

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

In today's globalized world, the ability to communicate appropriately in English has become increasingly essential, especially in Indonesia (Isadaud, Fikri & Bukhari, 2022; Tauhid & Sari, 2024). As a global lingua franca, English is not only crucial for international communication but also for academic and professional success (Crystal, 2013; Menggo et al., 2019). Among the four core language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), speaking is often considered the most vital, as it directly influences an individual's ability to engage in real-time communication (Nunan, 2003). Moreover, speaking fluently in English, particularly with accurate pronunciation, allows individuals to express their ideas clearly and engage meaningfully in conversation (Crystal, 2013).

However, developing speaking skills, particularly pronunciation, remains a significant challenge for many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners (Jon et al., 2021 & Isadaud et al., 2022). As Nunan (2003) points out that speaking English appropriately is often seen as the hallmark of language proficiency, but it is also the most challenging to master, especially for EFL learners. In Indonesia, the teaching of English primarily focuses on grammar and reading skills, with less emphasis placed on oral communication, particularly pronunciation (Jon et al., 2021). This results in students who may excel in written tasks but struggle to communicate verbally in real-life situations.

These challenges are even more pronounced for junior high school students. In many Indonesian schools, students are not adequately exposed to the practice of speaking in English, and pronunciation is often overlooked in favor of other skills (Kulsum et al., 2025; Palomargareta & Astutik, 2024; Zannah et al., 2023). As a consequence, many students struggle to master English pronunciation, leading to misunderstandings and inefficient communication. The study done by Smith (2017) emphasizes that poor pronunciation can substantially hamper one's capacity to communicate in English, affecting everyday conversations, public presentations, and even future employment chances. Regarding the importance of pronunciation

for appropriate communication, it is crucial to address this issue early, particularly at the junior high school level.

However, conventional teaching methods that are still commonly used in schools might not be the most operative way to improve speaking skills (Jon et al., 2021; Palomargareta & Astutik, 2024; Tuilan et al., 2024; Zannah et al., 2023). Traditional approaches often focus on rote memorization, grammar rules, and repetitive exercises, which can fail to fully engage students and don't always cover the finer points of spoken language (Isadaud et al., 2022; Zannah et al., 2023). Studies have shown that these methods often fall short when it comes to helping students develop the natural flow, rhythm, and emphasis needed for clear and accurate pronunciation. Researchers like Jon et al. (2021) and Isadaud et al. (2022) point out that traditional methods often lack the interactive practice students need to improve their pronunciation in meaningful ways. In a typical classroom, where communicative activities are minimal, students miss out on the confidence and fluency that comes from practicing real conversation. Because of this, there's a growing need for more engaging and innovative teaching approaches to truly support students in building strong speaking skills, especially when it comes to pronunciation.

In this context, drama-based pedagogy offers an exciting and operative approach to help students enhance their speaking skills, particularly in pronunciation. Research has shown that drama activities immerse students in real communication scenarios, helping them understand and practice natural language use (Angelianawati, 2019; Bessadet, 2022; Djafar & Yunus, 2023; Fahriyawan, 2023; Göktürk et al., 2020; Nguyen, 2023; Öztürk Pat & Yilmaz, 2021). Unlike traditional methods that focus on rote learning and repetitive drills, drama-based activities place students in meaningful, real-life scenarios that promote natural language use, including intonation, rhythm, and stress (Angelianawati, 2019). By engaging in role-playing and improvisation, students practice pronunciation authentically, boosting their confidence and reducing speaking anxiety (Fahriyawan, 2023; Göktürk et al., 2020). The approach also fosters collaborative learning, where peer and teacher feedback help students identify and refine their pronunciation errors (Nguyen, 2023; Utami, 2023). Therefore, this study aims to

explore the effect of using drama-based pedagogy to enhance the pronunciation skills of junior high school students.

Despite the potential benefits of using drama in language learning, there is a lack of research on using drama as a learning tool in the context of junior high school. The context of SMP N 5 Singaraja, a rural junior high school in Indonesia, may influence students' responses to drama-based learning due to their distinct cultural backgrounds and potentially limited exposure to English. Classroom observations at SMP N 5 Singaraja reveal specific challenges in English language instruction, particularly in fostering active speaking skills. Students tend to be passive, with lessons predominantly teacher-centered, heavily reliant on a single textbook, and limited to traditional tools like the whiteboard and occasional LCD projector use. The questionnaire results show that 91% of students in class 8D SMP N 5 Singaraja have difficulty pronouncing English words, 66% of students feel insecure in pronouncing English words, and 100% of students want to improve their speaking skills. Additionally, a shortage of English teachers and the lack of varied, interactive teaching materials make it difficult for students to engage fully with the language, hindering their ability to practice and improve pronunciation skills.

With this background, this study investigated whether drama-based pedagogy can enhance English pronunciation skills and explore the potential of drama-based pedagogy as a solution to improve these skills. This research is expected to make a constructive contribution to the development of operative teaching methods for enhancing students' speaking skills, particularly in terms of pronunciation.

## **1.2 Problem Identification**

Based on classroom observations conducted at SMP N 5 Singaraja have highlighted several challenges in teaching English, especially concerning students' speaking skills. One of the primary issues is that students often remain passive during English classes. Lessons rely heavily on a single textbook, with teaching aids limited to a whiteboard and occasional use of an LCD projector, creating a teacher-centered approach that minimizes active student engagement.

Moreover, the school faces a shortage of English teachers, which adds to the difficulty of providing operative instruction. The lack of diverse and interactive learning media also limits students' ability to fully engage with the language, resulting in many students struggling with pronunciation a crucial aspect of appropriate communication. Traditional teaching methods, which emphasize rote memorization and grammar drills, fall short of addressing the intricacies of spoken language, particularly pronunciation. Consequently, these conventional techniques do not provide enough communicative, context-rich practice for students to develop clear and confident speaking skills. This shortfall negatively impacts students' overall speaking abilities, reducing their confidence in both academic and real-life interactions.

### **1.3 Limitation**

This study concentrated on 9th-grade students at SMP N 5 Singaraja, which means its findings may not be easily applicable to other age groups or educational settings. Conducted within a limited timeframe, the research might not capture long-term improvements in pronunciation skills. Additionally, qualitative data collection methods, primarily observations and interviews, introduce an element of subjective interpretation. External factors, such as students' prior exposure to English, differing motivation levels, and individual learning styles, are not controlled in this study and could impact the results.

### **1.4 Research Question**

Based on the background of the study, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. Can drama-based pedagogy enhance pronunciation skills in SMP N 5 Singaraja?

### **1.5 Purpose of the Study**

In line with the research questions, the purpose of the study is formulated as follows:

1. To explore whether drama-based pedagogy can enhance pronunciation skills among students at SMP N 5 Singaraja.



## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

### **1.6.1 Theoretical Significance**

This study contributes to language learning theory by exploring the impact of drama-based pedagogy on pronunciation skills within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. Drama-based pedagogy is grounded in constructivist theories, particularly Vygotsky's theory of social interaction, which underscores the importance of social context and collaborative learning in language acquisition (Vygotsky, 1978). Through role-play, dialogue, and interactive drama activities, students actively participate in learning, fostering deeper cognitive and emotional engagement with the language.

Moreover, this study extends the framework of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes authentic, meaningful interactions as fundamental to language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Drama-based activities offer learners realistic, communicative environments to practice pronunciation, enabling not only fluency but also mastery of essential pronunciation elements like stress, intonation, and rhythm. This research provides empirical insights into the usefulness of drama-based pedagogy for pronunciation development, contributing to the refinement of CLT approaches by focusing on pronunciation, a skill often overlooked in traditional EFL methodologies.

### **1.6.2 Practical Significance**

#### **1.6.2.1 For Teachers or Educators**

The results of this study can offer practical guidance for teachers and educators at SMP N 5 Singaraja, as well as other schools, in designing more operative language learning strategies. Existing research highlights that drama-based pedagogy not only enhances language comprehension but also strengthens speaking proficiency and pronunciation (Angelianawati, 2019; Bessadet, 2022; Fahriyawan, 2023; Göktürk et al., 2020; Nguyen, 2023; Öztürk Pat & Yilmaz, 2021). By integrating drama activities, educators can foster a more interactive and student-centered environment that promotes active participation, creativity, and the development of pronunciation skills. This study reinforces the value of these

techniques, providing teachers with practical methods for incorporating drama into lesson plans to address pronunciation challenges.

#### **1.6.2.2 For Other Researchers**

This study serves as a valuable reference for researchers exploring the use of drama-based pedagogy in language education. Previous studies by Nguyen (2023); and Öztürk Pat & Yilmaz (2021) have underscored drama's potential to facilitate meaningful language use and enhance communicative competence, including pronunciation. By adding new empirical insights, especially within an EFL context, this study contributes to the broader understanding of innovative teaching methodologies. It encourages further research into the practical applications of drama in developing essential language skills, such as pronunciation, across diverse educational settings.

