronunciation because they want to be accepted to the target language community or they want to obtain external rewards such as being accepted to a reputable university or getting a higher salary.

Researching motivation in an EFL learning context seems imperative due to the importance of motivation. Motivation has been regarded as one of the main factors that mediates the success of foreign language learning as it is closely related to students' attitudes toward the language learning process (Mantiri, 2015; Kazantseva et al, 2016). Motivational orientation is related to the underlying attitudes and the purpose that gives rise to the action, concerning why someone acts in certain manners (Ryan & Deci, 2020). For instance, when a learner is highly motivated, he/she will have positive attitudes toward the language learning process and be able to endure the long arduous process of mastering a language. In this sense, motivation can be defined as a complicated psychological process which entails many aspects ranging from cognition, behavior, emotion, decision-making process and biological aspects (Estrada, 2018; Marshall, 2010; Woon et al, 2016). There have been numerous studies which suggest the role of motivation to enhance students' achievements (Huang, 2011; Hulleman et al., 2010; Möller et al., 2009; Robbins et al., 2004). In order to provide better motivation to students, investigating motivation can be one of suitable solutions. Considering its significant position in language learning, several theories of motivation have been posited. One of well-known theories regarding motivation is self-determination theory (SDT) proposed by Deci & Ryan in 1985. SDT is regarded as a comprehensive framework about motivation which can be used to explain motivation in almost all aspects of life (Ryan & Deci, 2017). This theory is qualitatively and quantitatively considered successful to describe many aspects of motivation and their impacts on learning and teaching process in schools (Howard et al., 2021; Vasconcellos et al., 2020). The latter points become arguments of why SDT

is used as a framework to analyze motivational aspects for the present study. Furthermore, SDT acknowledges that motivation is divided into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Both types of motivation are important and influence each other. SDT states that intrinsic motivation is an internal drive that influences someone to reach their personal goals while extrinsic motivation is driven by external factors such as reward systems, peers or family (Ryan & Deci, 2020). It has been argued that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation affect each other. Learners will be more motivated when they are supported by teachers, peers or family (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In addition, providing a curriculum that supports motivation and allows students to experience the socio cultural environment of the target language has been shown as beneficial to improve intrinsic motivation (Galishnikova, 2014; Liu, 2014). Furthermore, external factors such as the curriculum, resources, teachers, and socioeconomic status might affect learners' quality of intrinsic motivation. For instance, learners with resources such as computers, internet or gadgets might be more motivated to learn the target language than learners with less access to those learning resources. It can be said that investigating both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation seem important to understand learners' motivation fully, especially in the context of SDT.

In this regard, several studies have attempted to investigate the analysis of pronunciation errors in the context of learning English in Indonesia (Komariah, 2019; Rafael, 2019; Simarmata & Pardede, 2018). Furthermore, Antaris & Omolu (2019) have managed to uncover the factors that affect pronunciation difficulties of a group of EFL learners in Indonesia. Their study suggests low levels of motivation as one of the most salient factors that influence pronunciation errors. Similar results were found in the study of Mulansari et al (2014). However, there is a dearth of research that specifically examines the correlation between the ability to pronounce the voiceless letters θ and students' motivation in learning English, especially in the context of EFL learning in Indonesia. Such study will be important to uncover learners' motivation to learn pronunciation as well as learners' pronunciation skills. Therefore, this study would limit its analysis to mispronunciation of words with voiceless θ and its correlation with students' motivation to learn English. In addition, the present study aims to analyze motivational factors that influence learners to improve their pronunciation skills. The results of the present study are expected to provide better insights on teaching pronunciation skills to Indonesian EFL learners.

The present study is specifically guided by following research questions;

- RQ.1 Does a group of students experience difficulties in pronouncing words with voiceless θ ?
- RQ.2 Does the difficulty of pronouncing words with voiceless θ correlate with students' motivation?
- RQ.3 What are the factors that motivate students to learn English pronunciation?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The present study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to collect data. Nassaji (2015) argues that a qualitative approach is more suitable to analyze complex

phenomena such foreign language learning as tightly controlled experimental research might be less effective as the generalizability of their findings in the real classrooms are questionable. Therefore, the present study applies a descriptive qualitative approach as it seems more appropriate to analyze the complex nature of pronunciation and motivation in the contexts of EFL learning and teaching.

Participants

The present study involves fifteen high school students from a public school in Bekasi, Indonesia. Due to limited resources and duration, the present study only involved a group of students from a public school. Besides that, the present study uses a convenience sampling. An announcement to call for respondents was shared through posters in their school's notice board. Before data collection, respondents were given willingness forms informing the terms and conditions of the present study.

Techniques in Data Collection and Analysis

The present study applies two research instruments; pronunciation tests and semi-structured interviews.

1. Pronunciation test

Each respondent must pronounce words in the table. Similar method was used by [Afandi \(2022\)](#) in his study toward pronunciation errors of a group of junior high school students.

Table 1. Pronunciation Test

Initial	Medial	Final
Thunder	Birthday	Math
Thermos	Earthworm	Month
Thaw	Toothpicks	Broth
Thorn	Toothbrushes	Earth
Thought	Bathroom	Tooth
Thin	Toothpaste	Wreath
Thirteen	Healthy	Teeth
Throat	Athlete	Fifth
Thanksgiving	Nothing	Moth
Thumb	Truthful	Cloth
Thinking	Marathon	Path
Thirty	Bathrobe	Strength
Thick	Pathway	South
Three	Toothache	Underneath
Thursday	Panther	Oath
Thimble	Anything	Eighth
Thigh	Method	Beneath
Theater	Something	Ninth

Thousand

Youthful

Birdbath

Source: <https://speechtherapytalk.com/word-lists-for-speech-therapy/th-word-list/>

While pronouncing the words, the respondents would be recorded. The results of pronunciation tests of the respondents would be scored to analyze their pronunciation errors. Thus, the present study uses the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) phonological scale to assess possible errors made by the respondents. The CEFR is applied as it is regarded as the most extensive pronunciation scaling that can be applied for many languages (Piccardo et al, 2018). CEFR is used in the present study as the framework has been considered beneficial as a standard to analyze pronunciation errors in several studies (Burgos et al, 2013; Fang, 2022; Nakanishi et al, 2020; Zaw, 2022).

2. Semi-structured interviews

The interviews were conducted after the pronunciation tests. The length of interviews was around thirty minutes per respondent. The nature of the interview is a semi-structured one. In this case, there is no standard list of questions that would be asked to the respondents, but the researchers prepared several questions that would become a framework for additional questions. Following are the questions that were formed as the framework for this research:

- What motivated you to learn English?
- What are you doing to improve your English pronunciation skills?

After the interview sessions, the results of the interviews were transcribed. Then, the interviews' results were analyzed using a thematic analysis. In this sense, a thematic analysis refers to a method to obtain themes in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The latter method is frequently used in qualitative studies as a thematic analysis allows the researchers to find themes and concepts from the results of interviews conducted (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the interviews' results, the present study conducted steps suggested by Coleman (2022) such as making transcripts of the interviews, cross-checking the interviews' transcripts with the interviewee, and maintaining a neutral stance during the interview process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

Table 2. Pronunciation Tests' Results

NO	Correct Pronunciation made by the respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	100% - 85% (Very high)	2	13%
2	84% - 60% (High)	3	20%
3	59% - 45% (Low)	6	40%
4	45% - 10% (Very low)	4	27%

The table indicates that only two respondents were able to pronounce voiceless θ words correctly. On the other hand, only three respondents are shown as able to pronounce 84% to 60% words correctly. Six respondents are indicated only able to pronounce 59 to 45% words correctly. In addition, the table shows that four respondents can only pronounce 45 to 10 % words correctly. Based on the above table, it can be indicated that the majority of the respondents made relatively high errors in pronunciation.

Following are some responses of the respondents toward their motivation to learn English pronunciation:

Table 3. *The Interviews' Results*

Name	Motivational Factors	Attitudes	Attitudes toward Pronunciation or Pronunciation Learning	English/Pronunciation Learning
Student A	Extrinsic motivation • Getting better job offers. • Studying at university.	Positive as the respondent sees the benefits of learning English.	The respondent thinks pronunciation is important for communication but finds it difficult to be learned or taught.	The respondent likes his/her current teacher because he has good pronunciation and uses a variety of learning materials such as movies or songs.
Student B	Extrinsic motivation • Communicating with people around the world. • Parents.	Positive as the respondent sees English as beneficial for his/her future.	The respondent sees pronunciation as important and takes time to learn it.	The respondent likes his/her current teacher because he supports pronunciation teaching.
Student C	Extrinsic motivation • Communicating with people around the world. • Studying in the university.	Positive as the respondent sees English as a lingua franca.	The respondent thinks pronunciation learning is important but he/she is not interested in learning it.	The respondent likes his/her current teacher because he teaches both communication and grammar skills.

Student D	Intrinsic motivation • Interested in reading English novels.	Positive as the respondent sees English as important for his/her future.	The respondent finds pronunciation learning as important but difficult.	The respondent likes his/her current teacher. The respondent tries to improve his/her English skills through watching TV.
Student E	Extrinsic motivation • Interested in pursuing a career as a translator. • Parents.	Positive because the respondent considers English as an international language for communication with people from different countries.	The respondents find pronunciation needs to be taught because it affects meanings in communication.	The respondent likes his/her current teacher but he speaks too fast and his pronunciation is difficult to be understood.
Student F	Intrinsic motivation • Interested in learning English because he/she has learned since childhood. Extrinsic motivation • Communicating with people.	Positive but he/she finds English as difficult to learn.	The respondent thinks learning English pronunciation is important because there are words that seem similar with each other.	The respondent likes his/her current teacher because he uses multiple games.
Student G	Extrinsic motivation • Learning English because it is a compulsory subject.	Negative because he does not like learning English.	The respondent thinks English pronunciation is important to avoid miscommunication.	The respondent likes his/her current teacher because he uses multiple activities.

Student H	Extrinsic motivation • Wanting to work abroad. • Parents Intrinsic motivation • Interested in learning English.	Positive because English is considered as important for job and traveling.	The respondent thinks pronunciation is important to be mastered to avoid miscommunication.	The respondent likes his/her current teacher because he teaches using various activities such as games or storytelling.
Student I	Intrinsic motivation • Interested in learning English because he/she has learned since childhood.	Positive because learning English needs to be conducted thoroughly so that students can communicate well.	The respondent thinks pronunciation is important because it helps communication .	The respondent does not like his/her current teacher because he speaks too fast and his pronunciation is sometimes unintelligible.
Student J	Extrinsic motivation • Travelling • Studying at university. • Teachers are supportive Intrinsic motivation • Interested in learning English.	Positive because learning English is fun.	The respondent considers pronunciation as important because it needs to be correct for meaningful conversation and avoid shame.	The respondent likes his/her current teacher because he teaches using various activities such as games or storytelling.
Student K	Extrinsic motivation • Communicating with people around the world. • Studying English literature. • Getting job offers.	Positive because learning English can be beneficial for future use.	The respondent considers pronunciation as important to avoid miscommunication.	The respondent likes his/her current teacher because he teaches using various activities such as games or storytelling.

Student L	Extrinsic motivation • Getting job offers • Parents Intrinsic motivation • Interested in learning English.	Positive because learning English can be beneficial for his/her future.	The respondent considers pronunciation as important to avoid miscommunication.	The respondent does not like his/her current teacher because he speaks too fast. The respondent learns English through technology.
Student M	Intrinsic motivation • Interested in learning English.	Positive because learning English can be beneficial for his/her future.	The respondent considers pronunciation as important to avoid miscommunication.	The respondent uses a workbook and learns how to translate using Google Translate to learn pronunciation.
Student N	Extrinsic motivation • Communicating with people around the world. • Travelling • Getting job offers.	Positive and schools need to teach pronunciation to students.	The respondent considers pronunciation as important but confusing.	The respondent does not like his/her current teacher because he speaks too fast and his pronunciation is sometimes unintelligible.
Student O	Extrinsic motivation • Travelling • Getting job offers.	Positive because he/she likes learning English.	The respondent considers pronunciation as important and needs to be taught in schools.	The respondent does not like his/her current teacher because he speaks too fast and his pronunciation is sometimes unintelligible but still likes learning English.

The above table shows themes extracted from the interviews' results. Similar themes such as students' motivational factors, attitudes toward pronunciation and English learning were found. In this regard, table 2 indicates that the majority of the respondents are extrinsically motivated to learn English (N=11). Following are factors that extrinsically motivated students to learn English; getting better job offers (N=6), traveling (N=3), wanting to pursue higher education (N=4), communicating with people (N=5), parents (N=4), and teachers (N=1). On the other hand, only a handful of the respondents are intrinsically motivated (N=7). Following are factors that intrinsically motivated them to learn English; interested in learning English (N=6) and interested in reading English novels (N=1). The above table suggests that extrinsic motivation becomes the most salient motivation that drives the respondents to learn English while few of the respondents find intrinsic motivation, especially their interest in English as their main factor to learn English.

Table 2 also shows the majority of the respondents have positive attitudes toward the English language (N=14) while only one respondent does not have a positive mindset toward the English language. In addition, most respondents find pronunciation as well as its learning as important, but some considers English pronunciation as a difficult skill to master. Furthermore, most of the respondents like their current English teacher in high school as he has applied various activities such as storytelling or games in the classes. Nevertheless, some respondents think the teacher speaks too fast to the point that his pronunciation becomes difficult to be understood. Based on the interviews' results, several themes can be extracted. Those themes are extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation and attitudes toward English learning. The aforementioned factors would be analyzed further in the upcoming section.

Discussion

Pronunciation Errors

The results of the present study indicate that the majority of the respondents are unable to pronounce voiceless θ words correctly according to the CEFR standard taken by the present study. Nevertheless, the results of interviews suggest that the majority of the participants have relatively high motivation and positive attitudes toward English and pronunciation. It can be inferred that despite making relatively high pronunciation errors in voiceless θ words, the participants seem to be motivated to learn English. Furthermore, the outcomes of the present study indicate both intrinsic and extrinsic factors as one that motivate the participants to learn pronunciation.

Several studies on pronunciation errors of Indonesian EFL learners also show a high number of mispronunciations made by the respondents. Most participants of [Saadah & Ardi's \(2020\)](#) study make mistakes while pronouncing diphthong sounds. In addition, the results of [Tanjung's \(2021\)](#) study on pronunciation errors of vowel and consonant words suggest that the majority of their participants make pronunciation errors. Similarly, [Sayogie & Adbaka's \(2022\)](#) study on the interlingual errors in consonant minimal pairs suggest that the consonant minimum pairings /d/ and /ð/ are the most mispronounced minimal pairs. Furthermore, their study suggests that the

participants with low levels of motivation are shown to be ones that mostly make pronunciation errors as they are less likely to improve pronunciation of consonant words that do not exist in Indonesian language. The weight of evidence suggests that Indonesian EFL learners seem to make a variety of pronunciation errors besides voiceless θ words.

Regarding the aforementioned pronunciation errors, several factors can be the reasons. Firstly, it has been argued that socio-economic elements may affect learners' pronunciation as learners with better pronunciation may have access to suitable learning facilities, implying family's relatively stable income (Adeniyi, 2017; Sayogie & Adbaka, 2022). In order to minimize the gap of pronunciation skills among socio-economic classes, it seems important for the Indonesian government to provide affordable textbooks that include pronunciation skills as one of the basic skills. Secondly, learners might make mistakes similar to ones made by their teachers (Bui, 2016; Febrianto, 2021). Thirdly, ear's perception can affect someone's perception of sounds as Indonesian EFL learners tend to disregard the production of consonant sounds in English (Fadillah, 2020). Similar point is shown by a study of Nogita (2010) toward pronunciation errors made by Japanese EFL learners as they failed to recognize different phonemes. In regards to Indonesian EFL learners, consonants such /t/ and /d/ tend to be difficult to pronounce because they do not exist in their mother language (Irianto et al, 2018). Last but not least, the lack of phonological and phonetic awareness of the phonetic differences between learners' native and the target language can lead to pronunciation errors (Nogita, 2010; Plailek & Essien, 2021). Nevertheless, the relationship between socio-economic elements and pronunciation skills need to be investigated further before making a rigid stance. The latter factors have not been explored in the present study. Thus, the next studies might explore the correlation between pronunciation errors and socio-economic elements.

Extrinsic Motivation

The results of the present study also suggest the respondents' motivation and perceptions toward English learning, specifically pronunciation learning. The results of the interviews indicate that the majority of the respondents are motivated to learn English in spite of their pronunciation errors in voiceless θ words. Most participants are extrinsically motivated as they regard English skills as important for their getting better job offers or studying in the university. A study of Ulfa and Bania (2019) toward a group of Indonesian EFL learners in Aceh, Indonesia also suggests extrinsic factors as the most salient motivators for their participants. Several studies also show extrinsic motivation as one that motivates students the most to learn English (Oletić, 2014; Prošić Santovac & Halas Popović, 2022; Yuzulia, 2021). In addition, the majority of the respondents consider pronunciation skills as important to produce intelligible spoken communication. It can be said that despite their relatively high motivation to learn English, most respondents cannot produce voiceless θ words correctly. The results of the interviews also suggest that their English teachers may be attributed to students' pronunciation errors. Several participants comment that their current English teacher speaks too fast to the point they cannot comprehend his pronunciation. In this sense, teachers' pronunciation can affect his/her students.

Intrinsic Motivation

The results of the present study also indicate intrinsic motivation as a factor that affects the participants to learn English skills, especially pronunciation skills. Nevertheless, this type of motivation is considered as the least influential one among the participants of the present study. In this sense, the interests toward English do not seem to influence the participants the most to improve their English skills. Although a considerable amount of studies suggests intrinsic motivation as one that influences students the most ([Ali, 2022](#); [Bailey et al, 2021](#); [Ulfa & Mania, 2019](#)), [Ajmal et al \(2021\)](#) argue that extrinsic motivation seems to be the most influential among their participants. It is because students might find their learning goals to be external ones, such as getting good jobs or better exam results, but as they find enjoyment in learning the target language, their motivation might shift to intrinsic ones. It can be said that both types of motivation can be considered significant for students in order to improve their interests in learning. In regards to the present study, there seems to be a lack of studies that specifically examine the effects of intrinsic motivation to pronunciation learning or whether intrinsic motivation affects pronunciation errors. The latter points can be the focal points in the next studies.

Attitudes toward English Language/Pronunciation Learning

The outcomes of the current study show the participants' relatively positive attitudes toward English language learning, especially pronunciation learning. In this sense, the majority of the participants know that having English skills can be beneficial for their future. In addition, improving pronunciation skills can provide them with advantages such as avoiding miscommunication among language speakers. In this sense, encouraging positive attitudes might be a crucial point in EFL learning ([Syukur, 2016](#)). When they have positive attitudes toward language learning, they can be more motivated to improve their language skills ([Adara, 2020](#); [Adara & Haqiyah, 2020](#); [2021](#)). However, there should be a study that analyses the correlation between students' positive attitudes toward language learning and their pronunciation errors.

English/Pronunciation Learning

The findings of the present study suggest the participants' current condition of English or pronunciation learning. In this regard, the majority of the participants said that they depend on technology to improve both their English skills including pronunciation skills. Although the majority of the participants show positive attitudes toward their current English teachers, some show dislikes as the said teacher sometimes spoke too fast.

Several implications can be concluded from the above findings. First, the results of the present study imply the importance of sufficient training of pronunciation instruction for teachers. In this sense, pronunciation instruction can be defined as a direct lesson of phonological forms ([Thomson & Derwing, 2015](#)). [Nguyen et al's \(2021\)](#) study on the perceptions of teachers and learners in Vietnam toward pronunciation instruction in the EFL learning argues on the importance of pronunciation instruction to improve learners' fluency. Similar points are made in

numerous studies (Isaacs, 2009; Derwing & Munro, 2015; Couper, 2017). Nguyen et al (2021) also urge the policymakers to include pronunciation instruction in EFL curriculum in Vietnam. In order to perform pronunciation instruction, Darcy et al (2021) propose to include pronunciation-focused materials or activities into the lessons. The integration should be suited with learners' needs in order to improve their pronunciation skills. Numerous studies have also proposed the need to systematically integrate pronunciation instruction in content-based teaching (Celce-Muria et al, 2010; Darcy, 2018; Levis, 2018; McGregor & Read, 2018). It can be said that pronunciation instruction may be the focal point to improve learners' pronunciation skills.

In addition, both preservice and inservice teachers need to be trained in pronunciation instruction in order to minimize pronunciation errors made by teachers and students. Darcy et al (2021) argue the provision of teacher training as a significant component to facilitate pronunciation instruction. In this sense, teachers need to be trained on how to provide pronunciation instruction to students. In addition, Febrianto (2021) emphasizes on the importance of better teachers' selection to ensure the qualities of teachers and providing intensive pronunciation training so that English teachers will teach more intelligible pronunciation to their students. The weight of evidence suggests the need to provide sufficient training of pronunciation instruction to teachers.

CONCLUSION

As one of the most difficult skills to be mastered by foreign language learners, pronunciation errors need to be investigated to provide insights toward pronunciation skills of Indonesian EFL learners. The present study aimed to analyze the correlation between pronunciation errors of voiceless θ words as they are considered as one of the most difficult to be pronounced by Indonesian EFL learners. The present study used a descriptive qualitative approach by conducting pronunciation tests and semi-structured interviews to fifteen high school students in Bekasi, Indonesia. The findings of the present study indicate that despite their relatively high motivation to learn English, the respondents find it difficult to pronounce voiceless θ words. It can be inferred that the respondents' motivation level does not correlate with their pronunciation skills. Besides that, the findings suggest extrinsic factors such as teachers as well as intrinsic factors like interests toward language learning that encourage the participants to learn English pronunciation. However, the findings suggest extrinsic factors as ones that motivate the participants the most compared to intrinsic factors.

In addition, the present study is not without some limitations. First, the present study only uses a small number of respondents. Involving a high number of respondents might provide more insightful results that represent the population of EFL learners in Indonesia better. Besides that, the present study was conducted in a relatively short period of time. The results might differ if the present study was performed for a longer period of time. Nevertheless, the present study can be a milestone for similar studies. For instance, further studies can analyze the relationship between socio-economic elements to students' pronunciation skills. In addition, analyzing the effects of pronunciation instruction toward students'

motivation might provide more information toward pronunciation learning and teaching in the contexts of EFL learning in Indonesia.

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