



Exploring play-based method on Arabic language learning from the educator perspective

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ABSTRACT

Play-based learning is often illustrated as a method of teaching that incorporates physical activity in the learning process. This aims to influence the children to learn in a fun way. Play-based learning can develop many aspects of the growth process of children. This method generally influences imagination, soft and hard motor function, social ability, cognitive ability, and emotional management. This includes language ability. The learning process would have to be formal in classes, giving learning material to maximize focus. Most teachers implement this form of learning, and some assume that outdoor learning activities waste time, so play-based due to the lack of learning material delivery. This paper explores the effectiveness of play-based learning according to the teacher's perspective, namely in Arabic language learning. This paper will also explain what educators express about play-based learning regarding its advantages and disadvantages. The result of this illustrates the struggle of educators in implementing play-based learning due to formal education demands. Nevertheless, despite this struggle, teacher perceives that play-based influence the active behaviors of the student. In language learning, this method actively influences students to interact using Arabic, especially in kindergarten and elementary school. The finding of this paper also explains that play-based learning requires teacher self-efficacy in implementing play-based learning, which is made possible by conducive organizational conditions and support. Further play-based learning in roleplay also works for older students, indicating that play-based learning influences learning intention and motivation.

Keywords: Educator; language learning; play-based learning; roleplay; self-efficacy

1. INTRODUCTION

Play-based learning, an approach often used in the learning process, implies that it is essential for the student to feel free to choose activities that align with their interest. In this method, teachers act as facilitators, and a teacher's guide is also very important to ensure that students don't go off the rail and miss interpreting what they independently learn. Play-based learning methods are assumed to be very effective for kindergarten students due to the student's age in which they are active and love to explore and experiment with what becomes their interest (Keung & Cheung, 2019). Due to its primary, play-based method is often used and proven to be very effective in early childhood education. However, this method can be adapted to meet the needs of the different learners and also adapt to the learning environment, such as schools, homes, and community centers. In other words, play-based methods are available for a variety of students, older children, and adults, who tend to love learning processes that involve some action, which can be done in the form of a diversity of games (Khalil et al., 2022). The play-based method involves many times, giving freedom for the student to learn independently according to their interest. At the same time, some assume that the play-based method may be an ineffective learning method due to the number of time off classes. Empirical evidence expresses otherwise, stating that the play-based method is an effective learning method that supports an essential phase of children's development and growth process. This method helps students engage in social activities and collaborate with other students, such as developing social skills, cognitive abilities, and language abilities, which is also a very important aspect of the student learning and development process (Bubikova-Moan et al., 2019).

One of the most fundamental forms of communication since humans could speak is communicating in their language. However, due to the diversity of languages in the world, it can't be denied that at some point in human life, they will interact with foreigners or act as a foreigner themselves when traveling abroad. Therefore, implementing language learning in the national curriculum is essential. In Indonesia, the majority of the population is Muslim, which makes the ability to read Arabic a requirement to read the Holy Qur'an. However, knowing how to read it alone leaves the importance of Qur'an meaningful content vague to some people. By learning the Arabic language, one can have a deeper understanding of scientific sources such as the Qur'an, Hadith, Ijma, and Qiyas, but in the context of children, it is fundamental to learn at an early age since it is far easier to memorize than when already in the older age, in implementing Arabic language learning, according to empirical source, there are several methods, such as group work, and listening and speaking, also roleplay using foreign language, with this form of learning activities in encourage students to build confidence (Zurqoni et al., 2020). The play-based method also functions the same as other methods in language learning. These are due to its capability to build interaction with the foreign language. Similar to roleplay, the play-based method involves a form of play using a foreign language, which, for example, riddles in the Arabic language, or guessing names by picture using a foreign language, and many other forms of games, according to empirical evidence, the teacher stated that, by implementing the play-based method in language learning, it would

provide practice in vocabulary and grammar structure, also at the same time, developing communication skills through social interaction, making students more confidence when confronting foreigner (Pyle et al., 2020). Other research aligns with these findings, stating that it is possible to implement play-based methods in language learning, which can be done in the form of singing, storytelling, and roleplay. While considering consuming time, the teacher stated that the play-based method is a very effective way to develop social and emotional skills, as the student learns to communicate with others in a playful and supportive environment (Yin et al., 2022).

There are many ways to interest students to learn, one of which is by motivating them. Recent studies have developed a motivational model to influence students to learn and improve learning outcomes. This model is called ARCS, which stands for Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction. This model explains the chain reaction that educators should focus on by capturing students' attention using materials relevant to their goals. It will build their confidence and, thus, their satisfaction (Fauzi & Anindiati, 2021). These methods work well on children since children are competitive and have a particular interest in certain things; when educators explain the importance of Arabic language and its long-term potential achievement, this will motivate students' intention to learn Arabic language. Choosing the right method to maximize the learning outcomes is important. Play-based methods can also be done in many forms, which align with the nine steps of Arabic language learning: interaction, communication, acting, role-play, and presenting (Samah et al., 2016). Reflecting on this empirical evidence, it can be illustrated that the play-based method involves students in activities that enhance their nature as social beings. While studying primary learning material is important, it is also essential to build improvising skills, especially in communicating in your native or foreign languages. This paper will explore the effectiveness of play-based method implementation on Arabic language learning, which is viewed from an educator's perspective. This paper will also highlight the alignment of empirical evidence on play-based learning to support the findings of this research. Further, this paper will provide possible improvement that is assumed to contribute toward implementing play-based learning and developing its aspect, namely the educator itself.

2. METHODS

This paper is qualitative research. By deploying a case study approach, this paper will explore play-based methods as a learning method implemented in language learning, namely Arabic language. This paper will also consider empirical research and studies as primary sources of comparison. At the same time, the data are obtained through open interviews with school teachers since the paper's primary purpose is to present the perspective of educators on play-based learning methods. The interview will be conducted in the City of Parepare, namely taking 3-4 samples from each educational level (Kindergarten, Primary School, Middle School, and High School) as the main purpose stated that this paper will view Play-Based methods through the perspective of an educator, the samples will be teacher at that current schools. The data will then be interpreted to form results and discussion using deductive reasoning. The empirical

sources will be presented to support the main findings of this paper. This paper will also present the steps educators often integrate into their teaching methods to provide a more playful and enjoyable learning environment. To illustrate this paper's main purpose, its visualization uses the conceptual framework of the research flows, which can be seen below.

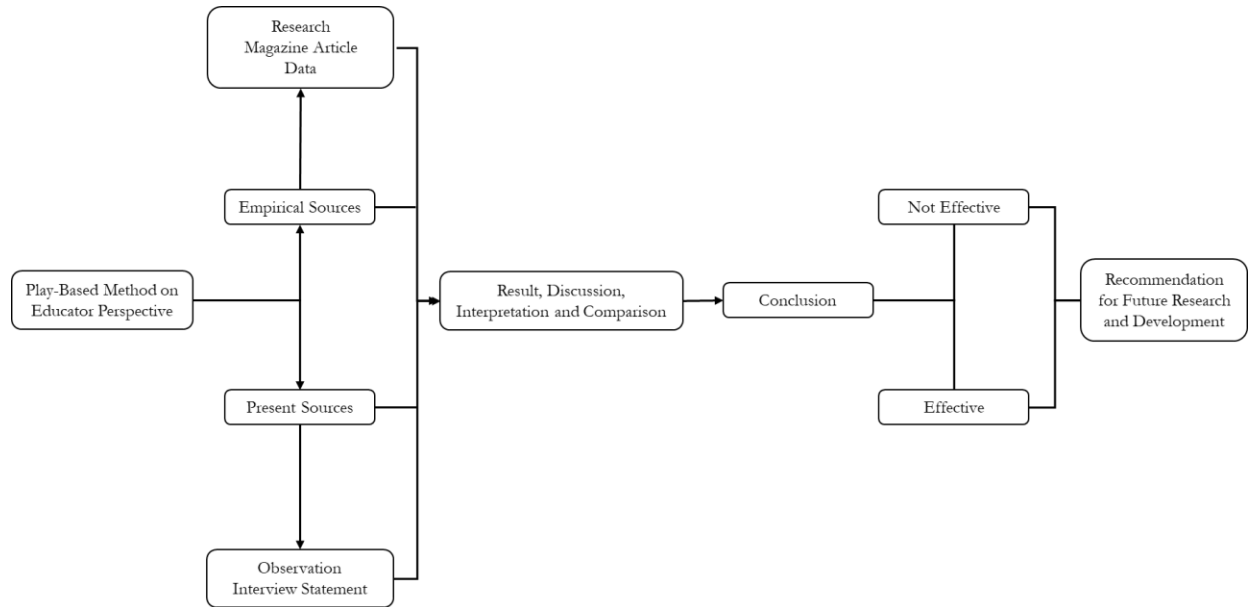


Figure 1. Research Flow Conceptual Framework

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Indonesia is a country with diverse tribes, religions, and races. However, most of Indonesia's population is Muslim, influencing the national curriculum to incorporate religious learning diversity for each religion. For Muslim students, it is essential to be able to read the Qur'an, fulfilling both a religious requirement and an educational goal. Institutions play a crucial role in supporting students to develop the ability to speak, write, and read Arabic, enhancing their understanding of the Qur'an. Highlighting the importance of the Arabic language, it is one of the foreign languages that enables communication with other nations. Mastering Arabic allows individuals to gain a comprehensive understanding of Arab culture. Additionally, proficiency in Arabic contributes to a deeper understanding of Arabic language literacy, providing access to meaningful lessons in the Holy Qur'an. Learning Arabic helps students appreciate the language and culture of the Islamic world. Furthermore, mastering the Arabic Language contributes to developing interactional competence and critical thinking skills (Ritonga et al., 2021). Other empirical research emphasizes the importance of learning Arabic, citing reasons such as (1) Arabic being the fifth most spoken language in the world; (2) Arabic as the language of the Qur'an, enhancing one's understanding of Qur'an and Islam; (3) Arabic as the language of culture and history, with much of human history and

literature written in Arabic; (4) Arabic as the language of technology and sciences, with many STEM findings discovered by Arabic-speaking scholars; (5) Arabic as the language of diplomacy, used to strengthen international relations; and (6) Arabic as the language of art and music, learning which can help in appreciating the history of music and art (Haron et al., 2016)."

The learning process is a crucial aspect of knowledge transfer, involving the educator's competence, commitment, and improvisation to adapt to the student's environment, ultimately influencing the students' learning outcomes. Some teaching methods can be dull, leaving students bored or sleepy. Consequently, various method developments in teaching have become a trend in the field of education, aiming to identify the most effective methods for diverse schools and students. A common issue in maximizing learning outcomes often stems from a lack of student interest. Therefore, motivating students to study is essential. In this context, several strategies can improve student interest in language learning, especially Arabic. (1) teacher should act as the main actor in fostering student interest, which can be done by formulating interactive, proactive, inspirational, and fun lessons; (2) creating positive learning environment; (3) using interactive and engaging teaching methods; (4) relating Arabic language learning to real-life conditions; (5) personalizing learning experience by providing opportunities for students to explore topic aligning with their interest in the context of Arabic language; and (6) make the learning experience full of enjoyment, packing learning activities with games, storytelling, and other forms of enjoyable activities (Juryatinai & Amrin, 2021). In terms of play-based methods, empirical research shows similar approaches to language learning by implementing play-based methods in the form of outbound activities. These activities have a diversity of forms to provide fun and enjoyable learning experiences, which is (1) catch the word, students will listen to the teacher's word, anyone whose finger is caught will have to say the next word to that related topics; (2) sentence relay, this is done by passing sentence by whispering, the last students than the task to write the sentence on the paper; (3) balloon pop, each balloon contains the separate word, which when it explodes, the student are task to form a sentence using a piece of word coming out from the balloon; (4) answer and jump, a form of race, every correct answer will give chance to jump a step toward the finish line; and (5) smash and arrange, same as balloon pop, only it is a race, which the first group finishes the sentence first is the winner (J. Ali, 2018). These methods work in early-age children and even for older children.

A. Effectiveness of Play-Based Methods on Arabic Language Learning

Play-based methods are often used in early-age children, which is kindergarten and primary school. This paper explores implementing this method up to high school by interviewing 3-4 teachers for each school. For kindergarten, there are four teachers from two different schools, according to their statement.

"In general, when teaching Arabic language, I used basic material in teaching, names of animals, names of body parts, and names of various items. However, I often use

play methods like teamwork games, riddles, and guessing names. This method motivates students to perform actively in learning activities, as they love games.”

This statement indicates that teachers often used play-based methods to engage students in active movement activities, harnessing their ability to improvise and follow their instincts as a form of the method. These statements align with the effective outcomes explained in empirical evidence, which can be inferred that play-based language learning activities can increase confidence in providing comments and help to improve their friends' language skills. Additionally, playful behaviors and language can promote creativity and other affective outcomes. Further, the student will also develop positive affection due to their engagement in active form activities (Cheep-Aranai & Wasanasomsithi, 2016). Other empirical evidence also explains that in term of effectiveness, there are several benefits provided by the play-based method, which is (1) oral language development, (2) enhancing creativity and imagination; (3) improve social interaction and collaboration, (4) multisensory learning as a form to improve students senses capabilities; (5) build motivation and influence engagement; and (6) function as risk-taking and confidence building (Pang & Simoncelli-Bulak, 2017).

“Play-based method is also used to support a student's development and growth process. At this age, student love to play and explore what interest them. Therefore, as a teacher, we provide a supportive environment and guide students' exploration. We, of course, provide in-class lessons and learning materials visualizing the importance of each learning material, namely Arabic language”.

Play-based learning allows students to engage in purposeful activities that simulate experiences they will likely encounter. It is defined by four features: voluntary participation, intrinsic motivation, physical engagement, and make-believe quality. Beneficial for developing various skills, including independence, social skills, social-emotional development, and motor function. It also helps foster strong metacognitive skills, independence, and co-dependency on peers. It also provides a more natural and meaningful approach to learning, which can lead to better retention of information and increased memorization skills needed for higher-level classes (E. Ali et al., 2018).

As for the older students, this paper interviewed three teachers from each middle and high school. In total, there were six teachers. The exact form of play-based learning can be implemented, in which older students also like to play games and outdoor activities. Most students enjoy playing sports during physical education (PE) lessons.

“Students love it when it comes to PE lessons, and they love to play sport and other form outdoor activities. Reflecting on this, as a teacher, we implement active learning through fun activities, such as games, experiments, and direct practice in conversation.”

Arabic language learning is implemented through direct practice in conversation. This is often illustrated as a form of drama but is mainly known as roleplay. This method shares similar elements with play-based methods, encouraging students to engage in

conversation and other forms of social interaction. Through this approach, students learn in a real-life simulation. These findings indicate that play-based methods can adapt to various age groups, from early-age children to high school students. Play-based methods continue to be effective in motivating students to learn.

According to empirical evidence, play-based methods in middle school actively shape tasks, involve interaction with skilled facilitators, explore complex scientific ideas, and engage with scientific phenomena dynamically and interactively. Play-based methods at this stage allow students to engage with scientific concepts through playful and embodied experiences. This involves using open-ended movement problems mediated by technology and investigated with instructional support (Margolin et al., 2021).

Another example of play-based method adaptation is roleplay, implemented in high school. As part of this method, virtual city planning is one of many roleplaying activities that effectively encourage students to engage in academic domains. Role-playing is a key component of play-based courses, such as VCP. The authors suggest that role-playing can facilitate dialogic teaching through reflections and discussions, scaffold students' experience with specific game mechanics, and encourage critical thinking. Role-playing encourages students to voice and apply their insights in individual and collaborative activities. As a result of their role-playing experiences, the similarities of both forms support each other. Play-based and role-playing courses can provide immersive and engaging learning experiences that support learners' academic and personal development (Foster et al., 2019).

"There was one day when students were given a bit of free time; during this, we used opportunities to see what the students were interested in; during this time, it also showed which students loved to play sports, which are engaging in other productive activities. As the students are free to choose what activities they want, it will develop many aspects of their personality, such as interaction with others who share the same interests in their current activities. "

Play-based learning is a comprehensive approach considering students' objectives, the learning process, and characteristics. The focus is on creating enjoyable and fun environments, and these methods also concentrate on improving students' skills in areas that interest them (Samsudin et al., 2023). Additional empirical evidence supports these findings, stating that play-based learning environments positively impact students' growth and development, particularly in oral language development. Oral language is considered one of the most crucial socio-cognitive skills, and even in older age, some students still appear to lack proficiency in it.

This method enables students to acquire and represent new knowledge, communicate their understanding, and develop literacy skills. Overall, the play-based approach provides rich opportunities for students to engage in language-rich activities, such as storytelling, role-playing, and collaborative play, which can enhance their oral language skills (Stagnitti et al., 2015). Consistent with these results, it is explained that

teachers play an essential role in implementing play-based learning effectively in creating a supportive and stimulating environment that encourages play and language exploration. They can provide a wide range of play materials, such as miniatures, props, and games, that are relevant to language learning goals. Teachers can also incorporate language-rich activities within play, such as storytelling, role-playing, and language games, to enhance language acquisition (Suwastini et al., 2022).

This result indicates that the play-based method can adapt to the learning environment and is effective at each educational level. According to the interview result, the teacher illustrated the play-based method as an effective approach, especially its capabilities to motivate students to learn, which is made possible by the learning environment it creates. Therefore, after the interview, the respondents showed positive, supportive behavior and recommended implementing play-based methods at least once in a while, especially in middle and high school.

B. Play-Based Learning Method on Arabic Language Through the Perspective of Educator

After exploring the effectiveness of play-based methods, this part will view educators' perspectives on play-based methods. While play-based methods are effective for children, their process has a diversity of perspectives. Therefore, it is important to explore and compare the present statement on this method with the empirical evidence perspective. This debate is mentioned in one of the empirical research, stating that While some teachers successfully integrate play-based learning to support social and academic learning, others face barriers to its implementation due to environmental factors (Fesseha & Pyle, 2016).

“Play-based method is certainly one of the effective methods, which when it comes to games, a student is hype. However, some other fellow teachers are provided with learning material that only focuses on centered learning without a variation of activities. However, when it comes to language learning, namely in Arabic Language, the teacher often gives a conversation format, which gives a form of roleplay for students to read and impersonate.”

Supporting this statement, empirical research explains that play-based learning is effective based on its capability to support the development of self-regulation while simultaneously uniting academic and developmental orientations and fostering the development of literacy skills. Moreover, in language learning, the play-based method can create interactive environments that enhance students' interaction and communication, whether in their own or a foreign language (Pyle & DeLuca, 2016). Roleplay implies a fun and engaging way of learning language, and the choice of playful activities to produce language has been proven to maintain student interest and concentration, especially for students who may lack motivation to learn languages other than their own. To effectively implement play-based learning, teachers play an active role

in facilitating it by setting concrete learning goals and integrating them into play activities (Mao et al., 2022).

“In kindergarten, there may have been many tools that can be used to implement play-based method effectively, but from a personal perspective, as for us high school teachers, there are target learning outcomes and less equipment which can be used to implement play-based method. Nevertheless, many competitions can be utilized in language learning to motivate students to learn a foreign language. Part of this competition includes elements of the play-based method, such as storytelling, acting, and short movies, which require an imagination and creativity of the students.”

These statements indicate that teachers often try to implement play-based methods but are limited by the learning outcomes targeted by the National Education Bureau. However, teachers view play-based methods as having the power to motivate and influence students. There is little empirical evidence supporting the play-based method in Zambia; teachers appreciate this approach as a means to support students' pedagogical and holistic development despite facing challenges such as conceptual and practical difficulties, the influence of the social-cultural context, and the lack of outdoor play materials and equipment. Nonetheless, teachers maintain a positive perspective on the effectiveness of the play-based method and put effort into its implementation (Lungu & Matafwali, 2020).

Other empirical research supporting the implementation of the play-based method states that it prioritizes child-directed play, while others endorse more structured activities. Additionally, teachers who hold an interventionist perspective may be more motivated to address social and environmental barriers in play and engage in strategies to promote inclusion for students (Danniels & Pyle, 2023).

Play is an essential activity that engages every muscle in the human body, contributing to overall health. Generally, humans need to engage in play and outdoor activities occasionally. In the learning process, particularly in language learning, play is integrated with students' ability to adapt to the learning material. These activities also enhance students' ability to improvise. For example, students adapt to audience reactions and improvise situations in storytelling. In language learning, a single incorrectly delivered sentence can convey a vague meaning, a challenge faced even in Arabic language learning. Therefore, teachers actively use this learning model to enhance oral proficiency in conversations, which proves useful in various life situations.

Empirical research supports these statements, highlighting play as a crucial element for effective learning outcomes due to its ability to motivate and influence students to learn topics of interest. Moreover, to implement this play-based method effectively, the government must provide support in enhancing the abilities and capabilities of teachers and educators through training (O’Keeffe & McNally, 2021). Empirical research further emphasizes the role of professional development for educators, indicating that the play-

based method is an excellent learning outcome. In this process, students are actively engaged without feeling bored or sleepy. However, professionals need to train and enhance the abilities of most educators, as some teachers struggle to understand the relationships between play and literacy, creating challenges in both play and learning. Despite this, teachers view play-based learning as effective and express a willingness to put effort into implementing this method to introduce variation in the learning process (Pyle et al., 2018).

Reflecting on the responses and empirical evidence, there is a tendency for alignment between statements and empirical support for play-based methods. Furthermore, it indicates that play-based methods exhibit a diverse range of forms and possess the capability to adapt to various learning environments. This is evidenced by the different models of play-based materials present at each educational level; for instance, play-based models are often associated with outdoor learning activities in kindergarten. Play-based methods in middle and high school include storytelling, role-play, and various other formats, sometimes involving external motivation such as competition.

In summary, play-based methods are effective and can be implemented across diverse learning environments. However, some empirical studies suggest that play-based methods require more attention, as some educators struggle to grasp the connection between play and learning. This issue needs to be addressed, and it recommends that the government provide facilities and programs to enhance educators' ability and capability to implement play-based methods in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

After conducting this research, the conclusion presented in this paper asserts that play-based learning is an effective method for teaching the Arabic language to children. From the perspective of educators, it is evident that play-based learning can enhance children's cognitive, social, and emotional abilities, ultimately improving their language skills. The alignment between the claims and the evidence lends credibility to play-based approaches, which are adaptable for use in various educational settings and contribute to a more enjoyable learning experience for all involved. Teachers can incorporate storytelling, role-playing, and friendly competition to introduce play-based learning into their language classrooms. These strategies are versatile enough to be applied across different settings and with students of all ages, from kindergarten through high school. Teachers can also boost student engagement and participation by integrating games, riddles, and music into lesson plans. Through play-based methods, educators can create a conducive learning environment that nurtures children's cognitive, social, and emotional growth and language development.

Several areas are suggested for further investigation because they are seen to be able to aid in the evolution of the play-based approach, which is (1) Longitudinal studies should be conducted to investigate the effects of play-based learning on children's academic achievement and their ability to acquire the Arabic language over time. Insight

into the long-term effects of play-based approaches to language acquisition will be gained; (2) Determine how technology contributes: Explore how to teach Arabic through play using digital tools like educational apps and internet platforms. This can be used to learn how play-based activities can benefit from technological enhancements; (3) Analyze the results for various age groups. Investigate the impact of play-based learning on teaching Arabic to students of all ages, from toddlers to teenagers. This will light how play-based approaches can be modified to fit the requirements of children at various ages and stages of development; (4) Examine the cultural context: Determine how play-based learning in Arabic language instruction may be affected by cultural influences. In doing so, we might consider how cultural beliefs and practices influence the conception and implementation of play-based learning experiences and (5) Find out where teachers stand regarding continuing education: Study what educators need to know to incorporate play-based learning into Arabic language classrooms successfully. By doing so, we can better equip teachers with the information and tools they need to employ play-based strategies in the classroom.

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