CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The integration of gamification into English language teaching (ELT) has transformed traditional learning environments by increasing student engagement, motivation, and participation. Gamification refers to the application of game-like elements such as points, badges, levels, and leaderboards into non-game contexts to enhance user experience and motivation (Deterding et al., 2011). In educational settings, these elements have been proven to foster learner autonomy, persistence, and enjoyment, particularly in second language learning (Hamari et al., 2014; Cheng et al., 2022).

Recent studies consistently highlight gamification's positive impact on language acquisition and affective learning outcomes. For instance, Arufe Giráldez et al. (2022) found that students in gamified environments demonstrated higher engagement and better academic performance than those in conventional classrooms. Similarly, Cheng et al. (2022) reported that gamified instruction significantly improved reading proficiency and enjoyment among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. From a motivational perspective, Armanda and Priyana (2025) discovered that students responded positively to challenges, points, and competition in gamified English lessons, while Putra and Priyatmojo (2021) found that such environments effectively reduced classroom boredom.

Despite these benefits, teachers' perceptions of gamification are more complex. While educators recognize gamification's pedagogical value, many report barriers to implementation such as limited time, inadequate training, and insufficient technological infrastructure (Titania, 2024; Kristriani et al., 2022). Luo (2024) emphasized that teachers' adoption of gamified tools depends largely on perceived ease of use and usefulness. This highlights the need for professional development and institutional support to promote technology integration in English teaching.

In the Indonesian EFL context, gamification has gained increasing attention as schools and universities adopt digital learning strategies following post-

pandemic educational reforms. However, most local studies focus on vocabulary and reading comprehension, with minimal attention to grammar learning a skill often perceived as less engaging and more rule-based. Furthermore, the majority of existing studies examine either teacher or student perceptions separately, leaving a gap in understanding how both groups perceive and experience gamification simultaneously. Comparative research that explores both perspectives within the same educational context remains scarce, particularly in public senior high schools in Indonesia.

To address these gaps, this study investigates both students' and teachers' perceptions of gamification in English language learning and teaching, with a particular focus on grammar instruction. By examining how these two groups perceive motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes in gamified classrooms, this study aims to bridge the gap between gamification theory and practical classroom application.

1.2 Problem Identification

Although gamification has been widely recognized for enhancing engagement and motivation in English language learning, its effectiveness across different language skills, particularly grammar remains inconsistent. Previous research has largely focused on vocabulary or reading, offering limited insights into grammar instruction at the secondary level (Hamari et al., 2014; Sari & Avifah, 2023). Moreover, most studies examine either teacher or student perceptions separately, creating a fragmented understanding of classroom realities (Titania, 2024; Trinh et al., 2022). Teachers often face obstacles such as insufficient digital competence, lack of infrastructure, and minimal institutional support (Kristriani et al., 2022; Luo, 2024). Additionally, few studies have explored gamification within the Southeast Asian, and specifically Indonesian, context (Chan & Lo, 2022). These gaps highlight the need for a comprehensive study that integrates both teacher and student perspectives to understand the challenges and potential of gamified English instruction in local classrooms.

1.3 Research Problems

1. What are students' perceptions of gamification in English language learning?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of gamification in English language teaching?
3. What benefits and challenges do both groups experience in gamified classrooms?
4. How do students' and teachers' perceptions compare in terms of motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To explore students' perceptions of gamification in English language learning.
2. To investigate teachers' perceptions of using gamification in English language teaching.
3. To identify the benefits and challenges faced by both students and teachers when using gamified learning platforms.
4. To analyze similarities and differences in students' and teachers' perceptions regarding motivation, engagement, and learning effectiveness.

1.5 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This research is grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Sociocultural Theory. SDT posits that learning motivation is enhanced when three psychological needs autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Gamification supports these needs through mechanisms such as self-paced progression, achievement feedback, and peer collaboration (Hamari et al., 2014). Likewise, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory emphasizes learning as a socially mediated process that occurs through collaboration and interaction within the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). Gamified activities that promote teamwork and communication align with this constructivist view of learning. Based on these theories, this study conceptualizes gamification as a pedagogical strategy that enhances learners' motivation, engagement, and language

performance through interactive, feedback-rich, and socially collaborative environments.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to English language education by providing an in-depth understanding of how both students and teachers perceive gamification in EFL classrooms. For students, gamified learning encourages active participation, reduces learning anxiety, and enhances mastery of grammar and vocabulary through interactive and reward-based activities (Panmei & Waluyo, 2022). For teachers, the findings offer practical guidance on integrating digital tools such as Quizizz, Duolingo, and Kahoot! into lesson plans in ways that align with curricular goals and foster learner motivation and engagement.

At the institutional level, the study emphasizes the importance of adequate infrastructure, professional training, and supportive policies to sustain the implementation of gamified instruction. Policymakers and education leaders can use these insights to promote innovation and digital literacy within language education programs. Furthermore, by combining teacher and student perspectives, this research enriches the theoretical and empirical understanding of gamification in the Indonesian EFL context and serves as a foundation for future studies exploring its long-term pedagogical impact.