

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This section outlines the background of the study, addresses the research questions, and presents the objectives that the study aims to achieve, the significance of the study, and the definition of key terms.

#### **A. Background of Study**

In the past, video games were primarily accessible to those in the upper-middle class. This exclusivity stemmed from the specialized equipment required to play them, limiting their enjoyment to a select few. However, a significant shift occurred when video gaming transitioned to smartphones, versatile devices that serve various daily purposes. The advent of numerous digital game apps developed for smartphones, including both original titles and cross-play options available on multiple platforms, has transformed video gaming from a niche pastime into an integral part of smartphone users' lives. This shift in mindset is underscored by the widespread adoption of gaming on these devices. Smartphones have democratized video gaming, making it more inclusive and accessible to a broader audience. This shift has not only benefited gamers but has also had a profound impact on the gaming industry, leading to significant growth in mobile gaming revenue and changing the way we perceive interactive entertainment. Smartphones have played a pivotal role in altering the perception of video gaming, turning it from a luxury pastime into an everyday form of entertainment enjoyed by people from diverse backgrounds.

According to a 2018 survey by the Statistical Office of the European Union, encompassing almost all European countries, 33% of residents aged 16–74 play digital games (Union, 2019). In addition, research from the ESA in 2024 states that the number of gamers in America aged 5–90 is approximately 190.6 million, and around 61% of Americans play digital games for at least one hour per day. Over 70% of respondents to this survey believe that digital games offer benefits across various aspects of life (Association, 2024). In another survey in 2021 in Indonesia by Niko Partners, 64.5% of the Indonesian population are active digital game players. The platforms they use to play games are consoles (16%), PCs (24%), and mobile devices (60%). This highlights the significant number of people in Indonesia who play games, especially on Android or iPhone devices (Leqa, 2024). Based on these surveys, we can observe the prevalence of digital game players worldwide, even though the data primarily originates from the USA, Europe, and Indonesia.

Even though game players are spread across many countries, not all games offer every language. The Indonesian language is difficult to find in high-end games, but it can be found in mobile-based games. For example, games from *Hoyoverse* provide Indonesian as a text option but not for audio. "*Mobile Legend: Bang Bang*" offers Indonesian in both text and audio. However, this does not change the fact that many games do not provide Indonesian as an option. The universal language in games is English, which forces players who want to participate and complete objectives to actively use English, which is not their native language (Vnucko & Klimova, 2023).

In the era of information technology, the use of digital tools has been a usual sight; the application of digital games to study is one example of digital aids in the educational field. Digital game-based learning is also getting a lot of attention in recent educational settings. It is due to DGBL having creative modes of self-expression in the language learning environment. Various studies have concluded that teachers need to apply interesting strategies, such as using digital tools for learning, that can improve students' knowledge and engagement in the learning process. However, the teachers should be careful when picking a digital game for the class, they need to choose one that suits the students' level. The teachers also need to be the mentors to control the students so they can get the game content's educational context effectively (Alhebshi & Halabi, 2020).

E-learning involves using information and communication technologies to facilitate access to online educational resources for both learning and teaching. In academic environments, e-learning is characterized by integrating multimedia elements, which enhance the educational experience by making it more engaging, interactive, and enjoyable. The advancements in multimedia and information technologies, coupled with the widespread adoption of the internet as a contemporary teaching tool, have profoundly transformed traditional teaching methods (Surayatika, 2019).

Although the digital age increasingly acknowledges the educational value of video games, many parents still prohibit their children from playing them at home or impose strict limits on their gaming time. In Kagawa Prefecture, Japan, there is even a law that restricts citizens under the age of 18 to just 60 minutes of gaming

on weekdays and 90 minutes on holidays. This reflects the prevailing belief that gaming can have several negative effects on children, one notable concern being its potential to interfere with their schoolwork.

To harness the benefits of digital games, particularly commercial off-the-shelf titles, as educational tools, teachers must carefully curate the content and information students can access to align with learning objectives. However, in the context of foreign language learning, especially English, certain games can effectively serve as stand-alone and enjoyable learning aids. The majority of games available today support English as their audio and text language, allowing students to interact with the language simply through gameplay. Even if the game offers only partial English content, it can still have a meaningful impact on players.

As the world becomes increasingly digitized, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, many students in Indonesia, particularly those from affluent and middle-class backgrounds, now consider smartphones to be essential learning tools. This widespread embrace of technology demonstrates the growing influence of globalization, which, if allowed to proceed unchecked, could lead to cultural homogenization and the erosion of traditional values.

Nevertheless, the rise of digital games offers a promising opportunity for English education. Rather than discouraging students from gaming, especially given the abundance of recreational activities like games and social media, directing these interests to digital games as motivation for learning, will be a chance for the teacher to make a more effective learning environment. By incorporating educational content into gaming platforms, educators can engage students'

enthusiasm for technology, enhancing language learning in a fun and effective manner. This strategy may help alleviate some of the adverse effects linked to unchecked globalization.

The issue of globalization, as civilization progresses, is increasingly drawing attention. The loss of national identity caused by easy access to the "world" facilitated by the internet, has led many people who have a special attachment to religion to view it as a negative thing, because the direction of globalization is towards the Western world, which has many distinct cultural aspects that are very contrary to Islamic law, including digital entertainment. Similar developments in the world of technology are expected to have negative effects on future generations, even though these technologies come from human beings. However, Allah says in the Holy Quran

اُكْتَسَبْتُ مَا وَعَلَيْهَا كَسَبْتُ مَا لَهَا ۚ وَسَعَهَا إِلَّآ نَفْسًا ٱللَّهُ يُكَلِّفُ لَا  
 اِصْرًا عَلَيْنَا تَحْمِلُ وَلَا رَبَّنَا ۚ اَخْطَاْنَا اَوْ تَسِيْنَا اِنْ تُؤَاخِذْنَا لَا رَبَّنَا ۚ  
 بِهٖ لَنَا طَاقَةٌ لَا مَا تَحْمِلُنَا وَلَا رَبَّنَا ۚ قَبْلُنَا مِنَ ٱلَّذِيْنَ عَلَىٰ حَمْلَتِهٖ كَمَا  
 اَلْقَوْمْ عَلَىٰ فَاَنْصَرْنَا مَوْلَانَا اَنْتَ ۚ وَارْحَمْنَا لَنَا وَاعْفِرْ عَنَّا وَاعْفُ ۚ  
 اَلْكٰفِرِيْنَ

(Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 286)

According to Al-Qurtubi's interpretation, this verse reflects Allah's compassion toward His servants, as He does not impose trials or commands that are beyond the ability of the one being tested (Al-Qurtubi, 2007). Globalization,

especially addiction to digital entertainment, is nothing but a trial. Something that we can overcome. As human beings bestowed with various strengths by God, why do not we immediately distance ourselves from something bad, but instead, turn it into something better, that can influence humans to a better stage. This research aims to demonstrate that video games can provide unexpected benefits.

Additionally, students' motivation plays a pivotal role in their learning journey. It refers to the factors that encourage and guide learners to engage actively in educational pursuits. Notably, motivation significantly influences the effectiveness of students' English language acquisition, shaping their attitudes and behaviors within a social context, consequently impacting their self-assurance. Enhancing students' motivation is crucial for yielding better outcomes in English learning. How educators bolster student motivation also directly influences students' confidence levels during the learning process. Essentially, fostering students' motivation is pivotal for facilitating a deeper understanding throughout the learning trajectory. According to Long, Ming, and Chen (2013), motivation plays a vital role in foreign language learning. Students who possess high levels of motivation exhibit strong learning drive and maintain a positive attitude towards their learning endeavors (Laksmi, Yasa, & Mirayani, 2021). The authenticity and interactive features presented by digital games are expected to foster motivation among students, particularly in today's era where not only playing games individually but also watching others play games has become a highly engaging form of amusement for most students.

Games inherently involve two or more factions of players competing to achieve a winning condition. This dynamic introduces a competitive aspect that can stimulate the motivation of learners who participate as players in learning sessions using games (Saputra, Septiani, Adriani, Sundari, 2021). This, combined with the digital format of non-educational digital games, transforms them into teaching aids that can provide a competitive arena for students. In this context, the teacher, as the user of media, needs only to establish rules not present in the games to ensure the lesson is structured and integrated. The integration of non-educational video games with EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learning aims to generate interest in learning among students because "gaming" has reached a point of no return in the culture of today's youth. Viewing EFL learning not as merely a "lesson" but as something that can seamlessly integrate into their culture is anticipated to increase student engagement.

Game-based learning or game-enhanced learning is frequently used in EFL classrooms; however, numerous challenges persist in its application, one of which is an unsupportive environment. Many schools cannot provide sufficient internet access and adequate PCs for each student; in some cases, they are insufficient even for a single class to use in shifts. Research and design efforts have focused on creating classrooms that can meet these requirements.

Another issue lies in the software or games used. Difficulties arise in finding a game that perfectly balances gaming and teaching aspects. Educational digital games often excel in teaching but lack in gaming aspects, while non-educational digital games often excel in gaming but lack in teaching aspects (Pan, et al., 2021).

Regarding solutions to these two challenges, the researcher has a distinct opinion. Concerning the hardware issue, a solution, albeit one that may not be ideal as a facilitator, involves students providing their own required environment. In elementary through high school, they can use their smartphones and personal data plans. When advancing to higher education, they can utilize their own PCs or laptops. Addressing the software balance issue can be achieved with a creative teacher. While a gaming expert is needed for the enjoyable gaming aspect, the classroom teacher is an educational expert. Non-educational digital games appear to be highly suitable aids in such situations. Given the abundance of non-educational digital games available in digital game stores like the App Store or Google Play on smartphones and Steam or Epic Games on Windows, students using their own devices can easily access the games to be used. The imbalance where the gaming aspect outweighs the teaching aspect can be addressed by a creative teacher who can transform a game into a balanced teaching medium.

Although many issues need to be addressed in this area, studies that elaborate on the operational aspects of lessons using non-educational games are still difficult to find. This is primarily because the growing interest in digital games used in language lessons remains focused on educational games. Moreover, using non-educational games in instruction requires a higher level of teaching competence, as such games are not inherently designed to support educational objectives. As a result, research that discusses the outcomes of learning using these types of games is also limited. Beyond operational concerns, studies that explore the challenges of implementing such approaches, particularly within the context of Indonesia, are



also scarce. This is largely due to the lack of learning environments that meet the basic requirements for such research, namely, having adequate access to non-educational games for classroom-scale implementation. Without these foundational conditions, researchers often cannot even begin conducting studies in this area.

Based on what has been mentioned above, the researcher has an interest in investigating some literature that has proven and demonstrated how the teacher performs a lesson with digital games that are not designed as learning material and the effect on the students. Therefore, a study entitled **“The Utilization of Non-Educational Digital Games in EFL Lessons”** was conducted.

## **B. Research Question**

Based on the explanation above, the research questions of this study are:

1. How does the literature describe the activity teachers employ when teaching lessons that utilize non-educational digital games?
2. How does the literature demonstrate the impact on the students following lessons that utilize non-educational digital games?
3. What Challenges are faced in utilizing non-educational Digital Games in the Indonesian educational context?

## **C. Research Objectives**

The objectives of the study are:

1. To analyze how the activity teachers teach on a lesson that utilize non-educational digital games, as documented in the literature.

2. To investigate the impact on students following lessons that incorporate non-educational digital games, based on existing literature.
3. To identify and analyze the challenges in implementing non-educational digital games within the Indonesian educational context.

#### **D. Research Significance**

The results and findings of this research are expected to give advantages to both the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching and learning. They are as follows:

1. Theoretical Implications

With this research, the researcher hopes that we can gain a deeper understanding of how a game that is not designed as a learning medium can become an effective and efficient media.

2. Practical Implications

- a. For Future Researchers

The findings of this research are expected to be a guide or source for future researchers who want to conduct and arrange research on the use of non-educational digital games as media in EFL classes. Hopefully, this research could give suitable information and reference for future research.

- b. For the Teacher

It is expected to help teachers when taking into account digital games in teaching and learning materials. It is also expected that the teachers to have a better

understanding of the effects, whether positive or negative, of digital games for students as language learners.

### **E. Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid misinterpretation of the various titles and contexts of the problem under study, the definitions contained in this study are operationally defined. The definition related to this research includes:

#### **1. Non-Educational Digital Game**

Non-Educational Digital Games are games that are developed and produced completely for entertainment and do not have any direct intention to be used by the educational sector.

#### **2. Teaching Media**

Teaching media refers to the use of various forms of media, such as films, television shows, popular music, news stories, literature, documentaries, and videos, to enhance teaching and learning experiences.

#### **3. EFL Lesson**

EFL lesson refers to an activity in a classroom where the teacher gives lessons about English as a Foreign Language to Students