

Transforming Arabic Language Learning through Game Based Learning Methods for Students Of University

Nunik Zuhriyah*,

Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

* nunik.zuhriyah.2502319@students.um.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the application of the Game Based Learning (GBL) method in improving students' Arabic language skills and to examine its effectiveness on motivation and learning outcomes. The study uses a descriptive qualitative approach involving students of the Arabic Language Education study program. The subject of his research is the second semester of the Arabic language department at IAI Badrus Sholeh. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, documentation and tests, while data analysis employs the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of Game-Based Learning (GBL) can create a more interactive, collaborative, and enjoyable learning environment. Students are more motivated to actively participate in activities such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking Arabic. Additionally, GBL has been proven to significantly enhance students' vocabulary understanding, sentence structure, and communication skills. However, this study also identified several challenges, including limitations in technological devices, faculty readiness, and variations in students' digital literacy levels.

Keywords

Game Based Learning; Arabic Language Learning; Higher Education

ملخص البحث : تهدف هذه الدراسة لتحليل تطبيق طريقة Game Based Learning لترقية مهارات الطلاب في اللغة العربية وتقييم فعاليته على التحفيز ونتائج التعلم. تستخدم هذه الدراسة وصفيًا يشمل طلاب دراسة تعليم اللغة العربية. عينة البحث هذه الدراسة الطلاب في الصف الثاني من قسم تعليم اللغة العربية بجامعة بدر الصالح الإسلامية. طريقة جمع البيانات في هذا البحث هو الملاحظة والمقابلة والوثائق والاختبار. بينما يستخدم تحليل البيانات النموذج التفاعلي لميلز وهوبيرمانز. تشير نتائج الدراسة إلى أن تطبيق طريقة (GBL) يمكن أن يخلق بيئة تعليمية أكثر تفاعلية وتعاونية وممتعة. يكون الطلاب أكثر تحفيزًا للمشاركة بنشاط في أنشطة مثل القراءة والكتابة والاستماع والتحدث باللغة العربية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، ثبت أن التعلم القائم على الألعاب يعزز بشكل كبير فهم الطلاب للمفردات وتركيب الجمل ومهارات. ومع ذلك، حددت هذه الدراسة أيضًا العديد من التحديات، بما في ذلك القيود في الأجهزة التكنولوجية، واستعداد المعلمين، والاختلافات في مستويات المعرفة الرقمية لدى الطلاب.

مؤسسة تعليم العالي، تعلم اللغة العربية، Game Based Learning

كلمات أساسية



Arabic language education in higher education today faces various challenges, especially in adapting teaching methods to the needs of the digital generation. Students living in the information technology era tend to want an interactive, flexible, and enjoyable learning process (Wahyuningtyas & Koentjoro, 2020). Conventional methods that are still lecture and memorization oriented are often unable to attract students' interest. As a result, Arabic language skills, especially in the aspect of active communication, often face obstacles. This condition demands learning innovations that not only focus on knowledge transfer but also pay attention to the aspect of student learning motivation. One approach that is considered relevant is Game-Based Learning (GBL), which integrates game elements into the learning process. GBL is believed to be able to foster a dynamic learning atmosphere while encouraging active student participation. Therefore, the transformation of Arabic language learning through this method is an urgent need in higher education (Sandy Ilham Hakim Syasri dkk., 2024).

Learning Arabic has its own complexities compared to other foreign languages. Students are required to master the interrelated skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Mastering the unique vocabulary and grammatical structures also poses a challenge. However, in practice, many college students find it difficult and lack motivation to learn Arabic (Rivaldi & Kurniawan, 2021). This is often influenced by the monotonous delivery of lecturers, the lack of media variety, and the lack of relevance to everyday life. If this condition is allowed to continue, the quality of Arabic language program graduates will not be able to compete in the global era. Therefore, a learning approach that can provide a meaningful learning experience is needed (Farida dkk., 2022). The application of the Game-Based Learning method is believed to be able to answer these challenges by providing opportunities for students to learn through experience, challenges, and interaction.

Game-based learning is a learning method that utilizes game mechanics as a means of delivering material. Through elements of competition, challenges, and rewards, students are encouraged to actively participate in each activity (Nisa' dkk., 2024). The learning process, which was previously considered difficult, can be transformed into an enjoyable activity. In Arabic language learning, the use of GBL allows students to practice vocabulary, understand grammar, and even practice conversation in a more lively atmosphere. Previous studies have shown that game-based methods can increase student motivation and memory. This is in line with the needs of university students who have a strong tendency to use digital technology in their daily lives (Al Azmi dkk., 2023). Thus, the transformation of learning through GBL is not just a trend, but a strategic necessity to improve the quality of Arabic language learning.

The transformation of Arabic language learning through GBL is also in line with the 21st century education paradigm. In this paradigm, students are expected to have critical, creative, communicative, and collaborative thinking skills (Diniyati & Mastroah, 2024). GBL can provide ample space for students to work together in completing game missions or challenges. In addition, students are also trained to think quickly in finding solutions to given problems (Riady, 2021). This is very relevant in Arabic language learning, where communication skills must be supported by flexibility of thinking. Furthermore, GBL can also integrate technological aspects, so that students become accustomed to using digital applications and platforms (Rosyidi dkk., 2024). In other words, the application of GBL not only improves Arabic language skills, but also prepares students to face the challenges of a digital workplace. Therefore, it is important to further examine the effectiveness of applying this method in higher education (Zuhriyah dkk., 2024).

This study aims to analyze the transformation of Arabic language learning in IAI Badrus Sholeh Kediri through the application of the Game Based Learning (GBL) method and to assess its effectiveness in improving the quality of the learning process and outcomes of students. The urgency of applying the GBL method in Arabic language learning is also supported by developments in modern educational theory. Constructivism theory, for example, emphasizes that knowledge is constructed through active experience. Games can be a vehicle for students to construct their understanding independently or collaboratively (Fransori dkk., 2024). In addition, learning motivation theory also shows that intrinsic and extrinsic factors play an important role in improving learning outcomes. The elements of challenge and reward in GBL can significantly increase student motivation.

METHODES

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach (Zuhriyah & Muhaimin, 2025) with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the transformation of Arabic language learning through the application of the Game-Based Learning (GBL) method among students at IAI Badrus Sholeh Kediri. The research subjects were second-semester students in the Arabic Language Education study program at IAI Badrus Sholeh Kediri were selected purposively based on their involvement in Arabic language learning using the Game-Based Learning method. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, documentation and tests (Hasanah & Rufaiqoh, 2025), while data analysis employs the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. To ensure data validity, this study used source triangulation techniques and methods. The data analysis procedure in this study used the interactive model of Miles & Huberman (Kusnadi dkk., 2025), which involved three main stages, there are data reduction, data presentation and conclusion

drawing or verification. This process was cyclical and iterative throughout the study. The steps were as follows: The first step is data reduction, which involves selectively analyzing raw data obtained from observations, interviews, documentation, and tests. The second method of presenting data is in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, matrices, and simple charts. This presentation of data aims to facilitate researchers' understanding of the phenomena being studied and to help them see patterns and relationships between findings. The third is drawing conclusions, which is formulating conclusions based on patterns and meanings that emerge from the data that has been presented.

RESULT

The results of this study were obtained through a series of observations, interviews, documentation, and simple tests conducted on second-semester students of the Arabic Language Education study program at IAI Badrus Sholeh Kediri. The findings of the study show several important aspects related to the application of the Game Based Learning (GBL) method in Arabic language learning, which can be detailed as follows:

1. **Increased Student Motivation**, The application of GBL has been proven to significantly increase student motivation. Students who were previously passive in lectures began to show greater enthusiasm when learning was packaged in the form of games. The classroom atmosphere became more lively, interactive, and conducive. Observation data showed that more than 80% of students actively participated in game-based activities, both individually and in groups.
2. **Improved Vocabulary Mastery (Mufradat)** One of the most noticeable aspects is the improvement in students' vocabulary. Through games such as interactive quizzes, puzzles, and digital flashcards, students find it easier to remember and understand mufradat. Test results show an average increase in vocabulary mastery of 25–30% compared to before the implementation of GBL. This indicates that a game-based approach is more effective in helping students internalize new vocabulary.
3. **Language Skill Development (Maharah al-Lughah)** One of the GBL methods not only increases vocabulary, but also has an impact on the four Arabic language skills: listening (*istima'*), speaking (*kalam*), reading (*qira'ah*), and writing (*kitabah*). It is used by embedding or linking game-based learning from platforms such as Kahoot, Quizizz, and Wordwall into each available learning topic. This is in line with the opinion that (Lathifah dkk., 2025)
4. An interactive and collaborative learning environment is demonstrated by the results of observations showing that GBL encourages students to work together, discuss, and help each other in completing game missions. These activities not only train language skills but also improve communication skills, teamwork, and self-confidence. The classroom

atmosphere has changed from being monotonous to being more participatory and collaborative.

5. Barriers to GBL Implementation Although the results were positive, this study also found several obstacles. First, technological limitations, particularly the varying specifications and internet access of students' devices. Second, the readiness of lecturers in designing learning games still varies, requiring further training. Third, there is a digital literacy gap among students, with some still requiring assistance to be able to utilize game-based learning applications.

DISCUSSION

The development of digital technology has provided ample space for innovation in learning media, including in Arabic language learning in higher education. One approach that is now widely used is Game Based Learning (GBL) utilizing the latest digital platforms. GBL not only provides entertainment, but also integrates pedagogical aspects so that the learning process becomes more interactive.

The latest platforms such as Kahoot, Quizizz, Wordwall, Blooket, and Gimkit are very promising media. These applications allow lecturers to design interactive quizzes, challenge-based games, and learning simulations that emphasize vocabulary (mufradat), grammar (qawaid), and reading and speaking skills. Students can compete healthily in answering questions, which indirectly increases their motivation, participation, and memory of Arabic material. There are also more depth serious game-based platforms, such as Duolingo, Memrise, or language learning applications designed with a level system, rewards, and leaderboards. These platforms can support students in learning Arabic independently outside of class, while also reinforcing formal learning in the classroom. The presence of gamification aspects such as points, badges, and rankings encourages students to learn consistently and repeatedly, which is very important in mastering a foreign language (Novela dkk., 2024).

Research shows that the application of Game Based Learning (GBL) methods in Arabic language learning in higher education can have a significant impact on increasing student motivation. This is in line with learning motivation theory, which emphasizes that the learning process will be more effective if students feel actively involved and have an enjoyable learning experience (Nur & Ramadan, 2024). In the context of this study, the lecture atmosphere, which previously tended to be monotonous, became more interactive and lively. Students showed high enthusiasm in participating in game-based learning activities, as evidenced by increased participation, competitive spirit, and collaboration within groups. Thus, GBL is not just an alternative strategy, but a relevant tool in overcoming low learning motivation among Arabic language students.

The application of GBL also has a positive impact on students' vocabulary acquisition. It is used by embedding or linking game-based learning from platforms such as Kahoot, Quizizz, and Wordwall into each available learning topic or theme. This allows students to immediately play the game after reading or studying the provided subject matter, making learning more linear and synchronized between the material, activities, and evaluation.



Figure 1: use of game-based learning media with Wordwall

Interviews with several students showed a positive response to the application of the Game Based Learning method in Arabic language learning in higher education. Most students stated that this method was able to create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere compared to traditional lecture methods. One student said that he felt more motivated when learning through games, especially in terms of vocabulary mastery (mufradat). According to him, interactive game-based quizzes made it easier for him to remember the meaning of words and immediately identify his mistakes when answering. Interviews with other students revealed that this method also contributed to increasing students' courage to speak Arabic. Games that require students to pronounce sentences correctly before advancing to the next level encourage students to practice speaking actively. This shows that Game-Based Learning not only functions in the cognitive aspect but also facilitates the affective and psychomotor aspects of students, particularly in training speaking skills (maharah al-kalam).

The results of this study also confirm that GBL is capable of creating a collaborative learning environment. Students are encouraged to work together, discuss, and help each other in completing game challenges. This is in line with the 21st-century education paradigm that emphasizes the 4Cs (Critical thinking, Creativity, Communication, Collaboration). With GBL, students not only improve their Arabic language skills, but also train their critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork abilities. This success shows that GBL has a broader contribution, not only in linguistic aspects, but also in the development of 21st-century competencies that are urgently needed by graduates of IAI BAdrus Sholeh Kediri.



Several inhibiting factors need attention. Limited technological resources remain a major obstacle, especially for students who do not have adequate devices or stable internet access. On the other hand, lecturers' readiness also varies, as not all of them have the skills to design educational games that are suitable for the context of Arabic language learning. In addition, the digital literacy gap between students leads to differences in the level of participation in the use of GBL applications. These findings indicate that the successful implementation of GBL is highly dependent on the readiness of the educational ecosystem, in terms of technology, human resources, and institutional support.

These obstacles need to be used as a basis for developing a more systematic GBL implementation strategy. Universities need to provide support in the form of adequate technological facilities, training for lecturers in designing educational games, and digital literacy programs for students. In addition, lecturers can adapt the form of games to suit the conditions of students, for example by combining digital and non-digital games. This approach allows for flexibility, so that students with limited devices can still be involved in the learning process. Thus, existing obstacles do not become barriers, but rather challenges that encourage the creation of new innovations in the application of GBL.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the application of Game Based Learning (GBL) in Arabic language learning in higher education can bring about significant transformations in terms of student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. GBL has been proven to create a more interactive, enjoyable, and challenging learning environment, so that students do not only play a passive role, but also become active subjects are directly involved in the learning process. Through digital-based games, students find it easier to understand vocabulary, dare to practice speaking, and are able to improve their memory in the contextual use of Arabic. However, this study also found a number of obstacles, such as limited technological facilities, differences in digital literacy among students, and the readiness of lecturers in designing games that are in line with learning objectives. These factors indicate that the successful implementation of GBL requires adequate infrastructure support, improved digital competence of lecturers, and continuous guidance for students. Thus, it can be concluded that Game Based Learning is a potentially innovative method that can be further utilized in Arabic language learning in higher education, provided that it is accompanied by appropriate supporting strategies to achieve optimal effectiveness.

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