CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction to the study, outlining the research background, problem identification, scope and limitations, research questions, research objectives, significance of the study, and key definitions of terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

English language learning involves four basic skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which are interrelated and mutually supportive in the process of foreign language acquisition (Pikulski & Templeton, 2004). Among these skills, vocabulary and pronunciation are considered fundamental language components because they directly support learners' ability to understand meaning and communicate effectively. Vocabulary plays a crucial role in language learning, as it forms the basis for developing other language skills. Susanto (2017) states that vocabulary is central to language instruction and holds significant importance for language learners. Pikulski and Templeton (2004) further explain that vocabulary mastery affects learners' proficiency in the four English skills, meaning that without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, learners are likely to encounter difficulties in understanding and using a foreign language effectively.

Despite its importance, vocabulary learning remains a challenge for many students. Previous studies indicate that some teachers are still not fully informed about effective vocabulary teaching strategies, which can hinder students' English language development (Afzal, 2019). As a result, students often struggle to

understand, memorize, and use new vocabulary in different contexts (Lutfiyah et al., 2022). EFL learners face significant difficulties in discovering and consolidating foreign language vocabulary, including problems with memorizing words, pronouncing them correctly, and using vocabulary in speaking and writing tasks (Kesmez, 2024). Similarly, English learners often struggle with comprehension and retention due to limited engaging learning media and instructional support (Bayu et al., 2025). These difficulties suggest that vocabulary learning needs to be supported by engaging activities and meaningful contexts that help students connect new English words with experiences that are familiar to them.

In addition, pronunciation is another essential aspect of English language learning because it determines the clarity and intelligibility of spoken communication. Pronunciation strongly influences learners' fluency and willingness to communicate. However, pronunciation is often perceived as difficult by EFL learners due to differences between the sound systems of their mother tongue, national language, and English (Baran-Łucarz, 2014; Henderson, 2021). In the Indonesian context, students frequently experience mother-tongue interference, where native language pronunciation patterns are transferred into English speech, resulting in mispronunciation and misunderstanding (Huda et al., 2024). These challenges also may reduce students' confidence and willingness to participate in spoken English activities.

Learning vocabulary and pronunciation involves more than memorization; it requires meaningful exposure, repetition, and contextual learning supported by appropriate instructional media. Teachers therefore play an important role in

designing engaging learning environments and selecting effective teaching tools. Sukma et al (2023) suggested that teachers need to use various instructional media to support learners' comprehension of language input, as media such as audio, visual, and audiovisual materials enhance students' understanding and engagement during English learning activities. However, students often face linguistic and psychological challenges, such as difficulty distinguishing spelling from pronunciation and limited ability to apply vocabulary in context (Lutfiyah et al., 2022). Moreover, Lawati (2025) revealed that learners often struggle with pronunciation, spelling, selecting the appropriate meaning, and retaining words in memory. Similarly, Sammour-Shehadeh (2023) highlighted that spelling in English presents particular challenges due to irregular orthography and difficulties in linking sounds with written forms. These challenges may facilitate students' confidence in using English and highlight the need for learning activities that provide repeated practice, meaningful contexts, and supportive opportunities for participation.

Beyond linguistic difficulties, students' beliefs about their abilities are also important in the language learning process. This study is grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which highlights the role of social interaction, cognitive processes, and personal beliefs in learning (Bandura, 1977). A key concept in this theory is self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks and achieve desired outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Numerous studies have demonstrated that students with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to show greater motivation, persistence, and academic achievement (Raoofi et al., 2012). In

language learning, self-efficacy influences learners' willingness to practice, use learning strategies, and overcome learning challenges (Heidari, 2012). Importantly, self-efficacy influences not only how learners interpret academic challenges but also how they respond behaviorally and emotionally, including their capacity to cope with stress and regulate anxiety (Yu, 2025). Therefore, vocabulary and pronunciation learning should not only address students' linguistic needs but also consider their confidence and willingness to participate in the learning process.

One instructional approach that has been shown to support both language learning and self-efficacy is Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL). Digital games-based learning can be understood as the use of online interactive platforms and mobile applications can further enhance engagement and motivation among students to create an active learning space for better language competence vocabulary development (Morales et al., 2024). Building upon this potential, digital games facilitate language learning by providing learners with contextualized, interactive, and low-stress environments where they can repeatedly practice English skills (Gautier, 2025; Sadigzade, 2025). Unlike conventional instruction, DGBL environments allow learners to explore language patterns through simulated real-life tasks, problem-solving, and immediate feedback (Jackson & McNamara, 2013; Santosa et al., 2022). Game mechanics such as scoring, competition, and feedback loops help maintain attention, while adaptive features allow instruction to be personalized to individual learner needs (Jiménez-Sánchez & Gargallo-Camarillas, 2020; Rachels & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2018). These features make DGBL relevant

to vocabulary and pronunciation learning because students can encounter language input, respond to questions, receive feedback, and engage in repeated practice.

Empirical studies have found that DGBL has a significant positive impact on vocabulary learning through enhanced motivation, engagement, and contextualized practice (Chowdhury et al., 2024; Rahayu & Utami, 2023; Zhang et al., 2024). For instance, Prastiwi and Lestari (2025) reviewed digital game-based vocabulary instruction. They found that features such as interactivity, adaptivity, and feedback significantly improved vocabulary mastery while also increasing learner engagement and confidence. Rahayu & Utami (2023) found that the use of Wordwall-based digital media has significant potential to stimulate students' interest and motivation in learning English vocabulary. Chowdhury et al. (2024) investigated digital game-based learning from a game-making perspective, focusing on how elementary students learn English vocabulary by designing their own digital games using Scratch. The study found that creating digital games fosters deep lexical engagement through multimodal exploration, creativity, and iterative feedback. Students demonstrated improved word recognition and contextual understanding as they connected textual input with visual and auditory information. These studies demonstrate the potential of DGBL to provide engaging opportunities for vocabulary learning. However, the selection and design of digital learning activities also need to consider the instructional content and the characteristics of the learners.

In this study, DGBL was implemented through Canva Interactive Quiz, an interactive digital medium used to present vocabulary and pronunciation activities.

Canva allows teachers to combine text, images, audio, hyperlinks, and multimedia elements to create visually engaging learning materials (Haake, 2021). Similarly, digital platforms can support more interactive English learning experiences (Arunachalam & Munisamy, 2022). In the present study, Canva was designed as an interactive quiz containing picture-based questions and multiple-choice activities related to the learning topics. Images were used to introduce and represent target vocabulary, while audio materials provided pronunciation models for students to listen to and practice. Students engaged with the quiz by identifying vocabulary, selecting answers, connecting English words with visual information, and listening to pronunciation examples. These activities were supported by responses and feedback provided during the quiz. This use of Canva is consistent with its potential as interactive hypermedia in English learning (Wachyu, 2023). Thus, Canva Interactive Quiz functioned not merely as a presentation tool but as a digital medium for organizing interactive vocabulary and pronunciation activities.

Empirical studies have also provided support for Canva as an interactive medium in English learning. Suparman and Ridwan (2026) reported favorable outcomes of Canva-based instructional media for junior high school students' vocabulary learning. Similarly, Gonadi et al.(2025) reported the use of interactive Canva media for English vocabulary learning of young learners, while Savitri and Ratri (2025) found that students perceived Canva positively because its visual and interactive features supported engagement and understanding. These studies provide support for the use of Canva in English learning. However, they do not specifically explain how Canva-based quiz activities can be combined with local

cultural content to support both vocabulary and pronunciation learning while exploring students' self-efficacy-related experiences. This distinction provides a basis for using Canva Interactive Quiz within a culturally responsive digital learning approach.

In relation to pronunciation learning, technology-mediated and game-based activities have also demonstrated potential to support students' accuracy and self-efficacy. For example, Berry (2021) demonstrated that an ASR-based pronunciation game providing immediate feedback encouraged learners to self-correct and significantly improved pronunciation accuracy through engaging and motivating activities. In the Indonesian context, Huda et al. (Huda et al., 2024) found that spelling bee competitions in pronunciation learning improved students' articulation accuracy and confidence through peer interaction and motivational competition. A study has demonstrated that AI-enabled pronunciation applications can provide personalized, real-time feedback that helps learners identify and correct pronunciation errors, reducing anxiety and building confidence (Fanania & Priyatmojo, 2025). Additionally, research on mobile pronunciation applications shows that such tools support learners' autonomous practice and self-regulated learning, helping them persist with pronunciation tasks despite initial difficulties (Faridah et al., 2022).

The cultural relevance of digital learning materials is therefore another consideration in designing English language learning activities. One challenge of using digital games in education is their potential cultural misalignment with local learners (Albirini, 2006; Hammer & Davidson, 2017). Because many digital

learning materials are designed for broader or different cultural contexts, they may not always reflect the values, traditions, and real-life experiences of learners in multilingual and multicultural contexts such as Indonesia (Basnet, 2024; Dewi, 2024). This issue is particularly relevant when digital games are introduced in local educational contexts where students' cultural experiences can serve as meaningful connection between students' everyday knowledge and the English language being learned.

To address this issue, Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), proposed by Gay (2002), emphasizes the integration of students' cultural knowledge, experiences, and identities into the learning process. This approach recognizes students' cultural backgrounds as valuable resources in the teaching and learning process. Culturally responsive instruction can incorporate familiar cultural knowledge and experiences into learning activities while providing opportunities for students to engage with educational content in relevant ways. These methods include integrating content from various cultures, cultivating the ability to communicate across cultures, and critically examining linguistic (Byram, 2020). Research indicates that CRT enhances student engagement, motivation, and emotional safety by connecting learning content with learners' lived experiences (Aguayo et al., 2024; Azis et al., 2024). Therefore, integrating CRT principles into digital learning activities may help make English language learning more relevant to students' cultural backgrounds.

The integration of CRT and DGBL provides a foundation for Culturally Responsive Digital Game-Based Learning (CRDGBL), which combines digital

game-based activities with culturally relevant learning content (Jasmaniah et al., 2024; Pivac, 2023). This approach enhances not only students' language proficiency but also their cultural identity, motivation, and academic self-efficacy (Mills, 2014). Previous studies have shown that culturally responsive digital games positively influence language learning outcomes by embedding local culture into game design. For instance, Adriyanti et al. (2022) designed a Balinese culture-based vocabulary game for primary school students that incorporated local folklore, traditional ceremonies, and contextual dialogues to promote cultural identity alongside English vocabulary acquisition. Similarly, Basnet (2024) documented the success of culturally embedded role-playing games in Nepal, where students practiced English through scenarios that reflected their daily activities, such as farming and community events. These examples demonstrate that embedding cultural relevance into game design motivates learners and reduces cultural dissonance. In the Indonesian junior high school context, similar strategies could be applied by integrating local narratives, proverbs, and community practices into interactive storylines, vocabulary challenges, and collaborative problem-solving tasks. Such integration has been shown to make English learning more meaningful and relatable for students by building on familiar cultural experiences, increases their motivation, confidence, and willingness to use English in classroom interaction (Ramadiani, 2021). However, these studies differ from the present study in terms of learning context, target learners, and the integration of vocabulary, pronunciation, and self-efficacy within a rural junior high school setting.

In the present study, culturally responsive content was drawn from Sumbanese cultural knowledge and everyday experiences. Three phases of cultural elements were incorporated into the learning materials. The phase group focused on traditional Sumbanese foods, including manggulu, nasi jagung, kaparak, and other familiar traditional foods. Students explored the names and ingredients of these foods while learning related English vocabulary. The second phase focused on animals represented in Sumbanese traditional weaving fabrics and their symbolic meanings, including animals such as horses, buffaloes, chickens, dogs, pigs, cows, lion, shrimp, birds, and geckos. The third phase focused on colors found in Sumbanese weaving fabrics and their associated meanings, including red, yellow, black, white, blue, brown, green, and orange. These cultural elements provided familiar contexts for introducing English vocabulary and practicing pronunciation. By incorporating local foods, animal motifs, and colors associated with traditional weaving, the learning materials connected English language activities with cultural knowledge familiar to the students.

Correspondingly, a preliminary observation at SMP Negeri 1 Nggaha Ori Angu reflects these challenges. English instruction relies heavily on national textbooks with Western-oriented contexts, while classroom activities are predominantly teacher-centered with limited use of interactive or game-based learning. As a result, students demonstrate low confidence in speaking English and experience difficulties in vocabulary and pronunciation learning. These initial conditions suggest the need to explore learning activities that combine interactive

digital media with culturally familiar content while providing opportunities for students to participate in vocabulary and pronunciation practice.

Based on theoretical and empirical studies, several research gaps can be identified. First, research on CRDGBL in English language education remains limited, particularly at the junior high school level in Indonesia. Several previous studies focus on higher education students or examine CRT and DGBL separately (Chiu et al., 2012; Rachels & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2018). Second, previous studies have used local cultural content in game-based English learning mainly for vocabulary or general English practice, while pronunciation studies have mostly focused on digital or game-based pronunciation activities without local cultural integration (Adriyanti et al., 2022; Basnet, 2024; Berry, 2021; Huda et al., 2024). Third, many public schools in Indonesia, especially in rural areas, face challenges in accessing culturally relevant materials and implementing interactive, student-centered methodologies. Teachers often rely on national textbooks and teacher-centered instruction, which do not adequately address the needs of students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Hidayat & Praseno, 2021; Santosa et al., 2022). In addition, the lack of institutional support and cultural competence among educators can hinder the effective implementation of culturally diverse curricula (Basnet, 2024; Dewi, 2024). These gaps suggest the need for a study that examines the integration of digital game-based activities, local cultural content, vocabulary and pronunciation learning, and students' self-efficacy within a rural Indonesian junior high school context.

In response to these gaps, the present study implemented Culturally Responsive Digital Game-Based Learning (CRDGBL) through Canva Interactive Quiz activities based on Sumbanese cultural content. The intervention was organized into three phases focusing on traditional Sumbanese foods, animals and symbols in Sumbanese weaving fabrics, and colors and their meanings in Sumbanese weaving fabrics. The activities integrated vocabulary and pronunciation practice through digital games, repetition, feedback, teacher modelling, and peer assistance. The study aims to explore how CRDGBL facilitates students' learning of vocabulary and pronunciation, their self-efficacy, and the challenges they experience during the learning process. Drawing on Gay's (2002) framework of culturally responsive teaching and Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, the present study is entitled "**Exploring Students' Self-Efficacy in Learning Vocabulary and Pronunciation through Culturally Responsive Digital Game-Based Learning at SMP Negeri 1 Nggaha Ori Angu.**"

1.2 Problem Identification

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that both Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL) contribute positively to student engagement, motivation, and language performance. For instance, Santosa et al. (2022) showed that embedding local culture into vocabulary games enhanced retention and cultural identity, while Basnet (2024) reported similar benefits from culturally embedded role-playing games. Furthermore, Mahayanti et al. (2024) and Mankgele (2025) confirmed that DGBL environments support the four sources of self-efficacy outlined by Bandura (1997), such as

mastery experiences and vicarious learning. Nevertheless, despite these promising findings, empirical research on Culturally Responsive Digital Game-Based Learning (CRDGBL) remains fragmented, with most studies focusing on motivation or engagement rather than deeper psychological constructs such as self-efficacy.

In addition, much of the existing literature has focused on urban or technologically advanced schools, while the rural schools have challenges and far less attention. Although CRT is widely recognized as an inclusive approach to teaching (Gay, 2002; Byram, 2020), its classroom application is often limited or superficial due to a lack of resources, inadequate teacher training, and minimal institutional support (Jia & Nasri, 2019; Azizah, 2025). Likewise, many DGBL studies do not take cultural alignment into account, which reduces their relevance and effectiveness for learners from diverse cultural backgrounds (Dewi, 2024; Basnet, 2024). Therefore, the literature highlights an important gap for limited explore about how CRDGBL implemented can strengthen not only student motivation and cultural awareness but also self-efficacy, vocabulary development, and pronunciation skills in rural EFL contexts.

These broader challenges are also evident at SMP Negeri 1 Nggaha Ori Angu, where preliminary observations revealed several difficulties that closely mirror those identified in the literature. First, students had lowered their motivation and self-confidence in learning English. During classroom observation, many students appeared passive, reluctant to answer questions, disengaged during speaking activities, and embarrassed to read in English. This challenge aligns with

studies showing that Indonesian junior high school students, particularly in rural areas, frequently experience low confidence and high anxiety when learning English (Demir, 2017; Setyowati et al., 2024).

Second, teaching practices remain predominantly teacher-centered. Lessons are mostly textbook-driven, with limited use of interactive activities or media. Such approaches not only reduce student engagement but also fail to provide opportunities for active participation. Teachers reported difficulties in adopting creative strategies due to curriculum demands, lack of resources, and limited training in integrating games or technology into English lessons. As a result, students are not exposed to varied learning experiences that could enhance their language skills and classroom motivation (Basnet, 2024; Dewi, 2024).

Third, the cultural content of English lessons does not reflect students' daily lives and local experiences. Most textbooks and materials use contexts drawn from Western culture, leaving students unable to connect personally with the learning material. This lack of cultural relevance often leads to disengagement and further decreases their confidence in using English. Previous research confirms that when cultural identity is not represented in instruction, students' sense of belonging and willingness to participate decline (Marlatt, 2018; Wang et al., 2022). The pre-observation also showed that students quickly lost interest when examples or dialogues were unrelated to their cultural setting in East Sumba.

Fourth, digital learning integration in the school is still limited. While platforms such as Kahoot! or Quizizz have been shown to enhance student participation and motivation in other contexts (Jiménez-Sánchez & Gargallo-

Camarillas, 2020; Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2022), teachers in SMP Negeri 1 Nggaha Ori Angu rarely utilize such tools due to limited digital literacy and lack of localized content. As a result, students miss opportunities to learn English in engaging, game-like environments that could support their confidence and persistence.

Based on these problems above, it highlights that the core issue lies in the low self-efficacy of students in learning English, shaped by disengaging teaching models, the absence of cultural relevance, and the lack of innovative digital learning practices. While both CRT and DGBL have individually shown potential to address these barriers by supporting student confidence, engagement, and academic persistence, their integration into a unified CRDGBL model has not yet been empirically examined in this rural Indonesian junior high school context. Therefore, this study aims to explore student's self-efficacy in learning vocabulary and pronunciation at SMP Negeri 1 Nggaha Ori Angu, guided by Gay's (2002) culturally responsive teaching framework and Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory of self-efficacy.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

This study specifically focuses on exploring students' self-efficacy in learning vocabulary and pronunciation at SMP Negeri 1 Nggaha Ori Angu through the implementation of culturally responsive digital game-based learning. The scope of the study is limited to examining how this approach facilitates vocabulary learning development and pronunciation learning development, supports students' self-efficacy in learning English, and identifies perceived challenges in its

implementation as well as their influence on students' self-efficacy. The participants are restricted to seventh-grade students, and the findings are based on students' learning experiences rather than on quantitative measures of language achievement.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the problems formulated in this study are as follows:

1. How does culturally responsive digital game-based learning facilitate vocabulary learning development?
2. How does culturally responsive digital game-based learning facilitate pronunciation learning development?
3. How does culturally responsive digital game-based learning facilitate students' self-efficacy?
4. What are the challenges of students in culturally responsive digital game-based learning and how do these challenges impact their self-efficacy?

1.5 Research Objectives

The aims of the study are determined based on the problems formulated. In general, this study aims to explore the student's self-efficacy through Culturally Responsive Digital Games-Based Learning. By defining the general purpose, the specific purposes of the study are as follows:

1. To determine how culturally responsive digital game-based learning (CRDGBL) facilitates the student's vocabulary development.
2. To determine how culturally responsive digital game-based learning (CRDGBL) facilitates the student pronunciation development.
3. To explore how CRDGBL facilitates students' self-efficacy.
4. To identify students challenges in culturally responsive digital game-based learning and how these challenges impact students' self-efficacy.

1.6 Research Significance

This study intends to contribute to both practical and theoretical fields by broadening understanding of psycholinguistics and enhancing English language abilities.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This study discusses the implementation of culturally responsive digital game-based learning in English classrooms, particularly in facilitating students' vocabulary learning development, pronunciation learning development, and students' self-efficacy in learning English, as well as identifying the challenges encountered during its implementation and their influence on students' self-efficacy. It is expected that this study provides a significant theoretical contribution to the field of English language teaching by extending theoretical understandings of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000), digital game-based learning, and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) within an integrated instructional framework. The

findings are also expected to support previous empirical studies and serve as an empirical reference for future research in similar educational and cultural settings.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

Aside from the theoretical significance, this study has significant practical implications for diverse stakeholders:

1. For students

   This study provides valuable insights into the benefits of CRDGBL, potentially serving as a reference for students to understand how their cultural backgrounds and digital games can be leveraged to improve their self-efficacy in English. It offers solutions and strategies for enhancing confidence and engagement in vocabulary and pronunciation learning, which students can apply to overcome difficulties in English language acquisition and foster their overall personal development.

2. For teachers

   For teachers, especially English teachers at junior high school level, this study offers practical information and innovative strategies for implementing Culturally Responsive Digital Game-Based Learning. It provides guidance on effectively integrating cultural elements and digital games into lessons to make learning more engaging, meaningful, and directly facilitates student self-efficacy. The findings can serve as a new pedagogical innovation to

address challenges like low student motivation and traditional teaching methods.

3. For researcher

This study yields empirical results and detailed qualitative insights into CRDGBL and student self-efficacy in the Indonesian context. It can be used by future researchers as a foundational and empirical study, enriching their knowledge in the field of psycholinguistics, educational technology, and culturally responsive pedagogies. It offers a clear reference point for studies with similar topics and interests, particularly those focusing on context-specific applications of modern learning approaches.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

The goal of term definitions is to avoid misinterpretation of research-related terminology, which is explained as follows:

1.7.1 Conceptual Definition

1.7.1.1 Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)

Gay (2002) defines Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is a pedagogical approach that draws on learners' cultural backgrounds, lived experiences, and performance styles as resources for designing instruction that is both meaningful and effective. This is a teaching method that recognizes and appreciates the different cultural backgrounds of students, leveraging their cultural heritage, identities, and experiences as essential

parts of their learning process to foster academic achievement and promote social justice (Cheng et al., 2021; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

1.7.1.2 Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL)

This term refers to the use of digital games in schools or learning environments (Breien & Wasson, 2021). DGBL involves learning processes where students use computers, smartphones, or tablets to solve problems or complete tasks, providing an immersive and interactive environment that can enhance motivation, strategic thinking, and technological skills (Behnamnia et al., 2020; Kavak, 2022)

1.7.1.3 Self-Efficacy

Conceptualized by Albert Bandura within his social-cognitive theory, self-efficacy denotes an individual's perceived capability to organize and execute the actions necessary to achieve designated goals or exhibit competence at a specific performance standard (Bandura, 1997, 2006). It reflects a person's faith and trust in their own skills to carry out tasks and handle challenges in order to reach desired results (Baron & Byrne, 2003).

1.7.1.4 Vocabulary Development

According to Nation (2001), vocabulary development refers to the process of learning words in terms of their form, meaning, and use, which includes knowledge of pronunciation and spelling, understanding word meanings, and the ability to apply words appropriately in different grammatical and communicative contexts. Additionally, Vocabulary development is a gradual and cumulative process in which learners expand

both their receptive and productive lexical knowledge through repeated exposure, meaningful practice, and contextualized use of words over time (Schmitt, 2010).

1.7.1.5 Pronunciation Development

Pronunciation development refers to the process through which learners acquire, refine, and apply the sound system of a language to achieve intelligible and effective spoken communication. It involves not only the accurate articulation of individual sounds (segmental features) but also the mastery of suprasegmental features such as stress, rhythm, intonation, and connected speech (Foote & Trofimovich, 2017). The primary goal of pronunciation development is intelligibility and comprehensibility rather than native-like accuracy, highlighting that successful pronunciation learning enables learners to be understood by listeners through consistent practice, exposure to appropriate models, and meaningful communicative use (Derwing & Munro, 2005).

1.7.2 Operational Definition

1.7.2.1 Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)

In this study, Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is operationally defined as a pedagogical approach in which students' cultural knowledge, experiences, identities, and local contexts are incorporated into English language learning activities. CRT serves as the pedagogical foundation for designing the learning content used in the Culturally

Responsive Digital Game-Based Learning (CRDGBL) implementation at SMP Negeri 1 Nggaha Ori Angu. Specifically, CRT is reflected through the integration of Sumbanese cultural knowledge, including traditional foods, animals and their symbolic meanings in Sumbanese weaving fabrics, and the colors and their meanings in these fabrics, into vocabulary and pronunciation learning activities.

Operationally, CRT focuses on how students' familiar cultural knowledge is connected to English learning materials and how students respond to culturally relevant content during classroom activities. These aspects are explored through classroom observations, learning documents, activity logs, researcher field notes, and semi-structured interviews. The analysis focuses on students' participation, engagement, understanding, and experiences when learning vocabulary and pronunciation through culturally familiar Sumbanese content.

1.7.2.2 Digital Game Based Learning Strategy

In this study, Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL) is operationally defined as an instructional strategy that uses digitally mediated game-based activities to facilitate students' English vocabulary and pronunciation learning. DGBL is implemented through Canva Interactive Quiz, which functions as the digital medium for presenting learning tasks. The activities involve interactive questions, visual representations, challenges, responses or feedback, and opportunities for repeated practice. Students engage with quiz questions by identifying

vocabulary through pictures and written words, selecting answers, and participating in oral vocabulary and pronunciation activities supported by teacher modelling and peer assistance.

The implementation of DGBL focuses on students' participation, interaction, engagement with learning tasks, responses to questions and challenges, and use of available learning support during the activities. These aspects are explored through classroom observations, activity logs, learning documents, researcher field notes, and semi-structured interviews. The analysis examines how students experience and respond to digital game-based activities throughout the three intervention phases rather than evaluating their performance through standardized pre-tests, post-tests, or statistical measurements.

1.7.2.3 Self- Efficacy

In this study, self-efficacy is operationally defined as students' beliefs about their capabilities to learn English vocabulary and pronunciation while participating in CRDGBL activities. Self-efficacy is examined through Bandura's (1997) four sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states. These sources provide a theoretical framework for understanding how students develop and express beliefs about their abilities during the learning process.

Operationally, self-efficacy focuses on students' confidence in recognizing and pronouncing English vocabulary, willingness to participate

in learning activities, persistence when facing difficulties, responses to teacher encouragement and peer support, and emotional responses such as confidence, hesitation, or anxiety. These aspects are explored primarily through semi-structured interviews, supported by classroom observations, activity logs, and researcher field notes. The analysis focuses on how students describe and demonstrate their confidence and responses to learning challenges rather than measuring self-efficacy through numerical scores.

1.7.2.4 Vocabulary Development

In this study, vocabulary development is operationally defined as the process through which students recognize, understand, remember, and attempt to use new English vocabulary during their participation in CRDGBL activities. The target vocabulary is connected to Sumbanese cultural content, including traditional foods, animals and their meanings in Sumbanese weaving fabrics, and colors and their meanings in these fabrics. Vocabulary learning is therefore examined in relation to students' experiences with culturally familiar words and contexts.

Operationally, vocabulary development focuses on students' recognition of target words, understanding of word meanings, recall and attempts to use vocabulary, difficulties in learning and retaining words, and strategies such as repetition, visual association, peer discussion, contextual guessing, and teacher explanation. These aspects are explored through classroom observations, activity logs, learning documents, researcher field

notes, and semi-structured interviews. The analysis examines how students learn and use vocabulary throughout the CRDGBL implementation as a qualitative learning process rather than as a statistically measured increase in vocabulary mastery.

1.7.2.5 Pronunciation Development

In this study, pronunciation development is operationally defined as the process through which students practice producing English words introduced during CRDGBL activities through exposure to pronunciation models, teacher modelling, repetition, and oral participation. The focus is on students' attempts to pronounce target vocabulary clearly and understandably rather than achieving native-like pronunciation.

Operationally, pronunciation development focuses on students' oral production of target words, the clarity and understandability of their pronunciation, difficulties in producing unfamiliar English sounds and words, willingness and confidence to pronounce words orally, and strategies such as listening to pronunciation models, imitation, repetition, teacher feedback, peer modelling, and self-correction. These aspects are explored through classroom observations, activity logs, learning documents, researcher field notes, and semi-structured interviews. The analysis focuses on students' pronunciation attempts, learning experiences, difficulties, and responses to feedback rather than standardized pronunciation tests or numerical measurements.