

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

English language proficiency has become an essential skill in the modern era. One of the crucial components of English proficiency is pronunciation, which plays a vital role in ensuring effective communication (Omar et al., 2022, p. 2). Proper pronunciation allows students to convey their ideas accurately (Rupley et al., 2020, p. 4) and helps build confidence when reading aloud in English or other situations, such as public speaking (Nurhasanah, 2023, p. 314).

In Vocational High Schools (SMK), English is taught as a compulsory subject to prepare students for the next level of education. According to the Learning Outcome curriculum (Wahyuni, n.d.) English is integrated into 4 elements, which contain several competencies, including reading comprehension, speaking, listening, and writing. Among these competencies, oral reading activities are often used to improve pronunciation skills because this activity provides students with the opportunity to practice articulation, rhythm, and intonation in a controlled learning environment. Unfortunately, many high school students are not yet able to pronounce English words correctly. This can be caused by limited practice and habituation, as well as a lack of direct guidance from teachers, which can hinder students' overall language development, especially in terms of pronunciation.

Oral reading is the process of reading text aloud to convey meaning to an audience (Yoursay.id, 2022). Oral reading technique involves the reader voicing

the words of the text, which can improve comprehension and fluency. Oral reading activities are conducted to model fluent reading, improve students' reading skills, and motivate students to love reading by making texts more accessible and enjoyable (Ceyhan & Yıldız, 2020).

According to (Adrián, 2014, pp. 99, 108) Oral reading is effective in improving pronunciation, which is a basic language skill because the activity involves noticing-awareness techniques that help students realize differences and be able to compare the way they pronounce the text with the model (reading) given by the teacher.

Although it is a compulsory subject in Vocational High Schools (SMK), learning English still faces several challenges. Many students have difficulty mastering basic English skills, namely pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. According to (Ahmad, 2023, p. 1045) this is influenced by several factors, including lack of vocabulary, difficulty in pronunciation, difficulty in understanding the material, lack of motivation and interest in learning, and lack of practice.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of the oral reading method in improving students' pronunciation skills as an effort to overcome these problems and be able to contribute to improving the quality of English language teaching in Indonesia. One of the factors that influences students' difficulties in learning English is the lack of good pronunciation skills. When pronunciation is not clear, it will change the meaning of a word, and the message to be conveyed becomes difficult to understand; it can hinder interaction and cause ineffective communication (Purwanto, 2019, p. 83). This requires effective learning

techniques to overcome the problem, one of which is the oral reading technique, which can be one of the solutions.

There is research that is relevant to this study. The research comes from Cotabato City, Philippines, by Razul B Omar et al. (2022) entitled “Oral Reading Intervention Activities: Effects on the Pronunciation Ability of Bangsamoro Grade 3 English Language Learners in Reading Aloud”. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of oral reading intervention activities on the pronunciation skills of grade 3 students at the elementary school level. The results of the study showed that Oral Reading Activities significantly affected students' pronunciation. This is evidenced by the difference in scores obtained between *the Pre-test and Post-test* scores, with the Pre-test mean score of 21.80, while the Post-test mean score increased to 36.55. This shows that oral reading activities can significantly improve students' pronunciation.

The difference between the previous and this study lies in the aspect and level of the sample. The previous study assessed students' pronunciation in reading words, phrases, and sentences before and after intervention activities, with the research subjects being grade 3 elementary school students. However, in the current study, the focus is more detailed, namely on the number of words pronounced correctly, reading phonemes, articulation, and Intonation and rhythm with research subjects at Vocational High School (SMK) students.

1.2 Problem of the Research

Based on the background and rationale of this study, the following research problem is formulated: is there any significant effect of oral reading technique on students' pronunciation performance?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

Based on the research problem, the objective of this study is:

To verify whether there is or not a significant effect of oral reading technique on students' pronunciation performance of Vocational High School students.

1.4 Operational Definition of the Terms

1. Oral Reading

Oral Reading is the ability to read English texts orally with fluency, proper intonation, and voice clarity in 11th-grade students of SMK Negeri 1 Wringin. In this study, oral reading is measured through an English text reading test involving aspects of fluency, reading phonemes, articulation, and Intonation and rhythm.

2. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the skill of pronouncing English words correctly, including accuracy in pronunciation of phonemes, word stress, intonation, and rhythm in 11th-grade students of SMK Negeri 1 Wringin. This pronunciation skill will be assessed through oral tests or assessments where students are asked to pronounce certain words or sentences. The tests are conducted using oral reading, which is when each student reads their respective reading texts.

1.5 Significant of the Research

Based on the problems described, the EF English Proficiency Index (EPI) data shows that Indonesians' level of English proficiency is still low, including in terms of pronunciation. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to be a reference for educators in designing more effective English learning programs, especially in English teaching. There are two main benefits that are highlighted, those are theoretical significance and practical significance:

1. Theoretical significance

This research is expected to contribute to the field of English language teaching, especially in understanding the role of oral reading in improving students' pronunciation. The results of this study can strengthen the theory that reading aloud is an effective technique in helping students improve their pronunciation. In addition, this study can also be a reference for further research that wants to examine the effectiveness of the reading-aloud method in learning English.

2. Practical significance

This research is useful for English teachers in understanding and implementing oral reading techniques as a method that can help students improve their pronunciation. With this research, it can be a basis for developing more effective learning strategies to improve students' speaking and reading skills in English. In addition, this research also has a direct impact on students, because through structured reading aloud exercises, they can increase their confidence in speaking English and improve the quality of their pronunciation.

1.6 Scope of the Research

This study focused on the Oral Reading technique of grade 11 vocational high school (SMK) students at SMKN 1 Wringin, with data collection procedures in the form of oral reading tests, and a Pre-test-Post-test research design.

