

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Speaking skill is one of the most essential components of language learning, particularly in learning English as a foreign language. It serves as the primary means of communication through which students express ideas, opinions, and emotions in real-life situations. However, speaking is often considered the most challenging language skill for students to master because it requires not only linguistic knowledge but also confidence, fluency, and the ability to interact spontaneously. Many students experience difficulties in speaking due to limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, low self-confidence, and anxiety when speaking in front of others. These challenges often result in students being passive during speaking activities and reluctant to participate actively in classroom communication. Therefore, the development of effective and engaging teaching approaches is crucial to help students improve their speaking abilities and gain confidence in using English.

In many classroom contexts, speaking instruction is still dominated by conventional teaching methods that focus heavily on textbooks, drills, and teacher-centered explanations. Such methods often fail to provide students with meaningful opportunities to practice speaking in an

interactive and enjoyable manner. As a result, students tend to feel bored, unmotivated, and anxious during speaking activities. Previous studies have indicated that inappropriate teaching methods can significantly hinder students' speaking development and increase their communication anxiety. When students do not feel comfortable or motivated to speak, they are less likely to practice, which eventually affects their speaking performance. This condition highlights the importance of adopting innovative and student-centered learning approaches that can create a supportive learning atmosphere and encourage active participation.

Several previous studies have explored various instructional strategies to improve students' speaking skills. Research conducted by Mahmawati and Mubayyinah (2024), Gayatri (2024), and Hidayat, Raharjo, and Tahalele (2024) revealed that innovative and interactive teaching methods contribute positively to students' fluency, pronunciation, and self-confidence. These studies emphasize that learning environments which actively engage students tend to produce better speaking outcomes. However, most of these studies mainly focus on measuring learning outcomes quantitatively, while fewer studies explore how students actually experience the learning process or how they perceive the methods used by teachers. Understanding students' perceptions is important because learning effectiveness is closely related to

how students feel, respond, and engage during the learning process.

In addition to instructional methods, speaking anxiety has been identified as a major factor influencing students' speaking performance. Research by Le (2024) indicates that self-confidence, classroom participation, and perceived language competence significantly affect students' anxiety levels when speaking English. Similarly, Quvanch, Qasemi, and Na (2024) found that many students experience moderate levels of speaking anxiety regardless of gender or academic background. This anxiety often prevents students from expressing their ideas freely and reduces their willingness to participate in speaking activities. Therefore, learning strategies that create a relaxed, enjoyable, and supportive environment are urgently needed to help students overcome fear and anxiety in speaking.

One instructional approach that has recently gained attention in language education is gamified learning. Gamified learning integrates game elements such as points, challenges, competition, and rewards into the learning process to increase student motivation and engagement. Previous studies have shown that gamification can enhance students' interest, participation, and enjoyment in learning. However, most existing research focuses on its effectiveness in improving academic achievement or engagement in

general, while limited attention has been given to students' perceptions and lived experiences when gamification is applied in speaking classes, particularly at the secondary school level in Indonesia. This gap indicates the need for qualitative exploration to understand how students experience gamified learning and how it influences their attitudes toward speaking English.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to explore students' perceptions and experiences of gamified learning in speaking classes at the tenth grade of SMAN 1 Bengkulu City. Rather than measuring learning outcomes quantitatively, this research focuses on understanding how students perceive the implementation of gamified learning, how they experience speaking activities through games, and how this approach influences their motivation, confidence, and participation. By exploring students' voices and experiences, this study is expected to provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of gamified learning from a qualitative perspective and contribute to the development of more engaging and student-centered speaking instruction in English language classrooms.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background description above, the identification of problems in this research is as follows:

1. Many students experience difficulties in speaking English due to low confidence, speaking anxiety, and limited opportunities to practice speaking actively in the classroom.
2. Speaking instruction is often dominated by conventional teaching methods that are less engaging and do not fully encourage students' participation and interaction during learning activities.
3. The use of gamified learning in speaking classes is still limited, and there is a lack of qualitative studies that explore students' perceptions and experiences toward this learning approach, particularly at the senior high school level.

C. Limitation of the Problem

In order to make this research more focused and avoid an extensive discussion, the researcher limits the scope of the study as follows:

1. This research is limited to the tenth-grade students of SMAN 1 Kota Bengkulu in the academic year 2024/2025.

2. The focus of the research is on English speaking skills, including fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, self-confidence, interaction, and task completion.
3. The teaching method observed in this research is gamified learning, which integrates game elements into the classroom learning process.
4. The outcomes investigated are limited to the improvement of students' speaking achievement and their feedback regarding the implementation of gamified learning.
5. This study is only conducted within the classroom setting and does not cover students' learning activities outside the school environment.

D. Research Questions

Based on the background above, the research problem can be formulated as the following research questions:

1. What are students' perceptions of gamified learning in improving their participation and confidence in speaking English at SMAN 1 Bengkulu City?

E. The Purposes of the Research

The main objective of this study is to determine the effect of the use of gamified learning on the achievement of eighth-grade students' speaking skills at SMAN 1 Kota Bengkulu. By measuring the extent to which learning methods involving game elements can improve students'

speaking skills in the context of English learning, this study aims to provide insight into the effectiveness of gamified learning in facilitating students to develop their speaking skills. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide empirical evidence regarding the positive influence of gamified learning on students' speaking achievement.

Furthermore, this study also aims to explore the perceptions of eighth-grade students at SMAN 1 Kota Bengkulu regarding the use of gamified learning to improve their speaking skills in English lessons. By understanding how students perceive their experiences in participating in game-based learning processes, this study is expected to provide information regarding aspects that are considered effective and challenges that students may face in using this method. This understanding is important for improving and developing game-based learning methods in the future.

Overall, this study aims to contribute to the development of innovative and engaging learning methods, particularly in improving students' speaking skills. By exploring both the impact of gamified learning on speaking achievement and students' perceptions of the method, this study is expected to provide useful recommendations for educators in implementing more effective and enjoyable methods in English learning in schools.

F. The Significants of the Research

This research has both theoretical and practical significance which can make an important contribution to the development of English language learning, especially in improving students' speaking skills..

Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the literature on the use of game-based learning (gamified learning) in educational contexts, particularly in English language learning. This research can provide new insights into the effectiveness of gamified learning in improving students' speaking skills, as well as broaden understanding of how a fun and interactive learning approach can influence student learning outcomes. Furthermore, the results of this study can enrich theories related to speaking anxiety and student learning motivation, and contribute to previous studies related to innovative teaching methodologies.

Practically, this research is expected to provide direct benefits to educators, particularly English teachers at SMAN 1 Kota Bengkulu. By understanding the effectiveness of gamified learning, teachers can design and implement more engaging and enjoyable methods to improve students' speaking skills. Furthermore, this research also provides insight into how students respond to and appreciate the use of gamified learning, which can help teachers tailor learning approaches to their needs and preferences. For students, this

research can provide a more interactive learning experience and increase their motivation to participate in speaking activities in class.

G. Operational Definitions of Key Terms

In this study, several key terms need to be explained to clarify the context and objectives of the study, namely Gamified Learning, Speaking Class, Outcomes, and Students' Feedback.

1. Gamified Learning is learning that uses game elements, such as points, challenges, and rewards, to increase student motivation and engagement in the learning process.
2. Speaking Class is a class that focuses on developing English speaking skills through various verbal activities, including conversations, presentations, and discussions.
3. Outcomes are the results achieved from implementing gamified learning, which include improving students' speaking skills in terms of fluency, pronunciation, and confidence.
4. Student Feedback is the response provided by students regarding their experience in participating in gamification-based learning, including their assessment of the method and its impact on their speaking skills..