

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problems

English is one of the most widely used languages in the world. According to Crystal (2003), English has become a global language because it is used internationally in education, business, science, technology, and communication. Similarly, Richards and Rodgers (2014) explain that English plays an important role in connecting people from different countries. Therefore, English has become an essential subject in Indonesian schools to help students develop communication skills and prepare them for future academic and professional opportunities.

English learning covers four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are interconnected and should be developed in a balanced way. Brown (2004) classifies speaking as a productive language skill because learners produce spoken language to communicate with others. Nunan (2003) emphasizes that speaking plays an important role in daily communication since people generally interact through spoken language more often than through writing. This shows that speaking is not only a learning objective but also an essential skill that helps students communicate effectively in real-life situations.

Among the four language skills, many young learners find speaking to be the most difficult skill to master. Ur (1996) explains that students are often reluctant to speak because they worry about making errors, have low self-confidence, and do not receive enough opportunities to practice speaking in the classroom. Harmer

(2007) mentions that students may avoid speaking activities because they worry about making errors in front of their classmates. As a result, many students participate passively during speaking lessons, which may slow the development of their speaking skills.

Teaching speaking to young learners requires learning activities that are enjoyable, meaningful, and suitable for their characteristics. Cameron (2001) argues that young learners achieve better learning outcomes when they actively participate in meaningful classroom activities that are closely related to their everyday experiences. In addition, Pinter (2017) emphasizes that young learners enjoy learning through games, movement, visual materials, and interaction with others. These characteristics suggest that English teachers should use teaching approaches that encourage students to participate actively and practice speaking in a fun learning environment.

One approach that can make classroom learning more engaging is gamification. According to Deterding et al. (2011), gamification refers to the application of game design elements in activities that are not originally designed as games. Kapp (2012) explains that gamification incorporates various game elements, including points, rewards, challenges, competition, and immediate feedback, to encourage learners to become more motivated and actively involved in the learning process. These game elements can encourage students to become more active during classroom activities because learning feels more enjoyable and less stressful.

To support the implementation of gamification, teachers also need appropriate learning media. According to the official Wordwall website (Wordwall, n.d.), Wordwall is a digital learning platform that allows teachers to design various interactive classroom activities, such as quizzes, matching games, random wheels, and other educational exercises. Mayer (2009) views that students are able to understand learning materials more easily when information is delivered through visual and interactive forms of multimedia. Therefore, Wordwall can be used to support speaking lessons by offering interactive activities that motivate students to practice English in a more enjoyable and meaningful learning environment.

During the observation at SDI Al Azhar 4 Kebayoran Lama, several problems related to students' speaking skills were observed. During the lesson, some students appeared hesitant to speak English because they lacked self-confidence and were concerned about making errors. Furthermore, speaking practice was largely teacher-directed, so students had limited chances to use English actively in the classroom. These conditions indicate that students need more interactive learning activities that encourage them to speak confidently and participate actively during English lessons.

Considering these classroom conditions, the researcher implemented gamification using Wordwall during speaking lessons on the topic of Clothes. Students participated in group competitions while answering speaking questions individually. Each correct answer contributed points to the student's group, creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere while still encouraging individual speaking

practice. This approach was expected to help students build their confidence, increase their motivation, and take a more active role in speaking activities.

Earlier studies have demonstrated that the use of gamification and Wordwall contributes positively to English language learning. Previous researchers found that gamification can increase students' motivation, classroom participation, and learning engagement, while Wordwall provides interactive activities that support English learning. However, many previous studies focused on vocabulary mastery, learning motivation, or general English achievement. Nevertheless, research investigating the effect of gamification through Wordwall on the speaking skills of first-grade elementary school students remains limited.

Considering the issues identified during the preliminary observation, this study was conducted to examine "The Effect of Gamification Using Wordwall on First-Grade Students' Speaking Skills at SDI Al Azhar 4 Kebayoran Lama." The results of this study are expected to expand the existing knowledge of gamification using Wordwall and provide practical insights for English teachers in supporting young learners' speaking development.

B. Identification of the Problems

The background of the study indicates several problems that need to be addressed in this research, as follows:

1. Many first-grade students still have difficulty speaking English confidently during classroom activities.

2. Students do not have sufficient opportunities to practice speaking English through interactive classroom activities.
3. Many students hesitate to speak English, worry about making mistakes and lack confidence.
4. Teacher encouragement is needed to increase students' participation in speaking activities.
5. Research on the effect of gamification using Wordwall on first-grade students' speaking skills, particularly in Indonesian elementary schools, remains limited.

C. Limitation of the Problems

The scope of this study is limited to investigating the effect of gamification using Wordwall on the speaking skills of first-grade students at SDI Al Azhar 4 Kebayoran Lama.

In this study, gamification using Wordwall serves as the independent variable (X), while students' speaking skills represent the dependent variable (Y). The study involved first-grade students from SDI Al Azhar 4 Kebayoran Lama.

The speaking skills assessed in this study include pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and students' ability to respond to simple questions in English. The study adopted a One-Group Pretest–Posttest Design to examine the improvement in students' speaking skills following the treatment.

D. Formulation of the Problems

To address the issues identified in the background of the study, the research questions are presented as follows:

1. What is the level of first-grade students' speaking skills at SDI Al Azhar 4 Kebayoran Lama before the implementation of gamification using Wordwall?
2. What is the level of first-grade students' speaking skills at SDI Al Azhar 4 Kebayoran Lama after the implementation of gamification using Wordwall?
3. To what extent does gamification using Wordwall affect first-grade students' speaking skills at SDI Al Azhar 4 Kebayoran Lama?

E. Objectives of the Study

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the speaking skills of first-grade students at SDI Al Azhar 4 Kebayoran Lama before the implementation of gamification using Wordwall.
2. To assess the students' speaking skills after the implementation of gamification using Wordwall.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of gamification using Wordwall in improving the students' speaking skills.

F. Significance of the Study

This study offers both theoretical and practical significance.

1. Theoretical Significance

The findings are expected to broaden the existing knowledge of English Language Teaching, particularly regarding the integration of gamification using Wordwall in speaking instruction for young learners. The findings are expected to contribute to future research on technology-enhanced language learning and game-based learning in elementary school contexts.

2. Practical Significance

a. For Teachers

The findings may help English teachers incorporate gamification using Wordwall into speaking lessons to create a more engaging learning environment. This approach may help teachers create a more interactive, enjoyable, and motivating classroom environment.

b. For Students

The implementation of gamification using Wordwall is expected to increase students' confidence, motivation, and participation in speaking activities, which may lead to better speaking skills.

c. For Schools

The findings may assist schools in implementing technology-enhanced learning activities, particularly through the integration of gamification using Wordwall in English classrooms.

d. For Future Researchers

This study may serve as a basis for future research exploring the use of gamification and digital learning media in English language teaching.