

Focus Group Discussion on Students' Perception of Gamification in Learning Cohesion in Arabic

Nurul Hanilah Mohd Ismath

Department of Arabic Language, Kulliyah of Languages and Management,
International Islamic University Malaysia

Nor Zainiyah Norita Mohtar

Department of English Language, Kulliyah of Languages and Management,
International Islamic University Malaysia

Arina Johari

Department of Malay Language, Kulliyah of Languages and Management,
International Islamic University Malaysia

Siti Yuliandi Ahmad

Department of Tourism, Kulliyah of Languages and Management,
International Islamic University Malaysia

Abdul Hadi Abd Aziz

Language Teacher, Jabatan Bahasa Antarabangsa, Centre of Language Studies, University Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia

Submitted: 15/10/2023. Revised edition: 23/11/2023. Accepted: 24/11/2023. Published online: 4/12/2023

ABSTRACT

Learning languages had been taught as a passive process. But in this era of Information and Communication Technology, a lot of educators use the technology provided on the Internet to attract students to focus on learning. Nowadays, gamification is widely used by educators while teaching online including Arabic language. Thus, this study aims to identify the students' perception on gamification in learning Arabic cohesive devices. This study employed qualitative approach which the researchers used focus group discussion as a mode of data collection. The sampling method used is convenience sampling which all of them are students at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), 2nd year students, semester 2, 2018/2019 taking Arabic subject. In this study, researchers managed to recruit 14 participants for 3 focus group discussion whereby 5 participants respectively in the first group and 4 participants in another group. From the result of the research, the process of learning Arabic cohesive devices in the Arabic language takes place with all enjoyment which increases the students' interest for learning.

Keywords: Focus Group Discussion, Students' perception, Gamification, Cohesion in Arabic

INTRODUCTION

The use of gamification in learning is something that can be applied in increasing motivation and student involvement as well as creating a good learning environment and improve students' proficiency

*Correspondence to: Nurul Hanilah Mohd Ismath (email: hanilah@iium.edu.my)

in Arabic (Rosmaza Sukardi, *et al.*, 2016). Nowadays, the teaching and learning techniques used by educators in the classroom do not attract the attention of students and it leads to less interest and less appreciate the content of arabic lessons. According to Johari *et al.* (2012) the use of information technology in teaching can accelerate the learning process due to increased interest and motivation of students to learn. Similarly in the view of Suzana *et al.* (2014) who stated that information technology can stimulate interest in learning and in turn promote self-access learning. Currently, several researchers have studied the effectiveness of gamification methods in several subjects such as algebraic expressions (Siti Norhaida, 2017), learning theory modules (Nurul Ain *et al.*, 2018) and environmental courses (Rahimah Wahid, 2019).

This study focuses on the students' perception on the use of Gamification in learning Arabic Cohesive Devices. Cohesion is vital aspect in learning Arabic. It does not mean just "grammatically correct" sentences; but it refers to the connection of ideas both at the sentence level and at the paragraph level.

Gamification

Gamification is the addition of game mechanics to non-game environments, such as a website, online community, or management system to increase engagement. It is a process that uses game mechanics that can improve students' skill and learning (Mario Buljan, 2021). Gamification in education improves motivation and engagement. The impact of game elements, such as instant feedback, earning badges for successfully completing challenges will greatly increase students' motivation to even engage in these games within the walls of the classroom. Games modify the reward and pleasure centers of the brain and enhance learning. One of the examples of gamification is *Kahoot!* It is a game-based learning platform that teachers can use in the classroom. It uses many game mechanics that follow a motivational approach. It has a "Ghost Mode" where possible students challenge themselves to beat their scores and have leaderboards to compete. Users create their own games and quizzes which they then share with teachers, students, or other users.

Arabic Cohesion

Cohesion plays a vital role in Arabic language. Cohesion is close to the linguistic meaning. It allows the text to be received and understood, through many linguistic elements that achieve the textuality of the text, in addition to its distinction with a comprehensive meaning that achieves its overall textual unity. Muhammad Khattabi (1991) says: "that strong cohesion between the parts that make up a text or a speech, and it is concerned with the linguistic (formal) means that connect the elements that make up a part of a speech or an entire speech".

In ancient times, the Arabs were interested in the concept of cohesion. Rhetoricians sought in their studies to reveal the interrelationship between the elements and components of the text. Just as we find in Hazem Al-Qurtajani who said, speaking about speech in poetry: "As for the connection between the phrase and the purpose, it is the one in which the end of the chapter has a relationship with the beginning of the chapter that follows it - a relationship from the point of view of the purpose, and a connection from the aspect of the phrase". Perhaps the theory of rhythm, as found by Imam Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, is considered one of the strongest evidence of the Arabs' interest in the issue of cohesion in texts. He looked at the Holy Qur'an comprehensively as a single text, wondering about the secret of its miraculous to the Arabs. (Bouthar, 2017)

The Qur'anic scholars' search for the correspondence between surahs and verses can also be considered in search of cohesion, they wrote many books about this in the sciences of the Qur'an, as we find in Al-Suyuti in his book *Al-Itqan fi Ulum Al-Qur'an* (Sibawayh, 1974).

There are three types of cohesion: grammatical, lexical, and phonetic, and it has many means and tools by which it can be achieved in texts, the most important of which are referral and substitution, connection, lexical consistency, and repetition (Bouthar, 2017):

- (1) Reference: It is the reference of an element within the text to another element and is achieved by a group of elements. Such as: demonstrative nouns, pronouns, and comparative tools. The reference is divided, on the one hand, into a situated reference outside the text, and a textual reference within the text, and on the other hand, it is divided into a prior reference that refers to something previous, and a post-reference that refers to something later.
- (2) Substitution: It is the replacement of a linguistic element with another element that has the same meaning. It is therefore of a lexical and grammatical nature. "Substitution is divided into three sections: nominal substitution, actual substitution, and verbal substitution." (Sibawayh, 1974)
- (3) Linking: It is the way in which subsequent and previous parts of the text are connected in an organized and coherent manner, and it has means; Among them: conjunction, which David Crystal considers one of the most important means of consistency, as it is the first means by which the text is consistent, and then the other means come after it. Such as referral, repetition, and lexical relationships. (Bouthar, 2017)
- (4) Lexical consistency: This consistency is achieved through two means: They are: repetition and consolidation. The first is "a form of lexical consistency that requires the return of a lexical item, or the occurrence of a synonym, a quasi-synonym, an absolute item, or a general noun." (Khatabi, 1991) As for the second, it is "the occurrence of a pair of words by action or force, due to their connection by virtue of a relationship." (Khatabi, 1991) Such as the relationship of opposition and dissonance, and the relationship of the part to the whole.
- (5) Phonological consistency: This type is achieved through assonance, alliteration, and phonetic and morphological parallelism

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

Stewart and Shamdani (1990) consider focus group discussion as the most popular method of data collection in recent years among social science researchers (Charlesworth and Rodwell, 1997; Parker and Tritter, 2006). They are commonly used when the research objective is to conduct an in-depth exploration of a topic about which little is known (Norzainiyah Norita, Nurul Hanilah, 2020). It is particularly suitable method for gathering data when the topic is specific and where the researcher is seeking the reactions of participants to an idea, product, intervention, or shared experience (Patton, 2002). It is a small group made up of six to ten individuals with certain common features of characteristics, with whom a discussion can be focused onto a given issue or topic. (Wellington,2015). In this study, researchers

managed to recruit 14 participants for 3 focus group discussion whereby 5 participants respectively in the first group and 4 participants in another group.

The sampling method used is convenience sampling which all of them were students at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), 2nd year students semester 2, 2018/2019 taking Arabic subject. To start with, the students were given 1 hour to answer the Arabic Cohesive Devices conducted by instructor via Kahoot (one of gamification examples). The instructor is their lecturer who is teaching them Arabic. The questions regarding Arabic conjunctions, reference, ellipsis were answered by students using *Kahoot!* After that, the researchers conducted 3 focus group discussion to have their perceptions on gamification in learning Arabic cohesive devices. The 1st two groups consist of 5 students respectively and the other focus group discussion consist of 4 students. Then, the researchers start to ask them this question regarding their opinion about gamification in learning Arabic Cohesion.

Question: What is your opinion about Gamification in learning Arabic Cohesive devices?

1. Coding

Focus Group Discussion 1 (5 students)

Student A: Personally, I think the gamification (for example kahoot) is good, sure, but I think, if only we were given the enough time to answer the question. Sometimes we don't enough time to think and it leads us to answer it incorrectly.

Student B: I think gamification is very much needed to us in this new technology era. It brings a lot of advantages which students enjoy learning Arabic in very attractive way, and I feel so motivated to answer the questions.

Student C: I can refresh the lesson thought by lecturer.

Student D: It depends on people how they think about it but I personally prefer the combination of gamification and traditional way to learn any lesson.

Student E: I like gamification (kahoot) because I feel so refresh and not sleepy in class.

Codes

- Good
- Not enough time to answer the question
- Not enough time to think
- is very much needed
- students enjoy learning Arabic Cohesion
- attractive way and enjoyable
- Refresh the lesson thought
- Gamification+traditional way
- Feel enjoyed in class

Focus Group Discussion 2 (5 students)

Student A: I think kahoot (gamification) is very engaging and not boring in class

Student B: the time is so limited for me to think

Student C: the time is limited so need to focus thoroughly

Student D: kahoot is good but please don't write long questions

Student E: it makes me to know more about Arabic Cohesive Devices

Codes

- Gamification is very engaging
- time is so limited
- time is so limited
- kahoot is good
- Feel motivated to know more about Arabic Cohesive Devices

2. Turning codes into themes

Focus Group Discussion 3 (4 students)

Student A: Make me want to know more about Arabic Cohesive Devices

Student B: kahoot (gamification) makes me motivated and enjoyed in class

Student C: Kahoot is very engaging

Student D: it helps to attract students.

Codes

- Help to understand the lesson
- Feel motivated to know more about Arabic Cohesive Devices
- Gamification is very engaging
- Gamification is attractive

Codes

- Feel motivated
- Attractive
- enjoyable
- Refresh the lesson thought
- Want to know more about Arabic Cohesive Devices
- Time is limited
- Not enough time

Theme

- Engaging
- Understand the lesson
- Limited time

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Table 1 Theme

Gamification	Engaging
	Helping students in understanding the lesson
	Needs more time to answer questions

This research used the thematic analysis in analysing the data. Based on what have been presented in Table 1, they are 3 themes regarding students' perception on the use of gamification in learning Arabic Cohesive Devices, we can see gamification has a great impact in learning Arabic Cohesive Devices in a way that it encourages students to participate in class and they feel so motivated and enjoyed without feeling bored and sleepy as it is very engaging. The finding is compatible with several research studies that also verified that Gamification increased the engagement of students to learn as Hussain *et al.* (2014) studies aim at stimulating student motivation in both intrinsically and extrinsic.

Students also can understand the lesson very well which this gamification helps students to refresh what they have learned in class before. It is a kind of doing a revision for the lesson they had going through as well as make them want to know the Arabic Cohesive Devices more. In addition several studies also confirm improvement in students' academic performance through gamification (Siti Norhaida, 2017), (Nurul Ain *et al.*, 2018) and (Rahimah Wahid, 2019).

Gamification especially Kahoot! is utmost important medium to encourage Arabic learners to learn Arabic in this era as a lot of students nowadays depend on their phone and tablet to gain information. It is hoped that instructors or lecturers in Arabic linguistic field may use gamification in teaching morphology,

semantics, and pragmatics as their tool of teaching as it is very engaging and help students to understand the lesson more effectively.

Above all these, the instructors or lecturers must make sure that time allocated for gamification is adequate so that students may answer all the questions very precisely and it is hoped that in future other researchers may increase the time allocated to answer all the questions in the games.

The essence of this study compared to other studies is that it uses a focus group discussion in contributing the field of Arabic Linguistic studies as well as the field of textual Arabic Grammar (*Nahw Nass*).

CONCLUSION

Nowadays, Arabic teaching and learning are witnessing accelerated changes and developments especially in terms of integrating technology with learning process by using new learning strategies such as gamification. Thus, establishments of higher education are seeking to utilize these advanced instruction and techniques to educate Arabic learners as well as Arabic instructors or Arabic lecturers in the desire to achieve a high-quality education that is aligned with global criteria.

The result of this study confirmed that students love to have gamification as their tool of learning as gamification is very engaging and help students to understand the lesson better (Arabic Cohesive Devices). Thus, gamification should be consistently implemented in class to motivate and engage students in the learning process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank International Islamic University Malaysia for their helpful feedback and support.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, F., Abdul Razak, K. (2021). tahap minat dan penerimaan pelajar terhadap gamifikasi dalam bidang Sirah (Level of interest and acceptance of students towards gamification in Islamic history). *Journal of Quran Sunnah Education and Special Needs*, 16(1), 27-38.
- Halliday, M. A. K. & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. Longman.
- (1985). *Language, context and text: Aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective*. Deakin University Press.
- Hussain, S. Y. S., Tan, W. H., & Idris, M. Z. (2014). Digital game-based learning for remedial mathematics students: A new teaching and learning approach in Malaysia. *International Journal of Multimedia Ubiquitous Engineering*, 9(11), 325-338.
- Johari, H. & Fazliana, R. (2012). Penggunaan ICT dalam proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran di kalangan pengajar fakulti pengajaran Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Skudai, Johor.
- Kiryakova, G., Angelova, N. & Yordanova, L. (2014). Gamification in education. *Proceedings of 9th International Balkan Education and Science Conference*.

- Nurul Ain Azmi, Razzatul Iza Zurita Rasalli & Norazila Aniah. (2018). Penggunaan aplikasi Kahoot dalam pembelajaran modul teori di Kolej Komuniti Ledang Johor. *International Conference on Education, Islamic Studies & Social Sciences Research (ICEISR)*.
- Nor Zainiyah Norita Mokhtar, Nurul Hanilah Binti Mohd Ismath. (2020). Focus group discussion and interview: Some basic guidelines enriching the Islamic Tradition in research inquiry. Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought (East and Southeast Asia Office).
- Rahimah Wahid. (2019). Kaedah gamifikasi sebagai alternatif pengajaran dan pembelajaran dalam kursus berkaitan alam sekitar. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 12(2), 50-53.
- Rosmaza Sukardi, Harun Baharudin, Maimun Aqsha Lubis. (2016). Konsep gamification sebagai kaedah meningkatkan motivasi dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab di Malaysia, *Kolokium Pendidikan Bahasa Arab 2016 (Kobar 16) 10 Desember 2016: 128-135*.
- Siti Norhaida Binti Abdul Rahman. (2017). Pendekatan Gamifikasi dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran terhadap murid tingkatan dua bagi topik Ungkapan Algebra. Tesis Sarjana, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia.
- Sibawayh. (1974). Al-Kitab. Al-Hayah Al-Misriyyah Al-Ammah lilkitab.
- Suzana, S. & Fariza, K. (2014). Pengajaran dan pembelajaran menggunakan perisian Google - Satu analisis kajian lepas. Pengajaran Sumber dan Teknologi Maklumat: Impaknya ke atas Penyelidikan dalam Pendidikan. 1, 25-32.
- Siti Rohani binti Jasni, Suhaila binti Zailani & Hakim bin Zainal. (2019). Pendekatan gamifikasi dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab. *Jurnal Pengurusan dan Penyelidikan Fatwa*. SeFPIA 2018, Special Edition, 358-367.