



7TH IRCHST 2025

PROCEEDING:

**7TH INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH
CONFERENCE ON HUMANITIES, SOCIAL
SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY 2025
(7TH IRCHST 2025)**



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**GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD
2025**



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PREFACE

It is with great pleasure that I present the proceedings of the 7th International Research Conference on Humanities, Social Sciences and Technology 2025 (7th IRCHST 2025), held on 4th–5th October 2025 at Yannaty Hotel, Hat Yai, Thailand. This conference marks another significant milestone in our ongoing effort to provide a dynamic platform for scholars, researchers, academicians, and practitioners to exchange knowledge, ideas, and innovative research in the fields of humanities, social sciences, and technology.

Since its inception, the IRCHST series has aimed to foster academic collaboration and encourage interdisciplinary research that addresses the evolving challenges of the modern world. The 7th edition continues this tradition, featuring thought-provoking discussions, insightful presentations, and groundbreaking research findings that reflect the diversity and richness of global academic inquiry.

We are honored to have participants from various countries contributing their valuable research to this conference. Their work not only enriches our understanding of different cultural and academic perspectives but also strengthens the spirit of international cooperation in advancing education and research excellence.

On behalf of the organizing committee, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to all presenters, participants, reviewers, and committee members who have dedicated their time and expertise to make this event a success. Special thanks are also due to our co-organizers, partners, and sponsors for their unwavering support and commitment to academic advancement.

It is our hope that the research presented in these proceedings will serve as a meaningful reference and inspiration for future studies in the areas of humanities, social sciences, and technology. May this collection of papers continue to encourage collaboration, critical thinking, and innovation among scholars and professionals around the world.

Congratulation and Thank You.

Sincerely,

Ts. Inv. Dr. Wan Azani Wan Mustafa

Chairman

*7th International Research Conference on Humanities,
Social Sciences and Technology 2025 (7th IRCHST 2025)*

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GLOBAL TRENDS IN GAME-BASED ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: A BIBLIOMETRIC OVERVIEW

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Abstract: *Game-Based Learning (GBL) has gained increasing attention in English language education as an effective way to enhance motivation, engagement and proficiency. However, comprehensive analyses of global research in this area remain limited. This study provides a bibliometric overview of research on GBL in English language learning, focusing on publication trends, influential studies, key contributors and thematic developments. Data were retrieved from the Scopus database using the keywords “Game-Based Learning” and “English Language Learning,” yielding 445 documents published between 2005 and 2025. The dataset was refined using OpenRefine and analyzed with Scopus Analyzer and VOSviewer to examine publication patterns, co-authorship networks, and keyword co-occurrence. Results show a consistent growth of publications with a marked rise after 2020. Taiwan, China, and Malaysia emerged as leading contributors, supported by strong institutional investment in digital pedagogy. Keyword mapping identified recurring themes in pedagogy, motivation, technology integration and vocabulary acquisition. Overall, this study highlights GBL’s increasing prominence in English language education and provides a valuable reference for future research directions.*

Keywords: *Game-Based Learning, English Language Learning*

Introduction

Game-based learning (GBL) integrates game elements into instruction to promote engagement and improve learning outcomes. In English language education, it enhances learners’ motivation, participation and overall proficiency, aligning with recent shifts toward technology-enhanced and learner-centred teaching (Hwang et al., 2017; Rajendran et al., 2025). The growing use of mobile and online platforms has transformed GBL from an experimental tool into a widely adopted classroom practice. Despite its increasing popularity, research on this topic remains scattered across regions and disciplines. This study therefore employs bibliometric analysis to map global trends, identify influential publications and examine thematic developments in GBL for English language learning. The analysis clarifies how GBL research has evolved and highlights emerging directions for pedagogical innovation.

Literature Review

Studies consistently report that GBL improves learners’ academic performance, particularly in vocabulary and grammar mastery. A Baamboozle-based intervention in India showed marked gains in vocabulary, grammar, and learner motivation (Rajendran et al., 2025), while Ukrainian

learners of Italian achieved higher vocabulary retention through game-based activities (Frolli et al., 2023). Similarly, a contextual gaming approach improved EFL students' grammar accuracy in Taiwan (Lin et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, GBL's effectiveness depends on thoughtful design, teacher support, and curricular alignment. Poor scaffolding or negative perceptions among non-gamers can limit its success (Ray & Ilangoan, 2024). Research also highlights the role of digital platforms and mobile learning in sustaining engagement and identity in language learning (Thanyawatpokin & Vollmer, 2022).

Overall, the literature confirms that game-based and gamified learning environments can increase motivation, participation, and proficiency, but their impact relies on context-sensitive implementation. These findings provide the foundation for this bibliometric analysis, which examines global research trends and emerging directions in GBL for English language education.

Research Aims and Questions

The main aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive overview of global research on Game-Based Learning (GBL) in English language education using bibliometric methods. By analyzing data from the Scopus database, this study seeks to identify research trends, influential authors and publications, major contributing countries, and key thematic areas. Through this approach, the study offers insights into the intellectual structure and evolving directions of GBL as a pedagogical innovation in language learning (Fahimnia et al., 2015; Wu & Wu, 2017).

To achieve this aim, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1 – What are the publication trends in game-based English language learning research?

RQ2 – What are the most cited articles?

RQ3 – Where are the top 10 countries based on the number of publications?

RQ4 – What are the author keywords related to the study?

RQ5 – What is the co-authorship by countries' collaboration?

Methodology

This study employed a bibliometric analysis to examine global trends, influential works, and thematic patterns in game-based English language learning. Bibliometric analysis systematically identifies patterns in publication output, co-authorship, and conceptual development within a field (Alves et al., 2021; Assyakur & Rosa, 2022; Verbeek et al., 2002). Data were retrieved from the Scopus database in October 2025 using the search string:

TITLE-ABS-KEY(("Game-Based Learning" OR GBL) AND ENGLISH AND (LANGUAGE OR learning)). Scopus was selected for its wide coverage of peer-reviewed research (Al-Khoury et al., 2022; di Stefano et al., 2010). To maintain quality, the search was limited to English-language, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers and reviews at the final publication stage while books, in-press items and non-English works were excluded (Gu et al., 2019). The final dataset of 445 documents was cleaned and standardized using OpenRefine. Descriptive statistics and publication patterns were generated through Scopus Analyzer and



network visualizations were produced using VOSviewer (version 1.6.20) (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010, 2017). This combination of quantitative and visual analysis enabled a comprehensive understanding of publication trends, co-authorship networks and keyword relationships within the field.

Findings and Discussion

Publication Trends

Analysis of studies published between 2005 and 2025 reveals a consistent upward trend in research on game-based English language learning, with rapid growth after 2020. Early work in this area was limited, but publication activity expanded significantly in the 2010s alongside the rise of digital and mobile-assisted learning (Hwang et al., 2017; Chen & Hsu, 2020). The surge in 2024 reflects the momentum of post-pandemic digital transformation and educators' growing interest in interactive technology-supported instruction.

Most Cited Studies

The most influential publications appeared in *Computers and Education* and *Computer Assisted Language Learning*. Liu and Chu (2010) recorded the highest number of citations by demonstrating how ubiquitous games enhance English listening and speaking proficiency. Hwang et al. (2017) explored the role of problem-based gaming in improving performance, and Reinders and Wattana (2015) examined affective engagement and willingness to communicate in digital environments. Collectively, these studies established GBL as a credible and motivating approach to language learning. Recent research by Lin, Ganapathy, and Manjet (2018) further emphasized the pedagogical value of classroom gamification tools such as *Kahoot!* in improving learner engagement.

Contribution Countries

The analysis identified Taiwan, China, and Malaysia as leading contributors, followed by the United States, United Kingdom, and Indonesia. Taiwan's dominance stems from sustained investment in technology-enhanced pedagogy, whereas Malaysia's increasing output reflects national educational reforms that promote innovation in English language teaching (Rajendran et al., 2025; Ray & Ilangoan, 2024). Collectively, Asian countries account for the majority of publications showing a strong regional commitment to digital language learning initiatives.

Keyword and Thematic Analysis

Keyword co-occurrence mapping using VOSviewer revealed five major clusters representing pedagogy, learner motivation, technology integration, vocabulary and grammar acquisition, and affective dimensions. High-frequency terms such as game-based learning, gamification and digital learning illustrate the field's multidisciplinary nature across education, linguistics and psychology. The increasing appearance of virtual reality and mobile learning suggests a shift toward immersive technology-rich environments (Yang et al., 2020; Hwang et al., 2016).



International Collaboration

Co-authorship analysis shows strong research networks among scholars in Taiwan, China and Malaysia, with additional methodological contributions from Western institutions (Van Eck & Waltman, 2017). These partnerships reflect Asia's expanding leadership in digital pedagogy and its growing integration into global research communities.

Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis provides a global overview of research on game-based English language learning from 2005 to 2025. Drawing on 445 Scopus-indexed publications, the study identified key contributors, influential works, and major thematic areas that define the field. The results show a steady rise in scholarly attention, with notable growth after 2020, reflecting the widespread adoption of digital tools in education. Taiwan, China and Malaysia emerged as the most productive countries, underscoring Asia's growing investment in technology-enhanced language learning. Highly cited studies emphasize the pedagogical benefits of digital games in improving learners' motivation, vocabulary, grammar and communicative skills (Liu & Chu, 2010; Hwang et al., 2017; Chen & Hsu, 2020). Although limited to the Scopus database and English-language publications, this study provides valuable insights into the intellectual development of the field. The findings reaffirm GBL's potential as a transformative and engaging approach in English language education and encourage future research that integrates cross-database analyses and classroom-based evaluations to deepen understanding of its pedagogical impact.

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