Gamifying Language Learning: Enhancing Primary School Student Engagement Through the Giant Snake and Ladder Board Game

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the ongoing challenge of maintaining student engagement and motivation in English language learning, particularly among primary school students. With traditional methods proving less effective in sustaining interest, this study aims to explore the impact of gamification on improving students' engagement and language acquisition. Specifically, the research investigates how the integration of a giant Snake and Ladder game, focusing on vocabulary and grammar, influences students' learning experiences. The study was conducted with 103 standard six students from a primary school in northern region, Malaysia who played the game in groups and completed a post-game survey. The survey included nine items that assessed the students' experience and motivation, using a 3-point Likert scale (Disagree, Neutral, Agree). Descriptive statistics, including percentages, mean, and standard deviation, were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that the majority of students reported enhanced motivation and a better understanding of English, with 76% agreeing that moving around as a token made the game more fun, and 67% stating they learned many new things. The study supports the notion that gamification, particularly through physical activities, can effectively foster engagement and improve language learning outcomes. The implications suggest that educators can integrate similar game-based approaches to enhance motivation and comprehension, especially in language subjects. However, future research should consider larger sample sizes and assess the long-term effects of gamified learning on language retention.

Keywords: Gamification in Language Learning, ESL/EFL Instruction, Student Engagement, Vocabulary and Grammar Acquisition, Educational Games

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, educators worldwide are searching for innovative approaches to engage students and enhance learning outcomes, particularly in language learning contexts. One of the most significant challenges facing education systems globally is the need to motivate and actively engage learners, especially in primary school settings, where attention spans are shorter and traditional teaching methods may fail to capture student interest (Zainuddin et al., 2020). Research has increasingly turned to gamification as a solution to this issue. Gamification, the process of integrating game mechanics into non-game contexts, has shown considerable promise in promoting student engagement and improving learning outcomes (Al-Azawi, Al-Faliti, & Al-Blushi, 2016). By turning learning activities into interactive and enjoyable experiences, gamification helps combat disengagement and fosters a sense of motivation among students (Dichev & Dicheva, 2017).

The importance of enhancing student engagement in education is especially critical in language learning environments. As English continues to be the lingua franca of globalization, ensuring proficiency in English from an early age has become a priority for educational institutions around the world (Graddol, 2006). However, students often struggle with traditional, classroom-based language learning due to its passive nature (Tang et al.,

2020). Gamified learning, particularly through interactive board games, offers a solution by transforming language acquisition into a more dynamic and participatory process (Thirasu, 2022). When learners are immersed in a game, they are more likely to engage with the material, practice language skills, and develop critical thinking abilities through interactive play (Sailer et al., 2017).

One effective tool in gamifying language learning is the use of board games, which provide both cognitive and social benefits. Board games have been shown to foster collaboration, critical thinking, and communication—skills essential for language acquisition (Hawkinson, 2013). The Giant Snake and Ladder board game, in particular, combines physical movement with learning, making it an engaging activity for primary school students. The game not only stimulates excitement through its competitive nature but also integrates language tasks that challenge students to use their English skills in context, thereby deepening their comprehension and retention of language (Mokhtar et al., 2019).

This study investigates the effectiveness of using the Giant Snake and Ladder board game in primary schools to enhance student engagement in language learning. Through gamified approaches like this, the study aims to provide insights into how interactive games can serve as powerful tools for improving both student motivation and English language skills, fostering a more immersive and enjoyable learning environment.

In Malaysia, the integration of gamification into language learning is gaining traction as educational institutions recognize the need to shift from traditional methods to more engaging approaches. The Malaysian Ministry of Education has emphasized the need for 21st-century learning strategies that incorporate technology and interactive activities, such as gamified learning, to improve student outcomes (Ng et al., 2021). The rise in the use of board games in classrooms has proven effective in addressing the common challenges of low motivation and passive learning behavior in ESL (English as a Second Language) classrooms (Mokhtar et al., 2019). A study by Yazid et al. (2019) shows that students exposed to language games demonstrate higher levels of engagement and enjoyment, which positively correlates with improved academic performance.

Additionally, data from recent studies reveal that Malaysian primary school students often struggle with language proficiency due to a lack of interactive learning environments, which are crucial for fostering communication skills (Ng et al., 2021). The use of gamified tools like the Giant Snake and Ladder board helps bridge this gap by combining physical activity with cognitive challenges, which has been shown to significantly improve vocabulary retention and pronunciation skills among young learners (Ng et al., 2021). The success of similar board game interventions in Sarawak, which increased students' speaking performance by over 30%, underscores the potential of gamification to revolutionize language learning in Malaysia (Hawkinson, 2013; Mokhtar et al., 2019).

Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of gamification in improving student engagement and learning outcomes, particularly in language learning contexts. Dichev and Dicheva (2017) found that incorporating game elements such as rewards, competition, and interactive tasks into the learning environment significantly increases student motivation. This is especially relevant in the case of primary school students, who tend to have shorter attention spans and respond more positively to interactive and playful learning experiences (Zainuddin et al., 2020). In Malaysia, similar findings were echoed by Mokhtar et al. (2019), who explored the use of the Idioms Hunter board game in ESL classrooms and found that students exhibited greater enthusiasm and confidence in using English during gameplay.

Furthermore, the work of Yazid et al. (2019) highlights how board games like NounSense not only improve language comprehension but also encourage cultural learning by incorporating locally relevant content, thus making the experience more relatable to Malaysian students. These findings support the notion that gamified learning environments foster a more engaging, student-centered atmosphere, which contrasts with traditional, passive learning methods. Additionally, Ng et al. (2021) found that the Pick and Speak board game had a substantial impact on pupils' speaking abilities, particularly in the areas of pronunciation and fluency. Their study demonstrated that even students with lower proficiency levels showed marked improvement after engaging with the game, confirming the effectiveness of gamified tools in bridging the gap between language comprehension and practical use.

Taken together, these past studies provide a robust foundation for the argument that gamification—specifically through interactive board games like the Giant Snake and Ladder—has the potential to significantly enhance language acquisition and student engagement. By moving beyond traditional instructional methods, gamified tools create an enjoyable and collaborative learning experience that is particularly effective for young learners in Malaysia.

While existing studies have highlighted the benefits of gamification in language learning, particularly through the use of board games, there is a noticeable gap in research that focuses on the specific impact of large-scale, interactive board games like the Giant Snake and Ladder on primary school students in Malaysia. Previous studies have largely explored digital gamified tools or traditional games with limited physical interaction (Mokhtar et al., 2019; Yazid et al., 2019). However, the unique blend of physical movement and cognitive challenges provided by a giant board game remains underexplored, especially in terms of how it can enhance engagement and learning outcomes in ESL classrooms. Moreover, little attention has been given to how gamified activities can influence students' motivation to actively participate in lessons while improving their language skills, particularly among younger learners in Malaysian schools.

To address these gaps, this study aims:

i) To evaluate the impact of the Giant Snake and Ladder board game on primary school students' engagement and enjoyment during English lessons.

ii) To assess how the Giant Snake and Ladder board game improves specific English language skills, such as vocabulary, grammar, and idiomatic expressions, among primary school students.

iii) To examine how the interactive nature of the Giant Snake and Ladder board game affects students' motivation to participate actively in English lessons.

This article is structured as follows: The literature review section provides an overview of key studies on gamification in education and the role of interactive board games in enhancing language learning. The methodology section describes the research design, participant demographics, and data collection methods, including the survey administered to assess student engagement, learning outcomes, and motivation. The results section presents the findings from the survey and data analysis, followed by a detailed discussion that interprets the results in light of the study's objectives and compares them to previous research. The article concludes with the implications of the findings for language education in primary schools, as well as recommendations for future research on gamified learning tools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Gamification in Language Learning (ESL)

Gamification refers to the application of game mechanics—such as points, leaderboards, and rewards—into non-game contexts like education, with the goal of motivating and engaging participants. In language learning, especially in the context of English as a Second Language (ESL), gamification has emerged as a powerful tool to enhance student participation, motivation, and overall learning outcomes. By turning learning into an interactive and enjoyable experience, gamification addresses the challenges often associated with traditional methods, such as low engagement and passive learning (Zainuddin et al., 2020).

Research highlights the significant benefits of gamification for younger learners, particularly primary school students, whose attention spans are shorter and who often find conventional classroom-based instruction disengaging (González et al., 2021). Gamified activities, when carefully designed, provide immediate feedback, foster peer collaboration, and reduce learning anxiety, making students more comfortable experimenting with new language structures (Dichev & Dicheva, 2017). Board games such as Idioms Hunter and Pick and Speak have proven effective in improving language proficiency, encouraging students to use English in contextualized settings, which is essential for language retention and application (Ng et al., 2021; Mokhtar et al., 2019).

Furthermore, gamified learning not only boosts student motivation but also creates a more student-centered environment. Instead of relying on teacher-led instruction, students engage with the language actively by participating in games that challenge their vocabulary, grammar, and communication skills. The use of physical games, like the Giant Snake and Ladder board, introduces physical activity into the learning process, thereby making language acquisition a multisensory experience (Mokhtar et al., 2019).

B. Game-based Learning Theory in ESL Education

Game-Based Learning (GBL) is closely related to gamification but differs in that it centers around the use of actual games, both digital and physical, as the primary mode of instruction. GBL asserts that games are effective educational tools because they engage learners in problem-solving, decision-making, and critical thinking within a structured framework, leading to deeper learning (Prensky, 2001). In the ESL context, GBL creates immersive environments where students can practice language skills in meaningful, real-time scenarios.

Game-Based Learning Theory is grounded in Constructivism, which suggests that learners build knowledge through active interaction with their environment (Piaget, 1977). Games provide authentic contexts in which students use language skills to achieve goals, negotiate meaning, and collaborate with others. This experiential learning process helps learners internalize language concepts more effectively than traditional rote learning (Gee, 2003). For example, board games like Noun Sense, designed for ESL learners, engage students in meaningful language tasks that require the application of vocabulary and grammar in context (Yazid et al., 2019).

Additionally, Flow Theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) explains why GBL is so effective in language learning. Games are designed to balance challenge with skill, creating an optimal learning environment where students are fully immersed in the task. This state of "flow" helps learners maintain focus, persist in language practice, and enjoy the process of learning (Schell, 2008). In ESL classrooms, where students often feel anxious about making mistakes, the immersive and low-stakes nature of games reduces stress, encouraging active participation (Ng et al., 2021).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) also plays a crucial role in understanding the motivational aspects of GBL. SDT posits that learners are motivated when they experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Games naturally provide opportunities for autonomy as students make decisions and solve problems, competence as they achieve goals and master language challenges, and relatedness as they interact with peers during gameplay. GBL, therefore, enhances intrinsic motivation, leading to improved learning outcomes in language education (Sailer et al., 2017).

C. Relevant Theories and Models in Gamification and Game-Based Learning

Theories of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) also underpin the value of gamified approaches and game-based learning. According to Krashen's (1981) Input Hypothesis, language learners acquire proficiency by being exposed to comprehensible input slightly beyond their current level (i+1). Games provide a constant flow of language input through challenges and tasks that encourage learners to stretch their abilities. For example, board games designed for ESL classrooms often incorporate new vocabulary and grammar structures that students must use to succeed, thus fostering language acquisition in a natural, enjoyable setting (Ng et al., 2021).

Moreover, Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis emphasizes the importance of reducing anxiety and fostering a positive emotional environment in language learning. Games lower the affective filter by creating playful, supportive environments that encourage students to take risks with the language without fear of failure (Lin, 2008). The physical and interactive nature of games like Giant Snake and Ladder further enhances engagement and reduces anxiety, particularly in primary school students (Mokhtar et al., 2019).

Finally, Behaviorism also plays a role in gamification and game-based learning. The reward structures embedded in games—such as points, levels, and badges—align with behaviorist principles of reinforcement, where learners are motivated by positive feedback to repeat desired behaviors (Skinner, 1953). In the context of ESL, rewards within games encourage students to practice language skills repeatedly, leading to better retention and mastery of concepts (Dichev & Dicheva, 2017).
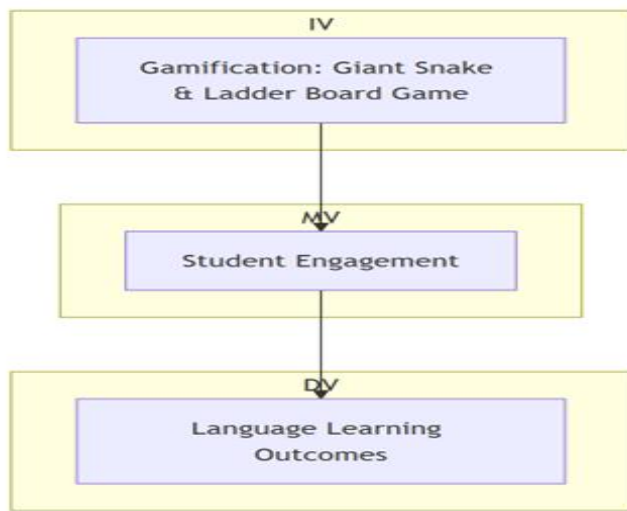
Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework of Gamifying Language Learning through the Giant Snake and Ladder Board Game

The conceptual framework on Figure 1 above illustrates the relationship between gamification and language learning outcomes, with student engagement acting as a mediating factor.

1. Gamification (IV): The Giant Snake and Ladder board game is employed as a gamified tool designed to enhance the learning process. Gamification introduces elements of play, competition, and interaction, which make the learning experience more dynamic and enjoyable for students.

2. Student Engagement (MV): As the students engage with the gamified learning tool, their levels of motivation, participation, and enjoyment in the learning process increase. In this framework, student engagement is a key factor that mediates the relationship between the gamified tool and the learning outcomes.

3. Language Learning Outcomes (DV): The final component of the framework is the desired improvement in language proficiency. This can be measured through outcomes such as improved vocabulary, sentence structure, and overall fluency in English. The framework suggests that gamified learning, through increased student engagement, positively influences these outcomes.

D. Relevant Past Studies

Table I: Summary of Recent Studies on Gamification in Language Learning (2019-2024)

Author(s)	Year	Title	Method Used	Key Findings
Mokhtar, Anuar & Talib	2019	Students' Perceptions of Using Board Games to Learn Idioms	Survey and interviews with primary school students	Board games improved student engagement and confidence in using English idioms.
Ng, Hassan, Linda, Ahmad, Yunus & Suliman	2021	Using Pick and Speak Board Game to Enhance Pupils' Speaking Skill	Experimental study with primary students	The game significantly improved students' speaking abilities, particularly in pronunciation and sentence construction.
Yazid, Bazlan & Omar	2019	NounSense: Boosting ESL Students' Language Skills Through Board Games	Case study on secondary school students	The NounSense board game improved students' vocabulary and grammar understanding.

Garcia-Sancho, Gonzalez & Ortega-Martin	2022	Gamification in Language Learning: A Spanish Perspective	Experimental design in ESL classrooms	Gamification improved student retention of vocabulary and grammar and increased classroom participation.
Robert	2023	Gamified Learning Intervention to Promote Music Literacy	Observational study on board game intervention for music literacy	Board games helped improve students' ability to understand and compose music.
Je-Young Lee, Minkyung Baek	2023	Effects of Gamification on Students' English Language Proficiency: A Meta-Analysis on Research in South Korea	meta-analysis	Gamification significantly enhances English language learning outcomes for South Korean students, particularly in vocabulary, listening, and writing skills.
Hojjat Dehghanzadeh, H. Fardanesh, J. Hatami, E. Talaee, O. Noroozi	2019	Using gamification to support learning English as a second language: a systematic review	systematic review	Gamification positively impacts learners' learning experiences and outcomes in English as a Second Language, with positive effects on content language learning, engagement, motivation, and satisfaction.
S. Zhang, Zuwati Hasim	2023	Gamification in EFL/ESL instruction: A systematic review of empirical research	systematic review	Gamification in EFL/ESL instruction has gained popularity due to its benefits in improving students' English language skills, attitudes, and emotional responses, but also has drawbacks like technical issues and short-lived positive effects.
Karwan Al-Dosakee, Fezile Ozdamli	2021	Gamification in Teaching	Systematic review	Gamification can be a useful tool for teaching and learning languages, increasing learners' motivation and making learning an enjoyable process.
Kevin Mario Laura-De La Cruz, Stefany Juliana Noa-Copaja, Osbaldo Turpo-Gebera, Cecilia Claudia Montesinos-Valencia, Silvia Milagritos Bazán-Velásquez, G. Pérez-Postigo	2023	Use of gamification in English learning in Higher Education: A systematic review	systematic review	Use of gamification in English learning in Higher Education: A systematic review
Tomislav Ivanjko, Kresimir Pavlina, Iva Grubjesic	2020	The Role of Gamification In Language Learning In Higher Education	systematic review	Gamification offers valuable advantages to language learning courses in higher education, but more research is needed to fully understand its impact on English as a Foreign Language acquisition.
Gamze Kaya, Hatice Cilsalar Sagnak	2022	Gamification in English as Second Language Learning in Secondary Education Aged Between 11-18: A Systematic Review Between 2013-2020	Systematic review	Gamification in English as a Second Language learning enhances fun, motivation, and participation, while promoting autonomous learning for students aged 11-18
Mun Pei Ng, Norlidah Alias, D. DeWitt	2022	Effectiveness of a gamification application in learning mandarin as a second language	-	Class Dojo significantly improves academic results and engagement among Year 4 pupils learning Mandarin as a Second Language.

Xin Wen	2023	The Effect of Gamification Learning on Primary School Students' Second Language Learning	systematic review	Gamification positively impacts primary school students' English learning, enhancing vocabulary, grammar, and overall language ability.

The table on previous studies provides a comprehensive overview of gamification's role in language learning across various contexts. It highlights the diverse methods employed, ranging from surveys and experimental studies to systematic reviews and meta-analyses. For example, Mokhtar et al. (2019) found that using board games to teach idioms improved student engagement and confidence. Similarly, Ng et al. (2021) demonstrated that the Pick and Speak board game enhanced students' speaking skills, particularly in pronunciation and sentence construction. Yazid et al. (2019) showed that the Noun Sense game was effective in boosting vocabulary and grammar. More recent studies, such as Garcia-Sancho et al. (2022), expanded the focus by exploring how gamification improved vocabulary retention and classroom participation in ESL contexts. Meta-analyses like that of Je-Young Lee et al. (2023) further confirmed the positive effects of gamification on vocabulary, listening, and writing skills, particularly for South Korean students. Additionally, systematic reviews by Dehghanzadeh et al. (2019) and Zhang et al. (2023) provide critical insights into the overall benefits of gamification, including increased motivation and engagement, though some concerns about technical issues and the longevity of its effects were noted. Overall, the studies underscore gamification's potential to enrich the learning experience and improve language outcomes across different age groups and settings.

E. Research Gaps and Conclusion

Despite the promising evidence supporting the use of gamification and game-based learning in language education, several gaps remain. One key gap is the limited research on the long-term impact of these approaches. While studies such as Mokhtar et al. (2019) and Ng et al. (2021) have shown that games improve immediate language skills like vocabulary retention and fluency, more longitudinal studies are needed to examine how these improvements persist over time and whether students can transfer game-based learning to real-life communication contexts.

Another gap lies in the exploration of physical board games in language learning, particularly in comparison to digital platforms. While digital gamified tools like Duolingo and Kahoot! have been extensively studied (Vandercruysse et al., 2013), research on large-scale, interactive physical games like Giant Snake and Ladder is still sparse. Physical games offer unique benefits, such as combining movement with learning, which may enhance cognitive retention and engagement in ways that digital games cannot. More research is needed to fully understand the potential of these tools in ESL classrooms.

Lastly, the cultural relevance of gamified tools is another area that warrants further investigation. While games like NounSense have incorporated local Malaysian cultural references to make learning more relatable for students, there is little research on how culturally tailored games impact language learning outcomes (Yazid et al., 2019). Given Malaysia's diverse linguistic landscape, future studies should explore how incorporating cultural context into gamified tools can enhance student engagement and language acquisition.

In conclusion, both gamification and game-based learning offer significant advantages for language education, particularly in ESL settings. By providing immersive, interactive, and motivating environments, these approaches help students engage more deeply with language learning. However, to fully understand the potential of gamified tools and games in language education, more research is needed on their long-term effects, the comparative value of physical versus digital games, and the impact of cultural relevance in game design. Addressing these gaps will provide valuable insights into how game-based learning can be optimized to meet the needs of diverse learners in ESL classrooms.

METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design, Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique

This study adopts a quantitative research design to explore the effects of gamification on language learning

through the Giant Snake and Ladder board game. The primary objective is to assess the engagement, motivation, and language proficiency levels of Standard Six students, focusing on their vocabulary acquisition and grammar comprehension. The participants were 103 students from a primary school in Sungai Petani, Kedah. The students were identified as having intermediate proficiency in English, suitable for engaging with language-based tasks. The sample size was determined based on the total number of students in the Standard Six-year group, utilizing a census sampling technique. This method was chosen to ensure that every student had an equal opportunity to participate, which enhances the representativeness and generalizability of the findings. Census sampling allowed the study to capture the full range of student experiences and provided a comprehensive understanding of the impact of gamification on language learning (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

B. Game Description

The Giant Snake and Ladder game was adapted to incorporate language-learning tasks. As students moved across the board, they were required to answer questions about vocabulary and grammar to advance. The questions were crafted based on the national curriculum for Standard Six students and covered areas such as sentence structure and correct word usage..

C. Students Proficiency Level

The students' language proficiency was evaluated based on the school records and class-level placement. These Standard Six students were considered to have an intermediate level of English proficiency, suitable for engaging in basic vocabulary and grammar tasks.

D. Data Collection

Data was collected using a **post-game survey** that students completed after engaging in the Giant Snake and Ladder board game. The game was played in groups, where students took turns to throw a giant dice and acted as tokens moving across the board. To advance, students were required to answer English-related questions correctly, including vocabulary and grammar items. The survey consisted of 9 items to measure various dimensions of student engagement and learning. These dimensions included their enjoyment of the game, confidence in answering the English questions, and perceived learning benefits in vocabulary and grammar. These questions were structured on a **3-point Likert scale** with options of "Disagree," "Neutral," and "Agree." This type of scale is commonly used in educational research for its simplicity and ease of understanding for young learners (Joshi, Kale, Chandel, & Pal, 2015). The data collection process took place immediately after the game to ensure that the students' experiences were fresh and that their responses reflected their immediate reactions to the gameplay.

E. Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed using **descriptive statistics**, focusing on **percentages**, **mean**, and **standard deviation** to meet the research objectives. Percentages were calculated to determine the distribution of responses related to student engagement and motivation. The **mean** was used to summarize the average levels of engagement and motivation reported by the students, while the **standard deviation** measured the variability in their responses. The data was processed using **SPSS software (version 26)** to ensure accuracy and efficiency in statistical calculations (Pallant, 2020).

F. Variables and Measurement

The independent variable in this study is the **use of the Giant Snake and Ladder board game** to facilitate learning, while the dependent variables include **student engagement** and **motivation**. Engagement was measured based on the students' participation in answering English-related questions during the game, while motivation was assessed using the post-game survey responses. Both constructs were measured using the 9-item Likert scale. The questions assessed the students' level of enjoyment, the ease of understanding the game, and their perceived benefits from playing the game, such as learning new vocabulary and grammar.

G. Validity of the Questionnaire Construct

Content validity was ensured by having the questionnaire reviewed by English language educators and gamification experts, ensuring that the survey items effectively captured the constructs of engagement and motivation (Yurdugül, 2008). Pilot testing was also conducted with a small sample of 10 students before the actual study to refine any unclear or ambiguous questions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study provide insight into the impact of using a gamified approach to learning English, particularly through the Giant Snake and Ladder game. The purpose of this section is to present the responses of 103 Standard Six students, gathered through a post-game survey that assessed their engagement, enjoyment, and learning experiences. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics, focusing on the percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations of the students' responses to nine survey items. These items evaluated various aspects of their experiences, including their enjoyment of the game, ease of understanding the English questions, confidence in answering, and the perceived educational value of the game. The results are aimed at understanding whether such gamification strategies can positively influence students' motivation and learning in language education.

Table II: Student Responses on Engagement and Learning Through Giant Snake and Ladder Game

Items	Disagree N=103 (%)	Neutral N=103 (%)	Agree N=103 (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
I enjoyed playing the game	0 (0.9)	25 (24.3)	78 (75.7)	2.75	0.45
The English questions were easy to understand	9 (8.7)	48 (46.6)	46 (44.6)	2.36	0.49
I felt confident answering the English questions	7 (6.8)	39 (37.8)	57 (55.3)	2.49	0.48
I learned many new things in English while playing the game	5 (4.9)	31 (30.1)	67 (65.1)	2.60	0.46
Moving around as a token made the game more fun	2 (1.9)	25 (24.2)	76 (73.8)	2.72	0.45
I prefer learning English through games like this rather than in the classroom	5 (4.9)	29 (28.2)	69 (67.0)	2.62	0.46
The game helped me to understand English better	5 (4.85)	30 (29.1)	68 (66.0)	2.61	0.46
The combination of physical activity and learning English made the lesson more interesting	1 (1.0)	37 (35.9)	65 (63.1)	2.62	0.48
I would like to play more games like this in the future to learn English.	1 (1.0)	29 (28.2)	73 (70.9)	2.69	0.46

The table II of findings above represents the students' feedback on their experience and motivation related to the

gamified learning session, using a giant Snake and Ladder game. The responses are categorized into nine items, each reflecting a particular aspect of the students' engagement and learning experience. The table shows the percentage distribution of responses for each category (Disagree, Neutral, Agree), along with the calculated mean and standard deviation (SD) for each item.

For instance, 75.7% of the students agreed that they enjoyed playing the game, with a mean score of 2.75 and a standard deviation of 0.45. Similarly, 67% of the students agreed that they preferred learning English through games rather than traditional classroom methods, showing a high level of engagement and preference for gamified learning, with a mean score of 2.62 and an SD of 0.46.

The overall results indicate strong positive feedback, with high mean values for most items, suggesting that the students not only found the game enjoyable but also beneficial for their English learning. The standard deviation values across all items are relatively low, indicating that the responses were generally consistent and clustered around the mean. This provides evidence of the effectiveness of the gamified approach in enhancing student motivation and engagement in English learning.

In the present study, the findings demonstrate that gamified learning approaches, such as using a giant Snake and Ladder game, significantly enhance students' motivation and engagement in language learning. This aligns with previous literature suggesting that gamification fosters an interactive and enjoyable learning environment, which contributes to improved learning outcomes. For instance, Zhang and Hasim (2023) emphasize that gamification enhances students' English language skills by increasing motivation and reducing anxiety through active participation.

Additionally, the positive feedback from students, as reflected in the high mean scores across all categories, echoes findings from Luo (2023), who noted that gamified tools stimulate intrinsic motivation and attention among learners. The consistency of responses, as indicated by the low standard deviation values, suggests that the gamified learning experience was uniformly well-received, further corroborating the results of Szabó and Kopinska (2023), who found that game-based learning techniques create a more engaging and effective educational environment for foreign language acquisition.

The students' preference for learning English through games rather than traditional classroom methods reflects the broader trend in the literature, where game-based learning has been shown to promote not only engagement but also critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Chan & Lo, 2024). Thus, these findings provide further evidence supporting the use of gamification in language education, reinforcing its potential as a valuable tool for improving both student motivation and learning outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study reveal that gamification, particularly through games like Snake and Ladder, significantly enhances student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes in English language instruction. Most students reported positive experiences, indicating that the interactive nature of the game promoted better understanding of vocabulary and grammar concepts. This supports previous research on the motivational effects of gamification in language learning, demonstrating that game-based activities can stimulate active participation and enjoyment, leading to improved language acquisition.

The theoretical implications of this study contribute to the growing body of knowledge on constructivist learning theories, emphasizing the importance of active learning and learner-centered strategies in language education. Gamification aligns well with these principles by providing learners with autonomy and immediate feedback, enhancing intrinsic motivation and deepening the learning process.

From a practical standpoint, educators can implement gamified learning approaches to make language instruction more dynamic and engaging, especially for young learners. Integrating physical movement with language tasks, as demonstrated in this study, can also cater to different learning styles and encourage holistic learning experiences.

However, the study has limitations. The sample size was limited to one primary school, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study only focused on short-term outcomes, leaving room for exploration of long-term effects of gamified learning on language proficiency.

Future research should consider expanding the scope to include more schools and a broader demographic to verify the findings. Longitudinal studies could also assess how sustained exposure to gamified learning influences language retention and application over time. Furthermore, investigating the integration of digital gamification tools in language learning could provide insights into new methods of fostering student engagement and achievement in increasingly digital learning environments.

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