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GAMIFICATION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION: INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO BOOST STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN ENGLISH EDUCATION

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Abstract. The lack of motivation in learning English remains a persistent challenge in the realm of education. Conventional, teacher-centered approaches are often deemed insufficient to ignite students' interest and active engagement. This study seeks to explore the application of gamification and social interaction, analyze the impact of game mechanics (points, rewards, challenges, and competition) on student motivation, and identify the obstacles encountered by the educator. Utilizing a qualitative case study design, this research involved one English teacher and 14 eleventh-grade students at MA NW Boro' Tumbuh. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and documentation. The analysis employed the Miles and Huberman model, encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the teacher implemented innovative strategies through educational games (Kahoot, Quizizz, Wordwall), a point and reward system, inter-group competitions, and collaborative learning activities. Gamification elements were proven effective in driving active participation, boosting self-confidence, and fostering students' enthusiasm. The challenges that emerged included limited internet access, restricted time allocation, disparities in students' learning capacities, and the shyness still experienced by some learners. In conclusion, the synergy between gamification and social interaction is proven to establish an enjoyable learning atmosphere and motivate students in mastering English.

Keywords: Gamification, Social Interaction, Students' Motivation, English Learning, Qualitative Case Study.

Abstrak. Kurangnya motivasi dalam mempelajari bahasa Inggris masih menjadi tantangan yang terus ada dalam dunia pendidikan. Pendekatan konvensional yang berpusat pada guru sering kali dianggap kurang memadai untuk memantik minat dan keterlibatan aktif siswa. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi penerapan gamifikasi dan interaksi sosial, menganalisis dampak mekanika permainan (poin, penghargaan, tantangan, dan kompetisi) terhadap motivasi siswa, serta mengidentifikasi hambatan yang dihadapi oleh pendidik. Dengan menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif, penelitian ini melibatkan seorang guru bahasa Inggris dan 14 siswa kelas sebelas di MA NW Boro' Tumbuh. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi kelas, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman, yang mencakup reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru menerapkan strategi inovatif melalui permainan edukatif (Kahoot, Quizizz, Wordwall), sistem poin dan penghargaan, kompetisi antar-kelompok, serta kegiatan pembelajaran kolaboratif. Elemen-elemen gamifikasi terbukti efektif dalam mendorong partisipasi aktif, meningkatkan kepercayaan diri, dan menumbuhkan antusiasme siswa. Tantangan yang muncul meliputi keterbatasan akses internet, alokasi waktu yang terbatas, perbedaan kapasitas belajar siswa, serta rasa malu yang masih dialami oleh sebagian peserta didik. Sebagai kesimpulan, sinergi antara gamifikasi dan interaksi sosial terbukti mampu menciptakan suasana belajar yang menyenangkan sekaligus memotivasi siswa dalam menguasai bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: Gamifikasi, Interaksi Sosial, Motivasi Siswa, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Studi Kasus Kualitatif.

INTRODUCTION

English holds a vital position as an international language utilized extensively across various sectors, including education, technology, and global communication. In the era of globalization, English proficiency has become an indispensable competency for students, given the abundance of academic references and digital materials presented in the language. However, classroom realities frequently expose a gap. Many learners continue to exhibit low participation, minimal involvement, and a lack of enthusiasm during English lessons. This condition indicates a discrepancy between ideal learning theories that emphasize an active learning environment and the actual practices occurring in the classroom.

Student motivation is the primary determining factor in the success of English language learning. Consequently, educators are required to adopt innovative and well-targeted teaching strategies. One approach that has recently gained significant traction is gamification, which entails integrating game elements into learning activities to enhance student involvement and participation (Deterding et al., 2011). Gamification is capable of transforming learning activities into more engaging and enjoyable experiences through the application of points, challenges, and rewards. Furthermore, social interaction among students during the learning process also plays a pivotal role in supporting motivation and language development, as learners construct knowledge through collaboration and communication with others (Hamari et al., 2014).

The integration of gamification and social interaction is expected to foster a more dynamic and motivating learning environment. When students are actively engaged in game-based activities and collaborative learning, they are more likely to demonstrate higher motivation, engagement, and enthusiasm in learning English. Based on this background, the present study aims to investigate the implementation of gamification and social interaction as innovative approaches to boost student motivation at MA NW Boro' Tumbuh.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The research was conducted at MA NW Boro' Tumbuh, East Lombok, during the odd semester of the 2026/2027 academic year. The participants consisted of one English teacher and 14 eleventh-grade students selected through a total sampling technique. Data collection was carried out utilizing three primary techniques. First, direct classroom observations were conducted to examine how gamification and social interaction were implemented during English learning activities, using an observation sheet to record teaching techniques, classroom interaction patterns, and student engagement. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the English teacher and several students to delve deeper into their experiences with game-based learning activities and social interaction in the classroom. Third, supporting data were collected from documentation, including Lesson Plans (RPP), teaching materials, and photographs of classroom activities.

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, which comprises three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure data trustworthiness, the researcher applied triangulation by comparing data from various sources and methods, alongside prolonged engagement and member checking to validate the findings against the participants' actual experiences.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the interviews and observations, the English teacher implemented gamification and social interaction through four primary strategies that significantly shaped the classroom dynamics. First, the teacher routinely integrated educational games, utilizing digital platforms such as Kahoot, Quizizz, and Wordwall, along with offline alternatives like PowerPoint games and printed flashcards. These activities were designed to review vocabulary and grammar in an enjoyable manner. Students responded positively, stating that the games alleviated boredom and encouraged active participation. Second, the teacher applied points, rewards, and classroom competitions. Points and small prizes were awarded to students who actively answered questions or won group competitions. This strategy served as positive reinforcement, motivating students to participate actively and contribute to their group's success. Third, social interaction was promoted through collaborative learning activities, including pair work, group discussions, and collaborative problem-solving. Students reported that working in groups allowed them to exchange ideas, ask questions freely, and receive support from peers, which ultimately boosted their self-confidence. Finally, the teacher continuously provided positive feedback and encouragement. Students were urged to participate even when they made mistakes, and positive feedback was consistently provided to enhance self-confidence and reduce anxiety during English learning.

The research findings revealed that gamification elements exerted a profoundly positive influence on student motivation. The implementation of points and rewards encouraged students to become more active in answering questions and completing tasks because they wanted to accumulate points and receive recognition for their efforts, which enhanced their sense of competence. Furthermore, classroom challenges transformed learning activities into enjoyable missions, prompting students to think critically and solve problems creatively. Healthy competition also motivated students to cooperate, discuss answers, and support one another, creating a positive atmosphere where students strived harder to achieve the highest scores. Consequently, game-based activities significantly reduced students' fear of making mistakes. The relaxed and enjoyable classroom atmosphere encouraged them to communicate more confidently with both the teacher and their peers.

Despite the successful implementation, the teacher encountered several obstacles during the process. Limited learning facilities, particularly unstable internet access, frequently hindered the use of digital platforms like Kahoot and Quizizz, forcing the teacher to adapt by utilizing offline games and printed materials. Additionally, limited instructional time was a significant constraint. Preparing game-based activities required additional planning, while classroom time was restricted by the school schedule, preventing all planned activities from being executed. The teacher also faced disparities in students' learning abilities, where students with higher English proficiency tended to participate more actively, whereas those with lower proficiency sometimes became passive. To address this, the teacher grouped students with varying ability levels to encourage peer support. Lastly, some students continued to experience shyness and a lack of confidence, remaining reluctant to communicate in English due to a fear of making mistakes. The teacher overcame this by providing continuous encouragement, rotating group members, and creating a supportive classroom atmosphere.

The findings of this study corroborate the theoretical foundations regarding gamification and social interaction. The utilization of educational games aligns with the perspectives of Kapp (2012) and Deterding et al. (2011), who emphasize that game mechanics can engage learners and promote learning. The positive influence of points, rewards, and competition is consistent with Skinner's Behaviorism Theory regarding positive reinforcement, and Deci & Ryan's Self-Determination Theory concerning the fulfillment of the needs for competence and relatedness. Collaborative learning activities reflect

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) and Johnson & Johnson's Cooperative Learning Theory (1999), which highlight that learning occurs through social interaction and positive interdependence. The challenges identified in this study, such as limited facilities and time, align with previous research by Hamari et al. (2016) and Labibah (2024). However, the teacher's ability to adapt by utilizing offline media and managing classroom dynamics demonstrates that effective gamification does not solely depend on technology, but also on the teacher's creativity and pedagogical skills. These findings are also in line with previous studies conducted by Yu (2023), Labibah (2024), and Ayu, Dollah, and Hasriani (2025), which reported that gamification and collaborative learning positively influence student motivation and participation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the English teacher at MA NW Boro' Tumbuh successfully implemented gamification and social interaction through various strategies, including educational games, points and rewards, classroom competitions, collaborative learning, and positive feedback. These strategies established a more interactive, enjoyable, and student-centered learning environment. The implementation of gamification exerted a positive influence on student motivation. Game elements such as points, rewards, challenges, and healthy competition heightened enthusiasm, classroom participation, self-confidence, and students' willingness to communicate in English. Social interaction through collaborative activities further amplified these effects by fostering cooperation, communication, and peer support.

Nevertheless, the teacher encountered several challenges, including limited learning facilities, restricted instructional time, disparities in students' English proficiency, and students' shyness. The teacher addressed these challenges through adaptive strategies, such as utilizing offline learning media, managing instructional time effectively, forming heterogeneous groups, and providing continuous encouragement. In final conclusion, the integration of gamification and social interaction constitutes an effective instructional approach to enhance student motivation in learning English. This approach creates an enjoyable, collaborative, and motivating learning environment that encourages students to participate actively and become more engaged in the learning process.

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