

Using Gamification Techniques in Teaching English: Empowering Student's Interest in ELT Classrooms

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Abstract

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The application of gamification in English language learning aims to overcome the low motivation and student engagement that often occurs due to conventional teaching methods. This research uses a gamification approach through interactive educational video media designed to deliver vocabulary and grammar materials in an engaging manner. The method was applied in teaching and learning activities and observed to assess student responses and learning outcomes. The results showed an increase in students' enthusiasm, active participation, and understanding of the material taught. Students are more likely to remember vocabulary and understand grammar concepts, and show positive responses to learning that becomes more fun and less boring. The findings confirm that gamification through educational videos is effective in creating an interactive learning atmosphere and improving the quality of English learning.

Kata Kunci:

*Gamifikasi,
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Abstrak

Penerapan gamifikasi dalam dunia pendidikan terbukti mampu meningkatkan partisipasi siswa dalam kegiatan pembelajaran. Motivasi dan keterlibatan anak dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sering menjadi kendala, apalagi jika metode pengajaran cenderung konvensional dan membosankan. Sebagai solusinya, gamifikasi diterapkan dengan memasukkan unsur permainan, misalnya melalui video edukasi yang menarik dan tepat guna. Penerapan metode ini menunjukkan adanya peningkatan antusiasme dan keaktifan siswa selama pembelajaran, menciptakan suasana kelas yang lebih interaktif dan menyenangkan, serta mendorong siswa yang sebelumnya kurang aktif untuk berpartisipasi dan menunjukkan minat yang lebih besar terhadap pelajaran Bahasa Inggris. Penilaian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan

pemahaman materi, dimana siswa lebih mudah memahami dan mengingat kosakata serta konsep gramatikal setelah menggunakan media Pembelajaran Berbasis Gamifikasi. Selain itu, respon positif siswa terhadap penggunaan video edukasi menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris menjadi lebih menarik dan tidak membosankan.

INTRODUCTION

Language ability is a critical basic talent because it is the primary means of communicating ideas, feelings, and information amongst people. Language mastery, particularly in foreign languages such as English, should be taught at a young age so that pupils become accustomed to and more quickly comprehend its use. However, many language learning methods have yet to adapt to the features of child development, resulting in poor material absorption and low motivation among students. This gap points to the need for a more engaging and child-friendly learning approach, such as the application of gamification that incorporates game elements in the teaching and learning process to increase engagement and effectiveness of language learning. Learning the language should be taught early by applying a style of effectiveness that is easy to absorb and understand. According to Talitha Nenden, et al (2023), children do not need formal instruksi to learn and understand language in this process, this is what is called Language Acquisition. Then growing into adulthood, other languages in this global era also need to be learned, none other than the international language, namely English, which is very important to learn in order to improve the quality of competition. Mastery of English is becoming increasingly important in elementary school because it will be widely used in various fields. In Indonesia, the emphasis on English as a foreign language has expanded significantly due to globalization and its role as a *lingua franca* (Sulistiyo et al., 2021). However, in teaching children, English lessons become a little difficult because at an early age, students tend to be more interested in more fun and challenging activities. To address this problem, the application of gamification as a teaching strategy offers a promising avenue for improving student

engagement and learning outcomes (Al-Azawi et al., 2020). The implication is that gamification, in addition to encouraging active engagement, fosters a more engaging and enjoyable learning environment. This can boost student motivation, improve content comprehension, and inspire teachers to develop more creative and relevant learning techniques. Research has shown that gamification-based software can influence and improve language learning outcomes. In addition, according to Abusin, J et al., (2021), the use of gamification-Based Learning media has the potential to enhance students' collaborative and social skills in elementary school.

Gamification is defined as the application of game design elements in a non-gaming context, which has been popular in educational settings. In it, gamification utilizes elements such as competitions, rewards, and interactive challenges to create a dynamic and engaging learning environment. According to Hassan et al (2023), the use of gamified learning media will introduce a tactile component of creative into the classroom, allowing students to develop their language skills in a more interactive and fun way. In its application, gamification allows learners to try again without fear of being wrong, increasing their motivation, interaction, and involvement in learning (Toimah et al., 2021). Rahardja et al. (2019) also stated several advantages of applying gamification in learning, including a more interactive and efficient learning process, increased enthusiasm and motivation in learners, active involvement of learners in following the learning process, increased interest of learners in learning, and the creation of a balance between teaching, learning, and play in learning. This study takes a gamification approach, using interactive educational movies that are specifically tailored to provide vocabulary and grammar elements to students in an interesting and understandable style.

METHOD

This study employs an in-depth literature review technique to investigate the principles of gamification in learning, specifically in the context of enhancing student interest. Although this study does not use an experimental design, it does use a systematic framework with a structured narrative approach and the PRISMA principle to guide the selection and review of relevant literature. The process

entailed looking for scholarly publications that discussed the use of gamification in primary school and categorized them according to basic themes such as positive student support, gradual engagement through progress bars, and feedback. These three key principles of gamification, as described by Etika et al. (2021), were chosen as the focus as they are closely related to the psychological and motivational aspects of learning. Although the literature review approach did not involve direct intervention, the synthesized results of previous studies provide a strong conceptual basis to conclude that the implementation of gamification elements has great potential in increasing students' interest in learning. However, the generalizability of the results remains limited and requires further research based on hands-on classroom practice to test the actual effectiveness of the principles. Therefore the method of implementing gamification in teaching English is divided into several methods, including:

1. Turn the lesson into a challenge or adventure, for example, can be applied to grammar material made by guessing the most appropriate grammar, and for students who answer correctly will get points.
2. Utilizing existing technologies such as online games (duolingo, quezlet, or kahoot) that can provide an interesting way for students to learn English, it can also be combined with interactive games, which will feature championship levels so as to increase students ' competitive spirit.
3. Give appreciation badges, badges or certificates for students who are competent or champion in certain areas in the game. This will significantly increase motivation and give a sense of satisfaction for the achievements that have been achieved.

In this gamification method, activities that can be done in it are various such as vocabulary quizzes, word associations, or puzzles, contextual use, or vocabulary battles. To compile an in-depth literature review on the role of gamification in English Language Teaching (ELT), a systematic approach was applied. The research method used includes the following steps:

1. Identify relevant literature: perform a comprehensive search through a variety of academic databases, including but not limited to Google Scholar, ERIC, and

academic journals focused on education, language teaching, and gamification. Key words such as " gamification, "" English language teaching, "" language learning, "" motivation, "and" engagement " are used to find appropriate resources.

2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria: the literature that has been identified is selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria that have been established. Only peer-reviewed articles, research studies, conference papers, and books published in the last ten years are included. The main focus is on research related to the utilization of gamification in ELT as well as its impact on motivation, engagement, and language learning outcomes.
3. Data extraction: key information and key findings from selected literature are extracted and grouped into thematic categories. These categories include the definition and key elements of gamification, motivation and engagement in language learning, advantages and challenges of gamification in ELT, gamification implementation best practices, case studies, empirical evidence, and future development directions.
4. Data analysis: extracted information is critically analyzed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and trends in the literature. A comparative analysis was conducted to identify similarities, differences, and consensus among the studies.
5. Synthesis and writing: the findings from the literature that have been analyzed are synthesized and organized to form a coherent narrative. A literature review is then written, incorporating relevant information, concepts, and supporting evidence from selected sources.
6. Reviews and iterations: literature reviews are carefully reviewed and revised to ensure accuracy, clarity, and coherence. Feedback from peers and experts in related fields is sought to improve the quality and accuracy of the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Gamification introduced and applied in the field of education, especially for early childhood students in this article, can significantly increase students ' interest in learning English. This gamification strategy is proven to improve learning

outcomes by enabling students to participate actively, overcome difficulties, work together with others, and experience results more effectively and optimally. The results of this study also underline that gamification improves students' understanding of English more optimally. From the data that has been found and the results of observations from previous research, the average student results differ significantly between gamification with books, technology, and learning that only do the explanation. After applying gamification, a technique that improves students' English comprehension, students not only get better test results, but they also strengthen their vocabulary (Talitha Nenden et al., 2024). Gamification is seen by many students as an innovative and exciting way of learning. This success indicates the potential of gamification as an effective learning instrument, where the integration of competition and game elements in the learning process has a significant positive impact. According to Lam (2016), gamification has the potential to improve students' cognitive and social development and motivate them to be more competitive. While the results were promising, we found some limitations. Some students may feel pressured by competition that is considered too intense. Therefore, teachers need to consider the individual needs of students. Adaptation is necessary to make learning more interesting and less stressful during classroom sessions with teachers; this is a limitation that is often encountered in the context of learning.

Based on surveys and observations from previous research, it was revealed that the gamification display was considered very attractive by participants. They also stated that the questions presented are easy to understand, so it does not make it difficult for students to understand them. The survey results are supported by student statements: P1 mentions that the language used is clear and easy to understand, while P3 reveals that the colorful and animated display makes the platform attractive to use. This ease in language and design indicates that gamification has the potential to increase student interest in learning, which in turn can make the delivery of learning more effective. In the evolving digital era, gamification and Technology-Based Learning media are the main focus in efforts to improve the quality of Education (Hakeu et al., 2023). By applying game

elements in non-game contexts, gamification has been shown to increase student engagement and motivation. Gamification-based learning Media have the potential to enrich students' learning experiences at the elementary/MI level, where their cognitive and social development is at a crucial stage (Hakim, 2023). Furthermore, the results showed an increase in students' English comprehension by 92 percent after the application of gamification in learning, as evidenced by the acquisition of high scores. In addition, teachers are able to present material more easily understood by students through gamification. Student statements such as "I gamified the problem well so I got a high score" (P4) and "Learning English feels easier" (P5) support these findings. Gamification is considered effective in improving students' understanding of the material studied, and they are very amenable to using it in English learning because of its positive impact on their understanding. Student engagement, as expressed by Lee and Hammer (2011), shows that gamification is able to create a pleasant learning atmosphere and encourage more active student participation. The study supports that view, with students showing higher enthusiasm and engagement in gamification-based learning compared to traditional methods. In terms of social and collaborative skills development, Kapp (2012) emphasizes that gamification can foster students' social and collaborative skills through elements such as team challenges and collective rewards. The context of this study suggests that gamification favors the development of these skills, especially at the elementary school level. Adaptation to the needs of students, according to Zichermann and Cunningham (2011), is one of the advantages of gamification, namely its flexibility in adapting to the individual needs of participants, thus maximizing learning outcomes. The findings of this study highlight the importance of adaptation in gamification, which is also found as a solution for students who feel pressured by competition.

Along with the growing effectiveness of Modern learning methods, Wood and Reiners (2015) stated that in the digital Age, game-based learning methods or gamification proved to be more effective than traditional methods that are monotonous. This quote reinforces the reason why gamification has the potential to bring positive changes in education, especially in improving students'

understanding and motivation to learn. Regarding motivation and Learning Engagement, Anderson and Lavoie (2014) mention that gamification provides an opportunity for students to engage more deeply, allowing them to learn in a more fun and interactive way. This is in line with research findings showing increased student engagement through gamification. There is also a positive impact on understanding the concept. According to Nah, Ward, and Poon (2014), gamification applied in education can help students understand concepts in depth through interactive and personalized learning experiences. This research supports the statement, where students experience improved English comprehension through gamification. Su and Cheng (2015) revealed that gamification facilitates the development of critical thinking, collaborative, and problem-solving skills that are essential in the 21st century. This research shows that gamification not only improves language comprehension, but also develops students' collaborative and social skills at the primary education level. Thus, the use of gamification not only has a positive impact on individual motivation and academic achievement, but also helps in the development of essential social skills, both in the school environment and in everyday life (Isnawati & Hadi, 2021, P. 205). In addition, Bovermann and Bastiaens (2020) state that gamification can increase students' intrinsic motivation by providing challenges, achievements, and rewards in the form of points, levels, or badges, which provide satisfaction for students. In this study, the intrinsic motivation of students increased with the challenges and rewards in gamification (Widiyanto, 2022). According to Landers (2014), learning using gamification encourages students to be more interactive and active in the learning process. The study also found that students were more enthusiastic and more active in following English lessons with a gamification approach than conventional methods. Denny and Duggan's (2018) article in the British Journal of Educational Technology mentions that advances in technology and data analysis allow a personalized approach in gamification. With the help of data and artificial intelligence, gamification can now be tailored to the needs and preferences of each student individually, making the learning experience more effective (Huber et al., 2018)

Overall, the results showed that students felt gamification was able to attract their interest in learning, which further encouraged their understanding of English lessons. Gamification-based learning utilizes game elements such as competition, achievement, and rewards to create a more fun and engaging learning atmosphere, which has the potential to increase students' intrinsic motivation (Shihab, 2021). Compared to conventional methods, gamification has the potential to increase student participation in the classroom. Maloney (2019) argues that "traditional educational methods are no longer effective because they tend to make students passive," which often leads to teacher dominance in classroom conversations. With gamification, all students involved will be motivated to participate actively and enthusiastically in answering the teacher's questions, so that this medium contributes to the creation of a more interactive learning environment and fosters a sustainable interest in learning. Students' English comprehension can improve because the display and questions in gamification are easy to understand. In addition, gamification also helps students develop social skills and cooperation, which are important aspects in holistic development in elementary school (Ratnawati & Werdiningsih, 2020). In line with Deterding et al. (2011) stating that "gamification integrates game elements into non-game contexts to encourage higher motivation and engagement," the findings of this study also suggest that gamification increases students' motivation in learning English.

CONCLUSION

The use of gamification approaches in English language instruction has been shown to be beneficial in enhancing students' interest in learning, increasing engagement, and improving learning outcomes, especially vocabulary acquisition and comprehension. It provides a more engaging approach than traditional approaches by fostering an interactive, collaborative learning environment that is consistent with the digital-native features of today's learners. Previous research repeatedly shows that gamification leads to considerable improvements in student learning outcomes, both cognitively and affectively. Gamification not only

increases intrinsic motivation, but it also helps kids build social skills through teamwork and reward-based tasks.

In a broader context, gamification not only improves teaching effectiveness, but also opens up new opportunities for personalization of learning through digital technology. Therefore, it is important for educators and curriculum developers to consider the integration of gamification elements in learning strategies. For further development, future research can be directed towards testing the implementation of gamification across different educational levels and cultural contexts, as well as exploring its integration with artificial intelligence-based technologies to provide more adaptive and real-time feedback to students.

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