

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Of the Study

Among the four language skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing requires mastery of basic linguistic aspects as well as accurate spelling (Al-Sobhi *et al.*, 2018). However, in practice, spelling skills often receive less attention in the classroom compared to grammar or speaking activities. In fact, according to Ghazi *et al.* (2021), spelling proficiency is essential for both vocabulary development and reading comprehension. Despite its importance, many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students struggle with spelling because English orthography is often inconsistent with its pronunciation. This irregularity between phonemes and graphemes makes English much more challenging compared to Indonesian, which has a consistent phonetic system (Al-Jarf, 2019).

This spelling difficulty arises because English spelling does not always correspond to its pronunciation. The inconsistency between phoneme and grapheme systems makes English spelling irregular, especially when compared to Indonesian,

which has a more consistent phonetic system. As a result, many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students find it difficult to spell words correctly, often leading to errors in writing (Al-Jarf, 2019). These challenges can reduce students' confidence and hinder their ability to express ideas effectively in written form.

As technology continues to develop, innovation in learning methods becomes essential to improve students' motivation and learning effectiveness. One approach that has been widely studied is game-based learning, which integrates digital games into the learning process. Research shows that game-based learning can increase student motivation, reduce anxiety, and create a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment (Huang, 2023; Ghazi *et al.*, 2021).

One of the most popular platforms among teenagers today is Roblox. Beyond entertainment, Roblox offers a multimodal learning experience where students interact with text, audio, and visuals simultaneously. A specific example is the "Spelling Bee" game within the platform, which provides immediate feedback and repetition key factors in strengthening spelling skills (Sinar *et al.*, 2023).

At SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang, English is a compulsory subject for all students. During a teaching practicum (PLP) in Class IX.1, the researcher observed that many students struggled with correct spelling. For instance, when the word 'second' was dictated, a student asked, 'How do you spell that word, Miss?' This observation shows a lack of both spelling knowledge and vocabulary recognition, which directly affects the overall quality of students' writing. Since spelling is a

core component of the writing assessment rubric, these errors negatively impact students' scores.

While previous studies have explored digital games for general vocabulary mastery and motivation, research specifically investigating the effect of Roblox-based tools on writing achievement, particularly at the junior high school level in Indonesia, remains limited. Given the students' need for interactive practice and the potential of Roblox to bridge the gap between spelling and writing skills, this study aims to investigate the effect of using a Roblox-Based Spelling Bee Game on the writing achievement of students at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the problems identified are as follows:

1. Students' English writing achievement remains comparatively low.
2. Limited vocabulary and spelling errors make it difficult for students to produce English texts.
3. Writing is often taught through methods that lack interactivity.
4. The relationship between Roblox-based Spelling Bee games and junior high students' writing achievement has not been widely studied.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

This study limits its focuses on:

1. The use of a Roblox-Based Spelling Bee game as the teaching media.
2. Students' writing achievement as the research focus.

3. Narrative writing as the writing genre assessed.
4. Nine-grade students at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the background and the limitations of the problem, the research question is formulated as follows:

Is there a significant effect of using a Roblox-based spelling bee game on students' writing achievement at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is formulated based on the research question mentioned above. Therefore, the study aims to:

To determine the effect of using a Roblox-Based Spelling Bee game on students' writing achievement at SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang.

1.6 Significance of the Study

1. Theoretical Significance

This research seeks to contribute to the theoretical understanding of game-based learning as a means of strengthening foundational writing skills, particularly spelling accuracy.

2. Practical Significance

The findings are intended to be of practical value to several groups:

a. For Teachers

This study may help teachers consider using interactive digital platforms such as Roblox to support vocabulary learning.

b. For Students

This study may introduce a fun, engaging way to practice vocabulary through a spelling bee game in Roblox.

c. For Future Researchers

This research can be a reference for further research related to digital media and improving writing achievement.

1.7 Definition of Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, several terms are defined as follows:

1. Writing Achievement

Writing achievement refers to students' overall performance in writing, which is measured through writing tests using a scoring rubric that assesses content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

2. Roblox Application

An online game platform that allows users to play and create games. In this study, Roblox is used as a medium for spelling practice.

3. Spelling Bee Game

An activity where students listen to a word and spell it orally, supporting vocabulary recall and phonological awareness.

4. SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang

A state junior high school in Tanjungpinang, Indonesia, where the study is conducted.