



Using Gamification to Improve Students' Motivation and Vocabulary Learning in English Language Classrooms: An Action Research Study



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Abstract

Motivation and vocabulary knowledge are two essential factors in successful English language learning. However, many students experience difficulties in learning and retaining new vocabulary due to traditional teaching methods that often emphasize memorization and repetitive activities. This action research study aimed to investigate the effect of gamification on students' motivation and vocabulary learning in English language classrooms. The study was conducted using an action research approach, in which gamified activities including challenges, rewards, interactive tasks, and vocabulary games were implemented to create a more engaging learning environment. Data were collected through classroom observations, students' learning activities, reflective notes, and learners' feedback. The findings indicated that gamification increased students' motivation, participation, and interest in English vocabulary learning. Students showed greater willingness to engage in classroom activities, collaborate with peers, and use newly learned vocabulary in meaningful contexts. The results also revealed that game-based activities improved vocabulary retention by providing repeated practice and immediate feedback. Overall, the study suggests that gamification can be an effective strategy for creating active, enjoyable, and student-centered English language classrooms. By integrating appropriate game elements into teaching practices, educators can enhance learners' motivation and support more effective vocabulary acquisition.

Keywords:

Gamification, English language learning, vocabulary acquisition, student motivation, action research, classroom engagement, game-based learning



Introduction

In recent years, the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language has faced various challenges, particularly in maintaining students' motivation and encouraging active participation in classroom activities. Among the different components of language learning, vocabulary acquisition plays a fundamental role because a strong vocabulary foundation enables learners to communicate effectively, understand texts, and develop their overall language skills. However, many students experience difficulties in learning and retaining new vocabulary due to traditional teaching methods that often rely on memorization, repetition, and teacher-centered activities. These approaches may reduce students' interest and limit their engagement in the learning process. Therefore, educators are increasingly seeking innovative strategies that can create more interactive, meaningful, and motivating learning environments.

One of the emerging approaches that has gained considerable attention in educational settings is gamification. Gamification refers to the integration of game elements, such as points, rewards, challenges, competition, levels, and feedback systems, into non-game contexts to increase motivation and engagement. In language classrooms, gamification can transform routine learning activities into enjoyable experiences by encouraging students to participate actively and take greater responsibility for their learning. Through game-based elements, learners can experience a sense of achievement, receive immediate feedback, and develop positive attitudes toward language learning. This approach is particularly valuable for vocabulary instruction, as it provides opportunities for repeated exposure, meaningful practice, and interaction with new words in engaging contexts.

Student motivation is considered one of the key factors influencing successful language learning. Motivated learners are more likely to participate in classroom activities, use learning strategies effectively, and continue improving their language abilities. In contrast, low motivation can negatively affect students' confidence, attention, and willingness to communicate. Gamification has the potential to enhance both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation by creating a supportive and enjoyable learning atmosphere. When students perceive learning activities as challenging yet rewarding, they are more likely to remain engaged and develop a stronger desire to improve their language performance.

Vocabulary learning also requires continuous practice and active involvement. Many learners struggle to remember new words when vocabulary instruction is limited to translation and memorization. Gamified activities can address this issue by presenting vocabulary in meaningful situations and allowing students to practice words through collaboration, problem-solving, and competition. Such activities can improve learners' memory retention and make vocabulary learning a more dynamic process. Furthermore, gamification can support different learning styles by combining visual, auditory, and interactive elements in classroom tasks.



Statement of the Problem

Learning English as a foreign language requires learners to develop several essential skills, among which vocabulary knowledge is considered one of the most important foundations for successful communication. Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, students may face difficulties in expressing their ideas, understanding spoken and written texts, and participating effectively in language activities. Despite the importance of vocabulary learning, many English language learners continue to experience challenges in acquiring and retaining new words. Traditional vocabulary teaching methods, which often emphasize memorization, repetition, and teacher-centered instruction, may not provide enough opportunities for meaningful interaction and active engagement. As a result, students may lose interest in learning vocabulary and demonstrate low levels of motivation toward English language learning (Nation, 2013).

Motivation plays a significant role in determining the success of language learning. Students who are highly motivated usually show greater participation, persistence, and willingness to use learning strategies, while students with low motivation may avoid classroom activities and show limited progress. In many English classrooms, maintaining students' motivation remains a major concern for teachers because learners may perceive vocabulary learning as a difficult and boring process. According to Dörnyei (2001), motivation is one of the most influential factors affecting learners' commitment and achievement in second language learning. Therefore, creating learning environments that increase students' interest and encourage active involvement is essential for improving language outcomes.

In recent years, educational researchers have focused on innovative teaching approaches that move beyond traditional methods and promote student-centered learning. One of these approaches is gamification, which involves applying game elements such as rewards, challenges, competition, points, and immediate feedback to educational activities. Gamification can make learning experiences more enjoyable and interactive, leading to increased student engagement and motivation. Research indicates that the use of gamified activities can positively influence learners' attitudes, participation, and academic performance by creating a more dynamic classroom environment (Kapp, 2012).

In English language classrooms, gamification has shown considerable potential for improving vocabulary learning. Through games and interactive tasks, students have more opportunities to encounter new words, practice them in meaningful contexts, and receive immediate feedback. These features can support vocabulary retention and help learners develop a deeper understanding of word meanings. According to Gee (2003), game-based learning environments encourage active participation, problem-solving, and continuous learning through meaningful experiences. Similarly, Hamari, Koivisto, and Sarsa (2014) reported that gamification can enhance motivation and engagement when game elements are appropriately designed and implemented.



Despite the growing interest in gamification, many English classrooms still rely mainly on conventional instructional approaches, and teachers may lack sufficient knowledge about how to effectively integrate gamified activities into vocabulary instruction. Moreover, some students continue to experience low motivation and limited vocabulary development due to insufficient interactive learning opportunities. In this context, conducting classroom-based research is necessary to examine whether gamification can address these challenges and improve students' learning experiences.

Action research provides an effective approach for teachers who aim to investigate their own instructional practices and develop solutions for classroom problems. Through a systematic process of planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting, teachers can evaluate the effectiveness of new teaching strategies and make informed improvements (كاظمی، ۱۳۹۸). Therefore, this action research study focuses on using gamification to improve students' motivation and vocabulary learning in English language classrooms. The purpose of this study is to examine how the integration of game-based activities can influence students' engagement, interest, and vocabulary achievement, while providing practical insights for English teachers who seek to create more motivating and effective learning environments.

Literature Review

Research on teaching and learning English as a foreign language has increasingly focused on identifying effective strategies that can improve learners' motivation, engagement, and academic achievement. Among the different aspects of language learning, vocabulary acquisition has received significant attention because vocabulary knowledge serves as the foundation for developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Learners with limited vocabulary often experience difficulties in understanding texts, expressing ideas, and participating in communication activities. Therefore, effective vocabulary instruction has become a major concern for English language teachers and researchers (Nation, 2013).

Traditional approaches to vocabulary teaching have often emphasized memorization, repetition, and direct translation. Although these methods may help learners acquire some vocabulary items, they are sometimes insufficient for creating meaningful learning experiences and maintaining students' motivation. According to Dörnyei (2001), motivation is one of the most influential factors in second language learning because motivated learners demonstrate greater persistence, participation, and willingness to overcome learning difficulties. Consequently, researchers have attempted to introduce learner-centered approaches that can increase students' interest and involvement in language classrooms.

One of the innovative approaches that has gained attention in recent years is gamification. Gamification refers to the use of game elements, such as points, rewards, challenges, competition, and feedback mechanisms, in non-game contexts, including education. Kapp (2012) stated that



gamification can enhance learning by creating engaging environments in which students actively participate and receive continuous feedback about their progress. Unlike traditional classroom activities, gamified learning encourages learners to interact with content, collaborate with peers, and experience a sense of achievement.

Previous studies have examined the effectiveness of gamification in educational settings. Hamari, Koivisto, and Sarsa (2014) conducted a review of empirical studies and concluded that gamification generally has positive effects on motivation, engagement, and participation; however, the success of gamified learning depends on the appropriate selection and implementation of game elements. Deterding et al. (2011) emphasized that gamification is not simply the addition of games to education but rather the meaningful integration of game-based mechanisms to improve users' experiences and behaviors.

In the context of English language teaching, several researchers have investigated the role of gamification in improving vocabulary learning. Gee (2003) argued that games create learning environments where students actively construct knowledge through exploration, problem-solving, and interaction. These characteristics make gamified activities suitable for vocabulary instruction because learners can practice new words repeatedly in meaningful and enjoyable situations. Reinhardt (2019) also highlighted that digital games and gamified activities can support language learning by increasing communication opportunities, collaboration, and learner autonomy.

Studies conducted in different educational contexts have reported positive relationships between gamification and students' vocabulary development. For example, research by Hung (2017) showed that game-based vocabulary activities could increase learners' motivation and improve their vocabulary performance. Similarly, Zou (2019) found that integrating digital game elements into language instruction encouraged students' active participation and created a more positive attitude toward English learning.

In Iran, researchers have also focused on the effectiveness of interactive and technology-supported approaches in English language education.

Definition and Significance of the Topic

Gamification is an educational approach that involves the integration of game-based elements and mechanisms into non-game environments, such as classrooms, with the aim of increasing learners' motivation, engagement, and participation. These elements may include points, rewards, challenges, competition, levels, badges, immediate feedback, and opportunities for collaboration. Gamification does not mean simply turning education into a game; rather, it refers to the purposeful use of game characteristics to create more attractive and meaningful learning experiences. According to Deterding et al. (2011), gamification is the application of game design elements in non-game contexts to influence users' behaviors and increase their involvement. In educational



settings, this approach has been considered an effective strategy for encouraging active learning and improving students' attitudes toward academic activities (Kapp, 2012).

In English language classrooms, gamification has particular importance because language learning requires continuous practice, interaction, and learner involvement. Among different language components, vocabulary learning is one of the most essential areas because vocabulary knowledge directly affects learners' ability to understand and produce language. Nation (2013) emphasized that vocabulary development requires repeated exposure, meaningful practice, and active use of words in different situations. However, many students consider vocabulary learning a difficult and uninteresting activity when it is limited to memorization and traditional exercises. Therefore, using innovative methods such as gamification can make vocabulary learning more enjoyable and encourage students to participate more actively.

The importance of gamification in language education is also related to its positive influence on students' motivation. Motivation is a key factor in successful second language learning because motivated learners usually demonstrate greater effort, persistence, and willingness to participate in learning activities. Dörnyei (2001) stated that maintaining learners' motivation is one of the major challenges in language teaching, and teachers need to create supportive environments that encourage students' involvement. Gamified activities can increase students' motivation by providing clear goals, immediate feedback, a sense of achievement, and enjoyable learning experiences.

Furthermore, gamification can contribute to improving students' vocabulary retention by providing opportunities for repetition and meaningful interaction with new words. When learners encounter vocabulary through challenges, games, and collaborative tasks, they are more likely to remember and apply new words effectively. Gee (2003) argued that game-based learning environments promote active participation, problem-solving, and deeper understanding because learners are involved in meaningful activities rather than passive reception of information. Therefore, gamification can support both cognitive and emotional aspects of language learning.

The significance of this topic is also associated with the need to move from teacher-centered approaches toward more student-centered learning environments. In traditional classrooms, students may have limited opportunities to actively engage with learning materials, which can reduce their motivation and interest. Gamification provides teachers with practical tools to design interactive activities that address learners' different needs and learning styles. According to Hamari, Koivisto, and Sarsa (2014), properly designed gamification strategies can enhance engagement and motivation, although their effectiveness depends on appropriate implementation.

Discussion



The findings of this action research study highlight the potential effectiveness of gamification as an innovative instructional approach for improving students' motivation and vocabulary learning in English language classrooms. The use of game elements, including challenges, rewards, competition, and immediate feedback, created a more interactive and engaging learning environment in which students showed greater willingness to participate in classroom activities. These results support previous research indicating that gamification can positively influence learners' motivation by increasing their sense of involvement, enjoyment, and achievement during the learning process (Kapp, 2012).

One of the main outcomes of implementing gamification was the improvement in students' motivation toward learning English vocabulary. In traditional vocabulary instruction, students may often perceive learning new words as a repetitive and demanding task, which can decrease their interest and active participation. However, gamified activities changed students' perceptions by transforming vocabulary practice into an enjoyable and meaningful experience. This finding is consistent with Dörnyei (2001), who emphasized that motivation is a central factor in second language learning and that teachers should create supportive environments that encourage learners' engagement and persistence.

The positive effect of gamification on vocabulary learning can be explained by the active involvement it encourages among learners. Through game-based activities, students had opportunities to repeatedly encounter and use new vocabulary items in different contexts. Repetition combined with meaningful practice can improve vocabulary retention and help learners establish stronger connections between words and their meanings. This finding is in line with Nation (2013), who stated that effective vocabulary acquisition requires multiple exposures to words and opportunities for active use. Therefore, gamification can provide an effective framework for overcoming some limitations of traditional vocabulary teaching methods.

Another important aspect of the findings is the role of immediate feedback and reward systems in supporting students' learning processes. Game elements such as points, levels, and recognition of achievement helped students monitor their progress and develop a stronger sense of confidence. When learners receive positive feedback and observe their improvement, they are more likely to continue participating and making efforts to overcome learning challenges. This result corresponds with the ideas of Gee (2003), who argued that game-based environments promote learning through continuous feedback, problem-solving, and active participation.

The findings also demonstrate that gamification can contribute to creating a student-centered classroom environment. Instead of being passive receivers of information, students became active participants who collaborated with classmates, competed in friendly ways, and engaged more deeply with learning tasks. Hamari, Koivisto, and Sarsa (2014) similarly reported that gamification can enhance engagement and motivation when game elements are appropriately designed and connected to educational goals. However, they also emphasized that the effectiveness of gamification depends on how teachers implement and manage these activities.



The results of this study are also consistent with findings from Iranian educational research.

Methodology

This study employed an action research design to investigate the effect of gamification on students' motivation and vocabulary learning in English language classrooms. Action research was selected because it enables teachers to examine their own instructional practices, identify classroom challenges, implement appropriate interventions, and evaluate the outcomes of those interventions. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), action research is a systematic process that includes planning, action, observation, and reflection, allowing educators to improve teaching and learning processes through continuous inquiry. Similarly, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) emphasized that action research provides practical solutions to educational problems by connecting theoretical knowledge with classroom experiences.

The participants of this study consisted of English language learners in a classroom setting who experienced difficulties related to vocabulary learning and maintaining motivation during English lessons. The participants were selected through purposeful sampling because the study focused on a specific classroom problem and aimed to improve the learning conditions of a particular group of students. Purposeful sampling is considered appropriate in action research because researchers select participants who can provide relevant information about the issue being investigated (Creswell, 2012).

The research process was conducted through several stages based on the principles of action research. In the first stage, the researcher identified students' problems regarding vocabulary learning and motivation through classroom observations, informal discussions, and reviewing students' learning performance. Initial observations indicated that some students had limited interest in vocabulary activities and experienced difficulties in remembering and applying new words. Therefore, gamification was selected as an instructional intervention to address these challenges.

During the intervention stage, different gamified activities were designed and implemented in English lessons. These activities included vocabulary games, point-based challenges, group competitions, rewards, quizzes, and interactive tasks. The purpose of these activities was to increase students' participation, provide opportunities for repeated vocabulary practice, and create a more enjoyable learning environment. According to Kapp (2012), effective gamification requires the purposeful integration of game elements with educational objectives rather than simply adding entertainment features to learning activities.

Data collection was carried out using multiple methods to increase the credibility of the findings. Classroom observations, students' participation records, learning activities, and teacher reflections were used as the main sources of data. In addition, students' feedback regarding their experiences



with gamified activities was considered to better understand the influence of gamification on their motivation and vocabulary learning. Using multiple sources of data is recommended in qualitative and action research studies because it improves the accuracy and reliability of interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The collected data were analyzed qualitatively through organizing, reviewing, and interpreting classroom evidence. The researcher examined changes in students' participation, interest, confidence, and vocabulary performance throughout the intervention period. Reflection was an essential part of the analysis process because it allowed the teacher-researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented strategies and identify areas for improvement. As Burns (2010) explained, reflection is a fundamental component of action research because it helps teachers understand the impact of their instructional decisions and develop more effective teaching practices.

Research Instruments

To collect the required data in this action research study, several qualitative and classroom-based instruments were used to examine the effect of gamification on students' motivation and vocabulary learning in English language classrooms. Since the purpose of action research is to understand and improve classroom practices, using multiple data collection tools allows the researcher to obtain a deeper understanding of students' learning experiences and changes during the instructional process. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the use of different research instruments in qualitative studies increases the credibility of findings by providing various perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation.

The first instrument used in this study was classroom observation. Observation enabled the researcher to directly examine students' behaviors, participation levels, interaction patterns, and reactions toward gamified vocabulary activities. Through systematic observation, changes in students' motivation, cooperation, confidence, and willingness to participate were recorded during the implementation of gamification strategies. Burns (2010) stated that classroom observation is one of the most important tools in action research because it provides researchers with direct evidence of classroom processes and learners' responses.

The second instrument was teacher reflective notes and a research journal. Throughout the research process, the teacher recorded observations, experiences, challenges, and reflections related to the implementation of gamified activities. These reflective records helped the researcher evaluate the effectiveness of instructional strategies and identify necessary improvements. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), reflection is a central component of action research because it allows teachers to analyze their actions and make informed decisions for improving educational practices.



Another instrument used in this study was students' learning activities and performance records. Students' participation in vocabulary games, completion of tasks, responses to activities, and progress in vocabulary exercises were examined to identify changes in their learning outcomes. These records provided evidence regarding the effectiveness of gamification in improving vocabulary acquisition. Nation (2013) emphasized that vocabulary assessment should consider learners' ability to recognize, understand, and use new words in meaningful contexts rather than relying only on memorization tests.

In addition, students' feedback and informal interviews were used as a data collection tool. Students were encouraged to express their opinions about gamified activities, including their feelings, level of interest, perceived difficulties, and learning experiences. Collecting students' perspectives helped the researcher understand how gamification influenced their motivation and attitudes toward English vocabulary learning. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), interviews and learners' feedback are valuable instruments in educational research because they provide insight into participants' experiences and perceptions.

The selection of these instruments was based on the nature of action research and the objectives of the study. Using observation, reflective journals, students' performance records, and feedback allowed the researcher to collect comprehensive data about both motivational and learning aspects of gamification. Kapp (2012) highlighted that evaluating gamified learning environments requires attention not only to academic outcomes but also to learners' engagement, enjoyment, and participation.

Limitations and Challenges

Although the findings of this action research indicate the positive effects of gamification on students' motivation and vocabulary learning, several limitations and challenges should be considered when interpreting the results. One of the main limitations of this study is related to the research design. Since action research is usually conducted within a specific classroom context and focuses on solving a particular educational problem, the findings may not be fully generalized to all English language learners and different educational settings. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative and action research studies provide deep understanding of specific situations; however, their results are often influenced by the characteristics of participants, learning environments, and research contexts.

Another limitation concerns the duration of the intervention. The effectiveness of gamification may require a longer period of implementation to produce stable and measurable changes in students' vocabulary development and motivation. Short-term classroom interventions may demonstrate immediate improvements in students' interest and participation, but long-term effects on vocabulary retention and language proficiency require further investigation. Nation (2013)



emphasized that vocabulary development is a gradual process that requires continuous exposure, repeated practice, and sustained learning opportunities.

A further challenge was related to the different levels of students' familiarity and interest in game-based activities. While many students responded positively to gamification, some learners may have different preferences and may not be equally motivated by competitive or reward-based activities. Excessive emphasis on competition can sometimes create anxiety among students who have lower confidence or weaker language abilities. Deterding et al. (2011) pointed out that gamification should be carefully designed to support learning goals rather than focusing only on entertainment or competition.

The implementation of gamification also requires sufficient preparation, time, and technological resources. Teachers may face difficulties in designing appropriate games, selecting suitable activities, and managing classroom time effectively. In some educational contexts, limited access to digital tools, lack of technological support, or insufficient teacher training may prevent successful implementation of gamified strategies. Kapp (2012) argued that the effectiveness of gamification depends largely on teachers' ability to integrate game elements with educational objectives in a meaningful way.

Another challenge is related to teachers' acceptance and readiness to use innovative teaching approaches. Some teachers may prefer traditional methods because they are more familiar and easier to manage, while others may lack confidence in designing and applying gamified activities. Therefore, professional development and training programs are necessary to help teachers understand the principles of gamification and use it effectively in language classrooms. According to Hamari, Koivisto, and Sarsa (2014), inappropriate selection or poor implementation of game elements can reduce the effectiveness of gamification and may even negatively influence learners' experiences.

Findings

The findings of this action research study revealed that the implementation of gamification in English language classrooms had positive effects on students' motivation and vocabulary learning. The analysis of classroom observations, students' performance records, reflective notes, and learners' feedback indicated noticeable changes in students' participation, interest, and engagement during vocabulary activities. Before the implementation of gamified activities, some students showed limited motivation toward vocabulary learning and often considered vocabulary exercises repetitive and challenging. However, after integrating game-based strategies, students demonstrated greater enthusiasm and willingness to participate in classroom tasks.

One of the main findings was the improvement in students' motivation toward learning English vocabulary. During the implementation of gamification activities, students actively participated in



challenges, group competitions, and vocabulary games. They showed increased confidence in using new words and were more willing to collaborate with their classmates. The presence of rewards, immediate feedback, and achievable goals encouraged students to continue their efforts and become more involved in the learning process. This finding is consistent with Dörnyei (2001), who emphasized that motivational strategies and supportive classroom environments play an important role in increasing learners' commitment and persistence in second language learning.

Another important finding was the improvement in students' vocabulary acquisition and retention. Classroom evidence showed that students were able to recognize and use newly learned words more effectively after participating in gamified activities. The repeated exposure to vocabulary items through games, quizzes, and interactive tasks helped students remember words more easily and apply them in meaningful contexts. This result supports Nation's (2013) view that successful vocabulary learning requires repeated encounters with words and opportunities for active practice.

The findings also indicated that gamification contributed to creating a more positive classroom atmosphere. Students experienced vocabulary learning as an enjoyable and meaningful activity rather than a difficult memorization task. They expressed positive attitudes toward the use of games and interactive activities, stating that these methods made English lessons more interesting and encouraged them to participate more actively. This finding aligns with Gee (2003), who suggested that game-based learning environments promote active engagement, problem-solving, and deeper learning experiences.

Furthermore, the results showed that gamification increased interaction and cooperation among students. Group-based games and collaborative challenges encouraged learners to communicate with peers, share knowledge, and support each other during learning activities. The classroom environment became more student-centered, and students had more opportunities to take an active role in the learning process. Similar findings were reported by Hamari, Koivisto, and Sarsa (2014), who concluded that well-designed gamification strategies can enhance learner engagement and participation.

The findings also revealed that immediate feedback was one of the most effective elements of gamification. Students appreciated receiving quick information about their performance and progress, as it helped them identify their strengths and weaknesses. This continuous feedback encouraged students to correct mistakes and improve their vocabulary knowledge. According to Kapp (2012), feedback mechanisms are among the important features of gamification because they increase learners' awareness of their progress and maintain their motivation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this action research study, several recommendations can be proposed for English language teachers, educational planners, and future researchers. The results indicated that



gamification can be an effective approach for increasing students' motivation and improving vocabulary learning; therefore, it is recommended that English teachers consider integrating appropriate game-based elements into their instructional practices. Using elements such as challenges, rewards, points, interactive tasks, and immediate feedback can help create a more engaging classroom environment and encourage students' active participation. According to Kapp (2012), gamification is most effective when game elements are purposefully connected to learning objectives rather than being used only for entertainment purposes.

It is recommended that teachers design gamified activities based on students' educational needs, language levels, and learning preferences. Since learners differ in their interests and abilities, selecting suitable games and challenges is essential for ensuring that all students benefit from the learning process. Teachers should avoid excessive competition and focus more on cooperation, creativity, and personal progress. Deterding et al. (2011) emphasized that successful gamification requires thoughtful design in which game elements support learners' engagement and meaningful participation.

English teachers are also encouraged to use a combination of traditional and gamified teaching methods instead of completely replacing existing instructional strategies. Gamification can be used as a complementary approach to reinforce vocabulary practice, increase repetition, and provide opportunities for communication. Nation (2013) highlighted that vocabulary learning requires continuous exposure and meaningful use; therefore, gamified activities should be designed to provide learners with repeated opportunities to encounter and apply new vocabulary.

Another recommendation is related to teacher training and professional development. Educational institutions should provide workshops and training programs to familiarize teachers with the principles of gamification and practical methods for implementing it in language classrooms. Many teachers may recognize the importance of innovative methods but may face challenges in designing and managing gamified activities. According to Hamari, Koivisto, and Sarsa (2014), the effectiveness of gamification depends largely on appropriate implementation and teachers' ability to select suitable game mechanisms.

It is also recommended that schools and educational organizations provide necessary facilities and technological support for implementing gamification-based learning activities. Access to digital tools, educational software, and appropriate learning resources can expand teachers' possibilities for creating interactive learning experiences. However, even without advanced technology, teachers can use simple classroom games, group challenges, and creative activities to apply gamification principles effectively.

For future research, it is suggested that similar studies be conducted with larger groups of participants and in different educational contexts to examine the generalizability of findings. Future researchers can also investigate the long-term effects of gamification on vocabulary retention and other language skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing.



Furthermore, comparative studies between traditional teaching methods and different types of gamified approaches can provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of various instructional strategies.

Finally, it is recommended that future studies examine students' individual differences, such as learning styles, attitudes, and levels of motivation, to determine which types of gamification strategies are most effective for different groups of learners. Understanding these differences can help teachers design more personalized and effective learning experiences. As Dörnyei (2001) stated, motivation is a complex and dynamic factor in language learning, and successful teaching approaches should consider learners' personal characteristics and needs.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that gamification can serve as a valuable educational strategy for improving motivation and vocabulary learning in English language classrooms. With careful planning, appropriate implementation, and continuous reflection, teachers can use gamification to create more active, enjoyable, and effective learning environments.

Conclusion



This action research study examined the effectiveness of gamification in improving students' motivation and vocabulary learning in English language classrooms. The findings indicate that integrating game elements into classroom instruction can create a more engaging, interactive, and learner-centered environment that encourages students to participate actively in the learning process. By incorporating activities such as vocabulary games, challenges, rewards, and collaborative tasks, students became more interested in learning English and demonstrated greater enthusiasm for classroom participation.

The study also revealed that gamification contributed positively to vocabulary acquisition by providing repeated exposure to new words in meaningful and enjoyable contexts. Students were more willing to practice vocabulary, interact with classmates, and apply newly learned words during classroom activities. Immediate feedback and achievement-based rewards increased learners' confidence and encouraged them to continue improving their language skills. These findings suggest that gamification not only enhances students' motivation but also supports more effective vocabulary retention and classroom engagement.

Another important conclusion is that the success of gamification depends on thoughtful planning and effective classroom management. Game elements should be carefully aligned with instructional objectives to ensure that learning remains the primary focus. Teachers play a crucial role in selecting appropriate activities, maintaining a balance between enjoyment and educational value, and adapting gamified strategies to students' learning needs and proficiency levels. When implemented appropriately, gamification can transform traditional vocabulary instruction into a dynamic learning experience that promotes active participation and meaningful learning.

Although this study demonstrated encouraging results, it also highlighted the importance of considering classroom conditions, available resources, and individual learner differences when applying gamification. Factors such as limited instructional time, differences in students' abilities, and teachers' familiarity with innovative teaching methods may influence the effectiveness of gamified instruction. Therefore, continuous professional development and careful instructional planning are essential for achieving successful outcomes.

Overall, this study concludes that gamification is a valuable instructional strategy for English language classrooms. It has the potential to increase students' motivation, improve vocabulary learning, strengthen classroom interaction, and create a positive learning atmosphere. The findings provide practical evidence that incorporating game-based elements into vocabulary instruction can enhance both students' learning experiences and academic performance. Consequently, English language teachers are encouraged to integrate well-designed gamification strategies into their teaching practices to support meaningful, enjoyable, and effective language learning.

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