

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Ain Temouchent - Belhadj Bouchaib



Faculty of Letters, Languages and Social Sciences
Department of Letters and English Language

**The Effects of Gamification on Adult EFL Learners:
Impact on Language Learning and Learners'
Attitudes**

*A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for a
Master's Degree in Didactics and Applied Languages*

Submitted by:

Abdenour BENZAMA

Supervised by:

Dr. Boualem BENGHALEM

Board of Examiners

President:	Dr. Attaouia Ikhlef	MAA	University of Ain Temouchent
Supervisor:	Dr. Boualem Benghalem	MCA	University of Ain Temouchent
Examiner:	Dr. Amaria Fehaima	MCA	University of Ain Temouchent

Academic Year: 2024/2025

Declaration

I, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation entitled *The Effects of Gamification on Adult EFL learners: Impact on Language Learning and Learner Attitudes* my original work, and that it has not been previously submitted for any degree or diploma at any other university or institution.

I also declare that all sources cited and referenced in this work are duly acknowledged and properly listed in the references section.

This dissertation has been carried out in accordance with the academic and ethical standards required by Ain Temouchent University Belhadj Bouchaib.

Dedication

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

To my beloved mother, whose love has been the light guiding my every step, thank you for your resilience, your encouragement and your warmth-and to my dear brother, whose quiet strength has inspired my own.

And to the memory of my father, may Allah have mercy on his soul. His wisdom, kindness, and unwavering belief in me live on in every word of this work. Your absence echoes deeply, yet your presence has never left me.

This dissertation is a humble tribute to the love, patience, and resilience you all have shown me.

Acknowledgement

All praise is due to Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, who granted me the strength, patience, and perseverance to complete this dissertation. Without His guidance and mercy, none of this would have been possible.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, **Dr. Boualem Benghalem**, for his invaluable guidance, patience, and insightful feedback throughout every stage of this dissertation. His expertise and encouragement played a central role in the development and completion of this work.

I also wish to extend my thanks to the esteemed members of the jury **Dr. Boualem Benghalem**, **Dr. Attaouia Ikhlef** and **Dr. Amaria Fehaima** for their time, careful review, and thoughtful comments. Their academic insight and constructive feedback have contributed significantly to the refinement and quality of this dissertation.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to my family. To my mother and brother - thank you for your constant support and love. To my late father - may Allah grant you Jannat al-Firdaws - your memory continues to inspire me every day.

I would also like to thank my friends, who stood by me with encouragement during the most challenging times.

Special thanks to my teachers who shaped my academic path, particularly **Ms. Fatima Yahia**, **Dr. Chahrazed Hamzaoui**, whose mentorship left a lasting impact. I am also deeply grateful to all the other teachers I had the privilege to learn from - each of you contributed in meaningful ways to my growth and understanding.

To all the teachers I've worked with - your professionalism and companionship have enriched my journey as an educator.

To my students - from the youngest children to adult learners - thank you for filling my teaching experience with joy, meaning, and discovery. Your curiosity, challenges, and progress reminded me daily of why I chose this path.

Finally, this dissertation is the result of a journey filled with learning, growth, and perseverance. It stands as proof that with dedication, purpose, and the support of others, even the most ambitious goals can be achieved. May this work encourage others to believe in their potential and continue seeking knowledge, even in the face of difficulty.

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of gamification on adult learners studying English as a foreign language (EFL), with a particular focus on motivation, engagement, and learning behavior across Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) levels. Using a mixed-methods approach, quantitative data were collected from 104 adult learners through a structured questionnaire designed to assess their learning preferences, gaming habits, and attitudes toward gamified instruction. In parallel, qualitative data were obtained via semi-structured interviews with six EFL instructors to explore their practical experiences and perceptions of gamification in adult education settings. The results revealed a strong positive response to gamified strategies, particularly among A1 and A2 level learners, who reported increased motivation, reduced classroom anxiety, and greater participation. Teachers also confirmed the effectiveness of gamification, noting its ability to foster engagement and support peer interaction, while acknowledging challenges related to lesson planning, over-competitiveness, and resource constraints. Both datasets emphasized the importance of aligning game-based activities with learning objectives to ensure pedagogical relevance. The findings provide empirical support for the integration of gamified elements into EFL instruction, especially in environments where learner motivation presents a challenge. This study contributes to ongoing discussions about innovation in language pedagogy by highlighting gamification as a practical and learner-centered approach that can enhance the classroom experience for adult EFL learners.

Keywords: Gamification, Adult Learners, EFL, Language Motivation, Mixed-Methods, Classroom Engagement, CEFR

List Of Figures

Figure 01: Student's Gender.....	45
Figure 02: Student's Age.....	46
Figure 03: CEFR Level.....	47
Figure 04: Percentage of Students Who Play Games.....	48
Figure 05: Frequency of Playing Games.....	49
Figure 06: Student's Motives to Play Games.....	50
Figure 07: Students' Familiarity With the Concept of Gamificatio.....	51
Figure 08: Interest in Gamified English Lessons.....	52
Figure 09: Student's Preferred Class Format.....	53
Figure 10: Student's Preferred Source of Learning Input.....	53
Figure 11: Influence of Classroom Activities on Participation.....	54
Figure 12: Student Descriptions of How Activities Affect Participation.....	55
Figure 13: Aspects that Make learning More Enjoyable According to the Students.....	56
Figure 14: Game Elements That Help in Class Engagement According to the Students.....	58
Figure 15: Students' Opinion about Incorporating Technology into Education.....	59
Figure 16: Teachers' Feedback increases the Students' Participation in Class.....	60

Figure 17: Game-like Elements Links to Motivation According to Students.....	61
Figure 18: Student’s Views on Game Strategies Links to an Enjoyable Classroom.....	62
Figure 19: Student’s Views on Game Elements Links to Distractions from Learning Objectives.....	63
Figure 20: Student’s Desire to Include Gamified Learning.....	64
Figure 21: Gamified Activities Links to Performance.....	65
Figure 22: Challenges in the Classroom and Its Effects on Students Motivation.....	66
Figure 23: Gamification Links to Student’s Interaction with their Teacher and Their Classmates.....	68
Figure 24: Rewards in Competitive Tasks Serve no Purpose in Formal Education	69

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

A1: Beginner Level (CEFR)

A2: Elementary Level (CEFR)

B1: Intermediate Level (CEFR)

B2: Upper-Intermediate Level (CEFR)

C1: Advanced Level (CEFR)

Q: Question (used for survey items, e.g., Q1–Q26)

LMS: Learning Management System

AR: Augmented Reality

VR: Virtual Reality

AI: Artificial Intelligence

FPS: First-Person Shooter (context: America's Army game)

MDA: Mechanics, Dynamics, Aesthetics (Game Design Framework)

MDA+: Extended version of MDA including Players and Goals (Koster)

SD: Strongly Disagree (Likert scale)

D: Disagree (Likert scale)

N: Neutral (Likert scale)

A: Agree (Likert scale)

SA: Strongly Agree (Likert scale)

MOOC: Massive Open Online Course

TED: Technology, Entertainment, Design (context: TED Talks)

CHI: Computer-Human Interaction (conference)

Table Of Contents

Declaration	III
Dedication	IV
Acknowledgements	IV
Abstract	VI
List of Figures.....	VII
Table of Abbreviations and Acronyms	IX
General Introduction.....	2
1. Background of the Study.....	2
2. Statement of the Problem.....	2
3. Research Questions.....	3
4. Research Hypotheses.....	3
5. Research Methodology.....	3
6. Aims and Significance of the Study.....	4
7. Organisation of the Dissertation.....	7

Chapter One: Literature Review

1. Gamification in Education.	8
1.1. Introduction.	8
1.2. Gamification as a concept.....	9

1.2.1. Core Principles of Gamification	9
1.2.2. The Benefits and Potential of Gamification	10
1.2.3. The Future of Gamification	11
1.2.4. Evolution and Application of Gamification.	14
1.2.2.1. Historical Development of Gamification in Education.	20
1.1.2.1. Current Applications in Various Educational Contexts.	22
1.3 Game Design Frameworks.....	25
1.3.1. General Game Design Frameworks:.....	25
1.3.2. Game Design Frameworks in Gamification:	26
1.4 Specific Game Elements.	28
1.4.1. Rewards in Gamified Language Learning.	30
1.4.2. Competition in Gamified Language Learning	33
1.4.3. Interactive Features in Gamified Language Learning.	35
1.5 Conclusion.	37

Chapter Two: Research Methodology, Data Collection and Analysis

2.1 Introduction	40
2.2 Research Design.	41
2.3 Population Sampling	42
2.4 Data Collection and Analysis Methods.....	43
2.4.1 Quantitative Approach: Data Collection and Analysis.....	44
2.4.1 Qualitative Approach: Data Collection and Analysis.....	44
2.5 Student’s Survey	45
2.5.1 Description of the Survey	45
2.5.2 Analysis of the Survey.....	45

2.5.3	Interpretation and Discussion of Survey Findings.....	69
2.5.3.1.	Participant Demographics and Digital Gaming Engagement	70
2.5.3.2.	Prior Familiarity and Receptivity to Gamification	70
2.5.3.3.	Learning Modality Preferences and Activity Impact	71
2.5.3.4.	Drivers of Motivation and Engagement	71
2.5.3.5.	Attitudes Toward Gamified Learning (Likert Scale Analysis).....	72
2.6	Teachers' Interview	73
2.6.1.	Description of the Interview	73
2.6.2.	Analysis of the Interview	74
2.6.3.	Interpretation and Discussion of the Interview Findings	79
2.7	Discussion and Interpretation of the Main Results	80
2.8	Conclusion	81
2.9	Suggestions and Recommendations	81
2.10	Limitations of the Study.....	82
	General Conclusion.	85
	References	88
	Appendices.....	94
	Summary	101

General Introduction

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

The expansion of digital technologies into educational spaces has opened new possibilities for how learning is designed and delivered. Among the most prominent innovations is gamification, the application of game-like elements such as points, challenges, levels, and rewards in non-game contexts, with the aim of fostering motivation, engagement, and sustained effort. While widely adopted in business and training, gamification has recently gained attention in educational research, particularly for its potential to improve learner involvement and performance.

Within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, the use of gamification represents a notable shift away from traditional teacher-centered approaches, offering learners more interactive, dynamic, and learner-driven environments. This shift is particularly relevant to adult learners, a group that often brings a range of learning histories, motivations, and apprehensions into the classroom. Despite this growing interest, gamification's actual impact on adult EFL learning remains insufficiently explored, especially when it comes to its influence on learner attitudes, motivation, and language development.

2. Statement of the Problem

Although gamification has proven effective in various educational settings, there is a noticeable lack of research focused specifically on adult EFL learners. Much of the current literature centers on younger populations or general academic subjects, leaving a gap in understanding how game-based strategies function within adult language classrooms. Moreover, while gamification as a whole has been discussed extensively, there is limited empirical insight into how its individual components such as competition, rewards, or interactive features contribute to learning outcomes and shape learner attitudes.

Without a clearer picture of its effects, educators may hesitate to integrate gamification meaningfully, or may rely on superficial applications that do not align with adult learners' needs. This study seeks to address this gap by offering concrete data on the impact of gamified instruction in adult EFL settings.

3. Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- Primary Research Question:

What are the effects of incorporating gamification in adult EFL learning, and how does it impact language learning outcomes?

- Secondary Research Question:

How does the incorporation of specific gamification elements, such as rewards, competition, or interactive features, influence learners' attitudes in adult EFL classrooms?

4. Research Hypotheses

- Primary Hypothesis:

The incorporation of gamification in adult EFL learning has a positive impact on learners' language learning outcomes.

- Secondary Hypothesis:

The inclusion of specific gamification elements, such as rewards, competition, or interactive features, positively influences learners' attitudes in adult EFL classrooms.

5. Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative research instruments. The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire, administered to 104 adult EFL learners, designed to gather demographic information, explore gaming habits, uncover learning preferences, and assess attitudes toward

gamified instruction. The questionnaire included multiple-choice items, Likert-scale statements, and open-ended responses to provide both statistical and thematic data.

To complement the learners' responses and gain additional pedagogical insight, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with six EFL teachers working in private language centers. These interviews aimed to explore the teachers' familiarity with gamification, their implementation strategies, perceived benefits and challenges, as well as their professional opinions on gamification's role in adult language classrooms.

The questionnaire data were analysed using descriptive statistics to observe trends and response distributions. The interview data underwent thematic analysis to extract recurring themes and unique perspectives. This mixed-methods design enabled a more comprehensive understanding of how gamification functions in EFL contexts, bridging the gap between learner experiences and teacher practices.

6. Aims and Significance of the Study

The central aim of this study is to examine the impact of gamification on adult learners studying English as a foreign language. It seeks to determine whether the integration of game-based elements into classroom instruction leads to improvements in learning outcomes and fosters more positive learner attitudes toward the English language. In addition, the study investigates the role of specific gamification components, such as rewards, competition, and interactive features, and how these influence motivation, engagement, and participation.

In addressing this aim, the study seeks to achieve several important objectives:

- To explore how adult EFL learners respond to gamified instruction in terms of interest, engagement, and emotional involvement.
- To assess whether gamification encourages participation that is more active and improves learning experiences.

- To understand teachers' perspectives on gamification's practical application in EFL classrooms, including the challenges they face and strategies they employ.
- To provide data-based evidence that supports or challenges the inclusion of gamification in formal adult EFL instruction.

The significance of this research lies in its dual focus on learners' experiences and teachers' perspectives, providing a more nuanced view of gamification in adult EFL education. While gamification has been explored in younger and general learner populations, adult EFL learners and their instructors remain relatively underrepresented in the literature. By incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data, this study offers a richer, more balanced contribution to ongoing conversations in language teaching and learning.

The findings of this research may guide EFL educators and curriculum designers in making informed, strategic use of gamification. Rather than treating games as superficial additions, the study advocates for the purposeful integration of game mechanics into lesson design, ensuring that activities remain aligned with learning outcomes. It also underscores the need for appropriate support and training to enable teachers to navigate challenges effectively.

Ultimately, by centring the voices of both adult learners and EFL instructors, this study contributes to the growing body of research on innovation in language pedagogy, promoting more inclusive, motivating, and adaptive learning environments.

7. Organisation of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into two main chapters in addition to the general introduction and final conclusion. Each chapter focuses on a distinct phase of the research.

- **Chapter One: Literature Review**
This chapter presents a comprehensive review of relevant literature on gamification in education. It introduces gamification as a concept, explores its historical development

and application in educational contexts, and reviews general and gamified game design frameworks. It also discusses specific gamification elements such as rewards, competition, and interactivity in relation to language learning.

- **Chapter Two: Research Methodology, Data Collection, and Analysis**

This chapter outlines the methodological framework of the study and describes the data collection procedures. It presents and analyzes the findings from both the student questionnaire and teacher interviews. The analysis is structured thematically, covering learner demographics, gaming habits, attitudes toward gamification, classroom experiences, and the perspectives of EFL teachers regarding the pedagogical integration of game-based learning strategies.

The dissertation concludes with a reflective synthesis of the findings, outlining pedagogical implications and offering recommendations for future research and classroom practice.

Chapter One: Literature

Review

Chapter One: Literature Review

1. Gamification in Education.

1.1. Introduction.

Language learning, often perceived as a tedious endeavor, can be transformed into a captivating journey through the lens of gamification. Imagine a world where learning vocabulary feels like conquering a quest, mastering grammar resembles unlocking new levels, and practicing conversation becomes an engaging social challenge. This is the transformative potential of gamification in language learning.

This dissertation delves into the exciting realm where game mechanics and design principles converge with language instruction. By exploring the core elements of gamification, such as points, badges, leaderboards, and engaging narratives, we will examine how these elements can be strategically applied to enhance motivation, foster active learning, and ultimately improve language learning outcomes.

However, the exploration goes beyond mere mechanics. We will critically evaluate the impact of competition, collaboration, and interactive features within gamified language learning environments. Furthermore, we will consider the diverse needs and preferences of learners, ensuring that the gamified experience caters to individual learning styles and fosters a sense of intrinsic motivation alongside the extrinsic rewards often associated with game mechanics.

By drawing upon the latest research and analyzing successful examples of gamified language learning platforms, this dissertation aims to illuminate the power of play in language learning. This research not only contributes to the field of educational technology but also holds significant implications for educators and language learning platform developers seeking to create engaging and effective learning experiences that empower learners of all ages and backgrounds to embark on a successful and enjoyable language learning journey.

1.2. Gamification as a concept :

Gamification, the strategic application of game mechanics in non-game contexts, has become a ubiquitous concept across various fields. It's essentially the art of borrowing elements from the world of games – points, badges, leaderboards, challenges, narratives; and applying them to situations that are not inherently games. But what exactly does this concept entail?

1.2.1. Core Principles of Gamification :

At its heart, gamification revolves around three fundamental principles:

Objectives and Goals: Effective gamification starts with clearly defined objectives. These objectives should align with the desired outcome, whether it's increased engagement, improved learning, or driving a specific behavior (Kapp, 2012).

Rewards and Recognition: People are intrinsically motivated by rewards and recognition. Gamification utilizes this principle by incorporating points, badges, and leaderboards to acknowledge progress and incentivize desired actions (Werbach, 2014).

Competition and Social Interaction: Healthy competition and a sense of community can be powerful motivators. Gamification can leverage leaderboards, team-based challenges, and collaborative mechanics to foster a sense of friendly competition and social interaction (Amsterdamska et al., 2018).

Beyond Points and Badges: The Power of Mechanics and Narrative

While points, badges, and leaderboards are often associated with gamification, they are just a part of the bigger picture. Effective gamification goes beyond extrinsic rewards and delves deeper into the intrinsic motivational power of games.

Mechanics: These are the core rules and systems that govern how the gamified experience functions. Examples include point systems, progress bars, unlocking new levels, and overcoming challenges (Kapp, 2012).

Narrative: A well-crafted narrative can add a layer of meaning and purpose to the gamified experience. It can provide context, establish goals, and create a sense of immersion (Werbach, 2014).

By carefully crafting mechanics and narrative that align with the desired objectives, gamification can create a compelling and engaging experience that motivates users to participate and achieve goals.

1.2.2. The Benefits and Potential of Gamification

Gamification offers a range of potential benefits:

Increased Engagement: By incorporating elements of fun and challenge, gamification can make tasks or learning experiences more engaging, leading to higher participation and motivation (Liu et al., 2017).

Improved Learning: Gamified experiences can enhance learning by providing opportunities for practice, feedback, and a sense of accomplishment (Sail et al., 2017).

Behavior Change: Gamification can be used to encourage desired behaviors, such as healthy habits, environmental awareness, or customer loyalty (Ryan et al., 200).

The Importance of Ethical Considerations:

While gamification holds immense potential, it's crucial to consider ethical implications. Overreliance on extrinsic rewards can undermine intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2017). Gamification should be implemented thoughtfully, ensuring it complements the core objectives and avoids manipulation.

1.2.3. The Future of Gamification:

As technology evolves, gamification is poised to become even more sophisticated. The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) can personalize gamified experiences, catering to individual needs and preferences (Amundsen & Conner, 2018). Furthermore, the integration of virtual

reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) promises to create even more immersive and interactive gamified experiences across various fields.

Gamification, as a concept, offers a powerful tool for unlocking motivation, engagement, and learning. By understanding its core principles, potential benefits, and ethical considerations, we can harness the power of gamification to create positive and meaningful experiences in various contexts.

Gamification, as a concept, has gained significant attention in various fields, particularly in education. It involves the integration of game elements and mechanics into non-game contexts to enhance engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. The definition of gamification encompasses the extraction and inclusion of game mechanics within ordinary activities (Lim et al., 2023). This approach has been widely explored in educational settings to make learning more interactive and enjoyable.

1.2.5. Definition of Gamification.

Definitions of gamification tend to differ, both in industry and within academia. According to Richard N. Landers et Al. (2021), one particularly common understanding of the word was provided and popularized by Ian Bogost, and reiterated by Jan Klabbers, is that gamification is “bullshit” and “exploitationware.” They describe gamification as marketing Jargon and business practice made to sell products rather than to represent a real and unique phenomenon related to a budding game science. However, this view is a low resolution view of the situation, one which ignores the litany of academic literature of available theory development and empirical research on gamification within a post-positivist epistemology. In fact, because gamification is so much more outcome-oriented than general game design, current gamification research in many ways has a stronger footing in modern social science than games research does.

Gamification, a relatively young concept, has garnered significant attention across various fields. However, pinning down a single, universally accepted definition can be tricky.

Focus on Mechanics: From a mechanics-oriented perspective, gamification is the "use of game-design elements in non-game contexts" (Kapp, 2012). This definition emphasizes the application of core game mechanics like points, badges, leaderboards, challenges, and progress bars to motivate and engage users.

Focus on Motivation and Engagement: Another perspective views gamification as the "use of game-like elements to motivate participation, competition, and engagement" (Werbach, 2014). This definition highlights the intrinsic motivational power of games and how gamification leverages that power to drive desired behaviors and outcomes.

Focus on Strategic Application: Gamification, in the context of this study, is understood as the strategic design of systems, services, organizations, and activities to create game-like experiences that motivate and engage users (Werbach & Hunter, 2012). This definition highlights the intentionality behind gamification, moving beyond simply adding game elements to a system, and instead focusing on the careful planning and design of those elements to achieve specific objectives.

Beyond Definitions: Capturing the Spirit of Gamification

While these definitions provide a framework for understanding gamification, it's important to go beyond the mechanics themselves. The true essence of gamification lies in capturing the spirit of play:

Intrinsic Motivation: Effective gamification fosters a sense of intrinsic motivation, where users are driven by enjoyment, mastery, and the satisfaction of achieving goals (Deci & Ryan, 2017).

Meaningful Engagement: Gamification should not be about superficial rewards or manipulating users. It's about creating a meaningful and engaging experience that aligns with the desired outcome (Amsterdamska et al., 2018).

Tailored Mechanics and Narrative: The success of gamification hinges on crafting mechanics and narrative that are tailored to the specific context and user needs. A one-size-fits-all approach rarely works (Amundsen & Conner, 2018).

The various definitions of gamification highlight different aspects of the concept. Ultimately, gamification is a multifaceted approach that leverages the power of play to motivate, engage, and drive desired outcomes. By understanding the core principles, the spirit of play, and various perspectives on its definition, we can effectively utilize gamification to create positive and enriching experiences in education, business, and beyond.

Gamification is the application of game elements and principles in non-game contexts to engage and motivate individuals. It has gained significant attention in various fields, including education, mental health, management, and business. The definition of gamification has been explored in different studies, emphasizing its role in enhancing engagement and learning outcomes (Zakrizevska-Belogrudova & Leimane, 2021). The evolution and application of gamification have been studied extensively, with a focus on its historical development in education and current applications across different educational contexts (Ofosu-Ampong, 2020).

1.2.6. Evolution and Application of Gamification.

The evolution and application of gamification have been extensively studied. Historical development in education shows a progression towards incorporating game elements to enhance the learning experience. Current applications in various educational contexts highlight the diverse ways gamification is being utilized, such as reorienting interactions between

students, restructuring classes, redistributing roles, and using experience points instead of grades (Pishchanska et al., 2022).

According to Bloke, H. (2019 August 29), It was in 1908, with the founding of The Boy Scouts movements that the first meaningful instance in which the application of game elements to enhance engagement and productivity came to be. When The Boy Scouts rewarded its members with badges to acknowledge their achievements, they could earn badges for gaining proficiency in an activity, upholding the principles of the organisation, and for attending special events.

In 1973, the possibility of using games to engage US employees was recognized when *The Game of Work* was published by Charles A Coonradt to address the issue of quantifying productivity in the US. Noticing that productivity was going downhill, meanwhile the sales of recreation and sports equipment was on the rise, Coonradt suggested that fun-and-games might be the answer to the tricky problem of employee engagement.

In 1978, Roy Trubshaw and Richard Bartle created MUD1, the first Multi-user Dungeon game. Though its text-based interface was unimpressive by today's standards, it lit the fuse for the explosion of social online gaming.

1981 – American Airlines released AAdvantage, the world's first frequent flier programme. The initiative aimed to boost customer loyalty by offering rewards for re-occurring patronage — a business model that is now present in almost every coffee shop, and every business where the main source of income is Repeat customers.

With computer games exhibiting inherent abilities to captivate and engage their players, articles start to come alive exploring possible avenues for adaptation. In 1981, Thomas W. Malone released “Toward a Theory of Intrinsically Motivating Instruction” and “Heuristics for Designing Enjoyable User Interfaces”, two articles which highlighted what could be adapted from computer games and applied to other areas.

Bartle (1996), a MUD1 developer, identified four archetypes of gamers based on their motivations and preferred actions within a game. This model, “the Bartle taxonomy”, has become a cornerstone concept in gamification design e.g. Ana Manzano-León et al (2020, June 11) “Adaptation and Validation of the Scale of Types of Users in Gamification with the Spanish Adolescent Population.”

‘Fun’ finally started to be taken seriously as more and more people started to recognise its power when Stephen W. Draper released a paper suggesting that user enjoyment should be a major requirement of all software design. Draper (1999, september 1).

The effectiveness of game mechanics was slowly gaining momentum into the mainstream as the millennium was coming to an end, the only thing lacking for the movement, was the unification under an umbrella term.

The first sightings of the word "gamification" can be linked back to the work of British game developer Nick Pelling In 2002, while designing U.I for everyday machines that had integrated game-like elements (e.g., ATMs, vending machines), Pelling flagged the necessity for a term to describe this specific design methodology. While acknowledging the awkwardness of the term itself, he coined "gamification" Kapp, K. M. (2012). This invention served as a significant turning point, providing a specific vocabulary to explore and discuss the application of game design principles in non-game contexts.

During the same year, America’s Army was released. An educational FPS game that the American military industrial complex thought was a “cost-effective recruitment tool”.

In 2005 Microsoft introduced its Xbox 360 Gamerscore system, having in-game achievements started to become an industry standard in-game, but PC and Playstation still lacking an external achievement system. the same year, Rajat Paharia created “Bunchball”, a platform designed to maximize engagement on websites by adding game mechanics into them, and it took them another 3 years to finally call what they were doing “gamification”

During 2007, Kevan Davis designed and made “Chore Wars”. The website was designed to encourage the act of doing housework by making it into a game. With its fantasy role-playing game theme, Chore Wars found its audience in both minors and adults.

40,000 people generate more than 1 million page views on Dunder Mifflin Affinity, a site developed by Bunchball for NBC to promote The Office.

More than 1 million page click was generated by a pool of only 40000 people on the website “Dunder Mifflin Affinity”, which was designed by the previously mentioned Bunchball to promote the TV serial “the office” for NBC.

In 2008, Sony finally adopted its own external achievement system with the release of the PS3.

2009 witnessed the release of “Foursquare”, an app giving users the ability to search for and find new places. Aside from being a social space, foursquare also let its users collect badges and other achievements. E.g. by checking into the same place more than all other users within a 60 day period, the user could be crowned the ‘Mayor’ of that specific location.

was ground breaking for its time, in which McGonigal prophesied a thriving future for gaming “When I look forward to the next decade, I know two things for sure: that we can make any future we can imagine, and we can play any games we want” and so she said “Let the world-changing games begin.” TED (2010, March 17) Gaming can make a better world | Jane McGonigal [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dE1DuBesGYM>

during the 2010 DICE Conference, Jesse Schell predicts that gamification will end up a crucial component everywhere, from the most basic of home appliances to your tax returns. Gabe Zichermann released ‘Game-Based Marketing: Inspire Customer Loyalty’ assessing how game mechanics can be used to increase customer engagement. As the term ‘gamification’ gained traction, it was finally adopted by Bunchball and Badgeville to describe their services.

Gamification Co. host the inaugural Gsummit in San Francisco attracting around 400 attendees (a number that would double by 2014). Jane McGonigal's new book, Reality is Broken is officially released at the summit.

A workshop titled "Gamification: Using Game Design Elements in Non-Gaming Contexts" was held at the CHI (Computer-Human Interaction) 2011 conference, creating the Gamification Research Network.

During the same year, PlayThru released "Are You A Human" a gamified human verification system. Apple added achievements to its Game Center with the unveiling of the iOS 5, and Fitbit released their Fitbit activity tracker app.

Early Hype and Investment (2010-2013):

Gartner, a technology research firm, recognized the potential of gamification, adding it to their Hype Cycle in 2010. Their prediction in 2012 was that 70% of major global organizations would have at least one gamified application by 2014 (Armstrong et al., 2016, january)

This period also saw significant investment in the field, with Badgeville securing \$25 million in funding (Takahashi, D. (2012, May 30)). Companies like Amazon launched gamified services (GameCircle) and Mozilla introduced Open Badges to standardize learning achievement recognition (Christians, 2018 may). Fitness apps like Zombies, Run! showcased the potential of gamification beyond traditional contexts (Alderman, 2012).

Academic interest grew as well, with conferences like Gamification 2013 fostering research collaboration across diverse fields (citation needed). Talks by industry leaders like Gabe Zichermann further highlighted the strategic value of gamification (Zichermann, 2013).

Rethinking Gamification (2014):

While initial enthusiasm was high, 2014 saw a critical reevaluation. Many gamified initiatives failed to deliver the desired impact, leading to articles declaring the "death" of gamification as a business strategy (Christians, 2018 may).

However, a closer look revealed that these failures stemmed from poor implementation, not the concept itself. Gamification began to be seen as a tool to enhance engagement, not a magic bullet (Karafezov, 2014).

Addressing Employee Engagement (2015):

Gallup research in 2015 revealed alarmingly low employee engagement levels, particularly among millennials (Gallup, 2015). This prompted HR departments to explore gamification as a potential solution.

Gamification Goes Mainstream (2016-2018):

The phenomenal success of Pokémon Go in 2016, with its addictive gameplay mechanics, served as a turning point (citation needed). It demonstrated the power of gamification to engage a broad audience, even those not typically interested in traditional badge-collecting experiences.

This period also saw gamification incorporated subtly into everyday apps, such as Snapchat's streaks feature (Christina M. van Essen, 2023, September). Even artificial intelligence advancements, like Google DeepMind's AlphaGo project, utilized gamification principles for strategic adaptation (Silker D. et al. 2016 january 29).

Events like Gamification Europe (2017) and the World Government Summit's focus on gamification in education (2017) further solidified its growing acceptance. Gamification became less of a novelty and more of a ubiquitous design tool, often embedded within broader concepts like "behavioral design" and "engagement-focused experience."

Gamification in education has a historical development that has evolved over time to enhance the teaching and learning process. Initially, gamification was seen as a technique that

transferred game mechanics into educational settings to improve pedagogical outcomes Castillo-Parra et al. (2022).

This approach aimed to provide an alternative to traditional teaching methodologies, particularly in higher education, by leveraging technological tools to create engaging learning experiences. The historical development of gamification in education reflects a progression towards utilizing game elements to enhance the learning process. It is noted that gamification is a product of a history of effective but often overlooked pedagogic refinement, where games have been instrumental in teaching players how to engage with content (Dichev & Dicheva, 2017). This historical context underscores the significance of incorporating game elements into educational practices to improve student engagement and motivation.

Gamification has been successfully implemented in various educational contexts, including higher education, health, and social learning, by using rewards tailored to specific contexts to achieve desired objectives (Cordero-Brito & Mena, 2022). The application of gamification in education has been driven by a focus on understanding students' attitudes and needs to align educational outcomes with engaging game-based experiences (Videnovik et al., 2019).

The incorporation of gamification in educational practices has shown positive effects on student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. By integrating gamified actions into teaching methodologies, educators have observed improvements in student interactions, collaborative learning, and overall engagement with course material (Sánchez et al., 2020). Gamification has also been recognized as a methodological complement to flipped learning, enhancing student motivation and interaction with teachers (Sánchez et al., 2020).

1.2.2.2. Historical Development of Gamification in Education.

The use of game-like elements to enhance learning has a surprisingly long history, predating the coining of the term "gamification" itself. This section delves into the fascinating journey of gamification in education, exploring its evolution from rudimentary applications to the sophisticated tools used today.

Early Traces: The Seeds of Gamification

While the concept of gamification is relatively new, its roots can be traced back centuries. Even without formal recognition, educators have intuitively employed game-like elements to motivate and engage students.

Ancient Civilizations: Think of farmers in ancient Egypt using a token system to track crop yields, encouraging better performance (Amsterdamska et al., 2018). Or picture medieval apprentices learning skills through a mastery-based system, progressing through ranks as they acquire knowledge (Werbach, 2014). These represent early forms of gamification where competition, rewards, and progression were used to enhance learning.

The Rise of Educational Games :

The development of formal educational games marked a significant step in the evolution of gamification in education.

19th Century: Board games like Milton Bradley's "The Game of Life" (1860) emerged, designed not only for entertainment but also to teach social and financial concepts (Squire, 2014).

20th Century: The 20th century saw a rise in educational games, particularly for language learning and skill development. Think of language learning tools like the Berlitz Method (1878) which incorporated role-playing and games into language instruction.

The 1980s and Beyond: The advent of personal computers revolutionized educational games. Titles like "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?" (1985) captivated students while teaching geography and history (Amsterdamska et al., 2018).

These early games highlighted the power of play in education, demonstrating that learning could be both fun and engaging.

The Digital Gamification Era

The turn of the 21st century ushered in a new era of gamification in education, fueled by the rise of the internet and digital technologies.

The Early 2000s: Educational institutions began exploring the potential of online learning platforms. Learning Management Systems (LMS) like Moodle started incorporating points, badges, and leaderboards to enhance engagement in online courses (Liu et al., 2017).

The Rise of Gamified Learning Apps: The proliferation of smartphones and tablets led to the development of a new generation of educational tools: gamified apps. These apps tackled various subjects, employing simulations, challenges, and point systems to make practice sessions more interactive and engaging (Akkerman & de Bruijn, 2017).

This era witnessed a focus on integrating game mechanics into existing educational structures, fostering a more interactive and engaging learning environment.

Contemporary Gamification in Education:

Today, gamification in education extends far beyond points and badges. Educators are actively incorporating game-based elements to transform traditional classroom activities:

Interactive Activities: Vocabulary review can be transformed into a quiz competition with teams, making memorization more interactive (Sail et al., 2017).

Collaborative Quests: Science experiments can be framed as quests with specific goals and challenges, fostering teamwork and scientific understanding.

Gamified Role-Playing: Role-playing historical events can allow students to step into the shoes of different characters, promoting empathy and a richer understanding of historical contexts.

The Future of Gamification in Education.

The future of gamification in education looks bright. As technology evolves, we can expect to see even more immersive and personalized gamified learning experiences tailored to individual needs and learning styles (Amundsen & Conner, 2018). Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) hold immense potential for creating engaging and interactive learning environments (Garris et al., 2002).

By leveraging the power of game mechanics and fostering a culture of playful learning, gamification can continue to revolutionize education, making it more engaging, effective, and accessible to all learners.

1.2.2.3. Current Applications in Various Educational Contexts.

The strategic application of game-based elements within educational environments, known as gamification, has become a prominent area of research and development in recent years (e.g., Akkerman & de Bruijn, 2017; Kim, 2018). This trend extends beyond the traditional implementation of reward systems, encompassing a diverse range of applications that aim to enhance the learning experience, foster deeper engagement, and ultimately improve learning outcomes.

Learning Management Systems (LMS) and Gamification:

Contemporary Learning Management Systems (LMS) platforms, such as Moodle and Blackboard, are increasingly incorporating gamification elements to boost engagement within online courses (Liu et al., 2017). These elements often include points, badges, and leaderboards, which serve to track learner progress, incentivize active participation, and cultivate a sense of healthy competition within the online learning community (Kapp, 2014). Furthermore, LMS platforms can leverage branching narratives and scenario-based learning to create immersive experiences that mirror the structure of video games (Landers & Mueller, 2018).

Subject-Specific Gamified Learning:

The development of gamified applications and software tailored to specific subjects is another emerging trend within educational gamification (Akkerman & de Bruijn, 2017). These tools, designed to make skill development more engaging, can encompass a variety of game mechanics:

Interactive Challenges: Gamified math applications can present problems as puzzles or challenges to be solved within a time limit, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Historical Simulations: Educational games can immerse students in historical periods, allowing them to make decisions and experience the consequences, leading to a deeper understanding of historical events.

Language Acquisition with Points and Levels: Language learning applications can utilize points and level systems to motivate learners to progress through vocabulary and grammar lessons, making the learning process more engaging and rewarding.

Augmented Reality (AR) Integration: Educational AR applications can overlay digital content onto the real world, allowing students to interact with 3D models of historical figures, scientific phenomena, or even dissect virtual frogs (Garris et al., 2002).

Interactive Gamified Activities in the Classroom:

Educators are actively incorporating game-based elements into traditional classroom activities to enhance interactivity and student motivation (Sail et al., 2017). This approach can involve a variety of creative strategies that leverage the power of game mechanics within the learning environment:

Gamified Vocabulary Review: Transforming vocabulary review into a quiz competition with teams and points can make memorizing new words more engaging and interactive.

Collaborative Quests for Science Experiments: Framing scientific experiments as collaborative quests with specific objectives and challenges can foster teamwork, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of scientific processes.

Gamified Role-Playing for Social Studies: Role-playing historical events or social situations can allow students to step into the shoes of different characters, promoting empathy and a richer understanding of historical or social contexts.

Gamification Beyond the Classroom:

The applications of gamification extend beyond the confines of traditional educational settings. Here are some contemporary applications:

Corporate Training: Gamified approaches are increasingly being adopted within corporate training programs to improve employee engagement and knowledge retention during onboarding and skill development initiatives (Kim, 2018). These programs can utilize simulations, challenges, and leaderboards to create a more engaging and interactive learning experience for employees.

Engaging Learners in Museums and Libraries: Educational institutions, such as museums and libraries, are utilizing gamified applications and tours to transform static exhibits and collections into interactive experiences (Papastergiou, 2014). These applications can provide users with quests, challenges, and augmented reality experiences that encourage exploration and deeper engagement with the exhibits.

Enhancing Completion Rates in MOOCs: Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) offered on platforms like Coursera and EdX are integrating gamification elements to address challenges associated with learner engagement and course completion rates (Chen et al., 2019). Leaderboards, badges, and progress tracking mechanisms can serve as powerful motivators within these self-paced learning environments, fostering a sense of accomplishment and encouraging learners to persist through the course material.

Additional Considerations:

It is important to note that the effectiveness of gamification in education depends on careful design and implementation. The mechanics and narrative of the gamified experience should be aligned with the learning objectives to ensure a meaningful learning experience (Amundsen & Conner, 2018). Additionally, consideration needs to be given to diverse learner preferences, abilities, and learning styles when designing gamified experiences (Sail et al., 2017).

gamification offers a diverse range of applications within contemporary educational settings. From enhancing engagement in online learning platforms to transforming traditional learning environments to be a more engaging and enjoyable.

1.4 Game Design Frameworks.

Game design frameworks provide a structured approach to developing compelling and engaging games. They offer a set of tools, concepts, and processes that guide designers in creating a solid foundation for their game. These frameworks can be particularly valuable in the context of gamification, helping to ensure that game mechanics are effectively applied to achieve specific objectives.

1.3.3. General Game Design Frameworks:

Several frameworks offer a comprehensive approach to game design. Here are a few prominent examples:

MDA Framework (Mechanics, Dynamics, Aesthetics): This framework breaks down a game into three core components: Mechanics (the rules and systems), Dynamics (the interaction between mechanics), and Aesthetics (the player's experience). Understanding these components helps designers create a cohesive and engaging gameplay experience (Hunicke, LeBlanc, & Zubeck, 2004).

Koster's MDA+ Framework: Building upon the MDA Framework, Koster (2004) adds Players and Goals as additional elements. This emphasizes the importance of considering the target audience and the desired outcomes when designing a game.

Bartle's Player Types Framework: This framework categorizes players into four types based on their motivational preferences: Achievers (goal-oriented), Explorers (curiosity-driven), Socializers (community-focused), and Killers (competition-driven) (Bartle, 1996). Understanding player motivations can help tailor the game mechanics and narrative to resonate with different audiences.

These frameworks provide a solid foundation for game design, offering a structured approach to consider the various aspects that contribute to an engaging experience.

1.3.4. Game Design Frameworks in Gamification:

When applying game mechanics to non-game contexts, these frameworks can be valuable tools for ensuring the effectiveness of gamification:

Identifying Desired Outcomes: Frameworks like Koster's MDA+ encourage designers to define clear goals upfront. In gamification, these goals could be anything from increased customer engagement to improved learning outcomes.

Tailoring Mechanics to Objectives: Aligning chosen game mechanics (points, badges, challenges etc.) with the desired outcomes ensures the gamified experience motivates the desired behavior.

Considering Player Motivations: Understanding player motivations, as outlined in Bartle's framework, can help gamify experiences in a way that resonates with the target audience.

Beyond Frameworks: Additional Considerations

While frameworks offer valuable guidance, effective gamification requires more than just applying a pre-defined structure. Here are some additional considerations:

Ethical Design: Overreliance on extrinsic rewards or manipulative tactics can undermine intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2017). Ethical considerations are crucial for designing gamified experiences that are both engaging and sustainable.

Narrative and Context: A well-crafted narrative can add meaning and purpose to the gamified experience. Mechanics should be integrated seamlessly within the context of the activity or learning objective.

Iterative Design and Testing: Just like game development, gamification often benefits from an iterative design approach. Continuously testing and refining the gamified experience based on user feedback is essential for optimizing its effectiveness.

Game design frameworks provide a valuable foundation for building engaging experiences, both in game development and in the context of gamification. By understanding these frameworks, designers can create gamified experiences that are not only fun and engaging but also effective in achieving specific objectives. However, it's important to remember that effective gamification goes beyond simply applying a framework. Careful consideration of player motivations, ethical design principles, and the specific context are all crucial aspects of creating successful gamified experiences.

1.5 Specific Game Elements.

Game design relies on a diverse toolbox of elements that work together to create engaging and immersive experiences. These elements, when strategically applied in the context of gamification, can motivate participation, drive desired behaviors, and enhance learning outcomes.

Core Mechanics: These are the fundamental rules, systems, and processes that drive the gameplay or gamified experience. They define how users interact with the system and what

actions they can take. Core mechanics are the backbone of both games and gamification, providing the structure for engagement and progression.

Points: Points act as a basic unit of progress, providing feedback on performance and motivating users to strive for higher scores (in games) or deeper engagement (in gamification). Think of points awarded for completing tasks in a fitness app (gamification) or points earned for defeating enemies in a video game (game).

Badges: Badges are digital or physical tokens that signify achievement or mastery of a specific skill. They provide a sense of accomplishment and can incentivize users to learn new things (gamification) or showcase their progress within a game (game). Examples include badges earned for completing educational modules or badges awarded for achieving high levels in a game.

Leaderboards: Leaderboards display the ranking of players based on specific metrics. They foster healthy competition and can motivate users to strive for improvement (gamification) or provide a sense of social comparison within a game (game). Examples include leaderboards showing top performers on a fitness app or leaderboards displaying the highest scores in a game.

Levels: Levels represent a progression system, allowing users to unlock new content, features, or challenges as they progress. This fosters a sense of accomplishment and motivates users to keep engaging (both in games and gamification). Think of unlocking new levels in a language learning app (gamification) or advancing through levels in a game to unlock new areas or abilities.

Engagement Mechanics:

Challenges: Challenges provide time-bound tasks or goals that require skill and effort to complete. They add a layer of excitement and can motivate users to test their abilities (both

in games and gamification). Examples include completing daily exercise challenges in a fitness app (gamification) or boss battles in a video game (game).

Quests: Quests are structured narratives that guide users through a series of tasks or goals. They provide a sense of purpose and direction, making the experience more engaging (both in games and gamification). Think of completing quests for rewards in an educational game (gamification) or embarking on epic quests within a video game narrative (game).

Unlockables: Unlockables are new features, content, or rewards that become available as users progress. They create a sense of anticipation and motivate continued engagement (both in games and gamification). Examples include unlocking new clothing options as you level up in a fitness app (gamification) or unlocking new weapons or abilities as you progress through a game.

Customization: Customization allows users to personalize their experience by modifying avatars, interfaces, or gameplay styles. This fosters a sense of ownership and increases engagement (both in games and gamification). Think of customizing your avatar in a fitness app (gamification) or customizing your character's appearance and skills in a video game (game).

Motivational Mechanics:

Rewards: Rewards can be tangible or intangible and are offered in recognition of achievement. They motivate users to keep engaging and striving for goals (both in games and gamification). Examples include virtual rewards like badges in a gamified learning platform or tangible rewards like discounts or merchandise in a loyalty program (gamification) or in-game rewards like new weapons or power-ups (game).

Social Interaction: Social interaction features such as teams, guilds, or collaborative challenges can foster a sense of community and belonging. This can motivate users to stay engaged and support each other (both in games and gamification). Examples include

collaborating with friends to complete challenges in a fitness app (gamification) or joining guilds and participating in team activities within a game (game).

Narrative Elements:

Storytelling: A well-crafted narrative can add depth and meaning to the experience, providing context and motivation for the gameplay or gamified activity (both in games and gamification). Think of the narrative driving players forward in a role-playing game (game) or the storyline used to introduce challenges and learning objectives in a gamified educational platform (gamification).

Immersion: Creating an immersive experience through visuals, sound design, and atmosphere can enhance user engagement (both in games and gamification). This can be achieved through high-quality graphics and sound effects in games or by creating a visually appealing and engaging interface in a gamified application (gamification).

It's important to remember that these are just a few examples, and the specific game elements used will vary depending on the context. Effective game design and gamification involve carefully selecting and integrating elements that align with the desired outcomes and resonate with

1.4.4. Rewards in Gamified Language Learning.

Rewards are a cornerstone of gamified language learning, serving as a powerful tool to motivate learners, celebrate progress, and reinforce positive learning habits. When strategically designed, rewards can significantly enhance the learning experience, making it more engaging and effective.

Types of Rewards in Gamified Language Learning:

Points and Badges: These classic game mechanics offer immediate gratification and a sense of accomplishment. Points can be awarded for completing lessons, practicing vocabulary,

or achieving daily goals. Badges can be earned for mastering specific skills or reaching milestones.

Level Progression: A level system provides a clear path for progress, motivating learners to keep engaging with the material. As learners complete lessons and challenges, they can unlock new levels, providing a sense of accomplishment and access to new features or content.

Leaderboards: Leaderboards can introduce a healthy element of competition, encouraging learners to compare their progress with others. However, it's important to consider learner demographics and goals when implementing leaderboards, as they might discourage some users.

Virtual Goods and Customization: Virtual rewards like avatars, stickers, or themed decorations for a virtual learning environment can add a layer of personalization and motivate learners to collect and showcase their achievements. Learners can customize their avatars or learning space as they progress, fostering a sense of ownership and engagement.

Unlockables and Content: Reaching milestones can unlock new lessons, games, or interactive activities related to the target language. This keeps the learning experience fresh and exciting, motivating learners to strive for more.

Real-World Rewards: Occasionally, tangible rewards like discounts on language learning resources or merchandise can be offered for reaching significant milestones. However, real-world rewards should be used sparingly as the focus should remain on the intrinsic value of language learning.

Designing Effective Rewards:

Alignment with Learning Objectives: Rewards should be aligned with the desired learning outcomes. For instance, awarding points for completing grammar exercises reinforces the importance of grammar practice.

Variety and Pacing: A variety of reward types keeps the experience engaging and prevents learners from becoming fixated on a single type of reward. Pacing the rewards ensures a steady stream of motivation throughout the learning journey.

Meaningful and Attainable: Rewards should be meaningful to the learner and attainable based on their effort and progress. Unrealistic goals or insignificant rewards can demotivate learners.

Immediate and Delayed: A mix of immediate rewards (like points) for completing tasks and delayed rewards (like unlocking new content) can provide both short-term gratification and long-term motivation.

Beyond Rewards: A Holistic Approach

While rewards play a crucial role, gamified language learning should not solely rely on extrinsic motivation. The learning platform itself should be engaging and interactive, with clear learning objectives and opportunities for practice and feedback. Incorporating elements like storytelling, challenges, and social interaction can further enhance the learning experience.

Rewards, when strategically designed and implemented, can be a powerful tool in your gamified language learning arsenal. By understanding different reward types, their impact on motivation, and best practices for design, you can create a language learning experience that is both fun and effective, helping learners achieve their language learning goals.

1.4.5. Competition in Gamified Language Learning.

Competition in Gamified Language Learning: A Double-Edged Sword

Competition can be a powerful motivator in gamified language learning, but it's a double-edged sword. While it can drive users to excel and create a sense of community, it can also discourage some learners (Amsterdamska et al., 2018).

The Benefits of Competition:

Increased Motivation: A well-designed element of competition can motivate learners to work harder and improve their skills faster (Sail et al., 2017). Seeing others succeed can inspire learners to put in extra effort and close the gap (Amsterdamska et al., 2018).

Engagement and Focus: Competition can make language learning more engaging and exciting. Learners might be more focused on completing tasks and practicing their skills to stay ahead (Deci & Ryan, 2017).

Social Interaction and Community: Leaderboards and team-based challenges can foster a sense of community among learners (Akkerman & de Bruijn, 2017). They can encourage collaboration, knowledge sharing, and friendly competition.

Benchmarking Progress: Leaderboards can provide a benchmark for learners to gauge their progress against others. This can be helpful for some learners who are intrinsically motivated by external validation (Liu et al., 2017).

The Drawbacks of Competition:

Discouragement and Demotivation: Not everyone thrives on competition. For some learners, constantly being compared to others can be discouraging, especially if they feel they are falling behind (Amsterdamska et al., 2018). This can lead to demotivation and a reluctance to continue learning.

Focus on Winning over Learning: Overemphasis on competition can shift the focus from learning the language to winning the game. Learners might prioritize scoring high or beating others rather than focusing on understanding and mastering the language itself (Deci & Ryan, 2017).

Stress and Anxiety: For some learners, competition can lead to stress and anxiety, hindering their ability to learn effectively (Amsterdamska et al., 2018). The pressure to perform well can overshadow the enjoyment of the learning process.

Unequal Playing Fields: Gamified language learning platforms cater to users with varying skill levels and learning styles. Competition can be unfair if learners are compared to others who have a significant head start in terms of language proficiency (Amsterdamska et al., 2018).

Effective Use of Competition in Gamified Language Learning

Optional Opt-Out: Allow learners to opt out of leaderboards or team-based challenges if they find them demotivating (Amsterdamska et al., 2018). This ensures a more personalized learning experience that caters to individual preferences.

Focus on Collaboration: Alongside competition, incorporate elements of collaboration, such as team-based challenges with shared goals (Akkerman & de Bruijn, 2017). This fosters a sense of community and support while still maintaining a competitive element.

Skill-Based Matchmaking: If using leaderboards, consider implementing a matchmaking system that pits learners against others with similar skill levels (Amsterdamska et al., 2018). This creates a more balanced playing field and reduces the risk of discouragement.

Non-Threatening Competition: Focus on competition that celebrates individual progress and milestones rather than solely comparing learners to each other (Amsterdamska et al., 2018). Award badges or points for completing tasks or achieving personal bests, fostering a sense of accomplishment.

Competition can be a valuable tool in gamified language learning, but it should be implemented with caution (Amsterdamska et al., 2018). Consider the needs and preferences of your learners, and ensure that competition complements the learning experience without overshadowing the joy of language acquisition. By focusing on a healthy balance between competition, collaboration, and personalized learning, you can create a gamified language learning environment that motivates, engages, and empowers learners of all levels.

1.4.6. Interactive Features in Gamified Language Learning.

Gamified language learning thrives on interactivity. By incorporating engaging features that go beyond static content, these platforms transform language learning into an active and dynamic experience. Interactive features not only make learning more enjoyable but also enhance knowledge retention and improve overall learning outcomes (Boyle et al., 2013).

Interactive Activities and Games: Gamified language learning platforms move beyond traditional flashcards and drills. They offer a variety of interactive activities and games that make practicing the language fun and engaging. These can include (Liu et al., 2017):

Matching exercises: Matching words with pictures, synonyms, or definitions.

Drag-and-drop activities: Arranging words or phrases to form grammatically correct sentences.

Quizzes and challenges: Testing learners' knowledge in a fun and interactive way.

Role-playing simulations: Providing opportunities to practice conversation skills in simulated real-world scenarios (Wang & Tahir, 2020).

Interactive storytelling: Engaging learners in stories where they can make choices and influence the narrative (Akkerman & de Bruijn, 2017).

Voice Recognition and Speech-to-Text: These features allow learners to practice their pronunciation by speaking into the platform. The system can provide feedback on accuracy and fluency, helping learners improve their spoken language skills (Liu et al., 2017).

Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR): Emerging technologies like AR and VR can create immersive learning experiences. Imagine learning vocabulary by interacting with virtual objects or practicing conversations in a simulated environment. While not yet mainstream, AR and VR have the potential to revolutionize language learning (Akkerman & de Bruijn, 2017).

Collaborative Features: Gamified language learning platforms can foster a sense of community and interaction through features like (Liu et al., 2017):

Chat rooms: Allowing learners to connect and practice conversation with native speakers or other learners.

Group challenges: Working together on tasks or challenges can boost motivation and engagement.

Peer feedback: Providing opportunities for learners to give and receive feedback on their language skills.

The Benefits of Interactive Features

Increased Engagement: Interactive features make learning more fun and engaging, keeping learners motivated to come back for more (Boyle et al., 2013).

Active Learning: By actively participating in games, activities, and discussions, learners retain information more effectively compared to passive learning methods (Boyle et al., 2013).

Personalized Learning: Some platforms offer adaptive learning features that adjust the difficulty level and content based on the learner's performance. This ensures a personalized learning experience that caters to individual needs (Liu et al., 2017).

Improved Communication Skills: Interactive features like voice recognition and collaborative tools provide opportunities to practice real-world communication skills (Wang & Tahir, 2020).

Real-Time Feedback: Many interactive features offer immediate feedback on learners' performance, allowing them to identify areas for improvement and adjust their learning strategies (Liu et al., 2017).

Interactive features are the lifeblood of gamified language learning. They transform language learning from a passive activity into an engaging and dynamic experience. By

incorporating a variety of interactive elements, gamified language learning platforms can make learning more enjoyable, effective, and ultimately lead to better language acquisition outcomes (Boyle et al., 2013)

1.5 Conclusion.

This chapter has explored the captivating world of gamification in language learning. We have journeyed through the core elements of gamification, from points and badges to engaging narratives, and witnessed their potential to transform language learning from a chore into a captivating adventure.

The research has revealed that gamification, when thoughtfully implemented, can significantly enhance motivation, foster active learning, and ultimately improve language learning outcomes. By incorporating competition, collaboration, and interactive features, gamified learning environments create a dynamic and engaging space for learners to develop their language skills.

However, the true success of gamified language learning lies in its ability to cater to the diverse needs and preferences of learners. Moving beyond extrinsic rewards, fostering intrinsic motivation through a sense of accomplishment and the joy of discovery is paramount.

This research not only contributes valuable insights to the field of educational technology but also empowers educators and language learning platform developers. By strategically integrating game mechanics and fostering a love of learning, they can create truly transformative experiences that make language learning accessible, engaging, and ultimately successful for learners of all ages and backgrounds.

The future of language learning is brimming with exciting possibilities. As technology continues to evolve and gamification practices become more sophisticated, we can expect even more innovative and immersive learning experiences to emerge. This dissertation serves as a

springboard for further exploration, encouraging continued research and development in this dynamic field. With the power of play harnessed effectively, language learning can become a lifelong journey of discovery and exploration, opening doors to new cultures, connections, and opportunities.

**Chapter Two: Research
Methodology, Data
Collection and Analysis**

Chapter Two: Research Methodology, Data Collection and Analysis

2.1 Introduction :

The current chapter is dedicated to the practical aspect of the research, which aims to assess the perception of teachers and students regarding the incorporation of game elements in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This segment intends to either support or refute the previously stated hypothesis, thereby addressing the research questions. Initially, it outlines the methodological structure of the study, followed by a description, analysis, and discussion of the data collected using two distinct instruments: a questionnaire for students and an interview for teachers.

2.2 Research Design.

A research design is the overall plan or strategy that a researcher adopts to integrate the different components of a study in a coherent and logical way. It ensures that the research problem is effectively addressed, guiding the methods of data collection, measurement, and analysis. Creswell (2014) defines research design as “the plan or proposal to conduct research, involving the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods.” In other words, the design acts as the blueprint for the entire investigation.

For the present study, a mixed-methods research design was adopted. This approach involves the combination of both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques within a single study in order to provide a more complete understanding of the research problem. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), mixed-methods research is particularly valuable in educational inquiry because it allows the researcher to “triangulate data

sources, thus ensuring that the biases inherent in one method are neutralized by the strengths of another.”

The rationale for selecting a mixed-methods design lies in the nature of the research questions, which explore both the impact of gamification on learner motivation and attitudes and the practical experiences of teachers who implement gamified strategies in EFL contexts. The quantitative component, based on a structured student questionnaire, allowed for the identification of general trends and measurable outcomes among adult EFL learners. The qualitative component, derived from semi-structured interviews with teachers, offered contextual insights and deeper understanding of classroom dynamics and implementation challenges.

This combination not only increases the reliability and depth of the findings but also reflects an awareness of the complex, multi-faceted nature of educational research. As Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) argue, mixed-methods research “provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone.”

In summary, the chosen design aligns with both the goals and scope of the study, enabling a robust exploration of gamification in adult EFL education through the complementary strengths of numerical data and interpretive insight.

2.3 Population Sampling.

Teachers and EFL students from different private language centres in Ain Temouchent, Algeria, made up the study's sample population. Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was employed to make sure that participants had relevant experience and could offer insightful opinions about the application of gamification in English language instruction and learning.

For the student sample, 104 learners were selected based on their enrolment in general English courses at different CEFR proficiency levels: A1 (Beginner), A2 (Elementary), B1 (Intermediate), B2 (Upper-Intermediate), and C1 (Advanced). The selection process was designed to guarantee a varied representation of students from various language development stages. To represent the demographic diversity usually found in language classes, both male and female students were included, ranging in age from university undergraduates to working adults. to properly demonstrate the demographic variety typically present in language centre classrooms.

In terms of teacher participants, 6 EFL teachers were chosen for the interview phase of the research. These teachers had at least two years of teaching experience and were recruited from the same language centres where the student survey was being administered. They were recruited based on their availability and interest in participating as well as experience with education technology and student-centred methodologies, including gamified instruction.

The rationale for this sampling technique was to obtain data from those participants who are actively involved in EFL learning and teaching in real, non-formal classroom settings. This ensures the validity and applicability of the findings, especially the implementation of gamification techniques in real classroom settings.

2.4 Data Collection and Analysis Methods

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of gamification on adult EFL learners. This methodological triangulation allows for the corroboration of findings across different data sources, enhancing the validity and depth of the research.

2.4.1 Quantitative Approach: Data Collection and Analysis

Quantitative research is characterized by the collection and analysis of numerical data to identify patterns, test hypotheses, and make predictions. It is grounded in the positivist paradigm, emphasizing objectivity and generalizability (Creswell, 2014).

In this study, quantitative data were gathered through a structured survey administered physically to 104 adult students enrolled in various English language centres. The participants represented multiple proficiency levels as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), including A1 (Beginner), A2 (Elementary), B1 (Intermediate), B2 (Upper Intermediate), and C1 (Advanced). The survey comprised closed-ended questions and Likert-scale items designed to assess learners' demographics, gaming habits, learning preferences, and attitudes toward gamified instruction.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize central tendencies and variation in responses. This analysis aimed to identify prevailing trends and patterns in learners' perceptions and behaviors related to gamification in language learning.

2.4.1 Qualitative Approach: Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative research is an exploratory approach that seeks to understand individuals' experiences, perceptions, and social contexts through non-numerical data. It is particularly effective in capturing the complexity of human behaviour and the meanings individuals ascribe to their experiences (Creswell, 2014).

To complement the quantitative findings and gain deeper insight into instructional practices, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six EFL teachers working in private language centres. These interviews explored teachers' familiarity with gamification, implementation strategies, perceived benefits and challenges, and their perspectives on the relevance of gamified approaches in adult education.

The qualitative data obtained from the interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis. This involved identifying, analyzing, and interpreting recurring patterns and themes within the responses, enabling a more nuanced understanding of how gamification is perceived and applied in real EFL classroom contexts.

2.5 Student's Survey

2.5.1 Description of the Survey

Questionnaires, as noted by MacDonald & Headlam, are frequently employed as instruments for gathering data, both to collect information and to provide numerical data (MacDonald & Headlam, 2008, p. 11). Essentially, a questionnaire is a tool that presents a series of questions to a sample group to gather data for analysis and knowledge extraction. In this particular study, the questionnaire comprised thirteen questions, incorporating single and multiple choice formats, as well as Likert scales. These questions were sequenced to move from general inquiries to those specifically addressing the research questions, focusing on student perceptions of game elements as a method for teaching English.

2.5.2 Analysis of the Survey

Section A: Participant Information

Question 01: Gender.

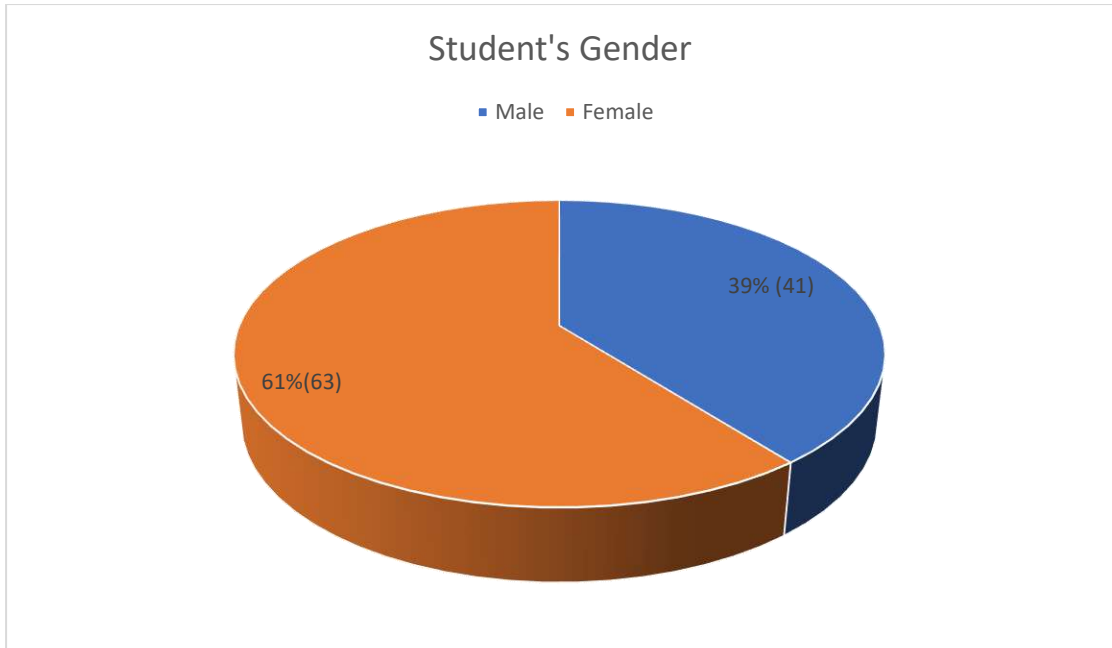


Figure 01 : Student's Gender

This purpose of this question is investigate whether a significant difference in gender influences learners' perceptions regarding the integration of gamification in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. The sample comprised 104 students, with females constituting a larger proportion (63 females) while males totalled at 41. This gender distribution accurately represents the demographic composition of the surveyed population and facilitates a balanced analysis of attitudes toward gamification across genders.

Question 02: Age.

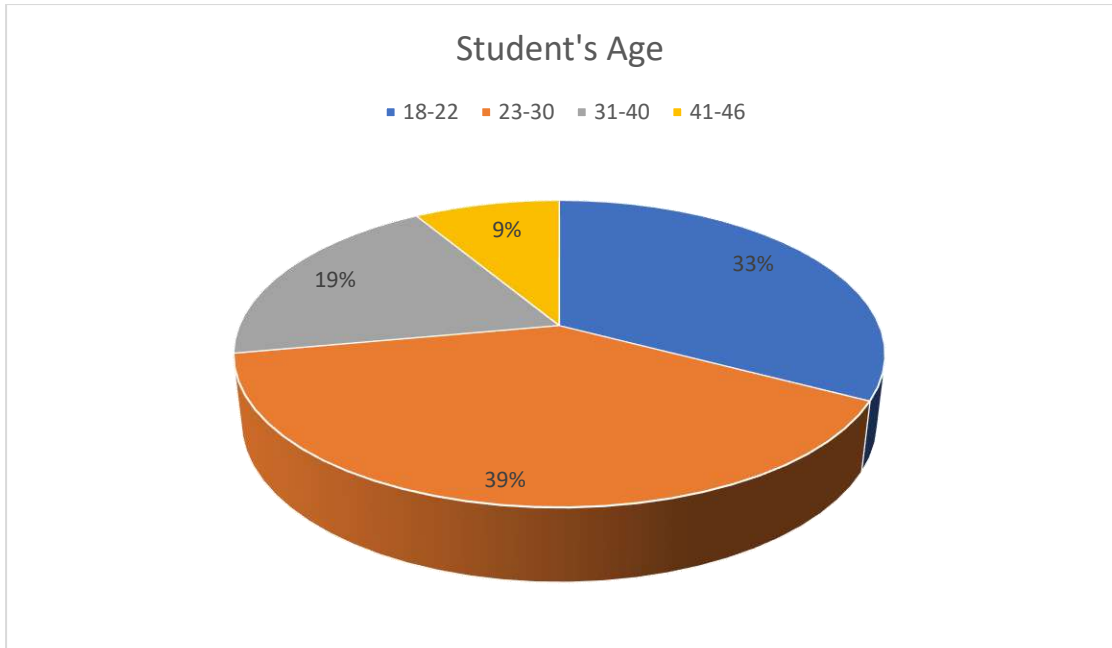


Figure 02: Students Age

The purpose of this question is to establish the age demographics of the sample. The sample's age distribution is notably concentrated, with the 23–30 age group representing the largest segment at 39%. This is closely followed by 18–22 year olds, who constitute 33% of the participants. Learners aged 31–40 comprise 19% of the sample, while individuals 41 and older account for 9%. This segmentation of age groups accurately reflects the diverse demographic landscape characteristic of adult learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts.

Question 03: Current English Level (CEFR Scale).

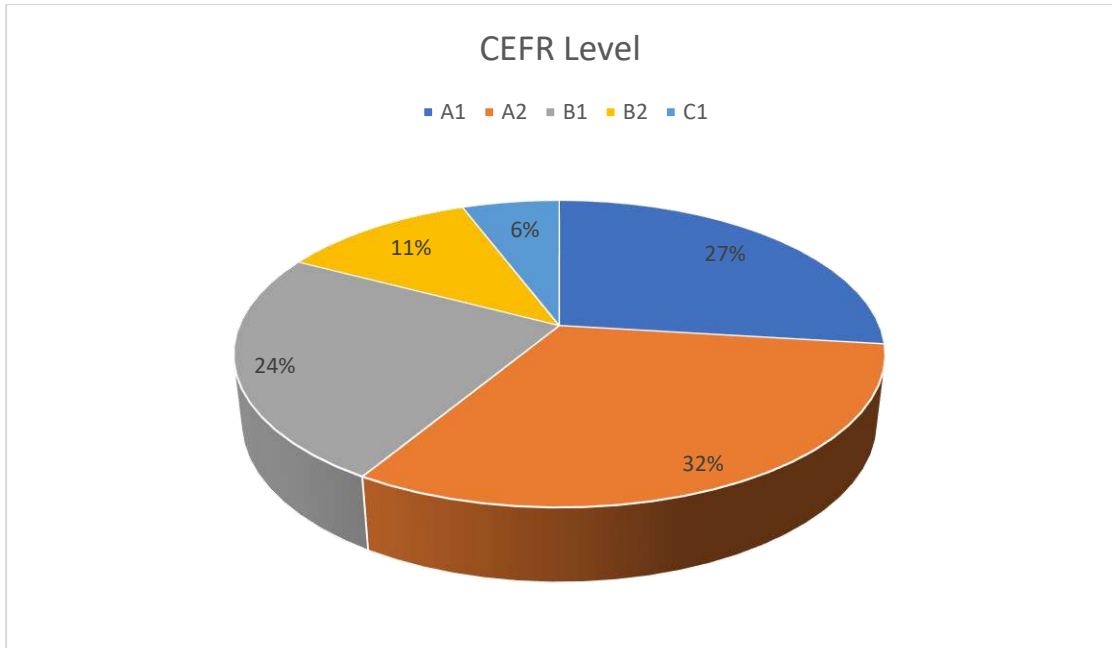


Figure 03: CEFR Level

This question aims to determine the English proficiency level of the participants based on the CEFR scale. The results revealed that the majority of the respondents were at beginner and elementary stages. The leading level with twenty-eight (27%) students was A1 (Beginner), followed closely by A2 (Elementary) with thirty-three (32%) students. B1 (Intermediate) came next with twenty-five (24%) students, while B2 (Upper-Intermediate) was reported by twelve (12%) students. Finally, C1 (Advanced) represented the smallest group, with six (5%) students.

Section B: Game Playing Habits.

Question 04: Do you currently play digital or mobile games?

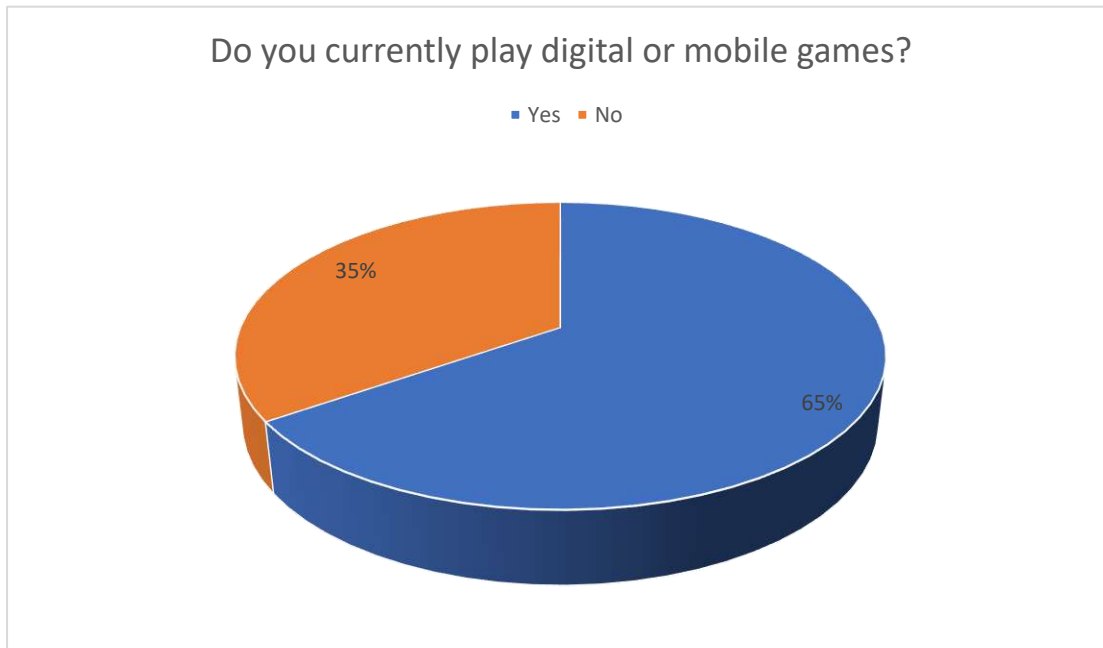


Figure 04: Percentage of Students Who Play Games

This aim of this question is to identify the digital gaming habits of the participants. The findings showed that a majority of the students, sixty-eight (65%), reported that they currently play digital or mobile games, while thirty-six (35%) stated that they do not engage in such gaming activities.

Question 05: If yes, how frequently do you play them?

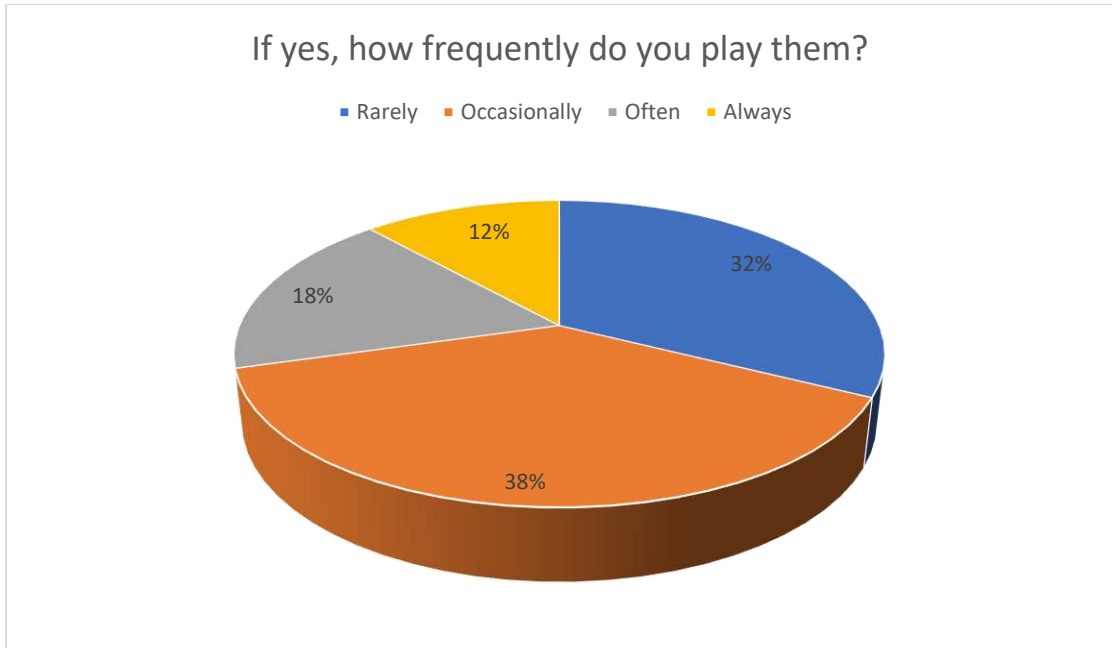


Figure 05: Frequency of Playing Games

This question is set to explore the frequency with which participants engage in digital or mobile gaming. It was answered by the sixty-eight (65%) students who had previously indicated that they play such games. The responses revealed that occasionally was the most common answer, selected by twenty-six (38.2%) students. It was followed by rarely, with twenty-two (32.3%) responses. Meanwhile, only twelve (17.6%) students reported playing often, and just eight (11.7%) stated that they always play.

Question 06: What encourages you to engage with games?

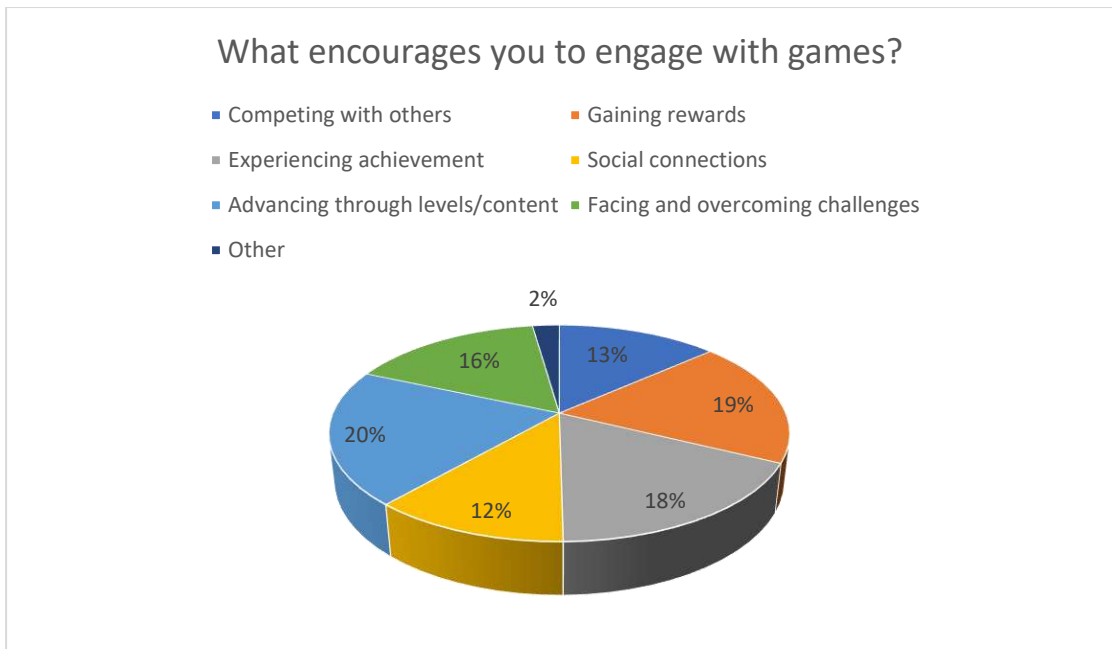


Figure 06: Student’s Motives to Play Games

The purpose of this question was to identify the primary factors motivating student engagement in digital gaming. The analysis revealed that advancing through levels or unlocking content was the most frequently cited motivator, selected by forty-five (66.1%) students. This was closely followed by gaining rewards, which garnered forty-two (61.7%) responses. Experiencing achievement was also a significant motivator, noted by thirty-nine (57.3%) students. Furthermore, facing and overcoming challenges appealed to thirty-six (52.9%) participants, and competing with others was chosen by thirty (44.1%). Social connections were selected by twenty-six (38.2%) respondents. A small proportion of students, five (7.3%), indicated other specific motivations.

Section C: Views on Gamification in Education

Gamification refers to the application of game-inspired features such as points, rewards, levels, and competition in non-game environments like education to make activities more stimulating and motivating. – adapted from Werbach & Hunter (2012)

Question 07: Before reading the definition, were you familiar with the concept of gamification?



Figure 07: Students' Familiarity With the Concept of Gamification

The purpose of this question was to determine participants' prior familiarity with the concept of gamification before its formal definition was provided. The findings indicate that the majority of students, specifically seventy-two (69.2%), reported no prior familiarity with the term. Conversely, thirty-two (30.8%) students indicated that they were already familiar with gamification.

Question 08: Based on this explanation, would you be interested in having gamified lessons in your English classes?

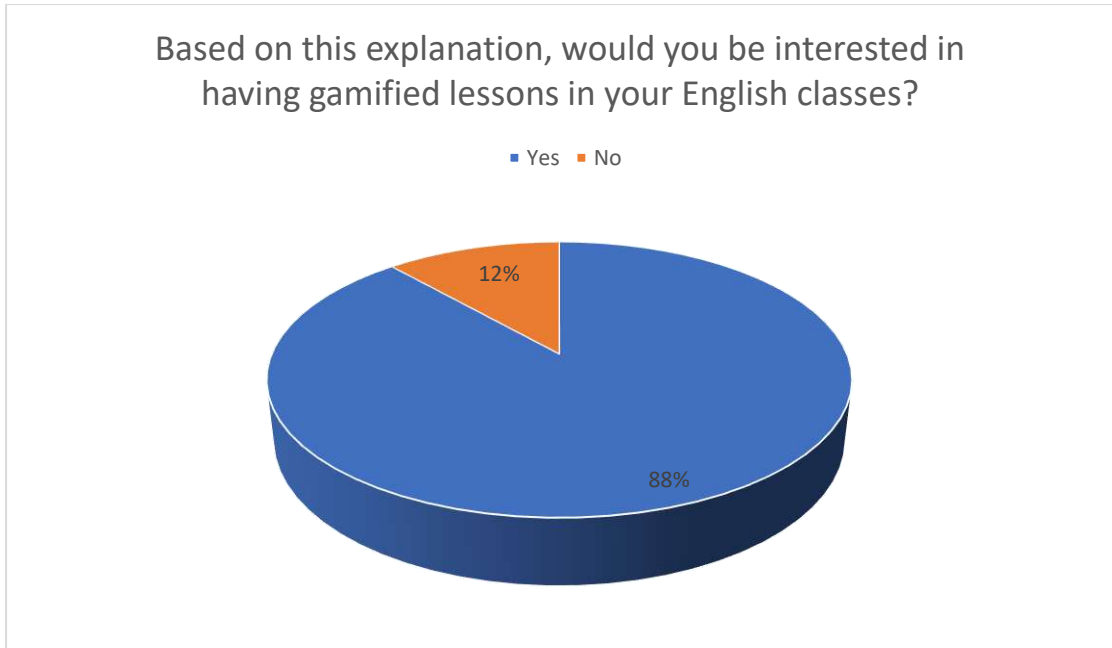


Figure 08: Interest in Gamified English Lessons

The reason behind this question is to gauge student interest in English lessons integrating gamified elements, such as points, rewards, and challenges. The responses indicated substantial interest, with ninety-two (88.5%) students expressing a desire for gamified English learning. Conversely, only twelve (11.5%) students reported no interest in such an approach.

Section D: Learning Style Preferences

Question 09: What type of class format do you prefer?

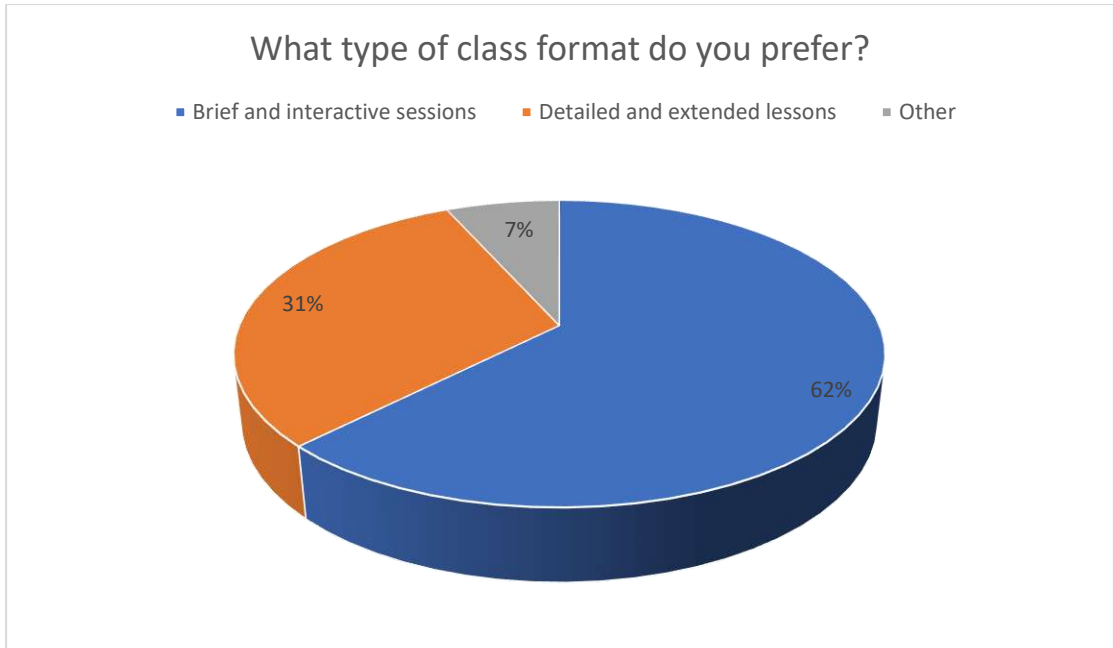


Figure 09: Student’s Preferred Class Format

This question aims to identify students' preferred format for English classes. The results indicated that the majority, specifically sixty-five (62.5%) students, expressed a preference for brief and interactive sessions. Thirty-two (30.8%) students favored detailed and extended lessons, while a smaller proportion, seven (6.7%), indicated other preferences, which included a mix of formats or flexible scheduling.

Question 10: What do you prefer as a source of learning input?

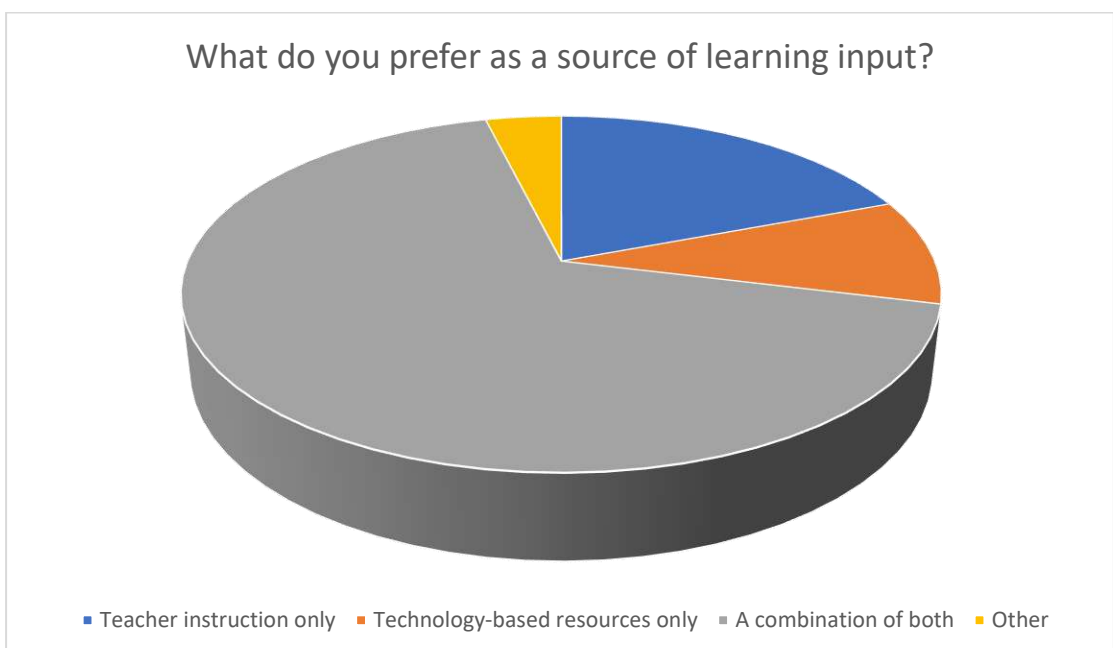


Figure 10: Student's Preferred Source of Learning Input

The purpose of this question is to explore students' preferred sources of learning input within English classes. The findings reveal that the majority of students, seventy (67.3%), favoured a combination of teacher instruction and technology-based resources. A smaller group, twenty (19.2%) students, expressed a preference for teacher instruction only, while ten (9.6%) students opted exclusively for technology-based resources. A marginal number of students, representing 3.9%, indicated other preferences.

Question 11: Do you believe the kind of activities used in class affects your participation level?

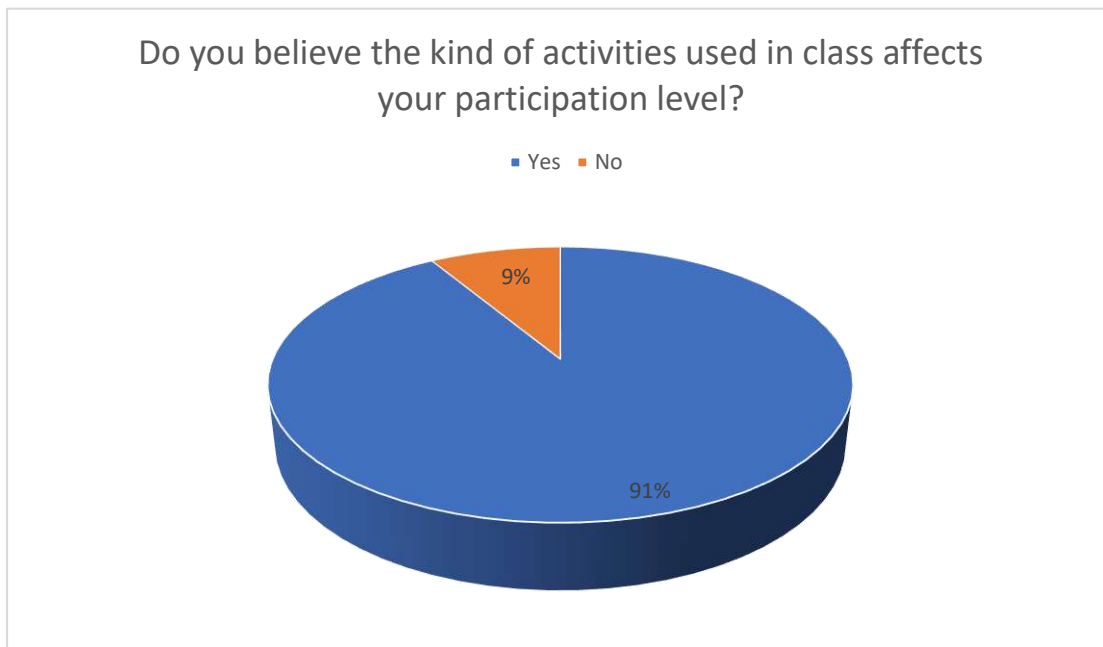


Figure 11: Influence of Classroom Activities on Participation

This question aims to assess whether students felt that classroom activity types influenced their participation. The vast majority, ninety-five (91.3%) answered “Yes”, indicating that the structure and nature of activities have a significant impact on their engagement. Only nine (8.7%) students responded “No”, suggesting that a small group perceived no link between activities and their level of participation.

Question 12: If yes, please describe how they affect you:

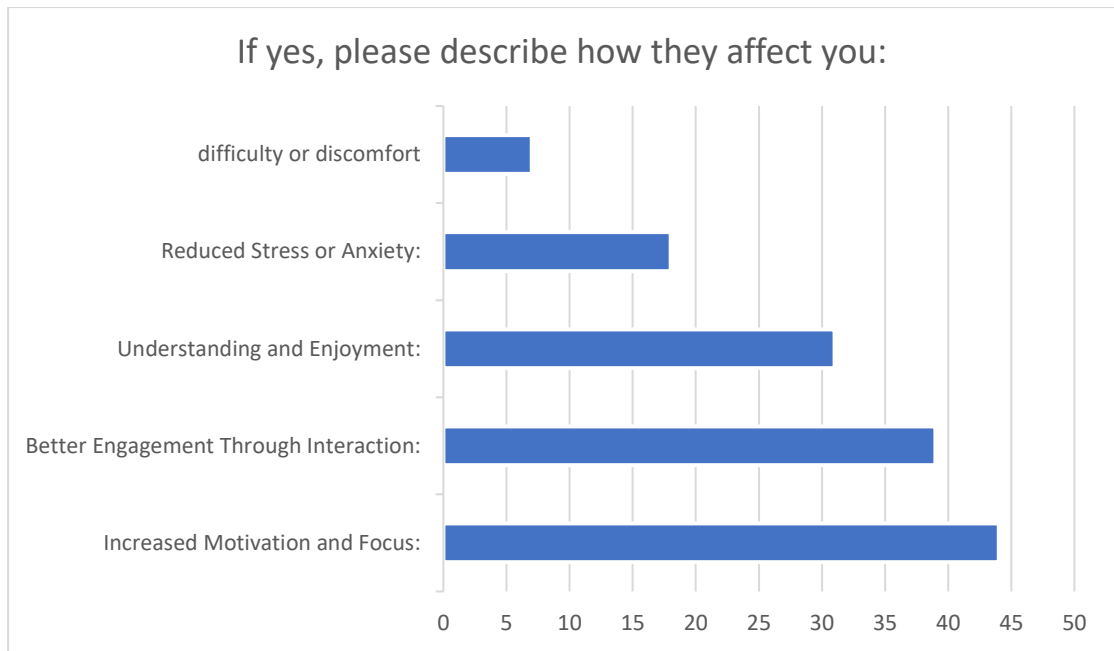


Figure 12: Student Descriptions of How Activities Affect Participation

The purpose of this question was to solicit qualitative data from the ninety-five students who affirmed that classroom activity types influence their participation. Participants provided brief written explanations, which were subsequently categorized into recurring thematic areas. It is important to note that students could provide multiple reasons, resulting in a total of 139 mentions.

The most frequently cited theme was *Increased Motivation and Focus*, articulated by forty-four (46.3%) students. These participants indicated that engaging activities, particularly those perceived as fun or competitive, enhanced their attentiveness and encouraged greater effort. A representative comment was: "When there are games, I try to win and I do my best."

This was followed by *Better Engagement Through Interaction*, mentioned by thirty-nine (41.1%) students. This theme highlighted the role of games and group activities in fostering participation and communication. One participant articulated: "I like working with classmates because it helps me speak more."

The theme of *Understanding and Enjoyment* was cited by thirty-one (32.6%) students, who expressed that activities facilitated comprehension and made lessons more enjoyable. For instance, a student commented: "I remember more when we learn with a game."

Reduced Stress or Anxiety was referenced by eighteen (18.9%) students, who indicated that interactive and gamified activities fostered a relaxed atmosphere, enabling them to participate without apprehension. A student shared: "I feel more relaxed when we play something and I can speak freely."

Finally, a smaller number of students, seven (7.4%), reported *Difficulty or Discomfort*, primarily attributed to pressure or the pace of competitive tasks. An example response was: "Sometimes I don't like games because I'm not fast."

Section E: Motivation and Engagement Drivers

Question 13: Which aspects help make learning more enjoyable for you?



Figure 13: Aspects that Make learning More Enjoyable According to the Students

The purpose of this question was to investigate the factors contributing to students' enjoyment of learning. As multiple selections were permitted, the total number of responses exceeded the number of participants.

The most frequently selected factor was *playing learning-related games*, chosen by eighty-eight (84.6%) students. This indicates a strong preference for game-based activities in the learning process.

Teacher feedback followed, selected by eighty-two (78.8%) students, highlighting the substantial influence of instructor input on learner experience.

Using digital tools was chosen by seventy-five (72.1%) students, underscoring a notable appreciation for technology integration in the classroom.

Other significant preferences included *receiving rewards*, selected by sixty-eight (65.4%) students, and *collaborating with peers*, chosen by sixty-one (58.7%) students, suggesting the importance of both extrinsic motivators and social interaction.

Having clear goals was selected by fifty-nine (56.7%) students, reflecting the perceived importance of structured progression in their learning.

Only four (3.8%) students provided additional responses in the "*Other*" category, which included varied mentions such as "funny teachers," "videos," or "short activities."

Question 14: Which elements help you stay actively engaged in class?

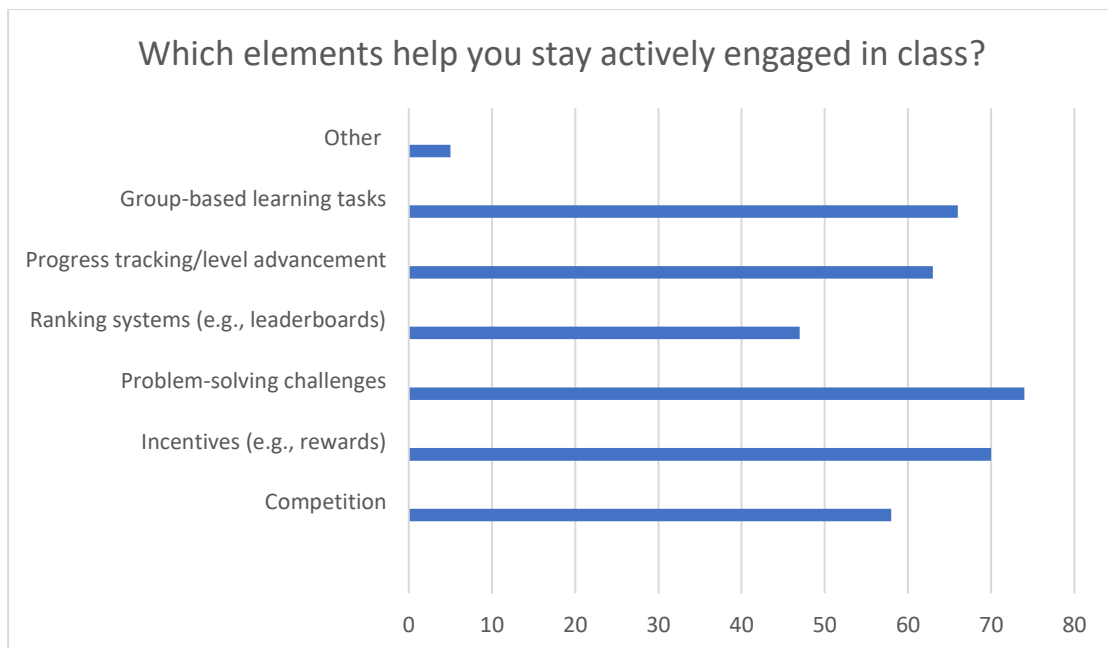


Figure 14: Game Elements That Help in Class Engagement According to the Students

This question aims to explore the classroom elements that students associate with active engagement. Participants were allowed to select more than one option, providing a broader understanding of which gamified and collaborative features are most resonant.

The most commonly selected element was *problem-solving challenges*, chosen by seventy-four (71.2%) students, indicating that critical thinking tasks are highly engaging.

Incentives, such as rewards, were selected by seventy (67.3%) students, demonstrating a strong interest in external motivators for participation.

Group-based learning tasks were chosen by sixty-six (63.5%) students, reflecting an appreciation for interactive and social learning dimensions.

Progress tracking or level advancement was selected by sixty-three (60.6%) students, highlighting the motivating effect of visible progression.

Competition also played a significant role, with fifty-eight (55.8%) students indicating its role in maintaining attention and drive.

Ranking systems (leaderboards) were selected by forty-seven (45.2%) students, suggesting a moderate interest in comparison-based progress.

Lastly, five (4.8%) students provided alternative responses under "*Other*," mentioning "fun activities," "real-life examples," and "changing tasks often."

Section F: Opinions on Gamified Learning (Likert Scale)

Question 15: To what extent do you agree with the following?

A: Incorporating technology improves the language learning process.

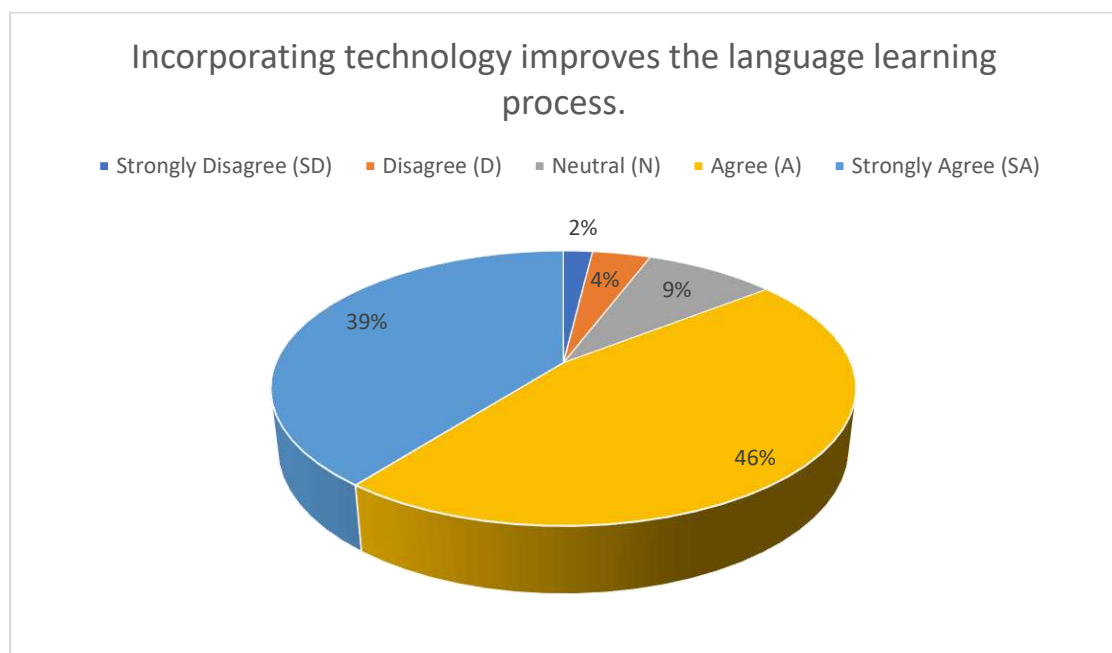


Figure 15: Students' Opinion about Incorporating Technology into Education

The purpose of this statement is to evaluate learners' perceptions regarding the role of technology in enhancing the language learning process.

Out of 104 participants, the overwhelming majority expressed positive views: forty-eight (46.2%) students agreed and forty-one (39.4%) students strongly agreed. Collectively, these responses represent 85.6% of the total, indicating a strong endorsement of technology's effectiveness in language education; while only nine (8.7%) students remained neutral, suggesting some uncertainty or limited exposure. Minimal disagreement was observed, with just six (5.7%) students either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

B: Feedback from teachers increases my motivation to participate.

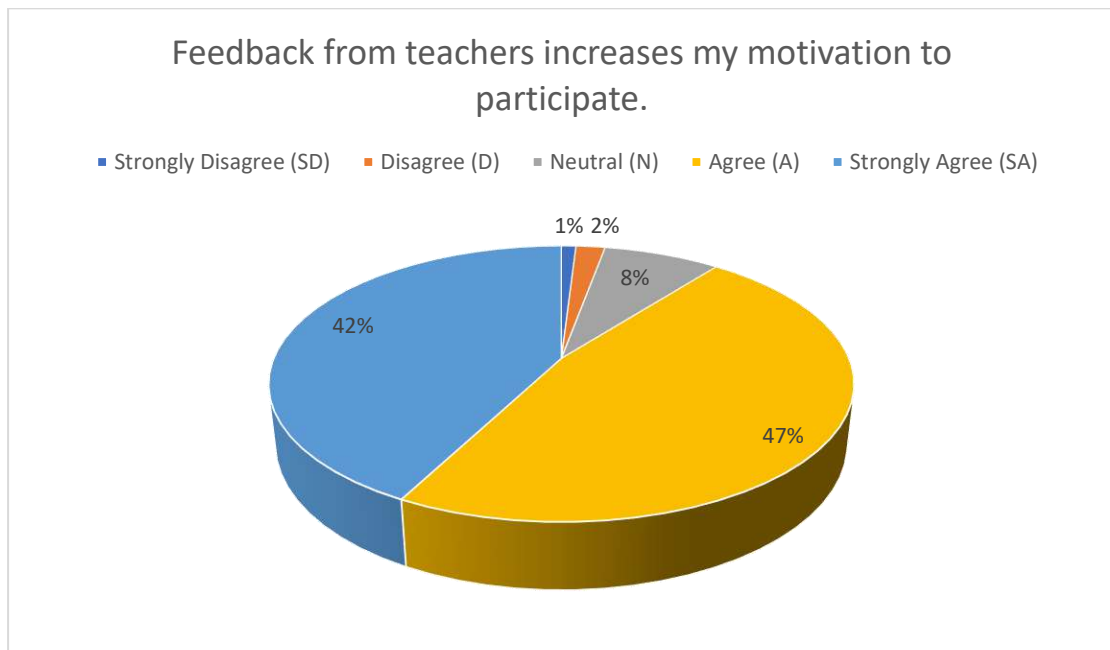


Figure 16: Teachers' Feedback increases the Students' Participation in Class

This statement aims to assess students' perceptions of the role of teacher feedback in encouraging classroom participation.

The responses indicate a clear trend: students generally perceive teacher feedback as playing a vital role. A large number of students agreed (forty-nine) and strongly agreed (forty-four), demonstrating that teacher involvement and constructive feedback are viewed as significant motivating forces. Only three students expressed disagreement, and eight students remained neutral.

C: Lessons that include game-like elements help me stay focused and motivated.

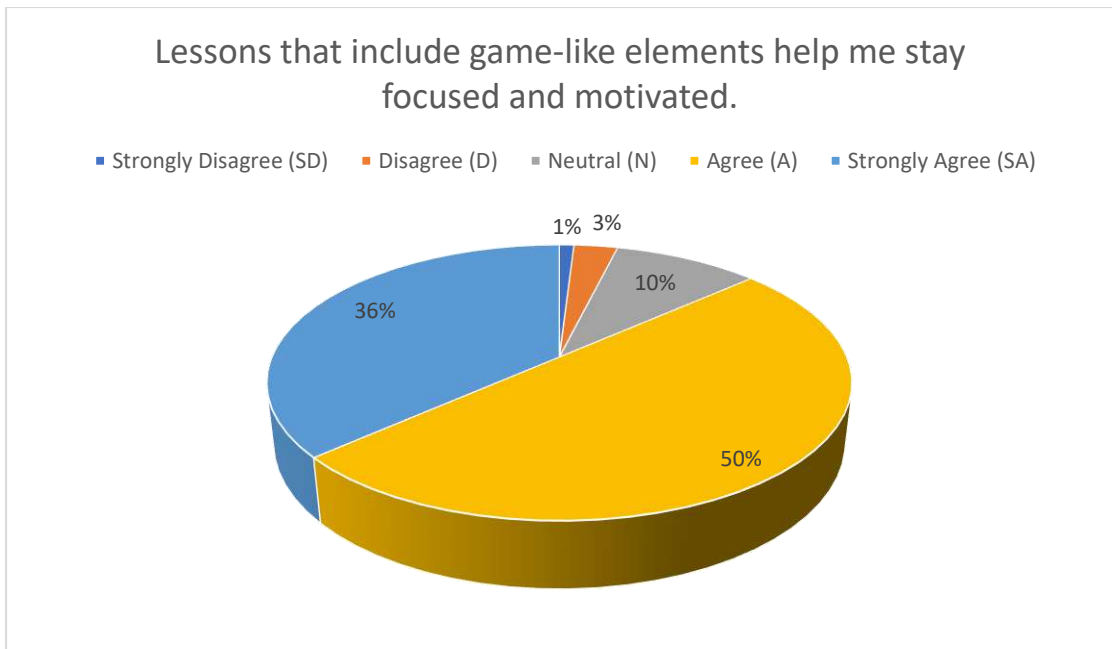


Figure 17: Game-like Elements Links to Motivation According to Students

The purpose of this statement is to directly assess the perceived impact of game-like features on students' focus and motivation during lessons.

A substantial portion of participants responded positively: fifty-two students agreed and thirty-eight students strongly agreed. This indicates a clear consensus that gamified elements significantly contribute to maintaining attention and motivation. Only a small minority of four students expressed disagreement, and ten students selected neutral.

D: Using game strategies in class makes the learning experience more enjoyable.

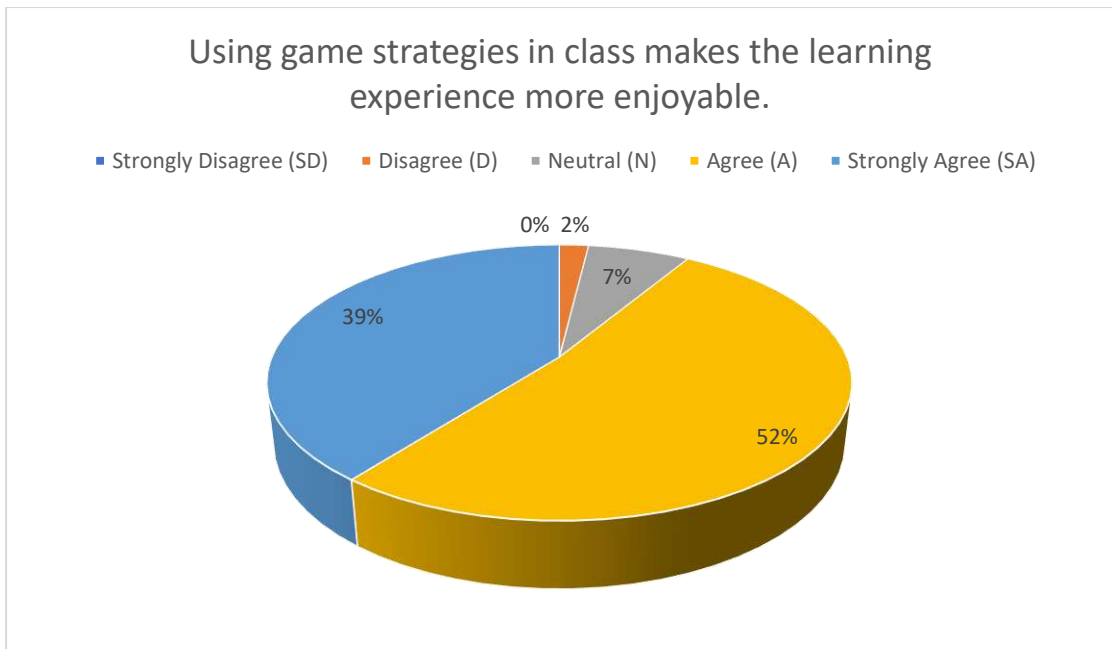


Figure 18: Student’s Views on Game Strategies Links to an Enjoyable Classroom

The purpose of this statement is to assess students' perceptions of the enjoyability of game-based learning strategies.

The results indicate an overwhelmingly positive reaction: fifty-four students agreed and forty-one students strongly agreed. This confirms that gamified strategies significantly enhance the overall classroom experience. Only two students disagreed, with no students strongly disagreeing, reflecting minimal resistance to this approach. Seven students responded neutrally, possibly due to limited exposure or individual learning preferences.

E: Game elements might distract learners from the main lesson objectives.

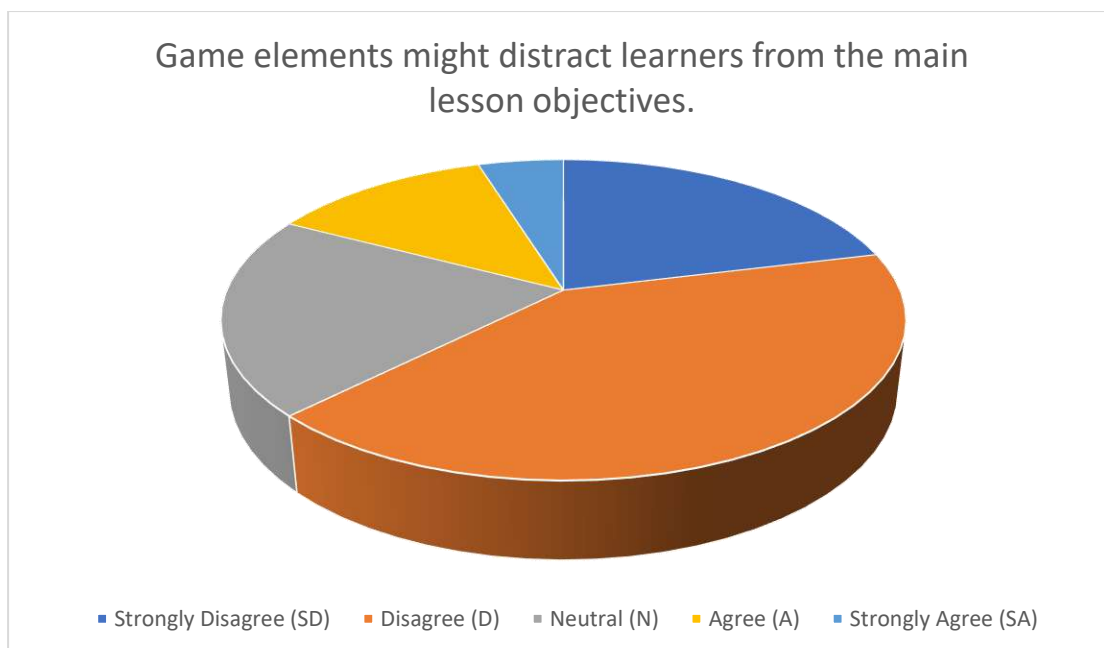


Figure 19: Student’s Views on Game Elements Links to Distractions from Learning Objectives

The purpose of this statement is to measure whether students perceive game elements as potentially distracting within the learning environment.

The majority of students disagreed with this statement, with forty-three students selecting this option and twenty-two students strongly disagreeing. This indicates that most participants do not view gamification as a source of distraction.

A smaller number, thirteen students, agreed, and only five students strongly agreed, potentially reflecting individual learning preferences or prior experiences with less effectively implemented game strategies. Twenty-one students chose a neutral stance, possibly indicating uncertainty or mixed experiences.

F: I would like to see more English lessons that include gamified features.

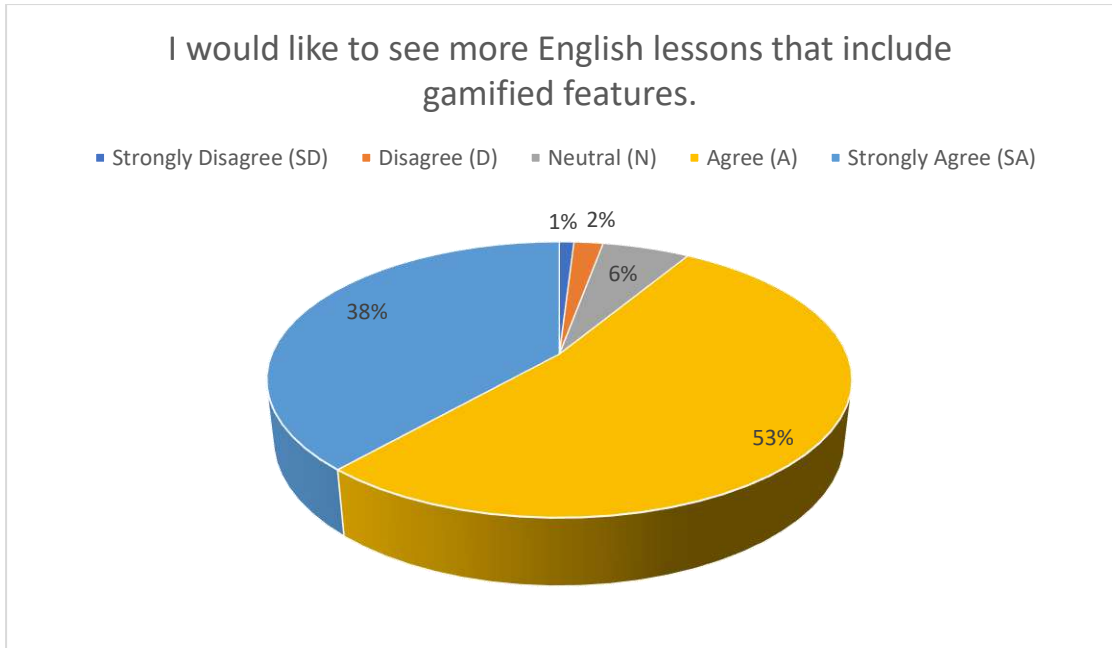


Figure 20: Student’s Desire to Include Gamified Learning

The purpose of this question was to gauge students' interest in a broader integration of gamification in English language instruction.

The responses were overwhelmingly favorable: fifty-five students agreed and forty students strongly agreed. This demonstrates strong support for expanding gamified teaching methods within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Only three students expressed disagreement, and six remained neutral.

G: Gamified activities push me to improve my performance.

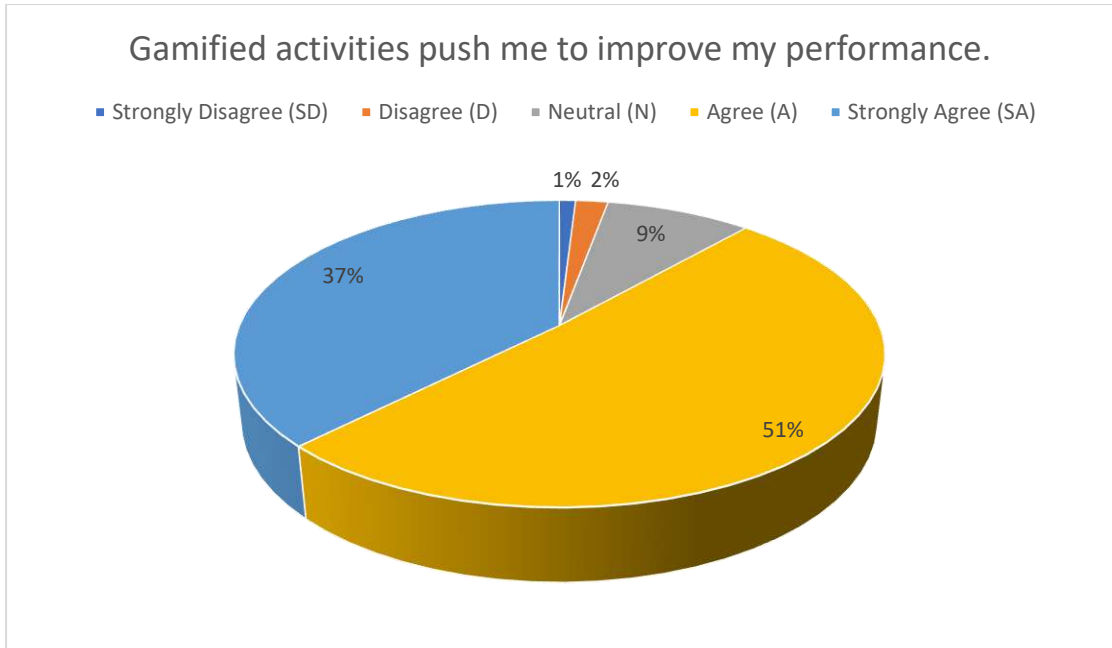


Figure 21: Gamified Activities Links to Performance

The purpose of this question was to evaluate whether students perceive gamified activities as motivational tools that encourage them to enhance their academic performance.

The data reflect strong agreement: fifty-three students agreed and thirty-nine students strongly agreed. This indicates that a significant majority find game-based learning activities to be effective performance motivators. A small number of students (only three) expressed disagreement, and nine responded neutrally.

H: Too many challenges in a lesson reduce my motivation to participate

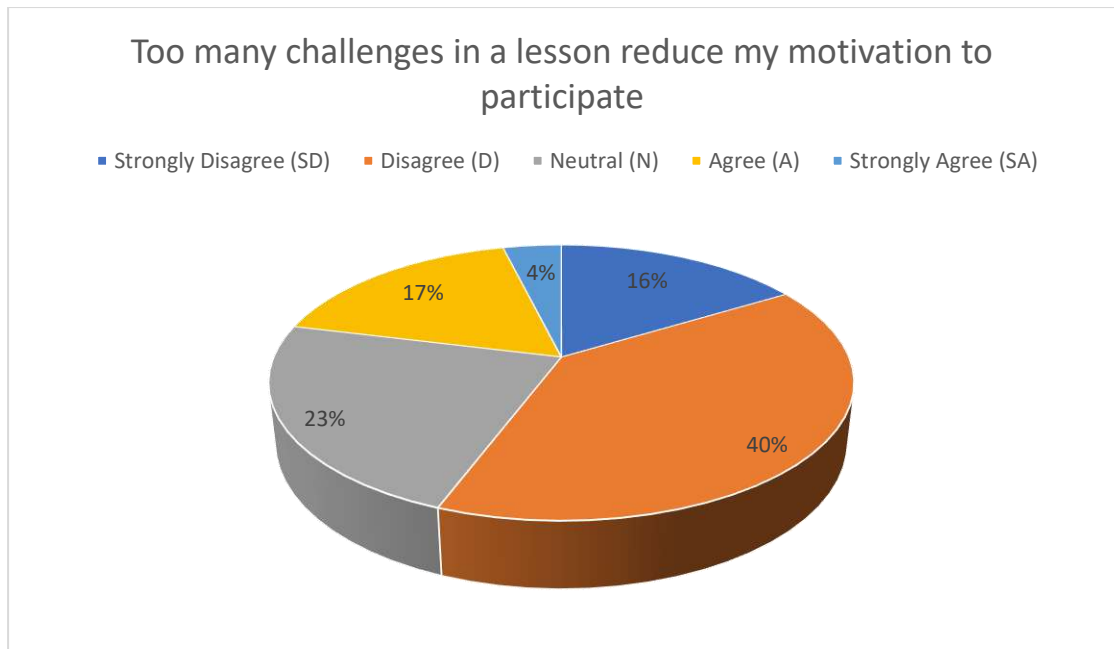


Figure 22: Challenges in the Classroom and Its Effects on Students Motivation

The purpose of this statement is to investigate whether a high number of challenges in gamified lessons could negatively affect learners' motivation.

The majority of participants disagreed with this statement, with forty-one students selecting this option and seventeen students strongly disagreeing. This suggests that most learners do not feel overwhelmed or discouraged by challenging tasks within a gamified setting.

In contrast, eighteen students agreed and four students strongly agreed, indicating that for a minority, excessive difficulty might reduce participation. Additionally, twenty-four students responded neutrally, suggesting either mixed feelings or a lack of significant impact.

I: Gamification helps me interact more actively with both my teacher and my classmate

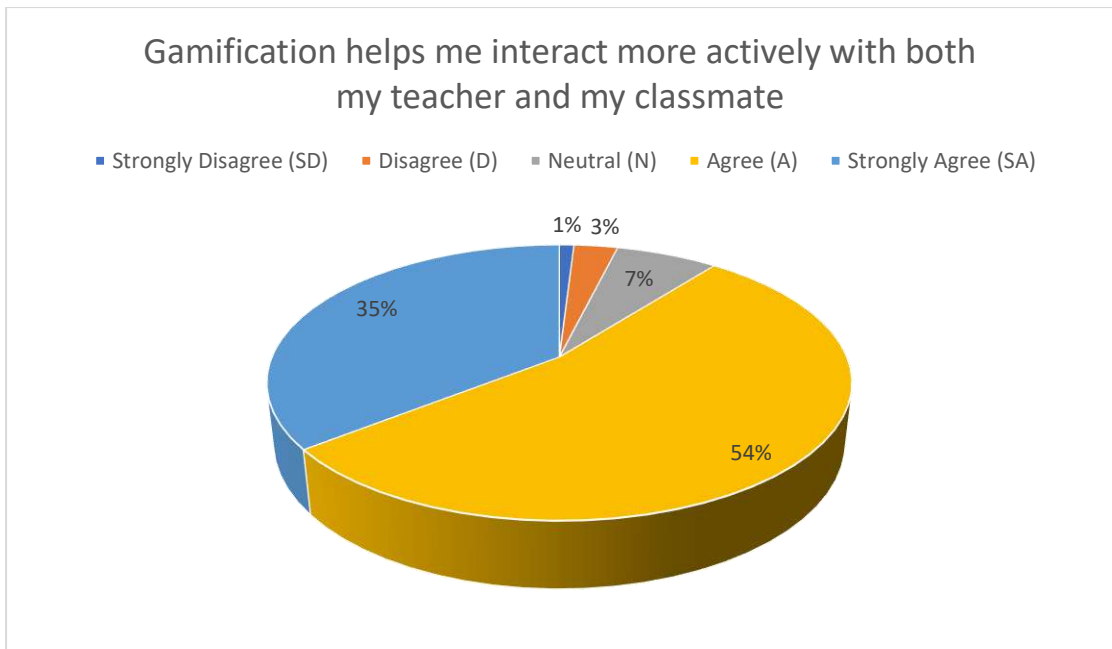


Figure 23: Gamification Links to Student’s Interaction with their Teacher and Their Classmates

The goal of this question was to assess whether students perceived gamification as encouraging more active interaction within the classroom, both with instructors and classmates.

The results indicate strong agreement: fifty-six students agreed and thirty-seven students strongly agreed. This confirms that gamified lessons foster a more interactive and communicative classroom atmosphere. Only three students disagreed and one strongly disagreed, suggesting minimal opposition to this view. Seven students chose a neutral stance, potentially due to limited collaborative gamified experiences.

J: Using rewards in competitive tasks serves no purpose in university education.

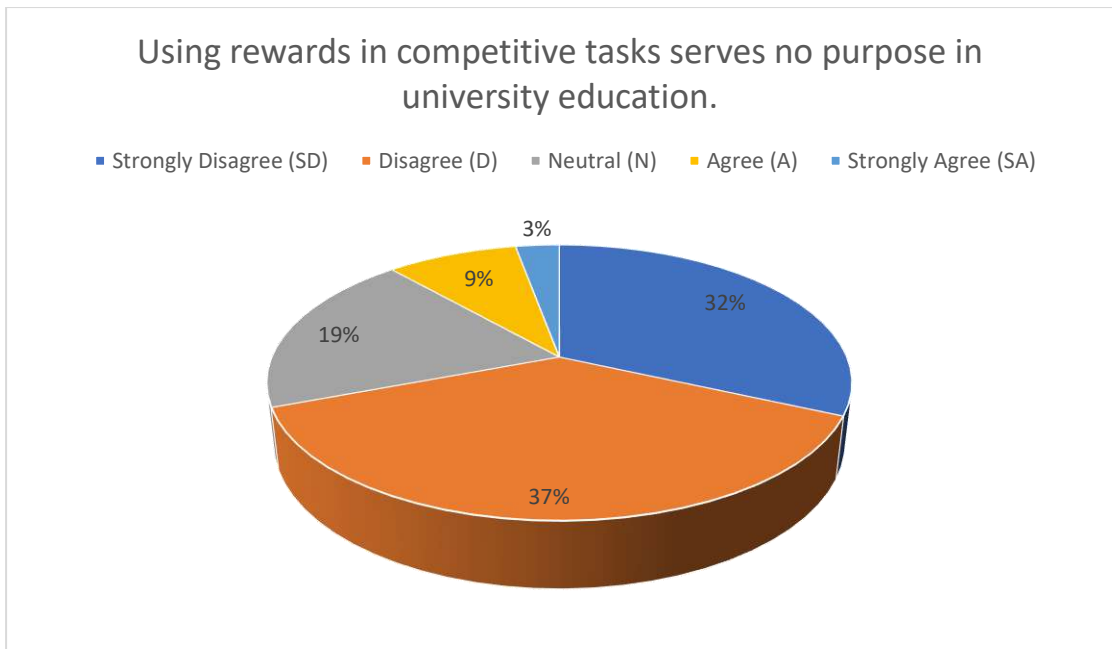


Figure 24: Rewards in Competitive Tasks Serves No Purpose in Formal education.

The purpose of this question was to examine students' opinions on the relevance of incorporating rewards in academic settings, particularly in competitive tasks.

A clear majority of students rejected the idea that rewards are purposeless in university education: thirty-nine students disagreed and thirty-three students strongly disagreed. This demonstrates that most learners value rewards as motivational tools, even in higher education.

Nine students agreed and three students strongly agreed, suggesting that a small group may view rewards as unnecessary or inappropriate at this level. Twenty students remained neutral, possibly indicating ambivalence or contextual judgment depending on how rewards are applied.

K: To become an independent learner, the teacher should not provide all the information directly.

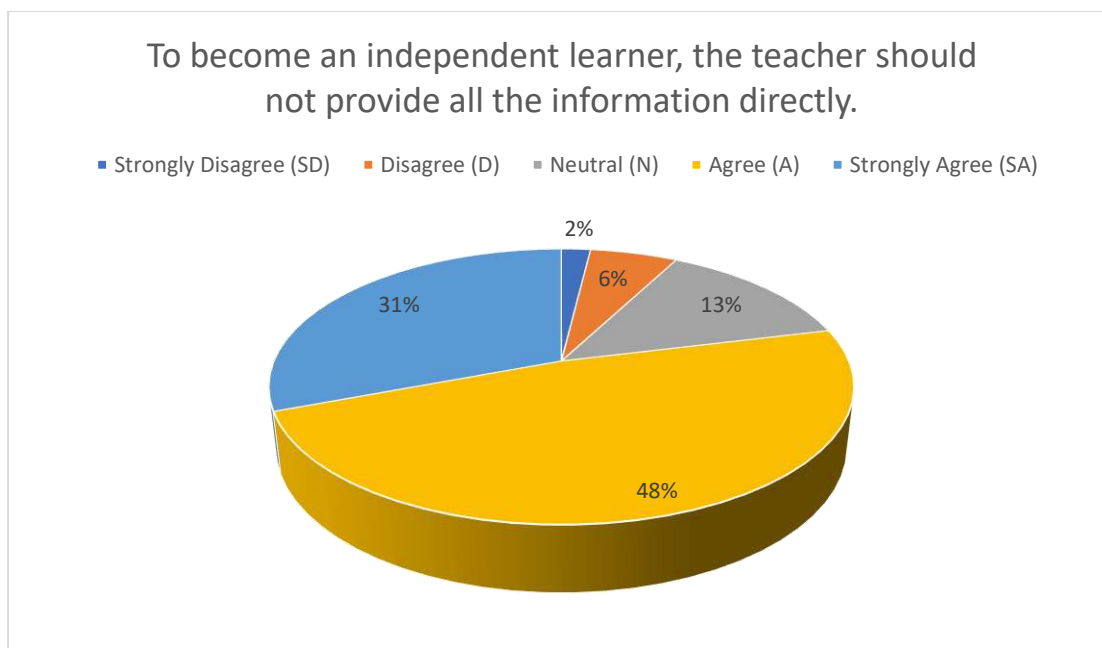


Figure 25: Student’s Views on Autonomous Learning and Teacher Involvement

The purpose of this final question is to examine student beliefs regarding learner autonomy and the teacher's role in guiding versus directly providing information.

The majority of students expressed a pro-autonomy stance: fifty students agreed and thirty-two students strongly agreed. This indicates that many learners value opportunities to discover, explore, and construct knowledge independently, rather than being fully dependent on the teacher.

A smaller number (six students disagreed and two strongly disagreed) may prefer more structured, teacher-led instruction. Fourteen students gave a neutral response, possibly reflecting mixed experiences or a transitional perspective on independent learning

2.5.3 Interpretation and Discussion of Survey Findings

This section interprets and discusses the empirical findings derived from a survey administered to 104 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. The primary objective was to investigate students' perceptions, behavioral patterns, preferences, and attitudes toward gamification and its pedagogical utility within the English language learning process. The comprehensive analysis revealed substantial support for integrating gamified strategies into the

EFL classroom and delineated several dimensions through which gamification positively influences learner motivation, interaction, and engagement.

2.5.3.1. Participant Demographics and Digital Gaming Engagement

The demographic data indicated a quantitative preponderance of female participants (63 females vs. 41 males) within the sample. Participant ages ranged from 18 to 46 years, with the 18-25 age bracket being the most frequently represented. A majority of respondents were categorized at the A1 and A2 levels of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), signifying their status as beginner or elementary learners. This contextual detail is critical, as it suggests that students in foundational language acquisition stages are receptive to, and potentially benefit significantly from, innovative and interactive pedagogical approaches such as gamification.

Regarding digital gaming habits, a considerable majority of students reported current engagement with digital or mobile games. However, most indicated infrequent or occasional play, with "always" being the least selected option. Students frequently identified several motivating factors for their gaming engagement, including the pursuit of rewards, goal attainment, level progression, and the overcoming of challenges. These factors are directly congruent with the core elements that gamified learning environments aim to replicate.

2.5.3.2. Prior Familiarity and Receptivity to Gamification

Despite a notable proportion of students initially lacking familiarity with the term "gamification," a significant majority (92 out of 104) expressed interest in incorporating gamified lessons into their English classes once a definition was provided. This overwhelming interest, even among those previously unacquainted with the concept, underscores the broad

appeal of game-inspired learning, particularly when learners perceive its potential pedagogical advantages in a classroom context.

2.5.3.3. Learning Modality Preferences and Activity Impact

The data evinced that most learners favored brief and interactive instructional sessions over extended, detailed lessons. This finding supports the efficacy of dynamic and engaging formats, characteristic of gamified environments. Furthermore, the majority expressed a preference for a combination of teacher-led instruction and technology-based input, suggesting that students seek to augment, rather than replace, traditional pedagogical methods through innovative, blended learning experiences.

Crucially, nearly all respondents concurred that the nature of classroom activities directly influences their participation levels. Their qualitative responses, derived from open-ended questions, coalesced into five principal themes:

- *Increased motivation and focus*
- *Enhanced engagement through interaction*
- *Improved understanding and enjoyment*
- *Reduction of stress and anxiety*
- *Occasional difficulty or discomfort*, predominantly among lower-proficiency students.

These findings are consistent with existing scholarly literature, which posits that well-structured gamified activities contribute to both emotional and cognitive engagement, both of which are fundamental for effective language acquisition.

2.5.3.4. Drivers of Motivation and Engagement

When queried about elements that foster learning enjoyment or sustain engagement, students predominantly favored features intrinsically associated with gamification. These

included digital tools, rewards, educational games, competition, problem-solving, leaderboards, and progress tracking. The high endorsement of these features affirms their effectiveness as motivational drivers, particularly among younger or less experienced learners who often find conventional instructional methods less stimulating.

Notably, students frequently selected collaboration with peers and group-based learning tasks. This implies that the social components inherent in gamification—such as team-based games or collaborative challenges—can significantly enhance language practice and classroom interaction.

2.5.3.5. Attitudes Toward Gamified Learning (Likert Scale Analysis)

The Likert-scale questions (Q16–Q26) offered more granular insights into students' attitudes toward gamification:

- A substantial majority agreed that technology enhances language learning (Q16) and that teacher feedback increases motivation (Q17). This supports the notion that digital platforms, when synergistically combined with supportive instruction, can optimize learning outcomes.
- Most students agreed that game-like elements contribute to sustained focus, motivation, and an enhanced learning experience (Q18–Q19). This provides robust empirical support for integrating gamified components within EFL contexts.
- Regarding potential drawbacks, only a minor proportion of students perceived gamified tasks as distracting (Q20) or believed that an excessive number of challenges diminished motivation (Q23). This suggests that, when appropriately designed, game elements primarily augment rather than impede the learning process.
- The overwhelming agreement on statements such as "I would like to see more gamified English lessons" (Q21) and "Gamified activities push me to improve" (Q22) reinforces

that students not only derive enjoyment from gamification but also perceive it as efficacious in fostering progress and self-improvement.

- Students largely concurred that gamification promotes active classroom interaction (Q24) and that rewards within competitive academic settings are indeed relevant in higher education (Q25). This challenges traditional assumptions that university-level learners may not respond positively to game-based incentives.
- Finally, responses to Q26 indicated that students value learner autonomy and self-discovery in their educational journey. The agreement with the statement that teachers should not exclusively provide all information suggests that students recognize the value of exploratory learning pathways, which gamification can effectively facilitate.

2.6 Teachers' Interview

2.6.1 Description of the Interview

To enrich the data collected from students and provide a more holistic understanding of the integration of gamification in EFL classrooms, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six EFL teachers from various private language centres in Ain Temouchent, Algeria. The purpose of these interviews was to explore teachers' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes toward using gamified elements in adult language instruction.

The interviews were designed around open-ended questions that allowed participants to elaborate on their views and classroom practices. Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes and was conducted face-to-face. Topics covered included teachers' familiarity with gamification, perceived advantages and challenges, the frequency of gamification implementation, observed learner responses, and any recommendations they had for its use in adult EFL settings.

The interview guide consisted of the following core questions:

1. How familiar are you with the concept of gamification in education?
2. Have you ever implemented gamified activities in your EFL classes? If so, how?
3. What benefits do you think gamification brings to adult language learners?
4. What challenges have you encountered when using gamified strategies?
5. How do students usually respond to gamified elements in your lessons?
6. In your opinion, should gamification be a core component of modern EFL instruction?

Why or why not?

All interviews were recorded (with participant consent) and later transcribed for analysis. The anonymity and confidentiality of participants were maintained throughout the process.

2.6.2 Analysis of the Interview

To present a structured analysis of the interview data, teacher responses are presented question by question. Each question is followed by individual responses and a brief analysis to highlight shared ideas, variations in perspective, and emerging themes. To present a structured analysis of the interview data, teacher responses are presented question by question. Each question from the interview guide is followed by direct quotations from all six participants, offering a comprehensive view of their perspectives.

Question 1: How familiar are you with the concept of gamification in education?

- *Teacher 1:* "I first came across the term during a Micro-teaching lecture at University. And I have been using games in class; so I'd say I'm pretty familiar with it"
- *Teacher 2:* "I'm know about the concept, especially as it applies to younger learners. For adults, I've only recently started exploring it."
- *Teacher 3:* "Yes, I'm very familiar. I board games and various games to introduce new vocabulary and enhance grammar."

- *Teacher 4*: "I know the basic idea; using games in learning... but I've never had any formal training in it."
- *Teacher 5*: "I've heard the term, but I'm still navigating how to apply it consistently in adult classes since Odyssey's centre encourages gamified teaching."
- *Teacher 6*: "I've done some reading on gamification in education, and I try to apply it when possible."

All six teachers demonstrated some level of familiarity with gamification, though their experiences and depth of knowledge varied. Teachers 3 and 6 appeared the most confident and experienced, having used structured gamified tools board games or incorporating mechanics purposefully. Others, like Teachers 1 and 5, had more intuitive exposure and were still exploring its practical classroom application. This variation suggests that while gamification is no longer a foreign concept among EFL teachers, professional development may still be needed to promote confident and consistent use.

Question 2: Have you ever implemented gamified activities in your EFL classes?

If so, how?

- *Teacher 1*: "Yes, I use simple team-based quizzes and vocabulary games. It's mostly... low-tech."
- *Teacher 2*: "Sometimes, I design board games or role-plays with rewards for completing tasks."
- *Teacher 3*: "I often use board games. I also create challenges that involve points and badges."
- *Teacher 4*: "I occasionally use games, but not with a full gamification framework. It's more spontaneous."

- *Teacher 5*: "Rarely, because I'm unsure how to structure them properly. But I've used flashcard competitions."
- *Teacher 6*: "Yes, especially vocabulary bingo and grammar races. Students enjoy competing."

Most teachers had experience implementing gamified activities, though their approaches differed in complexity. Teachers 3 and 6 favored competitive formats, whereas Teachers 1 and 2 and even 3 opted for traditional, low-tech games. Teacher 5 expressed hesitance due to uncertainty in structuring activities, reflecting a broader challenge in transitioning from passive to game-driven teaching styles. This range illustrates how gamification is practiced with varying confidence and tools depending on individual teacher readiness and classroom context.

Question 3: What benefits do you think gamification brings to adult language learners?

- *Teacher 1*: "It definitely boosts participation. Even the shy students get involved."
- *Teacher 2*: "It breaks the routine and gives students something to look forward to."
- *Teacher 3*: "It increases motivation and retention. When students are active, they remember way more."
- *Teacher 4*: "It helps learners see their progress in a fun way."
- *Teacher 5*: "It makes the class feel less intimidating, especially for lower-level or shy students."
- *Teacher 6*: "It creates a positive learning environment. Students are more open to making mistakes."

The teachers widely agreed that gamification improves participation, motivation, and emotional comfort in the classroom. Benefits were reported across affective (reduced anxiety),

cognitive (better retention), and behavioral (increased participation) domains. Teachers particularly noticed improved performance among shy or less confident students. This feedback supports the argument that gamification is not just entertaining but pedagogically effective for adult learners.

Question 4: What challenges have you encountered when using gamified strategies?

- *Teacher 1:* "Planning takes time, especially when I have a full schedule."
- *Teacher 2:* "Not all students respond the same. Some think games are childish."
- *Teacher 3:* "Sometimes the internet doesn't work, and digital tools become useless."
- *Teacher 4:* "It can be difficult to align the game with the lesson objectives."
- *Teacher 5:* "Lack of resources and guidance. I often have to improvise."
- *Teacher 6:* "Managing competition; some learners get too competitive or distracted."

The challenges teachers mentioned ranged from logistical to pedagogical. Time constraints and insufficient access to digital tools were commonly cited barriers. Teacher 6 highlighted a less-discussed issue: overly competitive students who become disruptive or dominate the activity, sometimes throwing off class balance. This indicates that while gamification is generally well received, its implementation must be carefully designed to prevent distractions, preserve inclusivity, and maintain classroom control.

Question 5: How do students usually respond to gamified elements in your lessons?

- *Teacher 1:* "They're usually more engaged. I can see the difference in energy levels."
- *Teacher 2:* "Most enjoy it, especially if there's a small prize involved."
- *Teacher 3:* "Adult learners are more willing to participate when it's not just lecture."
- *Teacher 4:* "Even older students laugh and compete. It really boosts morale."
- *Teacher 5:* "They respond well to team activities. It helps build class rapport."

- *Teacher 6*: "The feedback is generally positive. They ask for more gamified lessons."

Students were reported to respond very positively to gamified activities. Teachers noted greater energy, engagement, and participation, even among older adults. Teacher 4 observed how gamification lifted classroom morale, while Teacher 5 emphasized its social bonding effects. However, underlying these positive responses is the need for balance. Teachers indicated that if students become overexcited or overly competitive, the intended instructional purpose may be lost. Thus, managing emotional engagement is just as important as fostering it.

Question 6: In your opinion, should gamification be a core component of modern EFL instruction? Why or why not?

- *Teacher 1*: "Yes, but with moderation. It should support learning, not replace it."
- *Teacher 2*: "Definitely. It keeps learners interested and can be adapted to any topic."
- *Teacher 3*: "Yes, especially with adult learners who need motivation beyond just grades."
- *Teacher 4*: "I think it has a place, but we need more training on how to use it well."
- *Teacher 5*: "Yes, but only if it's meaningful. Empty games don't help."
- *Teacher 6*: "Absolutely. If planned properly, gamification can transform the classroom experience."

There was strong support for gamification as a core instructional approach, but with clear calls for moderation and proper integration. Teachers emphasized that gamification should align with learning goals, not serve as a distraction or be used superficially. Several teachers also highlighted the need for more training and pedagogical support. This reflects a readiness among instructors to use gamification more systematically, provided they are equipped with the right resources and frameworks.

2.6.3 Interpretation and Discussion of the Interview Findings

The interviews offer valuable insights into how EFL instructors perceive and apply gamification in adult classrooms. One of the most prominent takeaways is the positive attitude toward gamified instruction, even among those with limited implementation experience. The perceived increase in learner motivation and classroom participation aligns strongly with the student survey data, reinforcing the conclusion that gamification is a useful tool in promoting learner engagement.

Teachers' acknowledgment of challenges, such as time and resource constraints, reflects practical realities that must be addressed for gamification to be fully effective. These limitations do not indicate resistance to the method but rather highlight the need for institutional support, professional development, and appropriate technological infrastructure.

Interestingly, the responses also demonstrated that teachers recognize the need for intentional design in gamification. It is not merely about inserting games into lessons but about thoughtfully integrating game mechanics that align with instructional objectives and learner needs. The emphasis on balancing engagement with meaningful learning outcomes suggests a maturing view of gamification within the pedagogical landscape.

Overall, the teacher interviews support the notion that gamification, when well-planned and purposefully integrated, holds strong potential for transforming EFL instruction. The qualitative data complements the student findings, providing a fuller picture of the classroom environment and underscoring the practicality, appeal, and future promise of game-informed teaching strategies.

2.7 Discussion and Interpretation of the Main Results

The integration of findings from both the student survey and teacher interviews reveals a consistent and mutually reinforcing picture of gamification's value in adult EFL instruction. Across both data sources, the central themes of increased motivation, improved focus,

classroom engagement, and emotional comfort were recurrent. These benefits were especially strong among lower-proficiency learners, confirming the hypothesis that gamified instruction is most impactful for A1 and A2 level students.

The quantitative data demonstrated that learners were not only receptive to gamified methods but also actively engaged by them, showing enhanced focus, confidence, and a stronger willingness to participate. These findings support existing literature which suggests that interactive and game-based learning environments foster higher learner motivation and retention (Deterding et al., 2011; Hamari et al., 2014). Additionally, students favored collaborative and interactive activities over passive instruction, reinforcing the pedagogical value of social engagement.

The qualitative insights from teacher interviews provided an essential contextual layer to the numerical results. Instructors highlighted real-world challenges such as resource limitations, lesson planning time, and the occasional loss of focus due to overexcited learners. These insights underscore the need for structured training and careful classroom management when implementing gamification.

Moreover, while most teachers supported the integration of gamified methods, they emphasized the importance of balance. Games must be tied directly to pedagogical objectives and not used purely for entertainment. This aligns with Werbach and Hunter's (2012) assertion that gamification must be intentionally designed to serve learning goals rather than distract from them.

Overall, the results confirm both hypotheses of the study: that gamification improves learner outcomes and positively influences classroom attitudes when applied thoughtfully. The consistency between learner perceptions and teacher observations lends credibility to the data and positions gamification as a viable tool in adult language education.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter detailed the research design, data collection procedures, and the main findings from both the student questionnaire and teacher interviews. The results demonstrated that gamification has a broadly positive impact on adult EFL learning, particularly at beginner levels, where students showed the highest levels of motivation, participation, and emotional engagement.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data offered a well-rounded perspective. While the student survey highlighted clear trends in learner receptivity and engagement, the interviews provided valuable insight into the practical realities of implementing gamification in the classroom. Teachers expressed strong support for gamified strategies, while also acknowledging the challenges of time management, resource availability, and classroom dynamics.

Taken together, the findings confirm that gamification, when thoughtfully planned and executed, enhances the EFL learning experience in meaningful ways. These results provide a solid empirical foundation for the recommendations and pedagogical implications that follow in the final sections of the dissertation.

2.9 Suggestions and Recommendations

The findings of this study underscore the potential of gamification as an effective pedagogical tool in adult EFL instruction, particularly at beginner proficiency levels. To harness this potential, it is important that language educators be supported in the thoughtful integration of game-based strategies into their teaching practices.

One recommendation emerging from the data is the need for ongoing teacher training. While instructors expressed openness to using gamified elements, several cited uncertainty or a lack of experience in structuring such activities. Targeted professional development that

introduces teachers to practical tools, pedagogical frameworks, and adaptable game formats would help bridge this gap and promote confident implementation.

In addition, institutions and language centres should consider providing the necessary infrastructure to support gamified learning. Although many teachers successfully employed low-tech methods such as paper-based games or team challenges, the inclusion of digital tools—when available—can further diversify classroom engagement and enhance interactivity.

It is also advisable that educators select gamification elements that are pedagogically purposeful and contextually appropriate. Not every game-based activity translates equally well across different groups or lesson objectives. As highlighted by teacher participants, maintaining a balance between fun and focus is critical to sustaining educational value.

Future research is encouraged to build on the present study by examining gamification's long-term impact on language development, learner autonomy, and retention. Additional studies involving larger, more diverse populations and varied instructional contexts would further refine our understanding of how gamification functions across educational settings.

2.10 Limitations of the Study

As with any empirical investigation, this study is subject to certain limitations that should be taken into consideration when interpreting its findings.

The research was conducted within a specific geographic and institutional context, involving a sample of 104 adult EFL learners and six EFL instructors from private language centres in Ain Temouchent, Algeria. While the sample size was appropriate for the scope of the study, broader representation across regions, institutions, and learner demographics would enhance the generalizability of the results.

The teacher interviews, although rich in detail, were limited in number. A wider range of participants might have yielded further perspectives, particularly from educators working in public institutions or with access to different technological resources.

Moreover, the reliance on self-reported data introduces potential biases. Both the questionnaire and interview responses are subject to the influence of participants' perceptions, experiences, and willingness to self-disclose. While triangulation between student and teacher perspectives helped to mitigate this, it remains an inherent limitation of the methodology.

Despite these limitations, the overall consistency between the quantitative and qualitative data lends credibility to the study's findings and highlights important insights into the pedagogical potential of gamification in adult EFL contexts.

General Conclusion.

General Conclusion.

The application of game-like elements in non-game contexts, a strategy known as gamification, has emerged as a significant innovation in educational design. By integrating features such as points, challenges, levels, and rewards, gamification aims to transform learning, often perceived as a tedious endeavor, into a more captivating and engaging journey. This approach is particularly relevant in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), where it marks a notable shift away from traditional, teacher-centered instruction toward more interactive, dynamic, and learner-driven environments. The potential of gamification is especially pronounced for adult learners, a diverse demographic that often enters the classroom with a wide range of learning histories, motivations, and apprehensions. By framing vocabulary acquisition as a quest or grammar mastery as the unlocking of new levels, gamification can create a more stimulating and enjoyable learning experience.

Despite its growing popularity and theoretical potential, the actual impact of gamification on adult EFL learning remains insufficiently explored in academic research. A significant portion of the existing literature centers on younger student populations or on general academic subjects, leaving a distinct gap in the understanding of how game-based strategies function within adult language classrooms. Furthermore, while the concept of gamification has been discussed extensively, there is limited empirical insight into how its individual components—such as competition, rewards, or interactive features—specifically contribute to learning outcomes and shape learner attitudes. This lack of clear, data-driven evidence presents a practical problem for educators, who may either hesitate to integrate gamification meaningfully or resort to superficial applications that are not aligned with the distinct needs and preferences of adult learners. This study is therefore designed to address

this critical gap by providing concrete, empirical data on the impact of gamified instruction within adult EFL settings.

The central aim of this study is to examine the impact of gamification on adult learners studying English as a foreign language. It seeks to determine whether integrating game-based elements into classroom instruction leads to measurable improvements in learning outcomes and fosters more positive attitudes toward the English language. To achieve this, the research pursues several key objectives: to explore how adult EFL learners respond to gamified instruction in terms of interest and engagement; to assess whether gamification encourages more active participation and improves the learning experience; to understand teachers' perspectives on the practical application of gamification, including its challenges and strategies; and to provide data-based evidence that either supports or challenges its inclusion in formal adult EFL instruction.

To guide this inquiry, the research is framed by specific questions and hypotheses. The primary research question asks: *What are the effects of incorporating gamification in adult EFL learning, and how does it impact language learning outcomes?* The secondary research question explores: *How does the incorporation of specific gamification elements, such as rewards, competition, or interactive features, influence learners' attitudes in adult EFL classrooms?* Correspondingly, the study's primary hypothesis posits that the incorporation of gamification in adult EFL learning has a positive impact on learners' language learning outcomes. The secondary hypothesis proposes that the inclusion of specific gamification elements positively influences learners' attitudes.

To rigorously investigate these questions, this study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative instruments to provide a comprehensive and triangulated understanding of the phenomenon. The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire administered to 104 adult EFL learners, designed to gather statistical

data on demographics, gaming habits, learning preferences, and attitudes toward gamified instruction. To complement these findings with pedagogical insight, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six EFL teachers working in private language centres. The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while the interview data underwent thematic analysis to extract recurring themes and perspectives.

The significance of this research lies in its dual focus on the experiences of learners and the perspectives of teachers, providing a nuanced and balanced view of gamification in adult EFL education; a demographic that remains relatively underrepresented in the literature. By offering a rich, data-driven contribution, the findings may guide EFL educators and curriculum designers in making more informed and strategic use of gamification. Rather than treating games as superficial additions, this study advocates for the purposeful integration of game mechanics that remain aligned with pedagogical outcomes, thereby promoting the development of more inclusive, motivating, and adaptive learning environments.

References

References

- Akkerman, S. F., & de Bruijn, E. (2017). An ecological approach to learning design in gamified education. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 48(6), 1209–1223.
- Alderman, N. (2012). *Zombies, Run!*
- Amsterdamska, O., Boswijk, G., Cauberghe, M., & De Pelsmacker, P. (2018). *Mastering gamification: The business of engagement*.
- Amundsen, D., & Conner, K. (2018). *The gamification of learning and instruction: Game-based methods and strategies for training and education*.
- Bartle, R. A. (1996). Hearts, clubs, diamonds, spades: Players who suit MUDs. *Journal of MUD Research*, 1(1), 19.
- Boyle, E. A., Hainey, T., Connolly, T. M., Gray, G., فعاليات, J. E., & Huffmaster, J. (2013). An investigation into the effects of gamification on motivation and learning. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 29(5), 413–431.
- Castillo-Parra, A., González, C. S., & Romero-Rodríguez, J. M. (2022). Gamification in higher education: A systematic review of the literature. *Education Sciences*, 12(8), 598.
- Chen, G. M., Chiang, C. H., & Ho, H. N. (2019). Gamification in MOOCs: Implementation and learners' motivation. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 22(1), 10–22.
- Christians, T. (2018, May). *Lessons learned from the rise and fall of gamification*. In *Proceedings of the 2018 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1–12).
- Cordero-Brito, J. A., & Mena, J. J. (2022). Gamification in education: A systematic review. *Computers & Education Open*, 3, 100007.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford Publications.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Deterding, S., Dixon, D., Khaled, R., & Nacke, L. (2011). From game design elements to gamefulness: Defining gamification. In A. Lugmayr et al. (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 15th International Academic MindTrek Conference* (pp. 9–15). ACM.

Dichev, C., & Dicheva, D. (2017). Gamifying education: What makes a gameful experience and effective pedagogy? *Electronic Journal of e-Learning*, 15(2), 209–222.

Draper, S. W. (1999, September 1). *Observations of enjoyment in HCI*. In *Proceedings of the INTERACT'99 Sixth International Conference on Human-Computer Interaction* (pp. 397-404).

Gallup. (2015). *State of the American workplace, 2017*.

Garris, R., Ahlers, R., & Driskell, J. E. (2002). Games, motivation, and learning: A research and practice model. *Simulation & Gaming*, 33(4), 441–467.

Hamari, J., Koivisto, J., & Sarsa, H. (2014). Does gamification work? A literature review of empirical studies on gamification. In *Proceedings of the 47th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (pp. 3025–3034). IEEE.

Hunicke, R., LeBlanc, M., & Zubek, R. (2004). *MDA: A formal approach to game design*. In *Proceedings of the AAAI Workshop on Challenges in Game AI* (Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 1).

- Kapp, K. M. (2012). *The gamification of learning and instruction: Game-based methods and strategies for training and education*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Karafezov, N. (2014). *Is gamification dead*.
- Kim, B. (2018). Understanding gamification. *Library Technology Reports*, 54(8), 29–35.
- Koster, R. (2004). *Theory of fun for game design*.
- Landers, R. N., & Mueller, J. L. (2018). Gamification in higher education: Evaluating deterring effects on exam performance. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 79, 161–175.
- Landers, R. N., Wotka, K. D., & Stricker, J. (2021). Gamification revisited: Definition, components, and psychological effects. *Journal of Management*, 47(6), 1431–1461.
- Lim, T., Lee, E. W., & Goh, D. H. (2023). Gamification for learning: A scoping review of definitions, frameworks, and effects. *Educational Research Review*, 38, 102003.
- Liu, D. Y., Kang, Y., & Liu, Y. (2017). The effects of gamification on students' learning and participation in educational contexts: A meta-analysis. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 25(6), 745–755.
- MacDonald, S., & Headlam, N. (2008). *Research method handbook*. Express Networks.
- Oforu-Ampong, K. (2020). Historical development of gamification in education. *International Journal of Game-Based Learning (IJGBL)*, 10(1), 59–72.
- Papastergiou, M. (2009). Digital game-based learning in high school computer science education: Impact on educational effectiveness and student motivation. *Computers & Education*, 52(1), 1–12.
- Pishchanska, N., Antoniuk, Y., & Kutsyk, V. (2022). Gamification as a trend of modern education. *Advanced Information Systems*, 6(1), 38–44.

Ryan, R. M., Rigby, C. S., & Przybylski, A. (2006). The motivational pull of video games: A self-determination theory approach. *Motivation and Emotion*, 30(4), 343–363.

Sailer, M., Hagl, F. J., Steuerer, J., & Hummel, K. A. (2017). Reappraising gamification elements: The user perspective on motivation affordances and psychological need satisfaction. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 69, 561-575.

Sánchez, A. B., García, A. A., & Román, M. V. (2020). Gamification in flipped learning. Effects on motivation and self-efficacy on university students. *Revista Complutense de Educación*, 31(4), 453–463.

Silker D., Kane J., Bernstein D., Smith K., Lanctot M., Schrittwieser J., ... & Silver D. (2016, January 29). Mastering the game of Go with deep neural networks and tree search. *Nature*, 529(7587), 484–489.

Squire, K. (2014). *Video games and learning: Teaching and playing in a virtual world*. Teachers College Press.

Takahashi, D. (2012, May 30). Badgeville raises \$25 million to bring gamification to more enterprises. *VentureBeat*.

Van Essen, C. M. (2023, September 8). What are Snapchat streaks and how do they work? *Digital Trends*.

Videnovik, M., Janevski, A., & Trajkovik, V. (2019). Gamification in education. In *ICT Innovations 2019* (pp. 82-91). Springer, Cham.

Wang, A. I., & Tahir, L. M. (2020). The effect of gamification on students' motivation and learning: A systematic literature review. *Computers & Education*, 144, 103698.

Werbach, K. (2014). (Re)defining gamification. *Communications of the ACM*, 57(4), 28–30.

Werbach, K., & Hunter, D. (2012). *For the win: How game thinking can revolutionize your business*. Wharton Digital Press.

Wikipedia. (2024). *Gamification*.

Zakrizevska-Belogradova, M., & Leimane, L. (2021). Gamification in education: A systematic literature review. *Society. Integration. Education. Proceedings of the international scientific conference, 1*, 440-449.

Zichermann, G. (2013). *Gamification 2.0: The evolution of engagement*.

Appendices

Appendices

Appendix 01:

Student Questionnaire – Gamification in EFL Learning

Section A: Participant Information

1. **Gender**

Male Female

2. **Age**

_____ years old

3. **Current English Level (CEFR Scale)**

A1 A2 B1 B2 C1

Section B: Game Playing Habits

4. **Do you currently play digital or mobile games?**

Yes No

5. **If yes, how frequently do you play them?**

Rarely Occasionally Often Always

6. **What encourages you to engage with games?**

- Competing with others
 - Gaining rewards
 - Experiencing achievement
 - Social connections
 - Advancing through levels/unlocking content
 - Facing and overcoming challenges
 - Other:
-
-

Section C: Views on Gamification in Education

Gamification refers to the application of game-inspired features such as points, rewards, levels, and competition in non-game environments like education to make activities more stimulating and motivating. – adapted from Werbach & Hunter (2012)

7. **Before reading the definition, were you familiar with the concept of gamification?**

- Yes No

8. **Based on this explanation, would you be interested in having gamified lessons in your English classes?**

- Yes No
-

Section D: Learning Style Preferences

10. What type of class format do you prefer?

Brief and interactive sessions

Detailed and extended lessons

Other:

11. What do you prefer as a source of learning input?

Teacher instruction only

Technology-based resources only

A combination of both

Other:

12. Do you believe the kind of activities used in class affects your participation level?

Yes No

13. If yes, please describe how they affect you:

Section E: Motivation and Engagement Drivers

14. Which aspects help make learning more enjoyable for you? (Select all that apply)

- Teacher feedback
- Using digital tools
- Receiving rewards
- Collaborating with peers
- Playing learning-related games
- Having clear goals
- Other:

15. Which elements help you stay actively engaged in class? (Select all that apply)

- Competition
- Incentives
- Problem-solving challenges
- Ranking systems (e.g., leaderboards)
- Progress tracking or level advancement
- Group-based learning tasks
- Other:

Section F: Opinions on Gamified Learning (Likert Scale)

To what extent do you agree with the following?

No. Statement	SD D N A SA
16. Incorporating technology improves the language learning process.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
17. Feedback from teachers increases my motivation to participate.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
18. Lessons that include game-like elements help me stay focused and motivated.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
19. Using game strategies in class makes the learning experience more enjoyable.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
20. Game elements might distract learners from the main lesson objectives.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
21. I would like to see more English lessons that include gamified features.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
22. Gamified activities push me to improve my performance.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
23. Too many challenges in a lesson reduce my motivation to participate.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
24. Gamification helps me interact more actively with both my teacher and classmates.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

No. Statement

SD D N A SA

25. Using rewards in competitive tasks serves no purpose in university education.

26. To become an independent learner, the teacher should not provide all the information directly.

Appendix 02: Teacher’s Interview

1. How familiar are you with the concept of gamification in education?
2. Have you ever implemented gamified activities in your EFL classes? If so, how?
3. What benefits do you think gamification brings to adult language learners?
4. What challenges have you encountered when using gamified strategies?
5. How do students usually respond to gamified elements in your lessons?
6. In your opinion, should gamification be a core component of modern EFL instruction?
Why or why not?

Summary

Résumé

Cette étude examine l'impact de la ludification sur les apprenants adultes étudiant l'anglais en tant que langue étrangère (EFL), en se concentrant plus particulièrement sur la motivation, l'engagement et les comportements d'apprentissage à tous les niveaux du CECR. À l'aide d'une approche mixte, des données quantitatives ont été collectées auprès de 104 apprenants adultes au moyen d'un questionnaire structuré visant à évaluer leurs préférences d'apprentissage, leurs habitudes de jeu et leur attitude envers l'enseignement ludifié. Parallèlement, des données qualitatives ont été obtenues par le biais d'entretiens semi-structurés avec six enseignants d'EFL afin d'explorer leurs expériences pratiques et leurs perceptions de la ludification dans les milieux de l'éducation des adultes. Les résultats ont révélé une forte réaction positive aux stratégies ludifiées, en particulier chez les apprenants de niveaux A1 et A2, qui ont signalé une motivation accrue, une réduction de l'anxiété en classe et une plus grande participation. Les enseignants ont également confirmé l'efficacité de la ludification, soulignant sa capacité à favoriser l'engagement et l'interaction entre pairs, tout en reconnaissant les difficultés liées à la planification des cours, à la compétition excessive et aux contraintes de ressources. Les deux ensembles de données ont souligné l'importance d'aligner les activités ludiques sur les objectifs d'apprentissage pour garantir leur pertinence pédagogique. Les résultats apportent un soutien empirique à l'intégration d'éléments ludiques dans l'enseignement de l'anglais en tant que langue étrangère, notamment dans les environnements où la motivation des apprenants représente un défi. Cette étude contribue aux discussions en cours sur l'innovation en pédagogie des langues en mettant en avant la ludification comme une approche pratique et centrée sur l'apprenant, susceptible d'améliorer l'expérience en classe des apprenants adultes d'anglais langue étrangère.

Mots-clés : Ludification, Apprenants adultes, Anglais en tant que langue étrangère,

Motivation linguistique, Méthodes mixtes, Engagement en classe, CECR

ملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في تأثير التلعيب على المتعلمين البالغين الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) ، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على الدافعية والانخراط وسلوكيات التعلم عبر مستويات الإطار الأوروبي المشترك للغات (CEFR). باستخدام نهج مختلط، تم جمع بيانات كمية من 104 متعلم بالغ من خلال استبيان منظم مصمم لتقييم تفضيلاتهم في التعلم، وعاداتهم في الألعاب، ومواقفهم تجاه التعليم المعتمد على التلعيب. بالتوازي، تم الحصول على بيانات نوعية من خلال مقابلات شبه مهيكلة مع ستة معلمين للغة الإنجليزية لاستكشاف خبراتهم العملية وتصوراتهم حول التلعيب في سياقات تعليم الكبار. كشفت النتائج عن استجابة إيجابية قوية لاستراتيجيات التلعيب، خاصةً بين المتعلمين في المستويين A1 و A2 ، الذين أبلغوا عن زيادة في الدافعية، وانخفاض في القلق داخل الفصل، ومشاركة أكبر. كما أكد المعلمون فعالية التلعيب، مشيرين إلى قدرته على تعزيز الانخراط ودعم التفاعل بين الزملاء، مع الإقرار بالتحديات المرتبطة بتخطيط الدروس، والمنافسة المفرطة، والقيود المتعلقة بالموارد. شددت مجموعتنا البيانات على أهمية مواءمة الأنشطة التعليلية مع الأهداف التعليمية لضمان ملاءمتها البيداغوجية. تقدم النتائج دعماً تجريبياً لإدماج عناصر التلعيب في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، لاسيما في البيئات التي تمثل فيها دافعية المتعلم تحدياً. تسهم هذه الدراسة في النقاشات المستمرة حول الابتكار في تعليم اللغات من خلال إبراز التلعيب كنهج عملي متمركز حول المتعلم، يمكن أن يعزز تجربة الفصل الدراسي لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية البالغين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التلعيب، المتعلمون البالغون، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الدافعية اللغوية، المنهج المختلط، الانخراط في

الفصل، الإطار الأوروبي المرجعي العام للغات (CEFR).