

## **Gamified English Learning: A Thematic Review of Perceptions, Impacts and Challenges**

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### **Abstract**

This thematic review explores the perceptions, impacts, and challenges of gamification in teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It has synthesized the results of 20 peer-reviewed articles on gamification in various settings, with a focus on both students and teachers. Based on the results, the study participants find gamification in learning to be enjoyable, stimulating, and extremely motivating, which helps build confidence and foster teamwork. The teachers consider it a vital tool for improving the classroom environment and enhancing student engagement. Although the application of gamification has a significant influence on improving the learning process and the acquisition of vital life skills, several challenges are associated with the practice, including technical issues, design challenges, potential stress to students due to competition, and financial constraints for teachers. Nevertheless, the general evidence suggests that EFL learning can be more interactive, engaging, and exciting through gamification, leading to enjoyable learning experiences. This review offers insights into maximizing the benefits of a gamified learning environment for educators, curriculum designers, and researchers. The study highlights the necessity of further investigation into the long-term effects of gamification in the English language classroom.

**Keywords:** Gamification, EFL learning, perceptions, impacts, challenges

### **Introduction**

The concept of gamification in education is grounded in a range of well-established psychological principles that explore how game properties can enhance the learning process. Some of these concepts include the notion that instant rewards, such as points, badges, and leaderboards, facilitate successful learning behaviors, as introduced by the behaviorist theory (Skinner, 1953). This instant feedback creates interest and motivation in students to continue, as video games compel individuals to achieve new levels. The second significant one is self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which suggests that people can feel in control, good at something, and close



to others through playing the game. As soon as they are achieved, students will be internally driven, and they will not find learning a burden but will find it fun, according to the models of SDT and Attention Restoration Theory. They found that the integration of gamification has a strong positive impact on language learning outcomes, which are mediated by learner motivation, and that learning style preferences moderate this relationship. The study suggests that the correlation between the implementation of gamification and language learning outcomes is stronger in situations where the preference for a learning style is high.

Gamification is a term introduced in research by Deterding et al. (2011), who described it as a game element deployed in non-gaming contexts. This methodology, when applied in language learning, transforms traditional classes into interactive lessons that integrate task-based learning (Ellis, 2003) and practical experience (Kolb, 1984). For example, a vocabulary test can be made more interesting by taking the form of a spaceship; every answer someone answers correctly will take the spaceship one step closer. Gamification can be associated with the theory of Vygotsky (1978), which posits that learning occurs through social interaction. Language games and group tasks are multiplayer, which will promote a learning community. The social aspect helps alleviate anxiety by allowing learners to practice the language in a relaxed and engaging setting and later apply it to real-life scenarios. It aligns with the flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), which suggests that it is most effective when the challenges presented to a person correspond to their competencies. The learning games, with their well-designed elements, offer a counterbalance to the growing complexity and difficulty that are essential for maintaining sanity among learners and keeping them engaged and focused. It may be particularly helpful in language training, as learners are introduced not only to complex grammar but also to complex vocabulary and are constantly corrected over time. The questionnaires of the new study of the impacts of gamification are explainable. The grammar of gamification, including plot, progress, and badges, has been proven to positively affect student engagement and performance, as evidenced in the literature review by Nah et al. (2014). In a similar study, a meta-analysis of 40 high-quality articles by Cavus et al. (2023) suggested that gamification has a positive influence on student engagement, motivation, and creativity, and also positively affects academic performance, regardless of educational level.

When communicative language teaching is applied, students benefit in all respects because gamification not only puts students in a real-life scenario but also demonstrates to them how to maximize the language they already possess. Moreover, the role-playing game could allow students to practice dialogue that would be applicable in real-life situations, such as ordering in a restaurant or conducting business. It is an effective way to define and memorize language concepts. There is a positive influence of gamification on language learning, as supported by various empirical research studies. In the survey, O'Donovan et al. (2013) demonstrated that attendance ratings and course grades improved during lectures, and course grades also improved as storylines, goals, points, and leaderboards were implemented into courses. Liyanagunawardena et al. (2017) conducted a literature review (2011-2015) on the subject of open badges, confirming the idea that most works claim the beneficial effects of badges on student engagement and motivation. Badges in this context were digital displays of accomplishment, giving learners a visual representation of the achievements they had attained. Additionally, Khoshnoodifar (2023) found in the meta-analysis that gamified activities are closely associated with learning when students have access to immediate feedback, a particular challenge to overcome, and are aware of their progress.

Empirical evidence has been used to support the theoretical statements, as reflected in recent studies. Al-Khresheh (2025) demonstrated in an experimental study that gamification can effectively motivate memory capacity and attention management among English language students, resulting in real-life improvements in memory capacity and mental performance. Similarly, within ANOVA analysis, Chen et al. (2021) found that game-based studies in competitive environments, specifically in digital game-based learning, yielded significantly better learning results compared to conventional learning procedures. Moreover, the majority of students preferred game-based learning, as stated in the interviews, and claimed to be more interested and confident in it.

Discovering something new can be thrilling and fun, and when a person feels like they are playing a game, it can be even more enjoyable. In other words, we borrow a single or a few elements of the game, such as a point system, badges, having our names displayed on a scoreboard, or exciting challenges, and apply them to school (Kapp, 2012). Instead of reading books, they have the opportunity to play games, explore new horizons of knowledge, and solve puzzles to better understand complex issues in English. Engaging and interesting ways of learning English can make otherwise boring lessons more exciting and engaging, with greater student involvement (Deterding et al., 2011). The application of games in schools cannot be the least important, as it is now easy to access the internet and smart devices. In this context, learning with the assistance of technology clearly seems familiar and significant.

Similarly, most students have become proficient in using digital tools and have grown accustomed to learning through online games; therefore, many students today are considered digital natives (Prensky, 2001). Their schools should reflect the technology they use in their everyday lives, and they are digital natives with experience in gamification. Educationists today must adopt new pedagogical strategies that would benefit the students in their learning styles. They are increasingly occupied with playing various digital games these days, and if we can introduce gamification into English language classes, we can effectively leverage their interest in games to enhance the learning process. It implies that the time spent gaming is transformed into informative participation in the educational process through the use of the gamification method. Games can make learning interesting for students with diverse backgrounds and learning styles. The traditional method of teaching may not be effective in engaging students in the classroom in certain instances, and some participants might not find it important to read English or may not be able to use it in their daily lives (Matyakhan et al., 2024).

These challenges clearly demonstrate that we need to adopt more effective teaching methods that inspire students to be enthusiastic about learning. The vital necessity is to find effective methods that prevent them from feeling bored and help them learn the subject matter more effectively. Games may seem like an appropriate answer to this matter, but we need to understand more about how they truly work and what problems might be encountered. This study consolidates all the significant facts to provide a better understanding of the topic.

The primary contribution of this research to teachers, curriculum designers, policymakers, and educational leaders is that they will gain insight into how to effectively utilize games and identify potential pitfalls, thereby enhancing English learning and making it more engaging and interesting. Although numerous studies have surveyed games within the school environment, they are not the most effective tool for gaining a clear and comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of games in various settings, including non-Western ones, such as English classes (Cheng et al.,

2024). Thematic reviews, also known as large-scale studies of thematic aspects of games in English classes, which compile all the detailed findings in one work, have not been conducted in sufficient quantity. According to recent and quite tiring studies conducted by Gini (2025) on over 9,000 manuscripts, although the sphere of gamification studies is expanding at an incredible pace, there are still gaps in understanding the cross-cultural context and approaches to particular implementations.

In a scoping review, Ruiz-Navas et al. (2024) found that the concept of gamification in inclusive teaching is not well studied, particularly in non-specialist schools. Although research interest has increased, meta-analytical research indicates that the results are inconclusive and thus require further examination. Luo (2023) conducted a review of 63 studies and concluded that the effectiveness of gamified tools in foreign language learning varied, with some studies reporting positive changes, others negative changes, and others showing no significant changes in their efficacy. The variability highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of the factors of implementation and situational variables that influence the success of gamification. Thus, this complicates the observation of key tendencies and raises serious concerns about the presence of gamification in English language classrooms. Similarly, there are no definitive recommendations on how to design effective learning games or how to accurately determine whether these games enhance the desire to learn (Anunpattana et al., 2021).

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by compiling findings from various studies, which will present a more comprehensive picture of the perception of games, the value they may bring, and the constraints they pose regarding English learning worldwide. This research will initially examine the attitude of the teachers and students. Then, the overall positive impacts and difficulties they experienced will be discussed. Lastly, there will be a conclusion and implications section. By using these two questions, the article aims to provide a clear explanation of how games can be effectively employed in teaching English.

1. How do students and teachers perceive using gamification for English language teaching and learning?
2. What are the impacts and challenges of using gamification in English language teaching?

## **Methods and Procedures**

### **Thematic Review Process**

To ensure that the thematic review would be rigorous and logical, I took the principles of the thematic analysis as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), as demonstrated below:

1. Familiarization with the Data: One must immerse oneself in the data to understand it well.
2. Generating Initial Codes: Finding characteristics of the data of interest.
3. Searching for Themes: Compiling codes into possible themes.
4. Reviewing Themes: Trying to make the themes reflect the data.
5. Defining and Naming Themes: The meaning of each theme is clearly defined.
6. Writing the Report: Preparation of the analysis in a logical account.

### **Search Strategy and Review Protocol**

To conduct the thematic review, I first identified keywords that included: gamification in language learning, perceptions, impacts, and challenges, which allowed me to search through the studies on the topic. Google Scholar and ERIC were the databases used. The search was filtered to three levels: initially, by examining the titles, then the abstracts, and finally, the entire texts were

analyzed to confirm suitability to the research focus. The articles were read and coded to ensure that they were appropriate. As a result, 20 peer-reviewed articles that covered gamification in ELT were included in this process.

### **Inclusion/ Exclusion Criteria**

In this thematic review, I used the composite criteria to include the relevant studies. The articles must be peer-reviewed and written in English, with the main subject of the studies being gamification in the ELT setting. Only articles that included a theoretical or conceptual framework on gamification in education and were published between 2017 and 2025 were used, to ensure that the publications were current. The intended audience of the chosen research included the teachers, the learners, and researchers working in ELT settings. The studies were excluded from the research if they did not directly address gamification in ELT, were not published within the specified period, were not peer-reviewed, or were not written in English. The search by keyword yielded a list of potential studies that were filtered sequentially using titles, abstracts, and full texts. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 20 articles were selected for analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the selected studies, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). All the articles underwent a thorough review, and the essential details were extracted, coded, and classified to reveal common trends in the data. Out of this process, three themes were identified, including perceptions that explained the attitudes and beliefs of teachers and learners toward gamification; impacts that pointed to how gamification affected motivation, engagement, and language learning outcomes; and challenges related to the barriers of technology, resource shortage, student resistance, and challenges in implementing gamification into established teaching practices.

The data were coded by identifying the main points of each study, interpreted through analysis of their meaning based on the research objectives, and classified into larger themes by identifying similar codes. This is a cyclical process that allowed for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the place of gamification in ELT and provided insights for future research.

## **Results and Discussion**

This section discusses the findings related to the research questions concerning students' and teachers' perceptions, as well as the impacts and challenges of gamification in the English language classroom.

### **Students' and Teachers' Perception of Gamification**

Students have very positive feelings about gamification in English language classrooms. Among the greatest advantages is that it makes the learning process much more enjoyable and interesting. In the example, students who learned English pronunciation with the help of a game-like app reported being interested and entertained, and stated that the learning process was easier and more convenient (Ridhon & Daulay, 2023). They thought that they could practice a lot and become confident when speaking English, just like native speakers. A significant point that students mostly mention is how gamification boosts their motivation and desire to learn English. It means that they feel more enthusiastic to participate in the lessons. Numerous studies demonstrate that students are highly motivated and actively engaged when games are incorporated into the lesson. They describe their experience as entertaining, joyful, and far from boredom (Ramzan et al., 2024). When they observe their progress, earn points, badges, or climb a

leaderboard, it truly motivates them to study more and achieve their learning goals (Khaleel et al., 2020). Some students even had a more positive experience using their smartphones for learning purposes when they were gamified, as it felt quite natural (Baytekin & Avara, 2023). Besides just having fun, students often perceive that gamification is a worthwhile approach for them to learn more effectively and improve their abilities. Students noticed improvement in vocabulary, reading, and even writing through fun challenges (Boyinbode, 2018). They often experienced more confidence when they successfully answered the questions and felt less anxious about making mistakes (Alnujaidi, 2025; Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2018). They felt a calmer environment by relaxing and learning more easily in the process (Ridhon & Daulay, 2023). Gamification is equally helpful for students to interact with each other. Many studies emphasize that the game-based learning method enhances teamwork and effective communication among classmates (Fernández-Portero & Castillo-Rodríguez, 2022). This social part of games makes the learning process more enjoyable and supportive. Putra and Priyatmojo (2021) found that students felt gamification made the learning process more interactive and fun, with many expressing that it helped them stay motivated and reduced the boredom often experienced in traditional lessons. Similarly, Pujolà and Appel (2020) noted that gamified applications help minimize students' anxiety and create a conducive classroom atmosphere, thereby developing a more relaxed environment. Therefore, students believe that gamification in English language classes can make the learning process more empowering, make lessons enjoyable, motivating, and engaging, and assist students in mastering skills, gaining confidence, and developing interest. A large number of teachers are convinced that gamified learning is highly effective and significantly impacts their teaching practices (Demirbilek et al., 2022). They explain that games have the capacity to make language learning easier, more enjoyable, more useful, and more efficient for their students.

Teachers often notice a significant improvement in the students' language learning atmosphere. They note that gamification can create a great learning environment and motivate students to engage highly (Ramzan et al., 2024). They often noticed that hitherto quiet and uninvolved students became much more active and willing to engage in activities following the implementation of gamification. Teachers generally believe that gamification enhances interest and attention, making the course more fascinating and entertaining with a dynamic environment (Demirbilek et al., 2022). Teachers prefer gamification as it truly helps them reach their different teaching goals. They find that game tools have contributed to making it simpler to teach new vocabulary, grammar rules, and even speaking topics (Thuy & Hung, 2021). They also notice that it helps introduce, review, and evaluate what students have learned, and it can provide immediate feedback as well (Veljkovic Michos, 2017). In short, teachers mostly perceive gamification as a powerful and positive tool for enhancing their teaching, making learning more engaging, increasing students' engagement, and improving their various skills.

Overall, gamification is viewed by students and teachers as a highly effective tool in English language classrooms. For students, it enhances motivation, interest, self-confidence, and teamwork, while also making learning enjoyable and less stressful. Gamification among teachers, in turn, enhances the effectiveness of instruction, enables teachers to effectively teach vocabulary and grammar, and creates a more active and interactive classroom atmosphere. So, gamified learning fosters a supportive and productive environment that benefits all parties involved.

### **Impacts of Gamification in Learning English**

Students often state that they really enjoy playing with learning apps and find lessons far from boring (Vathanalaoha, 2022). Such excitement encourages students to learn more and become more engaged in their lessons. The strong desire to learn means students are not only physically present but also mentally ready to participate in activities and give their best attempt (Khaleel et al., 2020).

The game also helps students become more active in class and more organized and focused in their studies (Inayati & Waloyo, 2022). Studies vividly demonstrate that when games are used, students participate more actively and follow the rules more effectively. For instance, one study found that active participation increased significantly (Inayati & Waloyo, 2022). Students often feel a strong urge to try harder and reach their goals, and game features such as points, badges, and leaderboards help them achieve this (Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2018). This significant increase in interest and involvement clearly demonstrates that incorporating games into the classroom is a truly positive approach to learning English. Students not only come to class more often, but they also put more energy into learning (Yazid et al., 2024)

Gamification is directly supportive for students to improve their English proficiency skills, including speaking, vocabulary, reading, and grammar. For instance, the use of the ELSA Speak app helps students improve their oral articulation, enabling them to sound more like native speakers. It also provides them with the feeling of confidence in communicating in English (Ridhon & Daulay, 2023). Games are also quite effective in facilitating reading comprehension, as students can read texts in the English language more effectively (Cheng et al., 2024; Matyakhana et al., 2024). The vocabulary development can be seen since the games tend to show the words fascinatingly and repeat them, thus. It is much easier to remember (Sirait & Kharisma, 2024). Numerous studies have demonstrated that the overall performance of students in English classes improves when games are implemented in the classroom, indicating that it is possible to achieve better grades in English courses, as games facilitate more effective learning (Alnujaidi, 2025; Vathanalaoha, 2022). Moreover, students can also remember information longer with the help of games (Zhang & Hasim, 2023). Educators also understand that the process of developing language skills in their students becomes significantly easier with the use of games (Demirbilek et al., 2022). It provides teachers with additional teaching methods and enhances the effectiveness of their lessons. Pujolà and Appel (2020) also noted that gamification can enhance digital communication, which is essential in the realm of language learning in the modern digital world. Gamification not only advances language skills among students but also other relevant aspects of life skills that will benefit them in other areas of their lives. As an illustration, the students will be more confident in other situations when they provide correct answers in the games. (Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2018). This sense of achievement in games is transferred to their general sense of self-confidence. Moreover, group work is prevalent in games, and it is an excellent way to learn how to work effectively as a group and communicate more efficiently with friends (Cheng et al., 2024). They also get to learn to exchange ideas and strive towards a common purpose. Students are also encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning and start practicing more independently, even when the lesson is not in session (Vathanalaoha, 2022; Zhang & Hasim, 2023). It provides them with the opportunity to learn at their own pace, reattempt challenges, and receive instant feedback, which enables them to become autonomous learners (Boyinbode, 2018)

Some games involve solving complex problems or puzzles, which require players to think more critically and seek creative solutions to the problems, thereby developing a good ability to solve problems and think critically (Demirbilek et al., 2022). In cases where students need to compete against time in games, it can help them develop the skill of answering questions correctly and efficiently, as well as spending their time effectively (Baytekin & Avara, 2023). Moreover, the games help the students to feel more accountable for their personal learning process as well as the success of their group, especially when the group scores (Baytekin & Avara, 2023). Gamification can help create a more favorable, cheerful, and relaxed learning environment for all individuals (Yazid et al., 2024). It will definitely help to create a less stressful classroom environment, a place where one can learn and feel safe, where learning mistakes are viewed as part of the process rather than failure (Chaves Yuste, 2023). According to teachers, gamification makes lessons more appealing and entertaining, and even contributes to reducing the negative attitude towards school among some students who would not necessarily be interested in the conventional way of learning (Demirbilek et al., 2022). This positive atmosphere will ensure that the students stay on track and are in a good mood. It may also attract more students to attend the class, as they will be eager to be part of it (Fernández-Portero & Castillo-Rodríguez, 2022; Yazid et al., 2024).

Students believe that using gamification makes memorizing information easier due to the engaging and interesting nature of games, which facilitates the retention of knowledge in their minds (Zhang & Hasim, 2023). When lessons are taught through games, they can be more effective than those taught through more traditional methods, which do not conform to a fun-based methodology (Bicen and Kocakoyun, 2018). In general, the influence of gamification on learning the English language is too positive. In addition to enhancing students' vocabulary, grammar, and reading ability, it has also been established that games affect most aspects of life that are important, such as collaboration, problem-solving, time management, and self-directed learning. Gamified activities provide an engaging and effective learning environment where students are more likely to be involved and retain the material, which in turn makes them more confident and self-sufficient in the learning process.

### **Challenges of Using Gamification**

However, as much as gamification has multiple positive outcomes, such as happy learning, enhanced concentration, and skill acquisition, there are other issues to consider. This theme examines the major challenges and difficulties that teachers and students often encounter when gamification is implemented in the classroom (Demirbilek et al., 2022). Understanding these problems is crucial so that we can develop better ways to utilize games for learning in the future. When schools attempt to use games for learning, they may encounter common issues that can render gamification less effective or even frustrating if not handled properly.

One of the most common problems encountered when using gamification is technical issues, such as inadequate internet or insufficient devices. Many studies have shown that weak or unstable internet signals can completely distract the learning process (Ridhon & Daulay, 2023). Teachers have clearly stated that not having the right technology and internet access is a significant obstacle that prevents them from using games in the classroom. If the Wi-Fi in the classrooms is not strong and stable, it can cause connections to drop or freeze, which makes classroom activities difficult or even impossible to continue (Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2018). Sometimes, the problem is not just in school; students may also lack access to computers at home or reside in areas with poor or limited internet connections, making it difficult for them to participate in learning activities that

rely on online games (Alnujaidi, 2025). Sometimes, even though the devices are available, the games themselves can have their own technical issues, such as freezing, which can be frustrating (Demirbilek et al., 2022; Zhang & Hasim, 2023). For instance, if an internet-consuming game consumes the mobile internet data of students who have plans that expire after a short time, the game will hinder their education. Additionally, some learning apps are initially designed for websites and later adapted for mobile devices, which can sometimes cause performance issues on phones. (Boyinbode, 2018). Furthermore, while keeping students engaged in long-term projects, such as telecollaboration, can be tough enough (Pujolà & Appel, 2020). All these different technical issues can make games less useful than expected, leading to frustration for both students and teachers.

Other challenges arise during the design of games and their implementation in the classroom. In some cases, when a game is created in a manner that makes it seem redundant, it might become boring to the students as time progresses, and they may lose interest (Sirait & Kharisma, 2024). It can also be challenging and time-consuming for teachers to find games that perfectly fit every single lesson's topic. Teachers also worry significantly about games that take much longer, which means they might not be able to complete the lessons and prepare students for upcoming exams (Demirbilek et al., 2022). Some studies even mention that the games might have fixed learning schedules, which do not allow for flexibility or creativity (Zhang & Hasim, 2023). For Example, a situation where a game forces learners to provide all the answers correctly to move to the succeeding tier may be overly challenging to some learners, thus making them stuck and eventually abandoning the game due to perceived frustration related to the learning process. Additionally, there are challenges in games, such as timed quizzes. They might give students too little time to complete the task, and as a result, they are unable to finish it, even though they know the answer, which causes unnecessary stress to the students (Boyinbode, 2018). When we observe students themselves, we often find that some emotional and behavioral difficulties can be exacerbated. While many students enjoy the idea of competing with others, some studies reveal that too much competition can cause problems. It can lead them to feel very bad or disappointed if they cannot succeed in front of their classmates (Fernández-Portero & Castillo-Rodríguez, 2022). Similarly, game features like leaderboards, which show who is at the top, could make some students feel bad (Vathanalaoha, 2022).

Similarly, games can sometimes be distracting due to their interactive and fun nature. This can divert a student's attention away from the main lesson, causing them to focus more on the game than on the actual subject matter (Ridhon & Daulay, 2023). Spending too much time looking at screens might also make it difficult for students to think deeply about what they are learning (Vathanalaoha, 2022). There is also a risk that students may become addicted to games, neglecting other important school activities or duties solely to play games (Demirbilek et al., 2022). Many teachers identified several barriers that can hinder their ability to use gamification successfully. Some teachers simply lack the motivation or confidence to try new digital tools or change their teaching style because they may not have the idea of how to effectively use new technology (Pujolà & Appel, 2020). Some teachers are also unsure if games can truly help students learn deeply and effectively beyond just having fun (Zhang & Hasim, 2023). They worry that using games will make their lessons less effective in achieving core learning goals, which may result in students receiving lower scores on important exams (Zhang & Hasim, 2023). This is a significant concern,

particularly in countries or schools where exam scores significantly impact a student's future path and opportunities.

The classrooms and schools have resource and practical problems that are mostly experienced; hence, it is hard to implement games. Schools may lack the necessary equipment, such as enough computers or reliable internet connections, to successfully run gamified lessons for all students (Vathanalaotha, 2022). Furthermore, lessons may often run out of time because games can take longer than expected to play, and sometimes, games can create a very noisy and chaotic environment as players become overly excited or talk loudly (Nguyen & Luu, 2021). There are also some worries among educators and parents, like screen addiction, where students spend too much time on screens, and other health or psychological issues might come from too much digital game-play (Demirbilek et al., 2022).

To sum up, while gamification offers numerous benefits in the teaching of the English language, including improvements in motivation, engagement, and skills, it can also pose several challenges. It can be hindered by technical failures, too much competition, screen time, the possibility of being distracted, and even addiction unless it is controlled. Effective execution of gamified learning can be achieved through careful consideration, proper resource allocation, and moderated utilization, ensuring that the positive effects outweigh the negative ones and result in a favorable and constructive learning environment for both students and teachers.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results of this thematic review, the significance of gamification in English language classrooms is very sensitive to students and teachers. Gamified activities are also beneficial for learners who are mastering their vocabulary, speaking, reading, and other language skills, as well as developing confidence, teamwork, and self-directed learning skills. Teachers admit that gamification represents a powerful pedagogical solution, which helps them to make their classes more interactive, address students more efficiently, and simplify the learning process. Other essential skills in life, such as problem-solving, time management, and digital literacy, are also learned through gamification and are therefore more holistic and effective.

The gamified learning application can be used in any setting, which explains its specific applicability to ELT, i.e., the paper under consideration will be highly useful. It is also rather informative, as it posits that the gamification of the classroom can be introduced by curriculum developers and educators with the help of technological support, teacher training, and enabling policies. These arguments informed the study's direction, maximizing the potential of gamification and making the process of acquiring the English language more meaningful, effective, and engaging for students.

The paper also outlines future research directions, including the exploration of long-term results and the most effective game design practices, which will contribute to the further improvement of the evidence base in ELT. Overall, gamification can be perceived as a pedagogically useful tool that can develop practice-based, engaging, and learner-oriented learning within English classrooms.

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