
PLAY-BASED LEARNING FOR CREATING FUN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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Abstract:

Playing is essential for children. Thus, play-based learning has been argued to create engaging learning. Employing literature review research from George, this study aims to provide a comprehensive review of play-based learning, the types of play-based learning, and their strengths and weaknesses for language learning. The data sources were previous studies published from 2015-2020 in reputable international journals and accredited national journals indexed by Sinta and other relevant sources. Play-based learning can be categorized into three types: child-directed play that results in involuntary creative learning; teacher-directed play, which allows teachers to set up more structured plays; and mutually-directed play, which combines both types of play to provide maximum benefits for both teachers and children. It implies that teachers should select the type of play that suits the children's needs, situation, and learning objectives when choosing to implement play-based learning.

Abstrak:

Bermain sangat penting bagi anak-anak sehingga pembelajaran berbasis bermain dianggap sebagai pembelajaran yang menarik. Dengan menerapkan model Kajian Pustaka dari George, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyajikan paparan komprehensif mengenai pembelajaran berbasis permainan, jenis-jenisnya, serta keunggulan dan kelemahannya untuk pembelajaran bahasa. Sumber data dalam penelitian ini adalah hasil penelitian-penelitian yang diterbitkan pada 2014-2020 di jurnal internasional bereputasi atau jurnal nasional terakreditasi Sinta, serta sumber lain yang relevan. Pembelajaran berbasis permainan dapat dikelompokkan menjadi tiga jenis. Pertama, permainan bebas yang diarahkan anak-anak, yang menghasilkan pembelajaran bahasa spontan dan kreatif tanpa campur tangan guru. Kedua, permainan yang diarahkan guru, yang memungkinkan pembelajaran yang lebih terstruktur dengan arahan guru. Ketiga, permainan kolaborasi yang memberikan manfaat yang maksimal karena baik guru maupun anak-anak merencanakan permainan tersebut. Bagaimanapun, dalam memilih jenis permainan yang akan digunakan, guru diharapkan mempertimbangkan kekuatan dan keterbatasan masing-masing jenis permainan berdasarkan kebutuhan, situasi, dan tujuan pembelajaran anak.

Keywords:

Play-Based Learning, Young Learners, Language Learning

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INTRODUCTION

Young learners are students aged from 5-12 years old. Due to their short attention span but much energy, teachers are demanded to always be creative and innovative in planning learning activities for young learners, especially in terms of language learning. Therefore, language learning for young learners should be fun, active, and explorative (Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019; Uysal & Yavuz, 2015). The activities should be enjoyable and exciting (Juhana, 2014; Nufus, 2018), as well as child-centered and hands-on learning (Cheep-Aranai & Wasanasomsithi, 2016). With children learning a foreign language, the teaching-learning process should provide an authentic experience, offers a fun atmosphere where children can be seen and heard, makes the children feel connected physically and emotionally (Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019; Nufus, 2018). Such a learning atmosphere will inspire students to learn instead of forcing them to learn (Nufus, 2018). For example, providing audiovisual aids or engaging technology as stimuli for learning, as argued by Dantes, Suarni, & Dharsana (2019), Hutapea & Suwastini (2019), Suarni & Dantes (2012), Suwastini, Lasmawan, & Artini (2020), and Suwastini, Utami, & Artini (2020). These activities will make children enjoy themselves and feel motivated, so they learn the language without realizing they are learning new sounds, new words, and new grammatical rules (Wulanjani, 2016).

Playing is children's natural instinct (Klimova, 2015; O'Gorman & Ailwood, 2012). As they play, children can explore their world and surrounding environment, making them learn something new. Moreover, the crucial relation between play and children's learning has been noticed as play is considered as the core of pedagogical practice in early childhood education, including their language acquisition (Edwards & Bird, 2015; Fesseha & Pyle, 2016; Zosh, Hopkins, & Jensen, 2017; Jay & Knaus, 2018). Consequently, play-based learning is considered one of the teaching methods that fit the needs of children. It is considered a means of driving literacy, numeracy skills, and other curricular competencies, including learning English (Taylor & Boyer, 2019). Play-based learning also is argued to contribute to the development of emotional, physical, social, and creative skills (Parker & Thomsen, 2019). Furthermore, Hesterman & Targowska (2020) argue that play in play-based learning focuses more on the process than the outcome, creating flexible, enjoyable, and intrinsically motivating learning.

Nevertheless, despite the benefits of play-based learning, its implementation in language classrooms is not without challenges. One of the conceptual problems is highlighted by Fesseha & Pyle (2016). They recognize that the term "play" is problematic in its practice, especially when brought into the classroom, where learning should occur in a "formal" context. Heyi (2020) explains that many parents and teachers are doubtful about the role of play for children's learning and development, as both teachers and

parents may be unconvinced in the effectiveness of “playing” for preparing children to enter their next steps of education. Meanwhile, along with the persistent challenge for teachers to create a fun, enjoyable, motivating, yet educating learning process for young learners (Rahman, Muspawi, & Muazza, 2019; Syam, Indah, & Sauri, 2020), play-based learning could be one of the best alternatives for young learners’ classroom (Jay & Knaus, 2018; Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh, 2019). It is to fill this gap between the possibility of play-based learning and the necessity to convince teachers, educators, and parents that play-based learning is strategy that the present study is stipulated. Thus, the present study elaborates the nature of play-based learning in language learning contexts, by drawing classifications of the types of plays in play-based learning, their respective characteristics, and to identify the activities that teachers can do so play-based learning can contribute optimal learning experiences to children, especially in terms of language learning. Such elaborations will provide a more systematic understanding of the nature of play-based learning and the best practice in its implementation. Moreover, the study will also provide valuable information about the teachers’ and the children’s roles in play-based learning and the kinds of play-based learning activities suitable for young learners. It will inform educators, parents, and readers in general about the strengths and weaknesses of each type of play-based learning while inviting further research to propose alternatives that can overcome the weaknesses of play-based learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

The present study adopted ten steps of library research from George (2008), as displayed in Figure 1 below, adopted by Ariantini, Suwastini, & Adnyani (2021). In George's model, the decision to choose the topic of the research, the focus of the study, and the present study's design belong to the first four steps of her total ten steps. The study was conducted during the second half of 2020. It was conducted through online websites that provide the books and articles that became the source of data in this study, such as Semantic Scholar, Education Research Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, Taylor & Francis Online (TANDFONLINE), and Science and Technology Index (SINTA). The application used for selecting the source of data was Google Scholar.

The fifth step in George's library research was choosing the database and referencing tools for selecting the books and articles that would become the data sources for this library research. In this step, it was decided to use the Google Scholar database because it indexes most scientific articles from various scientific databases. However, only open-access databases would be considered in this study, considering the independent nature of the research, to which no funding was granted. The sources were retrieved using the following keywords: play-based learning for learning English, benefits of play-based learning, implementing play-based learning for language learning, play-based learning in early childhood education, play-based learning for young learners, play-based learning in pre-schools, and play-based learning in kindergarten.

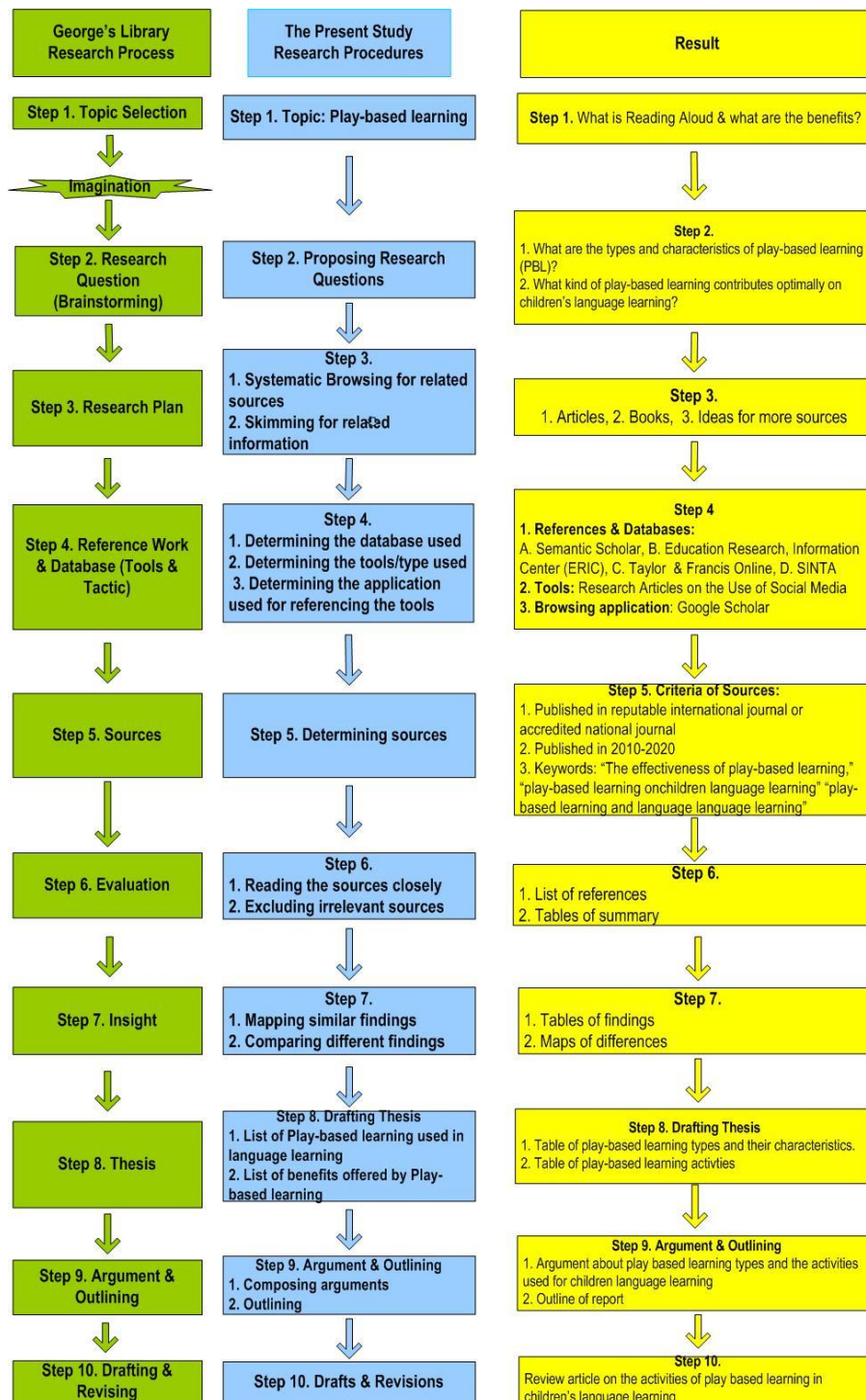


Figure 1. Research Procedure from George (2008) as adapted by Ariantini, Suwastini, & Adnyani (2021)

On the sixth step, the articles were then evaluated in terms of their relevance with the study, with only recently published articles (2015 – 2020) in reputable international journals or accredited national journals indexed by SINTA included to ensure the quality

of the articles and the research from which they were derived. This inclusion process resulted in thirty-four articles as the data sources. Eighteen of them were published in an international journal indexed by Scopus; two were published in international journals indexed by Index Copernicus, five were published in an accredited national journal, and two were modules. The study included seven articles published in un-indexed journals but posed essential arguments to support this study.

Table 1. Mapping of sources

No.	Source	Scopus/ H-Index	Sinta	Others
1.	Ali et al. (2018)			ICI
2.	Aulia (2020)		S2	
3.	Barblett et al. (2016)	Q2/H-index 13		
4.	Barton et al. (2019)	Q2/H-Index 45		
5.	Bubikova-Moan et al. (2019)	Q2/ H-Index 34		
6.	Cheep-Aranai & Wasanasomsithi (2016)	Q3/ H-Index 2		
7.	DeLuca et al. (2020)	Q1// H-Index 77		
8.	Fesseha & Pyle (2016)	Q2/ H-Index 32		
9.	Fiechtner & Albrecht (2019)			N/A
10.	Hesterman & Targowska (2020)	Q2/ H-Index 13		
11.	Heyi (2020)			N/A
12.	Hunter (2019)			N/A
13.	Jay & Knaus (2018)	Q2/ H-Index32		
14.	Jensen et al. (2019)			module
15.	Juhana (2014)			N/A
16.	Kara & Eveyik-Aydın (2019)			ICI
17.	Keung & Cheung (2019)	Q2/ H-Index		
18.	Kiewra & Vaselkack (2016)			N/A
19.	Mukaromah & Mutoharoh (2019)		S2	
20.	Nufus (2018)		S4	
21.	Parker & Thomsen (2019)	Q2/ H-Index 25		
22.	Pyle, de Luca, & Danniels (2017)			N/A
23.	Pyle & Danniels (2017)	Q1/ H-Index 63		
24.	Pyle et al. (2018)	Q2// H-Index 31		
25.	Rusiana & Nuraeningsih (2016)		S3	
26.	Sliogeris & Almeida (2019)	Q1/ H-Index 53		
27.	Stagnitti et al. (2016)	Q2/ H-Index 29		
28.	Syrjämäki et al. (2019)	Q2/ H-Index 41		
29.	Taylor & Boyer (2019)	Q2// H-Index 41		
30.	Tsai (2015)	Q4/ H-Index 9		
31.	Weisberg et al. (2016)	Q1/ H-Index 171		
32.	Wulanjani (2016)		S5	
33.	Zein (2017)			Garuda
34.	Zosh et al. (2017)			Module

After the data sources were determined, the analysis stage of the research commenced at the eighth step, where the articles were closely reviewed and

summarized, following the categories of the needed data for answering the research questions. Among the thirty-four sources reviewed in the present study, twelve of them support the definition of play-based learning, nineteen of them purport child-directed play, seven argue for teacher-directed play, and twelve propose for mutually-directed play. The summary allows the mapping of the information that helped form arguments about the definitions, types, strengths, and weaknesses of play-based learning. The arguments were then outlined comprehensively in the form of the present article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The connection between young learners and their instinct to play cannot be separated (Klimova, 2015; O’Gorman & Ailwood, 2012). Due to its benefits for children’s learning experiences, including play in the teaching and learning process, it is considered appropriate. Due to many misconceptions about play-based learning, this section focuses on defining play-based learning, elaborating the classifications of play-based learning, and highlighting characteristics of each type of play-based learning, along with their respective, and strengths and weaknesses.

Defining Play-Based Learning

Since children cannot learn abstract things, providing play that requires various exploration and sensory activities can help children learn concrete concepts related to their real-life (Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019). Playing is significantly linked to children’s cognitive and social-emotional development, preparing them for academic achievement and lifelong success (Heyi, 2020). Playful explorations enable children to gain intrinsic motivation to make sense of their world and learn about their own identity and differences between cultures, allowing them to and co-constructed knowledge related to their lived experiences (Heyi, 2020; Hesterman & Targowska, 2020). In an increasingly globalized interaction, a strong sense of identity amidst awareness of the myriad cultural differences will prepare the children from being ethnocentric. However, for most researchers, the definition and concept of play-based learning remain unclear. Therefore, this section will elaborate on definitions, general characteristics, and implications for children’s language learning.

Most researchers agree that there is no single exact and best definition of play (Barblett, Knaus, & Barrat-Pugh, 2016; Bubikova-Moan, Hjetland, & Wollscheid, 2019), although play-based learning is obligatory for early childhood curriculum in most countries (Pyle, DeLuca, & Danniels, 2017). Nevertheless, other researchers perceive that the core of play-based learning is the combination of play with educational pedagogy (Bubikova-Moan, Hjetland, & Wollscheid, 2019; Taylor & Boyer, 2019). Thus, play-based learning is defined as a child-centered pedagogy in which children’s development, interests, and abilities are promoted by following their natural curiosity and willingness to explore through developmentally appropriate structuring of learning experiences (Pyle, DeLuca, & Danniels, 2017; Hunter, 2019).

Cheep-Aranai & Wasanasomsithi (2016) argue that play-based learning is developed based on several principles in which the real-world experiences of young learners are centered. It focuses on academic, social, and personal growth due to extending learning toward imaginative and creative ends (DeLuca, Pyle, & Valiquette, 2020). Furthermore, play-based learning should focus on children-centered pedagogy (Hunter, 2019) and the process rather than the result (Hesterman & Targowska, 2020). It should provide an opportunity for children to explore and examine their environment to connect the experiences to their lived experiences and prepare themselves to face future challenges (Hesterman & Targowska, 2020). In this case, the teacher plays the role of encouraging children to reach their full potential through self-guided discovery (Hunter, 2019). Play-based learning enables children to experience collaboration and togetherness to achieve common goals, solve problems, and resolve conflicts (Taylor & Boyer, 2019). It encourages children to explore their world, try on new roles, solve problems, as well as express themselves (Fiechtner & Albrecht, 2019). It stimulates children's critical thinking and prepares children for facing future challenges (Hesterman & Targowska, 2020).

Taylor & Boyer (2019) argue that there is a correlation between play and children's social-emotional skills and language development. As children play, experience, and interact with peers and teachers, they will develop communication skills, routines of conversation, as well as oral vocabulary (Taylor & Boyer, 2019). Play-based learning allows children to observe, regulate, and control themselves; thus, it results in the mastery of various skills and acquiring awareness of various limits (Heyi, 2020). Children can observe how language is used, what regulations follow, and when to speak or listen, which are important social aspects of language (Taylor & Boyer, 2019). Furthermore, they will also learn social norms as they learn rules of play, for instance taking turns, transitions, sharing materials, and taking responsibility, which are essential communicative skills (Taylor & Boyer, 2019). In this case, teachers are expected to be responsive and intentional facilitators who can encourage and stimulate children's intrinsic motivation to use the target language authentically (Hesterman & Targowska, 2020).

However, the most immediate benefit of play-based learning is to condition the students to use the target language: listen to instruction, interact with friends, discuss, and ask questions. According to Taylor & Boyer (2019), the essence of play-based learning for language classrooms lies in children's exposure to the opportunity to practice using languages in communicating their ideas and feelings. When children play, they need to decide what to play, who takes what roles in that play, and why. During these interactions, they have to listen to their friends' opinions, which is a practice of listening and communication skills. When it is their turn to express their ideas, they will use the language authentically instead of repeating memorized drills. While they do so, they will practice another set of communicative skills: they have to connect their argument with their friends' opinions. When expressing themselves, they have to observe how their friends react to their ideas. As trivial as the topics might be among the children,

such language exposure will prepare the children to develop their communicative and social skills later.

The teacher's involvement in play-based learning, however, seems to be given in varying degrees. Experts believe that children should construct their ideas and how they play among themselves, with minimum involvement from the teachers (Ali, Constantino, & Hussain, 2018; Barton, Choi, & Mauldin, 2019; Cheep-Aranai & Wasanasomsithi, 2016; Fiechtner & Albrecht, 2019; Keung & Cheung, 2019; Kiewra & Vaselkack, 2016; Stagnitti, Bailey, & Stevenson, 2016). According to these experts, the teacher acts only as a facilitator in the background. Others are more confident in the teacher as a decision-maker in the management of play-based learning (Mukaromah & Mutoharoh, 2019; Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2016). Then, some experts have faith in the collaboration between the teachers and the students as the best way to conduct play-based learning (see, for example, Aulia, 2020; Juhana, 2014; Wulanjani, 2016; Zein, 2017). Interestingly, Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh (2019) believes that teachers should observe the necessity to let the children manage their play, get involved to a limited degree, or take control of the play, depending on the classroom situation and the children's interaction. This view is shared by Taylor & Boyer (2019), as well as DeLuca, Pyle, & Valiquette (2020), Parker & Thomsen (2019), Pyle & Danniels (2017), Rusiana & Nuraeningsih (2016), and Sliogeris & Almeida (2019). For the sake of terminology, the different involvement of the teachers in play-based learning is used to categorized play-based learning into child-directed play, teacher-directed play, and mutually-directed play. The following sections will explore more on the strength and weaknesses of play-based learning when play-based learning is exclusively directed by the children, dominated by the teacher, or mutually directed by the teachers and the children.

Child-Directed Play

Child-directed play is play-based learning where the play is decided, managed, and performed by the children, whereas the teacher only acts as a facilitator who overviews how the process takes place (Fiechtner & Albrecht, 2019; Jay & Knaus, 2018; Jensen et al., 2016; Pyle & Danniels, 2017). DeLuca et al. (2016) and Jay & Knaus (2018) are aware that the term child-directed play may be confused with the term free play. In free play, adults' participation and supervision is absent, giving the children absolute freedom of choice and flexibility to choose and direct their play (Fiechtner & Albrecht, 2019; Taylor & Boyer, 2019). While free play is most child-centered and offers ample room for creativity, they insist that young children should not play without any adult's supervision at all to the possibility of avoid unconstructive incidents. In child-directed play, the teacher can supervise the play to maintain that the children interaction remains safe and constructive without limiting the students' autonomy (Zosh, Hopkins, & Jensen, 2017).

According to Pyle & Danniels (2017), child-directed play usually occurs during break time when children play with each other. Children tend to use their imagination to create their play. They can play with sand and tags, pretending to sell something, or playing role-playing games such as being teachers and students, different family members, pretending to be certain professions, or pretending to be in certain social

situations. It can also include playing with blocks or Lego, school toys, and sensory play using surrounding resources, such as water or sand (Pyle & Danniels, 2017). These activities occur without any set of plans from adults. Thus, children will choose what, when, where, and with whom they want to play. In this case, children initiate the play with their peers. The interactions, shared activity, and imagination will promote cognitive and social development. For example, children use their mathematical abilities and oral language skills to invent an imaginary store role play (Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh, 2019). Moreover, they can also pretend to discover a new country and build the largest train station, which requires communication through language use (Zosh, Hopkins, & Jensen, 2017). Children are also found to love inventing their games with their friends (Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh, 2019). Therefore, children have immense opportunities to learn about life when they direct their learning.

The combination of autonomy and circumstantial supervision from the teacher in child-directed plays has been argued to bring benefits and disadvantages.

Table 2. Benefits and Limitations of Child-Directed play-based learning

Benefits	Limitation
Providing self-autonomy and creativity, exploring, playing, discovering, expressing, making choices, and developing different play activities	Lack of focus
Stimulating cognitive development and social skills	Lack of commitment
Providing higher opportunity to use language without surveillance from adults	It requires a supportive environment to spark children's maximum potential.

From Table 2 above, it can be observed that there are three main benefits offered by child-directed play. The first one is that it provides self-autonomy and creativity for exploring, playing, discovering, expressing, making choices, and developing different play activities. The next benefit is that it stimulates cognitive development and social skills. The last one is that it provides a higher opportunity to use language without surveillance from adults.

Child-directed play has been argued to provide the widest opportunities to develop self-autonomy and creativity through exploring, playing, discovering, expressing, making choices, and developing different play activities (Ali, Costantino, & Hussain, 2018; Barton, Choi, & Mauldin, 2019; Fiechtner & Albrecht, 2019; Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh, 2019; Keung & Cheung, 2019; Kiewra & Vaselkack, 2016; Zosh, Hopkins, & Jensen, 2017). Autonomy is mainly derived from their liberty to choose their play and direct it without the teacher's close supervision so they can play comfortably (Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh, 2019; Fiechtner & Albrecht, 2019; Keung & Cheung, 2019; Kiewra & Vaselkack, 2016). Zosh, Hopkins, & Jensen (2017) and Keung & Cheung (2019) argue that autonomy is developed when the children explore the play, discover options about modifying the play, and decide which options to take. Ali, Costantino, & Hussain (2018) recognize the possibility of conflicts

during this process but consider them a process of building the children's autonomy. For Ali, Costantino, & Hussain (2018), the process of solving conflicts allows children to express their opinions, communicate their intention, and negotiate the solution, which are forms of socialization among students and simulation for experiences they might encounter in the future. The minimum supervision and interference from the teacher may add to the children's formation of autonomy since children had to solve their conflicts based on their negotiation (Ali, Costantino, & Hussain, 2018; Fiechtner & Albrecht, 2019; Keung & Cheung, 2019).

The child-directed play has been argued to stimulate cognitive development and social skills (Ali, Costantino, & Hussain 2018; Fiechtner & Albrecht, 2019; Kiewra & Vaselkack, 2016; Sliogeris & Almeida, 2019; Zosh, Hopkins, & Jensen, 2017). As noted earlier, child-directed play involves children choosing their play, planning, and solving obstacles together. Such a situation would require the children to communicate, both in the pretended context of the play and in the actual context of the problem solving (Ali, Costantino, & Hussain, 2018; Zosh, Hopkins, & Jensen, 2017). For Zosh, Hopkins, & Jensen (2017), child-directed play allows students to show their natural ability to communicate with other people, which is an essential foundation for their development of social skills. Because the teacher's interference is minimal, the children can communicate comfortably without the fear of being under surveillance or the need to compete with other students to please the teacher (Ali, Costantino, & Hussain, 2018; Kiewra & Vaselkack, 2016). The minimal interference also gives time for the children to explore and practice their chosen play, so they will develop critical thinking and draw meaningful daily experiences and activities when exploring contextual learning concepts (Fiechtner & Albrecht, 2019; Sliogeris & Almeida, 2019).

The minimum interference of the teacher is also argued to positively to the students' language development (Barton, Choi, & Mauldin, 2019; Cheep-Aranai & Wasanasomsithi, 2016; Nufus, 2018; Stagnitti, Bailey, & Stevenson, 2016; Zosh, Hopkins, & Jensen, 2017). In general, children are required to use language to communicate when playing with their friends. It happens during the deciding of the play and the process of the play, including the negotiations when conflicts occur. According to Cheep-Aranai & Wasanasomsithi (2016) and Nufus (2018), the play requires children to use the language in authentic contexts. When discussing solutions to real problems, the children arbitrarily acquire the language through authentic use: they use the language because they need to communicate their opinions and express their feelings. When such needs to use language is self-driven and is not scrutinized by the teachers, the students will not feel embarrassed if they make mistakes, feel reluctant to express themselves, or feel pressured to perform only the correct use of language. For Barton, Choi, & Mauldin (2019) and Stagnitti, Bailey, & Stevenson (2016), the play itself becomes an opportunity to practice language for children. They mostly conduct "pretend play" to act out certain routines, roles, or inanimate objects (Barton, Choi, & Mauldin, 2019). As a result, children will be demanded to use their language skills throughout the play, stimulating their social skills and linguistic interactions (Stagnitti, Bailey, & Stevenson, 2016). Zosh, Hopkins, &

Jensen, (2017), for example, perceive the play and the preparation for practicing speaking and listening skills while improving their literacy skills.

Despite the benefits of child-directed above, studies have also recognized its limits. Parker & Thomsen (2019) are concerned that the limited guidance and supervision in child-directed play may lessen the learning experiences gained by the students. Parker & Thomsen (2019) argue that little children have a short attention span and focus. They are concerned that the children will get bored quickly and move on to the next play or other activities before the first play is completed. For Parker & Thomsen (2019), the students' lack of commitment is expected due to their short attention span. The students could switch to other activities that are more comfortable or more fun. If the play is related to the learning goals, the students may switch to the next play before achieving the learning goals targeted through the play (Parker & Thomsen, 2019). Another weakness of child-directed play is noted by Zosh, Hopkins, & Jensen (2017). They argue that child-directed play can offer maximum benefit for children's cognitive and language development only when provided with a supportive environment that sparks their potentials. Besides providing spaces and properties to generate ideas among the children, Zosh, Hopkins, & Jensen (2017) argue that the teacher also needs to provide stimuli that can motivate the students. They argue that asking specific questions can lead the children to create ideas about what to play. Zosh, Hopkins, & Jensen (2017) emphasize that even though the teacher's interference in child-directed play should be minimal, the teacher should induce ideas among the children and guide them to create ideas without imposing. They admit that this is a challenge for a teacher to balance the children's independence, the effort to achieve the learning goals, and the effort to provide maximum experience for the children.

Thus, child-directed play is arguably the type of play-based learning that offers the most autonomy for the children. However, this autonomy becomes key to both the strengths and weaknesses of child-directed play. On the one hand, the teacher's minimum interference can promote independence and minimum pressure to impress the teacher. It creates minimum pressure among the children and an authentic learning experience that benefits their cognitive and language development. On the other hand, the minimum interference of the teacher may backfire if the teacher does not use it wisely. Children's attention span is very short, thus leaning on their autonomy for the maximum benefit may not yield the best outcome. The teacher should use the minimum interference optimally when the child-directed play is intended to support the achievement of specific learning goals.

Teacher-Directed Play

Unlike child-directed play that is dominated by children, guided play requires the supervision of adults while making the children the center of learning (Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2016). In the teacher-directed play, teachers are the ones who plan and prepare the activities while ensuring children still have the freedom to explore (Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2016). In other words, the play is intended to occur by teachers, usually related to certain learning goals intended by the syllabus, where

activity is often based on a specific predetermined curricular learning goal (Pyle, Poliszczuk, & Danniels, 2018). Jay & Knaus (2018) and Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh (2019) consider guided play the most effective play-based learning for achieving learning goals.

In terms of language learning, teacher-directed play can be designed to facilitate the practice of particular language skills (Rusiana & Nuraeningsih, 2016). Teachers can design the plays to aim for vocabulary building, in which new words are introduced (Taylor & Boyer, 2019). In kindergarten, guessing games are among the most common games for inducing children to use new words contextually and support their literacy skills (Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh, 2019). With older students, the teacher can make guessing games on famous cities or places, in which the teacher describes the characteristics and famous landmarks of a specific place, and the students guess the name of the place. According to Taylor & Boyer (2019), such activity can support students' listening skills. The teacher can enrich this game by asking the students to describe a place, which their friends will guess. Taylor & Boyer (2019) suggest that students can use properties to boost their creativity: they can provide their explanations with a famous building made from blocks or sands. Moreover, the teacher can direct the play to be group activities. According to Taylor & Boyer (2019), the teacher can use songs and nursery rhymes in role-play based on the narrative in the songs. In such a play, rhyming words can be used to make the lines easier to remember.

Table 3. Benefits and Limitations of Teacher-directed play-based learning

No	Benefits	Limitations
1	Providing convenience in extending the academic context	Teachers are demanded to be creative and innovative
2	Supporting children to achieve learning goals while maintaining the context of play	Teachers' dominance may stress children and limit their participation
3	Controlled language use	The reluctance of shy and low achieving students

Table 3 shows the main benefits of teacher-directed play on the teacher's side: it can be designed to achieve specific learning goals, facilitate students' learning to achieve certain academic achievements in a fun way, and build structured language learning. As argued by Taylor & Boyer (2019) and Pyle, Poliszczuk, & Danniels (2018), teachers can deliberately employ particular play as a teaching-learning activity for achieving specific academic goals set in the syllabus. In this case, the teacher can prepare the play related to the materials that he needs to deliver (Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh, 2019). For the children, the benefit of teacher-directed play is twofold. The first benefit is the measured achievement of the learning goals as designed by the teacher (Taylor & Boyer, 2019; Pyle, Poliszczuk, & Danniels 2018). They argue that it will be easier for teachers to keep children on track of their learning goals, although children will consider themselves playing rather than studying. The other benefit would be the intended playful nature of the learning activities while guided to achieve the designed learning goals (Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh, 2019). This argument is based on the instinctive tendency of children to play (Klimova, 2015; O'Gorman & Ailwood, 2012). For children, an activity is interpreted as play only if they

sense autonomy and ownership in that activity. Meanwhile, children consider an activity a learning process when it takes place on a table rather than on the floor (Taylor & Boyer, 2019). In the context of language learning, teacher-directed play can be practical language skills exercises with emphasis on certain language skills or particular language aspects (Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh, 2019; Rusiana & Nuraeningsih, 2016; Taylor & Boyer, 2019). For Rusiana & Nuraeningsih (2016), the teacher must keep control of what aspects of language and perform the language skills properly, including the appropriateness of the language use and the topic expressed through the language use. On the other hand, Taylor & Boyer (2019) pay specific attention to how students pronounce and use certain words when learning new vocabulary. It is understandable because mispronunciations can lead to fossilization, while misconception of word use and meaning can weaken comprehension.

However, the teacher's involvement in the teacher-guided play comes with its challenges because of the very involvement of the teacher in the play. First of all, because the teacher determines the play and how it will go on in the classroom, the play's success, the fun atmosphere of the learning process, and the achievement of the learning goals, the teacher should be creative and innovative. According to Taylor & Boyer (2019), a teacher's role in a teacher-directed is the combination of crucial and challenging roles, such as observers, assessors, and facilitators (Taylor & Boyer, 2019). The teacher should decide what can and cannot be included in the play while directing the play to achieve the learning objective and maintaining the joy of play (Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh, 2019; Taylor & Boyer, 2019). For example, suppose the teacher intended to use play as a strategy to learn a particular language aspect. In that case, the teacher should design the play to train the children to master that language aspect while maintaining the fun nature of the play-based learning. The other challenge is closely related to the teacher's creativity: creating an authentic learning experience for the children. According to Mukaromah & Mutoharoh (2019), as much as the play is designed to achieve the designated learning goals, the play should allow the children to actively express their idea and critically contribute to the play. For Susanti, Sudirman, & Kusuma (2017), the teacher should be very creative in designing different plays to avoid repeating the same activities in the same classroom. The children will lose their excitement about the play if the teacher uses the same pattern for his play-based learning. The teacher should avoid monotonous play, which requires translation or expression memorization, as it will not be authentic enough to enrich children's language learning experience (Susanti, Sudirman, & Kusuma, 2017). Susanti, Sudirman, & Kusuma (2017) are concerned with plays that rely on memorization alone because it limits the children's exposure to authentic use of the language.

Another weakness of teacher-directed play is the teacher's dominance in preparing and conducting play-based learning. In this type of play-based learning, the teacher's supervision and guidance are ever-present, leading to these possibilities: competition to get the teacher's attention and limited participation from less competitive students. Juhana (2014) is most concerned about the first issue, in which students will compete for the teacher's attention and create a competitive atmosphere instead of a fun one. For

Juhana (2014), this competition can lead to stress among the children, especially competitive students who crave the teacher's approval. Neglect in giving positive reinforcement to these students will create frustration. It is suggested that teacher can create a play where every student are winners or no single winner at all to avoid this stress-inducing competition (Juhana, 2014). The other impact is the limited participation from less competitive students (Murni, 2019; Tsai, 2015). A class can consist of students with mixed-readiness and different learning profiles. Thus, the teacher should implement well-prepared activities suitable for children's needs, abilities, and characteristics (Murni, 2019). Furthermore, Tsai (2015) reminds the teacher in a teacher-directed play that continuous interruptions disrupt the flow of the play. It is also true for controlled language use in this type of play-based learning: the corrections may disrupt the play and discourage the students from using the language. Such a situation will lessen the authenticity of language use and limit students' experience in language use and the play itself. Consequently, teachers must pay attention to the strategy in planning the play while maintaining its fun side.

In conclusion, teacher-directed play entails the teacher's dominance, which offers both benefits and limitations. The benefits mainly lie in the teacher's authority to employ plays to achieve the learning goal, ensure students' academic activity to attain the intended competences, and supervision of the children's language use to assure no errors are committed and fossilized. However, the teacher's dominance can also limit the students' exposure to the authentic use of language, create a competitive atmosphere, and impede participation from less competitive students. Hence, the cruciality of the teacher's roles in teacher-directed play should complement the teacher's creative and innovative thinking while considering the children's various learning profiles and readiness.

Mutually-Directed Play

The last type of play-based learning is mutually-directed play. Taylor & Boyer (2019) define mutually guided play as collaboratively designed play in which teachers and children structure and control the play. The combination of teacher-directed play and child-directed play is one of the intentional and collaborative involvements of the teacher (Marija Sliogeris & Almeida, 2019). The teacher and the children design the play together, so the students can develop their critical and creative thinking while extending the play to achieve predetermined learning goals (Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh, 2019; Pyle & Danniels, 2017). It is considered to offer maximum benefits to children because teachers can drive the learning process while maintaining the joy of play (Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh, 2019; Parker & Thomsen, 2019). The teacher and children can collaborate so the language learning experience can be authentic and fun simultaneously, creating effective learning and a fun learning atmosphere. Mutually directed play can be initiated by the teacher who deliberately designed a play to be mutually directed. However, Taylor & Boyer (2019) argue that a mutually directed play can also be redirected from either child-directed or teacher-directed play. When children-directed play turns into a mutually-directed play, teachers' participation can be divided into two: when the

children invite them to join the play or when the teachers intentionally join the play to keep children's focus. When teacher-directed play turns into a mutually-directed play, teachers can set up and plan the play, yet give freedom to children to continue and direct how their play will be.

Many experts and previous studies conclude that mutually-directed play contributes maximum benefits, although it still has limitations that teachers need to consider. The following table presents the benefits as well as limitations of mutually-directed play. In general, the benefits of mutually-directed play rest on the balance between the teacher's supervision and the students' freedom of expression, between the realization of the academic instructional design and the students' creativity, between the students' academic growth with their social and personal growth, and between the leisure use of language and its control of proper language use. However, the mutually-directed play also comes with limitations that teachers need to consider, namely the appropriate portion and time to join the play, how much learning materials should be included, and children's characteristics and needs. Table 4 below displays the comparison between the benefits and the weakness of mutually-directed play.

Table 4. Benefits and Limitations of Mutually-directed play-based learning

Benefits	Limitation
Balance in teacher's supervision and students' freedom of expression	Necessary cautions in timing and measuring the amount of the supervisions.
Balance in teacher's academic instructional design and students' creativity	Over-exposure of teaching material may interrupt the play's flow
Balance in students' academic, social, and personal growth	Entailed teacher's observance and adherence to the children's characteristics and the dynamic of the group.
Monitored use of language	Prevention of excessive correction or inadequate model of proper language use

The balance between the teacher's supervision and the student's freedom of expression results from the freedom given to the children to regulate their play when the teacher still plays an essential role in facilitating conversation, provoking questions to gain children's perspectives, giving comments and encouragements, and providing alternatives in terms of continuing the (Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh, 2019; Parker & Thomsen, 2019; Taylor & Boyer, 2019). The balance between the realization of the academic instructional design and the students' creativity can be achieved when the teachers set up a play and let the children use their creativity and imagination to improve the play within the scenario planned by the teacher (Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh, 2019; Juhana, 2014; Tsai, 2015). It can also be achieved when the children propose the play. At the same time,

teachers facilitate the play to include the teaching materials to extend the play, resulting in maximum educational outcomes without diminishing the fun nature of play-based learning (Parker & Thomsen, 2019; Taylor & Boyer, 2019). Aulia (2020), Juhana (2014), Wulanjani (2016), and Zein (2017) argue that when children can choose and make their own choices, the learning process becomes meaningful. The teacher or the students can initiate the play. However, the teacher can stimulate perspectives and extend children's learning opportunities where the main actors of the process are children (Taylor & Boyer, 2019). This process involves interaction between the teacher and the students and among the students, allowing students to develop their communicative skills and their social skills (DeLuca, Pyle, & Valiquette, 2020). The negotiations between the students and the teacher will require different strategies when the students communicate with their peers. Thus, during the staging of a mutually directed play, the students are exposed to situations that encourage them to build communicative skills across different demographics and to learn to read cues and tics from the teachers and the students, which is the extension of an authentic language learning experience (Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh, 2019; Parker & Thomsen, 2019; Taylor & Boyer, 2019).

As much as the students are the center of the play, a mutually directed play is constantly affected by the teacher's involvement. Tsai (2015) warns teachers about the danger of inappropriate timing and portion of the involvements. Where excessive interventions may inhibit the children's freedom of expression, imagination, and creativity, lack of timely contributions from the teacher may lessen the students' learning opportunities. Jensen, Pyle, & Zosh (2019) further emphasize that the teacher should not impose the students' scenario or plans for the play with too much learning material. It can weaken the fun atmosphere that should be the essence of play-based learning. However, most researchers seem to be concerned with the need for the teachers to be observant of the students' characteristics and the dynamic of the play to provide effective guidance and encouragement. Tsai (2015) suggests that the teacher must observe the situation, condition, and children's characteristics before contributing to their play to enhance their ability. Likewise, Juhana (2014) and Rusiana & Nuraeningsih (2016) argue that the teachers must understand the children's characteristics and needs before planning the play.

In conclusion, mutually-directed play is a play in which teachers and children play equal roles in planning and conducting the play. Teachers can also provide guidance for children so the play can always be led to learning goals. As both teachers and children direct the play, the joy of the play can be enjoyed while learning goals can also be achieved. Nevertheless, teachers need to consider when and how to direct the play in the mutually-directed play. Teachers are required not to dominate the play excessively and not be too passive in directing the play. Thus, the maximum benefit of mutually-directed play can be obtained.

CONCLUSION

Play-based learning is learning through playing centered on students' characteristics and experience. Although the play may be child-directed, teacher-directed, or mutually-directed, a play-based learning always place the children as the centre of learning with varying degree of the teacher's involvements and interference. Nevertheless, the teacher's supervision is always present in a play-based learning. There are principles to follow for play-based learning to transmit optimal values and learning experiences, especially in language learning. The play must be suitable with the learners' characteristics and readiness to maintain active, interactive, fun, and child-centered, allowing them to learn subconsciously while they are playing. The three types of play-based learning elaborated in the present article entails their respective strength and weakness. However, most studies argue that mutually directed play is most beneficial in balancing the benefits of the learning process for the children and the achievement of the learning goals mandated by the curriculum. In terms of language learning, play-based learning is argued to promote communicative and social skills among the students. It requires the students to discuss designing and conducting the play, both with their peers and with their teachers. The supervision of the teachers may be utilized for a specific focus on language learning. In contrast, the teacher's guidance can direct the students to practice proper use of the target language.

As library research, the present study has strived to provide definitions, characteristics, and types of play-based learning and the strengths and weaknesses of the respective types. However, it does not include first-hand data from factual observations or deliberate experiments concerning the effects of play-based learning on students' development and language learning. Thus, the present study encourages future researchers to use the present study's results as an overview for conducting further research on play-based learning, especially those that compared the effectiveness of the three types of play-based learning proposed in this study on students' academic, cognitive, emotional, and social developments. Such studies will enrich the conceptualization of play-based learning, but they will directly impact the students' learning process.

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