

The Effectiveness of Gamification for EFL Learners in Indonesian Context: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This literature review examines the effectiveness of gamification in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning within the Indonesian educational context. Through a comprehensive analysis of over 30 empirical studies published between 2018 and 2025, this review synthesizes current research on how gamification influences EFL learners' language proficiency, motivation, engagement, and overall learning outcomes. The review identifies four major themes: (1) the impact of gamification on language skills development, (2) motivational and affective outcomes, (3) implementation of gamification platforms and tools, and (4) challenges and limitations in gamified EFL instruction. Findings reveal that gamification generally produces positive effects on Indonesian EFL learners'

vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, grammar mastery, and speaking skills. However, the review also identifies significant challenges including technical infrastructure limitations, the novelty effect, potential over-reliance on extrinsic motivation, and the need for teacher training. The review concludes by highlighting research gaps and suggesting future directions for gamification research in Indonesian EFL contexts, particularly regarding longitudinal studies and the integration of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality.

Keywords: Gamification, Digital Game-Based Learning, EFL, Indonesian Context, Language Learning, Motivation, Educational Technology

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Significance

English language proficiency has become increasingly critical in the globalized world, yet traditional teaching methods often fail to maintain student engagement and motivation in EFL contexts (Zhang & Hasim, 2023). In Indonesia, where English is taught as a foreign language, students face particular challenges including limited exposure to authentic English communication, teacher-centered pedagogical approaches, and insufficient motivation to learn (Santosa et al., 2022; Redjeki & Muhajir, 2021). These challenges are compounded by Indonesia's diverse geographical and socioeconomic landscape, which affects access to quality education and technological resources.

The emergence of gamification—defined as the application of game design elements in non-game contexts (Deterding et al., 2011; Werbach, 2014)—has offered a promising solution to these challenges. Gamification leverages game mechanics such as points, badges, leaderboards, challenges, and immediate feedback to create engaging and interactive learning experiences (Kapp, 2012). The integration of gamification in education aligns with 21st-century

learning demands, which emphasize digital literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and student-centered active learning (Santosa et al., 2022).

1.2 Scope and Objectives

This literature review focuses specifically on the effectiveness of gamification for EFL learners within the Indonesian educational context. The review examines empirical studies that investigate the implementation and outcomes of gamified learning environments, digital game-based learning (DGBL) tools, and gamification platforms in Indonesian EFL classrooms. The primary objectives are to:

1. Synthesize current research on the effectiveness of gamification in developing Indonesian EFL learners' language skills
2. Analyze the impact of gamification on learner motivation, engagement, and attitudes
3. Evaluate the implementation of various gamification platforms and tools in Indonesian EFL contexts
4. Identify challenges, limitations, and gaps in current research
5. Provide recommendations for future research and practical applications

1.3 Research Questions

This review addresses the following key research questions:

1. How effective is gamification in improving Indonesian EFL learners' language proficiency across different skills (vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, speaking, listening)?

2. What is the impact of gamification on Indonesian EFL learners' motivation, engagement, and attitudes toward English learning?
3. Which gamification platforms, tools, and elements are most commonly used and effective in Indonesian EFL contexts?
4. What are the main challenges and limitations associated with implementing gamification in Indonesian EFL classrooms?
5. What gaps exist in the current research, and what are the implications for future studies?

1.4 Organization of the Review

This literature review is organized thematically into four major sections following this introduction. Section 2 examines the impact of gamification on language skills development, including vocabulary, reading, writing, speaking, and grammar. Section 3 explores motivational and affective outcomes, including student engagement, self-directed learning, and psychological factors. Section 4 discusses the implementation of specific gamification platforms and tools used in Indonesian contexts. Section 5 addresses challenges, limitations, and research gaps. The review concludes with a synthesis of key findings, implications for practice, and directions for future research..

2. The Impact of Gamification on Language Skills Development

2.1 Vocabulary Acquisition and Retention

Vocabulary learning represents one of the most extensively researched areas in gamified EFL instruction. Multiple studies conducted in Indonesian contexts demonstrate that gamification significantly enhances vocabulary acquisition and retention among

EFL learners. Fithriani (2021), investigating mobile-assisted gamified vocabulary learning among Indonesian adult EFL learners, found that students in the experimental group outperformed their counterparts in the control group in terms of academic performance, pleasure, and motivation. The interactive nature of gamified applications allows learners to encounter and practice new words in meaningful, contextualized situations, leading to improved retention.

Research across broader Asian contexts supports these findings. Chen et al. (2019) examined the impact of a mobile game-based English vocabulary learning app among Taiwanese EFL students and discovered that the experimental group demonstrated superior performance in both vocabulary acquisition and retention. Students' involvement with the gamified application was positively correlated with vocabulary learning performance. Similarly, studies on popular gamification platforms like Duolingo have shown that gamified vocabulary practice presented in context through thematic word sets, combined with spaced repetition and immediate feedback, significantly enhances vocabulary development (Liu et al., 2024).

Ahmed et al. (2022) conducted an empirical study on using Kahoot as a game-based learning tool for EFL learners' vocabulary recall and retention, finding positive effects on both measures. The competitive elements of the platform, combined with immediate feedback mechanisms, created an engaging environment that facilitated memory consolidation. However, Prastiwi and Lestari (2025) note in their systematic literature review that while digital game-based learning significantly boosts vocabulary learning by increasing motivation, engagement, and retention, success depends on technological aspects such as interactivity, accessibility, and adaptive features, as well as pedagogical elements including self-regulated learning and emotional engagement.

2.2 Reading Comprehension

Gamification's impact on reading comprehension has received considerable attention in recent research. Studies demonstrate that gamified approaches can significantly improve reading skills among Indonesian EFL learners. Research by Pahamzah et al. (2020) found that Quizizz effectively enhanced reading comprehension among Indonesian vocational school students. The platform's interactive features, including immediate feedback and competitive elements, increased student motivation and engagement with reading materials.

More recent research in Asian contexts provides additional insights. A quasi-experimental study by Wang et al. (2025) among Chinese undergraduates revealed that students in gamified classrooms showed significantly greater improvement in reading assessment scores compared to control groups. The study found that gamification not only enhanced reading proficiency but also positively influenced foreign language learning enjoyment (FLLE), which in turn contributed to improved reading performance. Participants noted that gamified reading activities made learning more interesting and reduced anxiety associated with challenging texts.

The effectiveness of gamification in reading instruction appears to stem from multiple factors. Gamified reading activities promote cognitive engagement through problem-solving challenges, provide continuous motivation through reward systems, and create positive emotional experiences that reduce learning anxiety (Al-Obaydi et al., 2024; Guthrie & Klauda, 2014). However, researchers emphasize that gamification should be carefully designed to ensure activities focus on comprehension strategies and critical thinking rather than superficial game mechanics.

2.3 Grammar and Linguistic Accuracy

Grammar instruction through gamification has demonstrated positive outcomes in Indonesian and broader Asian EFL contexts. Research indicates that gamified grammar learning can improve both grammatical accuracy and learners' attitudes toward grammar study. Pham (2023) conducted a study on the impact of gamified learning using Quizizz on ESL learners' grammar achievement, finding significant improvements in grammatical competence. The immediate feedback provided by gamified platforms allows learners to identify and correct errors promptly, reinforcing accurate language patterns.

Studies on grammar learning through gamification highlight the importance of contextual practice. Gamified activities that embed grammar instruction within meaningful communicative contexts tend to be more effective than isolated grammar exercises (Reynolds & Kao, 2021). The game-based approach transforms potentially tedious grammar drills into engaging challenges, maintaining learner interest and promoting repeated practice essential for grammatical accuracy development.

Research by Dewi et al. (2020) on Quizizz's effect on grammar mastery in higher EFL classrooms found that mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) combined with gamification elements significantly improved students' grammatical understanding. The study emphasized that gamification's effectiveness in grammar instruction depends on the quality of question design, the appropriateness of difficulty levels, and the integration of grammar points with communicative contexts.

2.4 Speaking and Writing Skills

Research on gamification's impact on productive language skills presents more complex findings. Putra (2024) investigated gamification implementation on students' English proficiency in a Bali school, finding that posttest scores for overall English

proficiency, including speaking and writing, were significantly higher than pretest scores. The study employed performance-based tests and rubrics to assess speaking and writing skills, demonstrating that gamified instruction positively affected productive language abilities.

For speaking skills specifically, gamification creates opportunities for meaningful oral communication practice. Aeni et al. (2024) examined Bamboozle's effectiveness in promoting EFL students' engagement at Indonesian higher education institutions, finding that students demonstrated increased motivation and active participation in speaking activities. The game-based application helped students understand lessons more easily and engaged them across behavioral, affective, social, and cognitive dimensions. Students particularly appreciated the collaborative aspects of gamified speaking activities, which reduced speaking anxiety and encouraged risk-taking in language production.

Writing skills development through gamification has received less research attention in Indonesian contexts, though existing studies suggest positive potential. Samosa et al. (2021) investigated gamification as an innovative strategy to improve learners' writing skills, finding that game elements enhanced student motivation and engagement in writing tasks. The incorporation of narrative elements, challenges, and immediate feedback in gamified writing activities appears to make the writing process more appealing and less intimidating for EFL learners.

2.5 Integrated Skills and Overall Language Proficiency

Several studies have examined gamification's impact on multiple language skills simultaneously, providing insights into comprehensive language development. Zhang and Hasim (2023), in their systematic review of 40 empirical studies, found that gamification has been utilized across various English language skills including vocabulary (27.6%), grammar (20%), speaking (15%), reading (15%), writing (10%), and listening (7.5%). The research

indicated that gamification provides an authentic language learning environment that cultivates students' comprehensive competence by integrating multiple skills.

Research in Indonesian contexts demonstrates that integrated skills instruction through gamification can yield positive results. Studies show that digital game-based learning engages students emotionally through flow states, cognitively through problem-solving activities, and behaviorally through cooperative learning activities (Mahayanti et al., 2020). This multi-dimensional engagement facilitates the development of interconnected language skills rather than isolated competencies.

The effectiveness of gamification for integrated skills development appears to depend on instructional design that creates meaningful connections between different language areas. Activities that require learners to listen, speak, read, and write within game-based scenarios tend to produce more robust language development than those focusing on single skills in isolation.

3. Motivational and Affective Outcomes

3.1 Student Motivation and Engagement

Student motivation emerges as one of the most consistently positive outcomes in gamification research. Multiple studies in Indonesian contexts demonstrate that gamification significantly enhances EFL learners' motivation to learn English. Research by Janah (2021) found that Quizizz had a significant positive effect on student English learning motivation at a senior high school in Indonesia, with a correlation value of 0.699 and R-Square value of 0.488. The study revealed that gamified assessment tools increased students' enthusiasm for learning and willingness to participate in English classes.

The relationship between gamification and motivation is theoretically grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which

posits that motivation is enhanced when learning environments satisfy three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Research by Yu et al. (2022) on Chinese college EFL learners' acceptance of gamified vocabulary learning apps found that autonomous motivation positively affects both perceived usefulness and ease of use. The study demonstrated that students who used gamified apps out of autonomous motivation rather than controlled motivation showed greater learning persistence and satisfaction.

Engagement, closely related to motivation, also shows consistent improvement through gamification. Aeni et al. (2024) categorized students into highly engaged, moderately engaged, and lowly engaged groups when using Bamboozle for interactive speaking, finding that higher engagement correlated with better performance in English learning. The gamified platform's features—including immediate feedback, progress tracking, and competitive elements—maintained student interest and encouraged active participation throughout the learning process.

Several studies note that gamification's motivational impact may be particularly strong for learners who traditionally struggle with English. Students with lower proficiency levels, who might typically lack motivation, found gamified platforms engaging and challenging in positive ways (Liu et al., 2024). The element of fun and sense of accomplishment associated with game-based activities fostered intrinsic motivation, encouraging learners to actively participate in their language learning process.

3.2 Self-Directed Learning and Learner Autonomy

Gamification's impact on self-directed learning (SDL) presents a more nuanced picture. Research by Wahyuni and Pusparini (2024) examined gamification-based Learning Management Systems (LMS) for EFL students using Garrison's SDL Framework, which encompasses self-management, self-motivation, and self-control. The study found that while gamification initially boosted

engagement and motivation, sustained self-management and control posed challenges for students. The findings suggested that gamification alone is insufficient to develop robust self-directed learning competencies without additional scaffolding and support.

Studies on self-regulated learning (SRL) through digital games provide additional insights. Research with young Indonesian learners found that digital games positively affected students' SRL in English learning, with learners unconsciously developing motivation, metacognition, and strategic actions through gameplay (Mahayanti et al., 2020). Students mentioned the games as fun, exciting, and engaging activities where they could play and learn simultaneously. However, the development of self-regulation skills appeared to require explicit instructional support rather than emerging automatically from gamified experiences.

The relationship between gamification and learner autonomy involves complex interactions between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. While game elements like points, badges, and leaderboards provide extrinsic motivators, the goal of language education is to develop intrinsic motivation and autonomous learning behaviors (Ramadhiyah & Lengkanawati, 2019). Researchers emphasize the need for careful design that gradually transfers control to learners and promotes metacognitive awareness of learning strategies.

3.3 Affective Factors and Language Learning Anxiety

Gamification's impact on affective factors, particularly language learning anxiety, represents an important area of research. Studies demonstrate that gamified learning environments can reduce anxiety and create more positive emotional experiences for EFL learners. Ahmed (2022) investigated the effect of game-based learning on Iranian EFL learners' motivation and anxiety, finding that gamification significantly reduced language learning anxiety while increasing motivation. The playful, low-stakes nature of many

gamified activities appeared to reduce the affective filter that often inhibits language learning.

Research on foreign language learning enjoyment (FLLE) provides additional evidence for gamification's positive affective impact. Wang et al. (2025) found that gamified classrooms significantly enhanced FLLE among Chinese EFL learners, with enjoyment serving as a mediating factor between gamification and learning outcomes. Students reported that gamified activities made learning feel less like work and more like play, reducing stress and increasing willingness to take linguistic risks.

However, some studies note potential negative affective outcomes in competitive gamified environments. Research indicates that leaderboards and competitive elements, while motivating for some learners, can increase anxiety and stress for others, particularly those with lower proficiency or competitive temperaments (Buckley & Doyle, 2014; Chen et al., 2022). The design of gamified instruction must therefore consider individual differences in learners' responses to competition and provide options for both competitive and cooperative gameplay.

3.4 Attitudes Toward Technology and English Learning

Indonesian EFL learners generally demonstrate positive attitudes toward gamification and technology-enhanced language learning. Studies consistently report that students perceive gamified learning tools as useful, entertaining, engaging, and beneficial for their English learning (Basuki & Hidayati, 2019; Lestari, 2019). Research comparing different gamification platforms found that students appreciated features such as immediate feedback, visual appeal, ease of use, and the ability to track their progress.

Teacher perspectives on gamification also tend to be positive, though with some reservations. Putra's (2024) mixed-methods study found that teachers recognized gamification's benefits for student engagement and proficiency development but expressed

concerns about implementation challenges, including technological requirements, preparation time, and curriculum alignment. Teachers emphasized the importance of viewing gamification as a complement to rather than replacement for traditional instruction.

Studies on pre-service teachers' identity construction in relation to digital gamification reveal complex attitudes toward technology integration. Research by Afrilyasanti et al. (2023) found that pre-service EFL teachers in Indonesia were developing professional identities that incorporated digital gamification, though this process varied based on their technological proficiency, pedagogical beliefs, and community of practice support. The findings suggest that attitudes toward gamification are influenced by both personal and contextual factors.

4. Implementation of Gamification Platforms and Tools

4.1 Kahoot!: Interactive Quiz-Based Learning

Kahoot! represents one of the most widely researched gamification platforms in Indonesian EFL contexts. This web-based application allows teachers to create interactive quizzes with competitive elements, real-time feedback, and engaging multimedia content. Research on Kahoot! consistently demonstrates positive outcomes for student engagement and learning.

Studies comparing Kahoot! with other platforms provide insights into its relative effectiveness. Basuki and Hidayati (2019) investigated Indonesian students' perceptions of Kahoot! and Quizizz, finding that while both platforms received supportive responses, Quizizz scored slightly higher (15.002 vs. 12.248) in fostering students' enthusiasm for learning. Students appreciated Kahoot!'s immediate feedback, competitive atmosphere, and ability to make learning more interactive and energetic.

Research on Kahoot!'s effectiveness for specific language skills shows mixed results. Ahmed et al. (2022) found that Kahoot!

significantly improved EFL learners' vocabulary recall and retention through game-based learning mechanisms. However, Wang and Tahir (2020), in their literature review on using Kahoot! for learning, noted that while the platform consistently increased student engagement and motivation, its impact on actual learning outcomes varied depending on implementation quality, question design, and integration with overall instructional strategies.

Teachers report both benefits and challenges in implementing Kahoot!. Benefits include increased student participation, immediate assessment data, and enhanced classroom dynamics. Challenges include the need for reliable internet connectivity, preparation time for creating quality quizzes, and potential technical difficulties during implementation (Hadijah et al., 2020; Susanti, 2017).

4.2 Quizizz: Self-Paced Gamified Assessment

Quizizz has gained significant popularity in Indonesian EFL education, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic's shift to online learning. Unlike Kahoot!'s synchronized, teacher-paced format, Quizizz allows students to progress at their own pace while still incorporating competitive and gamified elements. This flexibility makes it particularly suitable for diverse classrooms with varying proficiency levels.

Research demonstrates Quizizz's effectiveness across multiple dimensions. A study by Marsa et al. (2021) examined Quizizz's effect on teaching reading comprehension achievement, finding significant improvements in students' reading skills. The platform's immediate feedback mechanism enabled students to adjust their learning strategies promptly, while its entertaining features maintained engagement throughout the assessment process.

Investigations into Quizizz's motivational impact reveal strong positive effects. Janah's (2021) research at a senior high school in Indonesia found that Quizizz significantly influenced student

English learning motivation, with students reporting that the platform made learning more enjoyable and reduced anxiety associated with traditional testing. The gamified elements—including memes, music, and avatars—created a playful atmosphere that transformed assessment from a stressful experience into an engaging activity.

Studies on Quizizz implementation highlight both advantages and challenges. Advantages include accessibility across devices, ease of use for teachers, comprehensive analytics for tracking student progress, and flexibility for both synchronous and asynchronous learning (Zhao, 2019; Zuhriyah & Pratolo, 2020). Challenges include potential technical issues, the need for internet connectivity, possible superficial engagement if questions lack depth, and the risk of students focusing more on speed than accuracy in competitive modes (Nova et al., 2023).

4.3 Duolingo and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

Duolingo represents a different category of gamification tool—comprehensive language learning applications designed for sustained, independent study. Research on Duolingo in Asian EFL contexts demonstrates its effectiveness for developing multiple language skills through gamified mobile-assisted language learning (MALL).

Liu et al. (2024) conducted a mixed-methods study investigating Duolingo's impact on Chinese EFL learners' enjoyment, ideal L2 self, and intrinsic motivation. The study found that the DGBL group showed significantly enhanced enjoyment and ideal L2 self-perception compared to control groups. Duolingo's features—including vocabulary practice in thematic contexts, spaced repetition algorithms, immediate feedback, and adaptive difficulty levels—created personalized learning experiences that fostered autonomous motivation.

Yu et al. (2022) examined Chinese college students' acceptance of gamified vocabulary learning apps using an integrated Self-Determination Theory and Technology Acceptance Model framework. Their findings revealed that autonomous motivation positively affected both perceived usefulness and ease of use of gamified apps. Students chose these applications primarily out of autonomous rather than controlled motivations, suggesting that well-designed gamified apps can support intrinsic motivation development.

Research on mobile-assisted gamified learning in Indonesian contexts shows promise but also highlights infrastructure challenges. Fithriani's (2021) study on mobile-assisted gamified vocabulary learning among Indonesian adult EFL learners found positive effects on learning outcomes, pleasure, and motivation. However, the effectiveness depended on students' access to appropriate devices, reliable internet connectivity, and digital literacy skills—factors that vary considerably across Indonesia's diverse socioeconomic landscape.

4.4 Learning Management System Integration

The integration of gamification elements into Learning Management Systems (LMS) represents an important trend in Indonesian higher education. Research by Wahyuni and Pusparini (2024) examined gamification-based LMS for EFL students at a private university in Indonesia, evaluating its impact on self-directed learning dimensions. The study found that while gamification enhanced initial engagement and motivation, sustained self-management and control required additional support structures.

LMS-integrated gamification offers several advantages for Indonesian EFL contexts, including centralized access to learning materials, progress tracking, integration with institutional assessment systems, and support for blended learning approaches. However, successful implementation requires careful attention to

pedagogical design, ensuring that gamification elements support rather than distract from learning objectives (Al-khresheh, 2022).

Research on LMS-based formative assessment emphasizes the importance of alignment with English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) principles. Studies suggest that gamified LMS assessments should prioritize intelligibility and communicative effectiveness over native-speaker norms, particularly in multicultural contexts like Indonesia's diverse linguistic landscape (Fithriani et al., 2024). This approach supports more inclusive and culturally responsive assessment practices.

4.5 Other Gamification Tools and Platforms

Beyond the major platforms, various other gamification tools have been explored in Indonesian EFL contexts. Bamboozle, a web-based game application, has shown effectiveness in promoting students' engagement and motivation for interactive speaking (Aeni et al., 2024). The platform's emphasis on collaborative gameplay and visual engagement makes it particularly suitable for speaking activities.

Classcraft, an application that transforms entire classrooms into role-playing games, has demonstrated effectiveness in enhancing vocabulary retention in flipped classroom contexts (Botmart, 2019). The immersive narrative framework and character development features create sustained engagement over extended periods, addressing concerns about the novelty effect that affects shorter-duration gamified interventions.

Educational games specifically developed for Indonesian contexts, such as "PowPow" for elementary students, show promise in supporting vocabulary learning through culturally appropriate content and developmentally suitable gameplay (Andreani & Ying, 2019). These locally developed tools address the need for materials that reflect Indonesian cultural contexts and learning preferences.

5. Challenges, Limitations, and Research Gaps

5.1 Technical and Infrastructure Challenges

Technical and infrastructure limitations represent significant obstacles to effective gamification implementation in Indonesian EFL contexts. Multiple studies identify internet connectivity issues, insufficient technological resources, and disparate access to devices as primary challenges (Hung, 2017; Guaqueta & Castro-Garces, 2018; Tan, 2018; Ebadi et al., 2021).

Indonesia's geographical diversity exacerbates these challenges, with significant disparities in technological infrastructure between urban and rural areas, and between Java/Bali and outer islands. Research by Taufik et al. (2019) on digital game-based learning in Indonesian EFL classrooms highlighted that many schools, particularly in rural areas, lack the technological infrastructure necessary for consistent implementation of gamified instruction. Teachers report difficulties with unreliable internet connections, insufficient numbers of devices for students, and inadequate technical support for troubleshooting.

These infrastructure challenges affect not only implementation quality but also equity of access. Students from more affluent backgrounds or urban areas benefit disproportionately from gamified learning opportunities, potentially widening existing educational inequalities (Okoye et al., 2023). Addressing these disparities requires systemic investments in technological infrastructure, not just pedagogical innovation.

5.2 Pedagogical and Design Challenges

Beyond technical issues, pedagogical challenges affect gamification's effectiveness in Indonesian EFL contexts. Research by Luo (2023) identified several factors influencing gamification effectiveness, including failure to achieve meaningful gamification, mixture of element selection, sub-optimal measurement, and data

interpretation biases. These issues stem from insufficient understanding of gamification principles and lack of evidence-based design frameworks.

One significant challenge involves balancing extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. While game elements like points, badges, and leaderboards provide immediate motivational boosts, they risk over-emphasizing extrinsic rewards at the expense of developing intrinsic motivation for language learning (Hanus & Fox, 2015). Studies suggest that prolonged exposure to gamified environments focused primarily on external rewards may lead to decreased motivation once those rewards are removed.

The novelty effect represents another important limitation. Research indicates that gamification's positive effects may be short-lived, with initial enthusiasm waning as the novelty wears off (Fu et al., 2021). Longitudinal studies are needed to determine whether gamification produces sustained improvements in language learning outcomes or merely temporary increases in engagement and performance.

Design quality significantly affects outcomes. Studies emphasize that superficial implementation of game elements without thoughtful pedagogical design rarely produces meaningful learning benefits (Iaremenco, 2017). Effective gamification requires careful attention to learning objectives, alignment with curriculum standards, appropriate difficulty progression, and integration of game mechanics with sound pedagogical principles.

5.3 Individual Differences and Contextual Factors

Research increasingly recognizes that gamification's effectiveness varies based on individual learner characteristics and contextual factors. Studies examining personality traits, learning preferences, and prior gaming experience find that not all students respond equally positively to gamified instruction (Smiderle et al., 2020). Some learners prefer traditional instructional approaches or find

competitive game elements anxiety-inducing rather than motivating.

Cultural factors also influence gamification's effectiveness. Research in Asian contexts suggests that cultural attitudes toward competition, collaboration, and technology use affect how learners engage with gamified learning environments. Indonesian cultural values emphasizing collective harmony and respect for authority may interact with gamification elements in ways different from more individualistic Western contexts.

Gender differences in responses to gamification present another area of complexity. While some research suggests gamification is gender-neutral (Zahedi et al., 2021), other studies find differential effects based on gender, with males sometimes showing greater responsiveness to competitive elements (Ke et al., 2018). Understanding these differences is essential for designing inclusive gamified experiences.

Age and proficiency level also mediate gamification's effects. Research indicates that gamification strategies effective for young learners may not translate directly to adult or advanced learners (Alotaibi, 2024). Similarly, low-proficiency learners may benefit from different gamification approaches than advanced learners.

5.4 Teacher Readiness and Professional Development

Teacher readiness represents a critical factor in successful gamification implementation. Studies reveal that many Indonesian EFL teachers lack sufficient training in using gamification tools effectively (Zhu, 2022). Research by Karuniasih (2022) on teachers' readiness for English remote teaching found varying levels of technological proficiency and pedagogical knowledge for implementing digital innovations.

Pre-service teacher education programs have begun addressing this gap, but implementation quality varies. Research on pre-service

EFL teachers' identity construction in relation to digital gamification found that identity development depended on explicit training, mentorship, and community of practice support (Afrilyasanti et al., 2023). Teachers need not only technical skills for using gamification platforms but also pedagogical knowledge for designing effective gamified learning experiences.

Professional development challenges include limited time for training, insufficient ongoing support, and lack of exemplary models for integrating gamification with existing curricula. Teachers report feeling pressured to adopt new technologies without adequate preparation or resources for doing so effectively (Hartman et al., 2019). Sustainable implementation requires systemic support including pre-service training, in-service professional development, collaborative planning time, and mentorship from experienced practitioners.

5.5 Assessment and Evaluation Challenges

Methodological limitations affect research on gamification's effectiveness in Indonesian EFL contexts. Many studies employ short-duration interventions, making it difficult to distinguish between genuine learning effects and novelty effects (Dindar et al., 2021). The lack of longitudinal research prevents understanding of gamification's long-term impact on language development and sustained motivation.

Research designs often include methodological weaknesses such as small sample sizes, absence of control groups, or failure to control for confounding variables (Luo, 2023). Some studies measure only one aspect of language proficiency while neglecting others, providing an incomplete picture of gamification's overall effectiveness (Lam et al., 2018; Qiao et al., 2022).

Assessment instruments present another challenge. Many studies rely on single measures like vocabulary tests rather than comprehensive assessments covering multiple language skills and

competencies. The complex, multidimensional nature of language proficiency requires sophisticated assessment approaches that current research often lacks.

Additionally, research frequently focuses on cognitive outcomes while paying insufficient attention to affective, metacognitive, and strategic competencies that gamification may influence. Comprehensive evaluation frameworks are needed that examine gamification's impact across multiple dimensions of language learning.

5.6 Research Gaps and Future Directions

Current research reveals several significant gaps requiring attention. First, longitudinal studies examining gamification's long-term effectiveness in Indonesian EFL contexts are scarce. Research is needed to determine whether positive effects persist over extended periods or fade as novelty wears off.

Second, research on specific learner populations is limited. Studies examining gamification's effectiveness for different age groups, proficiency levels, and learning contexts (e.g., rural vs. urban, public vs. private schools) would provide more nuanced understanding of optimal implementation strategies.

Third, research on integrating emerging technologies with gamification remains limited. Studies exploring artificial intelligence-driven adaptive gamification, virtual reality language learning environments, and augmented reality applications could identify new possibilities for enhancing EFL instruction.

Fourth, investigation of culturally responsive gamification designs is needed. Research should examine how game mechanics, narratives, and reward structures can be adapted to align with Indonesian cultural values and learning preferences.

Finally, research examining the cost-effectiveness and scalability of different gamification approaches would inform policy decisions about resource allocation and systemic implementation. Understanding which gamification strategies provide the greatest benefit relative to their implementation costs is essential for sustainable adoption.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

This literature review synthesized research on gamification's effectiveness for EFL learners in Indonesian contexts, revealing several consistent patterns. Gamification generally produces positive effects on language skills development, particularly for vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and grammar mastery. The evidence for productive skills (speaking and writing) is more limited but still suggests beneficial outcomes when gamification is thoughtfully implemented.

Motivational and affective outcomes represent gamification's strongest and most consistent benefits. Research consistently demonstrates increased motivation, engagement, and enjoyment, along with reduced language learning anxiety. However, the development of self-directed learning competencies requires more than gamification alone, necessitating explicit scaffolding and instructional support.

Various gamification platforms and tools have been successfully implemented in Indonesian EFL contexts, with Kahoot!, Quizizz, and mobile-assisted applications like Duolingo showing particular promise. However, effectiveness depends critically on implementation quality, pedagogical design, and alignment with learning objectives rather than on platforms per se.

6.2 Persistent Challenges and Limitations

Despite positive findings, significant challenges limit gamification's effectiveness and accessibility in Indonesian EFL contexts. Technical infrastructure limitations, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged areas, create equity concerns. Pedagogical challenges including superficial implementation, over-reliance on extrinsic motivation, and the novelty effect require careful attention to instructional design.

Teacher readiness remains a critical factor, with many educators lacking sufficient training and ongoing support for effective gamification implementation. Methodological limitations in current research, including short duration studies and inadequate assessment frameworks, limit our understanding of gamification's true effectiveness and optimal implementation strategies.

6.3 Implications for Practice

Based on this review's findings, several practical implications emerge for Indonesian EFL educators and policymakers:

1. **Strategic Implementation:** Gamification should be viewed as a complement to, not replacement for, traditional instruction. Effective implementation requires integration with sound pedagogical principles and alignment with curriculum objectives.
2. **Balanced Design:** Gamification design should balance extrinsic motivators (points, badges, leaderboards) with activities that foster intrinsic motivation and autonomous learning. Competitive elements should be implemented thoughtfully, with options for cooperative gameplay to accommodate diverse learner preferences.
3. **Professional Development:** Systematic investment in teacher training is essential. Professional development should address both technical skills for using gamification

tools and pedagogical knowledge for designing effective gamified learning experiences.

4. **Infrastructure Investment:** Addressing technological disparities requires coordinated investment in infrastructure, ensuring equitable access to devices, reliable internet connectivity, and technical support across diverse geographical and socioeconomic contexts.
5. **Cultural Responsiveness:** Gamification designs should be adapted to align with Indonesian cultural values, learning preferences, and linguistic contexts, rather than simply adopting Western-developed models.

6.4 Future Research Directions

Future research should address several critical gaps identified in this review:

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Research examining gamification's long-term effectiveness, including studies that track learners over multiple semesters or years, would clarify whether positive effects persist or diminish over time.
2. **Specific Populations:** Studies focusing on particular learner groups (age, proficiency level, socioeconomic background) would provide more nuanced understanding of optimal implementation strategies for diverse contexts.
3. **Emerging Technologies:** Research integrating artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and augmented reality with gamification could identify new possibilities for enhancing EFL instruction.
4. **Comprehensive Assessment:** Development and validation of assessment frameworks that evaluate gamification's impact across multiple dimensions—cognitive, affective, metacognitive, and social—would provide more complete understanding of effectiveness.
5. **Implementation Science:** Research examining the processes, barriers, and facilitators of scaling up effective

gamification practices would inform policy and practice for systemic implementation.

6. **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** Studies examining the cost-effectiveness of different gamification approaches would help educators and policymakers make informed decisions about resource allocation.

6.5 Concluding Remarks

Gamification represents a promising pedagogical innovation for Indonesian EFL contexts, offering potential solutions to longstanding challenges of motivation, engagement, and language development. The evidence base, while not without limitations, supports gamification's effectiveness when implemented thoughtfully and systematically. However, realizing gamification's full potential requires addressing persistent challenges related to infrastructure, teacher preparation, pedagogical design, and equity of access.

As Indonesian education continues evolving to meet 21st-century demands, gamification offers one avenue for creating more engaging, effective, and learner-centered EFL instruction. Success depends not on technology alone but on the careful integration of game-based approaches with sound pedagogical principles, ongoing teacher support, equitable resource distribution, and sustained commitment to evidence-based practice. Future research and practice should focus on refining our understanding of how, when, and for whom gamification works best, ensuring that this promising innovation benefits all Indonesian EFL learners regardless of their geographical location, socioeconomic background, or prior educational experiences.

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gamification”, and “educational tool” on Google Scholar. After collecting some articles, the researcher read the articles that have

been downloaded. The researcher skimmed and scanned the data, then making notes. A summary of the key points, the study strategy, and the conclusions was recorded in a Word document

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The followings were the steps in using paper-mode Quizizz in English learning including signing up, creating questions, printing Q-cards, and starting and scanning the Q-cards.

There are some studies about the use of paper-mode quizizz in English language learning and teaching. Firstly, Al Husnah *et al.*, (2023) aimed to unveil the unique insights and experiences of students regarding Quizizz Paper Mode as a tool for language assessment. This study used descriptive analysis as a qualitative method. Semi-structured interviews were used to acquire data from a wide range of pupils. Students from a diverse range of backgrounds set out to collect a broad range of data samples. Their unique motivation and level of activity during their English language acquisition expanded the study's reach. According to the research gathered, students view Quizizz Paper Mode as an engaging instrument for language evaluation that boosts their self-esteem, drives them more, and improves their reading comprehension.

Rizal Wahid Permana Putra (2023) also carried out the study about paper-mode quizizz. His study aimed to investigate the use of Paper-Mode Quizizz to improve students' vocabulary at eighth grade students. He used Classroom Action Research as the research methodology. The data demonstrated that the usage of paper-mode Quizizz dramatically increased the eighth-grade students' vocabulary proficiency. Additionally, using paper-mode Quizizz to acquire new vocabulary increased the students' enjoyment, participation, motivation, and engagement. Lastly, Khadijah Maming *et al.*, (2023) aimed to evaluate if using Quizizz in paper format, an engaging and interactive medium, will help junior high school students improve their vocabulary scores. According to this study, paper-mode Quizizz is a useful tool for helping students become proficient in English vocabulary. The results revealed that

paper-mode Quizizz considerably increased students' vocabulary achievement compared to other similar programmes utilised in the control group.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above explanations, it can be concluded that paper-mode Quizizz is one alternate site that offers a variety of tools for English teaching and learning . Moreover, Paper-mode Quizizz, students' responses are delivered via printed code cards. After the students have shown and rotated their Q-cards, their teacher will scan each response card to provide the score and real-time answer. Besides that, paper-mode Quizizz is user-friendly, entertaining, challenging, and fascinating. The students are therefore more inclined to take the Quizizz exam in paper mode. The using paper-mode Quizizz in ICT and non-ICT classroom has some advantages, they are, improve students' motivation, enhance students' confidence, improve students' vocabulary, help teacher in assessing students' learning outcomes

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