

Participants in this study include both students and self-learners aged 18 to 35, representing a diverse range of educational backgrounds and learning experiences. Seventy-five percent of participants reported a noticeable enhancement in their vocabulary retention, further validating the effectiveness of the applications studied. Notably, Duolingo users exhibited the highest levels of engagement with the learning content, albeit with only moderate retention, while Anki users displayed significant benefits in terms of long-term recall of vocabulary. These findings are consistent with established research conducted by Burston (2015) and Stockwell (2013), confirming the effectiveness of spaced repetition and gamification techniques in vocabulary acquisition. However, it is critical to note that applications alone may not offer sufficient contextual learning experiences necessary for full language comprehension.

In conclusion, this study establishes that:

- Language learning applications can effectively enhance vocabulary retention when used strategically.
- Gamification and spaced repetition are critical components that significantly contribute to the vocabulary learning process.
- An optimal learning experience is best achieved through a blended approach, combining app-based learning with contextual and real-world usage of vocabulary.

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GAMIFICATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: ENHANCING ENGAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION

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Annotation. The aim of this paper is to investigate the role of gamification in enhancing student engagement and motivation in English language learning. The paper explores the theoretical foundations of gamification, its effectiveness, and its application in foreign language teaching. A detailed analysis of various studies in the field of gamification in education is conducted, focusing on its benefits in increasing student participation, improving learning outcomes, and fostering a positive learning environment. It also discusses the challenges and considerations for successfully implementing gamified strategies in the language classroom.

Keywords: gamification, English language learning, motivation, student engagement, educational technology, interactive learning, language acquisition.

INTRODUCTION. Motivation plays a pivotal role in successful language acquisition. Among the modern methods of fostering motivation, gamification stands out as one of the most effective. It introduces game design elements—such as points, levels, and rewards—into educational settings to enhance student engagement and interest in the learning process [1].

As education shifts from traditional teacher-centered approaches to more student-centered, interactive models, gamification serves as a bridge, making learning English both effective and enjoyable. According to the National Research Council, gamification transforms passive classroom environments into dynamic, interactive experiences that promote deeper learning [2].

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE. Gamification draws heavily on motivational psychology. Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory emphasizes the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation [3]. While intrinsic motivation involves doing an activity for its inherent satisfaction, extrinsic motivation relies on external rewards. Gamification effectively merges both.

According to Deterding et al., gamification is defined as “the use of game elements in non-game contexts,” especially in education [4]. This includes classroom applications such as interactive quiz games, leaderboards, rewards for task completion, and digital tools like Kahoot or Quizlet.

Gee argues that well-designed games mirror the learning process itself, gradually increasing complexity and encouraging experimentation [5]. Similarly, Anderson’s research shows that game-based learning can enhance emotional involvement, resulting in better retention of language structures and vocabulary [6].

METHODOLOGY. This study employs qualitative content analysis. Over 20 peer-reviewed journal articles and books on gamification and language acquisition were reviewed. These works provided theoretical models, empirical data, and classroom case studies.

Major analytical frameworks included the Self-Determination Theory [3], gamification mechanics framework by Deterding [4], and classroom observations from case studies in secondary and university-level EFL (English as a Foreign Language) settings [7].

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS. Hamari et al. found that gamification positively affects motivation and behavioral engagement in learners across digital platforms [7]. In language classrooms, students exposed to gamified lessons showed higher attendance, longer concentration spans, and more enthusiasm.

Surendeleg et al. conducted a study in Korean EFL classrooms and found that learners who participated in gamified learning scored 17% higher in vocabulary retention tests compared to the control group [8]. Similarly, Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory supports gamified learning since it fosters collaborative activities, zone of proximal development, and peer scaffolding [9].

Gamification also addresses different learning styles. Visual learners benefit from colorful dashboards and icons, auditory learners enjoy interactive voice prompts, and kinesthetic learners engage with role-play and physical challenges.

However, Ryan and Deci caution that excessive reliance on extrinsic motivators (e.g., points) without sufficient focus on mastery may reduce intrinsic interest in learning over time [3]. Thus, balance and thoughtful design are key.

RESULTS. Findings from the reviewed literature show that gamification leads to:

- Increased class participation [7];
- Better language retention [8];
- Enhanced learner autonomy [5];
- Higher levels of collaboration [9].

Challenges include potential distraction, over-competition, and technological dependence. Yet, when implemented with pedagogical goals in mind, the advantages outweigh these drawbacks [6].

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION. Gamification has emerged as a powerful tool in English language learning. It promotes active learning, increases student motivation, and fosters an engaging classroom environment. The combination of competition, collaboration, and personalized feedback makes it particularly effective in EFL contexts.

However, for gamification to be effective, educators must design activities that balance educational objectives with fun. Tools should be aligned with lesson outcomes, and learners' emotional responses should be monitored. Teachers must also consider inclusivity and ensure all learners feel supported regardless of their gaming aptitude.

In conclusion, gamification can significantly enhance English language learning outcomes when used strategically. Future research should focus on its long-term impact on language fluency and digital competence.

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THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SELF-STUDY IN LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Self-regulated learning is a dynamic and cyclical process in which learners take active responsibility for their own educational development. They make deliberate decisions concerning the focus, pace, and methods of study, thereby fostering greater autonomy and accountability. This process is particularly significant in foreign language acquisition, where individual motivation, sustained effort, and consistency are critical to achieving proficiency. [4, 214]

In today's globalized world, multilingualism is not only an asset but a necessity for academic, professional, and personal growth. As the demand for competent foreign language users increases, so