EXPLORING DIGITAL GAME-BASED ENGLISH TEACHING FOR YOUNG LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY IN INDONESIAN PRIMAY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Abad ke-21 ditandai dengan kemajuan teknologi yang sangat pesat yang secara signifikan mempengaruhi berbagai bidang, termasuk pendidikan. Dalam konteks pengajaran bahasa Inggris, teknologi khususnya permainan digital telah muncul sebagai alat yang efektif untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan dan hasil belajar siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana guru bahasa Inggris di tingkat dasar di Indonesia mengimplementasikan pengajaran berbasis permainan digital dan peran apa yang mereka mainkan dalam proses ini. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dengan dua guru sekolah dasar di Bogor. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa dalam lingkungan pengajaran berbasis digital, guru mengambil banyak peran: sebagai mentor motivator, fasilitator, inspirator, dan evaluator. Meskipun ada perbedaan dalam metode metode implementasi mereka, kedua guru menunjukkan pemahaman yang mendalam tentang strategi berbasis permainan digital dan beradaptasi secara efektif dengan kebutuhan siswa mereka. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa pengajaran berbasis permainan digital dapat menjadi pedagogis yang berharga untuk menumbuhkan motivasi, interaksi, dan penguasaan bahasa Inggris secara keseluruhan dalam konteks pendidikan dasar.

***Kata kunci** : Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris Berbasis Permainan Digital, Pelajar Muda, Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris*

ABSTRACT

The 21st century is marked by rapid technological advancements that significantly influence various fields, including education. In the context of English language teaching, technology especially digital games has emerged as an effective tool to enhance young learners' engagement and learning outcomes. This study aims to explore how English teachers at the primary level in Indonesia implement digital game-based teaching and what roles they play in this process. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through interviews with two primary school teachers in Bogor. The findings reveal that in digital game-based teaching environments, teachers take on multiple roles: as mentors, motivators, facilitators, inspirers, and evaluators. Despite differences in their implementation methods, both teachers demonstrated a deep understanding of digital game-based strategies and adapted effectively to the needs of their students. The study concludes that digital game-based teaching can be a valuable pedagogical approach to Foster student motivation, interaction, and overall English language acquisition in the primary education context.

Keyword: Digital Game-based English Teaching, Young Learners, English Language Teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Digital game-based teaching has received attention in education as technology advances. Recently, educational digital games have emerged as an emerging tool to support the teaching process (Lampropoulos, 2023). It is widely recognized that digital game-based teaching is a smart pedagogical method that uses educational digital games or learning by solving problems through digital devices (e.g., smartphones, personal computers or tablets). Van Eck (2015) proposes three strategies in the literature to use digital games in an educational context: first, integrating students in the development of digital games to satisfy their needs, next developing digital games to practice skills and improve knowledge and finally, using educational commercial games in the classroom. digital game-based teaching has been a prominent pedagogical method in secondary education due to its many benefits for students. Previous research highlights the reasons why teachers use digital games in the classroom. In research conducted by Huizenga, Ten Dam, Voogt, and Admiraal (2017), teachers agreed that in digital game-based teaching students can learn in a safe environment, become active learners and receive feedback on their actions. In addition, most teachers believe that when students are engaged in games, they will focus on one thing at a time and take responsibility for their academics (Kokandy, 2021). It should be noted that teachers, students and digital games are essential 9 10 elements for the effective implementation of digital game-based teaching. More importantly, students' perceptions of digital games can be influenced by several factors such as their usefulness, learning opportunities, experience with games and

preference for digital games (Bourgonjon, Valcke, Soetaert, & Schellens, 2010). When teachers successfully use educational games in the classroom, students' attitudes and academic performance will improve (Cagiltay, Ozcelik, & Ozcelik, 2015). Thus, evaluating students' attitudes towards digital game-based teaching is crucial in order to promote their performance. Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) or Teaching English to Early Childhood is an English language learning program specifically designed for children, especially those aged 6–12 years or elementary school students. This program aims to help children learn English in a fun and friendly way.

According to Brown (2001 and 2018) called that strategic investments will make students their own learning process. Meanwhile, in designing and creating a good and communicative situation at the class, the teacher should follow the communicative principle proposed by John and Morrow (1983): Knowing what is done, recognizing that the whole exceeds the sum of its parts, the processes are as important as the forms, and learning by doing.

METHOD

The researcher used a qualitative study to obtain a deep understanding and explanation of digital game-based learning. According to Creswell J.W (2012) qualitative research is exploratory research which the aim is to discover trends based on thoughts and opinions, and dive deeper into the problem. According to Crescentini and Mainardi (2009). The aims of qualitative research are to investigate a particular area, collect data by using interview and questionnaires to obtain data. The researcher chose to employ a qualitative approach because the researcher wanted to collect the data based on the teachers'perceptions. It is in line with the theory stated by Creswell (2012) in

which the participants' views are obtained. The type of research used in this current research is an case study. Arikunto (2013) suggests explorative research is research that tries to dig out the cause of something. This type of research aims to obtain accurate information and try to explore new knowledge to find out a problem. As a result, questionnaires and interview analysis were employed to provide an explanation. All English teachers from the school will provide information about digital game base english teaching to young learners in primary level. The researcher conducted an interview and asked questions to the teacher to find out how the teacher and students do in learning English using digital games. According to M. Shabir & M Furqan (2021) the relationship between cartoon and education, the writer writes a paper which the title is "The Use of Cartoon in Teaching Students Vocabulary". It has a purpose to help children in learning English, more specifically it aims to improve English vocabulary for children whose age are between seven years old to fourteen years old. The method of the research is quantitative research in design experiment class and control class.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In these research findings, the researcher analysed the data collected from the participants. The data collected in this study was the result of interviews and questionnaire. The topic of the interview is the teacher's roles in using digital game-based teaching. In this study there were 2 participants would be described as R1 and R2. There were 12 open ended questions in the semi structured interview. Teacher As a Class Manager In first indicator there are 2 question ask to R1 and R2. The question is about how they conduct and manage the class. Based on the interviews, it can be said that both teachers act as manager in their teaching. As it can be summarized from interview that the teacher establishing structure and expectations, setting rules and expectations before gameplay, clarifying learning goals and relevance of the game, monitoring and engagement, post-game activities and assessment implemented discussion, reflection, and assessment after gameplay students reflect on their learning assessments include in-game performance, written reflections, and presentations. For the comparison focuses on general preparation and engagement, then uses a three-phase classroom management strategy: pre-game, during-game, and post-game, ensuring a structured and meaningful learning experience. Teacher As a Guide The next question is about guiding and helping student to understand using digital game-based learning. The following is the transcription. From the interview, it can be said that both teachers act as guide in their teaching. As it can be summarized from interview that the teacher recognizes to assist students who do not initially understand how to use digital game-based tools. They stress the importance of being available to help and offering guidance throughout the learning process. Both of the teachers have different strategies in the differences is provides general support emphasizes giving instructions, being available for help and uses specific strategies to enhance student understanding like breaks down complex instructions into simpler steps, uses plain language and avoids technical jargon, offers individual or small-group support, encourages students to ask questions, emphasizes patience and practice with new technologies. After the analysis, R2 applies more effective strategies for differentiated instruction and student support. These techniques are crucial for accommodating diverse learning needs and fostering a more inclusive digital learning environment. R1's approach, while helpful, lacks the tailored interventions that R2 describes. Teacher As an Inspirator The next question is about inspire students to use digital game-based learning. Based on the interviews, it can be said that both teachers act as inspirator in their teaching. As it can be summarized from interview that the teacher focus on creating activities that are both fun and educational, clear communication like explaining the benefits of using game-based learning helps students understand the value of the approach and offering small awards or expressions of appreciation taps into the motivational aspect of learning. It can help create a sense of achievement and encourage participation. Teacher As a Facilitator The next question is about facilitating student

and utilize technology. From the interviews, it can be said that both teacher act as facilitator in their teaching. As it can be summarized from interview that the teacher shows an educator who prioritizes student equity and guidance, providing a solid foundation for fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment through digital game-based teaching. However, it lacks detail on how the games are selected, assessed, or how reflective practices are incorporated. demonstrates a more holistic and strategic approach to digital game-based learning, where the educator is actively involved in designing, guiding, assessing, and reflecting on the learning experience. However, it lacks explicit attention to student-centered issues like equity and could benefit from more concrete examples of how these roles are enacted in practice. Teacher As a Motivator The question is about motivate students to participate actively and appreciate student work. Based on interviews, it can be said that both teacher act as motivator in their teaching. As it can be summarized from interview that the teacher employs strategies to motivate students, but their approaches different, R1 emphasizes extrinsic motivation through challenges, praise, and rewards. Then the R2 emphasizes intrinsic motivation, using thoughtfully selected games that balance challenge, relevance, and variety to maintain engagement. Both teachers value student appreciation, but they express it through distinct pedagogical lenses. R1 integrates verbal praise with external rewards to promote motivation, especially in structured activities like games. In

contrast, R2 demonstrates a reflective and student-centered approach, offering targeted feedback and fostering a supportive learning environment through intrinsic reinforcement. Teacher As an Evaluator The last question is about evaluate students when using digital game, learning activities and assessment methods. Both respondents recognize the importance of multi-stage evaluation in digital game-based learning, R2 adopts a more structured and data-rich approach, leveraging game analytics and testing methods. These responses underscore the flexibility and potential of digital game-based teaching to support continuous, diverse, and meaningful student assessment.

Discussions

Teacher As a Class Manager The first indication asks two questions to R1 and R2. The question is how they conduct and manage the class. According to the interviews, both teachers control their students' learning. According to the interview, the teacher establishes structure and expectations before gameplay, clarifies learning goals and game relevance, monitors and engages, implements post-game activities and assessments, and students reflect on their learning through in-game performance, written reflections, and presentations. The comparison focuses on overall preparation and engagement, followed by a three-phase classroom management strategy: pre-game, during- game, and post-game, to provide a planned and meaningful learning experience. This is in line with (Rukhani, 2021) saying that as a manager, the teacher manages, arrange, and create a good learning environment which are the skill that must be possessed. Teacher As a Guide The next question is about using digital game-based learning to guide and assist students in understanding. The transcription is as follows. According to the interview, both teachers serve as mentors for their students. The teacher recognizes the need to help pupils who are first unable to use digital game-based tools, as may be summarized from the interview. They emphasize how crucial it is to be accessible and provide direction during the learning process. Although both teachers emphasize giving instructions and being available for help, they employ different strategies to improve student understanding. For example, they break down complex instructions into simpler steps, use plain language and avoid technical jargon, and offer individual or small-group

instruction. This is in 26 lines with Amri (2013) saying that as a teacher gives guidance to students in dealing with learning challenges and difficulties. Teacher As an Inspirator The following question is about inspiring pupils to use digital game-based learning. Based on the interviews, it can be concluded that both teachers serve as inspiration in their teaching. According to the interview, the teacher focuses on creating activities that are both enjoyable and educational. Clear communication, such as explaining the benefits of using game-based learning, helps students understand the value of the approach, and offering small awards or expressions of appreciation taps into the motivational aspect of learning. It can create a sense of achievement and inspire participation. This is line with Amri (2013) saying that as a teacher gives inspirator, teachers play a role in guiding students to apply effective learning strategies and utilize learning media to foster motivation and achieve academic success. Teacher as a facilitator the next question is about assisting students and utilizing technology (Jaelani, 2020). Based on the interviews, it can be concluded that both teachers operate as facilitators in their teaching. As can be seen from the interview, the teacher is an educator who stresses student equality and guidance, laying the groundwork for establishing an inclusive and supportive learning environment through digital game-based instruction. However, it does not explain how the games are chosen, appraised, or how reflective techniques are incorporated. demonstrates a more holistic and strategic approach to digital game-based learning, in which the educator actively participates in the creation, guidance, assessment, and reflection of the learning process. This is in line with Amri (2013) saying that as a teacher gives facilitator so that students can learn in a positive atmosphere, with enthusiasm, and the confidence to express their opinions openly. Teacher As a Motivator The question is about motivating students to engage actively and appreciating their efforts. Based on the interviews, it can be concluded that both teachers serve as motivators in their teaching. As stated in the interview, teachers use tactics to inspire pupils, but their approaches differ; R1 emphasises extrinsic motivation through challenges, praise, and incentives. The R2 then emphasises intrinsic motivation, employing carefully chosen games that combine difficulty, relevance, and variation to keep participants

engaged. Both teachers appreciate student appreciation, but they approach it with different educational perspectives. This is in line with Sobon and Mangundap (2019) saying that as motivators, teachers emphasize that motivation is a key factor affecting the effectiveness of learning, as it serves as an internal drive that encourages students to engage in learning activities and strive to achieve their goals. Teacher As an Evaluator The last question concerns evaluating pupils when using digital games, instructional activities, and assessment approaches. Both responses recognise the value of multi-stage evaluation in digital game-based learning, but R2 takes a more organised and data-rich approach, relying on game analytics and testing approaches. These replies highlight the adaptability and promise of digital game-based teaching to promote ongoing, diversified, and relevant student evaluation by combining old approaches with current, technology-enhanced practices. digital game-based teaching is an effective strategy for increasing student engagement, motivation, and learning results. Educators use a range of 28 evaluation and assessment approaches, combining traditional methodologies with game-based and reflective tools. While both R1 and R2 agree on the advantages, R2 provides a more detailed analysis of digital game-based teaching overall impact, particularly on 21st-century skill development. This is in line with Amri (2013) saying that as a teacher gives evaluating the success of students in achieving goals in teaching and learning activities and also evaluating the success of teachers in implementing teaching and learning activities.

CONCLUSION

Conclusions Based on the findings and discussion above, In the context of digital game-based teaching, teachers assume multiple pivotal roles that extend beyond traditional classroom management. Analysis of interviews conducted with two respondents (R1 and R2) reveals that educators function as mentors, inspirers, facilitators, motivators, and evaluators within digital game-based teaching environments. Despite variations in their specific approaches, both respondents demonstrate a strong grasp of digital game-based teaching principles and exhibit effective implementation of this pedagogical strategy. Their practices reflect an informed and adaptive use of digital game-based teaching as a

contemporary approach to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. 5.2. Suggestions In this section, the researcher will provide some suggestions for further research, for subsequent researchers, especially those who have the same problem and are interested in conducting research, it is recommended that this research be used as a reference. Researchers also suggest that subsequent studies can take more participants so that the data obtained is more varied. Students can explore 30 and utilize the use of digital games to be more active in learning and it is hoped that students can apply technology both at school and at home so that learning feels fun and not monotonous or boring. The next input is for critical reading lecturers, lecturers should be able to use a more fun method so that students can feel more comfortable in learning.

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