

Literature Review: Utilising Online Gamified Learning to Improve Students' Learning Motivation in ESL Classroom

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Abstract

The technological advances in the current industrial revolution have brought positive changes in multiple fields, including education. Nowadays, young students are more interested in using gadgets and technology and they are inseparable from technological advancements. This literature review paper focuses on utilising gamified learning to improve students' learning motivation in ESL classroom. Rather than using books and going to the library to increase their knowledge and confidence, the students prefer to learn via technology and utilise games as a way of equipping their time and knowledge. Numerous past studies have proved that online gamified learning has tremendously increased students' motivation in English language classrooms as they provide a relaxing learning environment by reducing learning anxiety and fun and enjoyable learning experiences as well as promote positive learning attitudes. This is due to the fact that games' emphasis on enjoyment, excitement, and competitiveness can increase students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning English.

Keywords: Utilise, ESL Classroom, Online Gamified Learning, Learning Motivation, Fun and Enjoyable

Introduction

The English language is used in practically every industry throughout the world, including science, engineering and technology, medical, trade and commerce, scientific research, education, tourism, the internet, banking, business, and the film and television industries. Without a doubt, English holds a special position because it is the language that is so widely used and so firmly entrenched as the dominant global language in the aforementioned fields. The dominance of English has grown like a snowball that is impossible to stop. To keep up with the changing requirements of the global needs, the Malaysian government has taken steps such as making periodic modifications to the education system and curriculum. According to Kok and Aziz (2019) the nation's growth and economic expansion have led to significant adjustments to Malaysia's educational system. To meet these ends, 21st-century learning is introduced and implemented with a focus on joyful and enjoyable learning. The

idea that instructional activities should be created based on student needs and preferences enhanced educational effectiveness and created a need for new approaches (Goksun & Gursoy, 2019).

Gamified learning activities also known as gamification would be the best choice in order to cater enjoyable and fun-filled learning. Rosli & Abdullah (2022) claimed that, as students grow increasingly independent and knowledgeable about the most recent materials and resources that are accessible for them to study in the comfort of their surroundings, they are no longer solely limited to classroom experiences. Due to the availability of technology-assisted learning, students can make the most of the numerous resources available on the Internet (Tan et al., 2022). In addition, kids are increasingly accustomed to using the Internet due to how simple it is to explore and obtain free educational resources there. According to Goksun & Gursoy (2019), because of its impact on student learning, gamification is becoming more popular in education. Gamification is an effective means of enhancing learning in the classroom by fostering motivation and engagement, increasing learner participation and instructional interactivity, and motivating students in a way that encourages knowledge growth (Goksun & Gursoy, 2019; Tan et al., 2022; Rosli & Abdullah, 2022; Zainudin et al., 2019). Gamified learning is highly in demand due the current generations' interest as they are more keen to be interested in the technology based learning rather than the traditional method of using books and long extended texts.

Motivation plays a significant part in the learning process since learning and healthy motivation go hand in hand (Yunus & Hua, 2021; Purba et al., 2019; Anisa et al., 2020). Most psychologists agree that motivation is necessary for learning to take place. As a primary goal of education, motivating pupils to pay attention and engage with the information is critical. According to Purba et al (2019), the process of being motivated to study results in a learning spirit, behavioural direction, and tenacity. That is to say, motivation is shown when the learner exhibits persistent, focused and energetic behaviour. The use of gamified learning in the classroom can boost students' motivation, which is an essential and pervasive component of learning behaviour (Anisa et al., 2020; Goksun & Gursoy, 2019; Hashim et al., 2019).

Educators today are 'forced' to revise their pedagogy practices because these practices are heavily influenced by an ever-evolving technology. The 21st century teaching and learning process needs to be strengthened through the use of technology (Tan et al., 2022). Online gamified learning is increasingly popular among millennials because it allows for cross-cultural connection and offers mobility, freedom, and adaptability. Gamifications are activities with rules, objectives for learning, and enjoyable components and they have the benefit of making learning enjoyable through friendly competitions, challenges, and awards, which makes it a great tool for boosting students' engagement in learning (Goksun & Gursoy, 2019). Studies from the past have demonstrated that adding gamified learning in the classroom has many advantages. Games facilitate learning by allowing students to have fun while learning the target language indirectly. Hence, this review paper looks into the application and effectiveness of gamification or gamified learning in enhancing students' motivation in learning English as a second language (ESL).

Factors Causing Low Motivation

It has been discovered from past studies that pupils' low motivation has been caused by many factors which made them struggle with their English language acquisition. First, their cultural background has an impact on how motivated they are to learn the language. Some students find it difficult to be inspired by their surroundings because the majority of those around them

might not be conversant with other cultures or languages (Azar & Sahar, 2021). Another biggest issue impeding pupils' language development is a lack of exposure to the English language. Due to their low vocabulary and inadequate prior knowledge, students choose to avoid speaking in the target language (Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021; Nadesan & Shah, 2020). As the learners have inadequate proficiency in the target language, they instead prefer to speak in their mother tongue or first language. Some pupils may even believe that learning English as a second language is unimportant because they can converse in their own mother tongue or first language (L1) (Zulkefly & Razali, 2019). Hence, students would want to avoid speaking a second language (L2) because they lack the background knowledge and vocabulary to even have a normal and informal conversation.

Additionally, students demonstrated a poor attitude towards learning by participating little in classroom discussion and acting as passive learners. The students' low competence and literacy levels contributed to their lack of confidence when speaking the target language, which was the root cause of the issue. This is supported by Azar and Tanggaraju (2020) due to fear of making mistakes and being made fun of by friends, pupils are hesitant to utilise the target language in casual conversation. Learning became challenging for students due to their experiences with anxiety and sadness (Kaur & Aziz, 2020). Language anxiety is the term used to describe the tension and fear that students feel in the classroom (Azar & Tanggaraju, 2020). Because they were afraid to speak up in front of their peers, this caused students to participate less and be more passive during class activities (Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021). The teacher alone cannot provide enough exposure to a language and overcome their anxiety for students to become fluent in it. To learn the language better, students must be exposed to more L2 situations outside of the classroom (Zoubi, 2018). Therefore, enjoyable online gamification activities increase students' exposure to the language and motivate them to use it through incidental acquisition.

Gamified learning/ Gamification

According to Willis & Willis (2013) language games are games that allow players to learn a language through communicative gaming. It should be a blend of regulations and fun with the same purpose in mind (Kaur & Aziz, 2020). Gamification is the process of incorporating game features into non-game environments (Campell, 2016). The goal of gamification is to bring game aspects into the real world in order to capture similar sensations without leaving reality, not to build a new world that is like a game (Goksun & Gursoy, 2019). Besides that, gamification is a cutting-edge technology that tries to make learning for students enjoyable, applicable, and relevant (Yaccob et al., 2022). A gamification platform is any software or technology that applies game elements to non-game contexts in order to improve engagement and overall success (Zainudin et al., 2019). Game components like quests, hints, challenges, levels, and awards are used in gamification to push pupils and pique their competitive spirits. Different kinds and numbers of players can be found in online or digital games. Digital games come in a wide variety of styles and genres, ranging from solo to multiplayer to instructive to fantasy, respectively. Overall, a unique concept of innovative technology that integrates language games and learning to make the learning process more meaningful and effective is called as gamification or gamified learning.

Since interactive media and video games are a part of students' lives now, gamification in the classroom could be interesting and inspiring (Hashim et al., 2019). There are many contemporary online language games platforms, such as Kahoot! Quizlet, Plickers, Quizvaganza and Quizziz, make it easier to acquire and assess English learning in the

classroom. Gamification uses elements like scores, badges, ranks, and awards to enable instant feedback (Goksun & Gursoy, 2019). Digital games are a prominent example of information and communication technology because they promote innovative learning approaches, peer interaction, and social engagement in addition to being a source of amusement. (Saptiany et al., 2022). By adhering to the game's rules when addressing problems, gamification helps students shift their ways of thinking. Gamification is effective at overcoming learning challenges and encouraging participation in learning activities (Zhao, 2019).

The primary factor that makes gamified learning an effective instrument for promoting learning is that it gives players a competitive environment in which to immerse themselves in the activity (Hashim et al., 2019). In the study conducted by Saptiany et al (2022) it was found that students who learn English through gamified learning perform much better than those who study through more conventional methods. When students learn through gamified learning platforms like Quizizz and Kahoot!, they are more likely to be highly motivated and participate voluntarily in the learning process. Yunus & Hua (2021) also proved in their study that implementation of online games in learning grammar has significantly improved student motivation and cultivates positive attitudes in learners compared to the traditional method of teaching. Furthermore, many researchers found that gamification stimulated students' motivation as it caters students with enjoyable and entertaining learning environment with attractive background design and music (Anisa et al., 2020; Goksun & Gursoy, 2019; Tan et al., 2022). Gamification provides the opportunity for students to learn independently in a comfortable, anxiety-free and more enjoyable atmosphere.

Motivation

Motivation, according to Dorneyi (2001), is the quality that opposes rational thought and appetites with cultural identity. Despite the fact that motivation is difficult to pinpoint, it is plainly evident inside each individual and correlates with environmental stimuli. There are numerous definitions of motivation from various perspectives since it is a phrase that is difficult to define, particularly in the context of language. Motivation is described as as "the internal drive that pushes individuals to do an action" by (Harmer, 1991). There are two main forms of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic, according to (Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory, 1985). Intrinsic motivation is defined as the pursuit of an action for one's own internal gratification (Anisa et al., 2020). Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is defined as taking a certain activity in order to get a certain, independent result (Azar & Tanggaraju, 2020). Motivation is regarded as one of the most important variables in ensuring language learning success (Rathiga & Sarpparaje, 2019; Azar & Tanggaraju, 2020). Because it is more relevant to students' everyday lives, intrinsic motivation is more prevalent and effective in the ESL environment. For instance, teachers may provide students options, occasionally push them, and give them a chance or setting to utilise English in their daily life. Extrinsic variables might be added by grading students or awarding points for task completion. Therefore, motivation is a process of human psychology and behaviour that acts as a motivating factor and influences how people choose to spend their time, energy, thought processes, and feelings in a task.

Gardner's Motivation theory for Second Language Acquisition was the next concept that significantly influenced and inspired this study. For many years, this theory has had a significant impact on the field of second language acquisition. Besides that, Gardner (2001) argued that these three factors—desire, effort, and positive affection—are essential to

motivation. According to Gardner (1985) integrative orientation and instrumental orientation are major factors in motivating students to achieve their learning objectives. Based on this theory, integrative orientation is a supportive attitude towards the community of people who speak a second language and the need to integrate into society. Instrumental orientation on the other hand refers to learning the second language for practical causes such as getting an award or a better occupation in life (Azar & Tanggaraju, 2020). Additionally, several studies have also shown that motivation occurs at multiple levels. The study conducted by Yunus and Hua (2021) has shown that there is a significant difference in the motivation level of gender where female respondents are highly motivated and demonstrated great improvement compared to male participants in their learning via Quizziz. Therefore, the more motivated students are, the more at ease they will be learning a new language.

Implementation of online gamified learning in ESL classroom

When gamified learning is used in a pedagogically effective way, it is incredibly helpful since they can assist students with a variety of learning issues. The improvement of students' motivation levels is facilitated by a variety of variables. First of all, gamified learning encourages participation and increases English language usage among students. Gamification provides more opportunities for the learners to practice the language creatively and communicatively (Yaacob & Yunus, 2019). In addition to improving language acquisition, this also stimulates learners' Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). This cutting-edge learning technology minimises teachers' roles and serves as a teaching substitute, so teachers may rely on it to convey knowledge (Lestari, 2019). Students can communicate with their peers to solve the challenges and problems presented in the game, where learning occurs inadvertently (Degirmenci, 2021). This approach consistently encourages and motivates students to practise the language independently without any hesitation or fear of making errors.

Gamified learning caters relaxing and enjoyable learning experiences, resulting in learners acquiring the language easily and effortlessly (Purba et al., 2019). Through Mann Whitney tests, the mean learning attitude and the percentage of ESL learners were reported to be high as learners were observed to be always or almost always engaged. From surveys, pupils commented that the class discussions that required critical thinking and in-class games such as Kahoot and Quizlet were engaging and interesting (Halim et al., 2020). However, the study by Dimitroff et al (2018) implied that pupils' engagement in the games would not be realised without the aspect of a competent teacher in terms of conducting the lesson or facilitating the pupils' learning. This indicates that motivation levels could be increased as a whole from the language games (Gozcu & Caganaga, 2016).

Since language games offer a variety of learning strategies that meet students' varying requirements in diversified learning contexts, they motivate students to participate and engage in classroom activities. This is in line with the study done by Liu et al (2021) that proved games help shy learners to participate actively and promote whole class participation without any passive learners. As claimed by Yacob and Yunus (2019) language games offer a unique environment for language learning that encourages student engagement and enthusiasm. Teachers may use language games to make lessons more exciting and engaging rather than having students memorise new vocabulary words and use standard grammatical rules found in workbooks (Zhao, 2019). Students will be strongly motivated to study the target language and perform well in it because of the engaging and exciting learning environment.

In addition, when learners are extremely motivated and engaged in learning, which can only be accomplished by using language games, they become more independent and passionate about promoting their own learning (Hashim, Rafiq & Yunus, 2019). It is clearly evident in their study that motivation is highly essential in the success of learning in acquiring English as the second language. Students will be more responsible to learn the target language by themselves without burdening teachers when their motivation level is increased (Armanda & Indriani, 2022). Hence, language games are motivating tools which enable students to learn better and attain better results in their assessments and make them proficient users of English language.

Furthermore, past studies have shown that students recognise gamified learning positively, preferring and looking forward to additional game-based activities in their learning process as well as including them in classroom activities. It's because they become really engrossed in the competitive elements of games while playing language games that need them to collaborate with their peers (Yunus & Hua, 2021). Students do not despise their friends when they collaborate with their peers to solve language games; rather, they are ready to work as a team with their friends. Additionally, it makes it possible for them to speak effectively in front of their peers without having to worry too much about their language proficiency and competence. As a result, students' motivation level is increased as a result of the excitement of finishing the games, and this may easily help them become better English language learners as they have no reluctance to pick up the second language.

Conclusion

Gamified learning can help students acquire new abilities, increase their confidence, lower their fear, spark their curiosity, and increase their drive to connect with the English language. It may also help teachers produce entertaining resources that mimic students' enthusiasm, competence, and motivation in language acquisition. Higher Order Thinking Skill (HOTS) and problem-solving skills can be easily cultivated through gamified learning. Despite this, students also warmly welcome the inclusion of games in their learning activities since they strengthen friendships and encourage a persistent work ethic that will get them through to the completion of their objectives. In order to increase their English language competency and ability to communicate in the target language, students must be highly motivated and willing to adopt the technique. Online gamified learning is pertinent and helpful for improving the standard of language instruction as well as for promoting digital literacy among the younger generation, in keeping with the needs of the fourth industrial revolution.

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