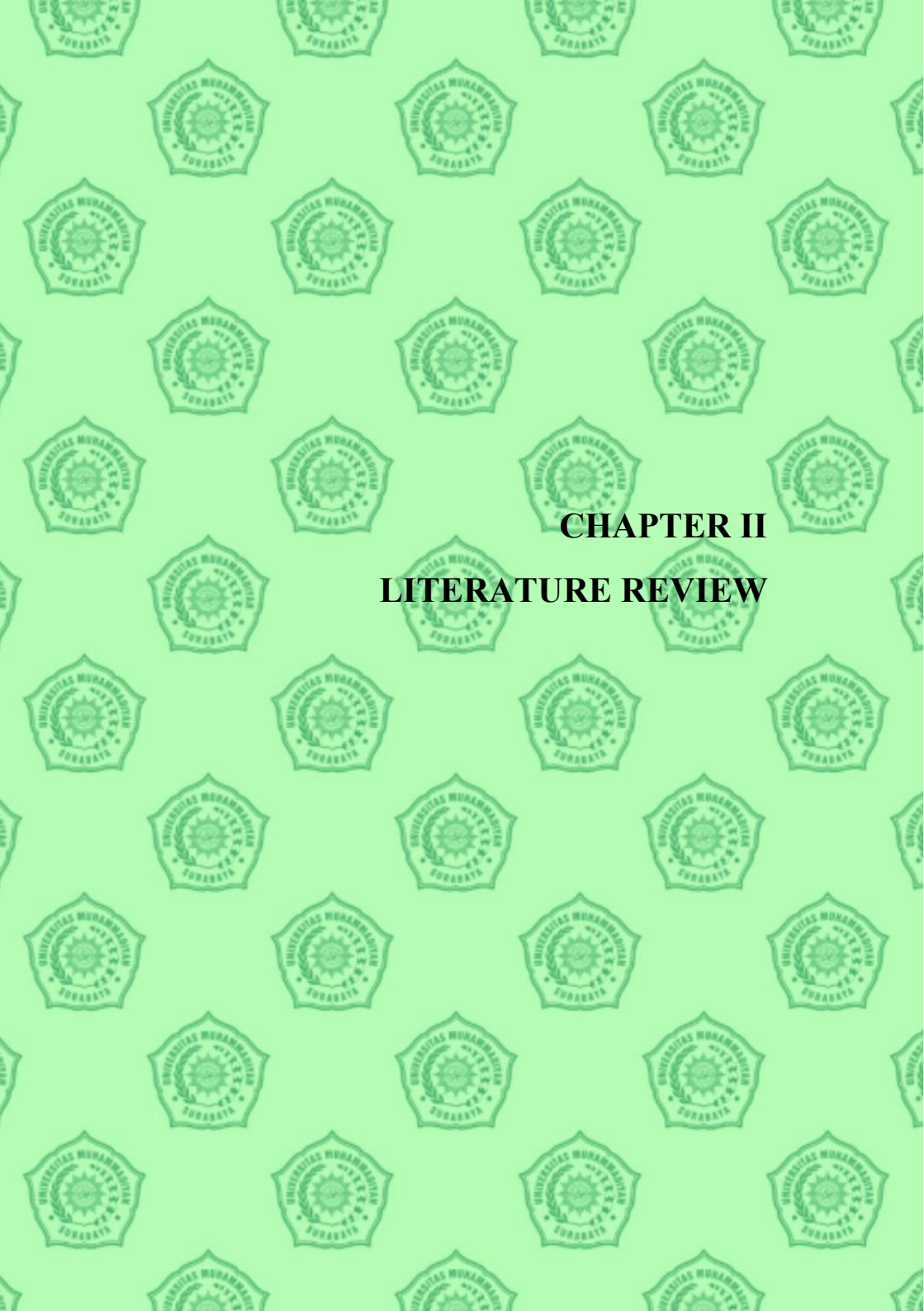




CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

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2.1 Teaching English to Young Learners

Teaching English to young learners means helping children between the ages of 5 and 12 develop their English language skills in a way that suits their developmental stage. At this level, English instruction focuses on building foundational skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing through meaningful and context-based activities. According to Cameron Lynne (2001), young learners acquire language best when it is connected to things they already know and experience in their daily lives. Teachers must therefore design lessons that are relevant, engaging, and appropriate to children's social and cognitive development.

Young learners have unique characteristics that distinguish them from older language learners. They have shorter attention spans, a preference for physical and hands-on activities, and a natural tendency to learn through play and exploration. Research by Wang (2021) highlights that play-based instructional strategies such as storytelling, songs, role-play, and games are highly effective in developing oral language skills in young learners. These methods allow children to practice English in low-stress, meaningful contexts, which supports natural language acquisition.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), teaching young learners presents specific challenges. Children in Indonesia often have very limited exposure to English outside the classroom, which means that what happens in the lesson is extremely important for their language development. This makes it essential for teachers to use strategies that maximize engagement and provide enough meaningful input. Kahoot has emerged as a promising strategy because it can simulate real communication, provide immediate feedback, and keep children's attention throughout the lesson (Saputra et al., 2021).

The integration of technology in teaching English to young learners aligns with how today's children interact with the world. Young

learners in the digital era are already familiar with screens, devices, and interactive platforms, which means technology-based activities feel natural and accessible to them. Using digital tools in English instruction not only supports language learning but also helps build digital literacy skills from an early age. When guided carefully by the teacher, technology can make English lessons more dynamic, personalized, and effective for young learners.

2.2 Characteristics of Young Learners

Understanding the characteristics of young learners is very important for teachers when designing teaching strategies and classroom environments. Young learners develop rapidly in cognitive, emotional, and social aspects, all of which influence how they learn a foreign language like English. From a cognitive perspective, young learners have high brain plasticity, which means they are able to absorb new information more easily and quickly than older learners. According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children at this stage learn best through concrete experiences, visual stimulation, and active participation rather than abstract explanations (Cameron Lynne, 2001).

Emotionally and socially, young learners are still in the process of building self-confidence, self-control, and the ability to interact with others. A positive and supportive classroom environment is therefore very important for reducing anxiety and encouraging students to participate. When children feel safe and comfortable, they are more willing to try new things, make mistakes, and engage with the lesson content. Teachers who create a warm and encouraging learning atmosphere tend to see better participation and more enthusiastic responses from their students.

Motivation is also a central factor in how young learners engage with language learning activities. Young learners tend to be more motivated when learning is enjoyable, relevant, and connected to their interests. In the digital era, young learners are highly familiar with technology and online platforms, which means that digital tools can be powerful motivators in the classroom. However, teachers must manage

technology use carefully to ensure it serves the learning objectives and does not distract students from the lesson.

In summary, young learners are best supported through interactive, playful, and technology-friendly learning environments. Their characteristics indicate that game-based learning approaches, especially digital ones, are a very appropriate and effective strategy for teaching English at the elementary school level. These characteristics also suggest that teachers need to be creative, flexible, and responsive to their students' needs in order to design lessons that are both engaging and educationally meaningful.

2.3 Kahoot

Kahoot is an instructional approach that uses digital games as a medium to deliver educational content and support learning outcomes. Unlike traditional teaching methods that often rely on passive listening and repetition, Kahoot encourages students to actively participate in goal-oriented tasks that involve problem-solving, decision-making, and communication. According to (W. D. Huang & Johnson, 2009), educational games are uniquely positioned to combine entertainment with pedagogy, creating situated learning contexts where students apply knowledge as part of the gameplay. This makes Kahoot particularly effective for young learners who benefit from learning through doing.

The concept of Kahoot is rooted in the understanding that games provide intrinsic motivation, which means students play and engage not because they are told to, but because they genuinely want to. Games create structured challenges, offer immediate feedback, and reward progress, all of which encourage students to keep trying and learning. Macmillan (2012) argue that when games are strategically aligned with instructional objectives, they can produce meaningful learning rather than just entertainment. This distinction between purposeful educational gaming and recreational play is central to understanding why Kahoot can be an effective tool in the English classroom.

Another important aspect of Kahoot is its compatibility with the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework. TPACK, developed by Koehler & Mishra (2009), describes the kind of knowledge teachers need to effectively integrate technology into subject-specific teaching. According to this framework, effective technology use in teaching requires not only knowledge of the technology itself, but also deep understanding of how it connects with both the content being taught and the best pedagogical approaches for that content. Teachers who implement Kahoot well are those who understand both the English language content and how to use digital platforms in ways that enhance student learning.

Despite its many benefits, implementing Kahoot in formal classroom settings also comes with challenges. Game design must balance educational content with engaging gameplay in order to avoid superficial learning or excessive cognitive overload for students (Hamari et al., 2016). Teachers also need to align game activities with curriculum standards and learning objectives, which requires careful planning and pedagogical knowledge. Accessibility issues, such as limited devices or unstable internet connections, can also create barriers, especially in schools with limited resources. Addressing these challenges is an important part of making Kahoot work effectively in practice.

2.4 TPACK in Kahoot

The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, introduced by (Koehler & Mishra, 2009), provides a useful lens for understanding how teachers integrate technology into their teaching practice. TPACK describes three core knowledge domains: content knowledge (what to teach), pedagogical knowledge (how to teach), and technological knowledge (how to use technology). When these three domains intersect, they produce the integrated knowledge that teachers need to use technology effectively in subject-specific instruction. For English teachers using Kahoot, this means they must understand both the language content they want students to learn and how to use digital game platforms to support that learning.

In the context of teaching English to young learners, the TPACK framework helps explain why some teachers are more effective than others at using digital games in the classroom. A teacher with strong TPACK does not simply use a game because it is available or popular. Instead, they deliberately choose games that match the specific language objectives of the lesson and adapt their facilitation style to make sure the game supports the desired learning outcomes. Koehler & Mishra, (2009) emphasize that TPACK is not just about having technology skills, but about understanding the complex relationship between technology, teaching, and content. This integrated understanding is what makes technology use in the classroom meaningful and purposeful.

Research has shown that TPACK significantly influences teachers' confidence and competence in integrating technology into their teaching. Angeli & Valanides (2009) argue that TPACK-informed teaching involves transforming content through technology in ways that are more engaging and accessible than non-digital approaches. In the case of Kahoot, this transformation happens when a teacher uses a platform like Quizizz not just as a quiz tool, but as a way to structure vocabulary practice, provide instant feedback, and create a competitive yet supportive learning atmosphere. The pedagogical intent behind the technology use is what makes it educationally powerful.

Understanding TPACK also helps explain why professional development for teachers is so important when adopting Kahoot. Teachers need not only technical training on how to use digital platforms, but also guidance on how to connect those platforms to their specific content and teaching goals. Hafifah (2019) notes that technology in education should serve the learning process, not replace the teacher's role. This aligns with the TPACK view that the teacher remains central to the learning experience, using technology as a tool to enhance, not substitute, effective instruction.

2.5 Benefits of Kahoot in English Teaching and Learning

Kahoot offers a range of meaningful benefits for students, especially young learners studying English as a foreign language. One of the most significant benefits is the increase in student motivation and engagement during lessons. Games naturally attract children's attention, and when learning content is embedded in game activities, students become more willing to participate actively and stay focused throughout the lesson. A study by A. Huang (2023) found that Kahoot significantly improved EFL students' motivation, showing that games can create a more positive attitude toward learning English.

Another important benefit of Kahoot is its ability to support vocabulary development and language skill practice. Interactive games provide multiple exposures to vocabulary items through varied tasks, which supports better retention and understanding. During game-based sessions, students were observed to be more willing to collaborate with peers, ask questions, and participate in classroom discussions (Salsabila Huwaidah et al., 2025). This kind of active and repeated engagement with language content is essential for young learners who need multiple meaningful encounters with new vocabulary in order to learn it effectively.

Kahoot also supports a wide range of cognitive and social skills that go beyond language learning. Many educational games require students to make decisions, think strategically, and solve problems, all of which promote critical thinking. Multiplayer or team-based games encourage communication and cooperation among learners, helping them develop social skills alongside their English proficiency. These broader developmental benefits make Kahoot especially well-suited to the holistic learning goals of elementary education, where teachers are not only teaching language but also helping students grow as individuals.

Furthermore, digital platforms used in game-based learning often include features such as progress tracking, leaderboards, and instant feedback, which give students a sense of achievement and make them

aware of their own learning progress. Platforms like Quizizz and Kahoot use these features to create a positive and competitive yet supportive learning environment that encourages students to keep trying and improving. According to Perdana et al. (2025), Kahoot increases the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction in elementary school settings. These benefits collectively show why Kahoot has become an increasingly popular and valuable strategy in English language teaching.

2.6 Implementation of Kahoot Learning in Teaching English to Young Learners

Implementing Kahoot in the English classroom requires careful planning and alignment between game activities and learning objectives. Teachers must select or design games that target specific language skills such as vocabulary, pronunciation, or simple sentence structures, and ensure that these games are appropriate for the age and level of the students. A critical part of implementation is how the teacher introduces and facilitates the game, as the teacher's role during Kahoot goes beyond simply pressing play. Salsabila Huwaidah et al. (2025) note that through game-based activities, students are trained not only to complete academic tasks but also to collaborate, think critically, and develop enthusiasm for learning.

Teacher facilitation is one of the most important factors in making Kahoot effective. According to Putri et al. (2025), when teachers integrate digital games into Indonesian primary school classrooms, their role evolves from mere instructor to multifaceted facilitator, taking on the roles of mentor, motivator, and evaluator. This shift means that teachers must be actively involved before, during, and after the game activity, rather than simply handing over the lesson to the technology. Effective facilitation includes giving clear instructions, monitoring student behavior, connecting game content to lesson material, and providing feedback after the activity.

The selection of the right platform also plays an important role in successful implementation. Platforms such as Quizizz and Kahoot are

widely used in Indonesian English classrooms because they are easy to use, visually engaging, and designed to motivate students through competitive elements. Quizizz allows students to answer questions at their own pace while still being able to see how others are doing, which balances individual learning with a sense of friendly competition. Kahoot, on the other hand, uses real-time quizzes with colorful visuals and sound effects that are particularly effective in maintaining the energy and attention of young learners during whole-class activities.

Finally, Kahoot implementation must also consider the practical challenges of the classroom environment. Issues such as limited time, classroom management, and access to devices and internet can affect how smoothly game-based activities run. Teachers need to plan carefully for these potential obstacles and have alternative strategies ready when technology does not work as expected. Assessment within Kahoot contexts should also include observation and reflection rather than relying only on test scores, in order to capture the full range of students' language development and engagement during game-based activities.

2.7 Previous Studies

Several previous studies have examined the use of Kahoot in language education, particularly in EFL contexts. Macmillan (2012) found that digital games can enhance students' intrinsic motivation when they are meaningfully integrated into instructional practice. Their findings suggest that learning is most effective when games are aligned with clear educational goals rather than being used simply as entertainment. Similarly, W. D. Huang & Johnson (2009) found that Kahoot positively influences both student achievement and engagement in ESL classrooms, with teacher facilitation playing a key role in maximizing outcomes.

In the context of young learners specifically, Vnucko & Klimova (2023) demonstrated that digital games are particularly effective in improving vocabulary acquisition and creating interactive learning environments. They argue that game-based activities support repetition, contextual learning, and student-centered interaction, which are essential

elements of early language development. Furthermore, Hanif et al. (2023) showed that platforms such as Quizizz can increase student participation, provide immediate feedback, and make lessons more enjoyable, especially when supported by appropriate teaching strategies from the teacher.

Putri et al. (2025) conducted a qualitative case study in Indonesian primary schools and found that Kahoot is highly effective in fostering student engagement and improving English language acquisition. Their findings also showed that teachers who implement Kahoot take on multiple roles, including mentor, motivator, and evaluator, which demonstrates the active and important role of the teacher in making game-based learning successful. This study is particularly relevant to the present research because it shares a similar context: digital game use in Indonesian elementary English classrooms.

While the previous studies confirm the benefits of Kahoot in terms of motivation, vocabulary development, and student engagement, most of them focus primarily on learning outcomes or the effectiveness of specific platforms. Limited attention has been given to examining how teachers actually plan, organize, and implement Kahoot strategies in real classroom settings, particularly in elementary schools in urban areas of Indonesia. The present study therefore aims to fill this gap by exploring in depth how Kahoot is implemented by a teacher at an elementary school in Surabaya, and what challenges arise during that process.