

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to explore what student teachers did in implementing Game-Based Learning (GBL) in the EFL classroom. A descriptive case study design was chosen to provide an in-depth understanding of this phenomenon within the context of a school-based internship program (FKIP EDU), where student teachers applied GBL during their teaching practice. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with two student teachers who actively implemented both digital and non-digital games in their lessons. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key patterns and themes across the data, offering detailed insights into the planning, implementation, and reflection stages of GBL in real classroom settings.

A. Research Design

This study used a descriptive case study design. A case study enabled a thorough investigation of a particular phenomenon, specifically what the student teachers do in implementing GBL during the teaching and learning process. Moreover, it allowed the researcher to obtain a comprehensive, in-depth understanding of the GBL implementation process as it transpired inside a particular, real-world situation. As Merriam (1998, cited in Yazan, 2015) notes that, qualitative case study is particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic, allowing the researcher to depict profound, contextualized comprehension of the teaching practices of student teachers. Likewise, Stake's (1995, cited in Yazan, 2015) recognizes that qualitative case study is holistic, interpretive, and empathetic and hence suitable for examination of how student teachers plan, implement, and reflect on GBL within naturalistic classroom settings.

B. Research Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in the context of the school-based internship (FKIP EDU). This program was a one semester teaching practice program designed for student teachers from the Department of English Education who applied their pedagogical and content knowledge in a real classroom setting.

During this program, student teachers were placed in junior high schools and were responsible for planning and delivering English lessons under the supervision of mentor teachers.

The participants of this study consisted of two student teachers who had completed FKIP EDU and implemented GBL during their teaching practice. To provide a clearer overview of the participants' demographic information, the details are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 2. Participants' Demographic Information

No.	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Cohort	Teaching level	Selection Criteria
1.	Arga	Male	22	2022	Eighth Grade	Actively implemented GBL using digital and non-digital games
2.	Haura	Female	22	2022	Seventh Grade	Actively implemented GBL using digital and non-digital games

As shown in Table 1, both participants were 22-year-old student teachers from the 2022 cohort who had completed FKIP EDU and conducted their teaching practice. Arga, a male student teacher, taught eighth-grade students, while Haura, a female student teacher, taught seventh-grade students. Both participants were purposively selected due to their active engagement in implementing Game-Based Learning (GBL), utilizing both digital and non-digital games across multiple classroom encounters. Both participants voluntarily agreed to participate in this study and provided informed consent prior to data collection. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used to represent the participants.

Both participants demonstrated repeated engagement with GBL throughout their teaching practice, although with different patterns of implementation. Arga consistently integrated GBL as a core instructional activity, particularly in the second meeting of each week, where it functioned as the main activity to

reinforce students' understanding of the previous lesson. In contrast, Haura frequently incorporated GBL across several topics, using it both as a primary activity and as a supplementary component to support learning. These variations indicate that GBL was not implemented only occasionally, but was meaningfully and regularly embedded in their instructional practices.

The first participant, Arga, implemented both digital and non-digital game-based activities. Arga used GBL to teach adverbs of manners, employing Quizizz for interactive quizzes and organized group-based activities related to the material that had been taught. These games encouraged collaboration, peer interaction, and deeper engagement with the learning material. Meanwhile, the second participant, Haura, applied GBL to teach topics such as prepositions of place, simple present tense, and giving directions. She made use of digital tools like Wordwall and Quizizz to design classroom games that encouraged students to recall sentence structures and apply them in context.

These practices showed how student teachers integrated game-based activities into their classroom teaching in different ways, incorporating digital tools, collaboration and competition to engage learners. This context provided a meaningful foundation for this study to explore what student teachers actually did when implementing GBL in English as an EFL classroom into their teaching practices.

C. Data Collection

The data in this study were collected through semi-structured interviews, which served as the main technique to obtain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of student teacher's activities when implementing GBL. The interview questions were adapted from Bado (2019), focusing on the three stages of Game-Based Learning (GBL): pre-game, game, and post-game activities (see Enclosures 2 for the complete list of interview questions).

The semi-structured format provided flexibility, allowing the researcher to follow up on interesting points raised by the participants while ensuring all key topics are covered (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The data collection process consisted of two rounds of interviews. The first round was conducted face-to-

face with both participants and aimed to explore their overall experiences in implementing GBL during their teaching practicum. The second round of interviews functioned as follow-up sessions to clarify, confirm, and deepen certain responses from the initial interviews. In this stage, Participant 1 was interviewed via Google Meet due to scheduling constraints, while Participant 2 was interviewed face-to-face.

All interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure clarity of communication and to allow participants to express their experiences comfortably and in detail. With participants' consent, the interviews were audio-recorded using a smartphone recorder for the face-to-face sessions and the built-in recording feature during the online session. The recordings were then transcribed verbatim to facilitate systematic analysis.

In addition to the interview data, this study also used instructional artifacts, such as lesson plans developed by the student teachers during their school internship. These artifacts were used to provide contextual support for the interview data to confirm that the participants had implemented Game-Based Learning and to provide contextual support for interpreting their interview responses. The artifacts served to enhance the credibility of the findings by illustrating how GBL was planned and structured across instructional stages.

D. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to examine the information gathered from the interviews. Because it enables the researcher to methodically find, examine, and report patterns or "themes" within the data, this approach is especially well-suited for qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2021). In analyzing the qualitative data, this study employed thematic analysis guided by the framework proposed by Naeem et al. (2025). Their step-by-step approach to thematic analysis informed the systematic process of data familiarization, initial coding, theme development, and interpretation. The use of this framework ensured that the analysis followed a transparent and rigorous procedure, particularly in organizing patterns across the data while maintaining alignment with the research objectives. Thematic analysis is conducted

iteratively, allowing themes to emerge through careful engagement with the data, while insights from Naeem et al. (2025) are used to support analytical consistency and methodological clarity throughout the analysis process.

1. Familiarizing with the data

During this phase, the researcher engaged in activities to familiarize self with the data. First, the interview data was transcribed. Then, the researcher read through the data multiple times to gain a thorough understanding of its content. While reading, the researcher also noted initial ideas about patterns and interesting points within the data.

2. Generating Initial Code

At this stage, the researcher creates initial codes to identify relevant data sections. Each code is given a different color, and relevant data is highlighted accordingly. This method helps researchers easily organize data with the same code. Table 1 below presents the example of how researchers create initial codes.

Table 3. Generating Initial Code

Utterances	Initial Code
Okay, I usually start by analyzing the learning objectives to be achieved first. After that, I look for games that are relevant to the topic. And I usually use the Quizziz platform.	Objective-Oriented Planning
I usually observe first. So, I enter a class twice a week. One session is about student abilities. So, I can observe the students' abilities first in the first session. Then, in the second session, I conduct games or tests.	Learner Readiness Assessment
Okay, for example, if the indicator identifies vocabulary or words, I usually create questions that ask students to choose the correct word. Or if, for example, the indicator is about grammar, distinguishing between different uses of grammar.	Pedagogical Game Alignment

Utterances	Initial Code
I usually create questions based on sentence context.	
Okay. The first step in preparing for class is to ensure that the game instructions are ready and understood by all students before the game begins. I also prepare equipment such as laptops and an internet connection, and ensure that every student is connected to the internet.	Technical Readiness Management
I usually start by explaining the purpose of the game first, and explaining that the game is related to learning objectives.	Instructional Framing
Yes, I always walk around the classroom to check if anyone is having difficulties with the questions or with the devices they are using, and I usually explain what they are struggling with right there and then.	Responsive Scaffolding
I asked each group to create questions related to the material I taught, then each group will exchange their questions with another group, so each group will answer questions from another group, and later I will ask one or two people to give a presentation on the answers from their discussion.	Active Classroom Regulation
Okay, I made the game as competitive as possible, so I activated the ranking system on the platform I use and gave rewards to students who got first place. That way, all the students were motivated to participate in the game.	Motivational Game Structuring
Once, there was a student who didn't bring his cell phone, so I	Situational Game Adaptation

Utterances	Initial Code
told him to wait for his friends first. After his friends finished the quiz, I told him to take the quiz even though he didn't get any extra time. But that was better than not taking it at all.	
I usually ask the children to summarize what they have learned today and their expectations for the next game.	Learning Reinforcement
After all the answers have been completed, there is a feature in the quiz where we can review the questions. And there, I can provide feedback that gives the correct answers like that.	Formative Feedback Provision
Immediately after the quiz was over, I explained the questions again so that they would remember the material that had just been explained.	Guided Learning Reflection
Yes, I always show my appreciation. In addition, I give rewards to students who I think are active during class. Furthermore, students who get high grades usually receive rewards from me in the form of extra points or something else.	Post-Game Motivation
Yes, explicitly and in accordance with the curriculum I use.	Curricular Meaning-Making

(Interview transcript, January 17th, 2026. Author's translation)

The interview data uncovered several aspects of information regarding student teachers towards the implementation of game-based learning in EFL classrooms. In total, the researcher identified 138 initial codes representing each aspect, which are listed below, along with their frequencies.

Table 1. List of Initial Codes and Their Frequency

No.	Initial Code	Frequency
1.	Objective-Oriented Planning	14
2.	Learner Readiness Assessment	9
3.	Pedagogical Game Alignment	8
4.	Technical Readiness Management	17
5.	Instructional Framing	7
6.	Responsive Scaffolding	13
7.	Active Classroom Regulation	18
8.	Motivational Game Structuring	6
9.	Situational Game Adaptation	2
10.	Learning Reinforcement	12
11.	Formative Feedback Provision	15
12.	Guided Learning Reflection	10
13.	Post-Game Motivation	5
14.	Curricular Meaning-Making	2

3. Searching for Themes

The next step is searching for themes. The goal here is to identify patterns within the data. During this stage, the researcher analyzed the codes and grouped them into broader themes.

Table 4. Searching for themes

Initial Codes	Themes
Objective-Oriented Planning	Strategic Instructional Preparation
Learner Readiness Assessment	
Pedagogical Game Alignment	
Technical Readiness Management	
Instructional Framing	Adaptive Facilitation During Gameplay
Responsive Scaffolding	
Active Classroom Regulation	
Motivational Game Structuring	
Situational Game Adaptation	
Learning Reinforcement	Reflective Learning Consolidation
Formative Feedback Provision	
Guided Learning Reflection	
Post-Game Motivation	
Curricular Meaning-Making	

4. Reviewing Themes

The next step involved reviewing the identified themes. At this stage, the researcher examined whether the themes accurately represented the data and adequately addressed the research aim. The themes were reviewed to ensure that they were internally coherent, clearly defined, and distinct from one another, with no conceptual overlap.

Minor refinements were made to clarify the scope and focus of each theme and to ensure coherence across the thematic structure. However, no themes were merged or discarded, as all identified themes consistently reflected the data and were well aligned with the research question and theoretical framework. As a result, the final set of themes was retained for further analysis and discussion.

5. Defining and Naming Themes

The final themes will be properly defined and given names, which will make it easy to understand the results.

Table 5. Defining and Naming Themes

Themes			Definition
Strategic Instructional Preparation			This theme refers to the deliberate pedagogical and technical planning undertaken by student teachers prior to implementing game-based learning. It includes aligning games with learning objectives, curriculum demands, student readiness, and ensuring technical feasibility to support meaningful gameplay.
Adaptive Gameplay	Facilitation	During	This theme captures the dynamic instructional practices enacted by student teachers during gameplay, including providing real-time scaffolding, managing classroom dynamics, motivating student participation, and adapting rules or strategies in response to classroom conditions.

Reflective Learning Consolidation	This theme describes post-game instructional actions aimed at reinforcing learning outcomes, such as feedback provision, guided reflection, motivational reinforcement, and explicitly linking game performance to curricular objectives.
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6. Producing The Report

In this final stage, the researcher compiled the result of the analysis and selected participants' excerpts that vividly illustrate the themes. The relationship between the analysis and the research question, as well as existing literature, was also presented.

E. Research Schedule

The research time in question is the time span for the implementation of the research as outlined in the form of a table, as follows:

Table 6. Research Schedule

Description	Sep	Oct	Nov	Des	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
	/2025	/2025	/2025	/2025	/2026	/2026	/2026	/2026
Research Proposal writing								
Research Proposal examination								
Data Collection								
Data Analysis								
Report								
Thesis Result Seminar								
Thesis Examination								