

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Research Background

In the era of globalization, mastery of English is the key to accessing brilliant opportunities in education, career, and global interaction. Agnesia Purba *et al.*, (2023) states that language plays an important role in today's life. Learning English requires consistent practice and a systematic approach to mastering various language skills. According to Silva (2010), languages are complex systems of sounds, words, and methods to express sentiments and thus learning a language takes time. Referring to this complexity, mastering good language skills, especially in vocabulary pronunciation, is a fundamental foundation in learning English. Pronunciation and speaking skills will be mutually reinforcing elements. Proper pronunciation will help one to convey ideas and thoughts, understand what others are saying easily, and build confidence in communication. Additionally, good speaking skills allow one to interact with others effectively and smoothly. Therefore, mastering good pronunciation and speaking is an important first step in learning English.

Pronunciation is the way pronounce words in a language. Correct pronunciation involves pronouncing the sounds of the language correctly, including intonation and word stress. Good pronunciation mastery is essential for communicating effectively. Mastering good pronunciation is like a magic key to unlock the door to success in learning English. Clear pronunciation helps students communicate effectively, and confidently and makes learning new vocabulary easier. When students hear English words with the correct pronunciation, they will find it easier to remember the spelling and meaning. This is due to the formation of a mental connection between the sound of the word and its representation in written form. Good pronunciation will increase students' confidence in using English. They will not hesitate to speak in front of the class, engage in

conversations with native speakers, or take English tests. Thus, mastering proper pronunciation is one of the main keys to achieving success in learning English. Students are encouraged to practice pronunciation consistently with various methods, such as listening to native English audio, practicing speaking with native speakers, using audio dictionaries, and utilizing English learning apps.

Dewi & Astriyanti (2021) states that “Pronunciation is one of the language components in English that must be studied to support the development of students' language skills.” It has an important role in English teaching. Silva (2010) states that pronunciation is required not merely for talking, but for communicating and making sense to another person, that is, for making meaning in both an audible and an understandable form. Quirk *et al.*, (1987) states how words are pronounced in English, including pronunciation rules for consonants, vowels, and syllables. A good understanding of the pronunciation of English vocabulary by students is very important. The first reason is that accurate pronunciation is the basis of effective communication. When students can pronounce words correctly, they will be more easily understood by native English speakers and other English speakers. Secondly, good pronunciation can help students in developing their confidence when speaking English. Third, analyzing students' pronunciation of English vocabulary can provide valuable information for teachers on how they can help students improve their pronunciation.

In this study, the focus of observation is directed at the pronunciation of vocabulary in narrative texts read by students. The choice of vocabulary as the main focus is based on the consideration that vocabulary is the basic unit in speaking, and errors in vocabulary pronunciation can interfere with the understanding of communication directly, even before paying attention to intonation or suprasegmental aspects. In addition, the pronunciation of certain vocabulary, especially those containing complex vowel and consonant sounds, is often a

challenge for learners of English as a foreign language. Therefore, by analyzing the pronunciation of certain vocabulary, researchers can identify the types of pronunciation difficulties that are common, as well as the factors that influence these errors.

During the researcher's internship program at SMA Negeri 1 Sukadana, it was found that students have difficulty pronouncing English vocabulary, even though they have been taught the words by using videos that demonstrate how to pronounce them. For example, when students will be asked to repeat the words such as 'curly' and 'shy,' they will tend to change the sound. For example, the /ʃ/ sound in the word "shy" is often changed to the /s/ sound. In addition, the /ɜ:/ sound in the word "curly" is often replaced by the /ə/ or /ʌ/ sound.

In addition to sound problems, students experience difficulties in stress and intonation patterns. Words like "naughty" and "wrinkled" are often pronounced with inappropriate syllable emphasis. Similarly, words like "middle-aged" and "intelligent" tend to be pronounced with intonation that sounds stiff and unnatural. This phenomenon shows that even when there is a video with the sound modeled, they still mispronounce the words. Therefore, this study aims to find the dominant words that are difficult to report by students and analyze the factors of pronunciation difficulties that affect the English vocabulary of SMA Negeri 1 Sukadana students.

Many previous studies have discussed problems with pronunciation in English. Sariani (2021) with An Analysis of Error On Students' Pronunciation of English Vowels At The Sixth Semester Students of English Language Education Department At Riau Islamic University. Revealed that sixth semester students of the English Education Study Program experience significant difficulties in the pronunciation of English vowels. The frequent error is interlingual substitution, where the influence of the students' native language interferes with their ability to distinguish the correct vowels. Dewi & Astriyanti (2021) that found that fourth

semester students of the English Education study program had difficulty in pronouncing consonants and vowels in English, especially in the sounds /s/, /z/, /æ/, and /eɪ/ with a high error rate. The findings suggest that the differences in sound systems between English and Indonesian contribute to the pronunciation difficulties experienced by students. An Analysis of Pronunciation Error of English Silent Letters by Miliani (2023) this research is about the mispronunciation of dead letters in English among 11th-grade students at SMAN 3 Sengah Temila. This study uses descriptive qualitative and quantitative approaches. The results showed that the common type of error was pre-systematic error. Gulo (2023) research conducted in the tenth grade of Mo'ale SMTK found that students have difficulty in pronouncing English vocabulary due to lack of confidence, lack of practice, the influence of Indonesian, differences in spelling and pronunciation, and lack of vocabulary. Students also have difficulty pronouncing certain consonants and vowels, as well as the ending sound "tion". Telaumbanua, Sihotang, & Rajagukguk (2024) found that seventh grade students of SMP N 1 Tarutung had difficulty in pronouncing English vowels. Factors that cause these difficulties include confusion with the sound or pronunciation, lack of seriousness when learning, and difficulty in reading descriptive texts.

Based on previous studies that have been conducted, there is a significant research gap in the context of English pronunciation. Although some studies have explored pronunciation difficulties at the college and junior high school levels, there is still a lack of research that focuses on the specific context of senior high school students, particularly at SMA Negeri 1 Sukadana. Previous studies such as Sariani (2021), Dewi & Astriyanti (2021), and Telaumbanua *et al.* (2022) have mostly focused on analyzing pronunciation difficulties in college or junior high school settings, by identifying common problems such as interlingual substitution and difficulties on specific consonants/vowels. However, these studies have not deeply explored the unique context of high school students, especially

in terms of identifying the dominant words that are difficult to pronounce and the specific factors that influence pronunciation difficulties in that location. The gap in this study lies in the need to conduct a comprehensive analysis that not only describes pronunciation difficulties, but also reveals the unique characteristics of English language difficulties in the context of SMA Negeri 1 Sukadana. Thus, this study is expected to provide a more specific and contextual empirical contribution in understanding the dynamics of English pronunciation at the high school level.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher aims to find what are the dominant words that are difficult to pronounce by students and to analyze the factors of pronunciation difficulties that affect the English vocabulary of SMA Negeri 1 Sukadana students. In this study, the researcher wants to analyze what are the dominant words that are difficult to pronounce by students and what are the pronunciation difficulty factors that affect the English vocabulary of SMA Negeri 1 Sukadana students. The title of this research is “An Analysis of Students' Pronunciation Difficulties of English Vocabulary By Students of SMA Negeri 1 Sukadana”. The selection of SMA Negeri 1 Sukadana as the object of research is done because it fits the criteria with the title to be researched. The researcher will use descriptive qualitative method by using tests and interviews. Given the importance of proper pronunciation as a basic skill in English learning, this study is expected to provide useful insights for participants, teachers, schools, researchers. In addition, this study is expected to open up further research opportunities to develop more effective learning methods to help students overcome difficulties in English vocabulary pronunciation.

## **B. Research Problems**

Based on the background explanation above, the research problem can be formulated as follows:

1. What are the most dominant words that students at SMA Negeri 1 Sukadana find difficult to pronounce?
2. What are the factors of pronunciation difficulties that affect the students' English vocabulary of SMA Negeri 1 Sukadana?

## **C. Research Purposes**

This study aims to analyze the pronunciation of English vocabulary among students at SMA Negeri 1 Sukadana. Specifically, the research will focus on:

1. To find what are the most dominant words that are difficult to pronounce by students at SMA Negeri 1 Sukadana.
2. To analyze the factors of pronunciation difficulties that affect the English vocabulary students of SMA Negeri 1 Sukadana.

## **D. Significance of Study**

The present research would benefit in the following aspects:

1. Theoretical Benefits
  - a. Identification of Influential Factors: By analyzing the factors impacting students' pronunciation, the study can shed light on internal (e.g., learning styles) and external (e.g., teaching methods) elements that influence pronunciation. This knowledge can inform the development of more effective pedagogical approaches for pronunciation instruction in English language learning programs.
  - b. Foundation for Further Research: This research may help future research. The findings can serve as a foundation for further research into the development of effective learning methods to improve students' pronunciation.

## 2. Practical Benefits

### a. To Participants

This research helps participant recognize difficulties in the pronunciation of English vocabulary so that they can understand their shortcomings and work on improving pronunciation more effectively.

### b. To Teachers

This study provides insight for English teachers into the various factors that influence students' pronunciation. By understanding the patterns of pronunciation errors and the factors behind them, teachers can adjust teaching strategies to better support the development of students' pronunciation. In addition, the results of this study can be a reference in enriching the learning methods that have been applied, so that the learning process becomes more effective and oriented to the needs of students.

### d. To Researchers

This research can contribute to the understanding of the factors that influence student difficulties.

## E. Scope of Research

### 1. Research Variabel

Variables are properties or characteristics possessed by research objects (such as people, places, or things) that can vary in value. In other words, variables are aspects that we want to measure or observe in a study. Creswell (2012:112) states that a "variable is a characteristic or attribute of an individual or an organization that researchers can measure or observe and varies among individuals or organizations studied". Before starting research, researchers must identify variables that are relevant to the problem under study. In this study, the researcher will use a single variable regarding the difficulty of English vocabulary pronunciation by SMA Negeri 1 Sukadana

students. Researchers will use a single variable, which aims to make it easier for researchers to formulate an object or the core of research which only consists of one research object.

## 2. Research Terminology

The researcher provides the following explanations which are used in this research. The terms are below:

### a. Pronunciation

Pronunciation refers to the way a word or language is spoken. Pronunciation is the ability to produce the sounds of a language accurately and naturally. In the context of English language learning, pronunciation is a vital aspect that supports smooth communication and understanding. “Pronunciation is one of the important components of communicative competence (Douglas, 2001)”. Accurate pronunciation not only contributes to clarity but also affects the listener's perception of the speaker's competence and confidence. So it can be concluded that mastering pronunciation requires the ability to produce language sounds precisely and naturally, ensuring clear and understandable speech.

### b. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the foundation of language learning, and without a strong vocabulary, learners will struggle to express their thoughts and ideas clearly and accurately. Learning vocabulary is one of the important aspects of learning English. “Vocabulary is the collection of words that a language has at any given time (Quirk *et al.*, 1987)”. So it can be concluded that vocabulary serves as the foundation of language learning, empowering individuals to express their thoughts and ideas effectively.