

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Research Background

In the digital era, online gaming has become an increasingly popular activity among students. Aside from providing entertainment, many of these games utilize English as the primary language for instructions, character dialogues, and player communication. This exposure allows students to engage with the English language naturally and repeatedly while enjoying the gameplay.

English is an international language used in many fields, including education, business, and global communication. Putra (2020) said that English not only plays a role as a communication tool but can also make it easier for us to adapt to the environment and work in the present and future. Among the four language skills including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking is often regarded as the most challenging to master. Speaking is the ability to communicate with each other. (Darihastining et al., 2019) stated that speaking is a process in expressing, presenting, and delivering a particular idea, thought, or opinion by using an understandable spoken language. Many students experience anxiety or a lack of confidence when attempting to converse in English, particularly if they possess a limited vocabulary or have few opportunities to practice in real-life situations.

Online games may help overcome some of these challenges. Games often require players to follow instructions, complete missions, and interact with others

in English. Such interactions can enhance students' vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in speaking. Unlike traditional classroom activities, games provide a more relaxed and engaging environment for language use.

Based on the previous research, there were some researchers who discussed the effect of online games. (Alshammari, 2015) Conducted a study entitled “The Effectiveness of Online Games in Enhancing Students’ Learning”, the results showed that the students who actively engage in online games adopt learning in a more comprehensive approach to learning, although some disadvantages exist. It is clear that with careful handling and a positive approach towards online games, it can be used as a complementary technique for a successful knowledge transfer to a student. Then, Wijiarti (2016) conducted a study entitled “The Effect of Online Game on Learning English through Students’ Perception”, the result showed that the participants use online games as their strategies to master English skills. These strategies included meta-cognitive, cognitive, affective, and social functions. Further, Ebrahimzadeh et al. (2017) conducted a study entitled “The Effect of Digital Online Games on EFL Students’ Language Learning Motivation”; the sample consisted of 241 Iranian High School Students (aged 12-18). It was selected through cluster sampling from one junior and two senior high schools. The result showed that using digital online games in the classroom positively affects student motivation. It can be concluded that digital online games can enhance LLM in high schools. Furthermore, Darihastining et al. (2019) conducted a study entitled “*Online Game as a Media to Improve Students' Speaking Skills*”. From the research, it confirms that online games influence students’ vocabulary acquisition

and language variation but online games also give negative and positive impact for the users. Moreover, (Kherbache, 2024) conducted a study entitled “*The Impact of Online games on Language Skills Among Tlemcen University EFL Students in Algeria*”, conclude that students generally have positive perceptions toward the use of online games in language learning. The study highlights that games can enhance learner motivation, confidence, and communication skills by creating interactive and enjoyable learning environments.

However, researchers have also noted several limitations. Peterson (2013), in his book *Online Games and Language Learning*, cautioned that online game environments may overwhelm beginners due to their fast pace and complexity, which can hinder effective language acquisition without proper support. In line with this, Reinhardt (2019), in *Gameful Second and Foreign Language Teaching and Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice*, argued that although games provide authentic exposure to language, they require educational framing and structured guidance to be truly effective in promoting language development.

Based on the discussion above, it is clear that online games have the potential to support students in improving their English skills. Although several studies have explored the use of games in language learning, most focus on vocabulary or reading comprehension. Research on students’ perceptions of online games specifically for improving speaking skills is still limited. While many students perceive these games positively due to their engaging and motivating nature, certain limitations such as lack of structured learning or language barriers may still exist. Therefore, this study is conducted to explore students’ perceptions

of the use of online games in enhancing their English-speaking skills, including the perceived benefits and challenges they experience, particularly among tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Pesanggaran, Banyuwangi.

## **1.2. Research Problems**

Based on the background above, the researcher arranged the research question as follows:

1. How do students perceive the impact of online games on their English-speaking skills?
2. What challenges do students face when using online games to improve their English-speaking skills?

## **1.3. Research Objectives**

Based on the research problem, the research objective in this study as follows:

1. To find out whether students perceive the impact of online games on their English-speaking skills.
2. To find out the challenges faced by students when using online games to improve their English-speaking skills.

## **1.4. Scope and Limitations**

Based on the identification above, the researcher focuses on students' perceptions of online games in boosting their English-speaking skills. This research is carried out in SMA Negeri 1 Pesanggaran, Banyuwangi until an indefinite time to get the appropriate result. The researcher chooses the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

## 1.5. Research Significance

The significance of the study can be classified into two, theoretical and practical.

### 1. Theoretical:

This study will contribute to the existing literature on language learning by offering insights into students' perceptions of online games as a medium for enhancing English speaking skills. It adds to the growing body of research on game-based learning and its application in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. It is expected that this research can give benefits to the students.

### 2. Practical:

#### a. For English Teacher

The findings of this study can be useful for English teachers by highlighting the potential of online games as supplementary tools to develop students' speaking skills. This study gives teacher a better understanding and knowledge about some teaching media that can help them find a good quality education. This study is also expected to help English teachers select the most effective media that makes easier learning for the students.

#### b. For the Students

This study aims to provide students with information about the media to enhance their English-speaking skills and increase their enthusiasm for learning the English language. Students also can learn more about English-speaking skills in a fun and enjoyable way. This research may encourage more meaningful and educational use of online games.

c. For the Future Researcher

This study will likely give a source or reference and information; others might have the same interest in the implementation of students' perception about online games in improving their English-speaking skills and finding other gaps that can benefit others.

### 1.6. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the researcher wants to clarify the meaning of the key terms that need to be explained; they are as follows:

1. **Students' Perception** refers to their feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions about a specific environment, influenced by emotions and behaviors (Rasita et al., 2020).
2. **Speaking** is a process in expressing, presenting, and delivering specific ideas, thoughts, or opinions by using a spoken language which is understandable (Darihastining et al., 2019), and speaking concerns how people will express, present, and deliver their ideas.
3. **Online game** is an equivalent of an electronic game that requires human involvement with machines on video devices (Alshammari, 2015). In this study, online game is game that can be played in smartphones and PC/Laptop such as RPg, MOBA, Survival and Action games.
4. **English Learning** involves using authentic materials to engage second language learners in real contexts, enhancing their comprehension, communication (both oral and written), and intercultural communication skills (Bastos & Ramos, 2009).