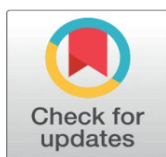
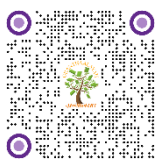


# ART OF GAMIFICATION: EXPLORING THE TRANSFORMATIVE INFLUENCE OF GAMES ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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## ABSTRACT

The article explores the intricate dynamics of language acquisition, highlighting the fact that learning a language is a skill-based endeavour rather than just a subject of knowledge. Language learning primarily relies on mastering the fundamental language abilities, encompassing speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The intimate interaction between active and passive abilities, which results in a comprehensive language competency, highlights the interconnection of various talents. Incorporating games into language classrooms is lauded as an innovative and captivating teaching strategy, fostering engagement, and facilitating effective learning experiences. In addition to making language learning engaging, games enhance student's engagement, teamwork, and the development of relationships. According to the study, games work as a conduit between the theoretical underpinnings of language learning and the actual, pragmatic application of the language. The study also emphasizes the cognitive and psychological advantages of using games to aid with language learning. It highlights how playing games fosters a joyful and positive learning atmosphere, making language learning engaging and entertaining. The research shows that games are a fantastic equalizer since they reduce stress, foster social interaction, and allow students of all skill levels to play and succeed. The research discusses the benefits of games for language learning and emphasizes the importance of bringing together different language skills in a learner-centered approach. Additionally, it highlights how games can help develop cooperative learning environments, lessen learning anxiety, and improve communicative competence. Thus, this study presents games as a potent and useful instrument in the toolset for teaching English, offering a comprehensive strategy for language learning that surpasses conventional techniques. The study emphasizes the need for innovative and engaging strategies to meet the demands of the rapidly evolving world. It highlights the value of creativity in educational methods and adds to the continuing conversation about cutting-edge language teaching approaches.

**Keywords:** Language, Learning, Skill, Teaching, Gamification, Acquisition



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Acquiring proficiency in a new language is meant to be useful in everyday life, particularly when travelling. The primary aim of the language-learning environment wasn't centred on developing spoken proficiency in the foreign language. Instead, the focus was directed towards an alternative aspect of language acquisition. Additionally, students were confined to reciting translated sentences aloud for oral practice. This indicates a specific teaching approach where verbal communication

held less significance, and oral activities primarily involved repeating translated passages rather than engaging in authentic conversations or spontaneous interactions in the target language. Thus, according to Richards and Rodgers, “Speaking the foreign language was not the goal and oral practice was limited to students reading aloud the sentences they had translated” Richards & Rodgers (1986), p. 4. Games serve as a confidence-building tool for students, greatly enhancing their fluency and serving as a premier method for honing language skills. Beyond merely keeping students occupied, teachers wield a considerable influence in the journey of language learners. It is incumbent upon language instructors to stay at the forefront of educational innovation, empowering students to take on increased responsibility for their learning. Moreover, it fosters independence of thought and a sense of uniqueness. It is necessary to place language learners in a variety of scenarios where they can use their vocabulary and word power. When students feel deficient in intelligence, gaming activities might be beneficial. Engaging in gaming not only demonstrates linguistic proficiency but also enhances social skills necessary for group education. Video games aid in the development of students’ vocabulary and grammar foundations as well as their reading, understanding, and even speaking abilities. According to G. P. Kumar, “Due to globalization, the world is changing rapidly, hence a teacher has to improve and update knowledge of innovative techniques in order to meet the demands of the changing era” Kumar (2016), p. 229. For learners who are having difficulty, the effects are even more evident. A recent study found that over 78% of teachers felt that educational games may help struggling students make up for the knowledge gaps in their traditional coursework.

A survey of primary school students in English-medium schools who were interested in using the play-based learning approach was conducted to gather data for a study on the effectiveness of games for English language learning. The remaining student samples, who were unwilling and felt less significant, were placed in a different group. The fifth-grade cohort, comprising fifty students, was divided into ten smaller groups as part of the intervention. Before the intervention, a test was administered to all participants. The test consisted of three ‘find-the-mistake’ items and twenty-two multiple-choice questions. The four LSRW categories were to be tested, and the test was supposed to take roughly twenty minutes to complete. The study took place over 15 working days, three hours a day, using the availability sampling approach. Different games that were intended for both larger and smaller groups were used, and they were grouped according to their models. Following the intervention, a post-test was given, and the data it produced were processed and examined to see how games affected students’ acquisition of the English language. The purpose of the study was to shed light on how effectively game strategies work to improve primary school students’ language proficiency.

- **LSRW Practices:**

Active listening skills might become boring if they are not maintained in a variety of contexts. When hearing is combined with games, like the timeless ‘Simon says,’ it increases interest and reduces boredom. This game can be used to practise vocabulary in addition to improving listening abilities. Games provide appeal to listening exercises, spark students’ interest, and raise the possibility that learning objectives will be met.

Despite the national curriculum’s emphasis on the importance of teaching communication skills, a significant number of teachers neglect to consistently utilize the target language in the classroom. Games come to the rescue by promoting dialogue and placing a higher value on fluency than accuracy. As per a 2006 study

examining English instruction in elementary schools in Iceland, a mere 10% of English teachers instructing ninth and tenth grades consistently employ the target language in their classrooms. Approximately 66% utilize it frequently or occasionally, while the remaining 24% do so infrequently. Furthermore, the study revealed that students also displayed a limited frequency of speaking English. In reality, according to Lovisa, Laufey, and Samuel,

39% of students stated they seldom ever responded to their teachers in English, while an astounding 75% of students stated they never spoke to their peers in the target language. It may be argued that games offer a vital link between the classroom and the outside world since fluency is a skill that is crucial for real-world situations and is thus useful to practise [Hadfield \(1990\)](#). “Speaking games fall into two categories: communicative games, which put fluency first, and linguistic games, which emphasise accuracy” [Hadfield \(1999\)](#).

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Reading is a foundational ability for learning a language and is necessary for writing, travelling, and pursuing further education. It is significant in the first place because reading comprehension is required for writing. Second, people should be able to understand a variety of printed materials such as menus, travel brochures, and directions if they intend to travel to a nation where the language is spoken. Thirdly, since reading is essential for further education, reading comprehension is crucial for children who intend to continue their education after elementary school [Harmer \(2009\)](#). Teachers need to find ways to keep kids interested, and games provide a fun and varied way to include enjoyment in reading assignments. According to Jenner and Jebakumar, “the approach of group or partner reading can significantly improve fluency and vocabulary among young readers” [Jenner & Jebakumar \(2023\)](#), p. 500. Thus, to be aware of the value of reading, games are a useful tool for making academic subjects engaging and entertaining, which enhances the whole experience of learning a language.

Writing is an acquired talent that requires a different vocabulary from informal speech, and it is generally seen as difficult and tiresome. It can be intimidating because there is not always an instant response and it is often associated with homework. Conversely, games present a fun and well-defined writing objective, making them an engaging writing medium. Through their fellow students, they also build an audience and provide insightful criticism that is frequently absent from traditional writing [Hadfield & Hadfield \(1990\)](#). It is simple to integrate online interactive writing games into the classroom, like the one where you rearrange sentences to create a professional letter.

- **Group Segmentation:**

Among the games that break up bigger groups into smaller ones, ‘Group Dividing by Miming’ is a well-known example. The teacher must prepare notes for this activity, each with a designated role—for example, ‘teacher’ or ‘clown.’ Four notes are created per role if the objective is to form groups of four. After giving each student, a letter that keeps their role secret from others, they all start acting out their parts. Students form smaller groups by identifying individuals who are playing similar roles to themselves through observation of others. This game works well for both gathering people together and breaking the ice, which creates a favourable mood for the activities that follow.

Games that can effectively break up larger groups into smaller, more manageable ones include introduction games, group games, physical games, scavenger hunt games, educational games, theoretical expression games, drawing

and coloring games, educational card games, word games, and story or question games. These varied game options support various learning preferences and styles, encouraging group participation and engagement and promoting successful learning outcomes. Sorting games into cooperative and competitive categories is another way to categorize them. "Playing cooperative games promotes self-confidence, collaboration, and teamwork by placing more emphasis on shared goals than on winning or losing" Wright et al. (2006), p. 253 They also help to accelerate learning. Additionally, age groups, grade levels, or particular educational goals might be used to categorize instructional games. In language learning, for example, the experimental design entails breaking up larger groups into smaller ones and having participants role-play through exercises like miming. This approach sets participants up for cooperative learning experiences by facilitating efficient grouping and acting as an entertaining icebreaker.

- **Introduction Game:**

Introduction Games are essential for establishing a lively, participatory environment that strengthens bonds between Students. One such game is called 'Searching for Objects,' in which students search within the workspace for objects and match them to the names of individuals in alphabetical order. Introductions become more memorable when participants are seated in a circle and give their names, the names of others, and a favourite item or adjective.

By connecting their names to personal preferences, students can improve their language abilities by playing this game in a language classroom setting. They could say something like, 'My name is Jaffer, and I love Jack Fruit.' Adding adjectives that begin with the same letter as their names, such as 'Awesome Anand,' 'Master Mithran' and 'Super Suresh' is another option. In addition to helping with language acquisition, this promotes creativity and the use of descriptive language. Adding more adjectives to the game that correspond with the second or even third letter in the students' names makes it more challenging and encourages an expanded understanding of vocabulary. As an engaging and instructive icebreaker in the language classroom, this interactive introduction game fosters a cooperative and happy learning atmosphere while also helping students remember names.

- **Group Game:**

'Fruit Basket,' a well-known group game that improves students' reflexes, memory, and listening abilities, is one example. In this game, students take the shape of a circle and are given the names of various fruits, such as apples, oranges, and mangos. Without a chair, one student stands in the middle and says the name of a fruit, like 'Apple.' Players who are designated as apples have to get up fast to locate new seats as the player in the middle tries to take a seat. The participant who was unable to find a seat becomes the new caller after successfully stealing a seat. You can easily modify this game to fit different contexts or teach different vocabulary by substituting additional word categories like colours, vegetables, or seasons. 'Fruit Basket' provides a flexible and enjoyable method to teach vocabulary and language abilities in a social context, simultaneously encouraging rapid thinking and hand-eye coordination.

- **Physical Game:**

'Walking the Line' is a physical game where students walk a line while doing different tasks, such as walking backwards or balancing objects on their heads. This game can be used in language classes, and the teacher can use phrases like 'Simon says jump' or 'Simon says clap your hands.' This game is classified as a physical game because Simon's commands are primarily physical in nature. This game is in line

with the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach to teaching languages, which is based on psychological principles. Through observation, TPR enables pupils to understand the language before engaging in active speech. TPR is helpful for language acquisition because it is thought to lower stress levels and make the classroom engaging and fun. It also mimics how youngsters naturally pick up language, being exposed to their mother tongue before engaging in conversation. Thus, 'Walking the Line' is a fun, TPR-inspired physical game that can be used in language courses. [Gardner \(2006\)](#)

- **Savage Hunt Game:**

Scavenger Hunt Games commonly known as 'Savage hunt games,' are particularly well-suited for language classrooms, leveraging the target language to create clues for participants. In this environment, participants can read the hints and engage in listening and comprehension tasks with other members of their team. The game may include riddles like word searches, crossword puzzles, or queries, which will push students to use their imagination to solve linguistic problems. Thus, scavenger hunt games turn into an exciting, interactive, language-focused activity that improves listening, reading, and problem-solving abilities.

- **Educational Game:**

A teaching game that promotes language development is called the 'Mail Game.' In this game, students have to deliver 'mail' to certain regions of the house (such as the kitchen, reading room, or portico) or different domains (such as the office and furnishings). The instructor creates envelopes with labels indicating several genres, and the 'mail' is made up of letters that have words that fit the assigned slots [Jones \(1998\)](#), p.48. For example, the word 'sofa' fits the envelope labelled 'drawing room,' while 'oven' matches the envelope labelled 'kitchen.' After writing their name on it, the student must start delivering them. If all the messages were delivered correctly, the first person to deliver them all would win. In addition to helping students practice their vocabulary, this game encourages them to explore language in a variety of creative and educational circumstances.

- **Theoretical Expression Game:**

'Who am I?' is a game that ideally fits the definition of theoretical expression. The objective of this game is to divide the class into two equal teams, with each pair of students facing the other. Teams alternately speculate or pose questions about a person's personality, and the respondent can only answer with a yes or no. One point is given to the team that asks the question, and two points are given to the team that correctly guesses the response.

- **Drawing- and Colouring Game:**

Among the colouring and drawing games is 'Drawing in a Foreign Language.' In this game, students sketch on the whiteboard and others have to figure out what they drew. Linking the drawn item with the appropriate word, not only improves vocabulary but also raises IQ since participants actively participate in word-object recognition. Through dynamic and entertaining gameplay, this game blends creativity with language acquisition. [Langran & Purcell \(1994\)](#)

- **Story Game:**

One wonderful example of a creative and entertaining technique to improve language abilities is through story games, such as 'Spin a Yarn.' "Everyone gathers in a circle, and one student is chosen to narrate the story" [Armstrong \(2000\)](#), p. 105. After delivering a phrase to each student, the teacher begins telling a story. Occasionally, the storyteller pauses and gestures to a student, who then has to insert the whispered word into the story. This game presents surprising twists and turns



in addition to encouraging the usage of words in sentences, making the storytelling experience both engaging and linguistically rich. [Larsen-Freeman \(2000\)](#)

• **Word Games:**

Word games, like word searches, word puzzles, and word construction, are well-known and frequently played by students in their free time. Taking part in these activities requires them to think hard and helps them gradually increase their vocabulary. Word construction games improve collaborative learning and help language acquisition when played in small groups. In addition, the use of word power in these games fosters a fun and efficient method of vocabulary building in addition to improving language ability. To make the students get the vibe of words, the researcher gives a letter and makes them name words related to it. The illustration is as follows:

**Table 1**

Table 1			
Avocado is one food type that begins with the letter A. Is there another cuisine category that begins with the letter A?	Are you a sports fan? Which one is your favourite? B is where Badminton begins. Do you know anyone else whose name begins with B?	The letter C is associated with several delectable culinary varieties, such as Chocolate, Coconut, etc. Is there another one you can think of?	I think a lot of meals are amazing, like Dates, Dal, etc. What are two food kinds that begin with the letter D?
<i>Apricot, Almonds and Asparagus</i>	<i>Baseball, Boxing and Basketball</i>	<i>Cauliflower, Candy, and Chicken</i>	<i>Doughnuts and Dosa</i>

**Table 2**

Table 2			
The letter F is entertaining. I believe that a lot of animals start with the letter F. How do you feel? Which ones can you mention?	Although the word 'food' starts with the letter 'F,' are there any particular foods that start with this letter?	Is there a sport that starts with the letter F?	There are a lot of countries in the globe, and most of them probably start with an F. Which one can you name?
<i>Fox, Frog, Fowl and Falcon</i>	<i>Fish, Figs, French Fries and Falooda</i>	<i>Football, Fishing, Formula 1 Racing and Frisbee</i>	<i>France, Fiji and Finland</i>

The illustrated exercise from [Table 1](#) and [Table 2](#), successfully encourages students to investigate words linked to particular letters, creating a lively and dynamic learning environment. By asking students to come up with and discuss

terms that begin with the letter 'F,' the researcher promotes original thought and vocabulary growth. The learning process is thorough and fun as a result of the activity's smooth integration of multiple categories, including foods, sports, countries, and creatures. By associating words with certain letters, the activity fosters critical thinking in addition to improving language proficiency.

- **Question Game:**

In English, it is sometimes referred to as a riddle. Once students are split up into pairs, each pair is given an assignment and is required to prepare a brief riddle about it. For example,

**Riddle:**

There are no locks on my keys. Though I have space, I lack room. You can enter but not exit. Who am I?

**Answer:** A Keyboard

**Riddle:**

I have no mouth, I have no ears, but I talk. I am alone, but the breeze makes me come alive. Who am I?

**Answer:** An echo.

**Riddle:**

What occurs once every minute, twice every moment, but never once every thousand years?

**Answer:** The letter 'M'

**Riddle:**

In my youth, I am tall, and in my old age, I am short. Who am I?

**Answer:** A Candle

It would be expected of each couple to come up with a riddle, show it to the class, and ask the other pairs to figure it out. After all pairs have posed their riddles, the other pairs are required to write down their guesses as to what the true solution is. The ones with the most accurate responses are then declared the winners.

Following the intervention, the samples are analysed to determine the values and results. As part of the post-test, students are given a motivational survey questionnaire, which is given in contrast to the pretest and records their values and answers. This change in evaluation techniques, which goes beyond conventional tests to measure motivation and perceptions, enables an enhanced comprehension of the intervention's impact.

- **Pre Test:**

**Table 3**

Skill set	Mean	SD
Listening	1.98	4.15
Speaking	1.59	3.08
Reading	1.81	3.39
Writing	1.65	3.58

• **Post Test:**

**Table 4**

<b>Table 4</b>		
	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>SD</b>
All of the activities were quite enjoyable.	4.20	1.20
Taking part in games is a good way to understand grammatical ideas.	4.00	1.30
I prefer to utilize worksheets and textbooks for learning	3.25	1.80
I don't think games are particularly helpful for learning grammar.	2.50	1.70
I concentrated on grammar during the games.	4.00	1.40
I didn't think the games were fair	2.00	1.20
I propose adding one gaming session per week.	4.50	1.40
I suggest holding gaming sessions more frequently than once a week.	4.10	1.70
I think playing video games should be completely avoided.	1.80	1.20
Playing video games makes you feel relaxed	1.50	4.40
For me, games act as a source of inspiration; I play them because I want to succeed.	4.60	1.10

These findings reveal how the students felt about the language-learning games following the session. The results of the post-test show a shift in perceptions in favour of the enjoyment, motivational factors, and potential of using games to teach grammar. Still, some participants say they would rather use more conventional techniques, such as using worksheets and books. The range of answers demonstrates the many viewpoints regarding the usefulness of games for language learning.

**2. CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study underscore the significant contribution of games to English language teaching and learning. The information shown in [Table 3](#) and [Table 4](#) demonstrate that games effectively enhance students' engagement, language skills, and overall learning experience. It is clear that students are becoming more involved in the learning process, and games are a major factor in making this change possible. Pre- and post-test findings show that students are engaged in a variety of language skills, which indicates that games have a major impact on students' language ability. One major benefit of using games in the classroom is that it puts the instructor in the background and gives the students more ownership over their education. An environment that is more engaged and participatory is fostered by this shift in dynamics. Furthermore, games' ability to introduce diversity is crucial for maintaining elementary school students' interest. The positive effects of games on students' attitudes and preferences are highlighted in the motivational survey replies, which also underline the engaging and inspiring elements of game-based learning.

The study emphasises how important it is to use games in the classroom to not only introduce important diversity and function as an effective teaching strategy but also to make learning enjoyable and interesting. The findings unequivocally show that games play a crucial role in getting students excited about learning, getting them to think critically, and creating a fun learning environment. Games function as a catalyst, either directly or indirectly advancing learning, regardless of the pedagogical approach used. In addition to their ability to engage students and foster diversity, games also help to create a cosy and welcoming environment in the



classroom. This gives hesitant students a platform to express themselves in the target language, which is especially helpful. Additionally, by creating a welcoming atmosphere and encouraging social interaction, games facilitate the development of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills among students. By simulating real-world scenarios, games help students learn in a more applicable and useful way. According to the study, games help students grow up, and including physical games in the classroom gives them a much-needed respite from the potentially boring atmosphere. Even though games are supposed to be simple and entertaining, educators must carefully evaluate several criteria before introducing them into the classroom. Important factors to take into account include making sure that each student has a good experience, choosing games that correspond with particular objectives, and giving thorough explanations of the rules. To reinforce the learning process, teachers are also recommended to create follow-up activities and refrain from interfering with the game's flow. The post-test motivational analysis shows that playing games greatly improves language proficiency in speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Games are a fun substitute for routine tasks that improve reading and listening comprehension while also helping to improve speaking fluency. In conclusion, this study emphasizes the effectiveness of using games as a teaching aid in English language classes. The results show that games improve student engagement, encourage the development of various language abilities, and create a more pleasurable and interactive learning environment. Additionally, games operate as stimulants to enhance students' motivation, critical thinking, and social engagement. Teachers can effectively improve language acquisition and create dynamic learning experiences that meet the demands of a diverse student body by carefully choosing and executing games. Overall, this study contributes valuable insights to the field of English language teaching, emphasizing the importance of using games to enhance student engagement and learning results.

### **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

None.

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None.

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