Gamification in EFL: Exploring the Use of Gamification Strategies to Enhance Student Motivation and Engagement

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Abstract
Many students experience a lack of motivation and engagement in learning due to the monotonous learning system. Therefore, many teachers apply gamification strategies to increase student motivation and engagement in learning. This study investigates the integration of gamification strategies within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction to amplify student motivation and engagement. Gamification, a methodology applying gaming elements in a non-game context, serves as a focal point to enhance learning participation and motivation. In the realm of EFL education, student motivation and engagement often pose significant challenges. Through qualitative methodology involving classroom observations, questionnaires, student interviews, and teacher reflections, this research assesses the impact of implementing game elements like point-based assessments, competitive dynamics, challenges, and rewards on student motivation and engagement in learning English. The findings underscore a notable surge in student motivation attributed to the incorporation of game elements, fostering a more enjoyable and competitive learning environment that encourages active student participation. This research contributes vital insight for educators, highlighting the efficacy of gamification as a tool to heighten motivation and engagement in EFL education. It emphasizes the need for judicious integration of relevant gaming elements in pedagogical design to craft more immersive and meaningful learning experiences for students studying English as a Foreign Language.

Keywords: gamification, student motivation, student engagement

Abstrak
Banyak siswa yang mengalami kurangnya motivasi dan keterlibatan dalam belajar karena sistem pembelajaran yang monoton. Oleh karena itu, banyak guru yang menerapkan strategi gamifikasi untuk meningkatkan motivasi dan keterlibatan siswa dalam pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menyelidiki integrasi strategi gamifikasi dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) untuk meningkatkan motivasi dan keterlibatan siswa. Gamifikasi, sebuah metodologi yang menerapkan elemen-elemen game dalam konteks non-game, berfungsi sebagai titik fokus untuk meningkatkan partisipasi dan motivasi belajar. Dalam dunia pendidikan EFL, motivasi dan keterlibatan siswa sering kali menjadi tantangan yang signifikan. Melalui metodologi kualitatif yang melibatkan observasi kelas, kuesioner, wawancara siswa, dan refleksi guru, penelitian ini menilai dampak penerapan elemen permainan seperti penilaian berbasis poin, dinamika kompetitif, tantangan, dan penghargaan terhadap motivasi dan keterlibatan siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. Temuan ini menggarisbawahi lonjakan penting dalam motivasi siswa yang dikaitkan dengan penggabungan elemen permainan, menumbuhkan lingkungan belajar yang lebih menyenangkan dan kompetitif yang mendorong partisipasi aktif siswa. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan penting bagi para pendidik, menyoroti kemanjuran gamifikasi sebagai alat untuk meningkatkan motivasi dan keterlibatan dalam pendidikan EFL. Penelitian ini menekankan perlunya integrasi yang bijaksana dari elemen-elemen permainan yang relevan dalam desain pedagogis untuk menciptakan pengalaman belajar yang lebih mendalam dan bermakna bagi siswa yang belajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing.

Kata kunci: gamifikasi, motivasi siswa, keterlibatan siswa

Intelektium adalah jurnal yang diterbitkan oleh Neolecutra, diterbitkan dua kali dalam satu tahun. Intelektium adalah media publikasi ilmiah dalam bentuk makalah konseptual dan penelitian lapangan yang terkait dengan bidang pendidikan. Diharapkan Intelektium dapat menjadi media bagi akademisi dan peneliti untuk menerbitkan karya ilmiah mereka dan menjadi sumber referensi untuk pengembangan ilmu pengetahuan.
INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, technology is developing rapidly, including in education to increase student motivation and engagement. The use of technology in the learning process has a positive impact, especially in English Foreign Language (EFL) classes. As stated by Resnik et al. (2021), technology has a positive impact on the EFL classroom, as it strengthens emotional resonance and increases enjoyment. As indicated by Jayanti (2022), the role of technology in education is very important in the learning process because it can be used for information and communication tools. As stated by Fadhol (2022) Technology can increase students' interest in learning because of its attractive appearance so that they will avoid boredom during the lesson.

Nowadays, many technologies can be used as learning strategies in EFL classes such as the use of Google Classroom, e-learning, game-based, gamification, and so on. Lin (2021) statement that Google Classroom enhances EFL writing by facilitating effective participation for teachers and students, enhancing learning effects, and leveraging online teaching resources. E-learning is perceived as the use of the internet to access learning in a virtual classroom to engage students and lecturers in a meaningful English learning process (Sutrisna & Dewi, 2021). In addition, Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL) benefits students in EFL classrooms by engaging their emotions, cognition, and behavior through fun, interesting, and engaging activities (Yawan, 2019). So, Gamification in EFL classrooms facilitates language learning, ensures active class participation, and makes learning more enjoyable, making the learning process effective and efficient.

As mentioned earlier, one of the technologies that can be used as a learning strategy in the EFL classroom is gamification. This strategy was popular during the COVID-19 pandemic and is still being used today. A phenomenon that cannot be forgotten during the COVID-19 pandemic where teachers and students at that time carried out the teaching and learning process by alternating online and offline systems (Permatasari, 2022). Gamification is a technology that incorporates game elements in non-game situations to engage customers, students, and users in completing tasks with rewards and other motivations (Prince, 2013). Added by Richter et al. (2015) also stated that gamification is an approach to increase learner motivation and engagement by incorporating game design elements in the educational environment. The use of this strategy also has a good impact as said by Rahardini (2022) Gamification can be a good method to increase students' motivation during the learning process during the transition from online to offline learning. The implementation of gamification proved to be a useful pedagogical strategy to promote participation and enhance motivation among undergraduate students during the COVID-19 pandemic (Flores, Mena, & Lopez, 2022). Some gamification applications that are often used are Quizizz and Kahoot.

In EFL classes, many teachers use digital gamification, one of which is quizzes in EFL learning assessment. Research by Maryo & Pujiaustiti (2022) showed that Quizizz can be used as an assessment tool in the EFL classroom, as it can help students reduce anxiety during exams or text-based activities. Similarly, Wijayanti et al. (2021) also stated that gamified e-quiz applications such as Quizizz are effective in evaluating student learning performance, especially as a formative assessment after completing each topic. Coupled with a statement from Rahman et al. (2021) that Quizizz App can also effectively be an assessment in developing EFL vocabulary learning for university students. In addition, gamification is also considered effective for the assessment of grammar learning in EFL classes. This is evidenced by research from Pham (2023) which showed that game-enabled learning using Quizizz significantly increased students' scores in grammar achievement tests compared to those who took the same quiz on paper.
In addition to good learning outcomes, student motivation, and engagement are also important things for teachers to consider, especially in the EFL classroom. Student motivation, including attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction, is important for teachers to consider for successful learning (Taufiq et al, 2019). Student motivation is essential for effective English learning and teaching, and teachers should focus on communicative learning to stimulate student learning effectively (Long, Ming, & Chen, 2013). In addition, student engagement is also important for teachers to pay attention to as it is related to student achievement and being more engaged in tasks with higher levels of authentic, collaborative, challenging, student-directed, and sustained elements (Parsons et al, 2018). In addition, Dai & Zhao (2022) stated that Teachers should pay attention to students' engagement in all three dimensions of General English learning, especially their emotional engagement, to enhance their emotional experience of learning. Therefore, teachers are required to pay attention to learning systems in the EFL classroom that can increase students' motivation and engagement.

The use of this Quizizz application can have a positive impact such as encouraging student motivation in participating in the learning process. This was studied by Jiménez-Sánchez & Gargallo-Camarillas (2020) that Gamification in the EFL classroom using Quizizz increases students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and has a good attitude towards its introduction. Intrinsic factors are factors that arise from within the students themselves. Moreover, there is another positive impact in increasing student engagement in the EFL classroom. Gamification strategies can also increase student engagement in activities that can potentially lead to improved performance and changes in student behavior in the classroom (Kuo et al, 2017). Similarly, Antonaci et al. (2019) also stated that gamification positively impacts performance, motivation, engagement, attitude towards gamification, collaboration, and social awareness. Gamification in education positively affects students' engagement and moderately improves learning outcomes in language learning (Ibáñez, Serio, & Kloos, 2014). In conclusion, the Gamification strategy has a positive impact on students in EFL classes.

Based on the previous research above, the use of gamification strategies has a positive impact in EFL classes, which can improve several language skills and also student learning motivation. In this study, the researcher wants to look further into the effectiveness and challenges faced by students in using gamification strategies through the Quizizz application to increase student motivation and engagement in the learning process and in the EFL classroom.

METHOD

The method used in this research is qualitative. According to Kilicoglu et al (2018), Qualitative research involves document analysis, observation, interviewing, and describing events. Researchers use observation, interviews, and questionnaires. These three stages are carried out systematically to produce clear research data.

Participants of this study were two EFL classes, especially grammar classes in the English study program at Esa Unggul University. The researcher collected data through observation of both classes while using gamification quizzes. Then the researcher collected data from questionnaires given to students in both EFL classes to analyze whether student motivation and engagement in class increased with the use of gamification quizzes. After that, the researcher purposively selected sample participants to be interviewed in more depth based on their responses to the questionnaire. Based on (Denieffe, 2020) theory
purposive sampling is a qualitative research method that involves involving key stakeholder views in determining the sample, helping ensure research findings are credible.

After the three data were collected, the researcher analyzed the results of the observations of the two EFL grammar classes. Then the results of the participants' responses to the questionnaire. Based on the theory of Sutrisna & Dewi (2021), the data were analyzed using Cresswell's method, which consists of data organization, coding, description, developing themes, reporting findings, and validating data. Finally, the researcher transcribed the interview results and analyzed the results. According to the theory of Fina (2018) analyzing interview data involves considering the role of the interviewer, the pattern of interaction between participants, and considering the context of the interview.

This is aimed at student assessment in using learning strategies through gamification applications. Therefore, the media used in gamification applications are Quizizz and other applications. The interviewed classes include 2 EFL classes in semester 3 of Esa Unggul University. In this study there are two kinds of variables including: student motivation variables and student engagement variables in EFL classes using gamification strategies. The student motivation variable consists of intrinsic and extrinsic. Furthermore, the student engagement variable in EFL classes using gamification applications invites students to be more interactive so that their enthusiasm and engagement increase while learning.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research has been conducted in two EFL classes at Esa Unggul University that have implemented gamification activities in the classroom. The researchers collected the data through:

- Classroom observation.
- Questionnaires.
- Interviews.

These three stages help to collect the data results of this research.

A. Classroom Observation

This research was conducted in two classes of 3rd-semester students in Grammar class at Esa Unggul University. The data results show that every student plays an active role in the EFL, especially in English Grammar class. Based on the results of observations in EFL classes, it can be seen that students are actively involved in gamification activities and show an understanding of the game rules. Students also showed increased motivation in learning grammar during the implementation of this gamification strategy. It can be seen from the feedback from the questions asked by the teacher whether they were happy with the learning experience with the gamification strategy. It was also indirectly seen that students were also engaged in collaborative or competitive activities initiated by the gamification strategy. students were also enthusiastic about the features in the gamification quiz that responded to student activity while using it. It is clear that all students actively participate in the gamification strategy in English Grammar class.

B. Questionnaires

The questions in the questionnaire covered aspects of effectiveness, comfort, convenience, understandability, challenge, engagement, and student motivation in using gamification strategies in EFL classrooms. The questionnaires were distributed in two EFL classes with a total of 25 respondents.
The results of this study showed that 80% of the students agreed that the use of gamification strategy is an effective and convenient strategy in learning. Through the use of this strategy, 70% of students also believe that it can facilitate and provide more clarity, in understanding concepts. Then ease and clarity will indirectly help in improving student understanding, this is evidenced by the results of 70% of students who answered about agreement in increasing understanding. The remaining 81.5% of students also felt that the use of this strategy increased their involvement and motivation. However, out of all the advantages of using this strategy, 64% of students also felt that there were challenges such as timed questions and interrupted internet connections.

C. Interviews
The results of the research from several questions are attached as follows:
1. How would you describe your experience of using gamification strategies in learning?
   The result shows that the gamification strategy succeeds in making them feel more fun in learning, and with the points that each student will get, it makes students more excited and competitive and makes them more motivated and engaged in the classroom. Quoted from one of the interviewee’s answers "Overall, my experience with gamification strategies in learning is very positive. It provides additional motivation, increases social interaction, and makes learning a more dynamic and engaging experience”.

2. What aspects of the gamification strategy do you think are most effective in increasing students’ learning motivation?
   Most of them answered that the most effective aspect in increasing students’ learning motivation is the points, ranking, and awards that will be obtained by students with the highest points which will create motivation and a sense of competition to get the ranking position and also the award. “Through the use of these elements, students feel more engaged in learning because there is additional motivation to achieve goals and overcome challenges. The opportunity to achieve, compete with self or peers, and gain recognition can increase students’ intrinsic motivation”.

3. How do you assess students’ reactions to using gamification strategies in the classroom?
   Many of them saw very good reactions from other students about the implementation of gamification strategies in learning. Raya as one of the interviewees agrees with the good reaction from other students, "Students usually seem to enjoy and be more engaged in learning because of the fun gamification strategy”.

4. How do you handle challenges that arise when implementing gamification strategies in learning?
   Most of them handle the challenges that arise by providing feedback or reflection between students and even teachers to keep the interaction lively. One of the interviewees said, "Listening to feedback from students to make necessary adjustments to keep the gamification strategy relevant and effective.”

5. What is the role of technology in supporting the effectiveness of gamification strategies in the classroom?
   The results from the interview about the role of technology in supporting this gamification strategy are very important because by technology this gamification strategy can run online supported by varied elements as well as aspects contained in certain applications, and make it more interesting with the cleverness of technology, "Technology plays an important role for the effectiveness of gamification. With technology, we can make learning media as interesting as possible so that people are comfortable learning and also motivated.”
Based on the result of the three stages shows that strategy Gamification in learning is an effective strategy that encompasses student understanding, comfort, engagement, and motivation. However, students also have challenges in using this strategy. From the results above, it can be concluded that the gamification strategy carried out in the classroom provides a sense of comfort, and gets rewards in the learning process so that students do not feel bored because of the monotonous learning system, but with an interesting strategy such as gamification, students will be more happy and easy to follow the learning process. Therefore, the use of gamification strategies is quite effective in EFL classes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data obtained, there is a significant impact for students and teachers from using gamification strategies in English classes. Taken from the results of the three stages of our research, shows that the gamification strategy in learning is an effective strategy that includes student understanding, comfort, and especially engagement, and motivation. However, students also have challenges in using this strategy such as the use of time to do the questions and the connection of each student. Therefore, teachers also need to pay attention to these challenges so that students have more comfort and interest in the learning process.

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