

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The last chapter of the present work, reveals the conclusions derived from an analysis of the data offered in the preceding section. This chapter also elucidates implications and limitations that could be advantageous for enhancing future studies. Furthermore, the recommendations are directed at pedagogical practices and future researchers who are interested in undertaking additional studies on game-based learning.

5.1 Conclusions

The goals of this study were to investigate the implementation of Game-Based Learning (GBL) in the teaching of English to students with intellectual disability, as well as to identify the challenges encountered by teachers in applying GBL. The findings from the observation, interview, and document analysis lead to several conclusions.

First, regarding the first research questions, it was found that the teacher implemented game-based learning by involving six steps: (1) selecting the game, (2) explaining the concept, (3) explaining the rules, (4) playing the game, (5) knowledge summarization, and (6) reflections.

In the “selecting the game” step, teachers consider several factors, such as the suitability of the game to the content being taught and the type of game. It is critically important to align the game type with the instructional content to optimize the learning experience in a classroom setting. The teacher's approach to selecting games is evidently thoughtful and strategic, focusing on the compatibility between the game mechanics and the educational goals. This ensures that the chosen game not only reinforces the material being taught but also enhances the students' engagement and understanding. Even though there are many kinds of games that teachers can give to students, such as the UNO card game, crossword puzzles, flashcards, role plays, and the traditional Bugis game “Dende-Dende,” the teacher must adapt the games she gives to students according to the purpose of the material she teaches.

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EFL TEACHING AND CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING GAME-BASED LEARNING TO STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES: A CASE STUDY

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In the “explaining the concept” step, the teacher conducts several activities to ensure that the teaching and learning activities run smoothly. These activities include introducing the game and demonstrating its mechanics. The teacher's strategy of introducing the game in each meeting highlights an approach tailored to meet the special requirements of the students by providing them with engaging learning activities. Students with special needs, such as those with intellectual disabilities, often forget the learning they have received. Therefore, teachers must always introduce the games and explain how to play them. When demonstrating the mechanics of the game to students, the teacher always gives direct examples, such as calling students to come forward as models to explain how to play the game, rather than just explaining verbally. Visual examples make it easier for students with intellectual disabilities to understand how to play the game.

In the “explain the rules” step, the teacher always explains the rules for playing time and helping each other as part of the students’ learning process. Establishing rules regarding time for playing games in the learning environment is one way that teachers maintain a productive learning atmosphere. With the allotted time, students will focus more on playing and not get too engrossed in the process, thus remaining in learning mode. Additionally, the teacher explains the importance of helping each other. The teacher provides game rules so that students can assist their classmates when playing the game. This ensures that all students can focus on learning, not just those who are actively playing the game, but all students in the class.

In the “playing the game” step, there are several things that the teacher does to help students and make the learning process more effective, such as guiding the students and providing real-time feedback. The teacher acknowledges the necessity of direct involvement in the learning process through games. This involvement is partly due to the recognition that many students may not yet have the skills to navigate learning through play independently. The teacher’s role thus expands from merely presenting information to actively engaging with students to ensure that the educational objectives of the game are achieved. This guidance is essential not only for managing the flow of the game but also for ensuring learning outcomes. Additionally, the teacher emphasizes the necessity of direct feedback to help students face challenges in the learning process. This feedback may involve providing clarification on vocabulary or concepts, offering additional explanations, or guiding students through problem-solving tasks. The importance of continuous

guidance and support is particularly crucial for students with intellectual disabilities, recognizing the need for ongoing assistance in their learning journey.

In the “knowledge summarization” step, the teacher wants to ensure that students have effectively learned the material provided through the game method. There are several steps the teacher takes, such as giving a short test and providing a conclusion. The process of asking questions and providing feedback or asking students to recall material learned through game-based learning methods is one of the activities frequently conducted by teachers to ensure the students’ learning process is proceeding well. Additionally, the teacher provides conclusions to students about what they have learned and reminds them to review the lesson when they are at home.

In the “reflections” step, there are two types of reflection carried out by teachers: oral reflection and taking notes. The teacher prompts students to reflect on their learning experiences, particularly the enjoyment and engagement aspects of the session facilitated through game-based learning. This activity serves not only to gather feedback on the session's effectiveness but also to reinforce the connection between enjoyment and learning, an element in educational psychology that suggests positive emotions significantly enhance learning outcomes. Additionally, the teacher takes notes as self-reflection to improve her teaching practices. This reflective process, conducted outside the classroom environment, allows the teacher to critically assess their teaching methods, identify areas for improvement, and strategize for future lessons. Moreover, this reflective practice aligns with principles of lifelong learning and professional development, demonstrating the teacher's proactive approach to refining their craft.

Second, regarding the second research question, it was found that the challenges related to the implementation of game-based learning by teachers revealed several themes: (1) student mood and focus, (2) students’ academic abilities, (3) student attendance, (4) classroom environment, and (5) teachers’ educational backgrounds.

The teacher highlighted the significant role that students’ moods and focus play in the learning process, particularly for students with intellectual disabilities. She emphasized that these students often struggle to regulate their moods for learning, and when they are not in the right

mood, they find it challenging to stay focused in class. This can sometimes lead to disruptive behaviors, such as leaving the classroom or running away, which hinders their ability to engage effectively with the learning material. Moreover, the teacher expressed concern over the considerable number of students who struggle with fundamental skills like reading and writing. This deficiency presents a formidable challenge, as language acquisition, especially in subjects like English, is contingent upon a foundational understanding of these skills.

The new findings from this research highlight significant challenges faced by teachers, particularly regarding student attendance. Ensuring consistent attendance is difficult, as irregular attendance patterns disrupt the continuity of learning and require teachers to repeatedly cover the same material for absent students. Additionally, the limited infrastructure of the school imposes further constraints. Due to inadequate classroom space, each class must be divided into two separate study rooms, resulting in restricted learning environments that pose various challenges to the teaching-learning process.

Lastly, the challenges faced by English teachers at the school, especially regarding educational backgrounds, were highlighted. This indicates that the teachers' academic education is not specifically adapted to the context of special education schools. Instead, the teacher graduated with a degree in English education, which initially posed challenges when adapting her teaching approach to meet the diverse needs of students with intellectual disabilities.

5.2 Implications

The results of this study have practical and theoretical significance for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and scholars. The findings offer useful insights for language teachers and educational professionals about the effective implementation of Game-Based Learning (GBL) methods in teaching English to students with intellectual disabilities. The research suggests that, despite the difficulties, the adoption of Game-Based Learning (GBL) can significantly enhance the growth of language abilities in those children, providing them with an accessible and fun learning experience. GBL can be used as an alternate teaching method for EFL teachers, helping students with intellectual disabilities to better prepare for future life challenges.

Theoretically, the results of this study provide support for the concept of Experiential Learning, specifically through the implementation of Game-Based Learning (GBL) as a framework for designing experiential learning activities. GBL seeks to enhance the learning environment by integrating play, which can alleviate students' anxiety and stress while they are studying. This research contributes to the current collection of knowledge on using Game-Based Learning (GBL) to teach English students with intellectual disabilities. Moreover, the insights gained from this study can serve as a basis for future scholars exploring similar subjects.

5.3 Limitations

There are a few limitations to this study. First, this study is limited by its focus on EFL students with intellectual disabilities. Although the research was conducted at a special school with a diverse population of students with special needs, the researcher chose to focus on only one type of student with special needs, specifically those with intellectual disabilities. This focus aimed to obtain deeper and more detailed research results regarding the implementation and challenges of game-based learning for English language learning. Therefore, the results of this research may not be relevant or applicable to other situations or groups of students with different needs.

Second, the study involved only one participant, leading to a lack of varied and objective data. This limited sample size introduces potential bias, which must be acknowledged as a significant limitation. To enhance validity and mitigate bias, the researcher employed member checks and data triangulation, utilizing multiple data sources to ensure the robustness of the findings.

Lastly, this research employed a qualitative case study methodology. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized to the broader population, as this method does not aim to extrapolate results to other participants or settings. Nevertheless, the strength of qualitative research lies in its detailed descriptions and the development of themes within the context of a specific site. Future research should consider utilizing empirical studies with diverse methods and across various institutions to enhance generalizability.

5.4 Recommendations

This research provides recommendations for instructional practices and other researchers to consider.

Firstly, Despite the challenges encountered, it is recommended that EFL teachers in special schools consider implementing game-based learning (GBL) as an alternative teaching method. GBL can enhance the quality of education by making learning more engaging and easier for students to understand, thereby helping teachers address issues related to students' focus and mood. Given the crucial role teachers play in designing and implementing GBL, it is essential for teacher education institutions to offer comprehensive training to prospective teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills in this area. For teachers new to GBL, training should particularly emphasize the design of syllabi and lesson plans that effectively integrate game-based learning.

Secondly, this research advises future researchers interested in this area to explore different variables and contexts. For instance, studies could investigate the implementation of game-based learning (GBL) for autistic students and those with other special needs, examining their perspectives on this method and the benefits they derive. Additionally, future research could delve into how teachers address the challenges they encounter, the development of students' language skills, and teachers' perceptions during the implementation of GBL.

Lastly, this study is expected to serve as a consideration for curriculum developers at higher education institutions. The research found that one of the most common challenges for English teachers in special schools is the lack of specialized training in teaching English effectively to students with special needs. Therefore, it is recommended that higher education curricula, particularly in English education departments, consider specific courses on how to teach English to students with special needs. Conversely, special education departments should offer additional training that prepares future teachers to effectively teach English to students with special needs, such as those with intellectual disabilities.

