CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews theoretical and empirical studies related to Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), English speaking ability, the use of digital games—particularly Valorant—in language learning, and the Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF) framework. These discussions provide a conceptual foundation for analyzing how digital games can support learners' speaking development.

2.1 Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) refers to the use of digital technologies to support and enhance the process of language learning. Rather than functioning merely as supplementary tools, CALL environments create interactive learning spaces where learners actively engage with language through meaningful tasks. Levy (2014) explains that CALL has evolved from drill-based software into dynamic systems that emphasize communication, interaction, and learner autonomy.

One important development within CALL is the incorporation of digital games. Game-based learning environments offer contextualized language exposure, allowing learners to practice language use while completing tasks and solving problems. Gee (2020) argues that games promote learning by embedding language within purposeful activities, enabling learners to process meaning rather than memorize isolated forms. This contextual learning is particularly beneficial for speaking skills, as learners are encouraged to communicate spontaneously in response to in-game situations.

Motivation is another crucial aspect of CALL, especially when combined with gamification elements. Deterding et al. (2021) suggest that features such as challenges, competition, and rewards can increase learners' engagement and willingness to participate in language tasks. In multiplayer games, these elements naturally encourage interaction, as learners must communicate to achieve shared

goals. As a result, CALL platforms that incorporate games can reduce anxiety and increase learners' confidence in using the target language.

CALL also supports the development of communicative competence. According to Canale and Swain (2014), effective communication involves not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts. Multiplayer digital environments provide opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning, adjust their language use, and employ communication strategies in real time. Furthermore, collaborative activities within CALL settings allow learners to learn from peers through interaction and feedback (Lai & Hwang, 2016).

Despite these advantages, CALL is not without challenges. Competitive environments may create pressure for some learners, potentially increasing anxiety and reducing participation (MacIntyre & Gardner, 2017). Therefore, careful design and guidance are required to ensure that digital interactions remain meaningful and supportive of language development.

2.2 English Speaking Ability

Speaking ability is a central component of language proficiency, as it reflects learners' capacity to express ideas clearly and interact effectively with others. Developing speaking skills requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, cognitive processing, and social interaction. In recent years, researchers have increasingly recognized the potential of digital games to facilitate this complex process.

Games provide immersive environments that encourage active participation, which is essential for speaking development. Gee (2015) emphasizes that meaningful engagement and problem-solving in games create conditions where language is used purposefully rather than mechanically. Multiplayer online games, particular, require players to communicate strategies, negotiate roles, and respond quickly to changing situations, thereby promoting authentic language use (Reinhardt, 2019).

Several studies have shown that online games can enhance learners' communicative competence. Sykes and Kohen (2024) found that multiplayer games encourage verbal interaction, leading to increased confidence and improved fluency. Real-time communication in gaming contexts also supports faster language processing, as learners must formulate responses quickly to achieve in-game objectives. This continuous interaction can strengthen learners' ability to produce spoken language spontaneously.

Vocabulary development also plays a crucial role in speaking ability. Nation (2016) states that a rich vocabulary enables learners to express ideas accurately and efficiently. Digital games expose learners to repeated lexical input in meaningful contexts, which can support vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, technology-based learning applications provide structured opportunities for speaking practice, reinforcing both vocabulary and grammatical knowledge (Stockwell, 2021).

Overall, previous research suggests that digital games can create supportive environments for speaking practice by combining interaction, motivation, and contextualized language use. However, the effectiveness of such environments depends on how games are integrated into language learning activities.

2.3. Valorant Game

Valorant is a free-to-play first-person shooter (FPS) developed and published by Riot Games. Released in June 2020, it is a tactical team-based game that blends precise gunplay with unique character abilities, same like games Counter-Strike: Global Offensive and Overwatch.

Here a breakdown of the key elements of Valorant:

1. Gameplay

Valorant is a free-to-play tactical first-person shooter developed by Riot Games and released in 2020. The game is played in a five-versus-five team format, where players must cooperate to complete objectives such as attacking or defending

specific locations. Successful gameplay relies heavily on teamwork, strategic planning, and continuous communication among team members.

Each match consists of multiple rounds, during which players must coordinate their actions, manage resources, and adapt strategies based on opponents' behaviour. Players select characters known as "agents," each possessing unique abilities that influence team tactics. To use these abilities effectively, players must communicate clearly and efficiently, often under time pressure.

The interactive nature of Valorant creates frequent opportunities for spoken communication. Players are required to give instructions, request assistance, provide feedback, and make rapid decisions. These communicative demands make the game a potentially valuable medium for practicing spoken English, especially in terms of real-time interaction and collaborative dialogue.

Moreover, the competitive yet social environment of Valorant can increase learners' motivation to communicate. While the primary goal of the game is entertainment, its reliance on teamwork naturally encourages language use, making it relevant for studies examining game-based language learning.

2. Agents

Players choose from a roster of unique characters called Agents, each with their own special abilities. Agents are divided into four main roles:

- Duelists: Offensive specialists (Phoenix, Reyna) who focus on getting kills.
- Controller: Focus on controlling the battlefield, often through smokes and barriers (Brimstone, Viper).
- Initiators: Set up attacks by disrupting the enemy team or gathering intel (Sova, Breach).
- Sentinels: Defensive experts who specialize in locking down areas and supporting their team (Sage, Cypher).

Each Agent has a set of abilities, including:

- Basic Abilities (which need to be purchased in each round).
- Signature Ability (usually free but limited use per round).
- Ultimate Ability (charged through kills, objectives, or deaths).

3. Weapons

Weapons in Valorant are varied, ranging from pistols and shotguns to sniper rifles and machine guns. The economy system requires players to manage their money each round, choosing the right weapons for the situation. Gunplay in Valorant emphasizes accuracy, with factors like recoil control and headshot precision being key to success.

4. Strategy

While gunplay is critical, strategic use of Agent abilities and coordination with teammates is equally important. Teams need to plan their attacks and defenses carefully, utilizing abilities to block sightlines, gather intel, or surprise the enemy.

5. Competitive Mode

In Valorant competitive mode, players are placed in a rank based on their performance. Ranks range from Iron to Radiant, with wins, losses, and individual performance affecting rank progression.

6. E-sports

Valorant has quickly developed a strong esports scene, with tournaments and leagues around the world. Riot Games has promoted the Valorant Champions Tour (VCT), which brings together top teams to compete for championships.

7. Aesthetic and Art Style

The game has a bright, colorful art style with futuristic elements, though it maintains a grounded feel with its tactical gameplay. Maps are designed with both realism and creativity, allowing players to use verticality and clever angles to their advantage.

8. Teamwork

Winning in Valorant requires close communication and teamwork. Coordinating abilities and strategies with teammates is crucial, and many games are won through strategic plays rather than individual performance.

In summary, Valorant combines the precision gunplay of traditional tactical shooters with the unique abilities of modern hero shooters, resulting in a fast-paced and highly strategic experience. Its focus on teamwork, strategy, and diverse Agents has made it a popular game within the competitive gaming community.

2.4 CAF Framework

This study diverges from existing literature by utilizing the Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF) framework to assess students' speaking abilities (Albarqi, 2024; Cendra & Sulindra, 2022; Deshmukh, 2024; Koizumi & In'nami, 2024). Impact of playing games for speaking skills, is create authentic contexts for language practice, promoting both receptive and productive skills through complex linguistic exchanges (Martins, 2023).