The Role of Gamification in English Language Teaching: Insights from Pre-Service Teacher

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Abstract

Gamification has emerged as an innovative approach to English language teaching, aiming to enhance student engagement and motivation. This study investigates pre-service teachers' perceptions of gamification in English language teaching practice. This study employed a mixed method based on an explanatory-sequential design as qualitative can clarify generalized quantitative results in a more thorough and appropriate interpretation. The study began by gathering quantitative data through a Likert scale questionnaire, followed by collecting qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with 100 pre-service teachers from Universitas Brawijaya post-teaching practice. The findings show that most pre-service teachers perceive gamification in English language teaching positively. Specifically, 89% of respondents reported increased engagement, while 85% noted improved motivation and focus. However, 15% of respondents remained ambivalent about how well gamification encourages self-directed learning. Additionally, 87% of respondents plan to continue using gamification in their teaching. In conclusion, gamification has the potential to be an innovative pedagogical approach in English language teaching, not only by enhancing engagement and motivation but also by facilitating differentiated learning by enabling students to gain the material at their own pace and fostering an immersive learning environment that enhances language acquisition. However, some challenges, such as limited infrastructure and pre-service knowledge and readiness to implement learning technology still need to be improved. Therefore, this study provides recommendations for educational institutions that can support the optimization of gamification in the context of English language teaching in the future. Further studies could explore its long-term effects on language learning to better understand its sustained impact.

Keywords: Gamification; Engagement; Motivation; Pre-service Teacher; Gamified Learning

INTRODUCTION

In the current digital era, gamification has become a widely used approach to promote specific behaviors and enhance both motivation and engagement. Initially popular in marketing strategies, it has now been integrated into educational programs to help teachers balance their objectives with the evolving needs of students (Robles Moral & Fernández Díaz, 2021). As an innovative phenomenon in education, gamification is designed to create a more immersive learning experience in an enjoyable environment and is believed to encourage students to engage in learning (Deterding et al., 2011). One of the key advantages of gamification in education is its

ability to facilitate language skills by creating an engaging and interactive learning environment (Martí-Parreño et al., 2016). This is driven by the fact that many students were raised in the technological age and have been surrounded by devices like computers and online games throughout their lives (Kıyançiçek & Uzun, 2022). According to Petkov et al. (2011), gamification is a technology that attempts to guide user behavior by igniting personal motivations through game design elements in a non-game context such as education. Gamification has gained a significant amount of traction in the teaching and learning of foreign languages, as evidenced by Stocker's (2020) study, which found that gamification boosts students' competence, autonomy, and emotional as well as behavioral engagement. The goal of gamification in English language instruction is to apply game concepts and elements to an educational setting in order to improve student learning and accomplish particular instructional objectives (Çınar et al., 2022; Hamari et al., 2014).

Beyond student engagement, gamification can boost students' self-confidence, independence, and emotional engagement in language classrooms (Stocker, 2020; Zeng et al., 2024). This is supported by studies conducted by Çınar et al. (2022), which demonstrate that the incorporation of game elements helps students focus on particular learning goals, such as grammar and vocabulary acquisition. Parreño et al. (2016) emphasized that gamification can make traditional learning activities more engaging. Additionally, gamification has implications for teachers. Blume (2020) found that pre-service EFL teachers' behaviors and perceptions showed a significant correlation between the frequency of game playing and both positive beliefs and perceived use of language learning strategies. Moreover, research conducted by Christopoulos and Mystakidis (2023) highlights that the use of gamification in educational settings can encourage logical thinking and increase student motivation. Students, who are already familiar with virtual environments and video games, recognize this pedagogical approach as fun and engaging. Additionally, according to previous research conducted (Çınar et al., 2022; Kaimara et al., 2022; Vitty et al., 2024), pre-service teachers have great potential to integrate gamification because they are more familiar with technology than senior teachers.

Despite its advantages, the integration of gamification presents several challenges (Thurairasu, 2022). Ertmer (1999) identified numerous barriers that hinder this process, including the significant effort required both inside and outside the classroom, as well as the need for additional modifications to ensure a comprehensive and meaningful learning experience. However, not all students actively engage with digital learning, and some studies have reported negative attitudes toward these technological approaches (Campillo-Ferrer et al., 2020). Furthermore, teachers remain hesitant to implement gamification because they are uncertain about its effectiveness in improving their teaching practices (Li et al., 2023; Mårell-Olsson, 2022). Pre-service teachers have also highlighted several obstacles to gamification-based learning, such as limited financial resources, a preference for traditional teaching methods, stereotypes regarding the educational value of digital games, insufficient ICT training, inadequate infrastructure, and the absence of supportive educational policies (Kaimara et al., 2021). Additionally, learners' attitudes toward digital games for language learning are shaped by three main factors: their prior gaming experiences, the opinions of influential figures such as parents and teachers, and their perceived self-efficacy (Acosta-Medina et al., 2021).

Although gamification is widely studied across various educational stages, its use in pre-service teaching remains underexplored, even as interest in this area grows exponentially—making it an emerging field of research due to the significant increase in studies over recent years (Guerrero Puerta, 2024). Furthermore, while gamification has been widely researched in the context of English language teaching, most prior studies focus on how it affects students or how experienced teachers implement it, without examining pre-service teachers' application of gamification during their teaching practice (Belda-Medina & Calvo-Ferrer, 2022). By investigating how pre-service teachers undergoing teaching practice understand, apply, and manage the challenges of gamification in the English language classroom, this study seeks to close this gap. Building on the identified gap in pre-service teachers' application of gamification, this study seeks to answer the following questions.

1. How do pre-service teachers perceive the use of gamification in English language learning?
2. How does gamification affect students' understanding of English language skills?
3. Do pre-service teachers have any intentions or plan to use gamification?

Responding to these inquiries will yield significant insights into the efficacy of gamification in English language instruction, aiding pre-service teachers in optimizing its implementation. This research provides an original perspective on gamification's effectiveness and offers educational institutions valuable insights for developing teacher preparation programs. Understanding the perspectives and challenges encountered by pre-service teachers can serve as a foundation for creating more relevant training, while evaluating its impact on students' language proficiency can inform the development of more innovative curricula. Furthermore, examining teachers' motivations for adopting gamification can facilitate the creation of supportive policies and resources that encourage its ongoing integration. This study aims to prepare pre-service teachers to effectively incorporate gamification, meet the demands of contemporary learning environments, and foster creative strategies in English language instruction.

METHOD

Research Design

In order to offer a more nuanced understanding of a study, this research combines mixed methods with an explanatory sequential design. This approach is organized around the initial collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by qualitative data to clarify the information gathered from the quantitative phase (Creswell, 2022). This methodology was selected because it enabled the research to discern significant trends using quantitative data, specifically regarding pre-service teachers' perceptions of gamification and its effects on English language acquisition (Belda-Medina & Calvo-Ferrer, 2022). Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) highlight that this method is favored by researchers due to its capacity to offer a more in-depth comprehension of the phenomenon being examined, particularly in language education and instruction. According to Subedi (2016), researchers can present statistical findings alongside qualitative insights into the reasons behind those findings by conducting sequential quantitative and qualitative analyses using a mixed-method explanatory design. In the first phase, quantitative data is collected and

analyzed to identify key patterns. This phase aims to provide a deeper explanation of the quantitative results. Therefore, by using this method, the researcher was able to investigate a fuller understanding of pre-service teachers' opinions on gamification's contribution to improving students' English learning.
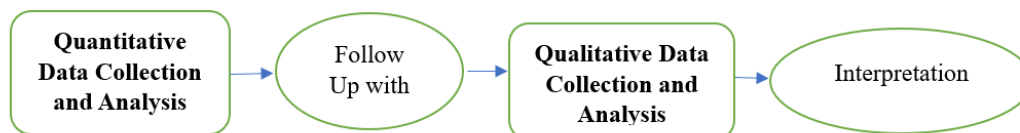

Figure 1. Explanatory Sequential Design

Sample and Research Subject

This study involved 102 seventh-semester students from Universitas Brawijaya majoring in English Education. However, only 100 participants completed the questionnaire. All of whom had completed teaching practice in several schools in Malang. All participants volunteered because they utilized gamification in their teaching methods. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) assert that while quantitative sample sizes are typically larger to detect patterns or trends, qualitative samples are smaller for more comprehensive exploration. The participants willingly contributed their expertise and experiences in applying gamification within their instructional methods.

Upon completion of the quantitative data analysis, the qualitative sample was chosen through purposive sampling to ensure participants possessed a consistent level of knowledge and could provide comprehensive insights. Five participants were interviewed to obtain more in-depth, exploratory data, thereby strengthening and explaining the quantitative findings. The number of qualitative participants was limited because in-depth interviews require additional time for data collection and analysis. Participants were selected based on two criteria: (1) a pre-service teacher who provided the highest rating scale and (2) a pre-service teacher who provided the lowest rating scale.

This study identified the perceptions of gamification and its impact on students, as well as the intentions of pre-service teachers for incorporating gamification into future learning by comparing the selected groups. This research employed surveys and interviews to gain a more thorough understanding of pre-service teachers' viewpoints on gamification. By combining quantitative and qualitative data, the study offered a comprehensive examination of the factors influencing gamification acceptance, its efficacy in education, and the challenges encountered during classroom implementation.

Research Instrument

Interviews and questionnaires were employed to gather detailed data on pre-service teachers' opinions of gamification in the classroom. While the goal of the qualitative interviews was to gather targeted information about pre-service teachers' understanding, application, and reflections regarding gamification during teaching practice, the questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data on pre-service teachers' experiences, perceptions, and challenges associated with using gamification. Semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire utilizing a 5-point Likert scale served

as the study's research tools. The questionnaire aimed to gather quantitative perspectives on the application of gamification to English language instruction. The survey questions were grouped into three categories: (1) pre-service teachers' perceptions of gamification, (2) the influence of gamification on students' English language learning, and (3) pre-service teachers' future plans and intentions to use gamification.

Pre-service teachers' agreement with the statements was determined using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). To ensure its relevance to this study, the questionnaire was modified and adapted from Thiagarajah et al. (2022). Its reliability was evaluated via Cronbach's alpha using SPSS (see Table 1). A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.964 signifies exceptional reliability, as scores exceeding 0.9 indicate excellent internal consistency.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability of instrument

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.964	10

In order to gather more comprehensive qualitative data on the experiences and opinions of pre-service teachers, the questionnaire findings were also examined in the second phase via semi-structured interviews. Purposive sampling was employed to select interviewees based on predefined criteria, specifically those who provided the lowest and highest rating scales. By balancing pre-service teachers' opinions on gamification during English language teaching practice, this approach is expected to yield a more thorough analysis. The semi-structured interview questions mirrored those on the questionnaire, which was modified and adapted from Thiagarajah et al. (2022).

Data Analysis and Procedures

This study employed an integrated approach combining descriptive statistics and thematic analysis to investigate pre-service teachers' perspectives on gamification. First, data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS to identify the mean values for each survey item. By drawing on measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode) and dispersion (standard deviation), the analysis revealed the primary trends in the responses and illustrated the degree of variation among participants. Frequency distributions and percentages were then used to clarify respondents' Likert-scale choices, thereby indicating their collective stance on gamification.

These descriptive measures enabled the detection of whether pre-service teachers were inclined to view gamification favorably, maintain neutrality, or express reservations. By examining the numerical findings, potential connections among variables, such as prior digital resource exposure or familiarity with gamified tools, were identified. This approach also made it possible to recognize any outliers, ensuring a comprehensive overview of the sample. Moreover, the descriptive data provided a robust framework for understanding the broader context in which more nuanced qualitative insights could be situated.

Second, a thematic analysis of the interview data, grounded in Braun and Clarke's (2012, 2021) framework, was conducted to identify patterns in participants' attitudes and experiences. The process began with multiple readings of the

transcribed data to ensure familiarity. Subsequently, initial codes were generated manually, grouping text segments according to repeated ideas. These codes were consolidated into thematic clusters reflecting the complex nature of pre-service teachers' perceptions of gamification. The resulting themes were then scrutinized and refined to confirm their fit with the research objectives. Finally, each theme was named and described in detail, with clear labels providing clarity and coherence.

To facilitate efficient communication, each thematic category was associated with a three-letter code. For example, "Pre-Service Teachers' Perception of Gamification" (PTG) encapsulates how participants conceptualize and assess the value of gamification, "Impact of Gamification on English Language Learning" (IG) addresses the benefits or motivational aspects observed, and "Pre-Service Teachers' Intention and Plan to Use Gamification" (PTP) indicates potential future implementation. After finalizing the themes, the findings were reported in a narrative form, incorporating illustrative quotations and pertinent theoretical perspectives.

The synergy between descriptive statistics and thematic analysis offers a holistic understanding of pre-service teachers' stances on gamification. Quantitative findings present a systematic representation of the data, while qualitative insights illuminate the deeper nuances of how participants interpret and value gamification in educational settings. This methodological combination underscores the strengths and possible limitations of gamification from a teacher-training perspective, enhancing the credibility, depth, and relevance of the results for both researchers and practitioners. The insights gleaned from this approach also inform the design of professional development initiatives, offering nuanced guidance for integrating gamification strategies into teacher education programs more effectively. Hence, it further enriches discourse on technology-enhanced pedagogy.

Ethical Considerations

All participants provided informed consent after receiving clear information about the study's aims, methods, and their rights (including the option to withdraw at any time). Data collection adhered to principles of confidentiality and anonymity: participants' identities were concealed through pseudonyms, and only the researchers had secure access to the raw data. Participants were selected via purposive sampling to represent a range of views on gamification; however, their involvement was entirely voluntary and free of coercion. The study minimized risks by maintaining a respectful interview setting and offering participants the freedom to discontinue if they experienced discomfort. Researchers safeguarded data through secure storage and upheld honesty in coding and reporting. By honoring these ethical practices—consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and minimal risk—the study ensured the integrity and protection of all participants involved.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pre-service Teacher Perceptions of Gamification

According to Table 2, 83% of respondents have a positive perception of gamification in English language teaching. The survey results show that most pre-service teachers find gamification relatively easy to implement, reflected in an average score of 4.16, while 7% of respondents disagreed with using gamification. According to Deterding et al. (2011), one of the key advantages of gamification systems is the

straightforward acquisition and use of valid user data, stemming from users' natural interactions with the system. This finding is also supported by interview responses, in which several participants indicated that gamification is quite simple and easy to apply, as shown in the following excerpts.

> *I think gamification is easier to apply than conventional methods that require us to write on the board and have to prepare physical items. Then, in my opinion, when using gamification, it feels like following a trend, like when I was teaching practice, I used 'Gimkit' which is a little similar to the game among us, which made my students very interested.* (PTG-R5)

> *The features in gamification are easy to use and fun. Gamification can increase student engagement because they can learn while playing, so it is beneficial.* (PTG-R4)

Table 2. Mean score results of pre-service teacher perceptions of gamification

No.	Item	Scale	F (%)	N	Mean
1	Teaching English using gamification is very easy for me.	SD	2	100	4.16
		D	5		
		N	1		
		A	41		
		SA	42		
2	I find that teaching English using Gamification is very useful.	SD	2	100	4.34
		D	4		
		N	5		
		A	36		
		SA	53		
4	I believe that using gamification in Learning English is a good idea.	SD	3	100	4.34
		D	2		
		N	5		
		A	38		
		SA	52		
5	I would recommend other teachers to use gamification in their teaching practices.	SD	3	100	4.33
		D	2		
		N	7		
		A	35		
		SA	53		

Note: SD: Strongly Disagree; D: Disagree; N: Neutral; A: Agree; SA: Strongly Agree

However, a lack of experience or limited access to necessary technology can contribute to challenges in using gamification. This is corroborated by Atabek (2019), who identified multiple difficulties, including insufficient pre-service teacher training and deficient technological or physical infrastructure. Some pre-service teachers also report that their schools do not adequately support gamification.

> *Gamification makes a little distracted when they have to access the gamification through their mobile phones, not to mention if they don't have a quota or the school Wi-Fi does not facilitate them to access it.* (PTG-R3)

This statement is supported by Bennet et al. (2012), who found that gamification is particularly challenging for students from low-income families lacking access to cell

phones or data, making it harder for them to keep up with schoolwork. Gamification can also exacerbate educational inequality by widening the gap between students who have technology access and those who do not. On the other hand, many pre-service teachers find gamification very helpful in their teaching. Following Veljković Michos (2017), who encourages educators to use gamification "to increase motivation, focused attention, diligence, and other positive values," these benefits contribute to a more conducive environment for foreign/second language teachers. This point has also been illustrated by the experiences of respondents 4 and 5.

> *I asked students how the learning experience was, when using gamification? Then my students answered, "When learning by playing quizzes, it makes me remember and understand the previous material and makes me more confident in learning English."* (PTG-R4)

> *For proof, the students always say, 'More miss, more miss, one more game.' Additionally, when I give a test where the questions I give are not much different from the gamification, they get better scores than before.* (PTG-R5)

With an average score of 4.34, the majority of respondents feel that gamification enhances teaching effectiveness and boosts student engagement; over 89% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that gamification is useful, while only 6% disagreed or remained neutral. In further support of gamification, most pre-service teachers believe that using gamification in learning is a good idea. The average score of 4.34 indicates that more than 90% of teachers view gamification as a viable classroom method. These findings align with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which highlights the importance of meeting learners' basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—to enhance intrinsic motivation and engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Petkov et al. (2011) argue that gamification leverages these motivational factors to influence user behavior and engagement. When implemented effectively, gamification aligns with SDT principles, promoting lasting motivation and stronger learner engagement.

This belief is further reinforced by the fact that 88% of respondents stated that they would recommend gamification to fellow teachers, with an average score of 4.33. This shows that in addition to using it themselves, pre- service teachers also believe that this method can bring wider benefits in the world of education. This is supported by several findings that game components, including scoreboards, rewards, missions, teams, and leadership positions, all contribute to the development of fundamental psychological requirements (Barghani, 2020; Hutson et al., 2022). Therefore, gamification has the potential to increase student engagement, improve their motivation to learn, foster collaboration among peers, aid knowledge retention, and create a positive and personalized learning environment.

Impact of Gamification on English Language Learning

According to Table 3, students' interest in learning appears to be positively influenced by gamification. Most pre-service teachers believe that gamification makes learning more engaging and interactive than traditional methods, with an average score of 4.30. While only 6% of respondents were neutral or disagreed, 88% said that gamification prompts students to participate more actively in the learning process. This suggests that gamification can stimulate interaction between students and

learning materials while making the environment more enjoyable. Sailer and Sailer (2021) likewise note that gamification activities can enhance learning outcomes through interactive approaches, aligning with the perspective of respondent 1.

One of the important reasons to use gamification is its ability to increase student engagement. Then Gamification I believe improves student ability, for example, at the end of each lesson I will ask students to speak, and answer questions through Kahoot. In this Kahoot application, the score will appear by itself, and I see the enthusiasm of students in doing quizzes through the Kahoot. (IG-R1)

Table 3. The impact of gamification on English language learning

No.	Item	Scale	F (%)	N	Mean
3	Using gamification can improve my effectiveness in teaching.	SD	3	100	4.26
		D	2		
		N	9		
		A	38		
		SA	48		
8	Gamification allows students to engage actively in the learning process, making it more enjoyable and interactive compared to traditional teaching methods.	SD	3	100	4.30
		D	3		
		N	6		
		A	37		
		SA	51		
9	Gamification has proven to be an effective tool in keeping students engaged in learning English.	SD	4	100	4.17
		D	1		
		N	1		
		A	44		
		SA	41		
10	Gamification encourages self-directed learning, allowing students to practice and strengthen their English skills.	SD	4	100	4.07
		D	1		
		N	15		
		A	44		
		SA	36		

Note: SD: Strongly Disagree; D: Disagree; N: Neutral; A: Agree; SA: Strongly Agree

With an average score of 4.17, 85% of pre-service teachers agreed or strongly agreed that gamification is an effective tool for maintaining student attention—consistent with Borrás-Gené et al. (2019), who emphasize gamification's effectiveness in enhancing learners' enjoyment. However, 6% were neutral or disagreed, suggesting that gamification's success in sustaining engagement can depend on classroom implementation. Based on the first respondent's experience, it also appears to help students stay focused and enjoy learning English. Another study indicates that when gamification aligns with Self-Determination Theory (SDT)—highlighting autonomy, competence, and relatedness—it can promote lasting intrinsic motivation and continuous learning (Deterding, 2012). Jose et al. (2024) further argue that gamification's long-term efficacy depends on integrating game elements into the learning process, with designs reflecting students' intrinsic motivations and personalized needs likely yielding more enduring benefits.

I do agree that The fun aspect of gamification makes learning less stressful and more enjoyable. When students are having fun, they are more likely to stick with the learning process and retain information over time. (IG-R1)

The average score of 4.07 indicates that although most pre-service teachers believe gamification can facilitate independent learning, 15% were neutral and 5% disagreed. The higher percentage of neutral respondents may reflect persistent doubts about whether gamification truly encourages students to learn without continuous teacher guidance. This hesitation could arise from various factors: the need for additional time to deliver detailed instructions, the absence of technical resources, inadequate training, limited financial support, and minimal backing from school administrations (Van Eck et al., 2015). A key reason for this skepticism is the lack of understanding about how to effectively design and implement gamification in the classroom, as many educators feel they do not have the technological skills or pedagogical expertise required (J. Buckley et al., 2019; P. Buckley & Doyle, 2016). Consequently, ensuring that gamification not only boosts engagement but also fosters substantial and self-directed learning remains a significant challenge.

Pre-service Teachers Intention and Plan to Use Gamification

According to Table 4, 52% of respondents strongly agreed (average score: 4.29) that they intend to use gamification in the future, while 4% were undecided. Although these results indicate a high acceptance of gamification, 8% of respondents remained neutral—suggesting that some teachers may still be weighing the technical challenges or long-term effectiveness of this approach. Mee Mee et al. (2020) note that many prospective educators lack confidence in the technology required for effective gamification due to insufficient training and limited practical experience in designing and implementing gamification elements. Respondents 2 and 3 offer insights that support this claim.

Firstly, I don't think that all skills can be applied well through gamification, especially since current gamification is just that. Maybe by applying gamification we get engagement from students, but in my opinion it is not that simple to teach skills in English to students; they still need practice, is not all gamification that cannot facilitate these skills. (PTP-R3)

I don't think gamification is necessary to make teaching English simple because I think language learning requires structure instruction, and I also think that gamification can engage students, but they can't simplify complex skills like grammar, writing, and fluency, and not all students can benefit from gamification. So teachers need to guide the students, provide the explanation, and assess their progress beyond playing game. (PTP-R2)

Those statements are also supported by Sánchez-Mena and Martí-Parreño (2017), who emphasize that beyond factors such as attention, motivation, entertainment, interactivity, and learning convenience, there are four primary barriers limiting teachers' use of gamification: (a) inadequate resources (time, training, financial support, and classroom organization), (b) student apathy (low interest or perception of wasted time), (c) subject constraints (not always aligned with learning goals or schedules), and (d) classroom dynamics (possible disruptions or conflicts with other teachers). Beyond intending to use gamification, most pre-

service teachers also plan to continue its implementation over time. With an average score of 4.24, 87% agreed or strongly agreed that they wish to keep integrating gamification into their teaching.

> *I will recommend gamification to other teachers because gamification can increase student engagement, and the current generation of students are technology experts. Therefore, we can use gadgets as an innovative method for learning English through gamification in the classroom. One way to ensure successful implementation is through simulated microteaching, where teachers can practice integrating gamification into their lessons in a controlled environment.* (PTP-R4)

> *I realize that generation Z and Alpha grew up in the digital era, where they are more accustomed to interactive and technology-based learning, so I still recommend gamification to other teachers, especially if they teach in schools with adequate facilities.* (PTP-R5)

Table 4. Pre-service teachers' intention and plan to use gamification

No.	Item	Scale	F (%)	N	Mean
6	I intend to use gamification to teach English in the future.	SD	3	100	4.29
		D	1		
		N	8		
		A	4		
		SA	48		
7	I intend to continue using gamification in English teaching throughout the classroom.	SD	2	100	4.24
		D	5		
		N	6		
		A	41		
		SA	46		

Note: SD: Strongly Disagree; D: Disagree; N: Neutral; A: Agree; SA: Strongly Agree

However, 6% of pre-service teachers remained neutral and 7% disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating that despite the benefits of gamification, external and internal factors—such as personal interests, attitudes toward gaming, as well as policy and curriculum—can shape teachers' perceptions (Fokides & Kostas, 2020). Internal barriers, including teachers' pedagogical beliefs and outlooks on gamification, may limit integration even if they possess adequate technology skills and have overcome initial obstacles. Additionally, respondents 2 and 3 highlighted concerns that require resolution before gamification can be more broadly adopted.

> *This gamification method should be combined with other interactive teaching methods. So, teachers should make sure gamification has clear learning objectives first, and it should also be tailored to the needs of the students, and it is better to use an approach that is suitable for all students, which can be role-playing, discussion, and implementing real tasks.* (PTP-R2)

> *As a pre-service teacher, I feel that gamification in English teaching has potential, but it is possible that the limited facilities in schools will be the main obstacle in the future. Without the support of sufficient facilities, I find it difficult to optimally implement gamification in learning in the future.* (PTP-R3).

This assertion is supported by Hanus and Fox (2015), who found that some educators worry gamification might shift students' focus from learning objectives to acquiring rewards or points, thereby potentially reducing their grasp of the material. J. Buckley et al. (2019) share these concerns, highlighting the importance of ensuring a balanced learning experience when integrating gamification. They emphasize that game elements should bolster students' intrinsic motivation rather than merely reward points, so that gamification delivers sustained benefits. Hence, even though gamification can greatly boost student engagement, it must be thoughtfully implemented to avoid compromising the depth of student understanding.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that pre-service teachers hold a positive view of gamification in English language learning. This finding aligns with prior research suggesting that gamification enhances learners' motivation and engagement through key game components—points, challenges, and immediate feedback—thus fostering a more interactive and enjoyable learning experience. According to pre-service teachers, gamification supports students' grasp of English language skills by creating an engaging learning environment and promoting active participation. However, some pre-service teachers argued that gamification has limitations when teaching more complex skills, such as grammar and writing, which may require traditional pedagogical methods involving subjective or nuanced responses. In addition, certain participants highlighted obstacles, including insufficient facilities and limited teacher expertise regarding gamification's exploration and use. Hence, effectively integrating gamification into English language learning requires adequate infrastructure and educational support in the form of simulations, seminars, and training. For instance, interactive workshops can give educators hands-on experience with platforms like Kahoot! and Quizizz, while microteaching simulations allow them to refine gamified lessons and receive feedback. Collaborative lesson design sessions can further guide teachers in developing gamified activities tailored to their students' needs. Finally, successful classroom implementation depends on reliable infrastructure such as digital devices, gamification software, and consistent internet access.

RECOMMENDATION

Future research should explore the long-term impact of gamification on student performance, its effectiveness across diverse proficiency levels, and how it can be integrated into advanced language skills, such as writing and grammar. Additionally, further studies might address key challenges, including teacher readiness—by identifying optimal training approaches for successful gamification—and student motivation—by examining which gamification elements best sustain engagement over time. Technological constraints could also be investigated, focusing on strategies to support schools with limited access to digital tools and infrastructure.

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Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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