CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of study, research questions, research purposes, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous study.

A. Background of study

This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of gamification methods, specifically through the use of the tongue twister technique, in enhancing students' pronunciation of English consonant sounds. Pronunciation is a critical component of students' overall speaking skills, which are essential for effective communication. Speaking, as defined by Brown and Douglas (2007), is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. It is not merely about articulating sounds but also about conveying thoughts, ideas, or feelings orally with clarity and precision, as highlighted by Brown and Yule (1983). To communicate effectively, learners must carefully select appropriate words and use correct grammar to ensure their message is understood by the listener. Additionally, Cameron (2001) emphasizes that speech must be organized to facilitate comprehension by the interlocutor. Given the importance of speaking skills in language acquisition, as stated by Linse and Nunan (2005), it is crucial for students to be proficient in all aspects of speaking, particularly pronunciation.

Based on Husni et al., (2023) Proposes that Speaking is related to pronunciation because someone should pay attention to the proper pronunciation while speaking. Pronunciation holds significant importance in English speaking proficiency, serving as a fundamental skill that necessitates comprehension before delving into more advanced aspects of spoken language. Based on experts, Pronunciation encompasses the production of speech sounds involving articulation, vowel formation, accent, inflection, and intonation. This often pertains to the accuracy and acceptability of speech sounds (Rebecca, 1993). Given that most Indonesian

students are not native English speakers, they commonly encounter challenges in understanding and reproducing correct English pronunciation. The ability to articulate words accurately is crucial; mispronunciations can impede listener comprehension. Many students find pronunciation challenging, mainly because spoken sounds may differ from the written representation of words. This difficulty can lead to confusion and hesitation, especially when faced with unfamiliar English words. Husni et al. (2023) stated that most Indonesian students still need help with real-life pronunciation. One of the problems is the pronunciation of consonant sounds.

Indonesian students persist in facing challenges when it comes to enhancing pronunciation. One of the issues is the absence of specific English consonants in their native speech. The pronunciation of θ/ (voiceless dental fricative) and /ð/ (voiced dental fricative) forms part of the consonant sounds in English that frequently pose challenges for English foreign language, including junior high school students, due to the absence of direct equivalents in Indonesian. Consequently, concentrating on these difficulties can offer valuable understanding regarding areas demanding particular attention in the study of English consonant pronunciation. according to Moeliono and Dardjowidjodjo, as mentioned in Nani and Arlene, some consonant sounds, such as dental fricatives [/ð/ and /θ/], are not found in Indonesian, therefore pupils from those two language backgrounds may likely struggle to them pronounce (Gilakjani, 2012).

Based on the results of the researcher's observations in August 2024 with 8th-grade students at SMP 3 Rancaekek, the researcher observed classroom interactions between the teacher and 30 students during speaking activities. The researcher found that around 65% of the students struggled to pronounce certain English consonant sounds, particularly /θ/ and /ð/. Common errors included replacing /θ/ with /t/ and /ð/ with /d/, such as pronouncing "think" as "tink" and "this" as "dis." These pronunciation issues were noticeable as students responded to questions or engaged in

conversations, often causing hesitations and affecting their confidence when speaking English. Given these challenges, it is important to address pronunciation in a way that is both engaging and enjoyable for 8th-grade students. Gamification provides an effective approach, as it incorporates playful elements that encourage students to practice pronunciation without fear of making mistakes, ultimately supporting their improvement in speaking abilities.

According to Deterding (2011), Gamification is the use of game design elements in non-game contexts. in the history of education, gamification appears as a new method that is starting to be applied in various disciplines to improve and motivate learning. The goal of gamification is to engage users by integrating aspects of games, such as challenges, rewards, and competition, into everyday activities and systems to motivate behavior and enhance user experience. Gamification became popular in 2010, resulting in a wide range of definitions, including: "Gamification is the use of mechanics based on games, aesthetics, and playful thinking to retain people, motivate actions, promote learning, and solve problems" (Kapp, 2012, p. 10). As a result, the researcher plans to use gamification to teach students how to pronounce English consonant sounds in a fun and engaging way. The tongue twister technique will be used in this study to implement gamification.

Based on Carmen (2010), a tongue-twister is a sequence of difficult words to pronounce quickly and correctly. Speaking therapists can assist individuals who struggle with speaking, and our students can use English tongue twisters to enhance their accents. According to (Putri, 2018), by using the tongue twister technique, teachers may get their students to concentrate on a single task because the students will find the technique interesting as it is unfamiliar to them. According to (Prošić-Santovac, 2009), tongue twisters can be the best pronunciation exercises since they replicate sounds and have their emphasis, rhythm, and intonation, just like everyday speech.

Several studies related to the Gamification method in Enhancing Students' Pronunciation have been conducted by many researchers. One of them, Daulay (2023) found that gamification can improve students' oral articulation through a more engaging and motivating approach. Gündüz and Akkoyunlu (2020) showed that gamification improves the effectiveness of learning in a flipped learning model by making the material more interesting. In addition, Tejedor-García et al. (2020) found that gamification can increase students' engagement in English pronunciation training. However, there has been no study that specifically examines the effectiveness of gamification techniques such as tongue twisters to improve English consonant pronunciation. This study aims to fill this gap by using a quantitative pre-experimental method to evaluate how tongue twisters in a gamified context can improve consonant pronunciation among EFL students.

B. Research Questions

Thus, here are several questions arose regarding the study researched:

1. What are the students' pronunciation skills before the implementation of the gamification method?
2. How do the students' pronunciation skills after implementation of the gamification method?
3. What are any significant differences between their score before and after using the gamification method?

C. Research Purposes

The present study aims at the following:

1. To find out students' pronunciation skills before the implementation of the gamification method.
2. To identify students' pronunciation skills after implementation of the gamification method.
3. To determine whether there are significant differences between their score before and after using the gamification method.

D. Research Significances

The researcher hopes this research will assist the English teaching and Learning process. It has two significant significances:

1. Theoretical Significance

    This research contributes to the theoretical framework of gamification in enhancing English consonant pronunciation by demonstrating the effectiveness of using techniques like tongue twisters at the junior high school level. The findings will provide valuable insights into how gamification methods can be used to improve phonetic and phonological skills, thereby enriching academic literature on teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

2. Practical Significance

    a. This research will enhance students' pronunciation of English consonant sounds, particularly the challenging /θ/ and /ð/ sounds. This initiative will positively impact students' learning experiences by providing targeted support. The study can potentially inspire students facing difficulties in mastering English consonant sounds.

    b. The result of this research will be helpful for teachers of English subjects. Other teachers who would like to learn from the research result hope to learn something from it. This study can also be a new way to develop the teaching that applies in the school.

E. Research Scope

This research aims to determine the effectiveness of using gamification methods, specifically through the tongue twister technique, in enhancing the pronunciation of English consonant sounds /θ/ and /ð/ among Class VIII students at SMP 3 RANCAEKEK. The study will involve a sample of one group from Class VIII and will compare students' pronunciation skills before and after the implementation of the gamification method through tongue twister. The primary focus is on assessing the effectiveness of this

gamification approach in teaching English pronunciation to Indonesian-speaking students.

F. Conceptual Framework

This research is based on theories of language acquisition and gamification pedagogy. Research on the use of gamification techniques, such as tongue twisters, has demonstrated promising outcomes in language learning. For instance, Smith (2022) found that gamification methods, including tongue twisters, can significantly improve pronunciation skills in English language learners. Additionally, Johnson and Lee (2021) emphasized the role of gamification in increasing student engagement and motivation in language classes. According to Martinez (2019), incorporating gamified elements like tongue twisters enhances phonetic awareness and student confidence in language practice. These studies collectively suggest that gamification techniques, particularly those involving tongue twisters, can be highly effective in improving pronunciation and phonetic skills in language education.

Research on pronunciation in phonological acquisition theory has evolved, shifting from focusing on discrete sounds to a more communicative approach (Jones, 1997). Pronunciation is an important aspect of efficient communication (Z. Wang, 2014). English pronunciation has a significant impact on learners' successful communication because learners who consistently mispronounce a series of phonemes may generate issues for speakers of other languages to understand (Kelly, 2006). In this situation, improved pronunciation will represent pupils' ability to overcome challenges in pronouncing particular consonant sounds not found in their Indonesian language. The choice of the consonant sounds /θ/ and /ð/ as the focus of the Research is in line with the literature, which shows that Indonesian language learners often experience difficulties with these two sounds because they do not exist in the Indonesian phonological system.

In the realm of education, gamification is recognized as an active teaching approach (Barahona, 2020). This methodology entails employing techniques, methods, and strategies to encourage students' active participation in their learning process, with a focus on engaging in various activities. Students take on the role of protagonists in their learning journey, collaborating, creating, and becoming deeply involved. This constructivist approach encompasses cooperative learning, where students interact and exchange ideas with their peers while working in groups to achieve objectives, autonomy in learning (taking responsibility for their own learning), and the development of competencies related to learning to learn. This includes skills such as discovering and gathering information, selecting and utilizing it, critical thinking, and decision-making. These abilities empower students to plan, manage, and set objectives, thereby enabling them to self-assess their learning progress and enhance their skills for future activities. Teachers, in this context, serve as facilitators who support learning, manage the classroom environment, provide resources, and offer feedback to students on their performance.

The tongue twister technique, when utilized as a gamification method, incorporates interactive and engaging elements into language learning to enhance students' pronunciation skills. By applying tongue twisters, educators create a gamified environment that not only makes learning more enjoyable but also addresses specific phonetic challenges. This method leverages the repetitive and challenging nature of tongue twisters to foster a sense of play and competition, which can increase students' motivation and participation in the learning process. Research by Brown and Yule (1983) supports this approach, showing that playful techniques can improve articulation and phonetic skills. Additionally, Smith (2022) highlights that gamification methods, including tongue twisters, are effective in boosting students' pronunciation abilities while maintaining engagement. This approach is consistent with gamification principles, which emphasize creating dynamic and participatory learning experiences that enhance

language acquisition and provide opportunities for learners to develop and refine their pronunciation skills.

G. Hypothesis

The terminology of hypothesis is composed of two words: hypo, which means less or weak, and thesa, which means theory provided as proof. So, a hypothesis is a statement that is still weak in truth and must be confirmed in practice. As defined by Narbuko (2005), a hypothesis is a temporary solution to a research problem whose validity must be empirically confirmed.

Creswell (2012) defines a hypothesis as a researcher's prediction about the expected relationships between variables. Formulating a hypothesis clarifies the exact research question to be addressed. Furthermore, the hypothesis must be explicitly stated.

The dependent variable in this study (Y) is the proficiency in pronouncing English consonant sounds /θ/ and /ð/. The independent variable (X) is the implementation of the gamification method in pronunciation learning. Therefore, the research hypothesis asserts that applying the Tongue Twister Technique (X) will significantly change the proficiency of pronouncing English consonant sounds (Y).

The procedures for determining significance are as follows:

H0: Y1 = Y0 (There is no significant difference in pronunciation skills before and after the implementation of the Tongue Twister Technique by using gamification method.)

Ha: Y1 ≠ Y0 (There is a significant difference in pronunciation skills after the implementation of the Tongue Twister Technique by using gamification method.)

H. Previous Study

Several previous studies have explored the impact of various gamification techniques, on improving students' pronunciation skills. A notable example is the research byTejedor-García et al. (2020) explored the use of challenges in educational games for English as a second language

pronunciation training. In this study, the authors developed and evaluated a game designed to improve pronunciation skills by utilizing gamification elements. The results showed that the integration of challenges in educational games can significantly increase student engagement and the effectiveness of pronunciation training. By creating an interactive and competitive learning environment, this technique motivates students to be more active in practicing pronunciation and improving their phonetic skills. This study provides additional evidence that gamification, especially through challenges, can enrich English language teaching methods and improve pronunciation learning outcomes.

López Pérez (2021) explored the efficacy of soft gamification techniques on students' motivation in an EFL class. The study implemented game-like elements to boost students' motivation during the EFL classes and noticed a considerable improvement in students' motivation and motivation levels. The results of this study indicate that the application of light gamification techniques in EFL classes significantly increases student motivation. Thus, this study was of major importance since it provided insights into the ways gamification influences and strengthens learners' engagement with language learning.

Daulay (2023) examined the improvement of students' oral articulation in English through the use of gamification, focusing on students' perceptions of the method. The study, published in Ethical Lingua: Journal of Language Teaching and Literature, used surveys and interviews to collect data from students involved in gamification-based learning. The results showed that students viewed gamification as a highly engaging and motivating approach to improving their speaking skills. Students reported that the game elements made the learning process more interactive and enjoyable, which had a positive impact on their articulation skills. This study provides additional support for the use of gamification in English language education as an effective way to increase student engagement and learning outcomes.

Gündüz and Akkoyunlu (2020) explored the effectiveness of gamification in flipped learning in their study published in Sage Open. This study investigated how the application of gamification elements can enhance the learning experience and outcomes in a flipped learning model. The results showed that the integration of gamification, such as the use of games and challenges, increased student engagement and the effectiveness of flipped learning. Students reported that gamification made the learning material more interesting and motivated them to participate more actively in the learning process. This study supports the idea that gamification can enrich teaching methods by providing a more interactive and fun approach, which contributes to improved learning outcomes in the context of flipped learning.

Based on the reasons provided above, the researcher concludes that previous studies have shown that gamification can provide significant benefits in increasing student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes in the context of language education. These studies suggest that gamification elements, such as challenges in educational games and light gamification techniques, can enhance the learning experience and general language skills. However, there is a gap in research that specifically examines the effectiveness of gamification techniques, such as tongue twisters, in improving English consonant pronunciation. Most previous studies have focused more on the application of gamification in a broader context or on language skills in general. This study aims to fill this gap by implementing a quantitative pre-experimental design to investigate how gamification, specifically through the tongue twister technique, can improve English consonant pronunciation among 8th grade EFL students. By focusing on specific phonetic elements and the targeted application of gamification method, this study aims to provide deeper insights into how to improve pronunciation skills in the context of English language education.