



(Enhancing English Language Skills through Gamification: A Case Study at Umm Al Quwain University)

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Abstract

This research investigates the effectiveness of gamification strategies in enhancing English language skills among first-year students in the College of Business Administration at Umm Al Quwain University, United Arab Emirates. The study encompasses a comprehensive assessment of language learning, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, and adopts a dual perspective by considering both teacher and student feedback.

The research findings reveal significant positive impacts of gamification on English language learning. After the implementation of gamification, student motivation increased by 93%, driven by a competitive gaming environment. Speaking skills improved by 100%, breaking down barriers to speaking English in public. Listening skills advanced by 86.7% due to diverse daily media within the game, while writing skills improved by 73.3% through daily writing assignments. Additionally, reading skills saw an 80% enhancement, attributed to the inclusion of various articles within the game. Furthermore, the gamification approach facilitated the acquisition of a greater vocabulary and information, underscoring its efficacy in promoting engaging and effective learning experiences.

The research recommends raising awareness through seminars and workshops among course designers about the benefits of gamification in education. Furthermore, integrating gamification into e-learning programs is encouraged, as is the application of gamification techniques in teaching various courses, especially those related to language education. Finally, the research underscores the importance of incorporating educational game design principles and standards in the approval process for educational games to ensure alignment with educational objectives.

Keywords: *Gamification - English Language Learning - Motivation - Language Skills*

Introduction

Gamification is an emerging educational and instructional approach aimed at stimulating students' learning by incorporating game elements into learning environments, with the objective of enhancing enjoyment and engagement while capturing learners' interest to foster continued learning. Al-Ghamdi (2019) defines gamification as "the application of game

elements in non-game contexts to enhance user behavior."

According to Zichermann, G., & Cunningham, C. (2011), gamification involves "engaging users in game-like practice and problem-solving." It refers to "the introduction or utilization of game components in other domains," particularly the application of these elements

in the field of education, as elucidated in the Oxford report.

Gamification, as a tool, is used to motivate individuals and keep them engaged in facing challenges while encouraging them to achieve goals (Pelling, 2011). The term 'gamification' was first coined in 2002 and its strategic use began in 2014, as affirmed in the book "Gamification in Education and Business," published in 2015. The term 'gamification' has since found application in various fields, including media, training, education, and healthcare.

To effectively implement and apply gamification, adherence to fundamental game rules, commonly used in traditional or digital board games, is crucial. These rules encompass achievement, motivation, challenge, narrative, rewards, and penalties. When creating a game, a story should be established within which participants are addressed to achieve specific objectives. Upon completion of these achievements, participants can be rewarded, or if objectives are not met, penalties may apply. However, merely applying these mechanisms and enforcing all the rules is not sufficient. The game must be made more engaging. For instance, badges can be created, participants can be ranked with unique ranks, and a leaderboard can be established to support the idea and motivate participants. Additionally, the game should not only consist of abstract rules or rewards but also incorporate tangible badges or bonuses, with a system for ranking and announcement through print media, or the creation of a unique mobile application.

The key attraction factor in gamification as a novel educational approach lies in the freedom granted to both students and instructors. Massachusetts Institute of Technology coined this concept as the "Four Freedoms of Play," which includes "freedom to fail," allowing errors without severe consequences, "freedom to different identities," encouraging players to explore diverse and distinct identities, "freedom to experiment," permitting players to engage in various experiences, and "freedom to exert effort," allowing players to undergo multiple stages of intense activity. These freedoms create a motivational environment that aids students in studying.

1. Research problem

Students suffer from traditional education that relies on rote memorization and neglects the knowledge acquisition and exploration aspects of learning. This leads to a lack of motivation and a noticeable weakness in students' English language proficiency. This deficiency is closely associated with the learning style and lack of motivation. In the current era of technology, students continuously utilize their smartphones and computers, spending a significant amount of time engaged in electronic gaming without boredom. Therefore, it was imperative to harness their knowledge and enthusiasm in using smartphones and

computers for educational purposes, thereby enhancing their motivation to learn and improving their English language proficiency.

The research problem emerged due to the stark differences between traditional teaching methods and the gamification strategy. Consequently, it was necessary to study the effectiveness of implementing the gamification strategy in English language learning.

The research problem can be formulated in the following question:

What is the effectiveness of implementing the gamification strategy in enhancing English language skills among students at the Umm Al Quwain University?

2. Research Questions

What is the impact of implementing the gamification strategy on the acquisition of English language skills, including writing, reading, listening, and speaking, among students at the Umm Al Quwain University?

What is the effect of applying the gamification strategy on increasing motivation and enthusiasm for learning the English language among students at the Umm Al Quwain University?

3. Research Objectives

Investigating the impact and effectiveness of implementing the gamification strategy on English language learning, encompassing its four skills (writing, reading, listening, speaking), among first-year students in the College of Business Administration at the Umm Al Quwain University.

Assessing the extent of the effectiveness of applying the gamification strategy in enhancing motivation and enthusiasm for learning the English language among students at the Umm Al Quwain University.

4. The significance of the research:

Providing a contemporary study on the effectiveness of implementing the gamification strategy in English language learning, encompassing all four language skills: writing, reading, listening, and speaking, among students at the Umm Al Quwain University.

Guiding curriculum designers for English language teaching towards the necessity of incorporating engaging strategies, such as gamification activities, to enhance students' motivation for language learning.

Assisting English language educators in fulfilling their teaching responsibilities by offering instructional lessons employing the gamification strategy. This strategy creates a more positive learning environment for both the teacher and the learner.

Aiding researchers and individuals interested in the field of English language teaching in developing educational materials that utilize gamification as a means to foster motivation for English language learning.

5. Research limitations

Sample : This study focuses on evaluating the effectiveness and impact of gamification technology in

enhancing English language skills among students in the College of Business Administration at the Umm Al Quwain University.

Geographical Scope: The study is conducted within the College of Business Administration at the Umm Al Quwain University, which is located in the United Arab Emirates.

Timeframe: The research experiment is applied to the research sample during the first semester of the academic year 2021/2022.

Human Scope: The study's participants include first-year students in the College of Business Administration at the Umm Al Quwain University, totaling 30 students.

6. Concepts and procedural terms of research

Traditional Education: Education is rooted in traditional culture, emphasizing the production of knowledge using old-fashioned tools and teaching methods, such as delivering curriculum content to students through rote learning. It also involves the use of traditional educational tools like textbooks, blackboards, and pens.

E-Learning: Methods that rely on technology to efficiently convey information to students in the shortest possible time and with minimal effort, aiming to provide the highest educational value.

Gamification: The application of game elements in non-game contexts with the goal of improving user behavior.

Four English Language Skills: English language skills are divided into four macro skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Motivation: An internal desire that guides the behavior of English language learners to make sincere efforts in language acquisition. It includes persistence in learning the language and a desire to achieve a prominent level of proficiency. It is measured procedurally by the level of motivation a student attains as assessed by the researcher's motivation scale.

Review of Related Literature

1. Previous studies:

Alomari, Islam & Al-Samarraie, Hosam & Yousef, Reem. (2019): This study conducted a review of forty previous studies on the role of gamification techniques in enhancing student learning. The results indicated that gamification techniques transformed the way students learn. Data analysis was presented in the form of a bar chart displaying gamification techniques, including points, badges, leaderboards, levels, rewards, progress bar challenges, feedback, and avatars. The top three techniques with the highest percentages were points (75%), badges (68%), and leaderboards (38%). Points were suggested to motivate students to engage in enthusiastic sharing networks, while badges and leaderboards encouraged social interaction among students, fostering positive attitudes in their performance. Although other gamification techniques

were less commonly used in enhancing students' performance in learning English, they still contributed to motivating students to learn.

Mikasyte (2018): This study examined six gamified educational environments, including an English problem-solving listening game, an AR-based task-oriented educational game, an AR-based self-directed learning game, the Happy English Language Learning System, and the OpenSimulator Project-CLLiOP developed for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). The results showed that students who played these educational games achieved significantly better results than those who received traditional English language instruction. Gamified learning reduced the number of instructions and focused more on self-regulated learning. Consequently, gamified educational systems empowered learners to take control of their learning process and enhanced 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, information literacy, ICT literacy, adaptability, initiative, and self-direction.

Mufidah (2016): This study investigated the impact of gamification on English language comprehension and grammar understanding. The research was conducted at Widya Mandala Catholic University in Surabaya in 2016. The study focused on whether game-based learning would reduce foreign language learning anxiety and enhance grammatical achievement among students at Stix Surabaya preparing for English language proficiency tests. The results indicated that game-based learning had a positive effect on learners, promoting their engagement and improving their grammatical skills. The enjoyable learning activities used in the study effectively enhanced students' grammar skills and participation in the preparatory class, reducing their anxiety based on Young's Five Foreign Language Anxiety aspects.

Michael & Jesse (2015): The aim of this study was to determine how gamification can be used to enhance student engagement in the classroom. Students were assessed twice during a 16-week semester, measuring motivation, effort, satisfaction, learner empowerment, and academic success. One course was given as an innovative curriculum with gamification components, while the other received the same core curriculum without gamification elements. The results showed that students who participated in the gamified course initially demonstrated higher motivation, satisfaction, and empowerment. However, these effects diminished over time compared to the non-gamified group. The type of curriculum moderated the effect on students' final exam scores through students' levels of self-motivation, with the gamified course students showing lower motivation and lower final exam scores than the other group.

Banat (2009): From the perspective of English language teachers, this study aimed to identify the role

of educational games in enhancing students' attitudes towards learning English. The study focused on determining whether game-based learning could reduce foreign language learning anxiety and enhance grammatical achievement among students. The results indicated that educational games had a significant positive impact on students' attitudes towards learning English in an engaging and creative way. The study recommended the use of more rigorous educational games to maintain long-term learning motivation and integrate real-life experiences into the learning process.

Martínez, Taillefer and Lidia (2022): The study's primary aim is to assess the efficacy of gamification as an active teaching methodology for English language instruction, specifically focusing on students pursuing a BA in Translation and Interpreting at the University of Malaga, Spain. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research collects both quantitative and qualitative data from students, revealing that gamification yields positive impacts on the learning process by enhancing student motivation in the classroom.

The evolution of technology has presented several challenges to the educational process, calling for the digitization of educational materials and methodologies to modernize the entire education system and achieve better, positive outcomes that facilitate effective learning. In the era of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution and its pervasive impact across various domains, coupled with the availability of digital resources and electronic systems, a reevaluation of traditional pedagogical methods became imperative to align with future aspirations. After a comprehensive examination of traditional and electronic teaching strategies, it becomes evident that the educational process has undergone transitional phases to adapt to the rapid changes imposed by the requirements of the contemporary era. This adaptation has entailed substantial alterations in pedagogical approaches.

Traditional education is defined as an approach that relies on traditional culture and places emphasis on knowledge production using conventional tools and teaching methods. It involves instructing students through curriculum delivery and content dissemination, often employing antiquated educational tools such as textbooks, blackboards, and writing instruments. Regardless of age, cognitive ability, or capacity, traditional education is a methodology rooted in three fundamental pillars: the teacher, the student, and the information.

On the other hand, electronic educational methods, in their various forms, represent approaches grounded in technology for the efficient transfer of information to students in the shortest possible time, with minimal effort, and yielding the highest educational value. Several types of electronic teaching methodologies

exist, with one of the most prominent being gamification.

This transition from traditional to electronic education underscores the paramount importance of harnessing technology and innovative methods to meet the evolving needs of contemporary education. It has not only influenced how educational content is delivered but has also redefined the roles of educators and learners. These changes signify a profound shift in the educational landscape, one that necessitates ongoing research and assessment to optimize the integration of technology and gamification strategies in the pursuit of enhanced learning outcomes. Consequently, this study seeks to explore the effectiveness of gamification in English language learning within the context of the Umm Al Quwain University's College of Business Administration, in response to the changing dynamics of education in the digital age.

2. The Emergence and Evolution of Gamification in Education:

Despite the recent proliferation of technology-related gamification applications, the use of reward and punishment systems has been a longstanding practice in various aspects of life since ancient times. The most common early examples of motivation, apart from games themselves, were in military contexts. When an individual becomes part of a military system, they are assigned titles or ranks (promotion) and receive rewards for achieving progress in their role. Conversely, they face disciplinary actions for engaging in negative behaviors. Such rules and management systems have been employed by the military to motivate soldiers and officers.

Gamification has also been used as an alternative to mechanical incentives to accomplish various tasks during the Soviet era (Sandusky, 2016). There is no doubt that gamification has been a presence in education, as it has consistently involved elements or mechanisms for providing rewards and incentives. However, with the advancement of technology, the concept of gamification has become strongly associated with technology, particularly in recent years. The purpose of applying gamification in education is to increase motivation and engagement in the learning process, impacting students positively (Oxford, 2016). Today, in large corporations, universities, and educational institutions, gamification is extensively employed to boost profits, enhance management skills, and facilitate learning. Gamification is an exceptionally critical field for exploration and the development of innovative solutions that emerge both before and during the implementation of this strategy. Consequently, it necessitates further academic research and experimentation.

3. Games for Motivation Enhancement:

Freiermuth, M. R., & Ito, M. (2022) proved that the game-based environment successfully motivated

students to engage more actively with their reading materials. Through activities that encouraged reflection on the content of their chosen books and the sharing of specific details with their peers, students reported increased motivation. This effect was particularly pronounced among lower-level readers who had previously shown disinterest in extensive reading. The incorporation of gamification techniques breathed new life into the classroom, demonstrating that gamified learning experiences have the potential to invigorate student motivation and promote focused engagement with educational content.

According to Carrasco, G., et al (2019), Through the incorporation of gamification elements and interactive strategies, Primary Education teachers in training experienced heightened motivation during their learning journey. This surge in motivation can be attributed to the engaging nature of gamified learning, which often involves rewards, competition, and active participation. Additionally, the program's success in enhancing the perception of learning achievement underscores how gamification not only motivates learners but also makes them feel that they are making meaningful progress.

Without a certain level of motivation, an individual will not be capable of learning. According to Hua Yin and Yang Chen (2020), Gamification in learning English can be highly motivational for students. By incorporating game design elements into pre-class learning activities in flipped EFL courses, gamification has the potential to enhance student engagement across various dimensions, including behavior, emotion, cognition, and agency. The interactive and rewarding nature of gamified activities can make learning more enjoyable and intrinsically motivating for students, encouraging active participation and a deeper connection to the subject matter. Additionally, as students become more engaged and invested in their learning, they may develop more positive beliefs about language learning, further reinforcing their motivation to excel in English language acquisition.

A European study conducted over a year involving 500 teachers found that the vast majority of surveyed teachers confirmed that "motivation significantly increases when computer games are integrated into the educational process" (Joyce & Deby, 2009). Most games provide clear objectives, tasks, and challenges, as well as feedback, which are essential elements for enhancing motivation. For this reason, games are often used as a starting point for improving motivation.

4. The importance of educational electronic games

Numerous studies emphasize the importance of using educational electronic games. Educational electronic games combine learning with fun and excitement. They enhance academic achievement, expand creative thinking in several ways, and contribute to individualizing education by allowing learners to

progress at their own pace without embarrassment or fear.

Researchers such as Aljuhani, A. S. (2011), Alharbi, O. M. (2010), and Kebritchi (2008) have all affirmed that electronic educational games increase student achievement in various fields. They have highlighted the role of computer-based educational games in helping students learn scientific subjects and in developing practical skills such as computer skills, social communication skills, reading skills, and self-directed learning skills.

5. Why Use Gamification Strategy?

Given the various stagnation in the educational process, scholars have sought to evolve teaching methods to facilitate the delivery of information more easily. They aim to empower students to recall and remember information effortlessly while also making the learning process enjoyable and engaging.

When applying gamification strategy and focusing on multiple senses simultaneously, students become more attentive and aware of the meaning and content of their studies. This strategy benefits not only children but also adults. Through the application of gamification, students solidify their understanding of the game, its application, and its connection to the information, leading to quicker and easier memorization and revision (Al-Shammari, 2019).

This strategy fosters the simultaneous development of both students' and teachers' skills. Teachers do not solely concentrate on lecturing but share the teaching process with students, assigning each of them specific roles. This collaborative environment cultivates a sense of cooperation among students and between students and their teacher. Consequently, students have the opportunity to enhance their critical thinking, creativity, and previously undiscovered skills.

Gamification significantly enhances information retrieval, as the mind processes information more efficiently when multiple senses and movements are engaged. For example, when the mind is active, the ears are attentive, the eyes are focused, and the body is in motion simultaneously, the mind can recall information more simply and rapidly due to its connection to multiple senses and actions.

Gamification possesses four freedoms, as noted in the World Government Summit (Oxford, 2016):

Freedom to Fail: Games allow for mistakes to occur without significant consequences.

Freedom to Experiment: Games facilitate the discovery of new strategies and information.

Freedom to Take Different Perspectives: Games encourage players to view problems from different angles.

Freedom to Exert Effort: Games involve players in intensive activity phases and relative periods of inactivity.

6. The Advantages of Gamification

Gamification plays a highly effective role in positively impacting learners, whether they are children or adults. This strategy does not solely emphasize a single aspect but encompasses various facets, including creativity, intellectual engagement, psychological well-being, and cognitive development. Consequently, gamification not only fosters the development of learners but also has a notable influence on educators, as it prompts them to think innovatively and creatively in designing games and effectively integrating them with the subject matter.

Examining the importance of gamification reveals a multitude of benefits. For example, gamification nurtures research and thinking skills, strengthens healthy competition among learners, enables students to express their opinions, and adds an element of enjoyment to education. This, in turn, enhances opportunities for interaction, integration, and cohesion among students in the educational process (Jaber, 2014).

This strategy creates an environment of positive interaction among students, especially in tasks that require cooperative learning to solve complex problems. Gamification significantly contributes to students' adaptation to following instructions and rules in their work. It bolsters students' self-confidence, promotes a desire for the learning process, fosters self-reliance and responsibility, enhances levels of motivation and critical thinking, encourages diversified and cumulative production, shapes learners' values, develops their attitudes, and fosters the idea of sustainable learning for continuous educational development (Al-Shammari, 2019).

Active learning strategies are instrumental in understanding the learner's perspective. They enhance the idea of interconnecting concepts and crystallizing them in daily life situations, increase students' abilities to find solutions familiar to them from their life situations, and foster a focus on tasks due to students' recognition of the importance of achieving the desired results. Active learning strategies do not solely rely on academic subjects but also combine academic materials with life-related information, allowing students to address problems realistically (Alharbi, O. M. 2010).

7. The Impact of Gamification on Mind and Thinking

Gamification is highly conducive to developing creative thinking skills, positively influencing the educational process, and enhancing thinking skills. This approach aligns with children's psychological foundations and their natural inclination towards play. Educational games encourage children, capture their attention, boost their motivation, and engage them in interactive learning experiences.

Gamification employs various forms, drawings, and images that have a positive and effective impact on instilling creative thinking skills in students, as

highlighted in Al-Ghamdi's study (2019). Teaching using gamification clearly contributes to the development of students' creative thinking skills. The design of educational games and learning through gamification strategies allows students to go through educational experiences via play. Since gamification represents a novel approach that differs from traditional teaching methods, it stimulates students' motivation, sparking their intellectual curiosity. Consequently, it fosters the development of their creative thinking, making them more capable of producing diverse, multifaceted, and authentic ideas, taking into account several educational principles, including considering individual abilities, providing feedback, addressing motivation, emphasizing the social dimension, transfer of knowledge, and assessment.

8. The Impact of Gamification Strategies on Skill Development

Gamification strategies are one of the active learning approaches aimed at fostering healthy competition among learners. These strategies provide students with opportunities to express their opinions and add an element of enjoyment to education. This, in turn, enhances interaction, integration, and cohesion among students within the educational process. It creates an atmosphere of positive interaction, especially in tasks that require collaborative thinking and cooperative learning for solving complex problems.

Active learning strategies boost students' self-confidence, nurture their desire for learning, encourage self-reliance, and promote responsibility among students. They also elevate and stimulate students' thinking levels, facilitating its development. Furthermore, these strategies increase students' ability to produce diverse and cumulative outcomes (Abdulaziz, 2012).

Active learning strategies are not limited to academic subjects alone; they integrate both academic knowledge and real-life information, enabling students to engage with problems realistically. These strategies aid educators in addressing individual differences that may hinder the learning process. Additionally, active learning strategies help students remember information that captures their interest, in contrast to negative information that lacks tangible relevance to them. This significantly enhances students' academic achievement, expands participation opportunities, and enriches students' experiences across various age groups (Aljuhani, 2011).

9. Challenges of Gamification Strategies

When games become more exciting and enjoyable than learning, it becomes necessary to examine the flaws within the educational process. Games not only capture the interest of learners but also motivate them to participate and engage more than they do in traditional education. Often, we find learners to be less effective

and less active during classroom activities, as well as lacking interest and motivation (Jaber, 2014).

There are various challenges and barriers to the adoption of gamification in the classroom. These challenges included issues such as irregularities, objections, and competitive tensions during game-based activities, the need for extended time allocations, and the potential for noisy learning environments. Technical difficulties and problems with digital games, limited access to technology and the internet, concerns related to screen time and game addiction, as well as health and psychological factors were cited as reasons why some teachers did not employ gamification in their EFL teaching. (Demirbilek, et al, 2022).

However, the study also identified barriers such as irregularities during games, negative competitive environments, extended time requirements, and noisy classrooms. Technical issues, limited access to technology and the internet, concerns about screen time and game addiction, as well as health and psychological factors, deter some teachers from using gamification in EFL teaching.

However, achieving this is neither easy nor simple, as the concept of gamification faces difficulties and challenges that cannot be described as easy or straightforward. We must endeavor to overcome these challenges, but first, we must become acquainted with these obstacles, or at least some of them (Paul, 2013).

10. Obstacles to Gamification in Education

Mikasyte (2018) identified several obstacles that render gamification ineffective in education, including:

One Size Does Not Fit All: Using the same approach for all learner groups, such as applying techniques suitable for teaching children to literacy programs, may not prove engaging.

Alignment with Course Objectives: Gamification should align with the course's intended objectives to be effective.

Variable Success Across Contexts: Many educational game designers have created extraordinarily successful games for one training course but failed in another.

Learners as Consumers: Learners are consumers, and the content of gamification is your product. Therefore, it is essential to research what motivates and engages your audience.

A Complex Tool: Despite its name implying simplification of content, gamification is a complex tool when applied in the educational process. Improper gamification usage not only wastes time and resources but also creates a lack of discipline and interest among learners when they discover that the game is random and not achieving its intended goals. Hence, always remember that you are a trainer and educator, not a game designer or entertainer. If you lack technical skills and game design expertise but require gamification to achieve your goals, consider seeking

the assistance of a game designer and listening to their input.

Gamification implementation

The application of gamification in education is not a straightforward matter, but rather it requires careful and specific steps to achieve maximum benefit from this strategy. In order to implement an effective gamification approach, it is necessary to follow five steps as outlined by Wendy and Dilip (2013).

Step One: Understanding the Target Audience and Context:

According to Kim (2015), one of the most crucial factors contributing to the success of this strategy is studying the target audience and defining the context. Educators must ensure that the elements and rules of the games integrated into the game design do not present obstacles to learners under any circumstances, such as social, cultural, or economic conditions. This helps educators design a precise program and achieve the maximum possible benefit.

Step Two: Defining Learning Objectives:

The success of any educational program primarily depends on the trainer's ability to clearly define the learning objectives and their capacity to apply these objectives. These objectives may include both general and specific goals, delineated for each step within the program, enabling the learner to perform these tasks after the training.

Step Three: Organizing the Experience: Organizing the experience is a crucial step, as it allows for the measurement of the success of each step and facilitates the identification of obstacles at each stage.

Step Four: Identifying Resources: Identifying the necessary resources for each stage individually helps the trainer simplify the delivery of information and enables the recipient to quickly respond and retrieve information for maximum benefit.

Step Five: Gamification Elements: This is achieved by creating a motivating learning environment to realize the goals of this strategy, ensuring the retention and understanding of information in a simple and enjoyable manner.

Gamification elements can be categorized into three groups, as mentioned by Dilip and Wendy (2013): Psychological or Mechanical elements, Social elements, and Emotional elements.

Psychological or Mechanical elements include progression, integration, immediate feedback, and badges.

Social elements or Personal elements encompass visual representation, collective responsibility, leaderboards, and rankings.

Emotional elements involve the concept of flow.

Distinctive Features of Our Study

Comprehensive Assessment: This study delves into each aspect of language learning and investigates the influence of gamification on each of them individually.

Dual Perspective: Unlike previous studies that primarily relied on either teacher or student feedback following the implementation of gamification, this research sought to understand the perspectives of both groups. It involved observing the results and collecting feedback from both teachers and students to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the positive outcomes after the completion of the academic term.

Multifaceted Questionnaire: The questionnaire designed for this research encompassed questions that assessed the academic aspect (each of the four language skills individually), the psychological aspect (motivation and increased desire to learn), and the practical aspect (performance during and before gamification implementation).

Methodology and Research Procedures

This research endeavor seeks to elucidate the efficacy and influence of deploying gamification as an independent variable in augmenting English language proficiency among students enrolled in the College of Business Administration at the Umm Al Quwain University. Gamification strategies were administered to a cohort comprising 30 students. The researcher adopted a descriptive methodology coupled with a quasi-experimental approach, specifically employing a single-group design. Subsequent to the implementation of gamification in the instruction of the English Language (1) course, the researcher conducted a rigorous analysis of survey outcomes.

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
93.0%	28	Yes
0.00%	0	No

1. Purpose of the Current Research

Achieving Results in the Application of Gamification Strategy in Enhancing English Language (1) Course for Students at the College of Business Administration, Umm Al Quwain University.

2. Research Population and Sample

The research population comprises first-year students in the College of Business Administration at the Umm Al Quwain University, totaling 30 male and female students.

3. Research Methodology

The researcher employed a descriptive research methodology to review the existing literature and previous studies related to the application of gamification in education in general, and English language studies in particular. Additionally, a quasi-experimental approach was utilized, involving the application of gamification strategies to a single-group design comprising 30 students.

4. Research Instrument

The research instrument utilized for data collection was a questionnaire designed to assess the effectiveness and impact of implementing gamification in the educational process.

5. Stages of Questionnaire Development

The researcher initially defined the purpose of the questionnaire, which aimed to measure the effectiveness of implementing gamification in the educational process.

The questionnaire was constructed in its preliminary form, aligning with the research objectives and addressing the questions it sought to answer, while also considering the study's expected outcomes.

To establish the validity of the instrument, the preliminary questionnaire was presented to a panel of five experts, specialized in English language teaching, and four experts in the field of educational technology, curricula, and teaching methods. This process aimed to ensure the clarity of vocabulary and phrasing. Subsequently, a number of questions were reformulated based on the experts' feedback.

The reliability of the questionnaire was determined by calculating Cronbach's Alpha, resulting in a reliability coefficient of 0.9721.

Following confirmation of the questionnaire's validity and reliability, it was administered to the students over a period of two months (one academic semester). Prior to commencing the questionnaire, all relevant vocabulary was explained to the students to ensure a clear understanding of the content.

6. Analysis of the results of the questionnaire

Table 1: Results of the First Question: Did your motivation to learn English increase after the implementation of gamification strategy?

The majority of respondents (28 out of 30, or 93.0%) indicated that their motivation to learn English increased following the implementation of the gamification strategy.

None of the respondents (0.00%) reported a decrease in motivation, while a small proportion (2 respondents, or 6.7%) expressed uncertainty (Maybe). This positive shift in motivation can be attributed to the competitive and engaging nature of the gamification approach, fostering a sense of competition among students and encouraging active participation.

Table 2: Results of the Second Question: Did gamification help in improving your speaking skills?

Choice	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	30	100.00%
No	0	0.00%
Maybe	0	0.00%

All students (30 out of 30, or 100.00%) unanimously agreed that gamification assisted in the development of their speaking skills. This unanimous agreement can be attributed to the fact that many first-year students generally encounter difficulties in face-to-face speaking during initial lectures. However, the

implementation of the gamification strategy bolstered their confidence and encouraged them to engage in discussions with greater assurance, thus making face-to-face communication significantly easier as shyness and anxiety subsided.

Table 3: Results of the Third Question: Did gamification help in improving your listening skills?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
86.7 %	26	Yes
3.3 %	1	No
10.0 %	3	May be

The majority of responses to this question were in the affirmative, with 26 students (86.7%) acknowledging that gamification aided in the development of their listening skills. This is attributed to their daily engagement with educational videos in the English language within the game, followed by responding to accompanying questions, which required them to focus extensively on listening. Three students (10%) responded with "Maybe," indicating their preference for direct assessment by an instructor to provide a definitive answer of "Yes" or "No." Only one student (3.3%) responded negatively (No), suggesting a limited impact on their listening skills.

Table 4: Results of the Fourth Question: Did gamification help in improving your writing skills?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
73.3%	22	Yes
16.7%	5	No
10.0%	3	May be

A total of 22 students (73.3%) reported that their writing skills improved following the implementation of the gamification strategy. They cited daily exposure to writing tasks within the game, where they had to surpass various levels, as a significant factor contributing to their enhanced writing abilities. Conversely, 5 students (16.7%) indicated that their writing skills did not improve. They cited difficulties in writing quickly and error-free on mobile devices and computers as a hindrance to their progress within the game. Additionally, 3 students (10.0%) responded with "Maybe," indicating uncertainty. They explained that writing on technological devices differs from traditional pen-and-paper writing, making it challenging to provide a definitive "Yes" or "No" response.

Table 5: Results of the Fifth Question: Did gamification help in improving your reading skills?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
80 %	24	Yes
16.7%	5	No
3.3%	1	May be

A total of 24 students (80.0%) affirmed that the use of gamification strategies aided in the development of their reading skills. They attributed this improvement to the game's diverse articles covering various subjects, which prompted them to read articles daily, learn new words and terms, and engage with new and interesting topics regularly. On the other hand, 5 students (16.7%) reported that their reading skills did not improve significantly. However, it's important to note that the majority of respondents indicated a positive impact on their reading abilities. Additionally, 1 student (3.3%) responded with "Maybe," suggesting some uncertainty regarding the effect of gamification on their reading skills.

Table (6) Results of the answer to the sixth question: Which is better: studying English by traditional methods or using gamification?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
90%	27	Gamification
10%	3	Traditional methods

The majority of students (27 out of 30, or 90%) asserted that studying English through the use of gamification is preferable to traditional methods. They cited the game's diverse and engaging articles, as well as motivational music, as factors that enhance concentration. In contrast, traditional methods were perceived as relying primarily on rote memorization, while the game fosters healthy competition among students without the fear of grade losses.

Table 7: Results of the Seventh Question: In your opinion, does the gamification strategy lead to time wastage?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
16.7%	5	Yes
63.3%	19	No
20%	6	May be

The majority of students (19 out of 30, or 63.3%) expressed the view that the gamification strategy does not lead to time wastage. They noted that the game enables them to acquire a substantial amount of information without feeling bored or perceiving it as a time-consuming activity. In contrast, 5 students (16.7%) indicated that gamification might result in time wastage, while 6 students (20.0%) were unsure (Maybe) about its potential for time wastage.

Table 8: Results of the Eighth Question: Does gamification increase your willingness to learn for longer periods than usual?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
86.7%	26	Yes
0%	0	No
13.3%	4	May be

The majority of students (26 out of 30, or 86.7%) affirmed that gamification increases their willingness to learn for longer periods than usual. They attributed this to the absence of boredom and the extended time they spend engaged with the game. They noted that they find the experience enjoyable, similar to other forms of entertainment, but with the added benefit of academic improvement, making educational games more engaging and enjoyable. None of the respondents (0%) indicated a decrease in their willingness to learn, while 4 students (13.3%) expressed uncertainty (Maybe) regarding the effect on their learning duration.

Table 9: Results of the Ninth Question: Do you find learning English through gamification enjoyable and beneficial?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
90%	27	Yes
0%	0	No
10%	3	May be

The majority of students, specifically 27 out of 30 (90%), expressed that learning English through the gamification strategy is both enjoyable and beneficial. They indicated that they do not feel the passage of time and emphasized that using these educational games enables them to retain information more effectively compared to traditional methods. None of the respondents (0%) found it unenjoyable, while 3 students (10%) responded with "Maybe," suggesting some uncertainty but not outright rejection of the idea.

Table 10: Results of the Tenth Question: Did gamification help you establish a daily routine to enhance your English language proficiency?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
86.7%	26	Yes
0%	0	No
13.3%	4	May be

The majority of students, specifically 26 out of 30 (86.7%), confirmed that gamification assisted them in establishing a daily routine for studying the English language. They mentioned that they engage in daily gameplay for a duration of at least half an hour, which has allowed them to maintain consistency and create a daily routine. This routine has contributed to the development of their language skills. None of the respondents (0%) reported that it did not help them establish a routine, while 4 students (13.3%) responded with "Maybe," indicating some uncertainty but not a definitive rejection of the idea.

Table 11: Results of the Eleventh Question: Do you feel embarrassed when you lose in the game in front of your peers?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
53.3%	16	Yes
30%	9	No
16.7%	5	May be

Many students, specifically 16 out of 30 (53.3%), indicated that they feel embarrassed when they lose in the game in front of their peers. However, they clarified in response to Question 15 that when they lose at a certain level, they continue playing and compete to excel, overcoming their embarrassment. On the other hand, 9 students (30%) reported that they do not feel embarrassed. They mentioned that competition among peers intensifies, and they enjoy the game. Additionally, 5 students (16.7%) responded with "Maybe," suggesting that they occasionally feel embarrassed, especially when the question is easy or the level is simple, but they don't always experience embarrassment and may even feel motivated to retry the level.

Table 12: Results of the Twelfth Question: Do you feel confident when making progress in the game?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
96.7%	29	Yes
0%	0	No
3.3%	1	May be

The majority of students, specifically 29 out of 30 (96.7%), affirmed that they feel confident when making progress in the game. This increased self-confidence serves as motivation for them to surpass more levels, achieve additional goals, and spend more time in the game, engaging in competition and learning. None of the respondents (0%) reported feeling unconfident, while 1 student (3.3%) responded with "Maybe," suggesting occasional uncertainty but generally feeling confident when progressing in the game.

Table 13: Results of the Thirteenth Question: Do you feel confident when speaking with your peers and professors online?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
82.2%	24	Yes
3.4%	1	No
13.8%	4	May be

The majority of students, specifically 24 out of 29 (82.2%), reported feeling confident when speaking with their peers and professors online. This confidence is attributed to adopting the gamification strategy, which has allowed them to become accustomed to speaking confidently in a foreign language. As a result,

engaging in direct conversation with each other has become easier compared to starting face-to-face conversations. This is especially significant for first-year students, as they need to build relationships before speaking in a foreign language in front of their peers. Only 1 student (3.4%) indicated not feeling confident, and 4 students (13.8%) responded with "Maybe," suggesting occasional uncertainty but generally feeling confident when speaking online.

Table 14: Results of the Fourteenth Question: Do you get bored while playing the game?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
33.3%	10	Yes
50%	15	No
16.7%	5	May be

The majority of students, specifically 15 out of 30 (50%), reported not feeling bored while playing the game. This is attributed to the presence of exciting offers and diverse topics in various fields that keep them engaged and entertained. However, 10 students (33.3%) indicated feeling bored when facing challenging levels, requiring them to replay the level multiple times to overcome it. Additionally, 5 students (16.7%) responded with "Maybe," suggesting occasional boredom but generally finding the game enjoyable.

Table 15: Results of the Fifteenth Question: What do you do when you lose in the game?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
90%	27	Replay the game again to score better points
10%	3	You leave the game and feel frustrated

The majority of students, specifically 27 out of 30 (90%), indicated that when they lose in the game, they choose to replay the level to achieve a better score. This practice contributes to improving their performance and retaining knowledge. However, 3 students (10%) reported quitting the game and feeling frustrated when they face a loss.

Table 16: Results of the Sixteenth Question: Do you feel a sense of teamwork when starting the game with your peers?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
86.7%	26	Yes
0%	0	No
13.3%	4	May be

The majority of students, specifically 26 out of 30 (86.7%), reported feeling a sense of teamwork when starting the game with their peers. They enjoy the competitive learning atmosphere that arises when multiple students begin the game simultaneously. This competitive spirit encourages them to continue playing for longer durations and compete for titles and awards.

Table 17: Results of the Seventeenth Question: Do you enjoy various educational activities that take place online?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
86.7%	26	Yes
0%	0	No
13.3%	4	May be

The majority of students, specifically 26 out of 30 (86.7%), reported enjoying various educational activities that take place online. They find these activities enjoyable and see them as an opportunity to improve their educational skills while having fun.

Table 18: Results of the Eighteenth Question: Do you submit assignments on time when using the gamification strategy?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
83.3%	25	Yes
3.3%	1	No
13.3%	4	May be

The majority of students, specifically 25 out of 30 (83.3%), reported submitting their assignments on time when using the gamification strategy. This indicates that the gamification approach has a positive impact on students' commitment to meeting assignment deadlines. Only 1 student (3.3%) indicated not meeting deadlines, while 4 students (13.3%) responded with "Maybe," suggesting occasional deviations from on-time submissions. These percentages highlight the effectiveness of gamification in enhancing students' punctuality regarding assignments.

Table 19: Results of the Nineteenth Question: Did gamification help you develop proper pronunciation skills?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
93.1%	27	Yes
0%	0	No
6.9%	3	May be

The majority of students, specifically 27 out of 30 (93.1%), reported that gamification helped them improve their pronunciation skills. This highlights the effectiveness of the gamification strategy in enhancing proper pronunciation. None of the respondents answered "No," indicating that gamification had a positive impact on pronunciation for all respondents.

Additionally, 3 students (6.9%) responded with "Maybe," suggesting some uncertainty, but still, the majority benefitted from improved pronunciation.

Table 20: Results of the Twentieth Question: Did the suggested topics in the game for developing reading skills help improve your level?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
93.1%	27	Yes
0%	0	No
6.9%	3	May be

A significant majority of 27 out of 30 students (93.1%) affirmed that the suggested topics in the game for developing reading skills were engaging and helped them improve their reading levels. None of the respondents answered "No," indicating that the provided topics were beneficial for all respondents. Additionally, 3 students (6.9%) responded with "Maybe," suggesting some uncertainty, but the majority found the topics highly beneficial in enhancing their reading skills.

Table 21: Results of the Twenty-First Question: Did the in-game information retention feature help you comprehend and remember a larger number of words?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
93.1%	27	Yes
6.9%	3	No
0%	0	May be

The data from the survey indicates that the majority of respondents, comprising 27 out of 30 students (93.1%), found the in-game information retention feature beneficial in helping them comprehend and remember a greater number of words. Only a small portion, 3 students (6.9%), responded negatively with "No," while none chose "Maybe."

Table 22: Results of the Twenty-Second Question: Do you use an electronic translation program or a paper dictionary to understand some of the phrases used in the game, or is the language used easy to understand?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
55.2%	16	Yes
13.8%	4	No
31%	9	May be

A significant number of students, 16 out of 29 respondents (55.2%), indicated that they use dictionaries during the game to improve their linguistic skills. This suggests that they utilize electronic translation programs or paper dictionaries to enhance their vocabulary and language comprehension. Additionally, 9 students (31%) selected "Maybe,"

indicating that they occasionally rely on translation tools. It is noteworthy that 13.8% of the students (4 respondents) reported not needing external assistance, indicating that the language used in the game is easy to understand.

Table 23: Results of the Twenty-Third Question: When you start playing the game, do you feel focused or distracted?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
93.1%	27	Focused
6.9%	3	Distracted

The majority of students, 27 out of 30 respondents (93.1%), reported feeling focused when they start playing the game. They noted experiencing excitement, motivation, and competitiveness. This focus is attributed to the game's thrilling presentations and upbeat music. Only 3 students (6.9%) reported feeling distracted at the beginning of the game, suggesting that distractions are less common among the surveyed participants.

Table 24: Results of the Twenty-Fourth Question: Did the visuals and sounds used in the game help you retain and remember the information?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
100%	30	Yes
0%	0	No
0%	0	May be

All students (100%) unanimously agreed that the visuals and sounds used in the game significantly contributed to their retention and clear recollection of information. They attributed this to the engaging music and visuals in the game, which heightened their sensory experiences, leading to enhanced information retention.

Table 25: Results of the Twenty-Fifth Question: Did the game related to sentence construction in its various forms help you develop your English writing skills?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
89.7%	26	Yes
3.4%	1	No
6.9%	3	May be

The majority of students, comprising 26 respondents (89.7%), strongly affirmed that the English sentence construction exercises significantly contributed to the improvement of their writing skills. They noted that constructing sentences requires clear adherence to syntactic and semantic rules, and engaging in these exercises and tests related to linguistic branches became both enjoyable and beneficial.

Table 26: Results of the Twenty-Sixth Question: Do you need to take notes outside of the game, or can you revisit and review the information multiple times?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
62.1%	11	I need to take notes outside
73.9%	18	I do not need to take notes

This question yielded somewhat conflicting responses. While 18 students (73.9%) stated that they do not need to take notes outside the game, 11 students (62.1%) indicated that they do need to take notes outside of the game. The disparity might be due to individual preferences and learning styles. Some students may prefer to take external notes for personal reference, even if the game allows for note-taking within the platform.

Table 27: Results of the Twenty-Seventh Question: Are the videos presented in the game engaging and enhancing your language skills?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
96.4%	28	Yes
0%	0	No
3.4%	2	May be

The vast majority of students, 28 in total (96.4%), found the videos presented in the game to be engaging and beneficial for enhancing their language skills. This positive response suggests that the video content used in the game is effective in supporting language development and keeping students engaged.

Table 28: Results of the Twenty-Eighth Question: Has the game increased enthusiasm among you and your peers, leading to stronger motivation to develop language skills?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
92.2%	26	Yes
3.6%	2	No
3.6%	2	May be

The majority of students, specifically 26 out of 30 (92.2%), reported that the game has increased enthusiasm among them and their peers, leading to stronger motivation to develop their language skills. This finding highlights the positive impact of the game in enhancing students' motivation and engagement in language learning.

Table 29: Results of the Twenty-Ninth Question: What is your opinion regarding the accuracy of the game's assessment?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
96.7%	29	Accurate Rating
3.3%	1	Inaccurate Rating

A large majority of 29 out of 30 students (96.7%) expressed that the game's assessment is accurate. This high percentage indicates that students believe the game effectively evaluates their language skills in the four areas: writing, listening, speaking, and conversation.

Table 30: Results of the Thirtieth Question: Do you feel that your English language skills have improved after the end of the semester?

Percentage	Number of Responses	Choice
96.7%	29	Yes
3.3%	1	No
0%	0	May be

An overwhelming 29 out of 30 students (96.7%) reported feeling a significant improvement in their English language skills after the end of the semester. This high percentage indicates that students believe that using the gamification strategy has been more effective in enhancing their language skills compared to traditional methods, making them feel more engaged and motivated throughout the learning process.

7. Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent: An informed consent was obtained from all participants, consisting of first-year students in the College of Business Administration at the Umm Al Quwain University.

Privacy and Confidentiality: Identifiable information, such as names, was replaced with participant codes to anonymize data. The access to identifiable information was restricted to authorized personnel only.

Data Security: Research data, including questionnaire responses and any other records, were securely stored in password-protected digital files.

Beneficence: Steps were taken to minimize potential harm or discomfort to participants. The gamification strategy was designed to be engaging and educational, with no intended harm to participants.

Honesty and Transparency: The research was conducted with full transparency and honesty, with no conflicts of interest that could influence the study's integrity.

Compliance with Institutional Guidelines: The research adhered to all relevant institutional and ethical

guidelines. It received approval from the appropriate ethics review board at Umm Al Quwain University.

Reporting and Publication: The research findings will be reported and published with a commitment to honesty and accuracy in presenting the results, including any limitations or ethical considerations.

Research Findings:

An increase in motivation for learning English after implementing the gamification strategy by 93%, with the game fostering a spirit of competition among students, driving them to compete for the top position.

Enhancement of speaking skills among students by 100% after applying the gamification strategy. The game proved highly effective in breaking down the fear barrier associated with speaking English in front of others.

Development of listening skills among students by 86.7%, thanks to the diverse daily videos and presentations offered by the game.

Improvement in writing skills among students by 73.3%, as they are exposed to daily writing assignments, leading to the enhancement of their writing abilities.

Advancement of reading skills among students by 80%. The game includes a variety of articles, encouraging regular reading practice.

Acquisition of a greater amount of information and vocabulary in the English language in an enjoyable and engaging manner after applying the gamification strategy, indicating that the game promotes learning and retention of information more effectively than traditional methods.

Research Recommendations:

Organize seminars and workshops to raise awareness among course designers about the value of gamification in the educational process.

Develop training courses to assist faculty members and students in enhancing their design skills.

Utilize gamification to create educational activities for e-learning programs.

Implement gamification techniques in teaching courses, especially those related to language education, as demonstrated by the positive outcomes revealed in this research and previous mentioned studies.

Incorporate the principles of educational game design and make them a requirement for approving any game before its application in the educational context.

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