

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The aim of this chapter is elaborating theoretical background that will be useful for establishing the framework underlying this study. This chapter deals with the Curriculum Merdeka, teaching and learning process, the structure of teaching and learning process in an English lesson, the nature of speaking, teaching speaking, teaching speaking for Junior High School, teaching method, Gamification, the problems encountered in teaching speaking through Gamification, possible solutions to solve the problems encountered in teaching speaking through Gamification and the previous study. Each topic will be discussed as follows:

2.1 Merdeka Curriculum

Based on a qualitative descriptive research that used narrative inquiry, the Merdeka Curriculum was created in Indonesia in response to the problems with the 2013 curriculum (Lestari, 2023). Azhari et al., (2023) explains how a STEM module at an Indonesian vocational school that focuses on teaching electrochemistry and renewable energy was developed utilizing the Merdeka Belajar philosophy. It highlights the Merdeka Learning curriculum's benefits of simplicity, depth, independence, relevance, and interactivity as well as the Ministry of Education and Culture's attempts to improve the quality of vocational education. The study

demonstrates how this curriculum fosters cognitive abilities, creativity, and critical thinking in students by mixing theory with practical applications, such as the STEM module. This promotes students' knowledge of scientific topics.

2.2 Teaching and Learning Grammar

Teaching grammar English using gamification has been shown to be effective in enhancing students' English language skills and abilities, improving attitudes and emotional responses towards learning, and creating an authentic language learning environment (Zhang & Hasim, 2023). Moreover, Sailer and Homner (2020) define gamification as the process of enhancing cognitive, motivational, and behavioral learning outcomes in English instruction through the use of game elements. Their meta-analysis shows that game fiction and social interaction are important moderators for enhancing behavioral outcomes, and that gamification has a considerable impact on cognitive, motivational, and behavioral learning outcomes. According to the study, gamification can be a useful teaching tool when used appropriately, especially when it comes to modifying attitudes and behaviors that support learning.

Several previous studies have investigated effective strategies for grammar instruction in EFL contexts. Rahimi and Zhang (2022) conducted a mixed-methods study that explored learners' perceptions of explicit and implicit grammar instruction. Their findings suggested that a balanced integration of both methods enhanced learners' grammatical awareness and long-term retention. This indicates the importance of not relying on a single approach when teaching grammar.

Nassaji and Fotos (2017) emphasized the effectiveness of form-focused instruction embedded within communicative language tasks. Their research showed that students who engaged in meaningful tasks with grammar support performed better in both fluency and accuracy. This supports the use of contextualized grammar teaching rather than isolated rule-based approaches.

In a similar vein, Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2019) examined challenges and technological innovations in grammar teaching. They concluded that digital tools such as apps and gamified platforms improve learners' motivation and grammatical accuracy, especially in younger or less motivated learners. This is particularly relevant in the modern classroom where student engagement is essential.

Additionally, Ellis (2021) introduced the idea of consciousness-raising tasks, where students are guided to discover grammar patterns independently through problem-solving. This inductive approach promotes deeper understanding and analytical thinking, which is beneficial for grammar mastery. Taken together, these studies support the integration of technology, context-rich instruction, and varied strategies in grammar teaching—reinforcing the relevance of gamified platforms like Quizizz in current educational practice.

Grammar teaching and learning entail more than simply memorizing rules, but it is about developing language skills for effective communication. Grammar instruction should center on introducing, discovering, and practicing grammar through engaging activities, such as games in order to improve language use in

meaningful ways (Rahmadani et al., 2021). It is critical to raise awareness of language structures early on and then scaffold knowledge as language development progresses (Costa, 2019). The process should take place at an appropriate difficulty level, in the context of meaningful texts and actively involve learners in exploring language in use. Communicative strategies are essential for motivating students and applying grammar knowledge in real-world situations, emphasizing the importance of communicative competence in grammar learning. Finally, mastering grammar is fundamental for language acquisition, serving as the basis.

The structure of teaching and learning process in an English lesson for teaching grammar involves integrating High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) to enhance students' creativity and innovation. This approach focuses on developing listening, reading, speaking, writing, and grammar skills through activities that engage students in critical thinking and problem-solving. By incorporating HOTS in English lessons, educators can create a dynamic learning environment that fosters language proficiency and encourages students to apply their knowledge in innovative ways (Hasbullah et al., 2022).

2.3 The Nature of Grammar

Grammar in English refers to the systematic rules that govern the language's forms, syntax, and proper usage, reflecting the logic of human thought in speech and writing. It is regarded as a complex minefield that requires a thorough understanding for language learners and researchers, with a particular emphasis on lexical, phonological, and syntactic structures that represent mental substance and

conceptual or perceptual categories. English grammar is essential for effective communication, acting as the fundamental performance rule for language learners and researchers, assisting in the development of language skills and facilitating a deeper understanding of linguistic structures and their usage. Furthermore, grammar handbooks provide practical knowledge for individuals seeking to acquire a solid grasp of English grammar, by providing detailed explanations of grammatical terms and their meanings.

2.3.1 Elements of Grammar

Grammar in the English language encompasses the systematic rules governing its forms, syntax, and correct usage, reflecting the logical structure of human thought in speech and writing. It serves as the fundamental performance rule for language, crucial for language learners and researchers to understand the development of language comprehensively. Grammatical element prediction involves using statistical models with syntax features to predict elements within text fragments like phrases or sentences. Additionally, English grammar covers various aspects such as verbs, auxiliaries, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, sentence structures, and more, all contributing to the overall framework of the language from individual words to entire texts. Understanding these elements is essential for effective communication and language proficiency.

2.3.2 Functions of Grammar

In English language learning, the functions of grammar play a crucial role in facilitating effective communication and understanding. Functional grammar emphasizes viewing language as a system of meanings, consisting of three macro-functions: the interpersonal function, the ideational function, and the textual function, contributing to text structure. Grammar instruction is essential for language proficiency and acquisition, impacting various language learning contexts. It is through grammar that phrases and sentences serve multiple grammatical and communicative functions, allowing for flexibility in conveying messages and purposes in English communication. Furthermore, grammatical competence is vital for successful communication, as it enables learners to choose appropriate language forms and structures according to different situations, ultimately enhancing communicative language learning. By understanding and applying the functions of grammar, English language learners can improve their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, leading to overall linguistic competence and proficiency.

2.4 Teaching Method

Teaching methods in language learning refer to structured and purposeful strategies used by teachers to present content and facilitate language acquisition. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), a teaching method is an overall plan for orderly presentation of language material, grounded in a selected approach and design that includes objectives, content, teacher and learner roles, and classroom

procedures. Over the years, several methods have been developed to suit different learning needs and contexts, such as the Grammar-Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method, and Communicative Language Teaching (Harmer, 2015). Each of these methods has unique characteristics and contributes to developing learners' linguistic and communicative competence.

In modern EFL classrooms, it is essential to consider not only the theoretical foundation of a method but also its relevance to learners' needs and contexts. Nunan (2003) emphasizes that learner-centered approaches tend to be more effective because they encourage learner autonomy, meaningful interaction, and personalized learning experiences. The implementation of teaching methods should, therefore, be dynamic and flexible, allowing educators to combine traditional and innovative techniques such as technology-enhanced and gamified learning to improve engagement and learning outcomes.

2.5 Gamification

The term "gamification" describes the incorporation of game features—like challenges, rewards, levels, and rankings—into non-gaming environments, like Duolingo language learning apps. The extensive gamification features of Duolingo are highlighted in the systematic review by (Shortt et al., 2023), which also emphasizes how these features improve user motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. Gamification provides a dynamic and interactive approach to language learning in mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) apps such as Quizizz, increasing user satisfaction and effectiveness.

Moreover, gamification in education refers to the use of game design elements - such as points, badges, leaderboards, and challenges—in non-game learning contexts to increase student motivation, engagement, and achievement. Kapp (2012) defines gamification as the application of game-based mechanics, aesthetics, and thinking to promote learning and solve problems. Deterding et al. (2011) further emphasize that gamification differs from full-fledged games or simulations because it does not create an entirely game-based environment but instead integrates selected game features into existing educational contexts.

In the context of language learning, gamification has proven to be an effective way to increase students' interest and reduce learning anxiety, especially when dealing with complex subjects like grammar. Zainuddin et al. (2020) explain that gamification encourages personalized, active learning, and facilitates the understanding of abstract linguistic concepts through engaging digital activities. By transforming traditional classroom routines into interactive experiences, gamified platforms like Quizizz enable students to interact with learning materials in meaningful and memorable ways.

2.5.1 Characteristics in Gamification

According to Najjar and Salhab (2022), gamification features include:

Cognitive Effects: By putting students in a game-like setting and presenting them with challenges and problem-solving tasks, gamification helps them develop their critical thinking abilities.

Emotional Impact: The goal of gamification is to pique learners' curiosity and interest while also improving their enjoyment of the learning process.

Behavioral Effects: By providing incentives, challenges, and rewards for active engagement, gamification pushes students to interact with the assignments and course content.

Engagement: By adding game mechanics and elements that make learning interactive and immersive, gamification improves learner engagement.

Motivation: By offering a sense of accomplishment, advancement, and rewards for their efforts, gamification encourages students to engage in educational activities.

Satisfaction of Needs: By generating an engaging and fulfilling learning environment, gamification meets the needs of learners for challenge, accomplishment, and enjoyment.

Knowledge Transfer: By presenting information in an engaging and dynamic way, gamification helps to make learning more successful and memorable.

Fun Tasks: Gamification is the use of engaging and enjoyable tasks to encourage learning, giving students a positive and fulfilling educational experience.

The effectiveness of gamification in language education lies in its core characteristics that appeal to learners' cognitive, emotional, and

behavioral domains. According to Najjar and Salhab (2022), gamification fosters cognitive development by presenting students with challenges that require critical thinking and problem-solving. Emotionally, it increases enjoyment and curiosity, making the learning experience more pleasurable. Behaviorally, gamification motivates students to participate actively by providing rewards, challenges, and feedback mechanisms.

Werbach and Hunter (2012) categorize essential gamification features into points, badges, leaderboards, performance charts, and meaningful narratives, all of which aim to promote intrinsic motivation. In addition, Hamari et al. (2014) found that gamification consistently leads to increased engagement and perceived usefulness, particularly in language learning environments. These elements collectively support learners' autonomy, competence, and relatedness, thereby fulfilling basic psychological needs and enhancing both motivation and satisfaction in learning activities.

2.5.2 Basic Stages in Gamification

The implementation of gamification in an educational setting follows a structured process. The first stage is identifying clear learning objectives, which guide the selection of game elements and ensure alignment with curriculum goals (Marczewski, 2015). Once objectives are established, the next step is to select appropriate game mechanics such as points, levels, badges, or leaderboards that match the desired learning

outcomes. These elements should be meaningful and relevant to the learners' context to ensure effectiveness.

After selection, the game elements are integrated into the learning environment. This includes designing tasks or assessments that incorporate game-based interaction and feedback. Domínguez et al. (2013) emphasize the importance of testing and iteration at this stage—students' responses and progress should be monitored so that improvements can be made continuously. Finally, the system is implemented and evaluated over time, with ongoing monitoring to ensure that it continues to support learning goals and enhances motivation. This cyclical process ensures that gamification is not only engaging but also pedagogically sound.

