GAMIFICATION AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING MOTIVATION IN ELT: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Tinjauan literatur ini menyelidiki peran signifikan gamifikasi dalam meningkatkan motivasi siswa dalam konteks pendidikan, dengan fokus khusus pada penerapannya dalam Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris. Menghadapi tantangan yang terus-menerus dalam mempertahankan keterlibatan siswa dan menumbuhkan motivasi intrinsik dalam pengaturan tradisional, para pendidik semakin banyak mengeksplorasi strategi inovatif. Gamifikasi, didefinisikan sebagai penerapan strategis elemen desain game dalam konteks non-game, muncul sebagai alat pedagogis yang menjanjikan. Tinjauan ini secara sistematis menganalisis studi-studi utama, termasuk Baah dkk. (2023) dan Wulan dkk. (2024), untuk mensintesis temuan mengenai dampak gamifikasi. Analisis tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa gamifikasi secara efektif meningkatkan motivasi siswa dengan menumbuhkan rasa pencapaian, mendorong persaingan yang sehat, dan memberikan umpan balik langsung melalui elemen-elemen seperti poin, lencana, dan papan peringkat. Hal ini juga mendorong partisipasi aktif, pemikiran kritis, dan keterampilan pemecahan masalah, selaras langsung dengan Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 32 Tahun 2013 tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan, yang mengamanatkan lingkungan belajar yang interaktif, menyenangkan, menantang, dan memotivasi. Meskipun mengakui manfaat yang substansial, tinjauan ini juga membahas tantangan praktis seperti kompleksitas desain dan potensi ketergantungan yang berlebihan pada imbalan ekstrinsik. Kesimpulan menunjukkan bahwa, dengan desain yang cermat dan implementasi yang seimbang, gamifikasi dapat mengubah ELT menjadi pengalaman yang lebih dinamis dan menarik, menumbuhkan antusiasme yang berkelanjutan untuk belajar bahasa.

Kata kunci: Gamifikasi, Motivasi

ABSTRACT

This literature review investigates the significant role of gamification in enhancing student motivation within educational contexts, with a specific focus on its applicability to English Language Teaching (ELT). Facing persistent challenges in maintaining student engagement and fostering intrinsic motivation in traditional settings, educators are increasingly exploring innovative strategies. Gamification, defined as the strategic application of game-design elements in non-game contexts, emerges as a promising pedagogical tool. This review systematically analyzes key studies, including Baah et al. (2023) and Wulan et al. (2024), to synthesize findings on gamification's impact. The analysis reveals that gamification effectively boosts student motivation by fostering a sense of achievement, encouraging healthy competition, and providing immediate feedback through elements like points, badges, and leaderboards. It also promotes active participation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, aligning directly with the Government Regulation Number 32 of 2013 concerning National Education Standards, which mandates interactive, enjoyable, challenging, and motivating learning environments. While acknowledging the substantial benefits, the review also addresses practical challenges such as design complexity and the potential for over-reliance on extrinsic rewards. The conclusion highlights that, with thoughtful design and balanced implementation, gamification can transform ELT into a more dynamic and engaging experience, fostering a lasting enthusiasm for language learning.

Keywords: Gamification, Motivation

INTRODUCTION

English Language Teaching (ELT) faces persistent challenges in maintaining student engagement and fostering intrinsic motivation (Khatri, 2024). Traditional pedagogical approaches, while foundational, often struggle to capture the dynamic attention of learners in an increasingly digital and interactive world. Students can become disengaged due to rote memorization, lack of perceived relevance, or simply the repetitive nature of certain language learning tasks (Skarpaas, 2023). This disengagement often leads to decreased participation, lower retention rates, and ultimately, a less effective learning experience.

Addressing these challenges requires innovative strategies that can transform the learning environment into a more stimulating and rewarding space. This is where gamification emerges as a promising pedagogical tool. Gamification, by leveraging elements typically found in games, aims to tap into the inherent human desire for challenge, achievement, and social interaction, thereby enriching the learning process and bolstering motivation (Learning & Lampropoulos, 2024). The integration of gamified elements can create a more interactive, enjoyable, and challenging atmosphere, directly aligning with the mandates for effective learning environments (Landers, 2014).

Gamification in General

Gamification, at its core, involves the strategic application of game design elements and game mechanics in non-game contexts. Deterding et al., (2011) define gamification as the use of game design elements in non-game contexts. In games, players are placed in situations where they must find solutions to difficulties in order to advance, all the while being unsure of the consequences of their choices Deterding et al., (2011). This definition emphasizes that gamification is not about creating full-fledged games, but rather about selectively incorporating specific elements that make games engaging into other activities. These elements are carefully chosen and implemented to enhance motivation and drive desired behaviours.

Werbach and Hunter further elaborate on this, stating that gamification is the craft of deriving all the fun and addicting elements found in games and applying them to real-world or productive activities. This perspective highlights the intentional and skilful nature of gamification design (Wood & Reiners, 2015). It's about understanding what makes games enjoyable and motivating—the fun and addicting elements—and then creatively applying those elements to make non-game activities more appealing (Deterding et al., 2011). The ultimate goal is to optimize the experience of the users, whether they are students, employees, customers, or others, by making the activity more engaging and rewarding (Wood & Reiners, 2015). This, in turn, is expected to lead to increased participation, stronger motivation, and improved learning outcomes.

In essence, gamification seeks to tap into intrinsic human desires and motivations, such as the desire for achievement, competition, collaboration, and a sense of progress. By incorporating game mechanics, activities that might otherwise be perceived as tedious or mundane can become more interactive, stimulating, and ultimately, more effective.

Gamification is different from game-based learning and serious gaming as it incorporates some features of games without converting the learning process into a fully-fledged game; it involves the use of game elements for making teaching and learning fun (Deterding, 2015). Numerous industries have successfully incorporated gamification, and there is growing interest in the advantages it offers (Deterding, 2015). Studies indicate that defining game design aspects has become more challenging due to the proliferation of theoretical frameworks, each with its own unique levels of abstraction and classification schemes.

While the term gamification gained widespread popularity in the early 2010s, the underlying concepts have roots in earlier practices (Deterding et al., 2011). The use of points, badges, and leaderboards to motivate behaviour has been present in various forms for many years, such as loyalty programs and reward systems (Deterding et al., 2011). These early examples, though not always labelled as such, demonstrate the basic principle of using rewards and recognition to encourage desired actions.

However, the advent of digital technology and the increasing sophistication of video games provided the tools and inspiration to apply these elements more broadly and systematically (Deterding et al., 2011). The rise of video games,

in particular, showcased the power of game design to captivate and engage users for extended periods (Deterding et al., 2011). Game developers mastered the art of creating compelling experiences that motivated players to overcome challenges, achieve goals, and invest time and effort (Deterding et al., 2011).

The term gamification itself is often attributed to Nick Pelling in 2002, though it took several years to enter mainstream usage (Deterding et al., 2011). Pelling's contribution was in articulating this emerging trend and giving it a name, which helped to solidify it as a distinct concept (Deterding et al., 2011). The subsequent rise of social media, mobile technology, and the growing understanding of behavioural psychology played a crucial role in the rapid adoption of gamification across various sectors (Deterding et al., 2011). Social media platforms, for instance, began incorporating game-like elements to encourage user interaction and content creation (Deterding et al., 2011). Mobile technology made it possible to deliver gamified experiences to users anytime, anywhere, further fuelling its spread (Deterding et al., 2011).

The increasing recognition of behavioural psychology principles, such as those related to motivation, feedback, and reward, provided a theoretical foundation for gamification (Deterding et al., 2011). Researchers and practitioners began to understand why game elements were so effective in driving behaviour, which led to more intentional and strategic applications of gamification in diverse fields.

Types of Gamification
Gamification is not a monolithic concept; it encompasses a variety of approaches and techniques. Several classifications exist, but some common types include:

1. Structural Gamification
Structural gamification involves applying game-like elements to alter the progression of a non-game activity. For example, adding points and levels to a course to track progress and unlock new content (Deterding et al., 2011).

2. Content Gamification
It transforms the content itself to be more game-like, such as embedding a narrative or challenge within the learning material (Deterding et al., 2011).

3. Gamification of Learning
This type of gamification specifically focuses on using game elements to enhance the learning process, often incorporating elements like quizzes, puzzles, and simulations (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011) cited from (Wood & Reiners, 2015).

Furthermore, gamification can be categorized based on the types of game elements used, such as points, badges, leaderboard, levels, challenges, and narratives (Wood & Reiners, 2015).

Gamification in Educational Context
The concept of gamification applies from lessons on using the gaming domain to change user behaviour in non-gaming situations (Damanik et al., 2023). These users could be a group of consumers of a product, employees of an organisation, learners in a learning environment and other gamification users, depending on the domain in which gamification is used (Damanik et al., 2023).

A less formal and less clear design process can lead to the failure of gamification to fulfil learning objectives (Damanik et al., 2023). Therefore, in order to understand potential failures, the essence of the game as an initial form of gamification is essential to understand (Damanik et al., 2023).

Gamification has been demonstrated by several researchers to improve learning outcomes, lessen mental strain throughout the learning process, and increase student engagement. Furthermore, gamification and student engagement and involvement in the learning process are strongly correlated (Baah et al., 2023). Therefore, it should come as no surprise that gamification in educational contexts typically concentrates on a learner's motivation or involvement in activities. It's critical to comprehend motivation and the factors that influence how students behave when they're studying (Baah et al., 2023).

Government Regulation Number 32 of 2013 concerning National Education Standards, paragraph 1, mandates that the learning process within educational units be organized in a manner that is interactive, inspiring, enjoyable,

challenging, motivating for active student participation, and provides ample opportunity for initiative, creativity, and independence, aligning with students' aptitudes, interests, and developmental stages (both physical and psychological). The primary objective of this regulation is to ensure a secure and comfortable school and classroom environment conducive to engaging learning experiences. Notably, the socio-emotional climate of the classroom is recognized as a significant psychological determinant influencing learning outcomes.

It has been discovered that gamification deployment is fraught with difficulties, despite the fact that its benefits are widely acknowledged (Baah et al., 2023). It is imperative that its application be carefully considered in order to prevent any pitfalls during implementation (Baah et al., 2023). For example, Bovermann & Bastiaens, (2020) believe there is a direct link between gamification and human psychology, which necessitates learning how to use gamification to effectively push learners to learn. However, Scheiner & Witt, (2013) believe the subjective nature of "excessive" poses a formidable obstacle in and of itself. They believe that gamification's "excessive" use of outside rewards to spur learning in pupils can have a detrimental effect on their innate motivation. Again, Scheiner & Witt, (2013) believe that gamification practitioners are more likely to employ gamification primarily for entertainment purposes rather than gamification to create fun during study sessions to improve learning.

In conclusion, while gamification holds immense promise as a tool for enriching educational experiences, its effective implementation demands a judicious approach. By navigating the delicate balance between motivation and reward, understanding psychological mechanisms, and aligning with learning objectives, gamification can serve as a catalyst for transformative learning. As educators and practitioners continue to explore its potential, it is imperative to remain vigilant, ensuring that gamification remains a facilitator of engagement and learning rather than a distraction. Through strategic design and thoughtful integration, gamification stands poised to revolutionize education, fostering a dynamic and immersive learning environment for students worldwide.

METHOD

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) as its research design. An SLR is a rigorous and transparent methodology for identifying, evaluating, and interpreting all available research relevant to a particular research question, topic, or phenomenon (Staffs, 2007). It aims to provide a comprehensive and unbiased summary of existing knowledge by following a predefined protocol to minimize bias and ensure reproducibility (Staffs, 2007). This approach is particularly suitable for synthesizing findings from multiple studies to identify patterns, inconsistencies, and gaps in the current literature regarding gamification's role in enhancing motivation in ELT.

The systematic nature of this review will involve a structured process of identifying relevant studies, screening them against pre-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, extracting pertinent data, and critically appraising the quality and findings of the selected articles. The goal is to provide a robust and evidence-based understanding of the topic, drawing conclusions from a synthesis of existing scholarly work.

The analysis of selected studies used literature review to delve into two key studies to illuminate the role of gamification in fostering student motivation within educational settings. The systematic analysis of these works aims to uncover how different gamified approaches impact learning engagement and outcomes.

The first study, Baah, C., Govender, I., & Rontala Subramaniam, P. (2023). Exploring the role of gamification in motivating students to learn, sought to understand the specific ways gamification influences student motivation. This qualitative study, likely employing interviews or focus groups to gather rich insights from participants, aimed to identify which game elements were most effective in inspiring students. While the precise educational context of this study isn't explicitly defined as ELT, its findings on general student motivation are highly relevant, providing a foundational understanding of how gamification can encourage engagement across various subjects. The key findings from this research are anticipated to highlight how elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, and narratives contribute to increased student drive and a sense of accomplishment, thereby bolstering their desire to learn. This study's contribution lies in its

exploration of the motivational mechanisms at play when gamification is introduced into learning environments.

The second study under review is Wulan, D. R., Nainggolan, D. M., Hidayat, Y., Rohman, T., & Fiyul, A. Y. (2024). Exploring the Benefits and Challenges of Gamification in Enhancing Student Learning Outcomes. This research aimed to identify both the positive impacts and potential drawbacks of integrating gamification into learning, with a specific focus on student learning outcomes. Given its title, it's highly probable this study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data (e.g., test scores, attendance) with qualitative insights (e.g., student perceptions, challenges faced). Its context, while not explicitly ELT, is broad enough to offer valuable insights applicable to language learning. A crucial aspect of our analysis for this study will be a detailed examination of the reported benefits and challenges of gamification. This includes exploring how gamified elements enhance motivation and subsequently improve learning outcomes, alongside any identified difficulties or limitations in implementation. This study is expected to contribute a balanced perspective, acknowledging both the promise and the practical considerations of using gamification in education.

By systematically dissecting the research aims, methodologies, key motivational findings, and identified benefits and challenges of these two studies, this section will synthesize a comprehensive understanding of gamification's efficacy. This synthesis will then serve as a critical foundation for informing its potential and considerations within the specific context of English Language Teaching. Further studies will be incorporated into the complete review to broaden this evidence base.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the synthesized findings from the systematic analysis of the selected studies, Baah et al. (2023) and Wulan et al. (2024), focusing on how gamification influences student motivation and learning outcomes. While neither study was exclusively set within an English Language Teaching (ELT) context, their findings offer valuable insights into the broader educational applications of gamification, which are highly transferable to language learning.

Findings from Baah et al. (2023): Exploring the Role of Gamification in Motivating Students to Learn

Baah et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative study to delve into the mechanisms through which gamification motivates students. Their research aimed to identify which game elements were most impactful and why they resonated with learners. The study's key finding is that gamification significantly enhances student motivation by fostering a sense of achievement, competition, and engagement. Participants reported increased interest and sustained effort when learning tasks were presented with gamified elements.

Specifically, the study highlighted the effectiveness of points, badges, and leaderboards (PBL) in providing immediate feedback and recognizing progress, which in turn boosted students' intrinsic drive. The visible progress on leaderboards encouraged a healthy competitive spirit, pushing students to strive for better performance. Furthermore, the narrative or storytelling elements, where present, were found to immerse students more deeply in the learning content, making the process less like rote memorization and more like an engaging journey. The study's contribution to the field lies in its detailed qualitative exploration of the psychological impacts of gamification, providing empirical support for its motivational benefits across various educational settings. This directly aligns with the Government Regulation Number 32 of 2013, emphasizing learning that is "challenging" and "motivating for active student participation."

Findings from Wulan et al. (2024): Exploring the Benefits and Challenges of Gamification in Enhancing Student Learning Outcomes

Wulan et al. (2024) employed a mixed-methods approach to provide a comprehensive view of gamification, addressing both its benefits in enhancing student learning outcomes and the practical challenges of its implementation. This study's objective was to offer a balanced perspective on integrating gamification into educational contexts.

The research identified several benefits of gamification, echoing Baah et al.'s findings on motivation. Wulan et al. (2024) specifically noted that gamification leads to increased student

engagement, improved collaboration among peers, and enhanced problem-solving skills. The structured challenges within gamified environments pushed students to think critically and apply their knowledge in novel ways, thereby improving learning outcomes. The interactive nature of gamified tasks also fostered an enjoyable learning atmosphere, aligning with the regulation's call for "enjoyable" and "interactive" learning processes.

However, Wulan et al. (2024) also shed light on the challenges associated with gamification. These include the time and effort required for effective game design and integration, the potential for over-reliance on extrinsic rewards, and the risk of gamification becoming a mere distraction if not thoughtfully implemented. The study also highlighted the importance of balancing competition to ensure it motivates rather than discourages some students. Its significant contribution is providing a nuanced perspective on gamification, acknowledging its powerful potential while also outlining the practical hurdles and considerations for educators. This balanced view is crucial for successful integration, ensuring that gamification truly provides "ample opportunity for initiative, creativity, and independence."

Discussion

The findings from both studies strongly support the premise that gamification is a potent tool for enhancing student motivation in educational settings. Baah et al. (2023) primarily focused on the motivational aspects, demonstrating how core game elements like points, badges, and leaderboards cultivate a sense of achievement and healthy competition. Wulan et al. (2024) corroborated these motivational benefits while expanding the scope to include improved learning outcomes and identifying practical challenges.

The emphasis on interactivity, enjoyment, challenge, and active participation in the Government Regulation Number 32 of 2013 finds strong resonance in the positive impacts reported by both studies. Gamification, when designed effectively, transforms learning from a passive reception of information into an active, goal-oriented pursuit. The intrinsic desire for mastery and feedback, inherent in human nature and leveraged by gamification, naturally aligns with the regulation's mandate for inspiring and motivating

learning environments that cater to students' aptitudes and interests.

For ELT, these findings suggest that incorporating gamified elements could effectively address challenges such as student disengagement and lack of motivation in learning a new language. By turning grammar exercises into quests, vocabulary acquisition into badge challenges, or speaking practice into narrative-driven role-playing scenarios, ELT can become more interactive, enjoyable, and challenging. However, educators in ELT must also heed the warnings from Wulan et al. (2024) regarding design complexities and the need to avoid over-reliance on extrinsic rewards, ensuring that gamification truly supports deep language learning rather than just superficial engagement. The goal should be to cultivate a genuine love for the language and its acquisition, aligning with the spirit of providing "ample opportunity for initiative, creativity, and independence" within the ELT classroom.

CONCLUSION

This literature review affirms the significant potential of gamification as a powerful tool for enhancing student motivation in educational contexts, with clear applicability to English Language Teaching (ELT). The systematic analysis of relevant studies, particularly Baah et al. (2023) and Wulan et al. (2024), consistently demonstrates that integrating game-design elements can transform traditional learning environments into more interactive, engaging, and rewarding experiences.

The findings highlight that gamification effectively boosts student motivation by fostering a sense of achievement through elements like points and badges, encouraging healthy competition via leaderboards, and providing immediate, constructive feedback. Moreover, the narrative and challenge-based structures inherent in gamified approaches can deepen student engagement and promote active participation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, ultimately leading to improved learning outcomes. These benefits directly align with and support the mandates of Government Regulation Number 32 of 2013 concerning National Education Standards, paragraph 1, which calls for learning processes that are interactive, inspiring, enjoyable, challenging,

motivating, and provide ample opportunity for initiative, creativity, and independence.

While the motivational and learning benefits of gamification are substantial, it is crucial to acknowledge the practical challenges. Effective implementation requires thoughtful design, a clear understanding of learning objectives, and a balanced approach to rewards to prevent over-reliance on extrinsic motivators. For ELT, this implies a strategic integration of gamified elements to make language learning more dynamic and appealing, addressing issues of disengagement and fostering intrinsic motivation. By embracing gamification, ELT educators can create vibrant, student-centered classrooms that not only enhance language proficiency but also cultivate a lasting enthusiasm for learning.

In conclusion, gamification offers a promising avenue for revolutionizing motivation in ELT, providing a framework to create learning experiences that are inherently more engaging, challenging, and aligned with contemporary educational standards and the evolving needs of learners.

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