

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses about the background of the study, problems of the study, purposes of the study, scope and limitations of the study, significance of the study, and definition key-terms.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

English is an international language that has evolved over time and continues to be widely used today as a tool for communication and interaction in daily life. People communicate through both spoken and written language, allowing for efficient conversations and the exchange of new information. According to Jackendoff & Pinker (2005:3), Language as an arbitrary vocal symbol system. In Language and cognition language is the primary means of communication. In Indonesia, people primarily use Indonesian for daily interactions. However, when communicating with individuals from other countries, they cannot rely on Indonesian alone and must use a global language like English to bridge the language barrier.

English is essential for communicating with people from other countries, as it is widely recognized as an international language. Communication plays a crucial role in society, enabling the exchange of ideas, information, thoughts, and emotions. In schools and universities, English is a mandatory subject due to its significance in various aspects of life, including education, business, technology, and the professional world.

In language learning, pronunciation is just as important as other language skills. According to Cook (1996, in Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2016:2) defines pronunciation as "the production of English sounds." Pronunciation is learned through repetition and correction of pronunciation errors. Good pronunciation not only enhances understanding and communication between native speakers and learners but also contributes to fluency. While vocabulary and grammar are often prioritized in language teaching, accurate pronunciation is a key factor in effective communication. Mispronunciation can lead to misunderstandings, even if the words used are correct, making pronunciation a vital aspect of mastering English.

English pronunciation is a fundamental aspect of language learning, yet it remains one of the most challenging skills for non-native speakers to master. This difficulty arises due to several factors, including differences in phonetic systems, variations in accents and dialects, and the influence of one's mother tongue (Gilakjani, 2016). According to Roach (2009:20), English pronunciation consists of several components, including segmental features (vowels and consonants) and suprasegmental features (stress, rhythm, and intonation). Among these, vowels play a crucial role in distinguishing word meanings and ensuring clear communication.

The complexity of English vowels lies in their variability. Unlike many other languages, English has a wide range of vowel sounds, some of which do not exist in other linguistic systems. For instance, Indonesian has a relatively simple vowel system compared to English, English vowels can be classified as front, central, and back vowels, depending on the position of the tongue during

articulation" (Yule, 2016:45) This can create challenges for Indonesian students, as certain English vowel sounds, such as /ɪ/ and /i:/ or /ʌ/ and /æ/, may not have direct equivalents in their native language (Deterding & Poedjosoedarmo:2001). Mispronouncing these vowels can lead to misunderstandings and difficulties in communication.

For school children learning English as a compulsory subject, correct pronunciation is vital in helping them communicate effectively. According to Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (2010), learners who develop accurate pronunciation skills experience greater confidence in speaking and are better understood by others. One effective approach to improving pronunciation is through frequent exposure and imitation. Listening to English songs significantly improves students' pronunciation skills by providing a natural and enjoyable context for practicing sounds, intonation, and rhythm. Songs motivate learners, boost their confidence, and help them internalize correct pronunciation patterns more effectively than traditional drills"

(Gutiérrez-Barrera & Zambrano-Zambrano, 2025:29). "The students' ability in pronouncing vowels based on 'Sound of English' is good. The students could produce vowel sounds clearly enough to be understood by others, although mispronunciation sometimes led to misunderstanding. vowels are an important element in phonology, and differences such as between 'sin' and 'seen' illustrate the significance of accurate vowel pronunciation" (Mulyadi, 2023:5). From the researcher's experience as a student, mastering English vowels requires consistent practice and engagement with the language in authentic contexts. Many students

struggle with vowel pronunciation because they rely on Indonesian phonetics, which do not always correspond to English sounds. Consequently, systematic pronunciation training, including phonetic drills, listening exercises, and guided speaking practice, is essential for developing clear and accurate pronunciation.

Reviewing the statement above, researcher is interested to analyze the pronunciation of vowels made the students under research title: Analysis on Pronunciation of English Vowels Made by the Eighth Grade Students of MTsN 1 Kutai Kartanegara in Academic Year 2024/2025. By examining common mispronunciations and identifying specific vowel sounds that pose challenges, the research seeks to provide insights into the difficulties faced by students and suggest strategies for improvement. The findings of this study will contribute to a better understanding of pronunciation challenges among Indonesian EFL learners and offer recommendations for more effective teaching approaches in pronunciation instruction.

## **1.2 Problem of the Study**

Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulates the problem of the study as follows: “How do the eighth grade students of MTsN 1 Kutai Kartanegara in academic year 2024/2025 pronounce English vowels?”

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

In line with problems of the study above, the purpose of the study is formulated as follows: “To know how the eighth grade students of MTsN 1 Kutai Kartanegara in academic year 2024/2025 pronounce English Vowels.”

#### **1.4 Scope and limitation of the study**

In order to make the study focus, the researcher has limited the scope as follows:

1. The variable of the study is pronunciation of English vowels made by the eighth grade students of MTsN 1 Kutai Kartanegara in academic year 2024/2025
2. The indicators of pronunciation of English vowels are pronunciation of long vowels in english include of /i:/, /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /ɜ:/, /u:/, made by the eighth grade students of MTSN 1 Kutai Kartanegara in academic year 2024/2025
3. The subject of this study is the eighth grade students of MTsN 1 Kutai Kartanegara in academic year 2024/2025.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The results of this study are expected to have valuable contribution in theoretical and practical bases.

1. Theoretically, this study is expected to provide pronunciation theories and how to pronounce the word perfectly relating to pronunciation of English vowels made by the eighth grade students of MTsN 1 Kutai Kartanegara in academic year 2024/2025.
2. Practically, the study can provide the findings on pronunciation of English vowels made by the eighth grade students of MTsN 1 Kutai Kartanegara in academic year 2024/2025. These facts can be used by English teachers at the

school as references data in teaching and learning process to improve the students' pronunciation ability, especially pronunciation of unfamiliar English vowels.

## 1.6 Definition of Key-Terms

In order to avoid misinterpretation and give a clear description of terms used in this study, the researcher provides several key-terms as follows:

1. **Analysis**, is the process of organizing and separating data or the whole phenomenon into smaller parts, with the aim of knowing the nature, proportion, relationship, or pattern that exists. In this study, analysis refers to identify and analyze and assess the quality of pronunciation according to appropriate standards and norms in English.
2. **Pronunciation** is the way of someone to produce pronunciation of consonants, vowels and diphthongs that is accepted or generally understood. In this study, pronunciation refers to the way of the eighth grade students of MTsN 1 Kutai Kartanegara in academic year 2024/2025 to produce pronunciation of English vowels.
3. **English Vowels** are some of the continuous voiced phonemes produced without obstruction in the mouth so the sounds pass through the mouth freely without any friction. Those sounds are among others: /i:/, /ɪ/, /e/, /æ/, /ɑ:/, /ɒ/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /u:/, /ʌ/, /ɜ:/, /ə/.