

Improving the Understanding of Marabu Thodar Among Lower Secondary School Students Using Genially Digital Game-Based Approach

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Abstract: This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of digital game-based learning through the Genially platform to improve the understanding of Marabu Thodar comprehension among lower secondary school students. Marabu Thodar is a type of idiomatic expression that is also hard to understand by many lower secondary school students. This challenge occurs due to the traditional teaching method which is not engaging the students. Therefore, Genially the digital game-based platform that uses gamfication and visuals to create engaging effective learning of Marabu Thodar among lower secondary school students. The method applied in this study is mixed method. The data collected in pre and post test are quantitative. It was analysze with to get conclusion with the qualitative feedback from students. Findings shows that students exposed to the digital game-based approach like Genially significantly improved their comprehension of "Marabu Thodar". This approach reported higher motivation and interest in the subject matter. The results highlight the potential of digital game-based learning tools to improve the language education, demonstrating their ability to improves understanding and classroom engagement.

Keywords: Marabu Thodar, Genially, digital game-based learning, lower secondary school

INTRODUCTION

About Marabu Thodar

Marabu Thodar is a type of idiomatic expression that is defined as fixed phrases that express meanings beyond their literal definitions. These expressions represent the cultural values, life lessons, and historical wisdom passed down through generations. Using idiomatic expressions

like Marabu Thodar in Tamil literature enriches communication skills by enabling speakers to clearly express their complex ideas. By the way, understanding these expressions requires contextual knowledge, cultural knowledge, and critical thinking. Especially for those students who have limited cultural exposure becomes challenging.

Background of the Study

Language becomes a medium for culture, history, values, and idiomatic phrases. It is one of the richest linguistic elements that reflect this connection. In Tamil literature, Marabu Thodar refers to idiomatic expressions that convey moral lessons, cultural nuances, and practical wisdom through brief and often metaphorical phrases. These Marabu Thodar is one of the essential element in Tamil literature which improve the critical thinking.

The Secondary School education system in Malaysia consists Marabu Thodar as one of the components of Tamil Subject from Form 1 to Form 5. Therefore, students who take the Tamil subject will learn Marabu Thodar. Even Marabu Thodar is taught from primary it remain as difficult aspect of the curriculum. Students often struggle with Marabu Thodar due to their contextual understanding. The lack of attractive teaching methods worsens this issue.

In addition, teaching Marabu Thodar on rote learning requires memorizing Marabu Thodar and its meanings. This method not give importance to understand the cultural and contextual among learners. However, technology like digital game-based learning in education helps to overcome the challenges faced with interactive and visual elements. This methods encourage students to learn Marabu Thodar in enjoyable situation and increase students engagement in learning.

Problem Statement

Teaching using traditional methods in this generation is not recommended. Particularly, when it comes to teaching Tamil literature at secondary schools. At Malaysia, teaching literature in Tamil faces significant challenges, especially abstract and context elements like Marabu Thodar. Traditional teaching methods most of the time fails to capture students' attention. Low pre-test scores among lower secondary school students shows that students have limited understanding of Marabu Thodar.

Furthermore, limited exposure to Marbu Thodar outside the classroom reduces students' ability to relate these expressions in real-life scenarios. Where students' see Marabu Thodar as an unimportant lesson in school. Learning outcomes of Marabu Thodar can be greatly improved by incorporating interactive and visual components, especially for abstract ideas like Marabu Thodar. The lack of such creative teaching methods in Tamil literature classes reduce students involvement and their fresh ideas.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study was carried out with two objectives:

- a. To identify the challenges lower secondary school students face in understanding the Marabu Thodar concept.
- b. To determine the effectiveness of digital game-based learning through Genially approach in improving lower secondary school students' understanding and comprehension of Marabu Thodar concept.

LITERATURE RIVIEW

The Role of Interactive Learning in Language Education

The advent of technology has revolutionized educational practices, shifting the focus from traditional, teacher-centered methods to student-centered, interactive approaches. Research in language education highlights the effectiveness of interactive tools in promoting active learning, fostering engagement, and enhancing comprehension. Yuvapriyah (2023) conducted an in-depth study on integrating digital tools like Animaker into Tamil literature lessons. The findings revealed that visual aids simplify complex literary concepts, making them more accessible to students. Tools like Animaker enable students to visualize abstract ideas, providing a concrete framework for understanding. This approach aligns with the constructivist theory of learning, which emphasizes that learners construct knowledge through active engagement and interaction. The benefits of interactive methodologies extend beyond comprehension. They also address diverse learning styles. Visual learners, for instance, benefit greatly from the inclusion of multimedia elements, while kinesthetic learners thrive in environments that allow hands-on participation. The findings of Chan (2012) further support this argument, demonstrating that interactive lessons stimulate higher levels of interest and motivation among students, particularly in subjects perceived as challenging or abstract, such as literature.

Marabu Thodar in Tamil Literature

Marabu Thodar refers to idiomatic expressions deeply embedded in Tamil culture and language. These idioms carry cultural transmission, representing moral lessons, societal values, and traditional wisdom passed down through generations. They are not simply linguistic tools but are essential to the identity of Tamil literature. However, teaching Marabu Thodar presents unique challenges. Idioms frequently carry metaphorical meanings that can be challenging for students to understand solely through memorization. Traditional methods, such as teacher-led explanations and textbook exercises, often fail to capture the depth of idioms, leaving students disengaged.

As Tamil Nadu Curriculum Standards (2018) emphasize, incorporating culturally rich content into language education requires innovative strategies that make idioms relatable and memorable. This calls for integrating real-life contexts and interactive elements into lessons, enabling students to see how idioms function within communication and storytelling. Furthermore, idioms are a reflection of the lived experiences of the Tamil-speaking community.

Gamification in Education

Gamification, which refers to the use of game-inspired elements in a context outside of gaming, has gained popularity in educational environments due to its ability to engage learners actively. By adding aspects like point system, competition, and rewards, gamification changes the learning experience into an enjoyable and entertaining activity. In the study of Karabiyik (2024), he highlighted that gamified instruction frequently provides instant feedback, enabling students to learn and make immediate corrections to their mistakes, which promotes a deeper understanding of concepts and helps students to progress more efficiently. Solekha et al. (2023) averred that learning through gamification is effective as it stimulates learners' enjoyment and keeps them engaged, involved, and motivated when the classroom environment becomes more lively with learners' loud voices, which helps to reduce boredom.

For language learning, gamification proves particularly effective because it mimics real-world applications of language. Through games, students are placed in simulated scenarios where they must use Marabu Thodar to solve problems, respond to situations, or collaborate with peers. Zaharah Kamaruddin and Suziyani Mohamed (2019) researched gamification in

Malay language education, finding that it improved comprehension and retention of vocabulary and phrases. This outcome highlights the potential of gamification in enhancing memory, a critical aspect when learning idiomatic expressions.

The Role of Multimedia Tools

Visual learning tools, including animations and illustrations, provide additional dimensions to language education. These tools allow students to associate idioms with specific images or contexts, thereby enhancing recall and understanding.

A Mayer & Moreno (2020) study found that multimedia tools like videos and animations enhance student learning when designed according to cognitive load principles. They effectively combine visuals and text to improve understanding, especially in STEM education. Hung & Young (2021) research indicated that gamified multimedia tools, incorporating elements such as badges and interactive graphics, boost student motivation and performance, particularly among younger learners.

Similarly, Nababan, Sirat, and Siregar's (2023) study explored the use of Animaker to create animation videos for teaching physics topics like momentum and impulse. The researchers concluded that Animaker simplifies complex concepts by providing visually engaging content, which enhances student understanding and interest in learning. By visually representing idioms and their meanings, students gain a clearer picture of how these expressions function within language.

Challenges in Teaching

Despite the potential of interactive tools and gamification, challenges persist in teaching idiomatic expressions. Teachers often face constraints such as limited access to technology, lack of training in digital tools, and time restrictions within the curriculum. Moreover, students with lower levels of digital literacy may initially struggle to navigate gamified platforms.

Harris et al. (2020) carried out a study that explores the barriers to integrating technology in classrooms, such as lack of teacher training and limited access to resources. It suggests solutions like professional development programs and better access to digital tools. In addition, Tynjala & Hakkinen's study in 2022 looks into how teachers struggle to keep up with continuous curriculum changes and the need for ongoing professional development to maintain teaching effectiveness.

To address these barriers, teacher training and infrastructural support are crucial. Teachers need to be equipped not only with the skills to use digital tools but also with pedagogical strategies to integrate these tools seamlessly into the curriculum. Additionally, platforms like Genially must be designed to accommodate varying levels of user expertise, ensuring accessibility for all students.

METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted with a mixed-methods approach by combining both quantitative and qualitative data, to evaluate the effectiveness of genially digital game-based learning in improving students' understanding of Marabu Thodar in Tamil literature. Around 40 students from Form 1 to Form 3, aged 13 to 15 years old from three secondary schools in Kedah have participated in this study. These students were enrolled in Tamil courses and had varying levels of familiarity with the Marabu Thodar concept. In addition, 2 Tamil language teachers were involved in the study, contributing to the intervention. The participants were randomly selected for the study as it focused on lower secondary school students. Students from these groups typically struggle with understanding the deeper meanings of Marabu Thodargal. The study

employed an action research design, which is an ideal for an educational environment where the researcher is also the instructor. The design study allowed the researcher to observe and reflect on students' progress over time and make necessary adjustments to the intervention. The intervention took place over four weeks. Only students from the experimental group were taught using an interactive digital game-based activity by Genially platform. At the end of the last experimental week, the researcher conducted a delay treatment method for controlled group students using the Genially platform. To ensure they receive the potential benefit of the intervention. This Genially platform was chosen for its ability to create engaging, visually rich, and interactive lessons that allowed students to engage with *Marabu Thodar* dynamically. Weekly sessions lasted for approximately 90 minutes, with a mix of theory and hands-on activities. Several instruments were used to assess the impact of the intervention:

- **Pre-Test and Post-Test:** A pre-test was conducted before the start of the intervention to assess the students' baseline understanding of *Marabu Thodar*. The post-test was conducted after the intervention to measure the improvement in students' comprehension of *Marabu Thodar*. The tests included both multiple-choice questions and short answer questions, focusing on the correct usage and meaning of idiomatic expressions in context.
- **Surveys and Interviews:** To collect qualitative data for the study, students were expected to fill a survey at the end of the study. For the survey, the questionnaire contained open-ended questions and closed questions which asked students about their experiences with the digital game-based learning activities. Also, an interview was conducted to get the perception of the teachers on the success of the intervention.
- **Digital Game-Based Activities:** The Genially platform, allows various game-based activities to be created to improve students' understanding in *Marabu Thodar*. These activities included Find the Pair, Flash Cards, Mystery Breakout, and Jumanly where students had to apply *Marabu Thodar* in context. The goal was to make the learning process fun, engaging, and meaningful, there by helping students internalize the *Marabu Thodar* more effectively.

Evaluation

Before approaching Genially digital game-based learning in *Marabu Thodar* among lower secondary school students a pre-test was conducted to find the challenges faced by students in understanding *Marabu Thodar*. Then the study was conducted along with the data to improve students' understanding of *Marabu Thodar*. At the end of the four-week intervention, a post-test was conducted to find the results. A survey responses were also gathered from both students and teachers. The pre and post-tests provided quantitative data on how students had understood the *Marabu Thodar*. Whereas, the surveys and interviews provided a deeper comprehensive view of the students' learning experiences. Both data sets were analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the digital game-based learning approach in enhancing comprehension of *Marabu Thodar*.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study on implementing Genially's game-based approach to teach "*Marabu Thodar*" revealed significant improvements in students' understanding and application of Tamil idioms. The pre-test findings indicated that 60% of the 40 students scored below 75%, emphasizing difficulties in understanding *Marabu Thodar* through traditional teaching methods. Post-test findings, however, showed a remarkable reversal, with 85% of students obtaining scores of

90% and above. This marked improvement demonstrated the effectiveness of the interactive learning approach in improving the understanding of Marabu Thodar.

Student involvement and motivation were also significantly elevated during the intervention. Surveys conducted during the study revealed that 90% of students considered the gamified lessons enjoyable and engaging. The use of attractive games, interactive quizzes, and competitive aspects encouraged active involvement, contributing to better learning outcomes. Teachers observed that students showed an increased willingness to participate, with many enthusiastically working to learn Marabu Thodar to improve their performance in the games.

Retention of "Marabu Thodar" was significantly enhanced as students transitioned from rote memorization to practical application. Games that required students to use Marabu Thodar in sentences or conversations helped contextualize their learning, making it easier for them to remember and apply the expressions. The gamified approach also supported collaborative learning, as students worked in teams or competed with peers, further solidifying their understanding of the material.

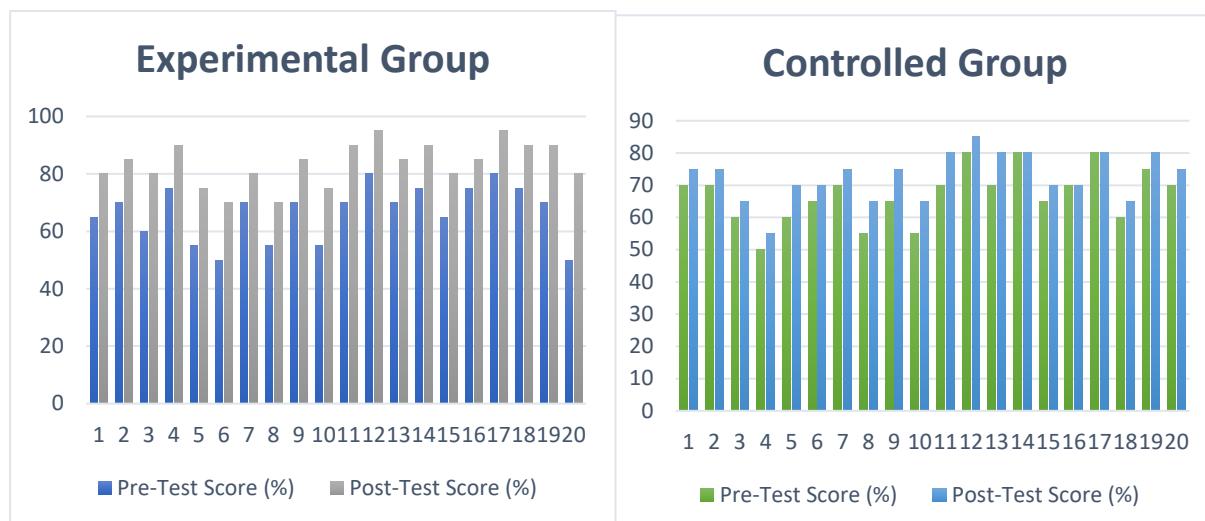
Table of Pre-test and Post Test Scores

Experimental Group

Students	Pre-Test Score (%)	Post-Test Score (%)
Post-Test1	65	80
2	70	85
3	60	80
4	75	90
5	55	75
6	50	70
7	70	80
8	55	70
9	70	85
10	55	75
11	70	90
12	80	95
13	70	85
14	75	90
15	65	80
16	75	85
17	80	95
18	75	90
19	70	90
20	50	80

Controlled Group

Students	Pre-Test Score (%)	Post-Test Score (%)
1	70	75
2	70	75
3	60	65
4	50	55
5	60	70
6	65	70
7	70	75
8	55	65
9	65	75
10	55	65
11	70	80
12	80	85
13	70	80
14	80	80
15	65	70
16	70	70
17	80	80
18	60	65
19	75	80
20	70	75



The findings of this study highlight the potential of gamification in transforming language learning, particularly in the context of culturally important topics like "Marabu Thodar." The significant improvement in test scores suggests that interactive and engaging methods are more effective than traditional approaches, which often fail to sustain student engagement. Genially's digital game-based platform included aspects of play and competition, aligning with psychological theories emphasizing intrinsic motivation's role in learning.

Cultural relevance was another critical factor contributing to the success of this approach. Integrating Marabu Thodargal into games that reflected Tamil culture not only improved linguistic proficiency but also a deeper appreciation for the cultural nuances of the language. The connection of content with real-world usage allowed students to connect deeply with the material, making their learning experience both meaningful and enjoyable. The study also revealed the broader effects of digital game-based learning on classroom dynamics. Teachers reported that integrating games into their lessons reduced the effort required to maintain student engagement while enhancing overall classroom participation. This proves the dual benefits of gamified learning improving student outcomes while making teaching more efficient and enjoyable.

However, the study also emphasizes aspects that require additional investigation. While most students showed significant improvement, a small subset demonstrated only marginal gains. This indicates that although digital game-based learning is effective for many individuals, it might require additional strategies to address the varied needs of all learners. Personalized learning paths or adaptive game elements could be incorporated in future iterations of the approach. Last but not least, the discussion reinforces the transformative impact of combining traditional Marabu Thodar expressions with modern educational technology. The findings validate the effectiveness of gamified learning in enhancing both linguistic skills and cultural understanding, paving the way for broader adoption of such innovative teaching strategies in language education.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the effectiveness of using digital game-based learning tools like Genially to improve comprehension of intricate concepts like 'Marabu Thodar'. By integrating interactive and visual components, Genially creates an engaging learning environment that helps students grasp challenging content, which traditional teaching methods might not consistently achieve. The feature in the Genially platform encourages active participants and makes learning more dynamic. The result shows that digital game-based learning boosts students' motivation and involvement, making learning enjoyable. Students show greater participation in lessons when they interact with the material and obtain immediate feedback, which also helps to recognize and resolve misunderstandings instantly. Furthermore, learning through digital games fosters student collaboration, motivating them to work in groups to solve problems and exchange ideas. In the end, the study concludes that using Genially as a teaching tool supports better comprehension and encourages a student-centered approach to learning. At the same time, it combines technology with traditional teaching methods and offers modern teaching with interactive games to learn complex topics. The approach in this study reflects the modern education trend by suggesting an innovative tool used to improve students' results and involvement in the classroom.

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