

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The digital transformation in Indonesian education became increasingly apparent since the COVID-19 pandemic, with many high schools now regularly incorporating online platforms into their teaching routines. This change forced teachers to seek learning media that not only delivered material effectively but also increased student engagement. In the context of English language learning, challenges related to motivation and confidence remained major obstacles for tenth-grade students, who often experienced a decline in consistency in learning outside of class hours.

Game-based learning emerged as a proven solution to increase learning motivation. Game elements, such as points, leaderboards, and badges, fostered a sense of healthy competition and curiosity that was higher than conventional methods. In Indonesia, the popularity of interactive quiz applications such as Kahoot!, Quizizz, and Zep Quiz continued to increase, in line with teachers' needs to integrate gamification into the language learning process.

Among these platforms, Zep Quiz emerged as a notable newcomer. Launched in 2022, it was a game-based tournament quiz platform that allowed teachers to present questions in an engaging and competitive format (Setyaningrum

et al. 2025). Its real-time feedback, badges, and leaderboards allowed teachers to provide challenges that were both educational and fun. By 2024, the platform had gained a global popularity of over 4.7 million, and was adopted by many educational institutions in Indonesia, which demonstrated its potential for widespread adoption as a platform at the high school level.

However, this rapid adoption of Zep Quiz was not matched by sufficient academic inquiry into the learners' own viewpoints, creating a significant research gap. Irwanto et al (2024) found that the majority of high school students had a positive opinion of the use of digital games in the learning process, but the study was general in nature and did not focus on a specific platform. This indicated a need to specifically examine students' perceptions of Zep Quiz.

The previous study that most closely approaches this topic is the study by Rohmatus et al (2021), which explored students' perceptions of Wordwall and Zep Quiz integrated with the Think-Pair-Share strategy in language learning. Although the results showed a positive attitude towards Zep Quiz, the study was limited to vocational schools (SMK) and combined two platforms at once, so it could not explain in detail students' perceptions of Zep Quiz alone in a regular high school environment.

Another study examining similar quiz platforms, such as Quizizz, provided additional insights Bakhtiar et al. (2024) report that students found Quizizz enhanced classroom interaction and provided quick feedback. Sorohiti et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of visual aesthetics and point mechanisms in shaping

students' positive attitudes toward quiz applications. Although these findings were relevant, the differences in interface and content between Quizizz and Zep Quiz made it difficult to generalize the results.

At a conceptual level, Zhyhadlo (2022) examined the application of digital game tools for formative assessment in foreign language lessons and highlighted that gamification can strengthen the continuous evaluation process. However, the study did not include empirical data on Zep Quiz, leaving a lack of concrete evidence regarding the effectiveness of this platform for English language learning in high schools.

Furthermore, a review of the existing literature showed that research on gamified learning platforms often relies on purely quantitative surveys, which might lack depth in understanding student experiences, or purely qualitative approaches, which might not capture broader trends. The dominant use of a single method limited the scope of findings, necessitating a more comprehensive analysis that could be provided by a mixed-method design.

Based on the above description, three research gaps underlay the need for this study: (a) the lack of research focusing on Zep Quiz usage in high school English classes; (b) the lack of studies that specifically examine tenth grade, even though this phase was a critical point of transition to more complex language material; and (c) the limited use of a mixed (quantitative-qualitative) approach to understand not only the level of satisfaction but also the factors that influence student

perceptions. Filling these gaps would provide a strong scientific basis for learning practices and educational policies.

The researcher's preliminary observations during the *Pengenalan Lingkungan Persekolahan* (PLP) program and interview with the teachers at SMAN 1 Tanjungpinang served to further emphasize the importance of this study. The results showed that Zep Quiz had been used since students started learning English in the tenth grade. To determine students' current level of English language proficiency, teachers used Zep Quiz as a preliminary assessment tool. This early exposure made it crucial to understand how students perceive this platform, as their initial experiences can significantly could shape their ongoing engagement and motivation. The practical need of SMAN 1 Tanjungpinang to optimize the use of Zep Quiz to improve motivation and English learning outcomes provided a concrete context for this investigation.

Therefore, this study was conducted to explore tenth-grade students' perceptions at SMAN 1 Tanjungpinang regarding the use of Zep Quiz as a supporting tool in their English language learning. The findings were expected to provide practical insights for English teachers in designing more engaging and effective formative assessments using Zep Quiz, and to offer evidence-based considerations for schools regarding the integration of gamified learning tools. Furthermore, this study aimed to enrich the existing literature on gamification in language learning, particularly in the Indonesian high school context, by focusing on a platform with distinct interactive features.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the Background above, the problem identified in this study were:

1. Research on the use of Zep Quiz in English language learning is still limited;
2. Studies on the use of Zep Quiz had not focused on tenth-grade students, especially in the Senior High School context;
3. A mixed approach (quantitative and qualitative) had not been widely used to understand student learning experiences through Zep Quiz.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

This study was focused on Students' perceptions of the Use of Zep Quiz in English Language Learning at the Tenth Grade of SMAN 1 Tanjungpinang.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the background above, the research question was formulated as: "How did tenth-grade students at SMAN 1 Tanjungpinang perceive the use of Zep Quiz for English language learning?"

1.5 Research Objectives

The objective of this research was to explore students' perceptions on the use of Zep Quiz to facilitate their English language learning.

1.6 Significance of Research

1. Theoretical Significance

This research was expected to contribute to the body of knowledge in Educational Technology, specifically in the field of Game-Based Learning (GBL) and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) theories. It provided empirical data on the application of an interactive and immersive game-based platform in a real classroom setting, enriching the existing literature, which was dominated by studies on more conventional GBL tools.

2. Practical Significance

a. For Teachers

The findings provided English teachers with evidence-based insights into the advantages and potential pitfalls of using Zep Quiz. This insight helped guide teachers in designing more effective, engaging, and innovative lesson plans that increased student participation.

b. For Schools and educational institutions

The result of this study served as a valuable reference for school administrators in considering the adoption or optimization of gamified tools for student engagement and assessment, potentially informing decisions on teacher training regarding educational technology.

c. For Future Researchers

This study served as a baseline for future research, such as investigating the correlation between the use of Zep Quiz and specific English language skills, conducting comparative studies with other platforms, or exploring its use in different subjects or grade levels in the Indonesian senior high school.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. Zep Quiz

Zep Quiz was an interactive, collaborative learning platform based on gamification that uses virtual maps and avatars to make quizzes interesting and fun.

2. English Language Learning

In this study, it refers to the process of acquiring and developing English language skills as a foreign language through structured learning activities to improve students' reading comprehension and skills.