

IS LEARNING ENGLISH BORING WITH GAMIFICATION?

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Abstract

COVID-19 is a global pandemic that has brought significant disruptions to education. EFL educators ought to be aware of suitable methods during hybrid learning. The Digital learning trend that is reshaping EdTech for Gen-Z is gamification. It is the application of game-design elements and game principles in non-game contexts. Thus, this study aims to shed light on student teachers' perceptions on gamification for boosting motivation in hybrid language classes. To assess the perception, we tracked it of 32 students. Critical aspects highlighted by students in their learning experience were also analyzed. Evidences show the usefulness of gamification in improving students' motivation and, to some extent, in changing their habits.

Keywords: EFL learners, gamification, motivation, student teachers

Introduction

Covid-19 pandemic has an impact in the education sector, especially on the teaching and learning process. Since March 2020, online learning activities have become an alternative by the ministry of education and culture to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. This online learning practice is carried out by various education levels, from elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, and university. As far as online learning is concerned, there are no longer learning activities in classrooms usually done by educators. Consequently, many educators have a challenging period managing this drastic change. As regards online learning in the pandemic era, it is possible that students would be slightly active in expressing their thoughts when the online meeting. At the same time, a student who experiences boredom in learning will get learning outcomes that are not maximal.

Hence, EFL educators should motivate their students to be enthusiastic in the online learning process. Brown (2007) uses the term motivation to refer to two behaviours: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsically motivated behaviour relates to the operations of inevitable internally rewarding consequences (i.e. feelings of competence and self-determination). Likewise, extrinsically motivated refers to the behaviours in expectation of a reward from outside and beyond the self. Brown (1994) establishes it as a necessary personality factor that the student needs to acquire a foreign language in terms of motivation. Foremost, EFL educators must take advantage of technological developments to attract students through the most relevant learning experiences that motivate them to learn English.

EFL educators need to be aware of suitable methods for this time, increasing motivation and involving students in learning English as a foreign language. One learning method that focuses on improving student learning motivation is using gamification in the teaching and learning process. The term gamification has been used to refer to situations in which the concept of "using video game elements in non-game contexts" (Deterding, 2014). The gamification trend in education has been increasing through technological advancements that foster digital learning environments and technical possibilities concerning video game elements to create immersive and engaging learning experiences. The study conducted by Suwanmolee and Ali (2021) found that gamification is a powerful method for catalyzing engagement because video games assist in any student learning experience. Students will be attracted by the enjoyment (affective) then rewarded with knowledge and skills. In this study, the authors tried to analyze and discuss the determinants of motivation in the learning process using gamification.

What is Gamification

The term gamification first appeared in 2002 by Nick Pelling in TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design), but it didn't really get popular until 2010 (Jusuf, 2016). Various international design and communication experts are also busy providing insights or views on gamification. Previous studies primarily defined gamification as utilizing game-based mechanics, aesthetics, and play to engage individuals and elicit action that motivates them by encouraging learning and problem solving (Kapp, 2012). Various experts use gamification in education and marketing developments, particularly in creating interactions between brands and consumers.

The main point of gamification is to interact with users in a game. Users will experience similar experiences when playing a game, which is a pleasant interaction. This suggests that characteristics are designed to help and motivate task performance, build enjoyable experiences, and boost participation in certain activities (Garcia-Iruela & Hijon-Neira, 2020). When playing a game, players must achieve certain levels, experience various obstacles to end a level and get rewards when they complete a level. These game elements are generally gamified through badges, points, and leaderboards. Next, if the users have already completed a certain activity, they will get badges and points as rewards. Earning these badges and points can be compared with badges and points earned by other users (leaderboard). Simple examples are Simpler, Duolingo, Socrative, Kahoot!, Vocabulary.com, and many others.

a) Gamification in Education

The literature on gamification has been highlighted in education through an innovative solution that has the potential to create a more digital learning environment. It is necessary to clarify what gamification means in the education context. Gamification in education is typically defined as a learning method that utilizes video game elements to motivate students in the learning process and boost sensations of enjoyment and engagement in an educational environment. Educators offer a more realistic picture to increase students' understanding as gamification in education develops. Gamification in education supports educators who recognize that games designed effectively can improve learners' productivity and creativity

(NMC-Horizon Report, 2014). In educational gamification, student behaviour is formed through game rules and playing experiences. More successful learning can occur by taking advantage of motivation in play and applying it to education's motivational problems. When students level up, through virtualized grades such as badges/points, they will receive tangible or intangible rewards for taking part in courses. Furthermore, by reformatting failure as a necessary part of learning, gamification can provide a way to deal with failure. In this case, students will learn from failures that make it an opportunity for them (Lee & Hammer, 2011).

b) Elements in Gamification

Another essential thing in gamification is its elements. The term game is commonly familiar to imply situational components such as goals to be achieved, the rules that decide how to achieve the goal, a feedback system that provides goals, and participation uncoerced (Sailer et al., 2017).

Element helps differentiate the concept within gamification, distinguishing a video game for entertainment and non-entertainment purposes. Similarly, gamification refers to the explicit use of certain video game elements in a non-gaming context. Pursuing this further, three significant elements in gamification are points, badges, and leaderboards. But apart from these elements, progress bars, performance graphs, quests, levels, avatars, social elements, and rewards are possible to available. Each element has different uses and purposes.

1. Points: The first important element of gamification is points. Points is a simple method in which users will get prizes or rewards for doing something. The points are used for accumulation based on certain activities.
2. Badges: Badges: Badges can be given as appreciation for an effort of the user, such as reaching a level after playing repeatedly.
3. Leaderboards: The leaderboard is a way for users to see where they are compared to others based on their score (ranked). This can make users more competitive and keep trying to compete with other users.
4. Progress Bars: To know the progress of a player.
5. Performance Graph: To know the player's performance.
6. Quests: The tasks of players which have to complete in a game.
7. Levels: Players' experience levels.
8. Avatars: Visual/illustration of the players.
9. Social elements: Connections with other players through the game.
10. Rewards: A system to get the rewards from points that have been collected.

Gamification elements such as points and badges (Hamari et al., 2014) are an essential part of volunteer motivational attractions of games (Peng et al., 2012); these elements represent a means of control (Callan et al., 2015; Korn & Schmidt, 2015). Besides, in the leaderboard element, users would view the leaderboard differently, resulting in different, and even potentially adverse, behavioural outcomes (Preist et al., 2014).

c) Differences between Gamification and Game-Base Learning

Werbach and Hunter (2012) define gamification as “using game elements and game design techniques in non-game contexts”. This means that gamification is applying the concept of a game to an activity to motivate the users. Gamification

learning methods usually involve a point-in-order system, a ranking system, and achievements. Caponeto et al. (2014) present Game-Based Learning (GBL) as adopting games for educational purposes. In a game-based learning environment, users can learn new concepts; their progress in the game depends on their understanding of the information. Also, GBL trains three important emotional, intellectual, and psychomotor stimuli. Gamification's application is broader can be used to develop business, in contrast to game-based learning, which is really based on teachers' learning.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Second language learning and foreign language are different contexts. Brown (2007) defines second language learning as to how the classroom target language is readily available out there. Turning now to foreign language learning, the students do not have ready-made contexts for communication beyond their classroom. Teaching English as a Foreign Language is refers to teaching the English language to students whose first language is not English, especially where English is not a native speaker.

English education study program is one study program that teaches students about using English for academic or teacher English purposes. As student teachers, EFL learners in English Department must have creative and innovative thoughts. Thus, their students will be more motivated to learn English. One possible reason for the emergence of language-appropriate student learning motivation is utilizing technology in EFL classrooms. Brown (2003) stated that the internet and distance education could improve language learning quality and provide available education anywhere. Students always have positive ideas about using technology in the classroom. Therefore, EFL teachers can create new ideas and develop their problem-solving skills while giving them self-responsibility to feel comfortable. Technology-related internships should be mandatory for teachers, and another stakeholder should also support EFL teachers in integrating technology into EFL classrooms (Hol & Aydin, 2020). Teachers have a favourable view of digital technology in EFL classrooms regarding the importance, usefulness, expertise, and context. It seems that technology is an excellent motivator for EFL students. It is necessary to pay attention to utilizing technology in the classroom because students are more motivated and interested in multimedia and technology lessons.

In addition, technology in EFL classrooms can enhance four student skills. Using technology in the classroom can motivate students and involve them in all four English skills, such as speaking, reading, listening, and writing. When pandemic Covid-19, distance education is the right policy. Apart from that, using distance learning is also unrestricted so that students can use this unlimited knowledge for their improvement. The use of technology also allows less confident students to express their capacities and creative thoughts. There are many advantages to using technology in an EFL classroom, such as providing easy or practical activities and creative assignments. Although technology cannot replace becoming a teacher, students will be motivated to learn and enrich the classroom atmosphere by using technology. Besides, teachers also have an essential role in effectively using technology in the classroom. They must plan and organize lessons according to the material's needs. One of the learning methods that cannot be separated from technology is gamification. This trend can be an effective learning

method because gamification in education aims to motivate students to maximize enjoyment and engagement with the learning process. This method can encourage students and inspire them to continue learning. Motivation is the main focus because it is included in gamification. Yilmaz and O'Connor (2016) show that the software development process supported by gamification increases student motivation and participation; in addition; can also be emotionally and socially influential and that reward and competition systems motivate learners (Dominguez et al., 2013). Revealed by Seixas et al. (2016), they reported that gamification is an effective method for creating student engagement.

Jusuf (2016) demonstrates the gamification learning method has several advantages compared to other learning methods, including:

1. Learning becomes more enjoyment
2. Encourage students to complete their learning activities
3. Help students to concentrate and easy to understand the material being studied
4. Allow students to compete to show better performance in class

Method

This study used descriptive qualitative, which aims to analyze EFL learner's as student teacher perceptions about implementation gamification as a learning method in a language class and determine the factors of implementing gamification as a learning method can increase motivation EFL learners. The technique to get the data sources in this study is a questionnaire. A questionnaire is a technique of analyzing data by giving questions or written statements to respondents. The questionnaire used in this study has been adapted to one of the research articles by Kalanzadeh, Soelimani, and Bakhtiarvand, who researches the influence of using technology on EFL students' motivation, which means that the scope is the same as this study. This study instrument uses a closed answers questionnaire by providing questions or statements, which the respondent will then answer by giving a checklist on the respondents' answers.

The Likert scale is used as a measurement scale with five indicators: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The total participants are 32 students, semester 4 class of 2019 in English Department Study Program, Universitas Tidar. The data was obtained from filling out a questionnaire via google form with 3 questions and 12 statements. The questions section has the aim of obtaining student teachers background knowledge about the use of gamification. The statements section was grouped into two indicators. The first is the statement for EFL learners as student teachers opinions about applying gamification in language classrooms. The second is to determine the extent of the benefits of implementing gamification for EFL learners.

Findings and Discussion

In this segment, the authors discuss the results of the questionnaires that have been obtained from student teachers Universitas Tidar. These questionnaires consist of 3 questions and 12 statements which the authors consider as the findings of this research questionnaire. First, the authors gave a brief explanation of gamification through video. Furthermore, respondents answered the questions and statements according to their circumstances. The authors chose student teachers from the Department of English Education because the authors want to know students'

perception of English Education as student teachers. Whether implementation gamification will benefit as a learning method for EFL learners, which can increase their learning motivation. To obtain the data, the authors made questionnaires, as shown below.

Table 1. Questions of Questionnaire (Section 1)

| No. | Questions |
|-----|---|
| 1 | After you know the term Gamification, have you ever used it as a learning method? |
| 2 | What kind of media have you ever used with Gamification? |
| 3 | How long is the duration of using it? |

Table 2. The Result of Questionnaire (Section 1)

| No. | Answers and Percentage |
|-----|---|
| 1 | Yes (90.6%) No (9.4%) |
| 2 | Website (53.1%) Application (43.8%) Never (3.1%) |
| 3 | Less than an hour (87.5%) More than an hour (12.5%) |

As seen above, the tables present the participants' results answering the questionnaire questions. It can be concluded from the three questions that student teachers at Universitas Tidar have ever used gamification learning methods. Mostly, they didn't know the term gamification, but they ever used the method for learning either from themselves or with the lecturer. The second question shows that student teachers mostly used gamification through the website because the website is one platform that is more efficient than the application. Using the website makes it easier for users to access learning media by gamification without downloading to the website. While using this gamification learning method, 87.5% (28 student teachers) stated that in less than an hour to use this method. It is based on the student teacher's needs because they still don't know what kind of appropriate learning needs. The remaining 12.5% (4 student teachers) already know how to use this gamification learning method effectively.

In section 2, a questionnaire comprising 12 statements was distributed among them. Here follows the table of the statements:

Table 3. Statements of Questionnaire (Section 2)

| No. | Statements |
|-----|--|
| 1 | Using the Gamification method in language classrooms can increase EFL learners' motivation. |
| 2 | As student teacher, you should use the Gamification method in the language classroom for every lesson. |
| 3 | As student teacher, you need technological devices to apply Gamification in language classrooms. |
| 4 | Gamification can be boring and unnecessary. |
| 5 | Using the Gamification method makes EFL learners can concentrate on the learning activities. |
| 6 | With the Gamification method, EFL learners can find out the progress of the learning activities. |
| 7 | Applying the Gamification method makes EFL learners active in the learning process. |
| 8 | Using the Gamification method in teaching activities makes the lessons more enjoyable. |

| No. | Statements |
|-----|---|
| 9 | EFL learners can understand the language better when the teacher uses the Gamification method in the class. |
| 10 | Using the Gamification method can be helpful to develop language skills. |
| 11 | Using the Gamification method are more enjoyable and effective than traditional lessons. |
| 12 | The Gamification method can encourage EFL learners to study a language. |

Here follow the results obtained from the student teachers answering the statements in the questionnaire that are given:

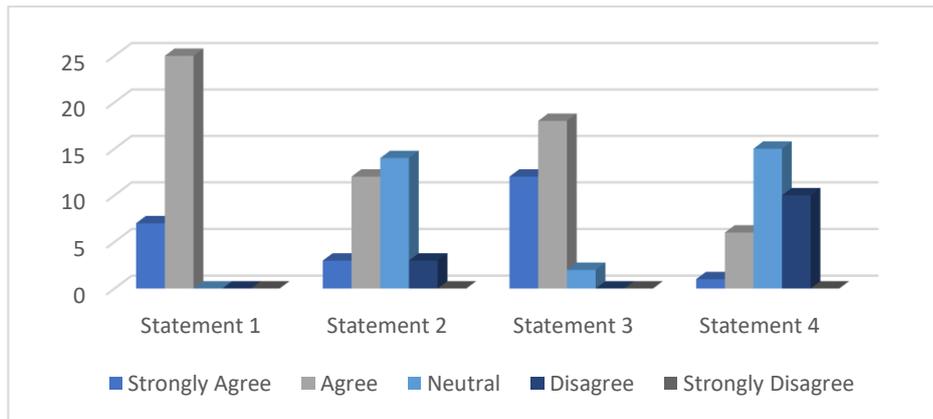


Figure 1. The Result of Questionnaire (Section 2 No.1-4)

The figure above shows the results of the data obtained in the statement section of the questionnaire. As seen in statement number 1, as many as 7 participants strongly agree and 25 participants agree, it can be concluded that the student teachers believe that the gamification method used in language classes can increase the motivation of EFL learners. However, in statement number 2, student teachers are still unsure about using the gamification method in learning as a necessity, with a total of 12 participants agree, and 14 participants are neutral. This is based on the needs of each lesson to achieve an effective and efficient learning process. In addition, the student teachers also believe that they need technological devices to apply the gamification method in the classroom, with 12 participants strongly agree and 18 participants agree. As student teachers, they will become teachers, and they need devices to support learning to make it easier to access in the teaching and learning process. In statement number 4, the student teachers are still unsure about the statement using the gamification method to allow the EFL learners to be bored or this method is not needed. As many as 15 participants were neutral and 10 thought they disagreed with the statement, the success of a learning method is in how the teacher organizes and takes advantage of the method.

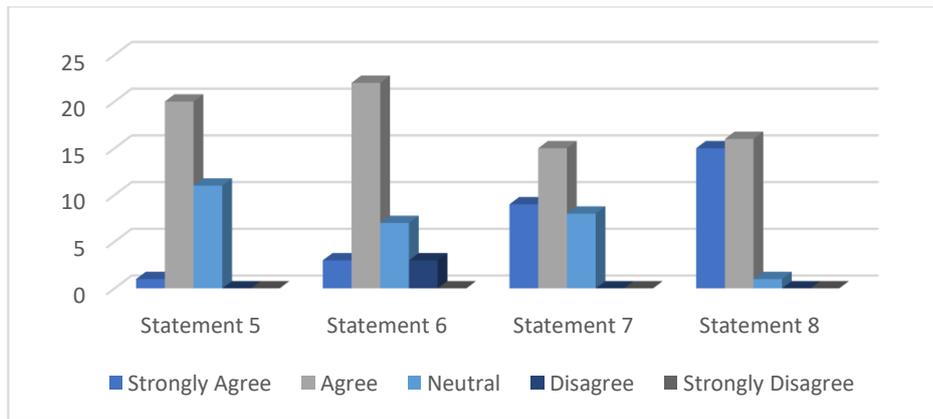


Figure 2. The Result of Questionnaire (Section 2 No.5-8)

In statements number 5 and 6, the majority of student teachers believe that the implementation of the gamification method in the language class can increase the concentration of EFL learners in the learning process. Teacher (student teachers) it will be easy to know the progress of their student's learning. The concept of gamification includes elements of game mechanics to provide practical solutions by building engagement so that students will more easily concentrate on the learning process. In addition, there are elements such as levels, points, and the leaderboard that make it easier for the teachers to monitor the progress of their students' development. In statements number 7 and 8, most student teachers agree that using the gamification method can make EFL learners active because EFL learners enjoy the learning process. Moreover, competition for a reward is the main thing to increasing the activeness and motivation of a student to participate in learning. This follows what Smith-Robbins (2011) expressed, which states that all game activities are meta-center and have activities because they are oriented towards specific goals that ultimately focus on winning by defeating obstacles and other conditions in achieving or achieving or completing quests.

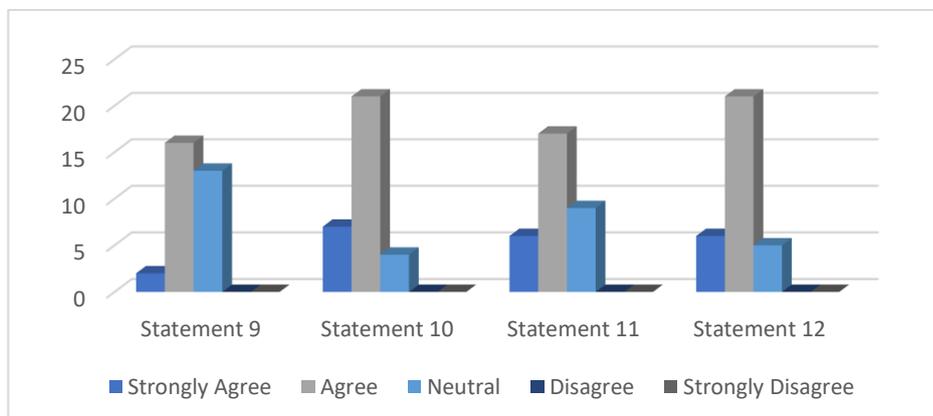


Figure 3. The Result of Questionnaire (Section 2 No.9-12)

In statements numbers 9 and 10, the student teachers agree that EFL learners can understand the language better by using the gamification method in the class, so this method is beneficial in improving language skills. The focused gamification approach provides the needs of various training, including collaborative learning.

And the last statements, numbers 11 and 12, the majority of student teachers agree that using gamification methods in language classes can encourage EFL learners to learn languages. And this method is not only enjoyable but also more effective than traditional learning to lead to more modern education.

In this study, the authors obtained data about the student teachers who believed that the gamification learning method had positive attitudes towards using technology in their English classes. They considered it an effective and efficient method to be used in language classes during the pandemic. They believe that if this method is used in language classes, it can increase the motivation and concentration of EFL learners because students will enjoy it more than traditional learning methods. In the implementation gamification method, the student teachers will easier know and manage their students' development.

Even so, every implementation of the learning method in the classroom must also have its drawbacks. EFL learners also need to adapt to the gamification learning method because this method will collaborate using technology to assist learning, so teachers must master technology well. Besides, the gamification learning method does not always have to be used in every lesson, and students will get bored if they use the same method.

Conclusion

This study aims to analyze and discuss the determinants of motivation in the learning process using gamification. In view of all that has been mentioned so far, based on the student teachers' responses, the authors know that two factors have considerable influences on the motivation of EFL learners by utilizing the gamification method in the classroom. First, in implementing the gamification learning method in the classroom, the game becomes the main point in applying this method. Thus, students will feel more enjoyment and engaged to participate in the classroom. Second, in applying the gamification method, some elements have different functions but are very helpful in teaching and learning. However, using this method is the main point because there are three essential elements: points, badges, and leaderboards. These three elements focus on student competition, which means that students will be motivated to learn because they want to achieve their desired achievements. Point as a score to accumulate the extent of the activities that have been carried out by students, at this stage, and students will try to be active in the class to achieve the achievement they want.

Furthermore, students will receive badges as a form of appreciation and feedback from the teacher. The last part is that the leaderboards will compare student scores with a ranking, and here the teacher can easily analyze the students' progress.

This study indicates that the gamification learning method is effective and efficient if applied during the Covid-19 pandemic. This is based on the decreasing level of student motivation, so the teacher must overcome this by finding a method solution that is more comfortable and interesting for students. This method focuses on games used for classroom learning; indirectly, students will be more interested and not feel bored in the learning process. Gamification can increase the fun while learning and at the same time encourage student performance. Although this method is the best innovation and has many advantages, teachers also need to create a maximum. Another important practical implication is that teachers must set

strategies for adapting to new learning methods to develop effective and efficient learning.

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