

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Language is very important in our life. It is a tool used by people to communicate. This, We should know it well in order that the message we send can be understood. Besides we use language to transfer our ideas and to express our emotion desire or feeling. Sapir (1921 :8) defined language as “a purely human and not instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotion, and desire by means of system of voluntarily produced symbols”.

There are four major language skills required of learners in mastering English as a foreign language. The first one is listening. Listening is receiving language through the ears, identifying the sounds of speech and processing them into word and sentences. Next, Writing is the expression of ideas, thought, insights, opinions, and feelings at this part. In writing, students are required to weave words into good compositions. Meanwhile, reading is the process of looking at a series of written symbols and getting meaning from them. When we read we use our eyes to see written symbols (letters, punctuation marks, and spaces), and to convert them into meaning. Furthermore, speaking is delivery of language through the mouth. To speak, we create sounds using speech organs such as the lungs, vocal tract, vocal cords, tongue, nasal cavity, teeth and lips. Harmer (2007) states “if students want to be able to speak fluently in English, they are required to be able to pronounce phonemes correctly, use appropriate stress and intonation patterns, and speak in connected speech”.

The pronunciation is heard when someone utter a word in a language. Even the learners are good in grammar and have a huge vocabulary but learners neglect pronunciation. And thus, their speaking can't be understood. "We also often judge people by the way they speak, and so learners with poor pronunciation maybe judged as incompetent, uneducated or lacking in knowledge, even though listeners are only reacting to their pronunciation" (Adult Migrant English program Research Center, 2002). This statement shows that pronunciation plays an important role in communication.

In learning English as a foreign language, students' pronunciation is influenced by some factors and one of them is teacher's pronunciation. In this case, when the teacher pronounces inappropriately it will affect student's pronunciation. So, teachers hold an important role in teaching and learning process, especially in pronunciation part. The students will repeat their teacher's pronunciation after the teacher says a certain utterances or certain words or sentences in the target language. Imitation of the teacher is essential striving for an acceptable pronunciation of the foreign language. The teacher should create classroom atmosphere to make the condition and the situation of students to learn pronunciation easily.

During the writer's makes teaching practice in SMAN 6 Kupang, specially at tenth grade, the writer found students often make mistake in pronouncing English words. For example, students pronounce "example" /Ig'za:mpl/ in the text as /eksample/, pronounce "zoom" /zu:m/ in the text as /som/, pronounce "because" /bIkoz/ in the text as /bIkaus/, pronounce "all right" /o:lraIt/ in the text as /olrIt/. Based on this problem, the writer would like to conduct a research

entitled : **A STUDY ON THE PRONUNCIATION ABILITY OF THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMPK SINT YOSEPH IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 2014/2015**

### **1.2 Statement of the Problems**

The problems statement of this study is formulated in form of questions. They are presented below.

1. Are the eighth grade students of SMPK Sint Yoseph Kupang able to pronounce the English words correctly?
2. What are the area difficulties faced by the eighth grade students in pronouncing the English words?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are actually the aims or purposes of what a study wants to fine out or to know. The objectives of this study are presented below.

1. To find out whether or not the eighth grade students of SMPK Sint Yoseph Kupang able to pronounce English words correctly.
2. To identify the area difficult in pronouncing English words faced by the eighth grade students of SMPK Sint Yoseph Kupang.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study has some benefits for the following persons.

1. **For the English teacher**

- a. To open and broaden teacher insight about English pronunciation including vowels and consonants.
- b. Through the result of the study, it is expected that the English teacher may know the students ability in pronouncing English words.

**2. For the students**

- a. To help the students in learning English pronunciation.
- b. To enrich students knowledge about English pronunciation including vowels and consonant especially at eighth grade students of SMPK Sint Yoseph Kupang.

**3. For the writer**

- a. To expand the writer is insights regarding English pronunciation.
- b. To supply the writer with a valuable experience that is useful in doing better teaching in the future.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

This study is about eighth grade students of SMPK Sint Yoseph Kupang ability in English pronunciation , the writer limited her study in phonetics aspects especially vowel, consonants, diphthongs in initial, medial and final positions and the writer use American English in her study.

### **1.6 Definition of terms**

To help the readers understand the terms used in this study,the writer presents some definition of terms as follows:

1. Ability

It is capacity or power to do something, mental intelligence of talent. (Richard, etal, 1985:1).

In this study ability means the capability of the eighth grade students of SMPK Sint Yoseph Kupang in pronouncing English words.

## 2. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the way in a certain sound or sounds are produced. In this study pronunciation refers to the act of saying English words or sounds of the eighth grade students of SMPK Sint Yoseph Kupang.

## 3. SMPK Sint Yoseph Kupang

SMPK Sint Yoseph Kupang is one of the private Junior High School in Kupang, in which the writer uses as the location of the study.