



GAME-BASED LEARNING AS AN INNOVATIVE STRATEGY IN INDONESIAN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the implementation of Game-Based Learning (GBL) as an innovative strategy in Indonesian language learning through a theoretical review. The method employed is a literature review examining various articles, journals, and theses related to the implementation of GBL. Data were collected through a systematic literature search in academic databases such as Google Scholar, SINTA, GARUDA, and university repositories. The findings indicate that GBL enhances students' motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. Media such as Kahoot!, Wordwall, Genially, Classcraft, and project-based games effectively support reading, writing, speaking, and text comprehension skills. GBL also promotes the development of 21st-century skills (4C), namely critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. However, its implementation faces challenges, including limited teachers' digital literacy, technological readiness, potential distractions, and unequal access to devices. Overall, GBL has strong potential to improve the quality of Indonesian language learning when systematically designed and supported by adequate teacher competence.

Keywords: Game-Based Learning; Indonesian language learning; motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Game-Based Learning (GBL) is increasingly recognized as an innovative instructional strategy capable of optimizing the learning process, particularly in Indonesian language education. In the rapidly evolving digital era, game-based approaches have become relevant alternatives for enhancing students' interest and engagement. Agrita (2025) states that GBL not only encourages active participation but also helps students understand learning materials more deeply through enjoyable learning experiences. However, the implementation of GBL in Indonesian language learning in Indonesia remains limited, despite its significant potential to address contemporary educational challenges.

Conventional teaching methods are often considered insufficient in fostering students' learning motivation, especially in subjects frequently perceived as less engaging. GBL offers an alternative by integrating game elements such as rules, challenges, point systems, levels, and rewards into instructional activities, making learning more interactive and less monotonous. Muharam (2024) explains that students who participate in game-based learning tend to demonstrate stronger comprehension and better ability to apply knowledge in real contexts. Beyond improving comprehension, GBL also



supports the development of 21st-century skills. Lisa and Muthohar (2024) emphasize that GBL enhances the 4C skills (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication), which are essential in modern education. Through educational games, students engage in problem-solving, discussion, and teamwork activities that promote active involvement and critical thinking.

From an implementation perspective, GBL requires systematic planning. Teachers need to identify targeted competencies, select or design games aligned with learning materials, provide clear instructions, and conduct reflection and evaluation. In this way, games function not merely as entertainment but as structured and meaningful learning tools that help students understand Indonesian language concepts in contextual ways. Nevertheless, several challenges remain. Sari et al. (2022) reveal that Indonesian language learning in the Industry 4.0 era faces obstacles related to teachers' and students' digital literacy, the availability of infrastructure, and curriculum adaptation to technological advancements. Limited access to devices and insufficient teacher competence in designing effective educational games are significant barriers.

Motivation also plays a crucial role in learning success. Muhammad (2025) asserts that motivation is a key determinant of effective learning. By combining entertainment and education, GBL has the potential to enhance students' intrinsic motivation, as they feel both challenged and engaged in the learning process. In addition to cognitive and motivational aspects, GBL contributes to students' social and emotional development. Raharjo et al. (2024) highlight the importance of emotional factors in learning, which are often overlooked in conventional methods. Through collaborative and interactive games, students develop teamwork skills, emotional regulation, and self-confidence within a positive learning environment.

Based on these opportunities and challenges, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of implementing Game-Based Learning in Indonesian language instruction and its contribution to improving students' motivation and learning outcomes. This research is expected to provide both conceptual and practical foundations for developing more innovative, interactive, and relevant instructional strategies in the digital era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a literature review approach to examine Game-Based Learning (GBL) as an innovative strategy in Indonesian language instruction. The review focuses on analyzing the advantages, challenges, and implementation recommendations of GBL within the context of Indonesian language learning. Zed, as cited in Juliangkary et al. (2022), explains that a literature review is a series of scholarly activities that include collecting relevant references, conducting critical reading, taking systematic notes, and processing and interpreting research materials in a structured manner.

The data were obtained from scholarly articles, journals, and theses discussing the implementation of GBL in Indonesian language learning published between 2021 and 2025. The analysis was conducted through thematic

synthesis by identifying major themes, such as the enhancement of learning motivation, the development of 21st-century skills (4C), and challenges related to technology and digital literacy. Furthermore, a comparative analysis across studies was carried out to identify patterns, trends, and best practices, including the use of learning platforms such as Kahoot! and Wordwall. The findings of this review provide conceptual and practical recommendations for educators in integrating GBL systematically and effectively in accordance with Indonesian language learning objectives.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Learning Motivation

Game-based learning contributes significantly to the enhancement of students' learning motivation through its interactive, adaptive, and participatory characteristics. This model offers a learning experience that differs from conventional methods, which tend to be one-directional. Students are no longer passive recipients of information; instead, they actively engage in exploring materials, making decisions, and completing challenges designed in alignment with instructional objectives. High levels of interactivity create two-way communication between students and the learning media, making the learning process more dynamic, engaging, and meaningful. Fauzi et al. (2023) state that game-based learning has great potential to improve students' learning motivation. Similarly, D. Hasanah et al. (2023) explain that games present learning tasks in an enjoyable and challenging format, thereby creating an environment that stimulates interest and the desire to learn.

The learning environment constructed through game elements such as appealing visuals, narratives, progressive challenges, and instant feedback further strengthens students' emotional engagement. A positive emotional atmosphere plays an important role in fostering learning readiness and reducing boredom. When students enjoy the learning process, academic pressure can be minimized, and learning activities are no longer perceived as a burden. This situation encourages the emergence of motivation that develops naturally from within, rather than being driven solely by external demands.

The competitive aspect of games also provides additional encouragement for learning enthusiasm. Well-managed competition can stimulate the desire to achieve the best results while increasing active participation in instructional activities. The presence of leaderboards, scoring systems, and specific achievements motivates students to continuously improve their academic performance. This dynamic fosters a spirit of achievement without neglecting collaborative aspects that can still be developed through team-based games.

In addition to competition, reward systems such as points, badges, and level advancement function as positive reinforcement for students' efforts. Such reinforcement provides a sense of accomplishment and enhances self-confidence. Each success recognized through the reward system creates a positive emotional experience, encouraging students to maintain and even increase their engagement in learning. Febrian (2023) emphasizes that embedding game

elements such as challenges, achievements, and rewards makes students more actively involved in the learning process. This condition strengthens intrinsic motivation, as students experience a sense of competence and recognition of their abilities.

The gradual and dynamic adjustment of difficulty levels also plays a crucial role in maintaining motivational stability. Tasks that are too easy may lead to boredom, while excessively difficult challenges may cause frustration. An adaptive game design enables a balance between students' abilities and the challenges they face. This balance helps maintain optimal learning conditions, where students feel challenged yet confident in their ability to complete the assigned tasks.

Overall, the integration of interactivity, healthy competition, reward systems, and adaptive challenges makes game-based learning an effective strategy for fostering sustainable learning motivation. Motivation that develops through meaningful learning experiences tends to be stronger and longer-lasting, thereby positively influencing both the learning process and outcomes.

2. Game-Based Learning (GBL) Instructional Strategies

Various Game-Based Learning (GBL) instructional strategies examined in this study can be classified into the following categories:

a. Competitive Quiz Strategy through Kahoot!

This strategy involves interactive learning activities conducted individually or in groups through online quizzes with real-time leaderboard systems. The activity aims to strengthen students' understanding of Indonesian grammar and vocabulary through healthy competition. Muhammad (2025) explains that within GBL practices, the use of points, music, and interactive visuals enhances students' enthusiasm and contributes to increased learning motivation, particularly in reading descriptive texts.

b. Matching and Unjumble Strategy through Wordwall

This strategy utilizes drag-and-drop features that require students to arrange words into coherent sentences or complete texts. The approach supports contextual learning in Indonesian writing skills. Nurul, as cited in Agrita (2025), states that Wordwall as a GBL medium encourages critical thinking and student collaboration through various game templates, such as matching activities and idiom arrangement, thereby positively influencing learning outcomes.

c. Escape Room Strategy through Genially

This strategy applies a digital escape room concept featuring interactive challenges and puzzles designed to improve reading comprehension. Khoirun et al. (2022) emphasize that this approach integrates analytical and creative thinking processes, enabling students to connect Indonesian language materials with real-life contexts. It is considered effective in enhancing students' retention, particularly in online learning environments.

d. Collaborative RPG Strategy through Classcraft

This instructional model adapts the concept of role-playing games (RPG) by assigning roles or avatars to students to complete missions related to speaking skills and text discussions. Lisa and Muthohar (2024), explain that teachers act as facilitators who provide rewards (experience points) based on students' participation and fluency. This strategy supports the optimal development of 4C skills through collaboration and active interaction.

e. Hybrid GBL Project Strategy

This strategy combines multiple GBL platforms, such as Kahoot! quizzes and Wordwall-based writing projects, within an integrated instructional sequence. Saleh, as cited in Prananda et al. (2025), states that this hybrid approach encourages students to think critically, collaborate effectively, and gain a deeper understanding of grammar concepts through integrated learning experiences.

3. The Impact of Game-Based Learning (GBL) on Students' Motivation and Learning Outcomes in Indonesian Language Learning

The implementation of Game-Based Learning (GBL) in Indonesian language instruction significantly influences students' learning motivation and academic outcomes. As an instructional strategy that integrates game elements into educational contexts, GBL reshapes the conventional learning environment into a more interactive and student-centered experience. However, its effectiveness depends largely on instructional design and classroom management.

From the motivational perspective, GBL enhances students' intrinsic motivation by incorporating rewards, points, levels, and progressive challenges into the learning process. These elements stimulate curiosity and active participation. Djunaedi et al. (2023) emphasize that game-based learning not only presents instructional content in an engaging format but also constructs meaningful interactive experiences. Similarly, Dianto et al. (2023) argue that such an approach transforms learning into an exploratory process that fosters enthusiasm and sustained interest. As a result, students demonstrate higher engagement, attention, and persistence in completing learning tasks.

In terms of learning outcomes, GBL contributes to improved conceptual understanding and the development of higher-order thinking skills. Through simulations, contextual scenarios, and problem-based challenges, abstract concepts in Indonesian language learning become more concrete and applicable. Mas'ut et al. (2023) explain that integrating game elements into instruction promotes exploration, creativity, and analytical thinking. Consequently, students are better able to apply linguistic concepts, analyze texts, and solve language-related problems effectively. Collaborative game activities also enhance communication skills and teamwork, which further support academic achievement.

Nevertheless, several challenges may affect the successful implementation of GBL. One potential issue is distraction, as students may focus more on entertainment aspects than on instructional objectives. N. Hasanah et al. (2023)

note that poorly managed game elements can reduce learning effectiveness. Additionally, the strategy relies heavily on technological infrastructure, including digital devices and stable internet access, which may create disparities among learners. Differences in digital literacy skills and the risk of excessive competition may also influence students' emotional well-being and classroom dynamics.

In conclusion, Game-Based Learning has a substantial impact on students' motivation and learning outcomes in Indonesian language education. While it offers significant pedagogical benefits, its success depends on thoughtful instructional planning, balanced competition, and effective classroom management to ensure that educational objectives remain the primary focus.

CONCLUSION

Game Based Learning (GBL) represents an innovative and effective instructional strategy in Indonesian language education, particularly in enhancing students' motivation and learning outcomes. By integrating interactive elements such as competition, rewards, progressive challenges, and collaborative activities, GBL transforms conventional one-directional instruction into a more dynamic and student centered learning experience. The findings of this literature review indicate that GBL not only strengthens students' intrinsic motivation but also improves conceptual understanding, critical thinking skills, and the development of 21st-century competencies (4C). Through well designed instructional strategies such as competitive quizzes, matching activities, escape rooms, collaborative RPG models, and hybrid GBL projects learning becomes more engaging, meaningful, and contextually relevant in the digital era.

Despite its significant benefits, the successful implementation of GBL depends on systematic instructional planning, adequate technological infrastructure, and teachers' digital competence. Challenges such as potential distraction, unequal access to devices, and differences in digital literacy must be carefully managed to ensure that educational objectives remain central. Therefore, GBL should not be viewed merely as an entertainment tool but as a structured pedagogical approach that requires thoughtful design and evaluation. When implemented strategically, Game-Based Learning has strong potential to contribute to more innovative, interactive, and effective Indonesian language instruction in contemporary educational contexts.

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