CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a comprehensive explanation of the research conducted. It contains the background of the study, formulation of the problems, operational definitions, aims of the study, and significance of the study.

A. Background of the Study

Grammar is the fundamental system of a language that determines how words are arranged and related to form meaningful sentences. According to Brown et al. (2000) as cited in Haryadi et al. (2021), grammar is the set of principles that govern the way words are organized and connected in sentences. Similarly, Lestari and Ningrum (2022) state that grammar serves as the primary resource for learning English and is the foundation of good language use. In simple terms, grammar helps learners form sentences correctly and understand the meaning of what they communicate. Therefore, mastering grammar requires not only knowing its rules but also being able to use them effectively in constructing sentences, which reflects students' grammar skills. However, problems in grammar learning at school do not only come from students, but also from teaching methods that are often monotonous and overly focused on theory. Many teachers use written exercises and lectures repeatedly without changing their teaching approach. As a result, students are not actively engaged in the learning process and it becomes boring. Some teachers use less innovative teaching strategies that look repetitive and make students bored (Hamdani & Novita, 2021). As a result, students often memorize rules without fully understanding how to use them in real situations, which affects their ability to form meaningful sentences.

Grammar is often seen as a difficult part of language learning because many rules are considered hard to understand and apply. This problem also occurred in the junior high school in Tasikmalaya, especially in a seventh-grade class. Based on the initial research result conducted through pre-observation, pre-interview, and pre-test, it was revealed that students face difficulties in learning grammar. The pre-

observation results in a seventh-grade class at a junior high school in Tasikmalaya revealed that problems in learning grammar were not only related to the material but also to the way the teacher taught it in class. Students may not be engaged because the teacher still uses an approach that focuses on theoretical explanations, resulting in low student engagement, such as talking to classmates or paying little attention in class, weak retention of grammar rules, and limited ability to use grammatical structures in speaking or writing tasks. After all, there were no activities that allowed students to practice using language structures directly. The pre-interview with the English teacher revealed that students find the grammar material difficult, boring, and theoretical, which leads to low engagement, low enthusiasm, and difficulty applying grammar rules in correct sentences. The pre-test result showed that student had problem in learning grammar, the mean score was 58.95 among 19 students. To overcome these problems, teachers need to implement more interactive and student-centered learning methods that can increase motivation and participation. One effective approach is the use of games as a learning tool. Games can transform the learning environment into a more enjoyable and stimulating experience, helping students engage actively while reinforcing grammatical understanding. Game-based learning, in particular, has been recognized as a promising strategy to address these issues. According to Supandhi et al. (2022), games are an excellent method of learning grammar since they provide significant advantages by making the learning process more engaging and challenging. Similarly, Sinaga et al. (2024) also found that well-designed games can create an active and engaging learning atmosphere that helps students stay focused and apply what they learn. In this study, a board game is implemented as the primary game-based learning tool to improve students' grammar skills through interactive and enjoyable classroom activities.

Board games are an excellent way to build knowledge and abilities. Board games can be used as learning tools because they can increase students' motivation and involvement in the learning process and encourage interaction among students, as they are not only enjoyable and practical but also encourage a desire for

communication and create predictability (Chotimah & Astiyandha, 2022). Learning using board games not only provides a fun learning environment but also allows students to interact and collaborate directly, making learning more effective. Furthermore, The use of board games is also related to constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes learning through experience and interaction

Previous research conducted by Montufar and Carolina (2025) has found that board games improve grammar scores as well as improve students' engagement and comprehension. The study showed that using board games in language learning can support student understanding and improve learning outcomes. Another research by Sitanggang et al., (2023) also found that board games affect students' grammar skills and learning activities. The research on data analysis showed that there was a positive effect of using Board Games on students' vocabulary and grammar.

Compared to the two previous studies, this research presents several distinct gaps in terms of focus, methodology, and participant characteristics. Although both previous studies examined the use of board games in language acquisition, The first study used a mixed methods approach and focused on grammar learning through student motivation and engagement. The second study examined the effect of board games on vocabulary and grammar using a quasi-experimental design. Unlike the two previous studies, this study uses the Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach because the main problem in teaching grammar in the classroom is not only student learning outcomes, but also how students learn grammar monotonously and are not actively involved. Teaching methods that focus too much on theory can reduce students' active participation in learning. By using the CAR design, researchers can implement board games in stages, see how effective the game is, and then make improvements at each cycle to systematically solve learning problems. This study also applied a mixed methods approach to collect both quantitative data from tests and qualitative data from observations.

B. Formulation of the Problems

Based on the phenomenon that occurred, the researcher's question addressed in this research is:

1. How can board games improve students' grammar skills?
2. To what extent can the use of board games improve students' grammar skills?

C. Operational Definitions

1. Grammar Skills

Grammar skills refer to Junior High School students' ability to understand and use grammatical rules accurately and appropriately in English. This includes the correct use of tenses, subject–verb agreement, to be, sentence structures, and word forms in both written and spoken communication.

2. Game-Based Learning

Game-Based Learning (GBL) is a learning approach that utilizes games as a medium to convey material and achieve learning objectives. In this method, board games are designed to motivate students to actively participate in the learning process, and they have the opportunity to improve their cognitive and social skills through interactive and enjoyable learning experiences.

3. Board Game

Board games can be defined as interactive game that can be used as a strategy to improve students' grammar skills in English language learning at the junior high school level. The board games used in this research such as Jenga, Bingo Board, and Snake and Ladder. It was designed to be played in a small group of students in the classroom and focused on verbal communication among them.

D. Aim of the Study

The aim of this research, based on the research question to answer the problem above, can be seen below:

1. To explore the process of improving students' grammar skills through board games.
2. To measure the improvement of students' grammar skills through board games.

E. Significances of the Study

1. Theoretical use

This research examines how interactive learning environments, such as board games, can improve students' grammar skills and also enrich the literature on language acquisition by providing insights into the role of board games in the learning process.

2. Practical use

This research provides teachers with practical strategies for integrating board games into their teaching process for a more engaging and interactive learning environment.

3. Empirical use

This research will provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of board games as a tool in language learning and offer more valuable data for future research.