Students' Perceptions Towards the Application of Gamification in English Class

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Abstract

The integration of technology in education is rapidly increasing. Thus, academic practitioners are expected to utilize it optimally in teaching and learning process. One of the ways is to apply gamification in the classroom. This study aims to investigate the students' perception of the application of gamification in English classes. This research was conducted using a qualitative design and the data presented were descriptive through data interpretation. To answer the research questions, the researcher used semi-structured interviews in a face-to-face setting with 31 seventh-graders in one of the public junior high schools in Malang. The results of the study were to investigate students' perceptions of the application of gamification in learning English and students' insights about digital facilities in the school. The questions from interviews conducted covered several aspects, including (i) student interest in accessing digital games; (ii) student learning motivation; (iii) digital resource facilities and the ability of teachers to operate digital resources. The study found that more than half of the students in the class frequently accessed digital games and even had a favorite game. Students also gave a satisfactory perception regarding the application of gamification in the classroom because it can increase learning motivation. Students also gave their perceptions of the digital resource facilities at school and the teachers' ability to operate them.

Keywords: digital games; digital resources; gamification; students' perception.

In the 21st century, the integration of technology in education is rapidly increasing. It is undeniable that today's students are already technologically literate. Students use technology a lot as a tool to retrieve information, play social media to share their activities, and spend most of their time playing online games (Pratama, 2020). The changing situation requires the students to operate technology, at least a smartphone they can hold in their hands.

According to Allcorrect (2022), 89.2% of Indonesia's population is predicted to have a smartphone in 2025. Besides that, 79% of Indonesians consider themselves gamers. This phenomenon can be a challenge for educators to create a fun environment in the learning process. As the facilitators assisted by technology, the critical role of technology can be utilized in teaching English (Tristiana & Rosyida, 2018). It arouses some questions on how the technology

is well integrated and can certainly be operated by academic practitioners.

Gamification is the application of the principle and operation of the game in a non-game context (Mahbubah & Anam, 2022). The non-game context is meant by applying game principles and mechanisms in real life, such as classroom activities that take advantage of students' competitive spirit, like playing games. Gamification in education intends to include game elements and game experiences in the design of the learning process (Jeidi, Sehweil, & Al-Qasim, 2021). By implementing a game model and the elements in language teaching, it can increase students' involvement or participation, stimulate their critical thinking, enhance problem-solving skills, help them understand the concepts, make them aware of their level of knowledge, and increase their learning experience (Wahyuni & Junior, 2018; Inayati & Waloyo, 2022; Chaiyo & Nokham, 2017). Gamification is also interpreted as applying educational tools to support educational practitioners in achieving their learning objectives. There are many game-based information and communications technology (ICT) tools in the realm of education. These include WordWall (Arsini et al., 2022), Quizizz (Prasongko, 2021), Kahoot! (Mahbubah & Anam, 2022), and Nearpod (Abdullah et al., 2022), and many other platforms.

The following are the results of the previous study using Wordwall, Quizizz, Kahoot! and Nearpod. The application, namely Wordwall, was considered to impact improving students' English vocabulary positively. A study by Arsini et al. (2022) found that using Wordwall can help students enrich their English vocabulary through the selected game features while also helping them be active in learning, increasing learning motivation, and increasing learning motivation for students' creativity. Furthermore, Quizizz can be an alternative application for gamification in the classroom. In another study from Prasongko (2021), the researcher applied gamification

at a university. Prasongko (2021) claimed that Quizizz is an interactive game media for education. His research, conducted at Uniska Kediri, involved teachers and students. From what teachers and students observe, Quizizz makes the students happy and enjoy the activity. Furthermore, the application of gamification becomes fascinating because the appearance can attract students' attention. Meanwhile, the study from Mahbubah & Anam (2022) showed that Kahoot! motivates, engages, and challenges students in secondary school. Kahoot! covered the dimensions of student engagement, including cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement. In addition, the study by Abdullah et al. (2022) applied Nearpod in an elementary school and revealed that Nearpod could be a learning application that has an impact on increasing students' attendance, helping the teachers to assess the student's learning effectively, and motivating the students through the interactive feature of Nearpod. From the previous studies, the application of gamification using educational applications can have a positive impact on student learning, especially in ELT.

Many sources report similar findings about the students' perception of technology integration, especially the gamification learning process. In the previous studies, Camilleri and Camilleri (2017) indicated that technology can help students to improve their learning journey in various ways, digital games also make them actively involved in learning. It can be evaluated that electronic resources and technological innovations in learning can affect the quality of education. In addition, gamification is different from games, the difference here is the addition of elements to the real world, or there are productive activities in it (Govindarajan, 2021). Therefore, gamification in teaching and learning can improve the quality of student learning experiences.

Putra and Priyatmojo (2021) found that students have a perception that gamification is acceptable to be applied in English classes and students said that gamification can increase

students' interest in learning English, besides the data results also show that gamification creates a lively atmosphere in the classroom because it is no longer teacher-centered. In line with that, the students positively perceived the application of game-based ICT on their learning motivation and English learning achievement (Asnadi et al., 2018).

Based on previous studies by Camilleri and Camilleri (2017) and Putra and Priyatmojo (2021), the research setting showed that the facilities to support gamification applications in the classroom are well-equipped, starting with internet connections and devices. As stated by Camilleri and Camilleri (2017), the study was conducted in a school categorized as middle to upper class. Therefore, in this study, the researcher wants to examine how gamification can be applied in a school with a wide range of student populations and inadequate facilities. In this study, the researchers investigate the students' perception towards the application of gamification tools in English class and find out the students' insights about the existing digital facilities currently being used in the school. The research questions can be formulated as follow:

1. What are the students' perceptions of using gamification tools in English class?
2. What are the students' insights about the digital facilities currently being used in the school?

Method

This research was conducted using a qualitative design. Based on Creswell (2012), the data presented is descriptive through data interpretation. In addition, qualitative research presented social phenomena, problems to students' perspectives, and perceptions. The phenomenon studied in this study is students' perceptions of gamification in English classes. This study was conducted at a public junior high school in Malang. The participants of this study were seventh graders, totaling 31 participants consisting of 20 girls and 11 boys from a class called 7B. Thirty-one students in grade 7B

were chosen to be participants because the researcher applied the learning media called Wordwall and Quizizz when teaching English in P4 program. P4 Program stands for Program Pengenalan dan Pengelolaan Pembelajaran, a compulsory subject containing activities for developing student competencies by carrying out activities to plan and practice classroom management for students of the Department of Language Education, Universitas Brawijaya.

The application of Wordwall and Quizizz was carried out every time the researcher explained the material, as follows:

Table 1. The application of Wordwall and Quizizz in English class

Application	Date	Material
Wordwall	August 11, 2022	Interpersonal Text (Thanking and Apologizing)
	September 7, 2022	Introduction (Family)
	September 8, 2022	Introduction (Family)
Quizizz	August 31, 2022	Introduction (Self-introduction)
	September 8, 2022	Introduction (Family)

Since the students had used Wordwall and Quizizz apps several times during English class before, there was no need for the researcher to re-explain how to operate the application. In Wordwall, many game templates can be utilized. The researcher used several of them, namely, Random Wheel, Quiz, Group Sort, and Wordsearch.
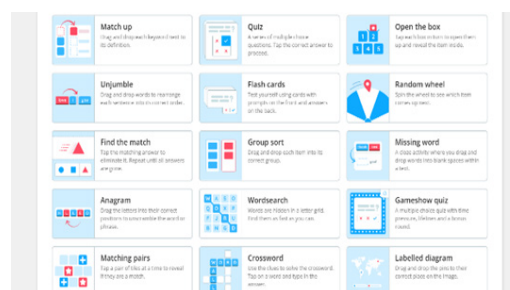

Figure 1. Wordwall activity templates

The researcher uses " Random Wheel " to randomly select student names to appoint a student to answer the quick question, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Random Wheel activity on Wordwall

In "Group Sort" the students were required to drag and drop expressions and responses about thanking and apologizing to the appropriate group, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Group Sort activity on Wordwall

In "Wordsearch" the students were required to look for words about family members hidden in the letter grid, as in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Wordsearch activity on Wordwall

Lastly, "Quiz" requires students to choose the correct answer in multiple-choice questions, as shown in Figure 5.

After the student pressed the "Submit" button, the Wordwall would display the ranking to show the fastest and most correct answers.

In applying Quizizz, the researcher uses it to explain the material through presentation features that can be filled with various question types on each slide. The researcher used the live mode or instructor-led lesson mode, where the presentation process is centered on the teacher or operator. Next, the students will log in to joinmyquiz.com and enter the code that will appear on the projector screen in front of the class, or sooner, the operator will share the link in the class group.
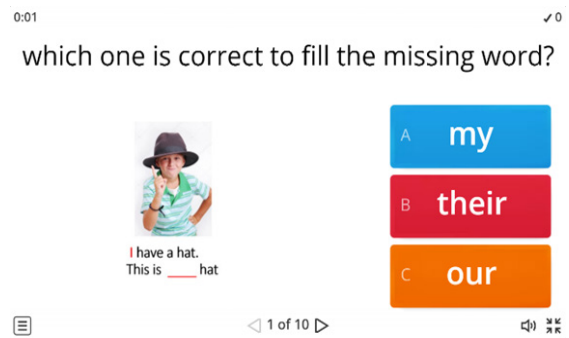

Figure 5. Quiz activity on Wordwall

In Quizizz, researchers mostly use the Open-ended Question and Multiple-choice features, as shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7.
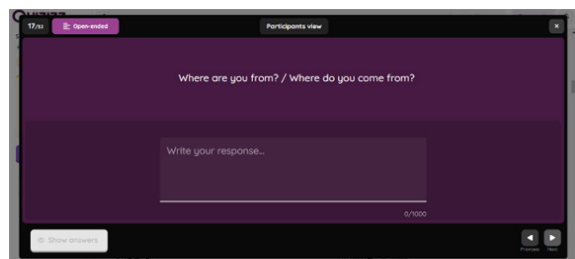

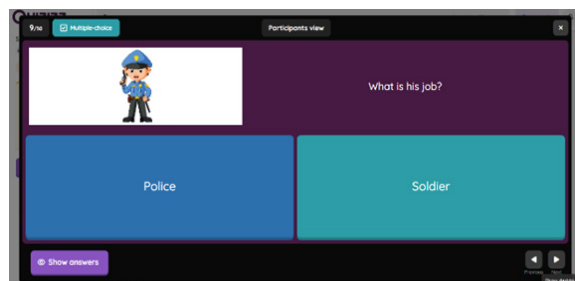Figure 6. Open-ended Question activity on Quizizz

Figure 7. Multiple-choice activity on Quizizz

After the live session ends, the teacher/operator will get a report containing the name of each student who participated in the live

session along with all activities performed, such as correct/incorrect answers, answers in open-ended questions, accuracy, points, and scores.
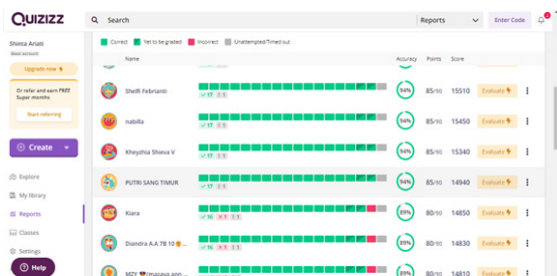

Figure 8. Students' report on Quizizz

After implementing Wordwall and Quizizz in the teaching and learning process, the researcher used semi-structured interviews in a face-to-face setting with 31 participants. One interviewee conducted the interview in one sitting for 90 minutes. In turn, the participants were expected to share their perceptions and opinions regarding the application of gamification in the classroom. In addition, the participants were also allowed to give their opinion about the facilities and digital resources in their classrooms or schools. The interview guidelines were adapted from "The Students' Perceptions of Digital Game-Based Learning (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2017)" which was translated into Indonesian and re-ordered for the convenience of participants.

The data of this study were analyzed using Qualitative Data Analysis by Miles and Huberman (2014). The analysis process includes data display, data condensation, and data conclusion/verification. In the data display, the researcher converted the interview audio into scripts. Then, data condensation was carried out to analyze the interview transcripts and dispose of the less relevant data. Finally, drawing conclusions from the data and answering the research questions.

Results and Discussion

The interviews' results were to investigate students' perceptions of the application of gamification in learning English

and students' insights about digital facilities in the school. The questions from interviews conducted covered several aspects, including (i) students' interest in accessing digital games; (ii) students' learning motivation; (iii) digital resource facilities and the ability of teachers to operate digital resources.

Students' Interest in Accessing Digital Games

From the results obtained, 10 out of 31 students said they rarely access or do not play digital games. For instance, more students frequently or like to access digital games. They even have their favorite games along with reasons.

S3 : *"I often play games, my favorite is Mobile Legends because it is fun."*

S6 : *"I play games about 3-4 hours a day. My favorite games are Call of Duty, Feeding Frenzy, and Bus Simulator. With these three games, we can sharpen our brains with critical strategies, and you could say it is to train brain sharpness."*

S8 : *"I often play games. I like Mobile Legends and FIFA because it is fun."*

S10 : *"I play games often. Brain Out, because it sharpens our brain and it is full of challenges."*

S12 : *"I quite often play the game. My favorites are SM Superstar, JYP Superstar, and Roblox because it is fun. In Roblox, there is a map, playing escape, so it is just fun to play a lot."*

S21 : *"Free Fire, it is fun because I participate in the tournament."*

This data also shows that today's students, called 'Gen-Z,' can naturally operate digital resources, especially digital games. Students born in the era of digital technology are known as digital natives (Rahman, Hidayatullah, & Rahmadani, 2019). Most of those who often access digital games think that the games they like are interesting, exciting, able to fill their spare time, have interesting

characters, and are challenging. With such high student interest in accessing digital games, learning the integration of games will have more impact on students.

Students' Learning Motivation

The participants perceived their learning motivation well when gamification was applied in the English class.

S1 : "It can attract learning motivation because it can help students to learn, accompanied by relaxing entertainment."

S2 : "If you use games, it can be more fun. We do not get bored, so it is (the material) easier to understand."

S5 : "It motivates us to learn because it is fun, the material is easier to learn, curiosity about learning increases, and it is more varied."

S10 : "Attract students' learning motivation because the task becomes more fun and exciting."

S21 : "Pretty interesting to be a motivation to learn."

S23 : "Very interesting, cool, the teacher is fun, the material is easier to understand, the curiosity is increased, the learning experience also increases."

S26 : "Attracting learning motivation, more fun, and more varied, the learning experience is slightly improved."

S31 : "Interesting, because we can be motivated by the image objects in the game."

Many students said that learning with games motivates them to learn. There are many aspects of games that motivate them to learn. As stated by the students, the game has an attractive appearance that can make them interested, increase curiosity, and be exciting, which makes them motivated and engaged with the material being studied. This statement,

in line with Singh (2019), notes that learning becomes very interesting because of the use of multimedia that contains colorful visuals and audio. An exciting learning atmosphere will easily attract students' attention, and it is hoped that students will be able to engage cognitively to motivate them to learn. In addition, the student (S10) stated that gamification could attract students' learning motivation because the task becomes more fun and exciting. This is because, in the game, students will compete to answer questions correctly and get the highest rank. During gameplay, the students set goals to advance to a certain level, motivating them more in the learning process (Retherford, 2020).

Gamification not only has a positive effect but also a negative effect. However, three participants stated that gamification applied in the classroom could also cause distraction, curiosity decreases, make the class less conducive and less attractive, and make the material explained needs to be clarified.

S13 : "Learning with the game is very interesting and exciting and can be refreshing. The material is easy to understand, more focused, but the curiosity to learn decreases because it is more focused on the game and distracted."

S16 : "Learning with the game is less interesting. The motivation for learning can be said to be fun, but not clear enough to understand."

S18 : "I like to learn to use games in class, but the students become crowded and disorganized. It can motivate learning, but if it is too crowded, I do not like it."

Based on the interview results above, the students mentioned that the application of gamification in the classroom caused distraction and the classroom atmosphere became too crowded. In line with Putra and Priyatmojo (2021), noise cannot be avoided from the implementation of gamification. This is because gamification is considered to make students too excited so that the class becomes

noisy and crowded and can distract students' focus.

Digital Resource Facilities and The Ability of Teachers to Operate Digital Resources

The participants were also given the opportunity to talk about digital resource facilities located around their school.

S6 : *"Not enough facilities because there may be several classes, and most of them have not used projectors or the cable system has not been repaired since the post-pandemic era."*

S9 : *"Lack of facilities to support teachers to do digital learning because there is no projector."*

S12 : *"The school lacks facilities, and sometimes the teachers are boring."*

S14 : *"Facilities are lacking, and the internet connection is also lacking."*

Most of the students think the digital resource facilities in their classrooms need to be improved. Since each classroom has no ready-to-use installation of a computer, audio speaker, projector, projector screen, and supporting cables (HDMI, USB, and audio jack). Therefore, the researchers implemented gamification in the classroom using their own laptops with the help of a projector that can be borrowed from the school's teacher's room and their own internet connection, as well as the students who use their own cell phones.

The unavailability of proper installation of digital resources in each classroom is due to the lack of maintenance during the Covid-19 pandemic when the school was not operating and became an online school. So after the Covid-19 pandemic ended, the projectors in each classroom were taken away because they were damaged. As for now, the school infrastructure only provides less than ten decent projectors in the teachers' room. For the internet connection, the students and teachers use their own internet connection as the school Wi-Fi cannot be connected. These facilities

must be fixed and improved to allow teachers to integrate technology or gamification fully.

Nevertheless, some participants said that some teachers have been able to apply gamification in learning with the Quizizz platform.

S10 : *"The facilities are sufficient because the teacher has also made games on Quizizz, some teachers are experienced, and some are not."*

S17 : *"Teachers have often used games in learning, such as Quizizz."*

Some participants said that some teachers needed help to operate digital resources properly in the learning process in the classroom. They also argue that teachers should conduct training to utilize digital resources in the teaching process.

S6 : *"Teachers should be trained to teach students in a way that mixes modern methods with old ways so as not to be out of date, so even though they are now using the old system, which is faster if they are combined, they may be able to improve student's learning and efficiency further."*

S13 : *"Teachers lack the experience to operate digital resources and require training."*

S14 : *"Teachers are not experienced in operating digital things, and teachers need training, but it also depends on their will."*

S15 : *"The teacher may be less experienced using digital things."*

According to Hafifah and Sulistyo (2020), teachers must equip themselves with updates with technological developments and digital literacy skills otherwise, they will be left behind. Because even though the facilities at school are still lacking, teachers are expected to learn to develop their potential in teaching digitally.

This is the end of the results and

discussion, 21 out of 31 students in the class often access digital games to fill their spare time. The students also said that games during the learning process could motivate them, despite the limited school facilities and teachers who could be more skilled in operating digital resources.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the students positively perceive the application of gamification in the learning process. With a lively learning motivation, students feel the class atmosphere is fun and exciting. However, gamification can also have a negative impact, namely, causing noisy and disorganized classes. However, proper supervision and competent teachers integrating meaningful gamification can overcome this negative impact.

Regarding the digital resource facilities located around schools and classrooms, the facilities are lacking in supporting digital resources in the learning process, especially gamification. In line with that, many teachers still need to be able to utilize digital resources for better learning. The researcher suggests that gamification can be applied in the teaching and learning process, particularly in English lessons. Therefore, teachers can better equip themselves with ICT skills and apply more modern and efficient learning methods.

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