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GAMIFICATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING: ENHANCING ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN LAHORE

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Abstract:

Gamification has emerged as an innovative approach to language learning, integrating game like elements to enhance engagement, motivation, and retention. This study explores the impact of gamification on improving English proficiency among university students in Lahore, focusing on vocabulary learning, grammar comprehension and speaking skills. Using interactive digital games, quizzes and role playing activities the research examines how gamification fosters active learning and increases students participation compared to traditional teaching methods. The study also conders educators' perspectives and student feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of gamified learning in Pakistani academic context. The findings of this research suggest that incorporating gamification strategies can create a more immersive and enjoyable learning environment , ultimately leading to better language proficiency. The study highlights the need for integrating game-based methodologies in curriculum design to enhance English language education in Lahore, particularly in higher education institutions striving to modernize their pedagogical approaches.

Keywords: Gamification, Language Learning, English Proficiency, Grammer comprehension, & Speaking Skills.

Introduction:

The educational community has intensively explored gamification over the last few years as it represents an innovative educational method to boost study engagement. The inclusion of game elements including rewards alongside interactive simulations alongside challenges has been proven to enhance student engagement and ensure knowledge retention and motivate students (Deterding et al., 2011). The dynamic approach of gamification addresses typical language-learning barriers like low student commitment and declining motivation through its implementation within this field (Anderson, 2019). Studies prove that game-inspired techniques inside language education enhance student performance in vocabulary acquisition along with grammar comprehension and speaking abilities (Chou & Chen, 2018).

English language proficiency stands as an essential capability in Pakistan because it helps university students succeed academically and professionally at global levels (Mahboob, 2009). Modern educational centers in Lahore primarily depend on traditional teaching systems but educational institutions become more dedicated to adopting technological procedures and novel approaches that boost language learning effectiveness (Alam, 2020). This study evaluates how gamification techniques enhance English language skills of university students in Lahore particularly for vocabulary acquisition and grammar understanding and speaking ability development. This research evaluates interactive digital games and quizzes together with role-playing activities as educational tools for active learning whereas it surveys their effectiveness in relation to traditional teaching methods. The research takes both student survey results and teaching professional input to determine the effectiveness of game-based language education programs in Pakistani higher education.

Literature Review:

Researchers now focus considerable attention on using gamification with its collection of non-game elements (points, rewards and leaderboards and challenges) to enhance educational

outcomes especially in language learning. The pedagogical approach of gamification presents an active method to improve student motivation and engagement along with learning retention according to Deterding et al. (2011). Gamification implementations in language education enable three crucial benefits according to (Anderson, 2019): the development of learner passion alongside immediate response features while enabling cooperation between students through games.

Student engagement stands as the most vital effect that gamification creates in educational settings. Research shows the traditional classroom eliminates student focus while teaching languages because this educational material is known for being slow and repetitive (Chou & Chen, 2018). The addition of gamification elements stimulates learner participation within their studies thus enhancing intrinsic motivation according to Ryan and Deci (2000). Educational gamification makes use of three major components in schools: digital games together with quizzes along with role-playing activities. The educational activities combine entertainment value with the ability to build language expertise through safe creative practice spaces according to Gee (2003).

Modern research demonstrates that language acquisition benefits from gamification methods because the approach effectively teaches vocabulary while developing grammar understanding and oral skills. Students in Sailer et al. (2017) conducted research which demonstrated that language students utilizing gamified curriculum programs retained more vocabulary than students who studied through traditional methods. Games require continuous repetition along with feedback systems to strengthen student knowledge acquisition which leads to better long-term memory retention. Grammatical structures presented by gamification through contextual methods help students actively engage with material to apply rules dynamically which enhances their grammar comprehension (Wouters et al., 2013).

Gamification provides valuable benefits to speaking ability in classroom settings where students worry about errors made during peer interactions. Through digital games and role-playing activities learners gain a protected training ground for speaking practice to enhance their self-confidence (Anderson, 2019). The peer collaboration function in gamified environments enables language learners to practice their skills through interactive conversations because of their participatory benefits (Chou & Chen, 2018).

Science has confirmed gamification plays a vital role when student-centered learning methods come into practice. Gee (2003) explains that gamification creates an experiential learning environment which enables students to actively discover and apply knowledge. The educational approach in English language learning within Pakistan remains limited because traditional methods only encourage passive learning and rote memorization (Mahboob, 2009). The implementation of gamification techniques helps resolve these issues through dynamic student participation and improves educational quality.

Various studies conducted in Pakistan demonstrate how gamification techniques produce enhanced outcomes for student language education. Alam (2020) conducted research on digital learning tools in Pakistani universities because universities plan to use technology in their curriculum to resolve educational difficulties in the country. Based on his research Khan (2017) discovered that Pakistani higher education students demonstrate increased motivation toward language learning through interactive game-based methods. Gamified learning faces hurdles in its implementation mostly because of limited resources and educator and student traditional

thinking according to Qureshi et al. (2018).Javaid et al.(2024) assessed stress causing factors and language related challenges in higher institutions in Pakistan. Ramzan et al. (2023) viewed students perceptions about collaborative strategies employed by teacher enhancing English vocabulary and learning motivation by adding amplified classroom enjoyment and cultivated positive learning attitude among ESL learners (Ramzan et al., 2023).

The assessment of gamification requires dedicated input from both educational staff and students to determine its overall success rate. Students love gamified learning environments according to Sailer et al. (2017) but educators struggle to implement these methods since they face time pressures and need additional training on such techniques. Successful implementation of gamification produces a learning environment which includes all students and maintains their enjoyment of the educational process (Alam, 2020).Ramzan et al.(2024) studied secondary public school teachers perceptions of gamification in ESL instructions.

The academic research demonstrates gamification creates distinctive improvements in English language education especially for Pakistan-based non-native students. Participation becomes active because the approach uses repetition and rewards to strengthen learning while maintaining student engagement in language acquisition. The research examines how gamification techniques influence English proficiency acquisition in vocabulary and grammar alongside speaking ability at universities in Lahore.

Significance of the Study:

This study has major importance because it can boost English language education within regions where standard teaching practices yield insufficient student excitement and motivation. Academic progress combined with professional development in Lahore Pakistan requires mastery of the English language as an essential requirement. Traditional rote memorization and passive learning methods used in language teaching have proved insufficient in retaining student interest particularly within the higher education system (Mahboob, 2009). The integration of digital games and role-playing activities in quizzes through gamification enables solutions which overcome these challenges.

Academic findings related to gamification methods assist those who develop language curricula and those who teach to understand its implementation benefits. The modern educational architecture demonstrates a progressive movement toward learning setups that base their design on students' needs and promote their active involvement (Gee, 2003). The research delivers beneficial findings showing that gamification both strengthens language capabilities through vocabulary acquisition and grammar development and speaking advancement and develops student participation and promotes groupwork and generates engaging educational experiences (Chou & Chen, 2018).

This research generates practical suggestions which benefit Pakistani universities in implementing gamified educational systems particularly in English language departments. Technology-driven learning enhancement (Alam, 2020) has increased interest that demonstrates a need for gamification in educational curriculums. The evaluation of gamification in Pakistani academic settings extends knowledge about innovative teaching methods for English language instruction in non-native environments.

Research Methodology:

The research design implements mixed methods which blend quantitative methods with qualitative approaches to understand gamification effects on English language skill development

among Lahore university students. The research follows a systematic framework to achieve three primary goals through studying how gamification improves language acquisition and measuring student and teacher opinions about gamification.

Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis:

A pre-test/post-test methodology will be utilized to determine the impact of gamification on student English proficiency levels. The initial measurement evaluates student performance in vocabulary and grammar knowledge together with their speaking abilities before the study begins. Students enrolled in a six-week gamified learning experience will complete post-program tests toward the end of the study period to determine performance adjustments.

The data collection will combine survey and questionnaire responses to measure student participation levels during the project. The survey consists of Likert scale items to measure students' motivational changes and also their enjoyment levels and estimaates about gamification versus conventional practices. Statistical methods including paired sample t-tests will be used to establish connections between gamified learning and language proficiency development as well as the pre- and post-test comparison analysis through regression analysis.

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis:

Semi-structured interviews with students and educators will supplement the gathered quantitative data to complete the research study. Student interview data will assess the effects of gamified learning on their motivational level and performance in vocabulary acquisition and grammar rules and speaking capabilities and their personal interaction experiences. The educator interview investigation will demonstrate both the obstacles and advantages for using gamification in teaching languages and their evaluation of student development throughout the research period.

Thematic data analysis techniques will help researchers extract meaningful patterns from the gathered qualitative information about student and educator reactions. The analysis of this data set will supply comprehensive information about how gamified learning is received by Pakistani higher education institutions.

Sample Selection:

English language students from colleges in Lahore will form the research sample. The research will employ a stratified random sampling method to choose 100 participants who represent different aspects such as gender and academic knowledge and proficiency abilities. By selecting the right participants the study achieves findings with wide applicability among students who fit a similar demographic in their learning context. The researcher will conduct interviews with ten English as second language educators while gathering insights about their thoughts on gamification in learning.

Data Analysis:

The researchers will use SPSS statistical software to analyze quantitative data through means calculation and standard deviations measurement and conducting paired sample t-tests significance tests. We will use NVivo software to analyze the qualitative data through computerized coding that will generate key themes about student engagement and motivational factors and their experience of learning.

Ethical Considerations:

The research methodology incorporates all ethical points by securing participant consent and ensuring private data protection while maintaining data confidentiality. The study goals and

participant withdrawal rights during any period of the study will be explained to all students. Research data will serve research purposes only as it remains under secure storage conditions.

Limitations:

A primary challenge of this research is its brief gamified learning intervention duration at six weeks because insufficient time may affect how gamification influences language proficiency maintenance over time. The findings derived from students in Lahore cannot be applied as general knowledge to educational settings beyond this specific region of Pakistan.

A mixed-methods approach stands as the research method because it delivers an extensive understanding of gamification's impact on English language education. The study results will illuminate both positive aspects alongside difficulties in using gamified learning in Pakistan while giving educators useful solutions to update their teaching while boosting student performance.

Results:

Quantitative Results

The quantitative data analysis yielded these outcome results:

Pre-Test Scores:
  Mean: 48.96
  Standard Deviation: 9.04
Post-Test Scores:
  Mean: 54.07
  Standard Deviation: 9.62
Paired Sample t-Test:
  t-statistic: -10.72
  p-value: 2.96×10^{-18}

Interpretation of Results:

The Post-Test scores display an extremely significant difference from the Pre-Test scores due to the extremely low p-value (2.96×10^{-18}). The experimental outcomes reveal that gamification techniques effectively enhance students' English ability by improving vocabulary skills and grammar understanding as well as speaking skills.The overall scores demonstrated students gained an average of 5.11 points through their participation in the gamified learning platform where pre-test scores averaged 48.96 and post-test scores reached 54.07.The pre-test along with post-test maintain equal ranges of score distribution though the post-test standard deviation grew moderately compared to the pre-test standard deviation because students demonstrated better outcomes in gamified learning settings. Student improvement levels differ hence the variable scores. Gamification within education promotes student language proficiency according to these research results.

Qualitative Results:

Student Feedback:

Students maintained that their engagement levels rose along with their motivation during gamified learning sessions according to semi-structured interview results. The interviews highlighted three main themes which students discussed:

Increased Motivation and Engagement:

A substantial number of students reported that the gaming technique was responsible for maintaining their interest throughout their learning experience. The interviews confirmed that

various activities combining digital games along with quizzes and role-playing tasks made the lessons significantly more interesting and interactive. When classes were gamified students became more energetic because they could relate to game dynamics without experiencing anxiety about failure according to student feedback.

Enhanced Vocabulary Learning:

The gamified approach to learning led students to enhance their vocabulary retention according to their feedback. The students found value in the immediate response system of the games because it helped solidify their acquired knowledge. The game immediately corrected mistakes during quizzes so students experienced easier memorization of each word.

Improved Grammar Comprehension:

The interactive games enabled students to learn and practice grammar rules better according to their tracking of student performance. The students mentioned they received functional on-the-spot grammar practice through gamification instead of traditional class-based theoretical approaches.

Increased Confidence in Speaking:

Through role-playing activities students gained an opportunity to speak without pressure which improved their sense of confidence. One of the students mentioned "Chatting English to my schoolmates felt challenging prior to gaming yet within game activities I never experienced shyness."

Educator Feedback:

Language teaching educators displayed a combination of positive and neutral perspectives about gamification implementation in their classrooms.

Positive Impact on Student Participation:

The educational professionals noticed that gamification methods led to considerable improvement in student involvement at school. Higher levels of classroom engagement now characterize those students who typically remained uninvolved during regular traditional classes. The educational approach of gamification generated student excitement in the classroom that traditional lessons never managed to achieve according to one interviewee.

Challenges in Implementation:

Several teachers emphasized implementation struggles of gamification because it was time-consuming while requiring additional technical resources. The educator explained that game-based activities required extended preparation time along with student unfamiliarity regarding the technology employed in these digital games.

Enhanced Learning Environment:

Committee members noted that gamification brought forth an environment where students could enjoy interactive learning experiences. The educational activities provided students with enhanced memory retention because students found the interactive lessons highly engaging. The teacher observed improved retention of grammar rules among students during post-test evaluations because students showed higher enthusiasm toward their classes.

Need for Training:

Teachers suggested that the success of gamification in education demands specialized training for staff members who plan to incorporate these methods into their curriculum.Participants in gamified learning expressed satisfaction about the format and students demonstrated better motivation as well as higher engagement while their language abilities in

vocabulary grammar and speaking skills showed improvement. The learning environment benefited from gamification approaches yet participant groups faced difficulties linked to scheduling issues alongside budget constraints in addition to untrained instructional staff needs. Placing gamified learning strategies in language classrooms demonstrates valuable educational potential while demanding proper resource allocation and training to achieve positive results.

Discussion:

The research findings deliver valuable information about language learning through gamification specifically for university students in Lahore. Analyzing quantitative and qualitative data measures allows us to evaluate how well gamification systems improve student English language abilities especially for vocabulary learning and grammar understanding and spoken language development.

1. Improvement in Language Proficiency:

The students achieved a statistically meaningful improvement in their English proficiency according to results from the paired sample t-test that examined gamified learning. The employee pre-test and post-test scores increased significantly across vocabulary sections and grammar segments as well as speaking capabilities. Research by other scholars confirms how gamification techniques enhance student language acquisition results. The research from Sailer et al. (2017) and Wouters et al. (2013 showed game-based learning creates enhanced participant retention and engagement which improves learning effectiveness and student enjoyment. When students completed six weeks of gamified learning they achieved measurable progress in their language abilities according to test results.

The students in qualitative interviews indicated stronger motivation alongside increased engagement when they experienced gamified lessons rather than traditional teaching methods. Students became more engaged through gamification dynamics that included quizzes together with digital games and role-playing activities. Student participants characterized gamified classes as they experienced them similarly to playing games while avoiding typical classroom boredom. Security and self-direction in learnin sessions enhance learners' motivation according to Self-Determination Theory explained by Ryan and Deci (2000). The pleasurable aspects of gamification probably developed intrinsic motivation that strengthened students' ability to remember and practice their language concepts.

Research by Chou and Chen (2018) supports this finding because they proved that gamification leads to better vocabulary memorization when students actively practice new words in game-like contexts. Through role-playing students strengthened their language skills and grammar knowledge as well as obtained real-life speaking proficiency without intense pressure in a supportive environment according to Anderson (2019).

2. Increased Student Participation and Confidence:

Research findings from this study match previous studies showing gamification can boost student engagement (Chou & Chen, 2018) as observed through post-test results. The research data shows that students participated more intensively in language education when using gamified activities rather than traditional lectures. Student participation achieved levels of significance according to Gee (2003) since active learning engagement promotes knowledge acquisition and retention. Student involvement in traditional classrooms decreased when they experienced game-based learning methods which suggests gamification works well for enhancing classroom engagement.

The students who provided feedback reported substantially enhanced English-speaking confidence levels as part of their qualitative responses. Students developed confidence in English speaking through role-playing games and interactive activities which provided them a supportive environment that removed peer-pressure during communication. The important characteristic of this approach stems from the fact that many non-native learners avoid speaking due to fear of mistakes in front of their peers. According to a student participant the gameplay eliminated their fear which led to increased confidence. According to Anderson (2019) gamified environments establish protected areas for language students to engage in speaking without criticism and reduce their language-learning anxiety.

3. Challenges and Implementation Barriers:

4. Implications for Curriculum Design:

The teachers shared mostly positive outcomes but experienced multiple obstacles and implementation obstacles when using gamification techniques in their classroom practice during interview sessions. Preparation time along with effort proved to be major issues that teachers faced when developing gamified lessons. Educators find it challenging to create digital games and quizzes because implementing gamification demands significant time especially since they manage multiple other tasks. Students faced difficulties using the technological requirements needed for gamified educational content. The implementation of gamification needs proper preparation together with sufficient resources and infrastructure according to Sailer et al. (2017).

A few teachers argued that the effective methods of gamification do not work well for all student learning types. Students who lack experience with technology face difficulties when trying to participate in digital gaming activities. Tutoring feedback on gamification techniques presented conflicting opinions with instructors who approved their approach yet retained hesitance due to technological constraints and training needs. The educational professionals' identified barriers underline the necessity of educator training in both gamified methods and technological integration according to Gee (2003). The implementation of gamified elements requires additional training for educators about effective integration and learning preference adaptation of gamification methods.

The data collected through qualitative and quantitative methods shows significant value to reform academic programs in Lahore institutions as well as educational institutions across the entire nation of Pakistan. The positive results achieved by gamification methods in language education show that curricula should adopt game-based strategies as modern teaching approaches. This study backs research which shows gamification serves as an effective tool to improve language education in Pakistani educational settings where teachers increasingly use technology for their instruction (Alam, 2020).

Higher education institutions must incorporate game-based methodologies since gamification proved effective in the present investigation. Instructional facilities as well as accessibility tools for students should be provided together with flexible teaching methods and trained staff in gamification practices in order to achieve these goals.The proven capability of gamification methods to increase student motivation makes it a suitable tool for curriculum developers to integrate rewards and interactive components into their teaching plans.

Conclusion

University-level English education demonstrates that gamification as a learning approach results in meaningful improvements of vocabulary understanding and grammar and speaking abilities

among students. The research findings combined with student and educator evaluations prove that gamification makes learning languages more engaging and motivating to students while stimulating their active academic involvement. The complete realization of gamification's potential demands that time restrictions and resource shortages together with educator training be overcome. This research strengthens the academic field which investigates gamification in language education while supporting the necessity of game-based approaches in Pakistani higher education institutions.

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