

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter consists of background of the study that explains about the problem and why the writers choose the topic, the statement of the problems, the significance of the study and objectives of the study, scope and limit of the study and definition of key terms.

#### **A. Background of the study**

Language is a tool of communication, and it becomes important for some reasons. To communicate with other people, we have to use international language. In English courses, there are four skills that must be mastered, and those are writing, speaking, listening and reading. Pronunciation is one of sub-skills in speaking ability. This component acts a very important role in speaking, because by pronouncing English words correctly, students are able to avoid misunderstanding when they speak to other people. Therefore, it is necessary for students to master English pronunciation.

Teaching pronunciation involves a variety of challenges. Teachers often find that they do not have enough time in class to give proper attention to this aspect of English instruction. When they find the time to address pronunciation, the instruction often seems as presentation and practice of a series of boring materials and unrelated topics as well. Drilling sounds over and over again (e.g., minimal pair work) often leads to discouraging results, and discouraged

students and teachers end up wanting to avoid pronunciation altogether.<sup>1</sup> In teaching pronunciation, teachers might use a suitable technique for students. An interesting technique will make the students interested in learning pronunciation, such as: chaining, drilling, pronouncing and spelling activities, listening activities and many other activities. These techniques might be useful in teaching pronunciation.

Pronunciation is one of the parts of language which is very essential. Nobody could understand the people with poor pronunciation even though their words and grammar are good. In addition, the crashed communication can be caused by the use of incorrect pronunciation. Moreover, being aware of correct pronunciation will give the advantage not only in production, but also the understanding of spoken language. Learning pronunciation is significant to the students in learning English. Pronunciation should be taught in the classroom. Pronunciation typically is not being taught independently, but it is usually taught in speaking or English lesson class.

A consideration of learners' pronunciation errors and of how these can inhabit successful communication is a useful basis on which to assess why it is important to deal with pronunciation in the classroom.<sup>2</sup> When a learner says, for example, *soap* /səʊp/ in a situation such as restaurant where they should have said *soup* /su:p/, the inaccurate production of a phoneme can lead to

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<sup>1</sup>. Judy B. Gilbert, *Teaching Pronunciation-Using the prosody pyramid*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p.1

<sup>2</sup>. Gerald Kelly, *How to teach Pronunciation*, (series editor: Jeremy harmer), Logman, 2000

misunderstanding. Based on the problem above, the students should aware when they pronounce the words. They who always mispronounce a range of phoneme can be extremely difficult for speaker from another language to understand. Learning pronunciation is essential for the students.

Many pairs of consonant sound are similar, but one of them is voiced and the other is not. For example, /d/ is similar to /t/, but /d/ is voiced and /t/ is not. Consonant is voiced when there is vibration in the throat.<sup>3</sup> A common problem is found in pronunciation about the phoneme. The problem comes from the letters which are voiced or unvoiced. This unvoiced consonant frequently make the students error in pronounce the words. The characteristics of English words are different from the Indonesian or Arabic language. In Indonesian language, most of the written words are the same as the words that we read. English words have many characteristics. The words that are written are not the same as at we read. Some of the words have totally different pronunciation from the original words, like the word *enough* but the pronunciation is /I'nʌf/. The learners have to be aware of these characteristics of pronunciation of English words to avoid misunderstanding among speakers.

For the students, pronunciation might be difficult because they are not the native speakers. Generally students pronounce the word as the formation of the letters. For example, the English words *knife* is pronounced /naɪf/ because [k] in

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<sup>3</sup> . Mark Hancock, *English Pronunciation in Use – self-study and classroom use*, Cambridge University Press

this word is a silent letter. But some students do not pronounce it correctly, they pronounce the silent letter /kənaɪf/. And commonly the word *scene* /si:n/, but the students pronounce this word with /ski:n/. Teaching pronunciation is important. Speaking words by incorrect pronunciation can make misunderstanding among speakers and addressee, especially if we speak with the native speakers.

Silent letter is a letter that appears in a particular word, but does not correspond to any sound in the word's pronunciation. English words have many silent letters, and they can make the non native speakers difficult to pronounce the words. There are 20 letters from 26 letters in English words that potential to be silent. Students should be aware of these kinds of silent letters. The problems happened because the students are not exposed to pronunciation lesson seriously. The students might find the errors in silent letters words, because they usually read what have written in the text. The researcher ever found these problems when she got the teaching practice in one of the schools in Surabaya. Most of the students mispronounced in silent letters, they do not pronounce it correctly. The basis of the problem because there is no special lesson taught about how to pronounce the words properly. Moreover, some students are lazy to learn English seriously.

The researcher chooses SMAN 1 Wonoayu as her place to observe pronunciation errors of silent letters in English words. The researcher asks one of the teachers in that school, the researcher gets the information that 40% of the students are able to pronounce well. The other 60% of the students are not

able to pronounce the English words correctly, especially the words with silent letters. The reason they make error in pronouncing silent letters is because there is no special lesson studying about the pronunciation. Even though the students have learnt the English language since they are at elementary school and junior high school, they still have difficulties in pronouncing English words, especially the silent letters.

From those reasons above, the researcher carries out this study to know the silent letters commonly pronounced incorrectly by students, having less knowledge about how to pronounce well can direct them to the mispronunciation among speakers. So, she wants to know the causes of the students made errors, and how the teacher deals with pronunciation errors. This research is conducted to analyze pronunciation errors of silent letter in English words made by students of the tenth grade students at SMAN 1 Wonoayu.

## **B. Statement of the problems**

There are three statements of the problems. Those are:

1. What are the silent letters in English words commonly incorrectly pronounced by the tenth grade students at SMAN 1 Wonoayu?
2. What are the causes of pronunciation errors of silent letters made by the tenth grade students at SMAN 1 Wonoayu?
3. How does the teacher deal with pronunciation errors of silent letters made by the tenth grade students at SMAN 1 Wonoayu?

### **C. Significance of the study**

The significances of this study are:

#### 1. For Teacher

The research can be used for measuring the students' ability in pronouncing the silent letters. The aim of this research is to make the teacher aware of the students' error in the class. Moreover, this research also gives the teacher inspiration to define a suitable method in teaching English, especially in pronunciation.

#### 2. For Students

The research can be used to know the students' ability in pronouncing the silent letter in English words. It also can motivate the students to study well so that they can pronounce English word correctly.

### **D. Objectives of the study**

Based on the statements of the problems, the objectives of the study are:

1. To describe the silent letters in English words which are commonly incorrectly pronounced by the tenth grade students at SMAN 1 Wonoayu.
2. To describe the causes of pronunciation errors of silent letters made by the tenth grade students at SMAN 1 Wonoayu.
3. To describe how the teacher deals with pronunciation errors of silent letters made by the tenth grade students at SMAN 1 Wonoayu.

### **E. Scope and Limit of the study**

The writer scopes the study in the error analysis. The researcher is interested in analyzing pronunciation errors of silent letters in English words. She analyzes about pronunciation of silent letters because she believes that pronouncing English correctly is needed. The error pronunciation can make misunderstanding among the speakers.

And she limits the study to the analysis of pronunciation errors of silent letter made by the tenth grade students at SMAN 1 Wonoayu. The first object of her research are the students, the researcher chooses the tenth grade students for her observation. One class consists of 30 students. She gives some questions for the students related to the errors pronunciation. The second object is the teacher of the tenth grade student at SMAN 1 Wonoayu, she interviews about how the teacher deals with the errors pronunciation in the class.

#### **F. Definition of key terms**

1. Error : Error is any deviation from a selected norm of language performance, no matter what the characteristics of causes of the deviation might be.<sup>4</sup> Error deals with producing or making inappropriate words, phrases, or sentences of the learner's speech or writing.
2. Pronunciation : Pronunciation is the competence of someone in producing sound used to make meaning. There are two aspects of pronunciation; segmental and supersegmental. The segmental one focuses on phonemes;

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<sup>4</sup> . Dulay et al, *Language Two*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) p. 193

vowel and consonants, while the supersegmental focuses on stressing and intonation. In this research, the researcher focuses on the segmental features.

3. **Silent Letter** : Silent letter is a letter that appears in a particular word, but does not correspond to any sound in the word's pronunciation. English words have many silent letters, and they can make the non native speakers difficult to pronounce the words. In addition, pronunciation is related with the sound of each word. The silent letter means the sound of the letter in each word that not pronounced.