DETERMINING GAMIFICATION ELEMENTS THROUGH EXPERTS' PERSPECTIVES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract: This paper explores experts' opinions and perspectives from two fields of study, namely English language teaching and instructional technology, in determining the key gamification elements or essentials needed to teach pre-university students in their English language classrooms. Four (4) experts experienced in teaching and evaluating pre-university were chosen, two from respective fields of English language teaching and instructional technology. A series of interviews were conducted to gain the opinions and perspectives on implementing gamification in the English language classroom. Based on their findings, they discussed the fundamentals of applying gamification, particularly how to attract students to utilise the pedagogical aspect. A prompt list of instructions was provided by the experts based on their experiences on how to make the approach more effective and enhance students' focus and English language skills in the classroom to be implemented in the real world. The paper's conclusion outlines the practical ramifications and offers ideas for further research.

Keywords: Gamification, Perspectives, English Language, Classroom, Pre-University Students, Pedagogical Approach

INTRODUCTION

As agreed by Rao (2019), the most widely used language in the world in various fields and functions is the English language, and due to said fact, it is prominent to deduce that the English language is considered the first global *lingua franca* – a status of a pioneering global language. Rao (2019) then concluded that since English carries the responsibility of *lingua franca,* it has become a primary language in the exchange of communication and information in professional settings and educational institutions, despite the backgrounds of speakers considering the nativity of one's language. English, or any other language in the world, needs a proper understanding of the utility of the language itself to avoid any misunderstandings. It is equally important to be skilful in comprehension when the conversation is being done, or in other words, a good comprehension skill. Since English is being used in almost every part of the world, it is important to teach and assist in the acquisition and comprehension of the English language for students, especially those who are not native speakers of English. In many countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, the English language is a compulsory subject that must be taught in schools up until their tertiary education to ensure students have a good amount of comprehension of the said language for them to continue their studies and, of course, compete with other people in the real world.

To accommodate the ever-changing situation of pedagogical practices in education, the notion of using media and entertainment has been lingering in the minds of instructors in efforts to catch up with the futuristic pace. Parallel to this effort, students nowadays prefer to work and learn with the help of technology, paying great attention to the incorporation of media and entertainment within the ICT prospects. In addition to promoting academic excellence and enjoyment, including aspects of the interests of the younger generation into the curriculum may be a boosting agent in the academic performance of the students and may also assist teachers in the ease of teaching in the classroom. Al-Arif (2019) mentioned that utilising information and communication technologies (ICT) in language education has increased in the past years. One of the technologies discussed to be implemented in education is educational games, albeit online or offline. This process, however, is labelled as the "gamification" process. Prathyusha (2020) believed that one of the methods to improve one's language skills and growth is through the use of games as the elements of the games, such as challenges, rewards and objectives, act as factors to boost students' motivation and inspire the students. In the context of gamification, Prathyusha (2020) supported the

claim by adding that gamification or any game-based learning pedagogy, is a strategy quickly being adapted in the educational system to encourage students by enforcing game elements and design aspects into the educational system.

Hence, it is believed that the gamification process in educational settings for the English language may boost students' productivity and engagement in the classroom, but a good grasp of gamification elements is needed to ensure that the teaching and learning process is at ease.

The primary objective of this research is to determine the gamification elements with the help of perspectives of experts from the English language and instructional technology fields in regard to teaching pre-university students English comprehension in the classroom.

This research paper seeks to answer these three research questions:

1. What are the gamification elements for teaching English comprehension in the classroom?
2. What is the effectiveness of implementing gamification in the classroom?
3. What is the applicability of gamification to English language teaching and learning?

LITERATURE REVIEW

English Comprehension

Reading literacy is described as one's capability to contemplate, comprehend and utilise written language with the aim of societal activity engagements, increasing potential and knowledge, as well as catering for their aims. Carroll (1993), David (1944, 1968) and Thorndike (1973), as cited by Oakhill et al. (2019), concluded that having the power to comprehend a text without any errors is dependent on the situation in which one possesses a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of lexical semantics within the text. Caccamise and Snyder (2005) noted that comprehension, in theory, is that one must first understand certain concepts of how language users interpret meanings cognitively. Though initially, it is not required to understand every word that exists. However, this can be measured to a certain degree since the meanings of unfamiliar words can always be deduced based on contextual cues of the reading material. Humans tend to acquire more vocabulary knowledge when engaged in reading activities (Oakhill et al., 2019).

Smith et al. (2021) mentioned that reading is an intuitive process that requires the readers to use their skills in reading and utilise cognitive processes concerning the linguistic elements read. Extensive vocabulary knowledge is not enough for the reading process if it means the period to comprehend the meaning of certain words is long. A higher standard of meeting demands is necessary to obtain the content foundation due to additional demands of making hypotheses based on the inability to understand a text's coherence, which then results in the lowering level availability of workable memory to activate weak schemata. This phenomenon reduces one's comprehension (Smith et al., 2021).

Gamification in Education

Elaish et al. (2019) delivered how games generally act as valuable tools in the education system, assisting in the teaching and learning process of a certain skill, comprehending information and boosting interests, leading to improved educational results. The "gamification" term is vast and various, but to define gamification is the process of the creation and designing of a game, involving game elements or principles such as rewards, leaderboards, scores and profiles to transform a non-game situation into something more similar to using real games. Based on a particular point of view, this definition defines what makes a game "essentialism". This perspective holds that a set of qualities determines the game's functions.

According to Kirriemuir and McFarlane (2004), there are three (3) main themes in games for education research: the creation and use of gaming elements in education, the integration of gaming mechanics in education, and the effects of gaming elements on education. The topics and efficacy of the game itself may alter because of the accelerated growth of research on gamification for education. For effective teaching and learning experience, these elements must be included, particularly when using technology in the classroom and observing the students and the process itself. The list of bases practitioners should include in gamified learning is: good gaming mechanisms

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(points, scores, leaderboards, buffs, etc.) that will engage with users, while poor gaming elements lead to lower chances of achieving educational goals in the games. Other than that, having reward systems such as awards or penalties may boost the user's motivation and push the students to be more engaged in the classroom. Serious games may help with knowledge transfer because of their adaptive design process, quick feedback, demands, and ongoing use of the intended audience system by potential users during the game creation process.

Therefore, the purpose of the paper is to determine the game mechanisms or elements needed to be incorporated into the pedagogical practices for English language learning and enhancing English comprehension skills for pre-university students, via experts' perspectives.

METHODOLOGY

This paper used a qualitative method, using a set of interviews with four (4) experts, two of each from different fields of English language and instructional technology. The experts are chosen from their expertise in the English language and instructional technology in education with pre-university students. A timetable for interviewing the four experts about gamification in English language instruction was agreed upon by the researchers and the teachers.

The interview strategy was used since a questionnaire was unable to provide the researchers with the detailed and particular information they sought.

1. Tenure in service for experts (years)

Table 1.
Experts' Tenure Service Terms Distribution (Years)

Highest Degree	Frequency n=4	Percentage (%)
21 and above	2	50
20 and below	2	50

SOURCE = Field survey 2023

2. Highest degree program obtained by experts

Table 2.
Experts' Highest Degree Program Obtained

Highest Degree	Frequency n=4	Percentage (%)
Doctorate degree (PhD)	3	75%
Master's degree	1	25%

SOURCE = Field survey 2023

FINDINGS

The researchers divided their conclusions into three primary categories based on the data:

- Gamification elements for teaching English
- Perceptions on the effectiveness of gamification in the classroom
- Perceptions of gamification application with English language teaching and learning

Gamification Elements for Teaching English

The first analysed data is determining gamification elements to be applied in the teaching and learning process for the English language. Experts believe that the elements should be interactive, mobile, available reasoning or feedback, have a reward system, good game designs and user experience, and be accessible for both teachers and students.

"The games should be exciting to students, to younger generations—it should be interactive. It should also be mobile, so that we don't have to be in the same venue to conduct games." (Expert 1, 2023)

"They should also give reasoning, not just answer questions…And there should always be a reflection on why the students had actually answered" (Expert 2, 2023)

"…giving rewards and incentives, also punishments…When talking about competitions, it is quite relevant to the cognitive domains by using rewards and points, or badges and leaderboards." (Expert 3, 2023)

"…The game design, game contexts and user experience on that game are all important when utilising gamification…" (Expert 4, 2023)

Perception On the Effectiveness of Gamification in The Classroom

As for the effectiveness of gamification in the classroom, the experts express their opinions and perspectives on the effectiveness of applying gamification in the classroom. The experts believe that instructors take note of the students' progress based on their marks, in the end, to analyse students' performance at the end of the quiz or assessment, followed by a series of discussions after the assessment. The results can also be measured using game learning analytics. However, an expert pointed out that the experts should not depend on results as students may make mistakes through intelligent guesses.

"…I would take note based on their marks that they receive…I would take note based on their marks that they receive" (Expert 1, 2023)

"…we can analyse students' performance at the end of the quiz to see their progress and then we can give the students feedback." (Expert 3, 2023)

"…We can use and measure them using game learning analytics" (Expert 4, 2023)

"*I will not just depend on marks they get at the end because sometimes some may just be just answering it and they tend to make intelligent guesses"* (Expert 2, 2023)

Perceptions of Gamification Application with English Language Teaching and Learning

The experts are questioned about their perceptions of gamification application in English language teaching and learning. Three experts remain positive concerning applying gamification in the classroom, with one expert opinionating that gamification is only a tool for facilitating education and not an assessment tool. The three experts mentioned that gamification is possible with proper training for instructors before applying the method in the classroom. Gamification is a suitable tool to increase students' language proficiency & skills with low and high technology. It is also suitable and should be used in children's early education.

*"Yes, the usage of gamification in education is possible to help students increase their cognitive skills. "(*Expert 1, 2023)

"Yes, it is possible…So, each question can reflect which domain of Bloom's taxonomy, especially for quizzes used via gamification." (Expert 3, 2023)

"However, if most of the students in the class are not tech-savvy, we can apply low tech gamification solutions or non-tech gamification solutions…we can adjust applying gamification without tech tools…it does not mean that we need to use digital components when teaching." (Expert 3, 2023)

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"That is why we have to start applying gamification in education in primary schools…However, before applying any gamification efforts, the educators or teachers must be trained by higher authorities or by the Ministry of Education themselves…" (Expert 4, 2023)

"For me, it is just a form of an approach or a method of teaching, or maybe to get feedback at the end of the lesson…So, I guess I still feel that gamification cannot be an assessment tool". (Expert 2, 2023)

DISCUSSION

To effectively include gamification in the design of pedagogical practice, we must be able to comprehend the frequent problems that experts and students encounter during the work. The specialists were tasked with compiling a list of frequent problems with gamification in education, theoretically and practically. Each of the four specialists has unique perspectives on the matter, leading to the implications of gamification in the classroom.

Experts held the opinion that for gamification to be successfully implemented in the classroom, the pedagogical tool for gamification itself needs to be engaging for the students to prevent boredom or confusion. Friendly competitions featuring components like prizes and penalties are just one of the many activities that may be generated from the idea of gamification and the English language. Gamification should be enjoyable. In this manner, it will assist the students in developing their cognitive abilities and gaining a deeper understanding of how a work of literature functions.

Whether or not technology is used in the teaching and learning process, one of the most important aspects is assessing students' performance by looking at their responses and how well they comprehend the assignments. Gamification is no exception; teachers and experts must still consider the performance of their pupils to improve their content and try new ways to support them.

The experts emphasised how crucial it is to use the pupils' performance when completing the gamification activities. Regarding the aforementioned discussion session, experts believed it would be preferable if students could comprehend why they selected a specific response and how to communicate their responses concerning the questions they were given. Experts emphasised the value of the gamification tool's game-learning statistics as well. Using gamification learning analytics, teachers can monitor and assess students' responses, performance, and behaviour based on the provided information. Instructors can use learning analytics to undertake in-depth assessments of their students' performance and to guide discussions based on the insights gleaned from the analytics data.

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