A. Pronunciation

1. Definition of Pronunciation

Gilakjani (2012:96) defined that pronunciation is a set of habits of producing sounds. The habit of producing a sound is acquired by repeating it over and over again and by being corrected when it is pronounced wrongly. Pronunciation refers to the production of sounds that use to make meaning. It includes attention to the particular sounds of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual sound, such as intonation, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm (suprasegmental aspects), how the voice is projected (voice quality) and, in its broadest definition, attention to gestures and expressions that are closely related to the way we speak a language. Fraser (2001:6) also stated that pronunciation is an essential ingredient of oral communication, which also includes grammar, vocabulary choice, cultural considerations and so on.

Pronunciation is an important component in English. Fraser (2001:5) stated that “Excellent grammar can be completely masked by poor pronunciation”. This means that learners who have better
pronunciation will have more opportunities to communicate naturally with native speakers — and this in itself is one of the surest paths to improvement in all aspects of language. So it can be concluded that good pronunciation is better than mastery grammar well when speaking English.

James in Gilakjani (2012:98) assumes that a learner’s pronunciation has three basic levels problems.

a. Level 1: People often do not understand what the speaker is saying. The speaker uses the wrong sounds when making English words or uses the wrong prosodic features when making English sentences.

b. Level 2: People understand what the speaker is saying, but the speaker’s pronunciation is not pleasant to listen to because he/she has a distracting and/or heavy accent.

c. Level 3: People understand the speaker, and the speaker’s English is pleasant to listen to.

2. The Elements of English Pronunciation

Burns in Gilakjani (2012:121) stated that the various features that make up the production of sounds in English are:

a. Suprasegmental Features

Suprasegmental features relate to sounds at the macro level. Advances in research have developed descriptions of the suprasegmental features of speech extending across whole stretches of language (prosody). Unlike languages such as Vietnamese or
Mandarin which are tonal, English is stress-timed and syllable-timed (for example, *WHAT’s his addRESS*?).

The effective communicative pronunciation competence can be achieved more through improving supra-segmental production in preference to segmentals. Linking, intonation and stress are important features for effective pronunciation at the suprasegmental level.

1) Linking

Linking refers to the way the last sound of one word is joined to the first sound of the next word. To produce connected speech, people run words together to link consonant to vowel, consonant to consonant, vowel to vowel and also shorten some sounds and leave others out altogether.

a) consonant to vowel *an_Australian_animal*

b) consonant to consonant *next_week; seven_months*

c) vowel to vowel. Some sounds such as *r*, *w* and *j (y)* are inserted to link adjacent words ending and beginning with a vowel: *where (r_) are you?; you (w_) ought to; Saturday (y_) evening*

d) sounds that are shortened. When words begin with an unstressed sound they are often pronounced as a short schwa ( ) sound: *when do they arrive?; five o’clock*
e) sounds that are left out. Some sounds are so short that they virtually disappear (become elided): 

\[ \text{does (h)e like soccer?} \]

\[ \text{we might as well (h_a)ve stayed at home.} \]

2) Intonation

Intonation can be thought of as the melody of the language – the way the voice goes up and down according to the context and meanings of the communication. For example, note the differences in:

a) Can you take the scissors? (rising pitch) – request

b) Can you take the scissors (falling pitch) – command.

3) Word stress

Word stress relates to the prominence given to certain words in an utterance. These focus words are stressed (made long and loud) to convey:

a) the overall rhythm of the utterance

b) the most meaningful part of the utterance.

At the meaning level, some words are given more prominence than others to foreground which meaning is important. For example, compare:

a) Can YOU take the scissors? (not someone else)

b) Can you take the SCISSORS! (not the knife)
b. Segmental Features

Segmental aspects of the sound system include individual vowels and consonants. Because segmental phonology is relatively more easily explained and taught than the supra-segmental features, some studies focus on studying segmental phonology in preference to suprasegmental features. Segmental features relate to sounds at the micro level. They include specific sounds within words (for example, \(l\) as in _lamp_, \(r\) as in _ramp_, \(a\) as in _hat_).

The sound systems of consonants, vowels or their combinations are called _phonemes_. Phonemes are sounds that, when pronounced incorrectly, can change the meaning of the word. Compare the changes of meaning in: pet pat lamp ramp about abort

Consonant sounds can be voiced (a part of the mouth is closed and the air behind it is released suddenly – for example, \(v\) as in _van_, \(b\) as in _bun_) – or unvoiced (air is pushed through a narrow part of the mouth – for example, \(f\) as in _fan_, \(th\) as in _thin_). Vowel sounds are articulated as single sounds. They can be short (for example, \(ae\) as in _cat_) or long (\(a\) as in _cart_). Diphthongs are two vowel sounds put together (for example, \(ei\) as in _Kate_ or as in _boy_).

Byrne and Walsh in Nunan (1991:103) argue that suprasegmental feature of stress; rhythm and intonation are much more important for intelligible pronunciation than producing native-like vowels and consonant.
3. Teaching Pronunciation

There are some techniques of teaching pronunciation by Celce Murcia (1996:49).

a. Listen and imitate

A technique used in the Direct Method in which students listen to a teacher-provided model and repeat or imitate it. This technique has been enhanced by the use of tape recorders, language labs, and video recorders.

b. Phonetic training

Use of articulatory descriptions, articulatory diagrams, and a phonetic alphabet (a technique from the Reform Movement, which may involve doing phonetic transcription as well as reading phonetically transcribed text).

c. Minimal pair drills

A technique introduced during the Audiolingual era to help students distinguish between similar and problematic sounds in the target language through listening discrimination and spoken practice. Minimal pair drills typically begin with word-level drills and then move on to sentence-level drills (both paradigmatic and syntagmatic).

d. Contextualized minimal pairs

In the technique, the teacher establishes the setting (e.g., a blacksmith shoeing a horse) and presents key vocabulary; students
are then trained to respond to a sentence stem with the appropriate meaningful response (a or b).

Sentence stem
The blacksmith (a. hits; b. heats) the horseshoe.

Cued student response
a. with the hammer; b. in the fire.

e. Visual aids
Enhancement of the teacher's description of how sounds are produced by audiovisual aids such as sound-color charts, Fidel wall charts, rods, pictures, mirrors, props, realia, etc. These devices are also used to cue production of the target sounds.

f. Tongue twisters
A technique from speech correction strategies for native speakers (e.g., "She sells seashells by the seashore.")

g. Developmental approximation drills
A technique suggested by first-language acquisition studies in which second language speakers are taught to retrace the steps that many English-speaking children follow as they acquire certain sounds in their first language. Thus just as children learning English often acquire /w/ before /l/ or /y/ before /l/, adults who have difficulty producing /l/ or /r/ can be encouraged to begin by pronouncing words with initial /w/ or /y/, and then shift to /l/ or /r/, respectively.
Practice of vowel shifts and stress shifts related by affixation

The teacher points out the rule-based nature of vowel and stress shifts in etymologically related words to raise awareness; sentences and short texts that contain both members of a pair may be provided as oral practice material.

**Vowel shift:** mime (long /i/) mimic (short /ɪ/)

Sentence context: Street mimes often mimic the gestures of passersby.

**Stress shift:** PHOtograph phoTOGraphy

Sentence context: I can tell from these photographs that you are very good at photography.

### Table: Vowel and Stress Shifts

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h. Practice of vowel shifts and stress shifts related by affixation

Further, Celce Murcia (1996:24) explains that techniques for teaching pronunciation can come from other fields, such as psychology, neurolinguistics, and theater arts.

i. Reading aloud

Passages or scripts for learners to practice and then read aloud, focusing on stress, timing, and intonation.
Here are some examples:

a. Breathing and relaxation techniques such as guided-imagery activities can help students relax so that their pronunciation can become more natural.

b. Fluency-building techniques are helpful in addition to accuracy-building techniques. These may seem to be “just speaking activities,” but they give students the practice they need in pronouncing sounds and sentences beyond very structured activities.

c. Multisensory reinforcement techniques help students understand how sounds should be pronounced and help them relax and improve their pronunciation.

1) Visual : Pictures, models, charts, diagrams, color coding, watching the teacher

2) Auditory : “Listen and repeat,” mnemonic devices, memory pegs

3) Tactile : Rubber bands, feathers, straws, kazoons, touching the throat

4) Kinesthetic: Hand signals, body movements, waving, using hands as a model of the mouth, “conducting an orchestra”
d. Neurolinguistic programming combines relaxation and multisensory techniques to increase learners’ awareness of their pronunciation and then to change it in positive ways.

e. Drama techniques: Voice exercises used by actors, as well as skits, role plays, improvisations, and simulations, can be useful in getting students to try out new pronunciation habits in a relaxed atmosphere.

f. Imitation techniques: In shadowing and mirroring, students mimic a recording, such as a video clip, trying to speak in exactly the same way as the actors.

Pennington and Richards in Nunan (1991:107) also recommended some ways to teach pronunciation.

a. The teaching pronunciation must focus on longer-term goals; short-term objectives must be developed with reference to long-term goals.

b. The goals of any explicit training in pronunciation should be to bring learners gradually from controlled, cognitively based performance to automatic skill based performance.

c. Teaching should aim toward gradually reducing the amount of native language influence on segmental, voice-setting, and prosodic features but should not necessarily seek to eradicate totally the influence of the native language on the speaker’s pronunciation in the second language.
d. Pronunciation should be taught as an integral part of oral language use, such as part of the means for creating both referential and interactional meaning, not merely as an aspect of the oral production of words and sentences.

e. Pronunciation forms a natural link to other aspects of language use, such as listening, vocabulary, and grammar; ways of highlighting this interdependence in teaching need to be explored.

4. Pronunciation at Elementary

According to Fraser, (2001:72) the most likely cause of problems at elementary level, as with beginners, is poor use of stress. The most likely cause of poor use of stress is inability to hear the difference between stressed and unstressed syllables, and lack of conceptual understanding of the role stressed syllables play for English listeners.

Further about teaching pronunciation in elementary level, Celce Murcia (1996:2) assumes that young children can acquire good pronunciation more easily than adults. Greater exposure to the target language makes it easier to acquire good pronunciation. If learners have had good pronunciation training before, this will help the learners. If learners have had ineffective training or no training, the learners are at a disadvantage.
Based on the explanation previously, teaching pronunciation is very important to be taught from the begin education in elementary level, because young children can acquire good pronunciation more easily than adults.

5. Problems in Pronunciation Teaching and Learning

Harmer (2007:184) explained that some problems occur in much pronunciation teaching and learning.

a. What students can hear

Some students have great difficulty in hearing pronunciation features which we want to reproduce. Frequently, speakers of different first language have problems with different sounds. There are two ways of dealing with this: in the first place, the teacher can show students how sounds are made through demonstration, diagrams and explanation. But the teacher can also draw the sounds to their attention every time they appear on a recording or in conversation. In this way, the teacher gradually trains the students’ ears. When the students can hear correctly, the students are on the way to being able to speak correctly.

b. What students can say

All babies are born with the ability to make the whole range of sounds available to human beings. But as the students grow and
focus in on one or two languages, the students lose the habit of making some of those sounds. Learning a foreign language often presents the students with the problem of physical unfamiliarity (i.e. it is actually physically difficult to make the sound using particular parts of the mouth, uvula or nasal cavity). To counter this problem, the teacher needs to be able to show and explain exactly where sounds are produced (e.g. Where is the tongue in relation to the teeth? What is the shape of the lips when making a certain vowel?)

c. The intonation problems

For many teachers the most problematic area of pronunciation is intonation. Some of people (and many of students) find it extremely difficult to hear ‘tunes’ or to identify the different patterns of raising and falling tones. In such situations it would be foolish to try to teach the students.

6. Testing of Pronunciation

In teaching pronunciation there are two kinds of testing. According to (Lado, 1961: 38-85) the kinds of pronunciation testing are recognition test and production test (Lado, 1961: 38). Recognition test emphasizes on students’ ability in analyzing how to pronounce the words or sentences. It means that, recognition test tends in listening.
Meanwhile, production test emphasize on students’ ability in practicing how to pronounce the words or sentences.

There is a reason why production test is more useful than recognition test. According to Lado (1961: 83) actually, in recognition test, the teacher only measures the students’ listening ability. Meanwhile in production test, the teacher measures the students’ pronunciation ability. It is concluded that the teacher can measure the students’ ability in their pronunciation by using production test.

Besides that, Celce Murcia (1996:23) explains the types of pronunciation evaluation:

a. Diagnostic evaluation: Used for screening and placement. Can test both listening discrimination and production.

b. Formal oral-proficiency testing instruments: Standardized tests that generally evaluate overall speaking proficiency. (iBT TOEFL, IELTS, etc.)

c. Ongoing evaluation with feedback: Self-monitoring and correction, peer feedback, and teacher feedback and correction.

d. Classroom testing: Tests of perception and/or production based on what has been learned in class.
B. Reading Aloud

1. Reading as a Language Skill

Tarigan (2008:7) stated that reading is a process which is done by a reader to get a message that will be delivered by the writer by words media or written language. Reading is a complex skill which is complicated, that covers or involves smaller series. In other words, reading skill covers three components:

a. An introduction to the letters or alphabet and punctuations

b. An alphabet correlation and punctuation formal linguistic elements.

c. Further relation from a and b with meaning.

2. Definition of Reading Aloud

Tarigan (2008:23) said that reading aloud is an activity or activities which area tool for teachers, students, or readers together with other people or listeners to capture and understand the information, thoughts and feelings of an author. Reading aloud is the action of one who reads loud by production of pronunciation. Reading aloud here means that the students speak loud when reading the words.
3. The Functions of Reading Aloud

Liangguang (2010:149) said that there are five functions of reading aloud in foreign language teaching.

a. Practice pronunciation

Reading aloud is a kind of comprehensive practice of pronunciation. The material for reading aloud is the passage with certain contents and circumstances. Not only the students should pronounce every word properly, but the students should divide the meaning groups correctly, arrange the paused based on the content. Meanwhile, the students should apply suitable stress, intonation and rhythm. Reading aloud can help the students correct the dialect effectively.

b. Improve oral English

The students with perfect oral English should pronounce properly and speak fluently. Most students learn English with a focus in reading and writing skill. For some students who don’t have the confidence to practice spoken English, reading aloud can help them overcome the faults of disfluency, repeat, improper pause, and develop natural and good pronunciation habit. Try to read with expression, change the pitch (high-low), Tone (gentle-rough), and volume (soft-loud) of our voice to show different characters or create a mood. Reading aloud can not only help the students open the mouths, but also improve students’ oral English evidently.
c. Get deeper understanding

In fact, reading aloud is reappearance of all the original content of idea, feeling, attitude and style in the form of voice. Therefore, standard reading not only can make the students keep great attention, arouse the students’ sense and imagination, but help the students understand original correctly and deeply.

d. Strengthen the knowledge

The students can strengthen what students have learned by listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading aloud which has relevant to listening, speaking, reading, is the practice of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. General oral English is an important method, but it has some restriction in vocabulary and structure. As a practice, reading aloud can make up with the lack of oral English, for its material has wide range in topic, vocabulary and grammar.

e. Improve the classroom atmosphere

In class, especially in intensive class, students may feel tired and dull after some times. At that time reading aloud can help them back to the class.
4. The Purposes of reading Aloud

Anderson cited on Tarigan (1994:7) explains that there are 4 purposes of reading aloud. They are:

a. To differentiate and understanding structure and phonetic in oral language.

b. To find out and introduce pronunciation, word and main idea of the text.

c. Reading aloud helps the students to comprehend the main idea.

d. To interpret the main idea.

5. The Advantages of Reading Aloud

Routhlein and Meinbach in Rahim (2008:124) stated that reading aloud for children is good activity to improve the skills of gathering, writing, and help the children to love book and read the story for their live.

Gruber in Rahim (2008:125) stated that there are some advantages and the importance of reading aloud for children.

a. Giving an example to the students the process of reading positively.

b. Exposing the students to enrich their vocabulary.

c. Give the students of new knowledge.

d. Introduce the students from the different literature.
e. Give the students a chance to gather and use their imagination.

Gibson (2005:34) stated that there are some advantages of using reading aloud in teaching English.

a. It would be difficult for a teacher to check that the correct graphemic-phonemic connections are being made without hearing a student read aloud. The student could practice these silently, but would not know if the teacher was getting the student right, and this could affect motivation.

b. It would be possible to pinpoint problems by hearing the students speaking or by answering questions about a text, without using reading aloud as a diagnostic tool.

c. Pronunciation and intonation could be addressed through specific exercises, but these tend to be short and much focused. Longer texts for reading aloud could provide intonation practice beyond the sentence or paragraph; it would not really be feasible to make students memorize these just to avoid reading aloud.

d. It could be said that articulation could also be practiced by speaking a lot, but then one would be concentrating so much on what to say and being grammatically correct, that there would be little attention left for listening to oneself and checking tongue positions, and so on.
e. Silent reading could be used for proofreading written work, but presumably this already happens and may not be as efficient for finding errors as reading aloud could be.

6. The disadvantages of Reading Aloud

Gibson (2005:30) stated that there some disadvantages of using reading aloud in teaching English.

a. It is dull and boring, anxiety-provoking, and of negligible benefit for the students, especially for the listeners.

b. For the speaker, such is the working memory processing capacity required for decoding, recoding, and articulation that there is little room left for comprehension, yet reading aloud is often used with the aim of comprehension.

c. The linear progression of reading aloud does not aid the development of efficient reading strategies.

d. The requirement to focus on every word also slows reading speed and impedes the chunking of meaningful units.

e. Reading slowly (fewer than 200 words per minute), whether aloud or silently, interferes with semantic proposition formation, therefore making it more difficult to understand what has been read.

f. A frequently cited reason for using reading aloud is for the improvement of pronunciation.
g. Students can be distracted by English spelling and make errors in the pronunciation of words they know orally (Birch op. cit.).

h. Reading is usually a silent activity and it is often said that reading aloud is not a skill that many people need; public speakers and broadcasters are in the minority. Reading aloud is a difficult thing to do well, even for native speakers, and this could be demotivating for students.

7. Reading Aloud as a Technique for Teaching Pronunciation

Reading aloud is one technique that can be used to teach pronunciation. Because by using reading aloud in English teaching learning process the students can practice pronunciation. By reading aloud the teacher can help the students in teaching pronunciation, through reading aloud the students can say something (in English), it makes the students will be easier in learning pronunciation. So the teacher can correct the students’ pronunciation if the students make a mistake in pronouncing the words. These are some steps of teaching pronunciation through reading aloud.

a. The teacher gives an example of words in English
b. The students say the words by reading aloud so the teacher can hear the students’ pronunciation clearly.
C. Relevant Research Result of Teaching Pronunciation

The first research is about teaching pronunciation entitled “Teaching Pronunciation through English Songs at Elementary School” by Ratna Mey Setyorini (2011). This research used English songs as a technique to teach pronunciation. The result of this research showed that the students’ pronunciation mastery belonged to good category and the technique of English songs is effective to teach pronunciation.

The second research is about teaching pronunciation entitled “An Effort to Improve Students’ Pronunciation Using Recording” by Sidty Mutsana B Ats-tsalisa (2009). The result of this research showed that recording can improve students pronunciation, it can be seen that there were improvement in the mean of test result of the students’ activity in the classroom. Besides that, based on the result on interview it was found that the students felt happy and enjoyable when the students were doing pronunciation activities using recording in classroom.

The last research is about reading aloud towards pronunciation ability entitled “A Study on the Influence of Reading Aloud Habit towards Pronunciation Ability of the 2nd Year Students of SMP N 2 Purwokerto” by Sugiryo (2005). The result of the research showed there was a different between reading aloud students and silent reading students in pronunciation ability. It could be seen from the result of t-test that showed there was any influence of reading aloud habit towards pronunciation ability of students.
Based on the explanation previously of relevant research of teaching pronunciation, the two researches were used media to teach pronunciation and those were done successfully, and one research showed the influence of reading aloud towards students’ pronunciation. Here the researcher using reading aloud technique to improve students’ pronunciation of elementary students. Reading aloud technique is chosen because it is the base of words pronunciation and also technique to practice pronunciation. So it can give good result in improving the students’ pronunciation of elementary students.

D. Basic Assumption

Teaching English for elementary school is new subject for the students. It is difficult to teach English, especially teaching pronunciation, because the students are just beginning learning of pronunciation. Teacher needs appropriate technique to get better result of English pronunciation among those elementary students. Reading aloud for children is good activity to improve the oral skill, because reading aloud is the base of words pronunciation. Reading aloud is a kind of comprehensive practice of pronunciation that can help the students overcome the faults of disfluency, repeat, improper pause, correct the dialect effectively and develop natural and good pronunciation habit. Through reading aloud the students can say the words with correct pronunciation, so it will facilitate the students in
learning pronunciation. Thus, reading aloud is appropriate technique which can be used teacher to improve students’ pronunciation.