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The Use of Gamification in Arabic Vocabulary Learning: A Literature Study

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Abstract:
In the digital era, teachers are required to integrate technology optimally in learning. One of the methods used in learning Arabic vocabulary is gamification. The approach in this research uses a literature study. Literature study is conducted by collecting references consisting of several previous studies, then compiled to draw conclusions. To maintain the accuracy of the content, the researcher will re-read carefully the collected literature. The purpose of this study is to describe the use of gamification in learning Arabic vocabulary and identify digital platforms that support it. The results obtained from several game platforms, including Kahoot!, Wayground, Wordwall, and Educaplay, can be used as media for learning Arabic vocabulary. However, there are challenges in implementing gamification methods, such as limited tools and teacher skills in utilising the platform. Therefore, some actions are needed, such as digital integrated learning training and training in memorizing Arabic vocabulary, so that gamification-based learning can be applied optimally.

Keywords: Gamification; Vocabulary; Arabic; Literatur Studies

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Introduction

Advances in information technology and digital transformation have brought significant changes in learning practices. Teachers are required to be able to integrate technology in the learning process to make it more interesting, interactive, and in accordance with the characteristics of 21st century learners such as critical thinking skills, communication, collaboration, and creativity in the learning process (Mantau & Talango, 2023). To meet these demands, educators must integrate technology into their teaching practices while maintaining strong pedagogical and content knowledge. (Ajizah & Huda, 2020). The integration of technology in teaching can improve the quality of learning practices, make the learning process interesting and interactive, and maintain learners' motivation. (Akram et al., 2022).

On the other hand, learning Arabic as a foreign language, which must be learned, especially in a religious-based education environment, still faces various challenges. According to research (Susiawati et al., 2025), challenges in Arabic language learning include the lack of technological infrastructure and digital skills among educators. In addition, the dominance of conventional methods, lack of technology integration, and weak mastery of the four language skills add to the obstacles in learning practices. (Mazyuna & Mad'ali, 2025).

One of the most important elements in language skills is vocabulary acquisition. Learners with a wider and deeper vocabulary tend to do better in all four language skills, listening, reading, speaking, and writing. (Corpuz et al., 2024). This requires an innovative vocabulary learning strategy that is adaptive to technological developments. One potential approach is gamification. Gamification is a modern educational strategy that applies game elements and principles to non-game contexts to increase student motivation (Carolus & Gormantara, 2022). Almelhes (2024) argues that gamification increases student motivation, engagement, and achievement in Arabic vocabulary and grammar for non-native speakers, with teacher engagement playing a crucial role.

Gamification platforms such as Kahoot, Wordwall, Wayground, and Educaplay have been widely used in Arabic language learning and have yielded positive results in increasing student engagement. Previous research by Riwanda et al. (2021) showed that the use of Kahoot! The gamification method is effective in improving Arabic vocabulary learning outcomes compared to traditional methods. Meanwhile, Zainuddin in (Ilhami et al., 2022) stated that Wayground (Quizizz) has a positive impact on learning because it can foster a spirit of competition among students. Wordwall application can increase students' fun, interest, and enthusiasm and motivation in learning Arabic (Fakhruddin et al., 2021). The Educaplay platform is effective for improving Arabic vocabulary skills of primary school students (Zuhriyah et al., 2025).

Although there have been many studies that discuss gamification, the focus is limited to one particular platform, especially Kahoot or Wordwall. There has been no study comparing four platforms, Kahoot!, Wayground, Wordwall, and Educaplay, comprehensively in the context of Arabic vocabulary learning. Therefore, there is no guide that helps teachers choose the most suitable platform based on the advantages of features, content suitability, and support for Arabic vocabulary learning objectives.

This study found that each platform has advantages and limitations. Based on literature analysis, and feature mapping to Arabic vocabulary learning needs, Wordwall excels in memory reinforcement through adaptive repetition, Kahoot! is effective in increasing student engagement and competition, Wayground excels in real-time monitoring of learning results, while Educaplay is more flexible in the variety of language game types.

This discussion is expected to provide practical and theoretical contributions for various parties. For educators, this idea can be a reference in developing more creative learning designs. For academics, this paper can enrich the literature of Arabic language learning innovation. As for education policy makers, this paper can be taken into consideration in formulating policies or teacher training programmes that support the integration of technology and gamification in educational institutions.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach in library research. Library research is research that uses data collection or research objects by collecting and reading various books, journals, articles, and so on (Sari, 2021). The subject of this research is to collect several primary and secondary sources in journals and books related to the research topic. Data collection was done using the documentation method, which involved searching through Google Scholar. The search was conducted with keywords such as literature study, gamification, and Arabic vocabulary. The data sources used came from journals or articles relevant to the research topic, and only included publications published between 2020 and 2025. The data obtained was analysed and then verified, and conclusions were drawn to strengthen the acquisition of data, which was later described as the results in the study.

Results and Discussion

Findings

The following table contains previous studies in the last 5 years that discuss gamification in Arabic vocabulary learning.

Table 1. Previous research related to gamification in Arabic language learning

Platform	Author & Year	Research Focus	Key Findings	Relevance to Arabic Vocabulary
Kahoot!	Riwanda et al. (2021)	Quasi-experiment, high school students	Arabic vocabulary score increased from 42 to 85 (N-Gain 74.31)	Effective for formative evaluation of vocabulary
	(Fiani et al., 2021)	MI vocabulary evaluation	Students' average score increased by 32%	Supports quiz-based quick evaluation
	(Primasatya et al., 2021)	Quiz question design	Teachers find it easy to organise core learning questions	Suitable for review tests
	(Riantimun et al., 2024)	Classroom study, application, and impact of Kahoot! in learning	Improve engagement & learning outcomes of Arabic vocabulary	Trigger competitive motivation
	(Mala et al., 2024)	Analisis pedagogis	Limited variety, more suitable for short evaluations	Not suitable for deep exploration

	(Kariyani et al., 2024)	Kahoot! utilisation training for teachers	Kahoot not only increases learning motivation but also strengthens understanding of the material through collaborative learning.	Teachers can monitor the strengths and weaknesses of students in mastering the material. So that teachers are challenged to repeat material that has not been mastered by students
Wayground	Zainuddin dalam Ilhami et al. (2022)	Arabic learning motivation	Foster healthy competition between students	Suitable for repetitive training
	Melissa et al. (2022)	Redemption Question	Wrong answers can be repeated; retention improves	Support vocabulary memorisation
	Ariyanti Nurningtias & Majid (2022).	Power-Up	Encourage repetition & student focus	Strengthens long-term memory
	Haruna et al. (2023).	Analisis fitur	Detailed results report supports independent learning	Monitoring progress kosakata
	Xodabande et al. (2024).	Flashcard digital	Longer retention than paper cards	Effective for Arabic vocabulary repetition
Wordwall	Fakhruddin et al. (2021)	Antworte siswa	Increase interest, motivation & enthusiasm	Suitable vocabulary introduction stage
	Hajar et al. (2024)	Survei persepsi	71,6% siswa respon positif	Efektif meningkatkan keterlibatan
	Saariah et al. (2024).	Media evaluation	Wordwall makes understanding complex vocabulary easy	Support conceptual understanding
	Nguyen (2025)	Learning independence	Support self-regulated learning	Adaptive to vocabulary level
	Dewi et al. (2024)	Variasi template	Crossword puzzles, matching, and pairing games	Enrich vocabulary practice
Educaplay	Zuhriyah et al. (2025)	The SD experiment	Arabic vocabulary learning outcomes improved significantly	Suitable for creative enrichment
	Khotimah & Nasution (2025)	Experience, perception, and effectiveness of using Educaplay as an Arabic vocabulary	Educaplay can help test students' abilities and is effective as a medium for evaluating Arabic vocabulary.	Suitable as Arabic vocabulary evaluation media

	evaluation media		
Rahman & Muallim (2025)	The effect of game-based interactive learning on engagement and retention (EFL)	Significant improvement in vocabulary acquisition, with the average score increasing from 55.71 to 94.48.	High levels of student motivation and satisfaction with the EFL learning process
Jasni et al. (2019)	Media innovation	Encouraging a positive attitude towards Arabic	Contextualising vocabulary
Almelhes (2024)	Systematic review	Interactive quizzes are effective in improving motivation and retention	Increase motivation, engagement, and retention

Analysis

The term gamification was first introduced by Nick Pelling in 2002 in a presentation at a TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) event. The concept has since grown rapidly and is being applied in various sectors, including education, business, and digital services (Goi, 2022). The application of gamification in education is done by integrating game elements into non-game contexts to enhance student engagement and learning (Srimuliyani, 2023).

In the context of language learning, gamification plays an important role as an additional stimulus to improve the quality of the teaching process, increasing student enthusiasm and motivation. Gamification is proven to turn learning and teaching a new language into a fun process (Al-Dosakee & Ozdamli, 2021). In addition, gamification can be applied in Arabic language learning to enhance the learning experience and foster positive attitudes among students (Al Irsyadi et al., 2020). Research (Irfan & Arifin, 2025) shows that gamification improves language acquisition while fostering greater enthusiasm for learning Bahasa Indonesia, which benefits both beginners and advanced learners. This study highlights gamified learning as an effective tool for foreign language education.

Arabic is considered to have special challenges, especially in vocabulary acquisition (mufrodat), requiring repeated practice, sound-writing associations, and consistent productive exercises. It is a process that can easily lead to boredom and loss of motivation (Mukhlis et al., 2021). Through a gamification approach, the process of mastering vocabulary and grammar can be made more interesting, such as through quizzes, puzzles, or team competitions that utilise leaderboards (Juliansyah et al., 2022). As research by Annisa et al. (2025) shows, the implementation of gamification had a positive impact on vocabulary retention and overall Arabic language proficiency, with the percentage of students who met the minimum learning criteria increasing from 38% to 91% after gamification was implemented.

A quasi-experimental study conducted by Riwanda et al. (2021) showed that the use of Kahoot! The gamification method is effective to improve Arabic vocabulary learning outcomes compared to traditional methods, namely increasing students' average vocabulary score from 42 to 85, with an N-Gain of 74, 31, and categorised as "moderately effective". In addition, Jaffar et al. (2024) designed a gamification model for Arabic vocabulary learning, and the respondent teachers stated that this strategy is highly

relevant for improving student engagement as well as learning outcomes. Furthermore, a systematic review by Almelhes (2024) confirmed that gamification, particularly through interactive quizzes and digital game elements, is able to increase motivation, engagement, and specific language skills such as vocabulary retention and writing skills.

Analysis of the Application of Kahoot, Wayground, Wordwall, and Educaplay in Arabic Vocabulary Learning

Gamification has been an innovative approach widely adopted in Arabic language learning. Four popular platforms that are frequently used are Kahoot!, Wayground, Wordwall, and Educaplay. The selection of these four platforms is based on the level of popularity, availability of gamification features, and empirical evidence from previous studies that show a positive impact on Arabic vocabulary learning. Research by Riwanda et al. (2021) showed that the use of Kahoot! The gamification method is effective in improving Arabic vocabulary learning outcomes compared to traditional methods. Meanwhile, Zainuddin in (Ilhami et al., 2022) stated that Wayground (quizizz) has a positive impact on learning because it is a learning media innovation that can foster a spirit of competition among students. The wordwall application can also increase students' fun, interest, and enthusiasm, and motivation in learning Arabic. (Fakhruddin et al., 2021). The Educaplay game-based learning platform is effective for improving Arabic vocabulary skills of primary school students (Zuhriyah et al., 2025).

The first is Kahoot! Platform, known as a competition-based quiz platform with a leaderboard feature that triggers healthy competition in accordance with the concept of competence in Self Determination Theory (SDT). A study by Riantimun et al. (2024) showed that the use of Kahoot! The App significantly improved student engagement and learning outcomes in Arabic vocabulary. This app presents quiz questions with a simpler question creation process than other apps, and the questions asked by teachers are generally related to the core learning material (Primasatya et al., 2021). The app also allows flexibility for teachers to set limits on the number of questions and the time given to students to answer. Research by Fiani et al. (2021) proved that the use of Kahoot! as an evaluation tool in learning Arabic vocabulary for fifth-grade students at MI Al-Ma'arif 01 Margomulyo increased their average evaluation score by 75.2, which contributed 32% to their learning outcomes. So Kahoot! is considered effective to be used as a final review or quick formative evaluation.

Kahoot also allows teachers to design engaging interactive quizzes with customisable themes and templates; however, it is limited in pedagogical variety (Mala et al., 2024). One of Kahoot's main advantages lies in its ability to increase student engagement. Students can actively participate in answering questions and get immediate feedback, including being able to compare their answers with those of their peers (Anviani & Pujiriyanto, 2022). Through Kahoot!, teachers can monitor the strengths and weaknesses of students in mastering the material, so that teachers are challenged to repeat the material that has not been mastered by students, and learning activities become more interesting (Kariyani et al., 2024). On the other hand, the use of Kahoot! also faces some limitations, including requiring a stable internet connection, limited school facilities and infrastructure, and distractions to open other things. (Fashi Hatul Lisaniyah & Ummidlatus Salamah, 2021).

In addition to Kahoot!, another gamification tool is Wayground (Quizizz), an interactive online assessment tool that offers a variety of question formats, including multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, tick-box, and open-ended questions (Tuki et al., 2023). The four main elements in Wayground are points, difficulty level, rewards, and avatars. If in Kahoot! Rewards are only points, then in Wayground, rewards are not only points but

also PowerUp. PowerUp is an opportunity to get double points if used for the next question, an opportunity to correct the wrong answer, and many more. In addition, the Redemption Questions feature also supports the reinforcement of vocabulary memorisation as students are given the opportunity to re-answer incorrect questions (Melissa et al., 2022). These two features encourage students to repeat until the vocabulary is recorded in long-term memory (Ariyanti Nurningtias & Majid, 2022). The spaced/distributed practice theory asserts that repetition with pauses is more effective than massed practice for long-term retention of vocabulary. This is very relevant to Arabic language learning, which demands mastery of harakat and complex word patterns. The question formats in Wayground vary, including free features such as Multiple choice, Path, and Short fill-in. In addition, there are paid features such as Match, Drag and Drop, Marker, Categorise, Rearrange, Drop-down, and Labelled Images. Open response features include Picture Answer, Survey, Essay, Video Answer, Audio Answer, and Word Cloud. The latest feature in the Wayground platform is digital flashcards designed to reinforce vocabulary acquisition through repetitive and technology-based practice. Flashcards can be customised according to education level and curriculum needs, allowing teachers to select or create flashcards that are relevant to students' level of understanding. Previous research suggests that digital flashcards are more effective than traditional paper-based flashcards in improving long-term retention of technical vocabulary among university students. (Xodabande et al., 2024). That said, Quizizz has some drawbacks, such as requiring stable internet connectivity, which can lead to rushed responses due to time constraints (Ilhami et al., 2022).

The next gamification is Wordwall, an effective interactive media for learning Arabic vocabulary, with positive responses from students (Hajar et al., 2024). The findings of this study confirmed that the application of Wordwall media in Arabic vocabulary learning received positive responses from students, as reflected in the percentage of student responses of 71.60%. This indicates a good level of engagement and interest in the use of technology in the context of language learning. Wordwall effectively enhances students' ability to remember and understand Arabic vocabulary, offers engaging features, and facilitates the understanding of complex concepts in the digital era (Saariah et al., 2024). Wordwall provides a variety of interactive quiz templates for teachers, including multiple choice, crossword, matching, and pairing (Dewi et al., 2024). Research (Nguyen, 2025) stated that Wordwall encourages independent learning by allowing students to choose learning content and templates that suit their abilities and preferences, ultimately resulting in better learning outcomes. However, this research also highlighted Wordwall's weaknesses, including limited features and a lack of visual variety, difficulty in adapting content to available formats, and a lack of visual variety (Ghozali & Irawan, 2024). There are technical challenges, such as the need for a stable internet connection and teachers' proficiency in using the platform. (Husna et al., 2023).

The Educaplay gamification platform, a game-based interactive learning media, effectively improved the Arabic language skills of primary school students, with a significant increase in learning outcomes (Zuhriyah et al., 2025). The game variation features in Educplay include Line Up, Yes or No, Froggy Jumps, Video Quiz, Riddle, Map Quiz, Matching, Quiz, Alphabet, Memory, Matching Pairs, Word Search Puzzle, Crossword Puzzle, Fill in the Blanks, Unscramble Letters, Unscramble Words, Dictation, Slideshow, and Dialogue. Based on the results of research on the use of EduCaplay educational game as an Arabic vocabulary assessment tool for class X students of SMA Laboratorium State Islamic University of North Sumatra, from the perspective of students and teachers, it can be concluded that the use of EduCaplay game as an assessment tool can increase students'

interest in learning Arabic language (Khotimah & Nasution, 2025). The drawback of this platform is the possibility of students focusing too much on the gaming aspect and neglecting the learning objectives. In addition, the use of technology in education can lead to device dependency and a lack of direct student-teacher interaction if not managed well (Sepriyanti et al., 2024).

Conclusion

This study found that the application of gamification in Arabic vocabulary learning has a positive impact on students' motivation, engagement, and retention. Each platform has a distinctive role according to the stages of vocabulary learning. Wordwall is effective at the vocabulary introduction stage through sharing interactive activities. Wayground (Quizizz) supports repeated practice and memory reinforcement through the repetition feature. Kahoot! is relevant for formative evaluation as it provides competition and immediate feedback. Educaplay is suitable as an enrichment tool that reinforces vocabulary meaning.

Thus, the integration of these four platforms can present a more comprehensive vocabulary learning, starting from the introduction, repetition, evaluation, and enrichment stages. Firstly, Arabic teachers are advised to combine platforms according to students' needs and characteristics to optimise learning outcomes. Second, future research can explore the effectiveness of gamification models based on cross-platform integration to see the broader impact on Arabic language skills as a whole. Third, training is needed for teachers in optimising the features available on each platform, because the limited technical skills of teachers are still a challenge in implementing gamification. With these steps, the integration of gamification in Arabic language learning is expected to not only increase learning motivation but also strengthen students' vocabulary acquisition in the long run.

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