

Applying Self-Determination Theory (SDT) In Game-Based Learning (GBL) To Teach Grammar For TOEFL For University Students

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Abstract

Keywords:

Self-Determination Theory,
Game-Based Learning,
Grammar in TOEFL

This study aimed to find out the intrinsic motivation from Self-Determination Theory (SDT) of university students in learning grammar for TOEFL through a gamified way. The game platform used was Kahoot. This study employed qualitative descriptive research as it focused on the responses of the students in doing TOEFL-like tests in Kahoot and then analyzed the students' feedback toward the game, the materials, and the activities. The results showed that the game was employed in an experimental setting to examine the influence of Autonomy, Relatedness, and Competence (ARC) support on player engagement and motivation. The intrinsic motivation components were evaluated, and they indicate certain conclusions. In the online game context, intrinsic motivation is enhanced by the perspective of winning and/or getting a reward. Implementing language games into the learning process will bring variety, break monotony, enliven classes, and motivate students to work. Rewards, points, and levels are forms of extrinsic motivators, but the whole gaming experience touches significantly on the intrinsic motivation aspects.

Abstrak

Kata kunci:

Teori Penentuan Nasib Sendiri,
Pembelajaran Berbasis Permainan,
Tata Bahasa dalam TOEFL

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi nilai-nilai karakter religius yang ditanamkan pada siswa di MI Al Hidayah Bangli, serta strategi yang diterapkan dalam membentuk karakter tersebut melalui kegiatan keagamaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan sembilan nilai karakter religius yang dikembangkan, yaitu bertaqwa, sopan santun, jujur, tanggung jawab, bersyukur, ikhlas dan rendah hati, disiplin dan menghargai waktu, peduli dan menghargai, serta menghargai pendapat orang lain dan mampu bekerja sama. Adapun strategi yang diterapkan meliputi keteladanan, penanaman kedisiplinan, pembiasaan, menciptakan lingkungan kondusif, serta integrasi dan internalisasi nilai-nilai karakter dalam berbagai kegiatan keagamaan. Strategi-strategi tersebut memberikan dampak positif bagi siswa, seperti meningkatnya akhlak karimah, jiwa sosial, kejujuran, keadilan, konsistensi, dan kesetiaan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa MI Al Hidayah Bangli berupaya menanamkan dan mengembangkan karakter religius pada siswa melalui berbagai strategi dalam kegiatan keagamaan yang dilaksanakan secara konsisten dan berkesinambungan, serta memberikan dampak positif bagi perkembangan karakter siswa yang diharapkan dapat diimplementasikan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari.

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INTRODUCTION

Test of English for Foreign Language (TOEFL) is one of the main requirements for university admission. Many universities worldwide, including those in English-speaking countries, require a minimum TOEFL score for admission. This is to ensure that students have the necessary English language proficiency to engage effectively in academic studies ('TOEFL Requirement for College', n.d.; 'TOEFL Scores & Preparation For Indonesian Students', 2023). Taking the TOEFL can help students develop and demonstrate their language skills, both in terms of written and spoken English. This can be beneficial for their overall communication abilities and future career opportunities.

Nowadays TOEFL test is one of the requirements to pass the Skripsi examination of English Education Departments at some Universities in Indonesia. The language center of universities in Indonesia, mostly, made the Test of English proficiency which is based on TOEFL, including listening, structure and written expression, and reading. When the requirement of TOEFL was applied, the Grammar and Structure Score was the lowest and it was a problem for the test takers (Fleckenstein, Keller, Krüger, Tannenbaum, & Köller, 2020). Based on the results of the TOEFL from August to November 2023 in the Language Proficiency Centre showed that the Grammar and Structure Scores were less than the Listening and Reading Scores (see Figure 1). Some of them do the second part of the test based on their feeling ('THE STUDENTS' FEELING-BASED GRAMMAR IN RESPONDING TO TOEFL ITEMS IN GENIUS APPLICATION | Jurnal Bahasa Lingua Scientia', n.d.), some others do the second section in random answers (Kusrini & Amalia, 2021).

HASIL STEP ONLINE BATCH 7												
Sabtu, 19 September 2023												
NO	NIM	NAMA	PRODI	LEVEL	Listening	Structure	Reading	CONVERSI			NILAI TOEFL	KET
								L	S	R		
1	20161700334017	Syamsiah nurul hikmah	Ilmu Al Qur'an dan tafsir	S1	8	9	24	32	31	43	353	TIDAK LULUS
2	20171700231032	Muhammad Zainal Abidin	Perbankan Syariah	S1	28	3	16	49	22	36	357	TIDAK LULUS
3	20171700126007	Khofatur rosidah	PGMI	S1	16	1	27	41	20	46	357	TIDAK LULUS
4	20171700120021	Habyb amirul haqq	MPI	S1	24	8	18	47	29	38	380	TIDAK LULUS
5	20171700101016	Gandung handixa mustofa	Pendidikan Agama Islam	S1	25	13	18	48	37	38	410	LULUS
6	201617000120025	Lalu muhammad sholeh hambali	MPI	S1	13	11	12	38	35	31	347	TIDAK LULUS
7	20171700148008	Nining syarifah	Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini	S1	22	5	13	46	25	32	343	TIDAK LULUS
8	20171700101014	Febtian yulkhoir	PAI	S1	28	17	17	49	41	37	423	LULUS
9	20171700242003	Abdul qadir jailani	Hukum Keluarga Islam	S1	15	9	13	41	31	32	347	TIDAK LULUS
10	20171700101037	Nurun najmi	Pendidikan Agama Islam	S1	13	9	20	38	31	40	363	TIDAK LULUS
11	20171700126003	Amilia eki ramadanti	PGMI	S1	29	8	27	50	29	46	417	LULUS
12	20171700126003	Alfi lailatul fadzilah	PGMI	S1	29	7	27	50	27	46	410	LULUS
13	20171700231015	Ustadah aisyah	Perbankan syariah	S1	13	3	15	38	22	35	317	TIDAK LULUS

Figure 1. The result of STEP (TOEFL-like) in Abdul Chalim University in August 2023

In TOEFL, English grammar consists of two parts, structure and written expression. In Structure and written expressions, structure starts from number 1 till number 15, and written expressions start from number 16 till number 40 (Alavi & Akbarian, 2012). Even though Structure and written expressions only 40 numbers but it should be done in 25 minutes. The Structure section tests your understanding and usage of standard written English. You will answer two types of questions in the Structure section of the TOEFL test. The first type of question is an incomplete sentence with four choices of words or phrases to complete the sentence. The second type of question requires you to identify a word or phrase in an incorrect sentence. On the computer-based version of the TOEFL test, the two types of questions are interspersed throughout the Structure section (Chiu, Chai, Williams, & Lin, 2021). The sentence structure is the arrangement of words, phrases, and clauses in a sentence (Kim, 2017). Sentence structure may ultimately be composed of many parts, but remember that the foundation of each sentence is the

subject and the predicate. The subject is a word or a group of words that functions as a noun; the predicate is at least a verb and possibly includes objects and modifiers of the verb (DeLuca, Cheng, Fox, Doe, & Li, 2013).

Grammar has been considered difficult to learn for some students (Sandy, 2020). Hence, new approach is needed to change the students' insight toward grammar. One of them is Self-Determination Theory. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a motivation theory that regards individuals as proactive participants (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The overarching concept behind SDT posits that all individuals are inherently inclined towards growth, overcoming challenges, and integrating new experiences willingly. However, these developmental tendencies are not self-sufficient and necessitate a supportive environment. Unfortunately, in various social contexts, including schools, these tendencies are often hindered, leading to non-compliance, oppositional behaviour, and disengagement. A notable example is the significant number of high school students who opt to leave school each year before completing their diploma due to perceiving schools as confining or feeling inadequate (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Consequently, SDT underscores the crucial role of the interaction between individuals and their social contexts in shaping their development.

Students may exhibit diverse motivations for engaging in school work, and in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the underlying reasons for behaviour are crucial as they lead to varying outcomes in terms of quality. It is possible to differentiate between different types of motivations based on the degree of self-determination, indicating the extent to which a behaviour originates from the self. Some motivations are considered autonomous, while others are controlled. Autonomous motivation includes intrinsic motivation, where an activity is performed for its inherent enjoyment and satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For instance, students who find pleasure in reading are deemed intrinsically motivated for that activity.

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation involves engaging in an activity for instrumental reasons rather than for its inherent qualities. SDT distinguishes between various types of extrinsic motivation, each varying in its level of self-determination or autonomy. Ranging from low to high autonomy, these include external regulation, interjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). External and interjected regulations are classified as controlled motives, whereas identified and integrated regulations are considered autonomous. SDT categorizes certain extrinsic motives as volitional, implying that students who lack intrinsic motivation for a school subject may still experience positive cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes if these extrinsic motives align with their sense of "self." In this case, students who assume grammar difficult may find their own way to understand and to analyse grammar problems in TOEFL.

The question arises regarding the applicability of these concepts to language learning, given the potential impact of gamified education on intrinsic and motivation. The primary emphasis of the research was on intrinsic motivation, identified as the key factor in game engagement. The theoretical framework for this research was provided by the Self-Determination Theory, aiming to understand why individuals may be inclined to use gamified systems. Specifically, the focus was on the component of "trying to learn what is relevant to you," which is an evident consideration from the teacher's perspective. Consequently, this study aims to find out what motivates students to learn what is relevant to them using gamification tools and what factors drive their desire to engage in learning games.

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METHODS

The study employed a descriptive research approach to assess the effectiveness of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in improving university students' understanding of TOEFL grammar sections¹. The research focused on analysing students' responses to TOEFL-like quiz in Kahoot.it. The results aimed to help students recognize unsatisfactory results and assess their progress in acquiring target language grammar.

The study targeted the third-year undergraduate students at Abdul Chalim University, emphasizing TOEFL test analysis during the semester. 74 students were carried out from two different departments, Arabic Education department (PBA) and Elementary School Teachers Education department (PGMI). Their level of language was beginner.

The games in question focused on grammatical problems which exist in the second section of TOEFL test. They are including adverbial, adjective and noun clauses, parallelism, subject verb agreement, subject verb inversion, conditional, subjunctives, and conjunction. These types of structures are slightly sensitive for students and mostly lead to problems.

The initial assessment of each game occurred immediately after the students completed the game. This assessment constitutes the game's concluding phase and is automatically generated by the system. Students rated the quiz, expressing the level of enjoyment they experienced during play by assigning stars out of a total of five. They also evaluated whether they learned something and if they would recommend the game to others, indicated by marking the Like or Dislike icon. Additionally, they could convey their emotions during the game—whether they felt happy, indifferent, or unhappy—by selecting the appropriate icon. Figure 2 depicts what students observed on their mobile device screens during the immediate game evaluation, while Figure 3 illustrates the final results visible on the main screen to both the teacher and students.

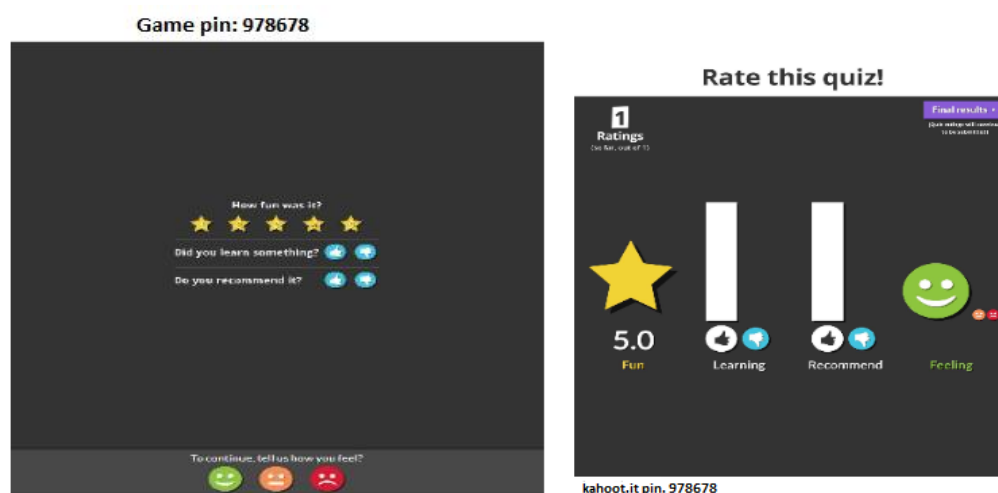


Figure 2 and figure 3. The screenshots of final evaluation just after the students finished the game

In the final semester of the course, an additional evaluation method was introduced in the form of a questionnaire. This questionnaire aimed to explore the motivation that led students to participate in the game offered during classes. The questions inquired about students' prior use of online language games, whether individually or in a group, the frequency of engaging with the

¹ Clinton E. Lambert Vicky A. Lambert, "Qualitative Descriptive Research: An Acceptable Design," Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research, December 2012, 255–56.

Kahoot game in English classes at the university, and their willingness to continue playing this specific game in future classes. The second part of the questionnaire focused on rating the levels of fun, stress, and interest, along with assessing the game-based approach to teaching grammar in class. Students were also asked to evaluate their motivation for participating in the game, including factors such as pursuing victory, mastering knowledge, collaborating with others, and having clear objectives. Finally, students provided ratings on whether they believed this game was superior to traditional classroom grammar exercises.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The game was employed in an experimental setting to examine the influence of Autonomy, Relatedness, and Competence (ARC) support on player engagement and motivation. The extent of ARC support provided to players was adjustable through a database that controlled the game. Each player was randomly assigned low, neutral, or high levels of Autonomy support; low or high levels of Relatedness support; and low, neutral, or high levels of competence support to ensure an even distribution across all possible combinations of levels. The individual's ARC support level dictated dynamic alterations to the game. For instance, players with high Autonomy support experienced a version of the game with adjustments to enhance their sense of agency and control, while those with low Autonomy support encountered a version designed to convey limited agency and control. Similar adjustments were made based on the Relatedness and Competence support settings for each player.

Autonomy

The Autonomy can be exposed through the evaluation generated by the game (Kahoot) system containing three pre-designed questions and one satisfactory question.



Figure 4. feedback triggering the game done by the students

In terms of assessing enjoyment, the overall rating was 75% of students found the game enjoyable, while nearly every third student had a contrary opinion. However, a significant majority (90%) reported that they had grasped the intended grammar structure through the game. Furthermore, 83% of the students expressed their inclination to recommend this learning approach. The post-game evaluation, conducted immediately after the game, also included an assessment of

the students' feelings. They were presented with three options to choose from, as depicted in Figure 5 below.

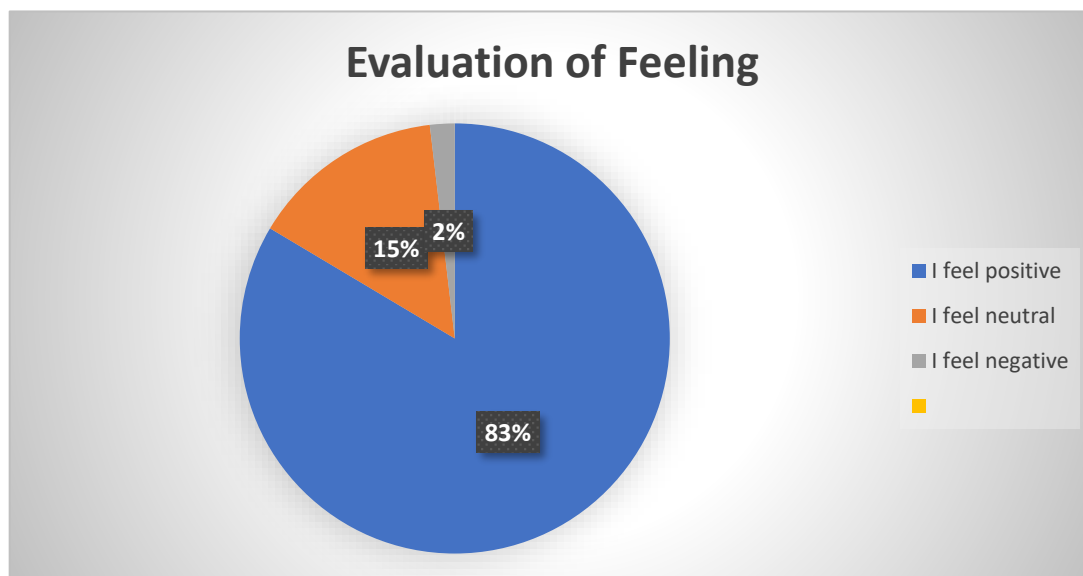


Figure 5. the students' feeling of playing Kahoot game

Among 78 students, the majority of the students feel positive to play the game. Approximately 11 students feel neutral and only a tiny portion of students feel negative.

Relatedness

The game system assessed enjoyment, learning outcomes, and feelings, while the post-gaming questionnaire focused on the central research question: how motivating the Kahoot game could be for teaching English with technology. The students responded to a series of questions categorized into four groups. Initially, the aim was to determine the extent of the students' familiarity with language games, both online and offline.

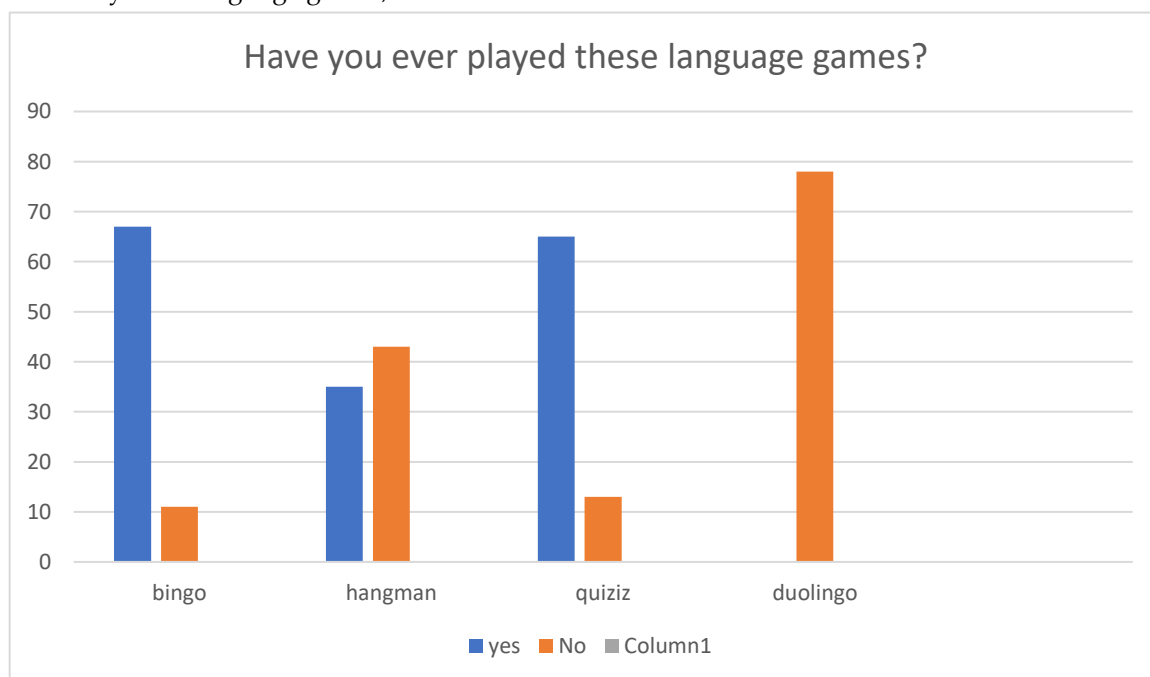


Figure 6. the other games the students familiar with

This chart exposes that most of student are familiar with both online and offline game. They usually play bingo and hangman in the class, particularly in the beginning of the semester during the contract class and introducing the course. Hangman is usually used to improve the students' vocabulary, while bingo is used for complex skills, speaking and listening. Moreover, quiziz is online platform which is mostly used by lecturers to teach all skills of English. However, none of the students knows about Duolingo.

The subsequent inquiry was: Would they exhibit a strong willingness to learn grammar in a gamified manner? Announcing that grammar would be the primary focus of a class typically elicits a deep sigh of reluctance. Consequently, the motivation to learn grammar through this specific game needed to be gauged. The students were presented with criteria outlined in Figure 7.

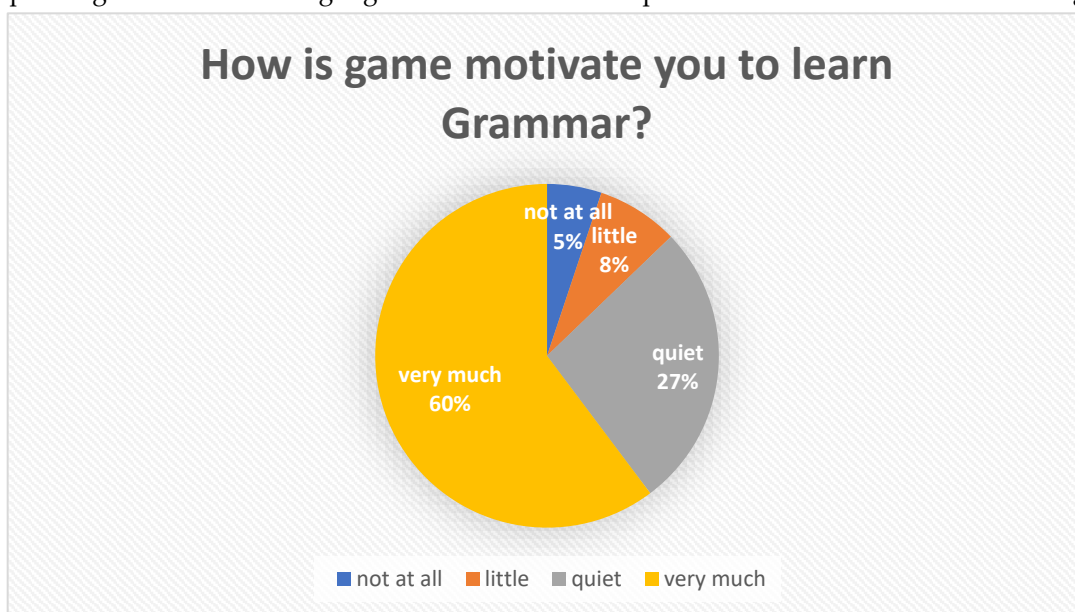


Figure 7. Students' motivation to learn

This chart indicates that around 87 percent of students has positive sight toward kahoot game especially to exposure their motivation in learning Grammar. Despite this condition, the other 13 percent seem rather indifferent.

Competence



Figure 8. reasons of motivation

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Since the game is about winning and losing, the desire to win the game must be dominated. Despite the number of winners, this game doesn't only count the correct answers but also the time. Hence, most of students almost win the game as their score might be slightly different. However, the students are mostly in their target. They have reached the score they have targeted before. In addition, this game also help the student to master the materials easier than conventional learning.

Analysis

The experimental use of the game aimed to assess the impact of ARC (Autonomy, Relatedness, and Competence) support on player engagement and motivation. The extent of Autonomy, Relatedness, and Competence support in the game was adjustable through a database used for game control. Each player was randomly assigned low, neutral, or high Autonomy support, as well as low or high Relatedness support and low, neutral, or high Competence support, ensuring an even distribution of players across all levels. Individual levels of ARC support dynamically influenced game modifications. For instance, players with high Autonomy support received a game version with adjustments to enhance their sense of agency and control, while those with low Autonomy support encountered a version conveying limited agency and control. Similar adjustments were made based on Relatedness and Competence support settings for each players.

1). Autonomy

The need for autonomy is characterized by the essential requirement to have a sense of choice, willingness, and volition in one's behaviour. Students, when feeling like initiators of their actions, will engage in behaviours that align with their interests and values ('Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation ... - Richard M. Ryan, Edward L. Deci - Google Buku', n.d.). This need for autonomy is closely interconnected with the "self," serving as the active centre for integration, initiation, and spontaneous engagement within the social context. In the framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the integrative process is central to the self, integrating new functions, values, experiences, and propensities (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When students experience support for their autonomy, they exhibit more autonomous behaviour² and internalize aspects of the educational context that allow them to voluntarily adopt school rules and expectations. In SDT, autonomy is not synonymous with independence; individuals can be autonomously independent or autonomously dependent on others. Additionally, autonomy is not a developmental stage but is considered important from the beginning of life until its end. Importantly, autonomy does not imply detachment or separation from significant others; numerous studies have demonstrated that feeling accepted and connected to significant others is linked to a greater sense of autonomy (Guay, Gilbert, Falardeau, Bradet, & Boulet, 2020)

The initial prompt assessment became feasible due to Kahoot's comprehensive evaluation system, enabling an immediate evaluation post-game completion. This system reveals four key aspects: enjoyment, educational efficacy, learning suggestions, and the emotional responses associated with the game.

² Frédéric Guay, "Applying Self-Determination Theory to Education: Regulations Types, Psychological Needs, and Autonomy Supporting Behaviours," *Canadian Journal of School Psychology* 37, no. 1 (March 1, 2022): 75–92, <https://doi.org/10.1177/08295735211055355>.

The primary noteworthy outcome from this prompt evaluation is the highly favourable rating for grammar learning effectiveness, standing at 90%. This indicates that despite the challenging content, students appear receptive and enthusiastic about learning through the online game. The elevated level of this learning recommendation also suggests that unconventional approaches, such as utilizing an online game, might be more effective than traditional grammar teaching methods, which often involve repetitive exercises like gap filling, sentence completion, verb form matching, or multiple-choice exercises.

While the fun aspect did not receive the highest rating, it also did not rank the lowest. This could be influenced by the competitive nature of the game, where the potential disappointment of failure might have played a role and, consequently, constrained the fun element. The feedback on feelings is positively associated with the genuine enjoyment and competitive spirit that students experienced during the game. Any disappointment or disengagement observed could be attributed to technical glitches or inadvertent mistakes made by students, resulting in lower rankings within the game.

2). Relatedness

The requirement for a sense of connection pertains to the essential need for close and secure emotional connections with significant individuals and a sense of belonging to groups (Ryan & Deci, 2000). If this need were absent, it would be challenging to understand why individuals would willingly internalize effective and harmonious ways of interacting within their social circles. Fulfilling the need for relatedness is also instrumental in fostering the development of individuals. For instance, a proficiency in mathematics is likely to flourish in an environment where children feel supported by their parents, while conditional regard or unresponsive parenting is more likely to hinder this potential (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

The second phase of the research, which focused on delayed feedback, provided insights into several aspects: familiarity with language games, motivating factors for participation, and the significance of the enjoyment factor. The findings clearly indicate that students are not well-acquainted with online classroom games, yet they express approval for their potential future use. This discovery suggests a favourable reception toward incorporating tools like Kahoot or other games into the classroom. It raises questions about whether this enthusiasm stems from a lack of methodological diversity, a sense of work overload, the pervasive presence of games in their lives, a need for strong stimuli, or a preference for enjoyable activities over monotonous tasks.

The reasons for engaging in classroom games vary, encompassing a desire to win and a need to master knowledge. Elements such as fun, rewards, leaderboards, avatars, points, and challenges, all borrowed from gaming contexts into non-game settings, seem to be generally effective in motivating students. However, the study indicates that these elements are not the sole reasons behind students' motivation.

3). Competence

The need for competence is defined as the aspiration to interact effectively with one's surroundings³. This desire motivates students to seek challenges slightly beyond their current capabilities and engage in activities to ultimately improve their skills. Importantly, it is not the absolute level of proficiency that a student attains that matter, but rather the subjective experience

³ Frédéric Guay, "Applying Self-Determination Theory to Education: Regulations Types, Psychological Needs, and Autonomy Supporting Behaviours," *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, October 27, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1177/08295735211055355>.

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of feeling competent. As its fulfillment is closely tied to performance (Farrell & Moffat, 2014), it undeniably has adaptive implications for students. Absent this need, students would be less motivated to overcome obstacles. For instance, elementary school children who perceive themselves as competent in school achieve higher educational levels a decade later. Thus, the satisfaction of the need for competence is a fundamental prerequisite for effective functioning in an educational setting.

Fortunately, the classroom environment can be effectively shaped by the inherent motivational drive embedded in the online class game. Within the studied group of students, the expectation of success, linked to the attainment of specific language skills, is met through the accumulation of points, bringing them closer to victory. Immediate motivational feedback is provided in the form of points, contingent on language and grammar correctness. Despite the potentially modest nature of the reward, it still serves as a positive reinforcement. The focus on goals is heightened by the opportunity for incremental progress toward the class objectives outlined by the teacher, as well as the chance to emerge victorious in the game and attain the top position in the class (Adimsyah, Fauzi, & Rofiq, 2023; Karanto, Aprilianto, & Rofiq, 2024; Qomariyah, Adityawati, & Aprilianto, 2023). All of these aspects are underscored by the social dimension of the experience, described by Deci as "competence" and characterized by Dörnyei as "cooperation." Students collaborate, jointly establish their working methods, and collectively face the consequences of their actions and mistakes. Consequently, the classroom-with-a-game dynamic remains intact, offering a richer array of motivational incentives than the conventional classroom reality alone (Calora, Arif, & Rofiq, 2023; Fawzi & Dodi, 2022; Rahmadani & Hamdany, 2023).

The three psychological needs do not function independently but instead interact in a mutually dependent manner, emphasizing the importance of considering them collectively rather than in isolation (Aprilianto & Fatikh, 2024; Kartiko, Rokhman, Priyono, & Susanto, 2024; Rofiq, Nisa, & Muid, 2024). Students in the contented profile, characterized by high scores across all three needs, exhibited the highest levels of vitality, positive emotions, and achievement, along with the lowest levels of academic stress and negative emotions when compared to the discontented profile. Consequently, these findings underscore the importance of interventions targeting all three needs concurrently, rather than addressing them individually, to yield the most advantageous impact on students' outcomes.

CONCLUSION

After analysing the questionnaire results, which predominantly focused on motivation, it is crucial to delve into the motivational aspects. The intrinsic motivation components were assessed, revealing certain insights. Within the online gaming context, intrinsic motivation receives a substantial boost from the prospect of winning and/or earning a reward. The drive to win in a language game plays a pivotal role in conditioning and shaping the learning environment according to students' needs, the learning process, or the course requirements. This allows the introduction and utilization of challenging or complex grammar content by the teacher, facilitating the achievement of various learning objectives, such as introducing, revising, or consolidating language content.

According to the questionnaire results, students value clear objectives, especially when they contribute to mastering knowledge or developing language skills. Explaining these objectives

to students goes beyond mere entertainment and lends purpose to the language game. To prevent the language game from becoming solely a gaming experience, it is beneficial to incorporate teamwork. Adhering to rules and norms within the group cooperation mode enables students to transcend content learning, making it purposeful and fostering connections with others. The effectiveness of this cooperation is evident in the instant motivational feedback received in the form of points or levels.

All these considerations are underpinned by a fundamental element: fun. Games, often unfairly associated with frivolity, offer an enjoyable and stress-free way to engage with others. Playing a game together transcends traditional learning methods; the surveyed game, designed for language practice and revision, provides not only educational benefits but also an exhilarating experience absent in conventional grammar exercises. Daily practice indicates that students prefer anything over the traditional teaching methods, with 69% of the surveyed students strongly convinced of this preference. The overwhelming majority express a desire for more games in their classes, recognizing that integrating language games into the learning process brings variety, breaks monotony, enlivens classes, and motivates students to actively participate. While rewards, points, and levels serve as extrinsic motivators, the entire gaming experience significantly impacts intrinsic motivation aspects

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