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## EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GAMIFICATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi efektivitas gamifikasi dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di kalangan siswa kelas IX di SMA Negeri 1 Gamping. Gamifikasi, yang melibatkan penggunaan elemen permainan dalam konteks pendidikan, diharapkan dapat meningkatkan motivasi dan keterlibatan siswa. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan dari 20 siswa menggunakan kuesioner yang terdiri dari pertanyaan terbuka dan tertutup. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 80% siswa merasa lebih termotivasi untuk belajar Bahasa Inggris setelah menerapkan gamifikasi, dan 90% merasa proses belajar menjadi lebih menyenangkan. Gamifikasi tidak hanya meningkatkan kepercayaan diri siswa dalam berbicara Bahasa Inggris, tetapi juga membantu mereka memahami materi dengan lebih baik. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa gamifikasi adalah metode inovatif yang efektif dalam meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di tingkat sekolah menengah.

**Kata Kunci:** Gamifikasi, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Motivasi Siswa, Keterlibatan, Pendidikan Inovatif

### Abstract

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of gamification in English learning among 9th grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Gamping. Gamification, which involves the use of game elements in an educational context, is expected to increase student motivation and engagement. Through a qualitative approach, data was collected from 20 students using a questionnaire consisting of open and closed questions. The results showed that 80% of students felt more motivated to learn English after implementing gamification, and 90% felt the learning process became more enjoyable. Gamification not only increased students' confidence in speaking English, but also helped them understand the material better. This study concludes that gamification is an innovative method that is effective in improving the quality of English learning at the secondary school level.

**Keywords:** Gamification, English Language Learning, Student Motivation, Engagement, Innovative Education

### BACKGROUND

Innovation in learning methods is necessary in the digital era to improve the effectiveness of education, including in English learning. Today's technology offers a variety of solutions that can enrich the learning experience, and gamification is one approach that has caught the attention of many educators. Gamification refers to the use of game elements in non-game contexts, such as education, to increase student engagement and student motivation (Je-Young

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& Baek, 2023). In English language learning, the application of this technology is increasingly recognized as a potential way to make learning more interactive and relevant. The impact of gamification goes beyond engagement; it also plays an important role in developing students' intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. Gamified learning environments have been shown to increase student motivation and self-efficacy, which are critical for academic success (Khatoon, 2023; Asanza, 2024). The integration of gamification into the English curriculum not only enriches the learning experience, but also suits the preferences of modern learners, who often prefer interactive and technology-based educational methods (Li & Li, 2022). With such rapid technological advancements, it is important to explore how gamification can contribute to improving the quality of English learning and provide more optimal outcomes for students.

One of the main challenges in English language learning is low student motivation. In addition to many students feeling that their English learning is irrelevant to their daily lives, thus reducing their motivation to learn (Zhang & Hasim, 2023), many students also find it difficult to maintain interest in language learning, especially as traditional methods are often less engaging. This causes students' engagement in the learning process to be low, so that the learning outcomes achieved are also not maximized. For example, students may feel bored with repetitive grammar exercises or lack of real context in learning. To overcome this problem, a more innovative and adaptive approach is needed that can attract students' attention. Gamification emerges as one of the innovative solutions that can provide a more engaging and fun learning experience (Khatoon, 2023).

Gamification offers a new way to increase students' motivation to learn English. According to Hamari et al. (2014), gamification can increase student motivation by providing a more engaging and relevant learning experience (Zhang & Hasim, 2023). By integrating game elements such as points, challenges and rewards, the learning process becomes more fun and encourages students' active participation. Students no longer see learning as a boring task, but as an interesting and challenging experience. These game elements help students to be more motivated in achieving learning goals, thus increasing their overall engagement. The level system allows students to feel a sense of accomplishment as they progress through different levels of difficulty, which can boost their confidence in learning English (Je-Young & Baek, 2023). Thus, gamification becomes an effective tool to motivate students to be more active and interested in learning English.

The implementation of gamification elements, such as rewards, levels, and challenges, is proven to make learning English more interesting and fun. Students can earn virtual awards when they complete tasks, level up, or successfully complete certain challenges. This mechanism makes students feel recognized and rewarded for their achievements, which in turn motivates them to keep trying harder (Zhang & Hasim, 2023). In addition, the level system allows students to see their progress in real time, which encourages them to keep going (Cruz et al., 2023). Direct rewards for effort create a more competitive learning atmosphere in a positive sense, while keeping students in a motivated mood.

Gamification also helps overcome barriers to learning, such as fear of mistakes and low self-confidence. In a gamification-based environment, students are encouraged to try without fear of making mistakes, as mistakes are considered part of the learning process. For example, game elements that provide retry opportunities and immediate feedback allow students to correct their mistakes in a more relaxed and less pressurized way. This is in line with constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of positive and supportive learning experiences (Zhang & Hasim, 2023). By adopting this approach, students can see mistakes as opportunities to learn, rather than as failures. Research shows that this supportive environment can boost students' confidence and encourage them to more actively participate in learning (Cruz et al., 2023). It also helps students overcome anxiety in English learning, as they feel supported in developing their skills gradually (Asanza, 2024). Thus, gamification not only improves language skills, but also provides a more comfortable learning atmosphere and supports student development.

Previous research has shown that gamification has a positive impact on student motivation and learning outcomes in English language learning. Students who learn through gamification show higher levels of engagement and have better learning outcomes compared to

traditional learning methods (Cruz et al., 2023). For example, research conducted in various contexts shows that gamification increases students' active participation in class, as well as accelerating their understanding of the material. The game element also makes students feel more confident and more satisfied with the learning process. Therefore, gamification is considered as one of the effective and innovative methods in English learning. In addition, this study also focuses on students' experiences in applying gamification in the increasingly advanced digital era, which has not been widely discussed in previous studies. The purpose of this study is to explore students' perceptions of gamification in English language learning and how it impacts their engagement in the learning process. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide new insights into more effective gamification-based learning strategies, as well as provide guidance for educators in designing methods that are more interactive and relevant to the needs of students in the digital era. This research is expected to be an important contribution to the development of innovative teaching methods, particularly in English language learning.

In addition, gamification also encourages collaboration between students, which enriches the overall learning process. Competitive and collaborative game elements encourage students to work together to solve challenges, share knowledge and support each other (Zhang & Hasim, 2023). Interactions between students in gamification-based activities not only improve English proficiency, but also develop communication and cooperation skills (Cruz et al., 2023). For example, group activities in gamification can help students to be more open and active in discussions, which in turn strengthens their understanding of the material learned. Thus, gamification is not only effective in improving individual language skills, but also building better social skills.

This research is unique compared to previous studies because it not only assesses the effectiveness of gamification in English learning in general, but also examines in depth how gamification elements such as points, levels and challenges affect learning motivation and language skills specifically. In addition, this study also focuses on students' experiences in implementing gamification in an increasingly digital era, which has not been widely discussed in previous studies. The purpose of this study is to explore students' perceptions of gamification in English language learning and how it impacts their engagement in the learning process. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide new insights into more effective gamification-based learning strategies, as well as provide guidance for educators in designing methods that are more interactive and relevant to the needs of students in the digital era. This research is expected to be an important contribution to the development of innovative teaching methods, especially in English language learning.

## **METHODS**

This research will use a qualitative approach with data collection methods through questionnaires in the form of open-ended and closed-ended questions. This research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions and experiences of 20 students of class IX SMA Negeri 1 Gamping in using gamification in English learning. Gamification-based learning activities will be implemented for one semester, with evaluation of student progress based on the results of assignments, Midterm Exams, and End of Semester Exams. The gamification design will include elements such as points, levels, challenges and rewards that are relevant to English learning materials for high school students.

The questionnaire includes open-ended questions that provide an opportunity for students to give their responses freely and in-depth regarding their experience with the use of gamification. These open-ended questions will allow students to express their opinions, feelings and reflections on the experience of learning English through gamification. In addition, the questionnaire also contains closed-ended questions that provide predetermined answer options, thus facilitating quantitative data analysis regarding the level of satisfaction, motivation, and effectiveness of gamification in English learning. Through this combination of data collection methods, it is hoped that this research can provide a more holistic insight into the impact of gamification on students' learning experience.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1. Close – Ended Questions

No	Questions	Answer Percentage				
		SS	S	N	TS	STS
1	Do you feel more motivated to learn English after using apps/games with gamification features?	80%	15%	5%	0%	0%
2	Do you feel more confident in speaking English after using apps/games with gamification features?	75%	20%	5%	0%	0%
3	Does the gamification feature help you understand the English material better?	75%	20%	5%	0%	0%
4	Do you feel that the gamification feature makes learning English more fun?	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%
5	Does the gamification feature make you more interested in continuing to learn English?	80%	15%	5%	0%	0%
6	Do you feel that the gamification feature helped you improve your English skills significantly?	65%	25%	10%	0%	0%
7	Would you recommend using an app/game with gamification features for English learning to a friend or someone else?	70%	20%	10%	0%	0%
8	Would you like to continue learning English using gamified learning methods in the future?	75%	20%	5%	0%	0%
9	Do you think the use of gamification in English learning is effective?	85%	15%	0%	0%	0%
10	Do you find it difficult to use educational apps/games that use gamification system to learn English?	0%	0%	5%	30%	65%

Based on the survey results, the majority of respondents showed a positive attitude towards the use of gamification in English learning. As many as 80% of respondents felt highly motivated to learn after using an app or game with gamification features, while another 15% also agreed with the statement. In addition, 75% of respondents felt more confident in speaking English after using gamification, with an additional 20% agreeing, and only 5% being neutral.

Gamification is also considered helpful in understanding the material, where 75% of respondents strongly agree that gamification features make it easier for them to understand English material, and another 20% agree. The use of gamification also managed to make the learning process more enjoyable, as stated by 90% of respondents, while another 10% agreed with no respondents feeling neutral or disagreeing. In addition, 80% of respondents felt more interested in continuing to learn English through gamification, and 65% of them strongly agreed that gamification features significantly helped improve their English skills. A total of 70% of respondents highly recommended the use of gamification to others, and 75% were eager to continue learning using this method in the future.

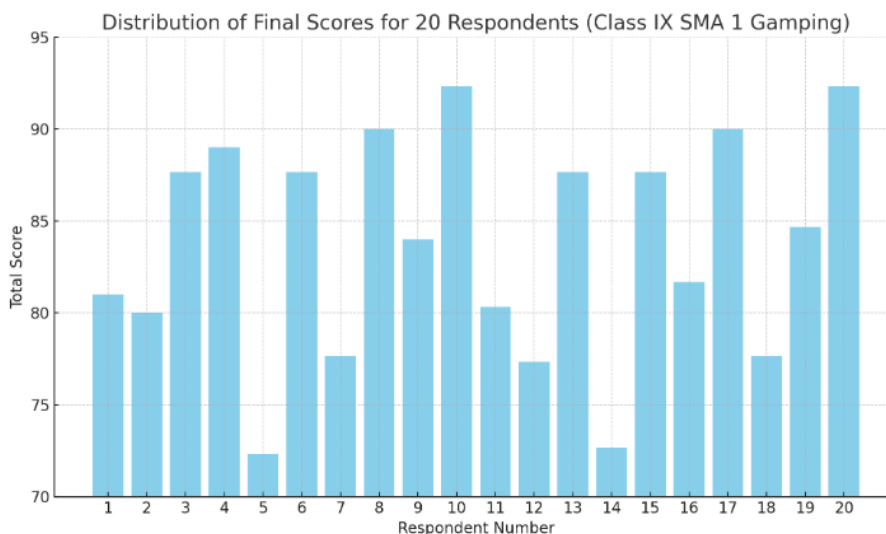
The effectiveness of gamification was also recognized by the majority of respondents, where 85% strongly agreed that this method is effective in learning English. Interestingly, 65%

of respondents strongly disagreed that they experienced difficulties in using gamified educational apps or games, while another 30% also disagreed that there were difficulties. Overall, these results show that the use of gamification in English language learning is highly favored by respondents, with benefits such as increased motivation, comprehension and English language skills. The technical difficulties experienced were minimal. The following presents the distribution of the final grades of 20 respondents in class IX SMA 1 Gamping, consisting of UTS, Assignment, and UAS grades and their totals.

Tabel 2. Distribution of UTS, Assignment, and UAS scores and their totals of IX students of SMA 1 Gamping.

Student	UTS	Task	UAS	Total
1	80	85	78	81.00
2	75	80	85	80.00
3	88	90	85	87.67
4	92	85	90	89.00
5	70	75	72	72.33
6	85	88	90	87.67
7	78	80	75	77.67
8	90	92	88	90.00
9	85	80	87	84.00
10	95	90	92	92.33
11	80	83	78	80.33
12	77	80	75	77.33
13	88	85	90	87.67
14	70	75	73	72.67
15	85	90	88	87.67
16	80	85	80	81.67
17	90	88	92	90.00
18	75	78	80	77.67
19	82	85	87	84.67
20	95	92	90	92.33

The following is a graph of the distribution of the final scores of 20 respondents in class IX of SMA I Gamping. This graph illustrates the total final score of each respondent, with a range of scores between 70 and 95.



Graft 1. Distribution of final scores for scores of 20 respondents

Over the course of the study, which was one semester, students engaged in various learning activities that integrated game elements, such as challenges, points, and rewards. These activities included: 1) Vocabulary learning through interactive games, 2) Speaking practice in simulated situations, 3) Grammar learning using gamification-based quizzes, 4) Group discussions involving competition in language problem solving, 5) Use of apps that provide immediate feedback on English language skills, 6) Application of role-playing techniques in everyday conversational contexts, 7) Challenges in public speaking using English, and 8) Project-based learning involving presentation and collaboration with classmates.

Tabel 3. Open-ended Questions

No	Open-Ended Question	Answer
1	How do you think gamification can help improve the effectiveness of English learning?	Gamification makes learning English more interesting and fun. With elements like points and rewards, I feel more motivated to learn and try harder to achieve learning targets. It also helps me to be more active in class.
2	How do gamification features (such as points, levels and rewards) affect your learning process in learning English?	Features such as points and levels provide challenges and make me feel more challenged to keep improving my English skills. In addition, the rewards provide a sense of achievement that motivates me to continue learning.
3	What are the benefits you feel from using gamification in English learning?	The benefits I feel are increased motivation to learn, learning becomes more interactive, and the immediate feedback from the game helps me understand my progress and shortcomings in English.
4	How does gamification help you understand English learning materials better?	Gamification makes me focus more on the material, especially when there are challenges or games that involve language use. This way, I can remember the material more easily because I am directly involved in the activity.
5	What are the biggest challenges you face when using gamification in English learning?	The biggest challenge I face is an unstable internet connection, which often interferes with the smooth running of the game. Also, sometimes some features in the app don't work properly, thus reducing the effectiveness of gamification.
6	What do you think about the potential future use of gamification in English language learning?	I believe that gamification has great potential to be developed in the future. With the advancement of technology, this method can become more effective and facilitate more independent and collaborative learning.
7	How does the use of technology in gamification affect your motivation to learn English?	Technology in gamification makes me more interested in learning. I feel more involved in the learning process because technology provides an interactive and engaging platform. In addition, I can learn anytime and anywhere with the help of technology.
8	What do you think makes gamified learning more interesting than traditional English learning methods?	Gamification makes learning more interactive, competitive and fun. I feel more motivated because of the challenges and immediate feedback, which is not always the case.
9	How important is the role of the teacher in maximizing the use of gamification for English	The role of the teacher is very important in strategizing gamification-based learning. Lecturers must be good at selecting relevant game

	language learning?	elements and providing constructive feedback to motivate students to achieve learning goals.
10	What kind of games or apps do you think are most effective to use in gamification-based English learning?	Some apps that I find effective are Duolingo, Kahoot, and Quizizz. These apps are not only fun, but also effective in helping me remember English materials in a more interactive way.

In this study, the use of gamification in English learning among 9th grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Gamping showed very positive results. Most students felt an increase in motivation, confidence, understanding of the material, as well as enjoyment in the learning process. This result is in line with learning motivation theory, where gamification serves as a motivating factor that encourages students to be more actively involved in learning. As stated by Deterding et al. (2011), gamification can transform the learning experience into a more engaging and interactive one, which is evident in the positive responses from 90% of respondents who felt that gamification features made learning English more enjoyable.

Looking at the results of the survey table, around 80% of students feel more motivated to learn after implementing gamification. This shows that game elements in learning can create a more interesting learning environment. Research by Puspitasari (2023) shows that the implementation of gamification can improve students' motivation and learning outcomes, making them more enthusiastic in completing tasks. This is in line with the findings that gamification can create a more positive learning experience and increase student motivation. This increased motivation contributed to students' desire to continue learning English, with 80% of respondents showing a high interest in continuing learning using gamification methods in the future. Romero-Rodríguez et al. (2019) added that gamification designs, such as challenges, badges and leaderboards, can create healthy competition among participants, increasing social interaction and intrinsic motivation. This suggests that gamification not only increases student engagement, but also creates a stronger learning community. Furthermore, research by Hürsen & Bas (2019) showed that the application of gamification in science education has a positive impact on students' learning motivation. This suggests that the application of gamification can provide wide-ranging benefits across different disciplines, including language learning. Thus, gamification can be considered as an effective strategy to increase students' motivation and engagement in the teaching and learning process.

Students' confidence in speaking English also increased, with 75% of respondents reporting feeling more confident after using the gamified app. This is in line with research by Díaz (2023) which shows that gamification can help students overcome fear and increase confidence in using the target language. Furthermore, Zhang and Hasim Zhang & Hasim (2023) in their systematic review of gamification in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) found that the use of gamification elements can increase students' engagement and their confidence in speaking. This research shows that gamification can create a more interactive and fun learning experience, which in turn encourages students to more actively participate in learning. By creating a supportive learning atmosphere, students feel more comfortable practicing and interacting in English.

The use of gamification not only increases motivation and confidence, but also helps students understand the material better. A total of 75% of respondents felt that gamification features helped them understand the English material. This suggests that game elements, such as challenges and rewards, can increase students' engagement in the learning process and strengthen their understanding of the material being taught. A meta-analysis by Sailer & Homner (2019) supports these findings by showing that gamification has significant positive effects on students' cognition, motivation and behavior. They found that gamification elements, such as badges and leaderboards, can increase student engagement and encourage them to be more active in learning.

The improvement in English skills is also evident from the UTS, assignment, and UAS scores obtained by students during one semester. The average total score of students ranged from 70 to 95, with many students achieving above average scores. This reflects that gamification not only increased student motivation and engagement but also had a positive

impact on their academic performance. The final grade distribution graph shows a positive variation in students' academic achievement, further strengthening the argument that gamification can facilitate a more effective learning process. Research by Puspitasari (2023) supports this conclusion, showing that gamification-based learning can result in significantly improved learning outcomes. Gamification, which involves the use of game elements in an educational context, has been shown to be effective in increasing student engagement and understanding of the material. Suwandani Suwandani (2024) notes that the application of gamification in learning can improve student learning outcomes by making the learning process more engaging and interactive. This is in line with research by Sailer and Homner (2019), which showed that gamification has a significant positive effect on student motivation and learning outcomes. Furthermore, research by Suwandani (2024) shows that gamification can increase student motivation and engagement, which in turn contributes to improved academic performance. By creating a fun and challenging learning atmosphere, students are more motivated to actively participate in the learning process, which is reflected in their improved academic grades.

During the study, students engaged in various gamification-based activities designed to increase interaction and collaboration. The activities encouraged students to work together to solve challenges, share knowledge and support each other, thus creating a more dynamic learning atmosphere. This is in line with research by Dicky et al. (2023), which showed that gamification in learning can increase student engagement and facilitate collaborative learning. By working together to achieve a common goal, students can develop important collaborative skills, such as communication and teamwork. Dicky et al. Dicky et al. (2023) emphasized that gamification creates a fun and interactive environment, encouraging students to actively participate in the learning process, which in turn can improve their learning outcomes. This research shows that gamification can create an atmosphere that supports collaboration, where students feel more comfortable to share ideas and learn from each other.

## CONCLUSION

This research has shown that gamification can significantly increase student motivation and engagement in English learning. Through the application of game elements in the learning process, students become more enthusiastic and actively participate, which has a positive impact on the understanding of the material. The results of the analysis showed that students who engaged in the gamification method experienced a significant improvement in their English skills compared to the conventional method. In addition, gamification also creates a more enjoyable learning environment, facilitates social interaction among students and promotes a healthy sense of competition. Therefore, it is recommended that educators consider the integration of gamification in the English learning curriculum to achieve more effective and engaging results for students.

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