

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter conveys the background of research, three research questions, three research purposes, the scope of research, conceptual framework, research hypothesis, and previous studies.

A. Background

This study aims to discover the grammar achievement of Indonesian English Foreign Language (EFL) students by integrating using Educaplay with gamification at the junior high school level. It focuses on enhancing grammar achievement. Grammar is a system of rules that govern the rules and determine the generic structure and correlation of words in sentences (Brown, 2000). Furthermore, grammar takes a prominent role as a major component of communicative competence, as grammar is included in language forms. There are different opinions related to whether language forms should be taught directly or in context, depending on the teaching method. Formal aspects of language received central attention in the Grammar Translation Method and in Cognitive Code Learning, while overt focus or too much concern on form was almost forbidden in the Direct Method and the Natural Approach (Brown, 2000).

Recent teaching methods, including technology and interactive learning, have been explored to help EFL students learn English grammar. One of them is gamification which has strong connection with technology and interactive learning. Gamification integrates game elements such as scores, levels, and rewards to make learning more attractive and engaging (Deterding et al., 2011). Gamification could be applied in a language classroom by Educaplay. Educaplay is an online platform that allows teachers to create educational games, making it a good tool for using gamification in teaching English. Teachers can design activities with Educaplay, like crosswords, quizzes, and matching games, to focus on specific learning goals, such as understanding grammar. Gamification through platforms

like Educaplay not only motivates students but also allows for more personalized and flexible teaching.

In teaching grammar, gamified activities can help students in learning grammar rules more effectively by providing instant feedback, creating a sense of accomplishment, and making the learning process more interactive. Research has shown that gamified learning can improve students' focus and help them remember language rules better (Hamari et al., 2014). For Indonesian junior high school students, who might find traditional grammar lessons boring or difficult, using gamification offers a fun and effective alternative. This approach helps connect abstract grammar concepts to real language use, making the learning experience both enjoyable and practical. This study will investigate whether using Educaplay's gamification tools can improve Indonesian students' grammar past tense achievement.

Due to large part to the significant disparities between English and their native Bahasa Indonesia, EFL students in Indonesia usually struggle to learn English grammar. According to Komara and Tiarsini (2021), Indonesian EFL learners feel that grammar is challenging yet crucial to learn and master. Along with this perception, students must understand a variety of resources, guidelines, and procedures. Additionally, the study made the case that students are prone to select different learning models, especially when it comes to using technology to learn English grammar. Moreover, most research on gamification in language learning focuses on vocabulary acquisition or general language skills. For example, a systematic review by Hamari et al (2014) revealed that 72% of gamification studies in language learning targeted vocabulary and reading comprehension rather than grammar instruction.

Furthermore, the researcher reveals that students face some difficulties in learning grammar at SMPN 2 Cileunyi when the researcher did teaching practice. This phenomenon leads to the importance of integrating using Educaplay with gamification to foster students' grammar achievement at SMPN 2 Cileunyi. However, few studies have examined how gamified activities influence grammar

achievement, which is an area that many EFL students find particularly difficult. Kawattipa and Tangkiengs (2023) revealed that there was a significant enhancement in the learners' performance in English grammar when gamification was implemented into the English grammar lessons. While most of the studies focus on using gamification in improving vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension, this study will focus on the Educaplay platform as a form of gamification to enhance grammar achievement, specifically past tense sentences, at SMPN 2 Cileunyi. By concentrating on Educaplay, this research aims to fill the gap in existing literature regarding the effectiveness of gamified tools in improving grammar past tense achievement among Indonesian EFL learners.

B. Research Questions

This study formulates three research questions to find out more about the integration of Educaplay. This study is conducted to answer those research questions. The three research questions are listed below:

1. What is the students' grammar achievement before and with implementing Educaplay?
2. What is the students' grammar achievement after and without implementing Educaplay?
3. Are there any significant differences in students' grammar achievement among those who use Educaplay and those who do not?

C. Research Purposes

Find out the effect of Educaplay on the students' grammar achievement among utilizing Educaplay and without Educaplay is the goal of this study. As a result, to decide the significant difference of the grammar achievement, the researcher makes three research purposes based on the previous three research questions. This study aims:

1. To figure out students' grammar achievement before and without implementing Educaplay.

2. To figure out students' grammar achievement after and with implementing Educaplay.
3. To figure out if there is a significant difference in students' grammar achievement among utilizing Educaplay and without Educaplay.

D. Research Significance

This study has significances both theoretically and practically. Also this study can be an essential reference for further studies related to gamification and grammatical proficiency.

1. Theoretical significance

This study is theoretically significant as it can be a reference for future research to improve students' English skills, particularly their grammar achievement, with gamified learning in the lesson for a more engaging learning environment.

2. Practical Significances

- a. Teacher

This study provides valuable insights for English teachers to integrate gamification through Educaplay to enhance students' grammar achievement. It encourages teachers to personalize their lessons, which can increase student engagement and make grammar lessons more interactive and enjoyable.

- b. Student

Educaplay helps students understand English grammar better by making the learning process more engaging and interactive. This study demonstrates how gamification can be used to increase student enthusiasm and focus, which in turn can lead to improved grammar achievement.

3. Further research

This study makes a contribution to the growing body of research on gamification in English language learning, particularly in the context of grammar achievement. It provides a foundation for future studies to explore

other aspects of language learning using gamified tools or to investigate the long-term effects of gamification on student performance across different language skills.

E. Research Scope

This section serves the scope of this study, including the goal of the study, the variables of the study, the research site and participants, and how the study will be conducted.

This study aims to improve the grammar achievement of eighth-grade students at SMPN 2 Cileunyi by integrating using Educaplay with gamification. The purpose of this study is to compare the outcomes in grammar of the class using Educaplay with the class without Educaplay and examine the variations in grammar achievement before and after incorporating Educaplay. Students in the eighth grade at SMPN 2 Cileunyi make up the study's population. The sample for this study is VIII J and VIII K, which were specifically chosen for their applicability to the goals of the investigation.

This study takes place at SMPN 2 Cileunyi, Bandung, during the 2024/2025 academic year in February 2025. The timeline includes the administration of a pre-test, treatment with Educaplay, and a post-test evaluation. This study examines two key variables: the integration of using Educaplay with gamification as the independent variable and students' grammar achievement as the dependent variable, which is measured through the score of pre-test and post-test.

Educaplay serves as the primary platform for creating interactive grammar learning activities, such as quizzes, crosswords, and matching games, designed to make grammar lessons more engaging and effective. The assessment involves a set of 20 questions administered in both pre-tests and post-tests to ensure consistency for valid comparisons. However, the scope of this study is limited to grammar achievement and does not extend to other language skills such as speaking or writing. Furthermore, the findings are specific to the selected participants and may not be generalizable to other schools or education levels.

By focusing on the integration of using Educaplay with gamification, this research aims to demonstrate its potential to enhance students' grammar achievement. This study provides valuable insights for educators in adopting innovative teaching methods, for researchers in further exploring gamified learning, and for students in experiencing a more engaging approach to mastering grammar.

F. Conceptual Framework

This section presents the conceptual framework of the study by focusing on grammar achievement, the integration of using Educaplay with gamification, and the improvement of grammar achievement. Some related studies are included to support the framework.

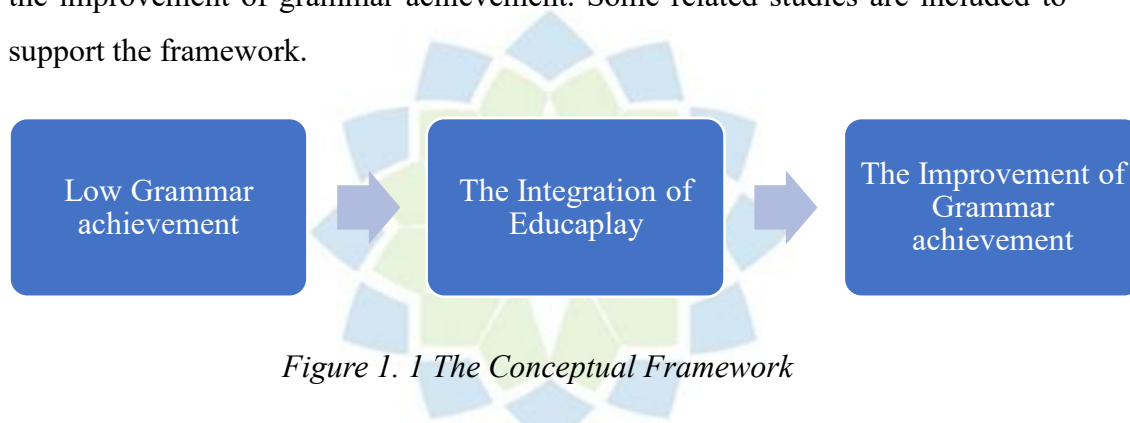


Figure 1. 1 The Conceptual Framework

This study figures out how gamified learning with the Educaplay platform can help students enhance their grammar achievement. Because of that, it requires the investigation of the integration of using Educaplay with gamification that is in harmony with the conceptual framework used to present in this study. This conceptual framework figures out various concepts, including grammar achievement, gamification in English language teaching, and the impact of the integration of using Educaplay with gamification on students' grammar achievement.

This study looks into the achievement of the past tense in grammar. Grammar is a tool to construct a sentence and to build meaning in context. According to Brown (2000), grammar is a system of rules that manage the conventional arrangement and correlation of words in a sentence. Additionally, Nunan (1998) states that grammar is the system of rules and structures that govern how language is used to communicate effectively. It enables speakers to organize words and sentences in a

way that makes meaning clear and appropriate within specific contexts. In this study, the part of grammar which focused to discuss is past tense. Past tense used to express or tell past experiences or activities and telling a story (Seaton & Mew, 2007). Furthermore, grammar helps learners to achieve their communicative goals by deploying grammatical resources appropriately, thus facilitating social interaction, expression of personality, and the attainment of various communicative ends. Good grammar proficiency is important for achieving communicative competence, as it allows learners to build sentences that are not only accurate but also contextually appropriate. Hence, a study by Ferlina (2023) revealed a substantial correlation between grammar abilities and speaking abilities, emphasizing that good grammar achievement leads to good speaking abilities.

The gamification of English language instruction is examined in this study. The process of utilising game elements in non-game contexts, such as education, to improve learning results and produce interesting activities is known as "gamification." Gamification in English language instruction produces a dynamic and captivating setting that encourages motivation and active learning. Gamification is the application of game characteristics outside of games to boost user engagement (Deterding et al, 2011). Teachers can build and access multimedia activities with Educaplay, an educational game generator (Spataro, 2022). The Educaplay platform integrates game elements that support gamification in education, like matching exercises, crossword puzzles, and quizzes.

This study looks into the impact of the integration of using Educaplay with gamification on students' grammar achievement. Research indicates that gamified learning can significantly improve learning outcomes, particularly in grammar achievement. According to Hashim et al. (2019) in their study, based on the students' scores on the grammar post-test, which significantly increased from the pre-test and in which no participant received a grade of D or E in the post-test relative to the pre-test, Hashim et al concluded that gamified learning is effective in teaching grammar to ESL students. Students benefit from gamified learning in grammar classes as well. According to Ardi et al. (2022), gamified learning

improved students' engagement in EFL grammar learning in six ways: by allowing students to set goals, increase their focus on assignments, develop their enthusiasm and interest in learning, participate in playful learning activities, work with friends, and satisfy their need for rewards and a sense of competition.

G. Hypothesis

The study's goal is to determine grammatical proficiency through the integration of using Educaplay with gamification. Additionally, this study produced research hypotheses, including the following null hypothesis and alternative hypotheses:

1. The alternative hypothesis (H_a) states that “there is a significant difference in students' grammar achievement between those who and those who do not use Educaplay.”
2. The null hypothesis (H_o) states that “there is no significant difference in students' grammar achievement between those who and those who do not use Educaplay.”

H. Previous Studies

This section involves some previous studies to support the goal of this study and to identify the gap of the study.

This study aims to look into how gamification and Educaplay might be combined to improve students' grammar achievement. Additionally, a number of related research discoveries served as the foundation for this investigation. The gap in this study was caused by earlier research findings that Educaplay is employed in classroom activities.

There have been several previous studies on gamification and Educaplay in ELT. First, Vargas et al. (2024) conducted a Quasi-experimental study of high school students at a public institution in southern Ecuador using a sample of 60 students selected by a purposeful approach. The study uses a pre-test, a post-test, an observation checklist, and graded vocabulary exercises to collect data. The study's goal is to ascertain how Educaplay influences the vocabulary development of EFL high school students in southern Ecuador. The study results show that Educaplay is

a helpful technology tool for helping children expand and maintain their vocabulary. The current study is comparable when discussing Educaplay as a learning aid. However, Educaplay is used in the current study to teach English grammar, especially past tense grammar, among EFL students at the high school level in Indonesia.

Second, during the COVID-19 epidemic in Ecuador, Páez-Quinde et al. (2022) investigated Educaplay as a tool for academic success in virtual education. The purpose of the study is to examine how Educaplay is used as a didactic tool in online learning and how this enhances student performance. Seventy elementary basic education students made up the study population, and the experiment was conducted with them, utilising Educaplay as a gamification tool. The results demonstrate that using gamification resources, which encourage active engagement and teamwork, helped students do better academically. The instructor is the one who creates their own resources based on the needs of the students. Nonetheless, the study differs from the current one, focusing specifically on students' eighth-grade grammar achievement. The current study seeks to find out the integration of using Educaplay with gamification to enhance students' grammar past tense achievement at eighth-grade SMPN 2 Cileunyi, Bandung. The current study uses Educaplay in a synchronous classroom environment.

Third, Cuesta et al (2022) conducted a study titled Implementing Gamification in Foreign Language Education: A Case of Pre-Service EFL Teachers in Ecuador. The study aimed to examine how gamification strategies could improve EFL writing skills in pre-service English teachers at Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja. Involving 54 participants over five months, the research used a mixed-method design with pre- and post-questionnaires and a writing rubric focused on grammar and idea organization. Educaplay games like crosswords and sentence unscrambling were used. Results showed that gamification effectively enhanced grammatical knowledge, particularly conditionals, and improved the organization of ideas. Most participants found the games motivating, which promoted active learning and increased interest in further language skill development. Nevertheless,

the current study is intended to examine the integration of Educaplay with gamification to enhance students' grammar past tense achievement in a junior high school, specifically the eighth-grade students. The current study conducts a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and a post-test to discover the differences in students' grammar past tense achievement between using Educaplay and without it.

Fourth, a study by Ochoa (2024) investigates the effects of gender, Educaplay usage, and note-taking on vocabulary development among EFL students. Using pre- and post-assessments with 39 undergraduates, the research employed multiple linear regression to analyze the predictive relationships. Findings showed that only note-taking had a significant positive impact on vocabulary improvement, while gender and Educaplay use did not demonstrate statistically significant effects. Compared with it, the current study only focuses on Educaplay in grammar improvement. The goal of the current study is to enhance students' achievement of past tense grammar.

Lastly, Fitri et al. (2024) conducted a study that described a community service initiative in Jorong Dusun Tuo, West Sumatra, which was impacted by flash floods in May 2024. The goal was to aid children's psychological recovery and enhance their English vocabulary skills through the use of Educaplay. Employing a pre-experimental, quantitative method over an eight-week period with nine participants, the research revealed a significant improvement in vocabulary scores, increasing from an average of 75.33 to 87.78 after the intervention. These findings suggest that digital games like Educaplay can be effective tools for boosting vocabulary acquisition in post-disaster recovery contexts. The study advocates for the integration of such technology into language education to increase motivation and learning outcomes among young learners. In contrast, the current study uses Educaplay to enhance grammar achievement at junior high school in Bandung. The current study employs a quasi-experimental design over a four-week period with 60 participants. The current study seeks a significant improvement in grammar achievement after the treatments given.