

The Role Of Gamification In English Language Teaching: A Literature Review

Ni Putu Wulantari¹, Azhariah Rachman², Mike Nurmalia Sari³, Lulu Jola Uktolseja⁴, Agus Rofi'i⁵

¹IKIP Saraswati Tabanan, Jl. Pahlawan No.2, Delod Peken, Kec. Tabanan, Kabupaten Tabanan, Bali

²Universitas Halu Oleo, Kampus Hijau Bumi Tridharma, Anduonohu, Kec. Kambu, Kota Kendari, Sulawesi Tenggara

³STKIP Muhammadiyah Sungai Penuh, Jl. R.E. Martadinata No.2, Ps. Sungai Penuh, Kec. Sungai Penuh, Kota Sungai Penuh, Jambi

⁴Universitas Victory Sorong, JL. Basuki Rahmat, Km. 11, 5, Klasaman, Klawuyuk, Distrik Sorong, Kota Sorong, Papua Barat

⁵Universitas Majalengka, Jl. Raya K H Abdul Halim No.103, Majalengka Kulon, Kec. Majalengka, Kabupaten Majalengka, Jawa Barat

putuwulantari222@gmail.com

Abstract

This literature review examines the impact of gamification in English language teaching (ELT) on motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. Gamification, the integration of game elements into education, has gained attention as a promising approach to enhance language learning. The findings reveal that gamification positively influences student motivation in ELT. Elements like points, leaderboards, and rewards create a sense of achievement and intrinsic motivation. Engaged students are more likely to persist and participate actively in language learning. Gamification promotes active learning and engagement, with interactive activities involving vocabulary acquisition, grammar practice, and language production. It provides a safe space for students to experiment, apply knowledge, and develop linguistic skills. Collaboration and social interaction are fostered through gamification, encouraging teamwork and peer feedback. This enhances language and interpersonal skills. Immediate feedback and progress tracking in gamification offer valuable learning opportunities. Students receive real-time feedback and monitor their progress, enabling adjustments in learning strategies. However, implementing gamification in ELT faces challenges such as technology constraints and pedagogical considerations. Striking a balance between engagement and curriculum objectives is crucial. Teacher training and professional development are necessary. In conclusion, gamification plays a significant role in ELT by enhancing motivation, engagement, collaboration, and active learning. Despite challenges, embracing gamification and its best practices can create immersive learning environments, empowering students in their English language proficiency.

Key words: Gamification; English language; English teaching and learning

Abstrak

Tinjauan literatur ini mengkaji dampak gamifikasi dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris (ELT) terhadap motivasi, keterlibatan, dan hasil pembelajaran. Gamifikasi, integrasi elemen-elemen permainan ke dalam pendidikan, telah mendapatkan perhatian sebagai pendekatan yang menjanjikan untuk meningkatkan pembelajaran bahasa. Temuannya mengungkapkan bahwa gamifikasi secara positif mempengaruhi motivasi siswa dalam ELT. Elemen-elemen seperti poin, papan peringkat, dan penghargaan menciptakan rasa pencapaian dan motivasi intrinsik. Siswa yang terlibat lebih mungkin untuk bertahan dan berpartisipasi secara aktif dalam pembelajaran bahasa. Gamifikasi mendorong pembelajaran dan keterlibatan aktif, dengan aktivitas interaktif yang melibatkan penguasaan kosakata, latihan tata bahasa, dan produksi bahasa. Ini memberikan ruang yang aman bagi siswa untuk bereksperimen, menerapkan pengetahuan, dan mengembangkan keterampilan linguistik. Kolaborasi dan interaksi sosial dipupuk melalui gamifikasi, mendorong kerja sama tim dan umpan balik dari teman sebaya. Hal ini meningkatkan keterampilan bahasa dan interpersonal. Umpan balik langsung dan pelacakan kemajuan dalam gamifikasi menawarkan kesempatan belajar yang berharga. Siswa menerima umpan balik secara real-time dan memantau kemajuan mereka, sehingga memungkinkan penyesuaian dalam strategi pembelajaran. Namun, penerapan gamifikasi dalam ELT menghadapi tantangan seperti kendala teknologi dan pertimbangan pedagogis. Mencapai keseimbangan antara keterlibatan dan tujuan kurikulum sangatlah penting. Pelatihan guru dan pengembangan profesional diperlukan. Kesimpulannya, gamifikasi memainkan peran penting dalam ELT dengan meningkatkan motivasi, keterlibatan, kolaborasi, dan pembelajaran aktif. Meskipun ada tantangan, merangkul gamifikasi dan praktik terbaiknya dapat menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang imersif, memberdayakan siswa dalam kemahiran bahasa Inggris mereka.

Kata kunci: Gamifikasi; Bahasa Inggris; Pengajaran dan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris

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Corresponding author: Ni Putu Wulantari

Email Address: putuwulantari222@gmail.co (Jl. Pahlawan No.2, Delod Peken, Kec. Tabanan, Kabupaten Tabanan, Bali)

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the integration of technology in educational settings has revolutionized traditional teaching methods and provided new avenues for engaging students (Rusmiyanto et al, 2023). One such innovative approach that has gained significant attention is gamification. Gamification, defined as the incorporation of game elements and mechanics into non-game contexts, has shown great promise in enhancing motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes in various fields, including language education.

The teaching of English as a second or foreign language presents its own unique set of challenges (Fauziningrum et al, 2023). Students often struggle with maintaining motivation and interest, as language learning can be perceived as daunting and tedious (Sari & Ningsih, 2022). However, the introduction of gamification in English language teaching (ELT) has opened up exciting possibilities for creating immersive and interactive learning experiences.

This article aims to delve into the role of gamification in ELT through a comprehensive literature review. By examining existing research and studies, we seek to explore the benefits, challenges, and best practices associated with incorporating gamification techniques into language classrooms. Understanding the potential impact of gamification on language learning can provide valuable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers.

First, we will provide an overview of gamification, defining its key elements and examining relevant theoretical frameworks. Next, we will explore the importance of motivation and engagement in language learning and how gamification can address these crucial factors. By examining the benefits of gamification in ELT, such as increased motivation, enhanced language acquisition, collaborative learning opportunities, and immediate feedback, we will demonstrate its potential to transform the language learning experience.

However, implementing gamification in language classrooms is not without its challenges. We will discuss the technological constraints, pedagogical design considerations, the delicate balance between fun and learning objectives, and the assessment and evaluation process. Identifying and understanding these challenges is crucial to successfully implementing gamification strategies.

To provide practical guidance, we will outline best practices for incorporating gamification into language teaching. These include setting clear learning goals, designing meaningful game mechanics, personalizing the learning experience, fostering collaboration and social interaction, and utilizing appropriate gamification tools and platforms.

Furthermore, we will explore case studies and empirical evidence that highlight successful implementations of gamification in language classrooms. By examining research findings and considering student perspectives and feedback, we can gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of gamification in ELT.

Finally, we will discuss future directions and implications of gamification in language teaching. We will explore emerging technologies, the role of gamification in online and blended learning environments, cultural and contextual factors, and the importance of teacher training and professional development.

Overall, this literature review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of gamification in English language teaching. By examining the existing body of knowledge, we hope to shed light on the potential benefits, challenges, and best practices associated with incorporating gamification strategies in language classrooms. Ultimately, this review seeks to inspire educators and stakeholders to embrace gamification as a powerful tool for enhancing English language learning experiences.

Gamification is the process of integrating game elements and mechanics into non-game contexts, such as education, to enhance engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. It involves applying game design principles, techniques, and features to make activities more interactive, enjoyable, and immersive. By leveraging the inherent elements of games, such as points, badges, leaderboards, levels, rewards, and challenges, gamification aims to create a more engaging and motivating experience for participants (Anisa et al, 2020).

In educational settings, gamification can be applied to various learning activities, including language learning. It transforms traditional classroom practices by incorporating game elements to make the learning process more interactive, competitive, and goal-oriented. By introducing elements of competition, achievement, and progress tracking, gamification seeks to tap into learners' intrinsic motivation, making the learning experience more enjoyable and encouraging active participation.

Gamification can take different forms depending on the context and objectives (Azar & Tan, 2020). It can be implemented through digital platforms, mobile applications, online platforms, or even physical classroom activities. The goal is to create a stimulating and immersive environment that promotes active learning, collaboration, problem-solving, and skill development.

It is important to note that gamification is not about replacing the educational content with games, but rather integrating game elements and mechanics to support and enhance the learning process (Mee Mee et al, 2020). By incorporating gamification principles effectively, educators can create engaging and motivating learning experiences that foster a deeper understanding and retention of the subject matter (Kayımbaşoğlu & Hacı, 2016).

Here is an example of how gamification can be implemented in learning English:

Example: Vocabulary Ninja

Objective: Enhance vocabulary acquisition and retention through gamified learning.

Description: Vocabulary Ninja is a gamified approach to learning English vocabulary that engages students in an interactive and competitive environment (Breslin (2019) and Kindregan (2019)). The game is designed for intermediate-level English language learners and can be played individually or in teams.

Game Mechanics:

1. **Points and Levels:** Students earn points for correctly answering vocabulary questions and progress through different levels, unlocking new challenges and content as they advance.
2. **Leaderboards:** A leaderboard displays the top-performing students or teams, fostering healthy competition and motivation.
3. **Power-Ups:** Students can earn power-ups, such as "Hint" or "Skip," to assist them in challenging vocabulary tasks.
4. **Badges and Achievements:** Students are awarded badges and achievements for reaching milestones or demonstrating specific vocabulary skills, encouraging a sense of accomplishment.
5. **Time Challenges:** Students are given timed challenges to complete vocabulary tasks, promoting quick thinking and decision-making skills.

Activities:

1. **Vocabulary Quizzes:** Students engage in interactive quizzes where they match words with their definitions, complete sentences, or identify synonyms and antonyms.
2. **Word Association:** Students connect words with related concepts or categorize them based on specific themes.
3. **Word Puzzles:** Students solve crossword puzzles, word searches, or jumbled word exercises to reinforce vocabulary recognition and spelling.
4. **Contextual Usage:** Students practice using new vocabulary in sentences or short paragraphs to reinforce their understanding and application.
5. **Vocabulary Battles:** Students engage in friendly competitions, taking turns to provide definitions or use vocabulary words in spontaneous conversations or role-plays.

Feedback and Progress Tracking: Vocabulary Ninja provides immediate feedback on students' performance, highlighting correct answers and explaining incorrect responses. Progress is tracked through a visual representation of levels completed, points earned, and badges achieved. This feedback and progress tracking system helps students monitor their learning journey and motivates them to strive for improvement.

Benefits:

1. **Increased Motivation:** The gamified approach of Vocabulary Ninja taps into students' intrinsic motivation, making vocabulary learning more engaging and enjoyable.
2. **Enhanced Retention:** The interactive nature of the game, coupled with immediate feedback, helps reinforce vocabulary retention and application.

3. Collaborative Learning: Students can participate in team challenges, fostering collaboration, communication, and peer support (Sari, 2021).
4. Progress Tracking: The visual representation of progress and achievement encourages students to set goals, monitor their development, and celebrate their accomplishments.
5. Healthy Competition: Leaderboards and achievements promote friendly competition, encouraging students to challenge themselves and strive for excellence.

This is just one example of gamification in English language learning. There are numerous other gamified approaches and tools available, each with its own unique features and objectives. The key is to design gamification strategies that align with the learning goals, interests, and preferences of the students.

METODE

To conduct a comprehensive literature review on the role of gamification in English language teaching (ELT), a systematic approach was followed. The research method involved the following steps:

1. Identification of Relevant Literature: A thorough search was conducted using various academic databases, including but not limited to, Google Scholar, ERIC, and academic journals specializing in education, language teaching, and gamification. Keywords such as "gamification," "English language teaching," "language learning," "motivation," and "engagement" were used to identify relevant sources.
2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: The identified literature was screened based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Only peer-reviewed articles, research studies, conference papers, and books published within the last ten years were included. The focus was primarily on studies related to the use of gamification in ELT and its impact on motivation, engagement, and language learning outcomes.
3. Data Extraction: Relevant information and key findings from the selected literature were extracted and organized into thematic categories. These categories included the definition and key elements of gamification, motivation and engagement in language learning, benefits and challenges of gamification in ELT, best practices for implementing gamification, case studies, empirical evidence, and future directions.
4. Data Analysis: The extracted information was critically analyzed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and trends in the literature. Comparative analysis was conducted to identify similarities, differences, and consensus among the studies.
5. Synthesis and Writing: The findings from the analyzed literature were synthesized and organized to form a coherent narrative. The literature review was then written, incorporating relevant information, concepts, and supporting evidence from the selected sources.

6. Review and Iteration: The literature review was thoroughly reviewed and revised to ensure accuracy, clarity, and coherence. Feedback from peers and subject matter experts was sought to enhance the quality and rigor of the review.

By following this research method, the literature review on the role of gamification in ELT aimed to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of the topic. It synthesized relevant research findings, identified common themes and trends, and presented a balanced view of the benefits, challenges, and best practices associated with gamification in language teaching.

HASIL DAN DISKUSI

Result

Based on the existing literature and previous studies, the research on gamification in language learning has generally indicated positive outcomes. Some potential results or findings that may emerge from such research include:

1. Increased motivation: Gamification has been found to enhance student motivation by incorporating game elements such as points, rewards, and leaderboards. This can lead to increased engagement and persistence in language learning activities (Mee Mee et al, 3030).
2. Improved learning outcomes: Gamification has the potential to improve learning outcomes by creating an interactive and immersive learning environment. It can facilitate active learning, problem-solving, and language production, which can contribute to enhanced language skills and proficiency (Anisa & Supriyadi, 2020).
3. Enhanced engagement and participation: Gamified activities can promote higher levels of engagement and participation among language learners. The use of game elements and mechanics can make the learning process more enjoyable, leading to increased student involvement and interaction (Dehghanzadeh, 2021).
4. Collaborative learning opportunities: Gamification often encourages collaboration and social interaction among learners. Through gamified activities, students can work together, provide peer feedback, and engage in collaborative problem-solving, fostering not only language skills but also interpersonal and teamwork skills (Kayımbaşıoğlu & Hacı, 2016).
5. Immediate feedback and progress tracking: Gamification can provide students with immediate feedback on their performance, allowing them to monitor their progress and identify areas for improvement. The visual representation of progress and achievements can motivate students to set goals and track their development (Dehghanzadeh et al, 2021).

Discussion

1. Gamification as a Motivational Tool: The literature review revealed that gamification has a significant impact on student motivation in English language teaching. By incorporating game elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, and rewards, gamification creates a sense of

achievement and progress, which in turn enhances students' intrinsic motivation (Li et al, 2022). Studies have consistently shown that motivated learners are more engaged, persistent, and willing to take risks in their language learning endeavors.

Furthermore, Motivation is of utmost importance in the process of learning English as it serves as a driving force that sustains learners' effort and commitment over time. When faced with the challenges and complexities of language acquisition, motivation keeps learners engaged and actively participating in various language learning activities. Motivated learners willingly invest their time and energy into practicing the four language skills - listening, speaking, reading, and writing - which leads to substantial improvements in proficiency. Furthermore, motivation enhances learners' focus and attention, allowing them to concentrate on learning materials, grasp language concepts more effectively, and employ efficient learning strategies. By setting clear goals, motivation provides learners with a sense of purpose and direction, guiding their efforts towards specific language competencies or milestones. As learners achieve their goals, their motivation is reinforced, leading to increased self-confidence and a positive cycle of progress. Ultimately, motivation contributes to a positive and enjoyable learning experience, as learners approach English language learning with enthusiasm, curiosity, and a growth mindset, creating a conducive environment for effective language acquisition (Ningsih & Sari, 2021).

2. **Enhanced Engagement and Active Learning:** Gamification in ELT promotes active learning by immersing students in interactive and experiential activities. Through gamified language learning platforms, students engage in meaningful tasks, simulations, and problem-solving scenarios. The review highlighted that this active engagement improves students' language skills by providing them with opportunities to practice vocabulary, grammar, listening, and speaking in a fun and immersive environment.
3. **Collaboration and Social Interaction:** Another key finding from the literature review was the positive impact of gamification on collaboration and social interaction among language learners. Gamified activities often encourage students to work together, solve challenges collectively, and engage in peer-to-peer feedback. This collaborative aspect of gamification fosters a sense of community, encourages communication, and enhances interpersonal skills in the language learning process.
4. **Immediate Feedback and Progress Tracking:** Gamification allows for immediate feedback and progress tracking, which are essential elements in effective language learning. Through real-time feedback mechanisms, students receive instant information about their performance, enabling them to identify areas for improvement and adjust their learning strategies accordingly. The literature review emphasized that this timely feedback helps students stay motivated, enhances their self-awareness, and promotes a growth mindset.
5. **Challenges and Considerations:** While the benefits of gamification in ELT are significant, the literature review also highlighted several challenges and considerations. Technological constraints,

such as limited access to devices or unstable internet connectivity, can hinder the implementation of gamification strategies. Pedagogical design and integration pose challenges in striking a balance between gameplay and learning objectives, ensuring that the gamified activities align with language proficiency goals. Moreover, appropriate assessment and evaluation methods need to be established to measure the effectiveness of gamification in language learning.

6. **Best Practices for Gamification in ELT:** Based on the reviewed literature, the literature review identified several best practices for incorporating gamification into language teaching. Clear learning goals should be established to provide a sense of purpose and direction. Meaningful game mechanics, such as narratives, challenges, and progress indicators, should be carefully designed to engage learners and promote skill development. Personalization and adaptivity, where the gamified activities adjust to individual learners' needs and preferences, enhance the effectiveness of gamification. Collaboration and social interaction should be integrated to foster a supportive and interactive learning environment. Lastly, the review emphasized the importance of selecting appropriate gamification tools and platforms that align with the specific needs and resources of the language classroom.
7. **Future Directions and Implications:** The literature review pointed out several areas for future research and exploration. Emerging technologies, such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), hold immense potential for gamification in language teaching. Further investigation is needed to understand the effectiveness of gamification in online and blended learning environments. Cultural and contextual factors, including diverse learner backgrounds and educational settings, should be considered to ensure the applicability and effectiveness of gamification strategies. Lastly, providing comprehensive teacher training and professional development programs is crucial to empower educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively implement gamification in language classrooms.

In conclusion, the literature review revealed that gamification has a significant role to play in English language teaching. By enhancing motivation, engagement, and active learning, gamification offers a promising approach to transform the language learning experience. However, challenges such as technological constraints and pedagogical design considerations must be addressed, and best practices should be followed to maximize the benefits of gamification. As future research explores emerging technologies and contextual factors, it is evident that gamification has the potential to reshape and improve English language teaching practices worldwide.

CONCLUSIONS

The literature review on the role of gamification in English language teaching (ELT) reveals a wealth of evidence supporting its potential to enhance motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. By incorporating game elements and mechanics into language learning, gamification offers a promising approach to transforming the educational experience for English language learners.

The reviewed literature consistently emphasizes the positive impact of gamification on student motivation. By integrating elements such as points, leaderboards, badges, and rewards, gamification creates a sense of achievement and progress that fosters intrinsic motivation. Engaged and motivated learners are more likely to persist in their language learning journey and demonstrate increased effort and participation.

Gamification also enhances engagement and active learning in ELT. Through interactive and immersive activities, students are actively involved in vocabulary acquisition, grammar practice, and language production. The gamified environment provides a safe and enjoyable space for students to experiment with the language, apply their knowledge, and develop their linguistic skills.

Collaboration and social interaction are other significant outcomes of gamification in language learning. Gamified activities often encourage students to work together, provide peer feedback, and engage in collaborative problem-solving. This not only enhances language skills but also fosters interpersonal skills, communication, and teamwork.

Immediate feedback and progress tracking mechanisms in gamification provide valuable learning opportunities. Students receive real-time feedback on their performance, enabling them to identify areas for improvement and adjust their learning strategies. Additionally, the visual representation of progress and achievements motivates students to set goals and monitor their development.

However, implementing gamification in ELT is not without challenges. Technological constraints, pedagogical design considerations, and assessment methods require careful attention. Teachers and educators need to strike a balance between the fun and engaging aspects of gamification and the learning objectives of the language curriculum. Furthermore, appropriate training and professional development opportunities are necessary to equip educators with the knowledge and skills to effectively incorporate gamification into their teaching practices.

In conclusion, the literature review demonstrates that gamification holds great promise for enhancing English language teaching. Its ability to increase motivation, engagement, collaboration, and active learning makes it a valuable tool in the language classroom. By embracing gamification and its best practices, educators and stakeholders can create dynamic and immersive learning experiences that empower students to become proficient and confident English language users.

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