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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Students' Attitudes towards the Use of Gamification in English Classes at Dong Nai Technology University

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| ABSTRACT

Recently, there has been a noticeable implementation of gamification in teaching and learning. Gamification has proven to help integrate students' educational process by increasing their engagement with instructional materials and increasing their competency level. Therefore, incorporating gamification into the classroom can improve English learning. This study assessed students' attitudes towards the use of gamification in English language classes at Dong Nai Technology University. The data were gathered via online surveys. 120 students participated in this study, and they were given questionnaires. The survey was a closed-ended, Likert-type questionnaire. The research found that most students have a positive opinion of gamification in English language classes. However, there are still issues with gamification technologies that need to be taken into account and resolved.

1. Introduction

In today's society, the most difficult duty for instructors in general, and English teachers in particular, is to motivate and interest students in learning. Gamification is a successful educational tool (Bicen, 2018). With an increasing number of online game platforms and smart devices, this pedagogical technique is now more accessible.

According to several studies, students find game-based learning more engaging (Malamed, 2012). Their ability to solve problems and think more abstractly has also been enhanced by the gamification of education (Malamed, 2012). Moreover, Gamification benefits students by providing scaffolded instruction tailored to their needs (Hanus & Fox, 2015), providing immediate feedback (Kapp, 2012), allowing students to fail without fear (Lee & Hamer, 2011), and allowing for trial-and-error learning (Hanus & Fox, 2015). Besides, Nguyen (2021) found that using technology in EFL classrooms led to better participation and collaboration among students.

For the reasons above, this study examines students' attitudes towards Gamification in English language learning at Dong Nai Technology University. It aims to address the following research question: What attitudes do students have towards Gamification in English language learning?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Gamification

The idea of gamification is applied in many industries to inspire individuals to reach their objectives. Although the phrase has only recently become widely used, the concept has been around for years. It first arose in 2008, but "gamification" did not become

widely accepted until 2010 (Huotari & Hamari, 2016). As the markets for educational games and children's software expanded, gamification in education started to develop in the 1980s (Smith, 2014). The topic of gamification emerged from the idea of applying the mechanics of games to non-gaming contexts to achieve a range of objectives while increasing user motivation and engagement.

Since the COVID-19 epidemic, gamification has become more and more common in online education and has become an important part of education. On the one hand, higher education relies heavily on the teaching process. Particularly, lecturers take charge and impart knowledge to passive students who are expected to absorb it from their seats. Nevertheless, new educational trends place a strong emphasis on incorporating teaching methodologies that enable students to participate actively in their learning (Corchuelo, 2018). According to Lozada and Betancur (2015), gamification is becoming more popular as a means of encouraging students at every stage of their education. It may be inferred from the background investigation that the game complements conventional teaching techniques and acts as an attention-getter.

Because gamification may interest and motivate students, it is widely regarded as a successful learning environment (Bicen, 2018; Kalogiannakis et al., 2018; Papadakis et al., 2020). Furthermore, research indicates that this particular instructional style fosters not only the development of learners' transversal skills, such as problem-solving and teamwork (Barata et al., 2013), but also the acquisition of specific skills in a given topic of knowledge (Kapp, 2012; Papadakis et al., 2020). Several specific components of gamification and game platforms have been discovered to boost learning, even though the efficiency of gamification for learning enhancement has to be established because of conflicting scientific findings (Kapp, 2012).

The potential for gamification is enormous, but there are drawbacks when it comes to using it in the classroom. It is asserted that in several situations, educators lack the necessary technical expertise, methodology, and support (Papadakis et al., 2020) to implement this strategy successfully. Another element that could determine whether gamification is successful or unsuccessful in a given environment is the attitudes of educators and students towards it.

2.2. Components of gamification
These days, the majority of games have some of these features, which are also referred to as components. They include progress bars, leaderboards, badges, points, levels, etc. Each of these components has a distinct purpose and may be modified to fit into almost any educational setting. Below is a brief explanation of each component: adaptable to almost any setting connected to education.

Points: marks for specific actions.
Badges: graphic display of accomplishment for usage.
Leader boards: listing the participants' names and current standings in a competition.
Progress bars: displays a player's status.
Quests: some of the objectives that players must complete in a competition.
Levels: rank of competition.
Avatars: an image of a player that appears on a screen.
Rewards: a technique to reward users who complete a mission.

2.3. Popular Gamification Tools
2.3.1 Kahoot!
This platform allows teachers and students to communicate via competitive knowledge games on pre-existing technology. Questions are shown on a shared screen to facilitate a live Kahoot. Players enter a special PIN on their browser or Kahoot! App to join a live Kahoot and report their answers. Kahoot! helps teachers create multiple-choice quizzes and encourages active learning. Several implementation approaches can be quickly customized to best match learner needs, regardless of whether teachers choose to deliver their lessons in-person, virtually, or hybrid. Kahoot may facilitate chances to measure students' baseline knowledge, promote formative evaluations, and provide enjoyable, team- or individual-based challenges.

2.3.2 Bamboozle
Bamboozle is an online learning platform. With a wealth of available content, it provides a large assortment of activities to engage learners in the exercises. For in-class use, distance learning, and homework assignments, bamboozle is a good choice. Learning and gaming are feasible from nearly anywhere, as learners can access them using their own devices.

2.3.3 ClassPoint
ClassPoint integrates gadgets and tools for student interaction with PowerPoint. Teachers can use it to add engaging interactive quizzes and questions directly on their slides, awarding stars for accuracy and engagement.

Increasing student participation is one of the main advantages of integrating ClassPoint into lessons. Students are more likely to focus and participate actively in class when they feel like they are competing. Furthermore, ClassPoint gives teachers the ability to continuously assess students' comprehension and modify their lessons in real-time while presenting. This feature, which is built into PowerPoint, makes it possible for teachers to assess students' requirements, monitor student participation, and provide students with immediate assistance in areas where they need it most to succeed.

2.3.4 Edpuzzle
A gamification program called EdPuzzle enables teachers to produce interactive video classes with games and quizzes included. Instructors can make original movies with this application, or they can edit pre-existing ones and add their questions, voice remarks, and notes. After watching the films, students respond to the questions they find there.

Using EdPuzzle in the classroom has the advantage of promoting student engagement, critical thinking, and active learning. Instructors can alter films to match the learning requirements of their pupils and get fast performance evaluations. EdPuzzle boosts student participation and engagement by offering an efficient method of teaching and learning through videos.

2.4. Attitude, motivation and engagement
Over the years, research has demonstrated that attitude is key in second language acquisition (Dincer, 2017; Getie, 2020). Attitudes and the teaching process are closely related to each other. If learners have a positive learning attitude, their academic performance will increase. This is because attitude has a significant impact on each person's actions, such as the willingness to participate in a learning activity or the desire to express a point of view (Cherry, 2021). Therefore, in a gamified learning environment, learners with positive attitudes absorb content more rapidly and efficiently.

According to Boller & Kapp (2017), learners will be more inspired and involved in the learning process since gamified task execution and assessment have a higher satisfaction value. It may improve learning outcomes. Consequently, gamification assures involvement and immersion, which is one of the most effective learning methods. Moreover, gamified systems are frequently built to provide numerous versions and replays of knowledge. Repetition promotes learning because students' knowledge and skills increase as they are exposed to the content more frequently.

Another advantage of gamification is that students also have more possibilities to concentrate on linguistic features that they may have previously neglected (Ellis, 2003). In addition, Gamification stimulates reflection by providing learners with quick feedback on their responses, and if they choose incorrect answers, they can take some additional time to do it perfectly, resulting in learning. In short, a good gamified learning environment promotes learning through engagement, opportunities for repetition, customization, and reflection (Boller & Kapp, 2017).

Mufidah (2016) stated that gamified exercises might lessen anxiety in EFL students and enhance their grammar proficiency. Additionally, gamified environments reduce distractions to studying and enhance language acquisition in young EFL learners (Kayımbaşıoğlu et al., 2016). In Zou (2020), the perspectives of EFL teachers and students regarding the application of gamification in primary schools in Hong Kong are investigated. The results demonstrate that gamification is deemed successful in promoting learner attitude, engagement, motivation, and confidence, as well as in improving learning outcomes.

Within the team, students are free to demonstrate their English language proficiency and teamwork qualities. It is evident that social settings can improve general learning environments and interpersonal involvement (Naggar & Berkling, 2020). Thus, by collaborating with others, students can enhance their collaboration abilities in addition to their communication skills (Rafiq et al., 2019). These abilities are essential for students in modern society.

Besides, the results of the research conducted by Bouchrika et al. (2019) support the notion that gamification components on online platforms have a good influence on learners' motivation and engagement.

Because of the positive aspects that previous studies have presented. This research explores learners' attitudes about whether using gamification is effective in English classes at Dong Nai Technology Univeristy.

3. Methodology
3.1 Participants
The participants of this research are 120 students majoring in English language at Dong Nai Technology University. There are 58 male students and 62 female students. The reason for choosing these students is because they have been studying with gamification for at least 2 years, so they have enough experience to complete the survey in the best way.

3.2 Method

The research uses an online survey to collect data. It contains 10 questions (motivation: 3 questions, attitude: 4 questions, classroom atmosphere: 3 questions), each with a 5-point Likert scale. Students were emailed the survey link via their institutional email accounts, and Google Forms automatically processed the collected data.

4. Results and Discussion

The author used a questionnaire (Appendix A) to ask students about their motivation, attitude, and classroom atmosphere when working with peers. The results were as follows:

4.1 Motivation

Questions 1 and 2 of the questionnaires were designed to determine whether gamification raised student interest in the lecture and encouraged them to learn more about the course. The results were as follows: most students (45% strongly agree and 42% agree) believed that when lecturers included gamification in their teaching, they felt more engaged. Simultaneously, gamification motivated them to learn more after failing a question. Besides, the repetition of knowledge used in gamification helped learners recall teachings for longer periods and stimulated them to actively participate in activities with their classmates (39% strongly agree and 45% agree in question 2). As a result, students absorbed knowledge more effectively, and the quality of instruction was improved.
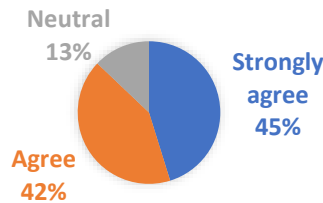
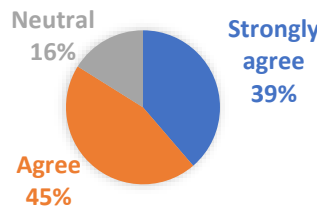Figure 1. Question 1: Gamification makes me interested in the lesson

Figure 2. Question 2: Gamification motivates me to seek more knowledge about the lesson

Question 3 of the questionnaire attempted to determine students' interest in competition. The findings were as follows: most of the students (45%) wanted to compete with their classmates by earning the best possible score. At the same time, students used their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities to determine the best way to solve the challenges. This demonstrates students' willingness to prove themselves in their schoolwork through appropriate gaming hobbies.
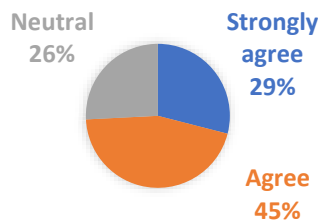
Figure 3. Question 3: Gamification makes me want to win challenges with my classmates

4.2 Attitude

Questions 4,5, and 6 of the questionnaires asked students whether they appreciated gamification and how confident they were in it. The majority of students (56%) enjoyed incorporating gamification into classes, and 50% (questions 5 and 6) believed that

gamification made them feel more confident in the classroom. This emphasizes that, in addition to memorizing content, students can develop their collaboration abilities by working on educational games in groups. It aids individuals in reducing anxiety while facing issues alone, as well as fear when speaking in class**.**
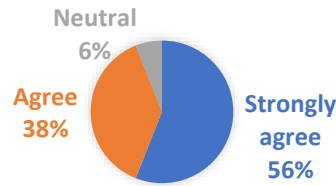
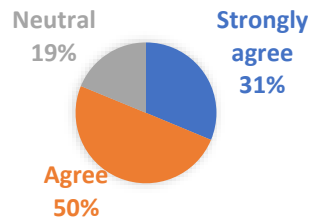Figure 4. Question 4: I like lessons that include gamification

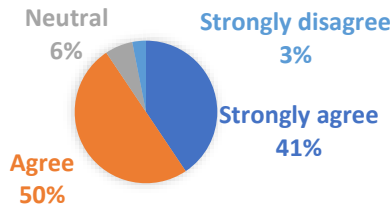Figure 5. Question 5: Gamification makes me feel confident

Figure 6. Question 6: Gamification makes me participate in group work

Question 7 in the questionnaire aimed to find out if students found gamification beneficial to their learning after completing the challenge. 50% of students agreed, and 31% strongly agreed that gamification provided them with rapid feedback without taking much time. Students could then self-correct any gaps in their knowledge.
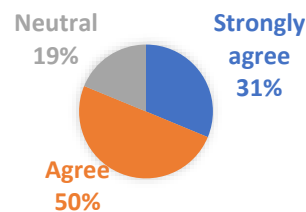
Figure 7. Question 7: Gamification gives me instant feedback

4.3 Classroom atmosphere
Question 8 in the questionnaire asked if all students wished to participate in gamification activities. The majority of students (47%) totally agreed, and 37% expressed enthusiasm for gamification. The reason for this is that students in the twenty-first century are part of Generation Z, which is a technology-loving generation; thus, activities that combine technical components receive a lot of attention.
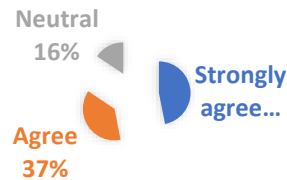
Neutral
16%

Strongly
agree…

Agree
37%

Figure 8. Question 8:   Gamification makes all students want to
participate

Question 9 of the questionnaire sought to determine whether gamification gives joy to the classroom. The majority of students (47%) highly agreed, while 41% agreed that they were pleased with gamification. Gamification not only helps students solidify their knowledge, but it also provides an opportunity for them to be entertained in a safe atmosphere.

Neutral
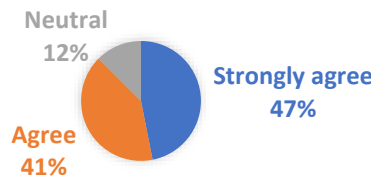12%

Strongly agree
47%

Agree
41%

Figure 9. Question 9: Gamification brings joy to the classroom

Question 10 of the questionnaire was supposed to find out whether gamification disrupted the classroom due to its game-based attraction. The findings were as follows: 31% of students expressed a neutral opinion, whereas 19% strongly disagreed and agreed. This demonstrates that, in addition to the benefits of gamification, teachers may face issues with classroom management, particularly in classrooms with a large number of students.
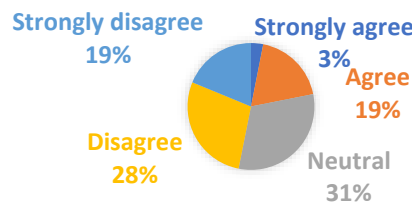
Strongly disagree
19%

Strongly agree
3%

Agree
19%

Disagree
28%

Neutral
31%

Figure 10. Question 10: Gamification makes the classroom out of control

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study shows that learners express positive attitudes about teachers using gamification in the classroom at Dong Nai Technology University. Gamification brings many benefits to the learning process by encouraging learners to participate in learning and to seek more deeply about the lesson content. For these reasons, the study recommends that teachers and curriculum designers should use this pedagogical method in the English curriculum, and teachers must have adequate training to use it effectively. Gamification, on the other hand, has the potential to disturb the classroom environment. It should be highlighted that teachers must pay attention to classroom management when implementing these activities in the classroom so as not to disrupt other students' classes.

Last but not least, this study has some limitations. The study focused on a moderate number of attendees and only used an online survey to collect data based on percentages per question, so the topic of gamification needs to be researched more with a larger number of participants and different research methods to comprehensively answer whether the use of gamification brings optimistic results for the majority.

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Appendix
Appendix A

DONG NAI TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
Questionnaire about Gamification

Name: ....
Age:....................................
Course:................................

The following questions ask you about your thoughts on the usage of gamification in classrooms. Please respond as honestly as possible by selecting the category that best expresses your attitude to each statement listed.
Note: Your answers will not affect any classes you are enrolled in.

Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Gamification makes me interested in the lesson.					
2. Gamification motivates me to seek more knowledge about the lesson					
3. Gamification makes me want to win challenges with my classmates					
4. I like lessons that include gamification.					
5. Gamification makes me feel confident					
6. Gamification makes me participate in group work					
7. Gamification gives me instant feedback.					
8. Gamification makes all students want to participate.					
9. Gamification brings joy to the classroom.					
10. Gamification makes the classroom out of control.					