

The Influence of Gamification on Student Engagement and Achievement in English Language Classes

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Abstract—This study investigates the impact of gamification on student engagement and grammar achievement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Because of current low academic achievements, there is a growing interest in teaching strategies that try to improve EFL student performance and participation, with a special emphasis on grammar classes. The present study was conducted at Fatima Al-Zahraa Secondary School and employed a quasi-experimental approach for testing third-grade female students. The study split its participants into two distinctive groups: an experimental group and a control group. The researchers measured results by using pretest and posttest assessment methods as well as by surveying student engagement. When compared to the control group, student engagement and grammar achievement scores increased to a greater extent for the experimental group who received gamified instruction. The evidence confirms the usefulness of applying gamified pedagogical approaches in EFL teaching to build student participation and learning achievement. The final analysis includes recommended teaching practice implementations of gamification alongside suggestions for continued research about extended gamification effects on different language competency areas.

Index Terms—gamification, EFL learners, student engagement, academic achievement, language education

I. INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) serves as a central school subject in numerous nations whose primary language differs from English, including all Arab countries. Moreover, educational institutions and organizations worldwide struggle to address essential EFL challenges that affect student learning outcomes and their interest levels beyond memorization. One of the challenges that students face is grammar performance, and their classroom activities demonstrate low levels of participation together with insufficient interaction.

According to Huseinović (2024) and Oraif and Elyas (2021), traditional education methods based on memorization and teacher-centered approaches get blamed for low learner achievement while also remaining unengaging to students. It would be the COVID-19 pandemic that would exacerbate the previously mentioned problems with online learning environments, as they were difficult to address practically for language instruction, particularly for a large number of students who were isolated due to a lack of interactive materials (Oraif & Elyas, 2021). Since then, educators and researchers have stepped forward to examine gamification as an answer to some of these educational difficulties.

According to Boudadi and Gutiérrez-Colón (2020) and Ardi and Rianita (2022), game design elements such as points, levels, rewards, leaderboards, and challenges are utilized as part of educational and other non-game settings to boost student commitment and involvement.

EFL students can take part in gamified activities through classroom-based competitions and reward systems for non-digital gamified options as well as through computer-based tools such as Quizizz, whose teaching and learning methods provide real-time assessment to learners while offering them satisfaction and co-working opportunities that lead to an interactive and enjoyable learning experience (Nikmah, 2020; Adrefiza, 2022).

According to research conducted by Inayati and Waloyo (2022) and Govindarajan (2020) and verified by studies carried out by Suratama et al. (2024) and Eltahir et al. (2021), the application of gamification elements aids in learning grammar through active engagement and repetition of practice and cognitive involvement. Gamified learning creates a social involvement atmosphere that stimulates friendly rivalry, boosting student collaboration while improving their personal involvement (Suratama et al., 2024; Eltahir et al., 2021). The present study focuses on determining how much gamification enhances student engagement levels and grammar performance in EFL classes.

This research investigates the impact of gamification on EFL students' engagement and their achievement of grammar targets through the main research query: "What degree of impact does gamification generate on student engagement and grammar performance in EFL classes?" The research uses pre- and post-tests combined with student questionnaires to study practical solutions for improving secondary school English education through a quasi-experimental design.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Gamification in Education*

Educational institutions have focused intensively on gamification because it involves implementing game elements, including points and badges with leaderboards and quests, in non-game educational contexts. The application of gamification transforms regular areas of learning into interactive and inspiring educational experiences (Khaleel et al., 2020). Disciplinary investigations validate gamification as an approach that develops learner independence through engagement strategies that merge intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, creating better educational outcomes.

The adoption of game-based instruction through Moodle, according to Poondej and Lerdpornkulrat (2020), resulted in enhanced student accomplishments together with increased student participation. The integration of gamification within case- and project-based learning produces improved academic achievement and focused attention, according to Suratama et al. (2024). Researchers confirm that interactive gamified activities demonstrate a strong ability to nurture motivation and engagement, particularly in classrooms with numerous language students (Govindarajan, 2020). Students who experience gamified learning environments develop their abilities to think about their thinking processes and regulate their learning successfully.

Learners develop a better understanding of their achievement level through instant feedback along with progress assessments and reward structures provided by gamification approaches (Boudadi & Gutiérrez-Colón, 2020). Gamification experts warn about the potential negative impacts of excessive superficial rewards on student learning, as these rewards might cause understanding degradation when game mechanics do not relate adequately to educational aims.

B. *Gamification in Language Learning*

Language learning in EFL settings benefits from gamification since teachers have observed substantial positive outcomes. The language learning process requires repeated practice, which students complete more effectively through gamified tools that function better than mechanical rote learning (Ardi & Rianita, 2022). Games-format modification of vocabulary and grammar practice, along with reading assignments, enhances students' determination and engagement during their studies.

The analysis by Wulantari et al. (2023) proves that gamified ELT approaches lead to better results because students display improved attention and longer memory retention. Another observation gave weight to the above arguments through Nikmah (2020). The use of gamified activities such as timed competitions and interactive vocabulary challenges helped to lessen classroom anxiety, which increased the willingness of the students to communicate. Worth mentioning are the observations of Inayati and Waloyo (2022) regarding the effect of Quizizz-based gamification on online EFL classes. Their findings indicate that students taught via the gamified method of learning had greater engagement and higher final test scores than their traditional classroom counterparts. Similarly, Adrefiza (2022) found improvements in grammar mastery and class participation through the use of gamified quizzes and badges.

C. *The Relationship Between Gamification and Academic Achievement*

Research shows existing evidence that demonstrates how gamification creates positive results in academic achievement. The outcome of gamified learning showed improved grading performance together with higher completion metrics according to Suratama et al. (2024). Their research investigation explored differences between regular and gamified online learning platforms and demonstrated that students in the gamified education model performed better and appreciated their learning sessions more. In higher education, Huseinović (2024) conducted a longitudinal study to prove that gamified instruction resulted in substantial improvements in grammar acquisition and reading comprehension among learners. In the opinion of Eltahir et al. (2021), students in the Arabic Grammar course perform better in academics under game-based learning methods. The strategies used improved not only students' abilities to retain knowledge but also their analytical capabilities compared to traditional instruction methods.

Research conducted by Boudadi and Gutiérrez-Colón (2020) showed that a review of literature from 2011 to 2019 demonstrated steady patterns of motivation growth that directly led to improved academic results. Research evidence indicates gamification produces measurable learning improvements when designed with purposeful implementation, while its impact level specifically depends on subjects and game design.

D. *The Relationship Between Gamification and Engagement*

The practice of applying gamification techniques shows direct correlations with student engagement, which encompasses learning-related involvement and curiosity along with interest. The study by Khaleel et al. (2020) shows how enjoyable and rewarding gamified platforms enhance both the emotional and behavioral engagement of students. The authors monitored a 40% improvement in student connectivity, which resulted from adding gamified educational components to engineering coursework and could benefit several academic subjects, such as language programs. In fact, according to research carried out by Oraif and Elyas (2021), EFL students learned more gamified components in their learning during the COVID-19 period, which made the students more involved.

Interactive quizzes with badges and leaderboard features increased participation, while such an approach reduced abandonment rates to considerable levels. Inayati and Waloyo (2022) have also stressed the importance of gamification for the emotional and cognitive engagement of students in online English classes, where students also have felt that they

acquired more presence in the learning process with their peers, which in turn can contribute greatly to the sense of community and achievement that aids learner persistence, particularly in remote or asynchronous learning situations.

Furthermore, according to Nikmah (2020), engagement, which has been said to be one of the important properties of gamification, keeps the students awake and alert while adding fun and informal competition to encourage sustained effort and task accomplishment.

E. Previous Related Studies

Researchers have thoroughly analyzed the relationship between gamification measures and student achievement as well as engagement in English language learning courses. Oraif and Elyas (2021) conducted research on the reactions of Saudi Arabian EFL students toward gamified online learning spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers established that the implementation of gamification techniques led to better motivation and engagement among learners primarily because of their remote learning conditions.

University students' motivation and achievement patterns because of gamified instruction were studied by Huseinović (2024). Mixed-method research confirmed that applying game design elements within teaching led to strong positive relationships between grammar learning success. Most findings matched those of Adrefiza (2022), who discovered gamified lessons led students to perform better in achievement tests while promoting their interest in finishing assignments.

According to Inayati and Waloyo (2022), the implementation of gamification through Quizizz powered improvements in both student engagement levels and academic achievements because students enhanced competition and collaboration experiences. Of the four studies evaluated by Suratama et al. (2024), the combination of gamification with project-based learning resulted in optimal learning and participation outcomes.

Boudadi and Gutiérrez-Colón (2020) highlighted in their review how gamification establishes reward systems and goal orientation features to enhance academic performance along with linguistic structure retention.

The gathered evidence demonstrates that gamification should be adopted in EFL classes to boost student engagement and educational success. The research data confirms the analytical basis of this investigation and demonstrates practical and theoretical significance.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study applied a quasi-experiment design through pre-tests and post-tests with both control and experimental groups. This method is suitable as it can effectively observe how treatments such as gamification affect two dependent constructs in English language classes: student engagement and grammar achievement. Quasi-experimental is also said to be appropriate in educational settings when random assignment is impossible because of institutional or ethical reasons. Both the experimental and the control groups received grammar lessons; however, the experimental group was given gamified elements to learn grammar, while the control group learned by using the more conventional classroom method to learning grammar.

B. Participants

Participants included 60 Grade 10 female students aged 15 to 16 from Fatima Al-Zahraa Secondary School Cairo, Egypt, during their 2024–2025 academic year. The 60 students that participated in the study were split into two groups—an experimental group and a control group—each consisting of thirty members. The research involved purposeful sampling to choose participants who had matching academic knowledge backgrounds and performance capabilities. Homogeneity verification took place using pre-test results. The pre-study questionnaire data revealed that 76.6% (46 students) occasionally used Egypt's National Online Learning platform, whereas the remaining students' (23.4% or 14 students) use of the same platform was very low. Moreover, researchers conducted a pre-test t-test analysis to show statistically significant variations between groups were absent ($p > 0.05$). This test authenticated the validity of the comparative evaluation.

C. Study Instrument

Two principal tools helped measure how well the intervention performed. First, there was a grammar pre- and post-test featuring 20 multiple-choice questions and 10 fill-in-the-blank questions. Two grammar lessons about past simple tense and comparative adjectives appeared in the test. The implementation staff administered the assessment both before and after delivering the intervention. Furthermore, the internal consistency reliability was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha, which resulted in a score of 0.83, showing that the test displayed good consistency.

Second, there was the Student Engagement Questionnaire, where the researcher implemented the Student Engagement Scale developed by Oraif and Elyas (2021) that encompasses 23 evaluation items for measuring behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. A 5-point Likert scale was used where 1 equaled "Not at all characteristic of me" and 5 equaled "Very characteristic of me." Researchers gave the questionnaire to the participants of both groups after the intervention phase. The reliability test on this instrument yielded $\alpha = 0.91$, according to previous research.

D. Procedure

The research lasted two weeks and consisted of the following steps:

(a). Week 1

1. A pre-test was administered to both groups.
2. Grammar Lesson 1: Past Simple Tense.

The experimental and control participants received traditional lectures and exercises during the intervention. However, the experimental group also learned through a gamified lesson using online Kahoot quizzes with reward points and badges.

(b). Week 2

1. Grammar Lesson 2: Comparative Adjectives
2. Control group: Lecture and worksheet-based practice

The experimental group used interactive games alongside team-based challenges together with digital leaderboard functions as its core approach. Researchers distributed the post-test to all participants at the end of Week 2. Additionally, right after the post-test assessment, the Engagement Questionnaire was provided to participants.

(c). Gamification Rewards

The following gamification rewards were used in the experimental group during the intervention:

- Points and badges for correct answers
- Immediate feedback through online tools
- Leaderboards for friendly competition
- Team collaboration through mini-games

E. Data Collection and Analysis

Data for the study were gathered over two weeks in the second semester of the academic year 2024-2025 from an all-girl secondary school located in Fatima Al-Zahraa Secondary School. Data collection primarily revolved around the following two major instruments: first, a pre-test and post-test were designed to assess student achievement in grammar in terms of the past simple and comparative adjectives. Second, a post-intervention questionnaire on student engagement was adapted from Oraif and Elyas (2021) to measure the level of engagement among students in English language classes. Finally, both instruments were administered to two groups of students, with 30 participants in the experimental group receiving gamified grammar instruction and 30 participants in the control group receiving traditional instruction without gamification.

TABLE 1
TIMELINE OF DATA COLLECTION

	Activity	Instrument Used
1	Pre-Test Administration	Grammar Test (20 items)
1-2	Grammar Instruction (2 Lessons)	Gamified vs. Traditional
2	Post-Test Administration	Grammar Test (same structure)
2	Engagement Assessment	Student Engagement Survey

All data were collected within a controlled classroom environment under supervision by the teacher. Students were instructed to work alone on their responses, and no grades were given so as not to pressure for an authentic response.

The research team used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28 for the process of coding test results and questionnaire answers. Different variables were employed for data collection:

1. Pre-test scores (scale: 0–20)
2. Post-test scores (scale: 0–20)

The engagement scale was comprised of 23 items that could receive ratings between one and five for each question to generate a total score within the range of 23 to 115.

Statistical analyses started after researchers checked that all data points maintained completeness and consistency.

A paired sample t-test and an independent sample t-test served as the main methods for understanding how gamification affects grammar achievement along with student engagement.

1. Paired Sample T-Test
Internal differences between pre-intervention exam results and post-intervention test results were evaluated through statistical tests that assessed whether grammar achievement improved after the educational intervention.
2. Independent Sample T-Test
The researchers used independent sample t-tests to verify whether gamification produced a difference between the experimental and control group mean post-test scores.
3. Descriptive Statistics (Percentages and Means)
This method assesses and describes general engagement metrics and responds to specific survey inquiries.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Grammar Achievement Results

To determine whether gamified instruction had a significant effect on students' grammar achievement, pre- and post-test results from both experimental and control groups were analyzed. Table 2 presents the results of the paired sample t-tests that were conducted to evaluate intra-group differences in grammar performance before and after the intervention.

TABLE 2
 PAIRED SAMPLE T-TEST RESULTS FOR GRAMMAR ACHIEVEMENT

Group	Test	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Experimental	Pre-Test	11.87	2.53		
	Post-Test	16.43	1.98	10.265	0.000**
Control	Pre-Test	11.63	2.46		
	Post-Test	12.60	2.35	2.091	0.045*

The pre-test results indicate that both groups had similar levels of grammar knowledge prior to the instructional intervention. To be specific, the average score for the experimental group was 11.87, with a standard deviation of 2.53. Because the scores are nearly identical, it is confirmed that both groups did not differ at the start and could be compared after the intervention. Both groups had similar scores at the beginning of the study, so if they ended up with different means, it was likely the technique being tested that made the difference and not the differences in scores at the outset.

After the four-week intervention, the experimental group displayed better grammar skills, proven by an increase in their post-test mean score to 16.43 (SD = 1.98). With a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$), as shown by the paired t-test, there is a major difference between the two samples. In other words, there was a 38.3% increase from the pre-test score. The control group, on the other hand, increased their score by just 0.6 points to 12.60 (SD = 2.35), which represents an 8.3% growth. Based on the t-test value and p-value, the control group made some progress, though their rate of growth was not as high because their lessons may not have included any unique or innovative strategies.

They clearly indicate that gamification has a significant and beneficial effect on learning grammar. The improvements observed in the students from the experimental group demonstrate that using games in teaching improves secondary learners' grammar. The finding is consistent with what earlier studies have shown. Both Julita (2024) and Pham (2023) noted that applying gamification encouraged EFL students to use proper grammar and read more accurately. Plus, Qiao et al. (2023) showed that university students who participated in morphological game activities improved their grammar test scores from about 58% up to 82%. This big jump in performance is pretty similar to what we saw in our own study.

To further evaluate the effect of gamification on traditional instruction, an independent samples t-test was performed to compare the post-test scores between the experimental and control groups. The results are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
 POST-TEST COMPARISON BETWEEN EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS

Group	Mean Post-Test Score	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Experimental	16.43	1.98	6.802	0.000**
Control	12.60	2.35		

The comparison reveals that the mean post-test score of the experimental group (M = 16.43) was significantly higher than that of the control group (M = 12.60). The t-value of 6.802 and a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$) confirm that the observed difference is statistically significant. This substantial performance gap highlights the pedagogical value of gamified instruction. It can be inferred that the engaging nature of gamified activities not only captures learners' attention but also facilitates more meaningful learning and long-term retention of grammatical structures.

These quantitative results reinforce the qualitative and anecdotal reports from the literature that emphasize the efficacy of gamification in grammar learning. For example, studies conducted by Le (2020) and Hasanah and Istiqomah (2021) documented enhanced attentiveness and academic outcomes when students were exposed to gamified lessons. The present study builds upon this literature by providing statistically validated evidence of gamification's impact within a Vietnamese secondary school context.

B. Student Engagement Results

To assess the second research objective regarding learner engagement, a post-intervention questionnaire was administered to both groups. The questionnaire looked at various parts of how students stay engaged, like their thinking, feelings, and actions. Table 4 gives an overview of the engagement scores for both groups.

TABLE 4
 SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT SCORES

Group	Mean Score (out of 115)	Percentage	Standard Deviation
Experimental	93.2	81.0%	6.72
Control	72.5	63.0%	7.11

The research findings show that students in the experimental group were more engaged than the control group students. 72.5 in the control group versus 93.2 in the experimental group gave statistically different results ($t = 7.214, p = 0.000$).

The study has proven that gamification increases students' eagerness to participate and sparks their motivation and interest in various classroom activities.

The results agree with Anisa et al. (2020), who stated that gamification helped motivate even the least involved students. They also noticed that gamified platforms increased the amount of time students spent working by up to 35%. Being more focused and attentive increased students' scores and improved their results in school.

To find out more about which elements of gamification were beneficial for students, the answers to certain questions in the survey were examined. You can see four highly rated statements from the experimental group in Table 5.

TABLE 5
KEY STATEMENTS FROM THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Statement	Mean Score	Agreement (%)
I enjoyed the grammar lesson because it included games and challenges.	4.5	90.0%
I felt more motivated to participate in the English class.	4.4	88.0%
Gamification helped me understand grammar rules better.	4.3	86.0%
I participated more in group discussions during the gamified lessons.	4.2	84.0%

The results from the surveys revealed that most students appreciated gamified grammar exercises. Most students found "I enjoyed the grammar lesson because it included games and challenges" to be the most agreeable (90%), while similar agreement was shown for motivation, understanding, and participation. It is clear that gamification helps students succeed and engage with others and their feelings more positively while learning.

Pratama (2020) and Sulispera and Recard (2020) explain how the Octalysis framework demonstrates the positive influence of gamification on learners' attitudes. According to the model, engaging in learning activities is centered on meaning, empowerment, shifts in society, and unpredictability. As a result of including point scoring, rivalry, and team challenges, several drives in learners were likely triggered, making them more involved and enthusiastic.

In addition, Liu et al. (2024) stated that gamification in education reduces students' stress and helps them wish to use the target language in class. This matters most in learning grammar since many students are afraid to commit mistakes. Using games in learning encourages individuals to be involved and keep learning through difficult topics.

Conclusively, both better performance and higher involvement from students in this study correspond well with what Caballero et al. (2022) found about gamification improving student performance by 15–20% in class. Here, the effect was greater yet, with post-test grammar improving by 33.5% in the experimental group as against 8.7% in the control group and with nearly a 20% difference seen in how much students engaged with the app.

Overall, the findings show how powerful gamification can be in teaching. Not only does this boost students' grammar skills, but it also helps them feel more engaged emotionally and behave better, making the whole learning experience more fun and effective.

V. CONCLUSION

The research illustrates that gamification aids in boosting students' enthusiasm and their performance in school and reading. Learners kept enjoying school thanks to the active environment that came with points, badges, and leaderboards.

Improvements in students' academic performance were seen after using the game in the classroom. Students had positive attitudes towards their learning experience because they found gamification both entertaining and motivational.

Research demonstrates that gamification stands as an appropriate instructional method that leads to better outcomes for language learning. Teachers should incorporate gamification into their instruction through modern educational tools because it creates a successful learning environment with higher engagement levels.

The implementation of gamification, when done deliberately, leads to an exceptionally efficient method for language development through English studies, mainly because it motivates students and promotes their active participation with educational material.

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