Developing Arabiyatuna Board Game for Engaging Students' Knowledge Towards the Arabic Language & Culture

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the development of the "Arabiyatuna" board game, a novel tool designed to enhance students' understanding of the Arabic language and culture. The game employs engaging, interactive elements to facilitate learning, making it an effective educational resource. By immersing players in various aspects of Arabic language and culture, "Arabiyatuna" aims to foster a deeper appreciation and comprehension of the Arab world. The Arabiyatuna Board Game implements the ADDIE model as the primary model in developing the game. This model was implemented on the students of Kolej Universiti Islam Perlis (KUIPs). As a result, this innovative approach to language learning offers a unique blend of entertainment and education, promising a more engaging and enjoyable learning experience for the learners.

Keywords: Learning Language, Arabiyatuna, Arabic Language, Board Game

INTRODUCTION

Utilizing a board game for gamification is notably user-friendly and visually appealing. As players engage with the game, their brains actively process and absorb the information presented on the board. Scholars concur that gamification can be defined as the use of game-based mechanics, aesthetics, and game thinking to engage individuals, motivate action, facilitate learning, and solve problems (Kapp, 2012; Taspinar et al., 2016; Zamziba et al.,2024).

Board games are cost-effective to produce and arguably simpler to design. They promote inclusivity and a social dimension to the gaming experience, making them a viable alternative to electronic gamification (Yan et al., 2012; Epstein et al., 2021). Games can also enhance students' social skills and improve their problem-solving and comprehension abilities (Kirikkaya et al., 2010; Liu & Chen, 2013).

This board game addresses three primary research questions: 1- What gamification features are necessary for Arabic learning? 2- How is the "Arabiyatuna" game model designed? 3- How do students accept the "Arabiyatuna" game model in Arabic learning?

The term Arabiyatuna is an Arabic compound noun consisting of two parts; "Arabiyat" and "Na", translating to "Our Arabic". The concept of Arabiyatuna was inspired by various board games on the market and informed by suggestions from previous research (Hussin. M.H. et al.,2020; Noor et al., 2023). Intriguingly, Arabiyatuna's strength lies in its unique learning approach, incorporating various elements of life, from basic knowledge to the geography of the Arab world. Additionally, players can gain business dealing experience while playing the board game (Rupert et al., 2017).

Board

The Arabiyatuna Board was adaptation on the classic Monopoly game. The application of Monopoly as an educational tool is not a novel concept. Numerous studies have underscored the effectiveness of simulation exercises to foster deep learning and as a valuable resource for cooperative learning (Lew & Saville, 2021). For

instance, Van der Laan Smith (2013) showcased how Monopoly can be used to impart knowledge about foreign exchange risk and the accounting of foreign currency transactions in a business context.

Similarly, Mastilak (2012) emphasized the game's ability to instil an understanding among students about the importance of accounting information. Wright-Maley (2015) proposed four criteria for simulations, asserting that they should mirror reality without being overly restrictive (verisimilitude); permit a range of developments and outcomes (dynamism and variability); incorporate interpersonal dynamics (active human agents); and be directed towards learning through interaction with a facilitator (pedagogical mediation), thereby partially encompassing game-based learning.

The Arabiyatuna game-board is composed of forty spaces, which include twenty-eight properties. These properties consist of twenty-two lands (grouped into eight unique color groups), four railroads, and two utilities. The board also features three Chance spaces (فرصة), two Community Chest spaces (الصندوق الاجتماعي), an Entertainment Tax space, an Income Tax space, and the four corner squares: Go, (In) Jail/Just Visiting, Free Parking, and Go to Jail as shown in figure 1.

A unique aspect of this board is the inclusion of an extra card deck – the Fine card (غرامة). This card is imposed on the players if they incorrectly answer a question posed on the board or a chance card. The properties on the board are based on the Arabic world capital cities. The list as follows:

Land	City	Country
1	Amman	Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
2	Cairo	Arab Republic of Egypt
3	Khartoum	Republic of Sudan
4	Sanaa	Republic of Yemen
5	Manama	Kingdom of Bahrain
6	Beirut	Lebanese Republic
7	Tripoli	State of Libya
8	Riyadh	Saudi Arabia
9	Damascus	Syrian Arab Republic
10	Casablanca	Kingdom of Morocco
11	Baghdad	Republic of Iraq
12	Algeria City	People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
13	Abu Dhabi	United Arab Emirates
14	Tunisia	The Republic of Tunisia
15	Muscat	Sultanate of Oman
16	Sharjah	United Arab Emirates
17	Salalah	Sultanate of Oman
18	Dubai	United Arab Emirates
19	Doha	State of Qatar
20	Bayt Maqdis	State of Palestine
21	Medina	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
22	Mecca	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

List 1: List of the Arab & Islamic main cities

Figure 1: The Arabiyatuna Board Game

Money

Arabiyatuna Board Game incorporated with 7 values with using unstated-country Riyal as the main currency. The Riyal is the official currency of several countries in the Arab world, including Saudi Arabia (Young,1953) and Qatar (Balli et.al, 2012). Using the Riyal as the currency in the game can add a layer of authenticity and help players connect more with the region's culture and economy (Nicholson,2015).

The monetary is piled as 1 Riyal (turquoise), 5 Riyals (purple), 10 Riyals (green), 20 Riyals (blue), 50 Riyals (orange), 100 Riyals (brown), 500 Riyals (gold). Each player begins the game with their token on the Go square (امش) and be provided 1,500 Riyals prior the game, similarly with the beginning of the classic Monopoly (Jarvis, 2022). The segregation as 5 pieces for 1 Riyal, a piece for 5 Riyals, 2 pieces of 10 Riyals, a piece of 20 Riyals, a piece of 50 Riyals, and 4 pieces of 100 Riyals with 2 pieces of 500 Riyals.

Figure 2: Arabiyatuna Money

Innovation Development

This innovation is based on ADDIE method of development. The ADDIE model is an Instructional Systems Design (ISD) model that uses rapid prototyping and instructional theories to create effective training and performance support tools (ADDIE Model - InstructionalDesign.org, 2018).

The project commenced with the researchers conducting a needs analysis among the students. This process involved 103 learners, and an evaluation of the user testing session was carried out with four lecturers at the Centre for Foundation Studies, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). This marked the first stage – Analysis (A).

Upon analysing the needs, the researchers held several brainstorming sessions to discuss the results and preliminary ideas. This process of scrutinizing the ideas considering the results constituted the second stage – Design (D).

During the third stage – Development (D), the researchers encountered certain challenges while designing, including labelling the properties and designing the questions for the chance cards. The researchers decided to include major Arabic capitals and cities to familiarize players with the Arabic world. They also agreed to incorporate basic Arabic grammar and vocabulary into the chance cards to enhance the students' knowledge of the Arabic language.

The project was then demonstrated to the learners by having them play the board game and provide feedback. The learners enjoyed the Arabiyatuna Board Game and expressed hope that they could play it in the future with a new set of questions. This marked the fourth and final stages – Implementation (I) & Evaluation(E).
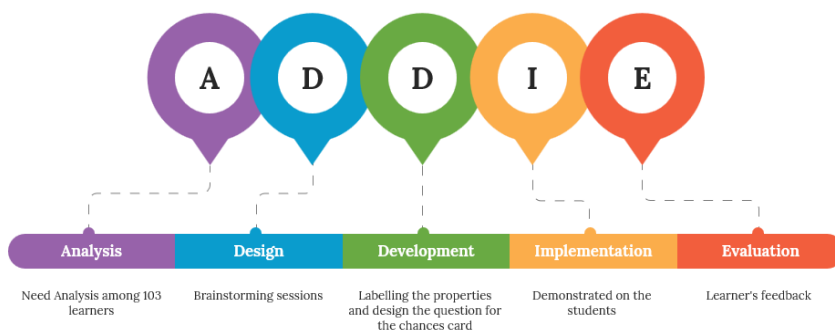

Figure 3: The development of Arabiyatuna Board Game

CONCLUSION

In summary, the creation of the Arabiyatuna board game is a significant and beneficial tool for learners of the Arabic language. It provides an opportunity for students to revise basic Arabic grammar, learn about the geography of the Arab world, and practice financial soft skills simultaneously.

The product's findings reveal that most learners had a positive experience learning with "Arabiyatuna", which enhanced their motivation and desire to learn. This, in turn, improved their understanding and performance in the subject.

Respondents concurred that Arabiyatuna facilitated self-learning. The explanations, exercises, and gamification elements designed into the game have heightened their interest in learning. Consequently, learning "Arabiyatuna" has become easier and yields positive outcomes for students, aligning with Malaysia's newly announced Education Blueprint: Globalized Online Learning (Suo, 2023).

The Arabiyatuna board game is suitable for Arabic language learners globally and can be utilized by all - students, university-level students, and Arabic teachers and lecturers. It serves as a convenient and effective tool for teaching and learning purposes.

The potential for commercializing the Arabiyatuna Board Game is undeniable. The public can fully utilize the board to learn Arabic at a basic level. Additionally, the ministry may consider the board as an additional educational tool, and lecturers can adopt the board as a supplementary tool in the classroom.

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