

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Research

The role of teachers in teaching English speaking skills to junior high school students is very diverse and important in shaping the development of the language. According to (Mulyasa, 2007), the teacher acts as a facilitator, creating a supportive and encouraging classroom environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves in English. Teacher guidance is essential in providing constructive feedback on pronunciation, intonation, and grammar, helping students improve their speaking skills. Besides the technical aspects, teachers also play a role in fostering a positive attitude towards language learning, motivating students to overcome their anxiety or fear of making mistakes. Utami (2018) ultimately states that the teacher's role is more than just imparting knowledge. This includes maintaining a supportive learning environment that empowers secondary school students to develop effective English-speaking skills.

Speaking skills are important for students in junior high school as they learn English as a second language (Fithria, 2019). These speaking skills are not only for effective communication daily, but it is also important to understand more about the language and its culture. For junior high school students, developing strong speaking skills involves more than memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules; it requires active engagement in conversations, discussions, and various speaking activities. The ability to

speak English not only improves academic performance but also prepares students for future academic and professional endeavors. On the other hand, students in junior high school have difficulty learning English speaking skills. There are many factors contribute to learning English speaking skills.

Factors that contribute to the challenges that junior high school students often face when learning English speaking skills. Students face fear and self-consciousness, fear of mistakes, and potential embarrassment during oral communication. The diversity of vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and grammar rules add to the difficulty. First, the complexity of mastering pronunciation, intonation, and nuances of other languages becomes a significant obstacle (Jaelani & Zabidi, 2020). Junior High school students are transitioning from basic to advanced language skills, so this process is very challenging. In addition, self-awareness and fear of making mistakes can make students want to participate actively in speaking activities. The limited exposure to the environment of native English speakers and native speakers is increasingly hindering practical application and smooth development. Extensive vocabulary, varied grammar rules, and cultural differences create additional difficulty levels.

In addition, the traditional method is also a factor in the difficulty of learning English speaking skill, because it focuses on written assessment in language classrooms and may need to place more emphasis on oral communication (Murti et al., 2022). Overcoming this challenge requires a holistic approach that combines supportive teaching methods, interactive

language activities, and a positive learning environment to build students' confidence and ability in English speaking skills. Based on these challenges, a supportive and deep learning environment and innovative teaching methodologies can help students overcome these obstacles and build confidence in their English ability over time, like an educational game (Hayati, 2020).

Educational games play an important role in transforming the learning experience by infusing elements of fun, engagement, and interactivity into the academic environment. In contrast to traditional methods, educational games utilize play and competition to impart knowledge and skills in various subjects (Boyle, 2011). These games are designed to align with educational goals, fostering a dynamic and immersive environment where students can actively participate in the learning process. Whether used in the classroom or through online platforms, educational games cater to diverse learning styles, allowing students to absorb information in a way that suits their preferences. From improving critical thinking and problem-solving skills to encourage collaboration and creativity, Educational games offer educators a versatile and effective tool to captivate students' interest and facilitate a deeper understanding of educational concepts. Educational learning makes education more fun and provides a valuable avenue for students to develop key competencies engagingly and interactively.

Guessing games can significantly contribute to developing students' speaking skills (Wahyuni & Yulianti, 2016). These games create an

interactive and fun environment that encourages participants to express themselves verbally. Whether guessing words, describing concepts, or playing games related to language, students are encouraged to use language actively, increasing vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation. The game requires quick thinking and spontaneous responses, thus helping students build confidence in their ability to communicate effectively. In addition, this game shows a sense of camaraderie among the participants, making the language learning experience more collaborative and interesting. When students participate in guessing games, they improve their speaking skills and important aspects of effective communication, such as clarity, creativity, and the ability to express ideas.

This research aims to determine the effect of student speaking skills in educational games such as guessing games. Previous research by Marleni (2018) used video as the media to find a significant effect on student speaking skills. On the other hand, previous research suggested conducting research regarding educational games to find a significant effect on student speaking skills.

B. Delimitation

The delimitation of this research is two classes in seven-grade Junior High School 6 Madiun using guessing games as educational games to find a significant effect on student speaking skills.

C. Research Question

The research question is, “Do students who are treated with educational games have better speaking ability than students who are treated using conventional methods?”

D. Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to determine whether there is a significant difference between students who are taught with educational games and students who are taught with a conventional method. The experimental group consists of students who are taught using an educational method, and the control group consists of students who are taught using a conventional method.

E. Significance of the Research

1. Teacher

This study adds important insights about incorporating educational games as a teaching strategy to improve students' speaking skills. Teachers can gain practical knowledge about the impact of such games on language acquisition and adapt their teaching methods accordingly. Understanding how educational games contribute to development of speaking skills which will equip educators with innovative tools to create engaging and effective learning environments.

2. Students

The findings of this study directly benefit students by clarifying the potential of using educational games to improve speaking skills. Students can enjoy more interactive and fun language learning experience, thus increasing their motivation and confidence in verbal communication. This research can inspire students to participate in language-related games, improving their positive attitude toward language learning.

3. Future Research

This research is the basis for further study in language education. Researchers can use this finding to explore certain types of educational games that can be used not only in the English context but also in other second-language contexts. This study provides a foundation for further research on the influence of educational games and the development of speaking skills, offering opportunities to improve teaching methodology and explore innovative approaches in language education.

F. Definition of Operational Key Terms

- a. Speaking skill is the ability to verbally articulate thoughts, ideas, and information with clarity, fluency, and appropriate language usage. Measurement tools such as speaking assessments, rubrics, and criteria quantify students' verbal expression proficiency.
- b. Educational Games are interactive and pedagogically designed digital or non-digital activities to facilitate learning through gameplay, with clearly defined features and objectives.