CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a background of the research, identification of the problem, limitation of the problem, formulation of the problem, objectives of the research, and significance of the research.

A. Background of the Research

Language is one of the important elements in human life. Language is used by humans as the main communication tool in interacting with other people. It is also used to express ideas, knowledge, thoughts, feelings, etc. Without language, humans will find it difficult to interact with other people. Algeo (2010:2) stated that language is a system of conventional vocal signs by means of which human beings communicate. Those terms are system, signs, vocal, conventional, human, and communicate. Besides, Brown (2000:5) said that language is a system of arbitrary conventionalized vocal, written, or gestural symbols that enable members of a given community to communicate intelligibly with one another. Based on this definition, it is clear that language is very important in human life.

One of the most important languages to learn is English. English is an international language used to communicate between one country and another. According to Brumfit (2001:35), English is an international language that is the most widespread medium of international communication. In

addition to the communication aspect, English also plays an important role in various aspects such as technology, public places, education, tourism, etc.

In this globalization era, many developments have occurred, especially in Indonesia. For example, many foreign companies are established in Indonesia, so the use of English is very important. English is the language used by people with different languages, backgrounds, and cultures. By mastering English, people can build relationships and communicate with others more easily. That is why English is very important to learn.

English has four basic skills, those are Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. In addition, there are some components such as Vocabulary, Grammar, and Pronunciation. These skills are very important and interrelated, students need to learn and master these four skills. One of the important productive skills for English learners to master is Speaking. Speaking skills are very important to learn, because in communicating we need to speak. People are said to be proficient in English if they have good speaking skills.

In learning English speaking, it cannot be separated from mastery of pronunciation. Good or bad speakers can be seen from their pronunciation. Although the grammar is good, if the pronunciation is bad, it can't be said as a good speaker. Pronunciation is a way of producing the sound of a word. Pronunciation is important to be mastered because mispronunciation of words can be fatal. Mispronouncing even one letter in a word can lead to different meanings and can confuse the other person. Therefore, pronunciation must be

mastered by English learners so that communication can run well and not cause misunderstanding and miscommunication.

There are some factors that can affect people's pronunciation, such as accent and mother tongue. Each country certainly has a different language accent. For example Malaysia, India, Korea, Japan, Thailand, China, and many others. Likewise, Indonesia has various languages such as Javanese, Sundanese, Sumatran, Balinese and others. English learners in every country often pronounce English words with the same accent as their mother tongue accent. However, the pronunciation and meaning of their words can still be understood by others. It's just not as clear as and as good as native speakers. Therefore, people with different accents and mother tongues should learn the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to make it easier to learn English and be able to speak like a native speaker. English learners can also improve their pronunciation by listening to how native speakers pronounce a word and then practicing it often.

Mastering English pronunciation is not easy. Students often face problems in learning English, especially in pronunciation. This is because many students are still hesitant and do not know how to pronounce English words correctly. Pronouncing English words is different from Indonesian because in English the written word is different from the pronunciation. For example, in Indonesian, the word *"Makan"* is pronounced the same as *"Makan"*, while in English the word "*Book"* should be pronounced as /bʊk/, and the word "*Scissors"* should be pronounced with a silent C as /ˈsɪz.ɚz/,

and the word "*Knife*" should be pronounced with a silent K as /naɪf/. This can cause pronunciation errors in students.

One of the errors that often occur in the pronunciation of English words is the silent letter. Silent letters are letters that are not sounded (when read or pronounced) in English words. According to Podhaizer (1998) in Pusfarani (2021:455), silent letters are letters that are not sounded. This research will investigate the students' pronunciation errors in silent letters c, d, e, and t. The examples of silent letters c, d, e, and t are the word "Scenario" should be pronounced as /səˈner.i.oʊ/, the word "Wednesday" should be pronounced as /ˈwenz.deɪ/, the word "Like" should be pronounced as /laɪk/, and the word "Listen" should be pronounced as /ˈlɪs.ən/.

As English learners, students must master pronunciation, because pronunciation is very important. As Hismanoglu said in Gilakjani (2016:2) that pronunciation is important for oral communication. By mastering pronunciation, the communication between each other will become clearer and easier to be understood. However, students still often make errors in pronunciation, especially in silent letters. They are still pronouncing letters that shouldn't be sounded. The factors that cause students' pronunciation errors need to be investigated.

Based on the observations made by the researcher to the tenth grade students of SMKN 3 Pacitan, the researcher found that students were still hesitant and had difficulty pronouncing English words, so there were still many pronunciation errors made by students. Therefore, the researcher is

interested in conducting research on this problem. The researcher chose this topic because of the importance of pronunciation for students in learning English, so it is necessary to identify the types of students' pronunciation errors, the most dominant pronunciation errors, and the factors that cause these errors.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in investigating students' pronunciation errors in a research entitled "An Analysis of Pronunciation Errors of English Silent Letters to the Tenth Grade of SMKN 3 Pacitan in the Academic Year of 2021/2022".

B. **Identification of the Problem**

Based on this background, there are some problems that can be identified:

1. Students are still hesitant to pronounce English words.
2. Students have difficulty pronouncing English words, especially in silent letters.
3. Students have a less in-depth understanding of pronunciation, especially in silent letters.
4. There are some factors that cause pronunciation errors, one of them is the low motivation of students to learn it.

C. **Limitation of the Problem**

From the background of the problem, the researcher must limit the research problem so that the research focuses on the topic of the problem. The researcher limits the research problem of students' pronunciation errors in silent letters /c/, /d/, /e/, and /t/.

D. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the research above, the researcher formulated 3 research questions as follows:

1. What are the types of pronunciation errors made by the tenth grade students of SMKN 3 Pacitan in the academic year of 2021/2022 in pronouncing silent letters /c/, /d/, /e/, and /t/?

2. What are the most dominant pronunciation errors made by the tenth grade students of SMKN 3 Pacitan in the academic year of 2021/2022 in pronouncing silent letters /c/, /d/, /e/, and /t/?

3. What are the causes of pronunciation errors made by the tenth grade students of SMKN 3 Pacitan in the academic year of 2021/2022?

E. Objectives of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the objectives of the research are:

1. To find out the types of pronunciation errors made by the tenth grade students of SMKN 3 Pacitan in the academic year of 2021/2022 in pronouncing silent letters /c/, /d/, /e/, and /t/.

2. To describe the most dominant errors made by the tenth grade students of SMKN 3 Pacitan in the academic year of 2021/2022 in pronouncing silent letters /c/, /d/, /e/, and /t/.

3. To find out the causes of pronunciation errors made by the tenth grade students of SMKN 3 Pacitan in the academic year of 2021/2022.

F. Significances of the Research

The significances of the research are:

1. Theoretically, the result of this research is expected to contribute to knowledge about pronunciation errors.

2. Practically, this research is expected to be useful for:

    a. For another researcher

    This research is expected to be a reference for other researchers who are interested in conducting research on the same topic.

    b. For students

    This research is expected to increase students' knowledge about how to pronounce the English silent letter correctly. Students are also expected to be motivated to improve their pronunciation skills.

    c. For writer

    This research is expected to provide knowledge and experience to the researcher.

    d. For teachers

    This research is expected to help teachers to find out students' pronunciation errors in pronouncing the English silent letter. In addition, it is also expected to be a consideration for teachers in the process of teaching English, especially in teaching pronunciation.

e. For readers

This research is expected to provide an understanding to the reader

about the English silent letter pronunciation errors and what causes the

error.