

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The progress of technology has created a new way for teachers to plan learning activities. A major problem they have to solve now is coming up with a new way to teach that works well with millennials ((Cenita & De Guzman, 2023). Technology is a big part of younger students' life, and it affects practically everything they do. They can quickly find information, post updates on social media, and play online games for a long period. But relying too much on technology doesn't always mean success in the classroom, and it can sometimes make it harder to create the best learning environment. Teachers have seen that many children would rather play games on their phones than study. Games might be a way to get millennials interested in school, but educational games are at best a temporary solution. The gap in involvement is getting too big for a few instructional games to make a big and long-lasting difference. Experts came up with the idea of gamification, which is a unique way to close the engagement gap in schools (Wahyuni et al., 2023). The goal is to make learning more engaging and fun by adding game aspects and rules to things that aren't games. The main idea is that the natural drive and enjoyment that comes from playing games can be used to get children more involved and motivated in school. Gamification and education will coexist together.

Gamification is a way to teach that uses elements from games or video games to make learning more fun and interesting for pupils. Students may be motivated to persist in their studies by utilising such media to record subjects that captivate their interest (Yansah et al., 2025). Gamification enhances student motivation to fulfil all their educational assignments. Gamification is the idea of making an activity more fun and interactive by adding elements of play and excitement. Gamification is the process of using game ideas to make work processes more interesting, rather than converting activities into games. Gamification has also changed the way languages are taught. Gamification adds game elements to the teaching process, whereas game-based learning lets students learn directly through playing games (Li et al., 2024). This method has been shown to work well for getting students more interested and motivated, both within and outside of school. It has also given teachers chances to build a culture of problem-solving and critical thinking in the classroom. Gamification has gotten a lot of attention, especially in schools. Gamification is meant to make students more interested in learning.

In a competitive learning environment, it is possible to create a one-of-a-kind learning

experience that motivates students. Motivation is an important part of most learning systems, including gamification, and it helps students do well (Mohammed et al., 2024). This method made the students more motivated and involved in the class. Some examples of platforms that are often gamified are Quizizz, Duolingo, and Kahoot. Students were taught about game ideas like points, badges, leaderboards, and awards. The prize is often not related to the goal being reached. That does show the player and others that they have reached a particular degree of skill, though. Reward systems often help and guide progress tracking. A sequence of intermediate goals shows how far you have come towards a main goal.

The most important difference between gamification and traditional methods is that competition is used as a clear motivator. Competitive side is a source of motivation. In some uses of this system, students can see how they and their classmates are doing in real time. When progress is clear, students should want to do better than their classmates. Gamification has a significant impact on education, particularly as students become disengaged with traditional instructional techniques (Kaya & Ercag, 2023).

The rapid advancement of digital technology has reshaped the way students learn and interact with knowledge. Millennials and Generation Z, often described as digital natives (Prensky, 2001), are deeply immersed in technology-driven lifestyles. They are accustomed to instant access to information, social media interaction, and online gaming, which significantly influences their learning behaviors (Wahyuni et al., 2023). Traditional instructional methods, however, often fail to capture their attention and sustain their motivation. As highlighted by (Kaya & Ercag, 2023) students are increasingly disengaged with conventional teaching techniques, thereby demanding innovative approaches that can align with their digital habits and expectations. This situation creates an urgent need to design pedagogical models that integrate interactive and engaging learning experiences, particularly in English language education.

Gamification has emerged as one such promising approach. Gamification as “the use of game design elements in non-game contexts,” aimed at enhancing user engagement and motivation. In educational contexts, gamification leverages elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, and rewards to create a more interactive learning environment (Deterding et al., 2011), (Supasa et al., 2024). Gamification significantly increases motivation, engagement, and enjoyment, which are essential in promoting persistence in learning tasks. Similarly, (Baah et al., 2023) argue that gamification enhances learners’ intrinsic motivation by introducing elements of

play, competition, and progress tracking, which are otherwise absent in traditional learning systems. These perspectives highlight the urgency of integrating gamification into language learning, where motivation plays a pivotal role in skill mastery and long-term proficiency (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Despite the increasing popularity of gamification in education, several research gaps remain. First, many studies emphasize the role of educational games but conclude that they serve only as temporary solutions for boosting engagement (Wahyuni et al., 2023). This raises the need to explore gamification as a more sustainable strategy rather than a short-term intervention. Second, while gamification has been widely studied in STEM and general education contexts, its application in English language learning remains relatively underexplored (Li et al., 2024). As English language learners face unique motivational challenges, empirical evidence focusing specifically on this area is limited. Third, although competition is frequently cited as a motivating factor, there is insufficient research on the impact of real-time competition mechanisms—where students can compare their progress instantly with peers—on language learning outcomes. Lastly, much of the existing literature focuses on short-term interventions, leaving a gap in understanding the long-term effects of gamification on learner motivation, engagement, and academic achievement.

In summary, the urgency of this study lies in addressing the mismatch between conventional teaching methods and the learning preferences of digital-native students. The research gap exists in the limited empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of gamification in fostering sustained motivation and engagement in English language learning, especially through competitive and progress-tracking mechanisms. By addressing these gaps, this study aims to contribute to both theory and practice, offering insights into how gamification can serve as a long-term pedagogical strategy for improving language proficiency.