

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background, research problems, research objectives, scope and limitation, research significance, definition of key terms.

1.1 Research Background

In an increasingly globalized world, the ability to speak English fluently has become essential for career advancement and future academic opportunities (Frantz et al., 2014; Hidayat, 2024; Shrestha et al., 2015). Proficiency in English not only opens doors to various job prospects but also enhances the chances of success in higher education. As more organizations operate on an international scale, effective communication in English has emerged as a vital skill for navigating diverse professional environments.

Despite its importance, many English learners face significant challenges in developing their speaking abilities, mainly on linguistic challenges and psychological factors. For linguistic challenges, it includes grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Mofareh, 2019; Rahmaniah & Asbah, 2019; Sukmojati & Rahmat, 2024). In addition, psychological factors includes anxiety, lack of motivation, and environmental influence (Chou, 2018; Huwari, 2019; Yessenbekova, 2024).

One innovative approach to overcoming these challenges is taking advantage the benefits of the game Valorant. In vocabulary development, interactive online games can be significantly improving speaking skills. As for engagement and motivation, gamified learning environments provide immersive experiences that encourage vocabulary enrichment, leading to improved language skills (Ashraf et al., 2014; Aulia et al., 2024). The game's design fosters a relaxed atmosphere, minimizing pressure and allowing players to practice their speaking skills without fear of judgment. By combining gameplay with language learning, Valorant creates a supportive setting that encourages communication and collaboration.

Recent research over the past five years has explored the use of games to enhance students' speaking skills across various global contexts, including studies conducted in America, Australia, Europe, Africa, and Asia. In Australia, digital game-based learning, are frequently utilized in motivating students and communication skills (Hung et al., 2016). In addition, research in Indonesia reveals that communication games enhance speaking skills more effectively than conventional teaching methods, particularly for students with varying self-esteem levels (Fakhrurazy, 2018). Furthermore, research in America, video games expose players to English language contexts, enhancing vocabulary and pronunciation skills. A survey indicates that students who frequently engage with English-language video games show improved language proficiency, suggesting a strong correlation between gaming and language skills (Winaldo & Oktaviani, 2022). Similarly, research in Europe, games like Zepeto and board games have been shown to improve fluency and confidence in English-speaking students, making language education more enjoyable and communicative language games significantly enhance speaking abilities, as evidenced by a study where students demonstrated improved scores after game implementation (Castillo-Cuesta, 2022; Maryam, 2020). These investigations highlight the potential of gaming as a tool for language acquisition, illustrating its effectiveness in promoting engagement and interaction among learners.

However, most studies focusing on games to improve speaking abilities predominantly employ experimental research methods. This study diverges from existing literature by utilizing CAF framework. The Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF) is used in this research to assess students' speaking abilities. This study aims to investigate the impact of Valorant game in increasing students speaking abilities. This study will contribute to the understanding of how digital games, specifically Valorant, can be effectively used as tools for language acquisition, emphasizing the importance of interactive and engaging methods in education.

1.2 Research Problem

How does playing the Valorant game influence the speaking ability of English learners as analyzed through the Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF) framework?

1.3 Research Objectives

To examine how playing the Valorant game contributes to the improvement of English learners' speaking ability by analyzing their performance in terms of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF).

1.4 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this research is focus on the use of the Valorant game as a medium for improving English speaking ability. The study specifically analyzes learners' spoken interactions during gameplay using the Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF) framework. The participants involved in this research are university students from the English Language Education Department who meet the predetermined criteria.

This research is limited to:

- A small number of participants, which may affect the generalizability of the findings.
- A short research duration, consisting of five gameplay sessions within one month.
- The analysis of speaking ability based only on recorded gameplay interactions, without comparing them to other learning media or instructional methods.

1.5 Research Significance

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions.

Theoretical Significance

The findings of this study are expected to enrich the existing literature on game-based language learning, particularly in relation to speaking ability assessed through the CAF framework. This research also contributes to a deeper understanding of how digital games, especially multiplayer online games, can function as alternative tools in second language acquisition.

Practical Significance

Practically, this study may serve as a reference for English teachers and educators in integrating digital games into language learning activities. It may also encourage students to utilize online games as supplementary learning tools to practice English speaking in an interactive and less stressful environment. Furthermore, future researchers may use this study as a reference for related research in similar contexts.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

Valorant Game : Valorant is a multiplayer first-person shooter (FPS) game developed by Riot Games, played in a five versus five team tactics. The game requires players to communicate, cooperate, and strategize in real time, making it relevant for speaking practice in English.

Speaking Ability : Speaking ability refers to learners' capacity to produce spoken language effectively, including the appropriate use of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency in communication.

CAF Framework : The CAF framework is an analytical model used to evaluate speaking performance. *Complexity* refers to the use of varied linguistic structures, *accuracy* relates to grammatical correctness, and *fluency* concerns the smoothness and speed of speech production.