

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents: (1) background, (2) problems of the study, (3) objectives of the study, and (4) significance of the study.

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

English is important to be learned for some reasons. Mohammed (2019) claimed that English is a language used in many countries and also as the language of education, medicine, business, banking, tourism, and diplomacy. Michalak and Bavli (2018) added that nowadays, the importance of English as a foreign language is increased because English represents a significant role in enhancing individuals' employability allowing international cooperation and collaboration, and giving access to international study and information. English skills are recognized to significantly increased someone's employability (Erling, 2015). It means that English is important to be learnt because it used in many sectors of life.

In learning English, there are some difficulties that faced by students, especially for EFL or ESL students. Learning English as second language is difficult for L2 students because they cannot use English in real life situations and they should learn sentences in textbooks not in a real environment (Derakshan & Shirmohammadli, 2015). Therefore students may not have been exposed to enough English conversation inside the classroom where teaching only teaches grammar (Suryanto & Sari, 2020). With regard to this, there were

some difficulties faced by the students in learning English especially English as a foreign language.

Despite the importance of English, some learners belonged to underprivileged learners. Typically, underprivileged students are the students that come from low income family and have multiple indoor environmental quality problems, including indoor air pollution, toxic chemical and pesticide use, mold infestation, asbestos and radon, lead in paint and drinking water, and other heavy metals (Hall, 2019). According to Sharma (2014), underprivileged learners come from such a section of class, home and social background which are not compatible for learning. In addition, Faustina (2017) stated that underprivileged learners are the deprived people who are socially, economically and locationally behind compared to the rest of the population of the society which low status are refused of all the facilities and privileged available to privileged class people. Furthermore, underprivileged students' tend to be isolated than non-low-income students, and those placements are associated with poorer outcomes (Hehir, cited in Terry, 2018). It can be stated that underprivileged students refer to the students which their background is behind.

Underprivileged students have some difficulties in learning English. The main problems of underprivileged students' is inability to understand the medium of instruction and mother tongue interference and also lack of confidence (Sherin, 2021). According to Sharma (2014), there are problems of underprivileged students in learning English, such as afraid of English,

lack of English mastery and bad reading ability, and inappropriate textbooks, teaching method and teaching procedure. Therefore, underprivileged students' are not able to use English to communicate effectively (Tangkijmongkol & Wasanasomsithi, 2013). Hence, underprivileged students faced particular difficulties in learning English.

Afterwards, a preliminary study was conducted by interviewing the vice principal of student affairs of SMP Negeri 1 Muara Padang, Banyuasin, and two of underprivileged students. Based on the data, the vice principal of student affairs explained that there were students of SMP Negeri 1 Muara Padang who were categorized as underprivileged students who came from low-income family (DAP, personal communication, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021). In addition, after interviewing two of the underprivileged students who are recommended by the Vice principal of Student Affairs (TR & DF, personal communication, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021), they mentioned that English is one of the difficult subjects to be learned and they faced difficulties in learning English. From the data obtained, it was concluded that underprivileged students at SMP Negeri 1 Muara Padang, Banyuasin, faced difficulties in learning English.

Some researchers conducted studies on underprivileged students' difficulties in learning English. First, a study conducted by Faustina (2017) in Madurai, India who found that underprivileged learners had difficulty in learning English because they had anxiety and lost of confident in practicing English skills. This study added that underprivileged students also had

difficulty in putting their effort because poverty was the main reason of that. Second, a study conducted by Aziz and Bakar (2019) in Malaysia found that underprivileged students, as a minority group, felt difficult and doubt about their ability to get better in learning English as a Second Language (ESL) because they were influenced by the factors, such as limited resources, opportunities and so on. And last, a study conducted by Dar et. al. (2016) in India found that there were three main problems faced by underprivileged students in learning English, they were English phobia, language load and poor reading skills, inappropriate textbooks, teaching methods and teaching procedures. The underprivileged students also had the limitation of the facilities and lack of parental supervision due to financial problems.

In conclusion, taking into consideration what literature had documented the phenomena, the researcher was interested in conducting a study about underprivileged students' difficulties in learning English. The purpose of this study was to figure out what the difficulties that underprivileged students faced in learning English. The researcher chose SMP Negeri 1 Muara Padang because there were underprivileged students. Therefore, the researcher was interested in conducting the study entitled "*Underprivileged Students' Difficulties in Learning English at SMP Negeri 1 Muara Padang*".

## **1.2 Problem of the Study**

Based on the background, the research problem was formulated as in the following question: What were the difficulties that underprivileged students faced in learning English at SMP Negeri 1 Muara Padang, Banyuasin?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

Based on the research problem, the objective of this study was to find out the difficulties that underprivileged students faced in learning English at SMP Negeri 1 Muara Padang, Banyuasin.

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

This study was expected to provide some advantages. First, this study was expected to be beneficial for stakeholders of SMP Negeri 1 Muara Padang, Banyuasin, as an additional literature for giving contribution in enhancing educational development. Second, this study was expected to be beneficial for the teacher of English to be used as reference of underprivileged students' difficulties in Learning English. Next, for the researcher herself, this study was expected to provide provision in her teaching skills and to gain her experience in educational research, especially case study design. And last, for other researchers, this study was expected to be used as reference and provide information to be developed for further studies.