



EXPLORING STUDENT EXPERIENCE OF GAME-BASED LEARNING IN TEACHING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT TO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

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Abstract:

In recent years, education has undergone significant changes driven by technological advances and innovative teaching methodologies. One approach that has received widespread attention is game-based learning (GBL), which integrates game elements into educational activities. This research aims to explore the benefits and drawbacks of implementing GBL in teaching descriptive texts in class 7C SMPN 1 Krian. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method, utilising interviews with students to explore their experiences regarding the advantages and disadvantages of GBL in teaching descriptive texts. The research results indicate that most students find GBL motivating and enjoyable for learning English. They felt that learning through games increased their interest and understanding of the material. However, technical challenges, such as device and internet connection problems, were identified as barriers.

Keywords: *Game-Based learning, Descriptive Text*

1. INTRODUCTION

The world of education has undergone significant changes in recent decades, particularly in teaching and learning methods and instructional approaches, which are primarily driven by technological advancements and innovative teaching methodologies. One approach that has received widespread attention is game-based learning. This method integrates game elements into educational activities to make learning more engaging and effective. Game based learning, or GBL, is a learning model that can foster learner activity in the learning process (Anik Sugiani, 2023). Implementing the Game-Based Learning (GBL) method was also aimed at testing the effectiveness and efficiency of this method in English language instruction to enhance the quality and interactive nature of classroom learning (Pan et al., 2021). The issues in English language learning are generally rooted in students' lack of interest in learning English (Maharantau, 2015). In the context of teaching descriptive texts to class 7C students at SMPN 1 Krian, game-based learning presents a unique opportunity to improve students' understanding and retention of the material.

According to Kapp, Game-based learning is defined as the gamification of conventional materials (Kapp, 2012). Gamification uses game-based mechanics, aesthetics, and thinking to engage people, motivate action, encourage learning, and solve problems. According to Seaborn and Fels, game-based learning is an emerging approach to encouraging user motivation, engagement, and enjoyment in computer-mediated non-game environments (Seaborn & Fels, 2015). This concept is gaining increasing attention, with standard definitions emerging and early frameworks based on fundamental psychological theories, such as self-determination theory, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation. In general, game-based learning is a method concept that combines learning materials with game methods so that students are more



motivated by the presence of interactive and non-monotonous learners with traditional methods.

The benefits of using game-based learning in learning include increasing students' interest in learning English. This opinion is supported by Saputra, who notes that teachers' use of GBL in the classroom increases student achievement and interest (Saputra et al., 2021). Game-based learning also has the advantage of motivating students to engage in class, capturing their attention, and encouraging them to think critically after playing the game. This opinion is supported by traditional learning. Because game-based learning is a very interactive, fun method with lots of interaction with students, it can also make students come up with creative ideas to apply to learning activities.

Awaz Naaman Saleem, in his study on game-based learning in the context of e-learning, identified several benefits through a comprehensive review of the available literature. He argued that game-based learning, facilitated through gamification of educational content, positively impacts students' motivation, increasing their engagement and understanding of the class material. In addition, students experience improved communication skills and a more enjoyable and dynamic learning environment (Saleem et al., 2022). Therefore, Awaz's study offers valuable insights into the effective implementation of game-based learning strategies, especially those centered on the e-learning environment. According to Zhonggen Yu et al., game-based learning also has several benefits students can receive during the learning process (Yu et al... For example, they will be more motivated during the learning process because of the educational and interactive learning applied to the game-based learning method. In addition, game-based learning integrated with tools such as Mindtool can improve attitudes and increase students' self-efficacy so that students feel more confident in the learning process. Students can also train their thinking performance, attitudes, motivation, and critical thinking skills. If some of the positive impacts these students receive can be appropriately applied, they can improve their academic education. Overall, the benefits of implementing game-based learning can be very significant compared to conventional learning methods that schools have long applied.

However, it cannot be denied that game-based learning may have shortcomings or negative impacts on classroom teaching and learning activities. Several studies, including those from Qian, prove the adverse effects of regular video game use on the cognitive abilities, motivation, emotional states, and behavior of younger students (Qian & Clark, 2016). Thus, researchers clearly distinguish between different types of game content that can be used in game-based learning. Firstly, there are so-called "serious" games, which are created specifically for teaching purposes and take into account pedagogical achievements and the requirements of training programs. With this negative impact, it is also possible that it could impact student learning activities, making it difficult for teaching staff to monitor students. Because this context occurs in junior high school students who still like to play a lot, the class can be very uncontrolled, which causes other problems and failure to achieve learning.



According to Sailer and Homner, the findings show a contrast, indicating that the positive effects of gamification are less significant than the adverse effects experienced by students (Sailer & Homner, 2020). The study revealed that the adverse outcomes were more prominent than the benefits obtained from gamification. These adverse effects include instability in motivation and behavioral outcomes. While the positive impact of gamification on cognitive outcomes is considered stable, its effects on motivation and behavior tend to be less consistent. This suggests that not all gamification elements produce consistent impacts, especially those concerning motivation and behavior. Another negative impact identified is the recognition of transfer of effects to situations outside the gamification context. There are indications that significant behavioral changes often only occur during the intervention and do not always carry over to other non-gamified contexts. In other words, the behavioral effects of gamification on participants may be temporary and specific to the gamification environment. Finally, there is a risk of mismatch between gamification design and learner needs. For gamification to be effective, it must be carefully designed to align with the psychological needs of learners and the types of high-quality learning activities involved. Otherwise, gamification can be ineffective or detrimental if it does not meet individual needs and preferences. Seeing the many negative impacts, it can be a consideration for teachers to start a better game-based learning method so that the negative impacts received by students can be appropriately suppressed and increase the positive impacts received by students during the learning process.

Descriptive text itself is a text that aims to describe an object, animal or human, or a specific place or location. According to Yenita, quoted from the opinion of Blaylock, J. said that descriptive text is writing that describes a person, place, or something as it is (Yenita et al., 2014). Sometimes, it can be where a place is located. Descriptive text also contains two general generic structures: identification and description. This opinion is reinforced by Yenita, who quoted from the opinion of Purwati and Marta, who also had the same opinion. Descriptive text has several linguistic elements: simple present tense, linking verb, adjective, and degree comparison. According to Knapp and Watkins, descriptive text is defined as text used to classify or categorise things obtained from observations, interactions, or experiences (Watkins & Knapp, 2005). Meanwhile, Tarigan defines descriptive text as text that aims to invite readers to feel, enjoy, and understand the object targeted by the writer as well as possible (Tarigan, 1987). With these various explanations, descriptive text can be defined as text that describes an object so that readers can understand the writer's message.

By looking at the possible impacts that may arise from various perspectives on game-based learning methods, the researcher decided to learn more about how these impacts are explained. This research was conducted at SMPN 1 Krian, where researchers provided teaching assistance for four months. This study also aims to explore the advantages and disadvantages that may arise when studying descriptive texts through game-based learning. What are the Advantages of incorporating game-based learning in teaching descriptive text to 7C class students at SMPN 1 Krian? What are the Disadvantages encountered when utilising game-based learning for teaching



descriptive text to 7C class students at SMPN 1 Krian? This research was to determine the effect of using game-based learning methods on student involvement in the learning process and understanding of descriptive texts and to specify the benefits and obstacles experienced by students when using game-based learning methods in class 7C SMPN 1 Krian.

2. METHOD

During the research process, a qualitative descriptive method was used. This method allows researchers to thoroughly examine students' experiences while applying the GBL method to learning descriptive texts in schools. In general, qualitative methods can collect data on interactions, activities, and outcomes to answer the research questions that have been asked. Therefore, this method facilitates data collection to document students' experiences with game-based learning in this context.

This study took research participants with unique specifications, such as having experienced game-based learning while learning English, especially descriptive texts. From the participants who were taken themselves in the school, six students were willing. They had also met the initial specifications about their experiences who had experienced learning through game-based learning. The participants themselves consisted of 3 male students and three female students.

The data collection in this qualitative study is through structured interviews, with the research design being question and answer based on research questions. The questions were related to the advantages and disadvantages they felt during game-based learning about descriptive text. The answers observed will focus on their experiences, according to their feelings during the research conducted by the researcher.

Data analysis was conducted using the content analysis method, which is used to understand and formulate the data obtained. The content analysis technique was applied to identify the main themes from students' responses to the questions. Each student's response was in-depth analysed to find patterns, meanings, and interpretations relevant to the research topic. Through content analysis, researchers can gain deeper insight into students' experiences using Game-Based Learning (GBL) in learning descriptive texts. The results of this analysis are then used to draw conclusions and provide recommendations regarding the effectiveness of the GBL method.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The Interview data were obtained after students participated in a series of learning activities with the Game-Based Learning (GBL) method relevant to the research questions. This data became a reference for researchers to determine and answer the research objectives. The interviews also had categories ranging from the good impacts obtained by students and the bad impacts experienced during GBL activities on Descriptive Text learning.

Most students reported that this method had a beneficial impact on their learning experience. They stated that learning through games increased their interest and enthusiasm for the subject. Responding to the first interview question, "In your opinion,



is the GBL method an effective and interesting way to teach English, especially for secondary school students? Why do you think so?" six students provided feedback. Most agreed that GBL facilitated their understanding of English and made the learning process more enjoyable. In addition, several students stated that this approach prevented them from getting bored quickly during the lesson.

The second question assessed whether learning descriptive text through Game-Based Learning (GBL) was more interesting than traditional learning methods. Students generally reported that this approach made it easier to understand descriptive text than conventional methods. They stated that the GBL method made it easier to understand the material. Furthermore, some students noted that GBL introduced more dynamic and non-monotonous learning variations, allowing them to experience a more varied and engaging learning process.

The third question explains the opinion on "whether the Game-Based Learning (GBL) method is more effective in teaching English to junior high school students". Most students stated that this method is more effective and helps them better understand the material presented. One student commented, "Because we are still teenagers, and technology has become an integral part of our lives, we are more engaged when learning combines technology, rather than just relying on traditional methods." In addition, some students stated that the Indonesian curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) often makes them feel bored, and they find that the GBL method reduces this boredom, increasing their interest in learning English.

From the end of the first interview session referring to the first research question, namely "What are the advantages of implementing game-based learning in learning descriptive texts for class 7C students of SMPN 1 Krian", very positive results were obtained. Most stated that GBL increased their interest and enthusiasm in learning, especially English. They felt that this method made it easier to understand descriptive texts and made learning more varied and less tedious than traditional methods. Some students also considered that GBL was more relevant to their lives who were already familiar with technology. Therefore, GBL is considered more effective and engaging in learning English at the junior high school level.

In the subsequent question, which focused on the challenges encountered while implementing the Game-Based Learning (GBL) method, the researcher gathered various responses highlighting various issues. The Question "What are the challenges that might arise when using game-based learning to teach descriptive text to 7C students at SMPN 1 Krian? Have you experienced any?" The answers from the students themselves were very varied, some expressed that the obstacles experienced ranged from problems experienced by their cellphones while doing activities, then the constraints of inadequate regional internet networks to most of them answering that the class became more crowded, because it was challenging to organize and manage students who were enthusiastic in learning activities using this GBL method.

The next question that still leads to the possibility of shortcomings of this method when applied to the class while students are studying. The question is, "Do you feel disturbed or not focused when learning descriptive text using games? What makes you



feel that way?". Most students answered no because they felt this method made them more interested in learning English. Some say that because they are still teenagers and prefer to play, this method also channels their pleasure in playing but still in the context of learning English, which in this case is learning descriptive text.

In the final question of this session, students were asked about any dislikes or challenges they experienced while using the Game-Based Learning (GBL) method to learn descriptive text. Some students expressed that the increased energy in the classroom often led to distractions, making it difficult for them to maintain focus. Others reported technical issues with their devices, which sometimes hindered their ability to access certain websites or applications as directed by the teacher. Additionally, students highlighted problems related to the regional internet connectivity, which was often slow. While some opted to use their data networks, this was not an option for everyone. In response, the teacher provided a personal internet service for students; however, this created new challenges, as multiple students connected to a single network often resulted in decreased speed and reliability.

In general, several obstacles were encountered in the section on questions about the disadvantages experienced by students, including technical barriers on cell phones and inadequate internet networks. Although the class became more crowded and challenging to organize, many students felt that this method increased their interest in learning. When asked about distractions while studying, most students stated that GBL made them more focused because it combined the fun of playing with learning. However, some students also experienced difficulties, such as energy disruptions in the classroom and technical problems that hampered access to the application. Although teachers provide personal internet services, this poses new challenges with network speed and reliability being disrupted due to the large number of users.

The results from interviews with grade 7C students at SMPN 1 Krian highlighted several benefits of incorporating Game-Based Learning (GBL) in teaching descriptive text. The main benefits identified by most students were increased engagement and motivation; learning through games makes the educational experience more fun and interactive. These findings can be strengthened by Saputra's theory that GBL can increase students' learning motivation and improve their learning achievement in class (Saputra et al., 2021). Then, many participants reported that GBL facilitated a better understanding of descriptive text than traditional methods, making complex material more accessible. Another benefit obtained was the use of technology in learning. Because students are now also many and familiar with technology, learning using the GBL method makes for an interesting variation in learning. This result can also be strengthened by the expert opinion of Pivec, who stated that GBL can create variations in learning that are not monotonous so that students are more interested in these learning activities (Pivec, 2004). So, with these many benefits, it also allows for a more dynamic learning environment that effectively overcomes boredom, which is often associated with conventional approaches.

Despite its many advantages, the implementation of GBL also has some disadvantages. Some problems or disadvantages students face during learning are;



students face problems related to their devices and inadequate regional internet connectivity. These technical difficulties sometimes prevent access to necessary applications, thus disrupting the learning process. Furthermore, although primarily beneficial, the increased energy and enthusiasm in the classroom sometimes causes distractions that make classroom management more challenging for teachers. The results were once expressed by Qian & Clark, who said that good GBL should focus on learning activities. So that pedagogical achievements can be considered and the possibility of errors occurring is minimised (Qian & Clark, 2016). This shift in classroom dynamics requires careful navigation to maintain focus and engagement. While students are aware of these challenges, many feel that the benefits of GBL outweigh the disadvantages, as this method can keep their interest and motivation intact.

Therefore, in this final discussion, implementing GBL in teaching descriptive text for grade 7C students at SMPN 1 Krian is a promising pedagogical approach to increase engagement and understanding. However, educators must be aware of the technical limitations and classroom management challenges that may arise to ensure that the implementation of GBL remains effective and enjoyable for all students.

4. CONCLUSION

Applying Game-Based Learning (GBL) to learning descriptive text for class 7C students of SMPN 1 Krian provides several significant benefits. The many responses obtained by researchers during the research prove students' enthusiasm for game-based learning. Therefore, the responses received can be a reference for teachers in updating or for more interactive and non-monotonous learning so that many variations of learning can be adapted during the learning process.

Related to the critical point of this discussion are the many positive effects found by students after going through a game-based learning process. The response stated that game-based learning can motivate students and allow them to interact more during the learning process, making it easier to absorb the material presented. This impact is promising if applied in the future and allows for increased student achievement in the academic field.

However, the obstacles caused by this learning process also have impacts that can be difficult to overcome. For example, the class can be more challenging to manage because students are too excited, so the teacher's directions are also ignored. Because their age base is still at the playing stage, more attention is needed when carrying out game-based learning activities.

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