



ENHANCING STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH GAMIFICATION

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Abstract

The limited English proficiency of students may be attributed to the teacher's failure to emphasize motivation throughout the learning journey. This research aims to identify the initial factors that influence students' motivation to learn English and investigate the potential of gamification in increasing their motivation to study the language. This study is a class action research conducted in the 8th grade of State Junior High School 1 Banyumas during the academic year 2023/2024. The study utilized a dataset of observations and questionnaires administered to a cohort of 35 students. Descriptive statistics were applied in the data analysis process. Research shows that engagement levels increased from pre-research (62% observation sheet, 68.21% questionnaire) to post-research (71.62% observation sheet, 79.36% questionnaire). The use of gamification can have a positive impact on learners' motivation by increasing interactivity and enjoyment in the learning environment. Therefore, gamification can be a viable approach to increasing learners' motivation to acquire English language proficiency.

Keywords:

Motivation, gamification, English, language learning

INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in language has emerged as a critical determinant for achieving success in navigating the complexities and prospects presented by global challenges and opportunities. In the present era, English has emerged as a widely spoken language, with over a quarter of the global population utilizing it. This trend is particularly evident due to the rapid advancements in Internet technology. English has increasingly become a means of international communication across diverse domains, encompassing global politics, tourism, international trade, economic activities, the media, and even education (Li et al., 2016).

English lessons are included in the formal education system in Indonesia, as part of the curriculum. The fundamental aim of English language acquisition is to develop learners' proficiency in both oral and written communication. The English language comprises four fundamental skills. According to Bozkırlı and Er (2018), the four fundamental skills can be classified into two categories: comprehension, which encompasses reading and listening, and expressiveness, which involves speaking and writing.

However, a considerable number of students acquire English language skills during their initial year of secondary education, resulting in a limited proficiency or incomplete mastery of the language upon graduation. One contributing factor to the student's limited proficiency in the English language can be attributed to the teacher's lack of attentiveness towards the learner's motivation during the course of instruction.

The research preparation is grounded in the teaching experience of the researchers during the Field Experience Practice 2 Pre-service Teacher Professional Education Year 2022 Wave 2 at State Junior High School 1 Banyumas. The researchers discovered that motivation played a significant role in enhancing students' performance during the English language learning process. Alizadeh (2016) posits that motivation plays a pivotal role in determining the outcome of a difficult endeavor. The achievement of job performance can be seen as an indicator of an individual's level of motivation.

The acquisition of English language proficiency poses a significant obstacle, therefore emphasizing the cruciality of cultivating an enduring motivation to engage in its acquisition. Motivation is an emotional state that consistently seeks to alleviate and cultivate discomfort and tension within the human psyche and cognition. According to Cook & Artino (2016), the utilization of positive motivation enables individuals to rejuvenate positive energy and effectively apply it to

job performance.

Motivational constructs, particularly in the context of learning, exhibit a range of interpretations. According to Emda (2017), the concept of learning motivation pertains to an internal condition experienced by individuals, characterized by an intense desire to engage in activities that are directed towards achieving a particular objective. According to the research conducted by Liao et al. (2015), motivation plays a crucial role in initiating a learner's behaviors and considerably influencing their perception of achievable outcomes. Motivation plays a fundamental role in motivating a learner's engagement and significantly influences their academic achievement.

Monika and Adman (2017) assert that learning motivation encompasses the drive that compels individuals to participate in educational endeavors, originating from either internal inclinations or external influences. According to Andriani & Rasto (2019), it fosters a sense of drive and enthusiasm that is integral to the process of acquiring knowledge.

Thohir (2017) believes that a frequently mentioned distinction in the realm of language learning motivation is the dichotomy between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, with the former originating from inside the individual and the latter stemming from external sources. According to Harmer (2001), as cited in Thohir (2017), the concept of intrinsic motivation refers to an internal source of motivation within an individual. This form of motivation might be derived from the enjoyment of the learning process or the aspiration to experience personal improvement. In contrast, extrinsic motivators encompass variables that stem from external sources, such as the desire to successfully complete an examination, the anticipation of monetary incentives, or the potential opportunity to engage in international travel at a later time. Therefore, the inherent motivation in the process of acquiring proficiency in the English language is associated with the enjoyment derived from the act of learning itself, whereas the extrinsic motivation is influenced by external variables such as educational obligations or incentives and consequences. Intrinsic motivation prompts language learners to undertake tasks or participate in class activities driven by personal enjoyment, while extrinsic motivation compels linguists to engage in such tasks or activities primarily due to the anticipation of receiving rewards or benefits upon completion.

Motivation is an essential element in the process of learning and holds significant importance in facilitating learners' participation in academic endeavors, as stated by Yilmaz et al. (2017). Suhag et al. (2016), as cited in Yilmez et al. (2017), assert that motivation plays a significant role in driving various actions, hence emphasizing the need to comprehend its significance within an educational setting. Motivation exerts various influences on students' learning and behavior. Motivation serves as a driving force that leads individuals' behaviour towards the attainment of specified objectives. Motivation has a significant role in shaping individuals' objectives and thus influencing the decision-making process of students. Motivation has a crucial role in influencing the level of effort and energy used by a student while deciding to do a challenging assignment, either with enthusiasm or a lack of passion. Motivation plays a significant role in the processing and comprehension of information, since it enhances cognitive processing. Consequently, learners who are motivated exhibit a greater inclination towards comprehending and critically analyzing the content, rather than merely engaging in superficial learning.

According to Zulfikar et al. (2019), as cited in Daif-Allah & Aljumah (2020), motivation plays a crucial role in achieving success in the process of language acquisition. Sustaining a heightened level of motivation throughout the duration of the language acquisition phase is widely regarded as a highly effective strategy for enhancing overall performance in the learning activity. Given the inherent variability in individual motivations, it is imperative to ascertain an optimal equilibrium between the drive for achievement and the deterrent of failure, as well as the inclination and the conducive learning environment. According to Tu & Zhou (2015), motivation is considered a significant aspect that requires careful consideration in order to achieve success in language acquisition. Consequently, in the event that students possess a robust drive, they will derive satisfaction from the process of language acquisition and exhibit a determined effort to master it.

Furthermore, Kompri (2016) posits that learning motivation is a psychological construct that is in a state of evolution, indicating that these motivations are impacted by both physiological aspects and the psychological growth of students. Several factors contribute to the amount of

motivation in the context of learning, including students' objectives and goals, students' talents, students' well-being, and the contextual situations in which students find themselves.

The utilization of games in a general sense, and the implementation of gamification specifically, has been widely recognized as a major instructional approach for enhancing students' motivation and engagement within the educational context (Millis et al., 2016). The term "gamification" is commonly used to describe the incorporation of game aspects into non-game contexts with the aim of fostering an enjoyable, stimulating, and motivating learning environment for individuals (Baptista & Oliveira, 2019; Sundqvist & Wikstrom, 2015).

According to Deterding et al. (2011), gamification can be defined as the incorporation of game design components into contexts that are not inherently game-related. Gamification refers to the utilization of game mechanics in order to enhance the participation of a certain group, hence offering practical answers (Vianna et al., 2014). Furthermore, as stated by Kapp (2012), gamification refers to the utilization of game-based processes, aesthetics, and game thinking in order to engage individuals, stimulate action, foster learning, and address challenges.

In order to comprehend the concept of gamification, it is imperative to also grasp the fundamental nature of games. Dickey (2005), as cited in Glover (2013), posits that the fundamental elements found in the majority of games may be categorized into three main components: goal-oriented involvement, methods for rewarding players, and systems for monitoring progress.

A goal-oriented activity inside a game refers to an activity that centers around a specific objective, necessitating unambiguous circumstances and clearly defined goals. This aligns with the educational framework, when individuals are encouraged to set precise goals. The integration of gamification elements inside educational games has the potential to enhance learning results.

The game's rewarding method encompasses the implementation of a leader board, which serves as a strategic tool to incentivize players towards the efficient completion of tasks. Rewards, often known as prizes, serve as symbolic incentives that drive participants to engage in tasks according to their own preferences. Achievement serves as a symbolic representation that inspires individuals to pursue their objectives and afterwards share their accomplishments with others. Progress tracking is a systematic procedure that facilitates the identification of areas necessitating future improvement or enhancement.

Jusuf (2016), believes that gamification is a pedagogical strategy that incorporates game aspects or features from video games to enhance students' motivation and foster a sense of fun and interest in the learning experience. Furthermore, these media platforms have the potential to catch subjects of interest to students, thereby fostering a continuing desire for learning. The utilization of gamification in the context of education is a pedagogical approach that has the potential to foster a sense of accomplishment and self-esteem among individuals across various age groups (Glover, 2013).

Moreover, according to Jusuf (2016), gamification learning has numerous advantages in comparison to alternative learning approaches. There are several benefits associated with the integration of gamification in educational settings. Firstly, it has the potential to enhance the overall learning experience by making it more engaging and enjoyable. Secondly, it can serve as a catalyst for motivating learners to actively participate in a wide range of learning activities. Thirdly, it has been observed to enhance concentration levels and facilitate a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Lastly, it provides students with the opportunity to engage in competitive activities, explore new concepts, and achieve personal milestones within the classroom environment.

ClassPoint is a gamification tool that educators can employ inside their instructional practices. The ClassPoint program was introduced by Inknoe, a software development business, in the year 2015. This program functions as a supplementary tool to Microsoft PowerPoint, integrating interactive dashboards, quizzes, and gamification elements. This combination offers a convenient resolution, facilitating the seamless transformation of PowerPoint presentations into interactive quizzes with ease. This program serves to streamline the administration of quizzes within a classroom setting by enabling the seamless delivery of quizzes, direct collection of students' replies, evaluation of quizzes, and storage of results, all without necessitating users to navigate to other tabs or interfaces. Students have the option to engage in the learning process by utilizing their

personal computer or mobile device to access PowerPoint presentations and engage with the assigned topics facilitated by their teachers. In order to gain access to the website (<http://classpoint.app>), students are required to input the designated class code and record the provided login. This application promotes active engagement and provides students with a platform to showcase their learned knowledge (Bong & Chatterjee, 2021).

Classpoint provides a diverse range of functions that are highly advantageous inside the educational setting. Several features are available in this system, including: (1) Class Code; (2) Polling feature; (3) Name Picker feature; (4) Annotation feature; (5) Multiple-choice quiz; (6) Short Answer quiz; (7) Word Cloud quiz; (8) Slide Draw quiz; (9) Image Upload quiz. Furthermore, ClassPoint offers a star-based system for both positive and negative feedback, as well as a level tag functionality that enables teachers to effectively track and assess students' educational advancement.

Numerous prior investigations have been conducted about the utilization of gamification as a pedagogical approach in the context of English language acquisition. The purpose of this endeavor is to demonstrate that the utilization of gamification serves as an efficacious means of enhancing students' motivation. The introduction of gamification has been found to enhance instructive motivation in the context of English language learning (Anisa et al., 2020). Furthermore, the inclusion of various aspects inside the gamification framework serves to stimulate the student's engagement and enthusiasm towards participating in the game. Extrinsic motivation can be elicited by the provision of prizes or rewards within the context of games. Additionally, the educational environment becomes more entertaining for students.

Based on the aforementioned reasoning, the implementation of gamification provides educators with an alternative approach for teaching the English language. Hence, the researchers are interested in conducting a study with the objective of determining the level of motivation among students in the context of acquiring the English language. Additionally, they aim to investigate the potential impact of incorporating gamification strategies on enhancing students' motivation throughout the process of learning English.

METHOD

This study constitutes a class action research. According to Mills (as cited in Mertler, 2016), action research refers to a methodical research approach conducted by educators, administrators, consultants, or other stakeholders who possess a vested interest in the educational process or environment. The primary objective of this research is to gather data regarding the operational procedures, instructional practices, and learning outcomes within specific educational institutions.

Furthermore, as stated by McNiff (2016), action research entails engaging in deliberate actions with the aim of effecting social and political change, followed by presenting the meaning of these actions to others. This involves providing explanations regarding the rationale behind these actions, the objectives they seek to achieve, and the anticipated outcomes. Action research is commonly known as 'practice-based research' due to its reliance on practical application and experiential knowledge. This research approach is frequently referred to as "practitioner research" due to its execution by individuals actively engaged in the field. Based on the definition mentioned, it can be inferred that action research entails the undertaking of an investigative process by several stakeholders with the intention of elucidating the actions taken and their resultant effects to a wider audience.

The study was carried out utilizing the action research methodology suggested by Kemmis and McTaggart (as referenced in Koshy, 2005). Action research is conducted through a dynamic and interrelated process, encompassing four important stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The four steps encompass action research methodologies, specifically encompassing problem identification, action planning, action implementation, action observation, action reflection, and plan revision.

This study conducted within the 8th grade class H of State Junior High School 1 Banyumas throughout the academic year 2023/2024. The total number of students in the group was 35, with a breakdown of fifteen boys and twenty girls.

The research was structured utilizing two primary data sources, namely observations and questionnaires. Both methodologies are employed to collect data related to the attitude and motivation of students within an educational setting.

The researchers documented the students' behaviour during their participation in the study by utilizing an observation sheet. The evaluation will center on six distinct attributes of observation, namely: responsiveness to inquiries, proactivity in posing questions, engagement in dialogue, demeanor characterized by tranquility, level of attentiveness, and degree of enthusiasm. Each student is assigned a rating for each component on a numerical scale ranging from 1 to 5.

In addition to employing direct observation, the study incorporates the use of a questionnaire as a supplementary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire aims to assess the motivation levels of students both prior to and following teacher intervention.

The data acquired from these methodologies is subsequently subjected to analysis employing descriptive statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics encompass the computation of several measures such as means (averages), medians, modes (the values that occur most frequently), as well as measures of variability and standard deviations (Suwartono, 2014).

The researchers have previously devised a set of criteria to assess the effectiveness of implementing teacher intervention in enhancing students' motivation towards learning. Based on the established criteria, it is imperative that the observations yield a minimum percentage of 70%, whilst the questionnaire responses should attain a minimum percentage of 75%.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

a. Pre-cycle

During the initial phase of this research, preliminary cycles were undertaken to ascertain the diverse problems encountered by students in the English learning and teaching process inside the eighth-grade class H. The researchers employed a combination of direct observations and the administration of questionnaires to gain a comprehensive understanding of the present state of motivation.

The empirical findings indicate that there exists a relatively low level of students' motivation. A mere 62% of the participants demonstrated active engagement and complete attentiveness throughout the instructional sessions. The mean value of these observations is 18,6 out of a possible maximum of 30, suggesting that there is a significant amount of potential for enhancement.

The questionnaires also exhibit comparable circumstances. The level of motivation exhibited by students in their pursuit of English language acquisition was found to be 68,21%, as indicated by an average score of 54,57 out of a possible maximum score of 80.

Based on the available data, several significant discoveries may be inferred. First, a significant proportion of students experience a sense of burden when it comes to their English courses, as they perceive the subject to be challenging in terms of comprehension. Second, a significant number of students experience feelings of boredom throughout the duration of their courses of study, leading them to choose for engaging in conversations or indulging in recreational activities on their mobile devices. Third, the absence of self-assurance often leads to a hesitancy among numerous students in responding to questions on an individual basis. Lastly, a limited proportion of students exhibit active engagement in the learning process due to apprehension of making errors, while possessing knowledge of the correct response. These findings underscore the multifaceted challenges that students encounter in the realm of English education, highlighting areas for potential intervention and improvement.

In order to tackle these issues, scholars have devised approaches aimed at augmenting learning motivation by incorporating technology into the instructional process through the utilization of gamification via ClassPoint media. ClassPoint is an innovative web-based platform that enhances the delivery of English classes and exercises, making them more engaging and pleasurable for learners.

The researchers aim to enhance students' motivation and promote their active engagement and confidence in the learning process through the utilization of technology such as ClassPoint in English language instruction. Furthermore, the utilization of gamification, such as ClassPoint, has

the potential to enhance the excitement of learning sessions and reduce boredom, thereby fostering heightened students' engagement.

Table 1. Results of Pre-cycle English Learning Motivation

No	Methods	Percentage
1.	Observation	62%
2.	Questionnaire	68,21%

b. Cycle 1

The main aim of the research was to enhance learners' desire to acquire English language skills by implementing gamification techniques through the utilization of the ClassPoint platform. During the initial phase, researchers devised and executed an instructional approach that emphasized the development of reading skills. This was accomplished through the utilization of word puzzle games and resources centered around the simple past tense, which were integrated as components of the Gamification method.

The execution of this action is scheduled for July 31, 2023. Despite encountering certain hurdles, including as students' varying levels of readiness and occasional absences from class, the learning process remains effective by employing strategies such as dividing students into groups and facilitating discussions centered around the recount text. The assessment of student's comprehension is conducted by means of individual worksheets provided as homework assignments.

Based on empirical observations made during the learning process, a modest enhancement in students' engagement and attentiveness was noted subsequent to the integration of gamification techniques. However, there are persisting obstacles, such as the presence of students who exhibit lower levels of engagement or are preoccupied with their mobile devices. Moreover, the visibility of gamification implementation should be enhanced.

During the initial phase of the research cycle, the researchers successfully identified both benefits, such as improved motivation, and flaws, such as inactivity or distraction caused by mobile phones. The mean values indicate a rise from 18,6 to 19,51, and the overall percentage of motivation increased from 62% to 66,96%.

However, the findings have not yet attained the research performance benchmark of a minimum motivation percentage of 70% as determined through observations. Additionally, the findings derived from the administered questionnaire revealed that the motivation rate among the student participants amounted to a mere 72,71%, which remains below the desired threshold of 75%. Hence, it is imperative to develop new approaches for the next cycle in order for successfully addressing these issues.

Table 2. Results of Cycle 1 English Learning Motivation

No	Methods	Percentage
1.	Observation	66,96%
2.	Questionnaire	72,71%

c. Cycle 2

While the initial iteration has demonstrated an enhancement in students' motivation levels, the desired outcome has not yet been achieved. The primary obstacles that persist in limiting progress are the problems posed by distractions and the fear experienced by students when engaging in English communication. Moreover, the utilization of gamification has not achieved complete dominance in the realm of classroom learning.

Consequently, the researchers made the decision to modify the approach during the subsequent iteration by placing greater emphasis on the auditory component and implementing an audio-centric word inference game. The game has a set of five questions, and students who demonstrate proficiency by correctly answering all the questions will receive a prize as a token of recognition. The execution of this subsequent phase initiative has been slated for August 7, 2023. Despite the absence of two students, the classes proceeded successfully, encompassing discussions and an assessment of individual comprehension, primarily centered upon the audio material that was listened to.

The data collected indicated a notable rise in students' engagement and attentiveness during the instructional period. The mean observation score increased to 21,35 out of a possible maximum score of 30, or approximately 71%. This surpasses the predetermined threshold of a minimum motivation percentage of 70% set by the study based on the observation outcomes.

However, there remain certain limitations that need to be addressed, such as the lack of engagement exhibited by certain students seated in the rear of the classroom. Hence, despite the findings of the questionnaire indicating that the students' motivation rate was 76,72%, surpassing the desired threshold of 75%, it is still necessary to reassess and refine the action approach for the subsequent cycle to enhance learning optimization.

Table 3. Results of Cycle 2 English Learning Motivation

No	Methods	Percentage
1.	Observation	71,18%
2.	Questionnaire	76,72%

d. Cycle 3

The research proceeds to its third cycle, with the objective of verifying the sustained impact of gamification on enhancing learners' motivation in English language acquisition. The instructional content relates to a kind of writing known as personal recall, which places emphasis on the many components of reading. As a component of the gamification technique, a picture guessing game was implemented alongside with a text utilizing the simple past tense.

The scheduled date for implementation of third cycle is August 21, 2023. While a subset of students may have challenges in utilizing ClassPoint, overall, the learning process is progressing very well. Students demonstrate a great deal of engagement and participation in the learning process, particularly when engaging in activities such as guessing games.



Picture 1. A Student Playing Picture Guessing Game via ClassPoint

Based on the observational data, there was an apparent increase in both students' engagement and attentiveness throughout the instructional period. The mean observation score attained a value of 21,8 out of a possible maximum score of 30, while the overall motivation percentage was approximately 72%.

During the current phase of analysis related to the third cycle, the researchers have observed that despite the deployment of gamification leading to an enhancement in students' motivation, certain students encountered challenges in successfully fulfilling the requirements of the Student Work Sheet (LKPD). However, the outcomes of the third cycle implementation have successfully achieved the desired objective of attaining a 70% observation result rate and approximately 79% students' motivation questionnaire scores.

Table 4. Results of Cycle 3 English Learning Motivation

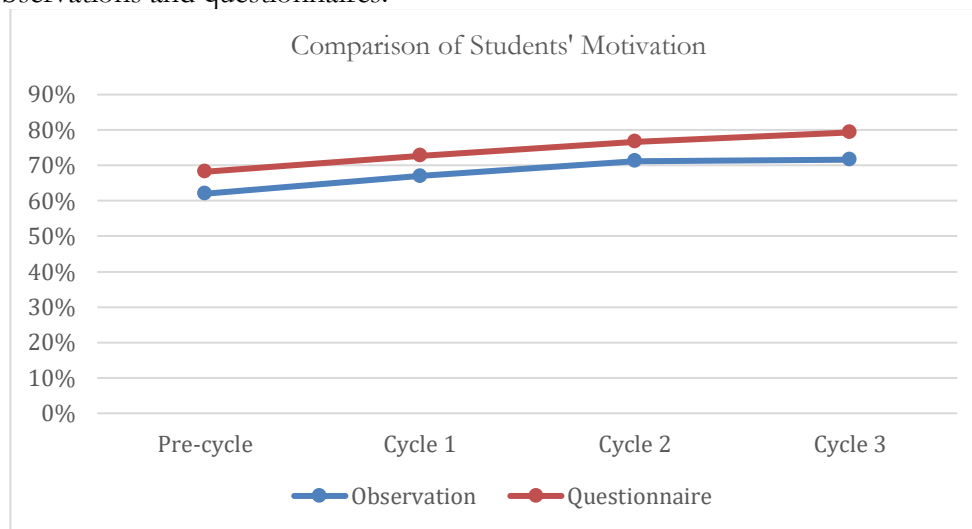
No	Methods	Percentage
1.	Observation	71,62%
2.	Questionnaire	79,36%

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the potential effectiveness of gamification as a strategy for enhancing students' motivation in English language acquisition among eighth-grade students in class H. This study primarily examines two key components: the present motivational state of students and the influence of implementing gamification on their motivation.

According to current studies, it has been shown that there is a prevailing low level of motivation among students. This phenomenon is seen in various aspects: (1) Students have challenges in maintaining focus during the learning process; (2) Students exhibit a tendency not to put forth the greatest amount of effort in fulfilling their responsibilities, often resorting to copying the work of their peers; and (3) There is a noticeable absence of enthusiasm and engagement towards the process of learning English.

After conducting three research cycles, it is evident that the integration of gamification in English language learning through the utilization of gamification via ClassPoint has yielded a favorable outcome in terms of enhanced students' motivation towards learning. This is evidenced by the observed increase in the percentage of motivated results as indicated by the pre-cycle to cycle 3 observations and questionnaires.



Picture 2. Comparison of Students' Motivation in Learning English

The chart provided illustrates a progressive increase in students' motivation levels with each successive cycle. Despite the existence of certain obstacles that necessitate resolution, gamification solutions have demonstrated a general efficacy in enhancing students' motivation within the context of English disciplines.

Based on present and prior research investigations, it can be inferred that the implementation of gamification has the potential to enhance students' motivation. The researchers additionally discovered that increased motivation among students will lead to an increase in their engagement and attentiveness during instructional activities. An empirical investigation conducted by Hamari et al. (2014) shown that the implementation of gamification yields a favorable impact on both intrinsic motivation, which stems from internal sources, and extrinsic motivation, which originates from external factors such as rewards or praise.

Furthermore, an examination of the implementation of gamification in educational settings indicates that this strategy has the potential to greatly enhance learners' motivation. According to the definition provided by Deterding et al. (2011), gamification refers to the incorporation of game features into a context that is not inherently a game. The primary aim is to establish an innovative learning environment that fosters engagement and active participation among students.

The integration of game elements into the English learning process enhances interactivity and enjoyment within the classroom environment for students. This is in line with the research of Jusuf (2016) aims to investigate the implementation of gamification in learning process. This phenomenon leads to fresh learning environments for individuals, hence fostering a constructive influence on their degree of engagement and active participation inside instructional sessions. Furthermore, Tsymbal's (2018) study also shown that the use of gamified training sessions

effectively improved students' self-assurance and motivation in the acquisition of the English language.

CONCLUSION

The recent studies provide empirical evidence that gamification serves as both a viable form of entertainment and a highly effective instructional tool. In essence, gamification entails more than only enhancing the enjoyment factor of learning; rather, it involves strategies aimed at enhancing the significance and effectiveness of the learning experience for individuals. This study believes that the implementation of gamification, which involves incorporating game aspects into a non-game setting, can be a viable approach for enhancing learners' motivation in the context of English language acquisition. The level of motivation exhibited by the students during the process of learning the English language was significantly low. The students exhibited a lack of excitement and engagement in their approach to the learning of the English language. Nevertheless, subsequent to the integration of gamification, their level of enthusiasm notably increased during the process of learning. This implies that the utilization of gamification techniques has the potential to enhance the appeal and enjoyment of the learning process for learners, hence fostering increased motivation and engagement in the acquisition of knowledge.

Furthermore, the primary emphasis of this study relates to the motivational factors experienced by students in connection with gamification, rather than the overall learning outcomes. Consequently, the results obtained from the study fail to provide a definitive response to the inquiry regarding the extent to which the implementation of gamification can impact students' academic performance or their overall skill development. In light of the previously mentioned limitations that arise from this study, the outcomes have laid the groundwork for subsequent investigations that may address other significant inquiries regarding to the efficacy and comprehensive advantages associated with the utilization of pedagogical approaches such as gamification.

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