

## The Impact of Using Gamification in Teaching and Learning English

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**Abstract:** For students to understand new contents while learning, they need motivation. Similarly, for the teachers to explain better practical, and simple strategies are needed. For these reasons, the main aim of this research is to find a middle ground between teachers and students; using gamification systems in education. Moreover, in this way teaching and learning atmosphere will give a sense of joy to the students that will make them focus and learn better. The focus of this research is to apply games in English learning. Furthermore, a survey of twelve questions was done on a group of students in Tishk international university to observe education willingness on the idea of having game activities while learning. Then, after the data were collected it was proven by the participants that students support the idea of having gamification in learning.

**Keywords:** Gamification, Motivation, Interest, Knowledge, Support, Increase

### 1. Introduction

The term gamification means adding gaming activities into non-gaming and serious atmospheres. Those gaming activities have been emerging into many sectors and environments in the past few years as more people are adapting to this new development. The same technique could be applied to educational environments where learners and teachers both can increase their motivation because learning is a long and tedious process. In addition to that, in today's world where almost everything is digital and more entertaining for the youth, the educational system seems to be more tedious to them. Therefore, adding gamification into the learning process could enhance the student's commitment and motivation. Teachers could benefit by using the gamification system to encourage students into practicing their skills and they could introduce the culture of the new language as well. This new method could boost and motivate both students and teachers.

Gamification includes the basic elements of games thus it has multiple forms, however in the classroom it has some certain rules; it involves the use of keeping score, challenges, rewarding, digital games, ranking and levels (Angelova, 2017). This paper will study the influence of gamification on learning and teaching

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English language. Learning and teaching is not an easy task, especially when it comes to language learning. While learning requires efforts from both sides yet many students lack the necessary motivation and encouragement to study and enjoy the learning process. Therefore, the problem is lack of motivation in education and especially in learning and teaching the English language. In order to motivate instructors and teachers into teaching the English language, the study suggests adding gamification into the classroom to improve the process. Therefore, the aim of our study is to increase motivation and improve the learning process for both the teacher and the learner. This paper suggests using gamification into the educational system in order to improve the process of learning the English language.

## **2. Literature Review**

To improve the performance of students in learning, teachers should aim to the root of learning. In our childhood we started socialization and developing our skills by playing, which developed our brain in a healthy manner as we were interacting with the world and people around us. Therefore, in order to progress the potential of the learners we connect learning and playing together. According to a study by Huang and Soman in 2013, published by the University of Toronto, the instructor can implement gamification by carefully demonstrating and producing a proper program. If gamification is properly applied, then the negative experience of studying and learning that is attached to the students would reduce. By following the method of playing games, students learn from their failures and improve instead of having negative emotions such as embarrassment and shame. Therefore, this study suggests that this implementation can improve students' performance and behavior. The guidelines of the study suggest that teachers should start by considering their targeted students, establish their objective, start constructing the material while they figure out and determine the required and available resources, and finally start the implementation (Huang & Soman, 2013).

The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing published an article authored by Stacey Brull and Susan Finlayson in 2016. This article points out the importance of gamification. As this generation was raised with technology and advanced games, they find it harder to focus in classrooms and during lectures; therefore, the study suggests that the addition of gamification could be very beneficial. At the same time learning in a non-threatening environment where the students are allowed to be on different paces and take their time to figure out the concept helps them in understanding and motivates them in the process. The study also shows that the method of gamification helps students learn ten times better. Moreover, there are many ways gamification could be used in the classroom in which instructors could construct it based on their objective and their desired outcome. Therefore, this method helps instructors to have their own choice and procedure based on their goals and the understanding of their students' levels, as they don't have to stick to one single method.

### **2.1 Integrating Gamification in the Classroom**

The implementation of gamification in classrooms might look like an easy job, however, it is in fact very critical, and instructors need to be very careful once they have decided to integrate gamification. Fortunately, over the years many studies and analyses have been conducted in order to identify the implementation of gamification and several steps and methods are suggested to teachers and instructors in order to help them in the process. According to a research published by Simon Fraser University in Canada,

four elements in gamification are very essential to achieve the desired effect. The first element is adding the choice of freedom of failing, just like in the games, students are free to lose/fail. The study has shown that when students are not thinking of the end results they tend to focus more on the learning process. With the reduction of anxiety and fear students would be able to pay more attention on learning. The second element is instant feedback, in this case students immediately recognize their mistakes. The third element is progression, where it is similar to the levels of videogames. The rule of failure freedom could be applied here, and students go back a level in the “game” when they fail. Another important point about the progression is that there could be some significant but challenging tasks where students are forced to learn in order to pass to the next level. The fourth and last element is storytelling through gamification, which has been indicated to help students learn faster and get more engaged, and interested (Stott & Neustaedter, 2017).

## **2.2 The Impact of Using Gamification on Learning at an Early Age**

Because knowledge is the base of a developed nation, educating our youths from an early age should be our aim. A research directed by ICAFS and published on Elsevier in 2016 was conducted with pre-school students in order to identify the impact of gamification technology on young learners. The study contained 60 samples and the results suggested that the students were more attentive on the educational material and showed better results than the ones who were trained without gamification (Kayimbasioglu, Oktekin, & Haci, 2016).

A meta-analysis was published by the International Journal of Instruction in 2020 authored by Fadhli, Setyosari and Brick on the effectiveness of gamification method for children. This study includes an analysis of six studies that were published on Elsevier during the years of 2014 until 2018. The study indicated that the rate of knowledge improvement is very high as it promotes the learning process while involving critical thinking and problem solving (Fadhli, Brick, & Setyosari, 2020). An article published by the Indonesian Association for Pattern Recognition International Conference in 2018 studied the effect of gamification in education on children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). People with ADHD tend to have different brain activity and development which impacts their daily life activities. More than hundreds of millions children have ADHD globally and they face difficulties in their education. However, this research studied how gamification helps children with ADHD by using logic, movement and sports, critical thinking and problem solving. It also encourages the addition of e-learning with gamification where students can learn anytime they desire as long as they all achieve the desired outcomes. The study recommends a specific design and objective of the gamification that can result in attracting the attention of children with ADHD. Specific shapes and sounds should be provided where the students find it interesting enough not to get distracted. This is an important implementation since people and specifically children with ADHD tend to be hyperactive and can easily shift their focus on other aspects (Putra, Warnars, & Abbas, 2018).

## **2.3 The Use of Gamification Makes Teaching and Learning Easier**

Many students lose their motivation on the learning topic even if they had potential in the beginning, yet other students tend to be distracted during lectures. At the same time the instructors might try to adapt new methods in order to make the lectures inclusive and interesting to everyone and achieve the anticipated

outcome nevertheless, this is not an easy job and not every instructor is able to do so. However, adding gamification can make the learning and teaching process easier. Gamification in education helps make the learning process easy and enhances the overall outcomes. Students tend to adapt better when it comes to playing video games that enable them to learn their concepts alongside.

According to Parveen Tyagi (2020), gamification can increase clarity to students as they adapt better to the process of learning. It also mentions how gamification improves self-learning skills and prepares students for their career. Another significance of gamification is the increase in the attentiveness of the students which results in better outcome and more efficiency as a result of an easier method of learning and better adaptation to the requirements and objective of the specific course. Teachers also found that by giving instant feedbacks and observing better development in their students encouraged them more into teaching which made the job easier for them instead of constantly looking for solutions (Tygai, 2020). Another study states that the result of gamification addition in learning boosted students' confidence and created a motivated atmosphere where students were curious to learn and engage with each other during online classes. At the same time, teachers found it easier to deliver their material. Two aspects were analyzed during the study, first the emotional aspect of the experience, where students felt more enjoyment and excitement toward the learning process which encouraged their effort into the course. The second aspect is the cognitive engagement where students were able to perform and apply their learning skills and were able to focus on developing their problem solving skills which improved their understanding ability (Chans & Castro, 2021).

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Method and Design**

A methodology helps the researcher to have a very professional and academic research because it helps in making a plan to follow all the required steps to get the data. Also, it gives a view to the researcher which method to use that would be the most applicable one (Indeed, 2021). For instance, one of the most useful ways to reach reliable data and to support the topic is taking surveys. For this reason, a survey was carried out with specific question that helps in proving the hypothesis, and it was sent to students in a university (Tishk International University). First of all, before answering the questions in the survey, students were asked about their ages and grades. Then, ten questions were directed to the participants which were answered by approximately 87 participants.

#### **3.2 Research Participants**

The participants who helped in this research were Tishk University students, they were selected because they are aware of the difficulties students face while learning. For this reason, involving these students will make the results less biased. Furthermore, 87 students participated in answering a survey that was sent by our members.

#### **3.3 Data Collection and Instrument**

For any research to be academic and not biased the way how the data are collected makes a difference. Also, data collection and the instrument that is used to collect the data might consume time, and sometimes

to make it reliable the researcher needs to repeat the process of collecting the data. However, the data collection instrument that was used in this research was a very practical and time-saving. The survey was made with google forms which is very useful while collecting data, and it was sent to the students through email and other social media facilities. This method was very quick, easy, and environmentally safe because there was no need to copy the survey and distribute it among the students.

#### **4. Data Analysis and Discussion**

Based on most of the responses in the survey, it can be concluded that the use of games in language learning highly contributes to achievement. Learning is usually full of stress and nervousness and is difficult for some learners. With this in mind, the use of motivation and encouragement is a huge need in the learning process. It is possible to say that motivated and encouraged learners can accomplish better results. The use of games is a useful strategy to enhance the success of learners because it not only motivates but also encourages them to increase their achievement. Also, the impact of games on classroom participation cannot be underestimated. It should be noted that when students are engaged in the learning process, they will likely produce more learning outcomes. In particular, the use of games in language learning cannot be neglected. In order to develop further, students need to pay more attention to what they are learning. As gamification can absorb the attention of students, improved learning might be witnessed. Hence, games can make difference in the learning process because all students who are a part of it are engaged in it.

Stress is a big handicap in language learning and can prevent learners from achievement. However, games have the potential to create stress-free learning environments. A great number of the participants in the study responded that the use of games can stimulate engagement of students and foster their participation. These are crucial factors to develop language learning. Furthermore, 67 participants agreed that gamification are useful to implement in the language classroom because their potency to increase focus of students. Students need to complete the games successfully and while doing this they need to focus on what games include carefully. Thus, students will be able to learn vocabulary and pronunciation related to that game with ease. In addition, 71 participants responded that the use of games while learning a foreign language can facilitate the learning process. Students will not be overloaded with language rules; on the contrary, through games they will be able to master the language easily. When students are given the rules of a language, they might lose their interest in learning. However, they will stand a better opportunity to understand the rules in a game.

Games are indispensable in children's life. The use of games develop their skills and talents which are required in their education. When students are engaged in learning by means of games, they will be far from stress. Their motivation, encouragement will increase without any doubt. They will be stimulated to learn. In other words, learning will change into fun when games are applied. In the same vein, mastering a foreign language will be facilitated with the use of games because students will understand the language rules better. When rules of a language are directly presented to students, they will be reluctant to learn because it will not be easy for them to grasp the rules easily. However, presenting the rules to students while playing a game will highly contribute them to understand how the rules work. Simply put, games will teach students the language without creating any stress.

## 5. Conclusion

For the research, practical data was required to make the argument stronger, so a survey was done by Google form to collect data and get reliable and accurate results. Students that were chosen as participants in the survey were in their year of college and were aware of the difficulties they face during learning. The survey results made it clear that the use of games in language learning is a useful strategy for students. It goes without saying that students achieve better results when they participate in the learning process. Moreover, gamification has the potential to develop their motivation and encouragement which are significant factors to enhance learning.

## Recommendations

Since teaching has a very challenging, boring, and old fashion system, it is necessary to implement new beneficial methods to improve the education.

- It is necessary to have gaming activities or gamification for students to learn new languages
- For non-English learners, they can benefit from gamifications to learn faster in an enjoyable environment.
- It is preferred for English teachers to teach the students in a fun way in which they can have gaming activities during class time to remove all the obstacles non-English students might face.
- It is recommended that the government should implement gaming and gamification in the education system to encourage students.
- Last but not least, it is preferred and recommended to apply gaming activities to early aged students so that they will be able to learn English easier.

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