Gamifying ESL Classrooms through Gamified Teaching and Learning

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Abstract
Modern trends lead to innovative technologies in education, including the birth of digital and gamified learning or gamification. In English language classrooms, meaningful teaching and learning are significant to developing students' English proficiency, focusing on linguistics and communicative competence. Various language activities and games are employed in lessons to instil anticipation for language learning. However, the concerns are how gamified learning is applied in English as a Second Language (ESL) lessons and the factors assisting students' meaningful English learning. Therefore, this paper, based on the review of past literature, explores the application of gamification or gamified learning in ESL teaching and learning. Based on the review, the researchers highlighted that motivation, engagement, and competition in learning through a gamification approach could assist students' meaningful ESL learning. It is found that gamification has its own motivation structure to arouse students' active participation. The elements in games that enhance students' engagement might improve students' learning. Although competition naturally arouses students' participation during ESL lessons, the findings indicated the need to create a safe environment to prevent students from feeling demotivated. This review paper contributes to the literature surrounding gamified ESL lessons.

Keywords: digital games, English as a Second Language, gamification, gamified learning, meaningful learning

Introduction

English holds the position as the essential language in the world and is called the language of knowledge (Boyinbode, 2018). Many stress the importance of English proficiency to gain knowledge easily and self-development since most documents, websites, and platforms use English to appeal to the global population. The English language is learned to ease communication with others from different backgrounds and who speak native languages other than English. Besides, English is one of the language subjects in schools around the globe, proving its significance in society (Boyinbode, 2018). Similarly, in Malaysia and countries with non-native English speakers, English is the medium of instruction in schools, educational institutions, and workplaces (Maasum, Mustaffa, & Stapa, 2015; Anak Yunus & Hua, 2021).

However, according to Rafiq, Hashim, Yunus, and Pazilah (2019a) and Yaccob and Yunus (2019), teaching and learning English are challenging due to factors such as understanding and using grammar items correctly. Hashim, Rafiq, and Yunus (2019) included mastering the linguistic skills, namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing, as well as practising the language in real-life contexts as the challenging factors. Rafiq et al. (2019a) stated that these challenges might demotivate students from learning and; cause a stagnant and decreasing number of students who cannot speak and use the language fluently in tertiary education, career, and real life even after years of formal and informal learning. Furthermore, there is an indication that students' performance in English language skills is discouraging and has been on a downward trend (Boyinbode, 2018). Locally, according to Anak Yunus and Hu (2021), the declining standard of English in Malaysia is a significant concern to meet the demands of global education. Therefore, it is important to explore how and why gamified learning could assist students' English improvement.

Teaching pedagogy and approach are characterized by a high degree of synergy with other factors influencing effective teaching. The language teaching and learning process has changed over the years following the various changes in the national curriculum (Adris & Yamat, 2015; Hashim et al., 2019), from traditional classrooms to digital learning environments (Subhash & Cudney, 2018; Yaccob & Yunus, 2021). Today, pedagogy is interlinked with technology, automation, digitalization, and entertainment, leading to more forms and means of education. Besides, learning is enhanced through exposure to English media, intercultural and global knowledge, and meaningful language learning activities (Maasum et al., 2015; Anak Yunus & Hua, 2021). Teachers are encouraged to be creative (Mee, Shahdan, Ismail, Ghani, Pek, Von, Woo, & Rao, 2020). They are also encouraged to exploit the advantages of technology and maximize the use of digital materials in lessons. In sync with the rapid advancement in education, teaching and learning are modernized and supported by technology (Anak Yunus & Hua, 2021; Welbers, Konjin, Burgers, de Vaate, Eden, & Brugman, 2019; Hashim, Yunus & Hashim, 2019). Chambers and Yunus (2017) have described how different approaches and classroom activities are significant to cater to students' different needs for effective learning. It attracts students' attention and interest in learning the complex English language (Sanchez-Mena & Marti-Parreno, 2017; Pazilah, Hashim, & Yunus, 2019). In any case, English is often considered dull and challenging to be acquired but could be exciting when fun approaches are implemented (Rahmani, 2020; Rafiq, Pazilah, Yunus, Hashim, & Sabri, 2019b).

One of the technologies in lessons is called gamification or gamified learning (Desnenko, Pakhomova, Starostina, & Tokareva, 2021; Pektas & Kepceoglu, 2019). Gamification and game-based learning are slightly different (Ding, Kim, & Orey, 2020), since gamification uses game design components in a non-game context, whereas the latter refers to the use of actual games (Welbers et al., 2019; Sanchez-Mena & Marti-Parreno, 2017). In the ESL classroom, gamified learning tools are used in softcopy and hardcopy to improve students' English proficiency (Rafiq et al., 2019a). The application of language games in lessons must use a game in which the rules have linguistic goals and are agreed upon by the participants (students) (Ibrahim, 2016). Through tweaks and alterations, the concept of games has evolved from self-entertainment to edutainment (Rahmani, 2020). According to An (2020), gamification has been used in various settings such as education, business, and healthcare. In an educational context, gamification is described by Fulton (2019) as "the bringing of game elements, into non-gaming environments to capture the motivational factors found in games" (p. 1). Similarly, Kingsley and Grabner-Hagen (2018) mentioned educational gamification as "an instructional method that turns learning into games" (p. 1). There are several reasons why games deserve a place in language lessons, and digital games share similar reasons. Hence, the influence of the motivating factors in designing effective games should be explored (Naggar & Berkling, 2020). This study looks into the elements in games that effectively enrich learning.

Students are known as digital natives for their competency in using gadgets, machines, social media sites, and playing digital and online games (Rahmani, 2020). This is because they grew up with technology (Hashim et al., 2019). Rahmani (2020) and Anak Yunus and Hua (2021) added that most students are engaged in using mobile phones to play games because they are interactive and exciting. A handful of games such as flashcards, word games, and video games on the internet are easy and enjoyable to use in lessons. Quizzes, tests, and other interactive tasks with gamification elements such as Quizizz, Triventy, Wordwall, and Kahoot can make learning more active (Desnenko et al., 2021). The element of fun in games can activate students' interest to participate in lessons more actively (Subhash & Cudney, 2018; Mee et al., 2020). Furthermore, games are interactive and more stimulating (Hashim et al., 2019). Most games require teamwork, collaboration, and student interaction (Maasum et al., 2015). They can share ideas and perspectives through effective engagement and collaboration, often associated with games (Anak Yunus & Hua, 2021). Relatively, students become engaged in discussion and learning through gamification (Ding et al., 2020). Primarily, students' anticipation of learning is crucial as it shapes their overall learning process.

Gamification can be applied based on motivating applications and game platforms available for classroom learning (Desnenko et al., 2021). It can enhance language students' engagement in their learning processes (Subhash & Cudney, 2018; Tsay, Kofinas & Luo, 2018; Anak Yunus & Hua, 2021; Poondej & Lerdpornkulrat, 2016) and further improve their performance (Adris & Yamat, 2015; Mekler, Brühlmann, Tuch, & Opwis, 2017). Thus, using game elements in lessons can encourage ESL teachers to create a better learning environment that is more positive, interesting, and interactive as equally important to achieve a successful language learning process (Alyaz & Genc, 2016; Rafiq et al., 2019b). Adris and Yamat (2015) opined that the interaction between language students and the games assigned would somehow increase their language competency. Hence, this review paper looks into the application of gamification or

gamified learning, student motivation, engagement, and competition in learning through gamification of ESL lessons.

Literature Review
The Application of Gamified Learning in ESL Lessons

Being proficient and competent in English is a demand, although learning English as a second language is commonly considered complex in Malaysia (Maasum et al., 2015). Various approaches have been integrated to simplify English language learning for local students. Over the years, English language educators and teachers have adopted best practices worldwide into their teaching styles to replicate practical and meaningful ESL lessons. The application of game elements to non-game or language educational settings has risen in popularity as an engaging learning method (Hanus & Fox, 2015; Buckley, Doyle, & Doyle, 2017; Poondej & Lerdpornkulrat, 2016). For instance, learning grammar through games can sustain students' interest to improve their understanding of the subject matter (Chambers & Yunus, 2017; Hashim et al., 2019; Yaccob & Yunus, 2019; Mee et al., 2020). As a result, students' engagement will enhance their learning and progress (Rafiq et al., 2019b; Hashim et al., 2019; Poondej & Lerdpornkulrat, 2016). It can be proven through the achievement of learning outcomes.

Game-based learning helps to improve students' learning by enhancing contextual understanding and thinking processes (Chow, Woodford, & Maes, 2011). It is increasingly becoming an effective approach in creating meaningful and engaging lessons. A study conducted by Rahmani (2020) found that the benefits of gamed-based learning or gamification in lessons include improving motivation, developing positive attitudes, better cognitive achievements, and performance in activities. The author further stated that the findings confirmed that the implementation fosters 21st-century skills, encourages social interaction and independence, and improves students' competitiveness during lessons. Although this qualitative study could not be generalized, the findings from the analysis of thirteen relevant articles could enrich the literature in this area.

To further emphasize, language learning using game-like approaches can be exploited as a potential learning tool to arouse students' motivation, strengthen engagement, and consequently improve their learning quality (Poondej & Lerdpornkulrat, 2016; Yaccob & Yunus, 2019; Ding et al., 2020; Vargas-Macias, Rodriguez-Hernandez, & Sanchez-Saenz, 2020; Pham et al., 2021). For example, Antonaci, Klemke, and Specht (2019) have discussed the deployment of game components in Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and found that it could increase students' engagement. The authors stressed that gamification is a successful strategy that engages students, especially in online education (Antonaci et al., 2019). When students are engaged in lessons, they can learn better by grasping the subject matter taught (Rafiq et al., 2019a). Engagement allows students to develop a more profound connection with the learning process, and they can enjoy it. According to Maasum et al. (2015), since games could become a source of enjoyment in learning English, it was discovered that students did not feel shy to participate in the activities. It is associated with students' positive responses and feelings toward gamified ESL lessons. In regards to students' positive emotions throughout the learning period, they reported feeling more confident in using English in a gamified learning environment (Maasum et al., 2015).

Positive reinforcement, such as badges or rewards, increases their motivation to progress and finish the assigned tasks related to their language learning (Anak Yunus & Hua, 2021). However, it also depends on the reward system's credibility, transparency, challenge, and fairness to be considered a motivational tool (Buckley et al., 2017). Nevertheless, games can positively impact teaching and learning English (Maasum et al., 2015). Since the improvement in students' learning outcomes can be seen with the use of gamification (Rafiq et al., 2019a; Anak Yunus & Hua, 2021), Bal (2019), in his study, has found that students' improvement in higher-order thinking skills when gamification is used to learn writing.

Although the benefits of digital games in assisting ESL students' language acquisition are widely known, there are adverse effects of digital gamified learning which need to be explored (Alyaz & Genc, 2016). Distraction is one of the concerns ESL teachers and students have regarding digital games since students must spend time on their mobile phones or devices to complete the language games. A study done by Alyaz and Genc (2016) found that "students played games with their mobile devices for hours" (p. 133). Assigning digital games to students may contribute to this distraction in their learning process once they have found non-educational games. Hence, it is suggested that learning involving games can be separated into several sessions to reduce screen time among school students and give them enough time to complete the assigned task systematically (Welbers et al., 2019). Overall, it is significant to conduct studies "examining the contribution of games to various languages and language skills in order to improve the use of digital game-based language learning" (Alyaz & Genc, 2016, p. 142).

The study conducted by Adris and Yamat (2015) indicated that students' negative perceptions of video games in English teaching and learning were mainly due to issues of equipment or device. Although this study was specifically on Massively Multiplayer Online Role-playing Games (MMORPG), the findings of students' negative perceptions should be considered. It is further supported by Mekler et al. (2017) that the method of implementing gamification should be appropriate and organized since students may lack motivation if technical issues occur. Similarly, the motivational features or aspects of learning-oriented games should be examined in more detail to ensure effective learning (Welbers et al., 2019). Using appropriate game elements for learning based on available facilities is essential. There is also a case of insufficient attention given to the design of gamification or gamified learning that does not have a meaningful context (An, 2020). Substantially, gamification in learning is more than points, badges, and leaderboards since it creates a practical learning experience using games for students. Thus, a game element must be added based on its functionality and considering its effects on learning (An, 2020). The mere addition of game elements does not ensure a practical and meaningful gamified learning experience for language students. Preparing future ESL teachers with appropriate digital skills, including digital literacy and gamification technology, is vital in current and future education systems (Desnenko et al., 2021).

Self-Determination Theory
The Gamification approach in language lessons is closely related to Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposed by Ryan and Deci in 1985. Boyinbode (2018) stated that "gamification combines both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to raise user engagement and also influences their behavior towards learning" (p. 183). The extrinsic and intrinsic motivation that encourages the desire to act

and respond to the learning content or activities and the expectation for rewards come from the SDT viewpoint (Healey, 2018). SDT postulates that individuals' engagement in an activity can be achieved with the presence of their basic psychological needs (relatedness, autonomy, and competence) (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Referring to Ryan and Deci (2000), there are three important aspects of SDT; (1) autonomy, feeling in control, (2) competence and skill, finally (3) relatedness or connection to others in the group. Gamification is an engaging platform for students to learn autonomously and collaboratively with peers (Tan, 2018). This develops students' self-determination to complete the tasks successfully and immerse them in the language learning process.

Students' progress unravels the connection between gamification and Ryan and Deci's self-development theory in students' learning approach. As aforementioned, gamified learning nurtures students to be active participants to experience independent and autonomous learning (Rafiq et al., 2019b; Pham, Nguyen, & Le, 2021) and active discussion during activities (Ding et al., 2020). On a similar note, meaningful gamification is a catalyst to motivate students to grasp key concepts of their language lessons (Tan, 2018).

Gamifying ESL Lessons
As a leading trend in global education, gamification is characterized as an innovative technology (Tan, 2018; Desnenko et al., 2021) that aims to create fun, practical, and meaningful learning for students (Pazilah et al., 2019; Anak Yunus & Hua, 2021). Gamification employs game elements that are quests, hints, challenges, levels, and rewards that challenge students and intensify their competitive spirits (Poondej & Lerdpornkulrat, 2016; Kingsley & Grabner-Hagen, 2018). Other game elements or components used in gamification are avatars, scoring, progress bars, rating tables, and ranking displayed (Desnenko et al., 2021). Game-like engaging activities have appealing elements and clear instructions that can motivate students to learn positively (Rafiq et al., 2019b; Vargas-Macias et al., 2020). Besides, with today's technological advancement, ESL teachers can maximize technology use through various available web and application-based software. Consequently, gamified learning supports student-centered learning (Tsay et al., 2018; Hashim et al., 2019); and students as the focus.

A study by Alomari, Al-Samarraie, and Yousef (2019) summarised its findings of gamification techniques used in selected previous studies into "the highest utilisation to the lowest that are points, badges, leaderboards, levels, rewards, progress bars, challenges, feedback, and avatars consecutively" (p. 399). The top three highest utilization points, badges, and leaderboards reflect standard gamification components in education (Alomari et al., 2019; Antonaci, 2019). Based on the observations made by the authors, using points to gamify learning activities helps create a competition-fun environment where students can also think critically and creatively to respond to others' views and ideas (Chow et al., 2011; Alomari et al., 2019; Mee et al., 2020). It is a motivating process for students since they will feel more intrigued to participate actively and gain more points. Additionally, the authors signified that learning badges for students are a sign of accomplishment that will stimulate them to put more effort into completing the tasks, which, in the end, enhances the learning outcomes (Alomari et al., 2019).

The use of leaderboards is common in gamification. It shows the leaders' ranking and how the students perform (Poondej & Lerdpornkulrat, 2016; Antonaci et al., 2019) and instills competitive spirits among students (Alomari et al., 2019). Interestingly, leaderboards can enable social comparison that influences positive performance (Antonaci et al., 2019). Students show eagerness when competing with others and completing tasks. Besides leaderboards, feedback is an element of games that can give students information about their progress, achievements, issues, and clues (Antonaci et al., 2019). Providing feedback may enhance learning (Welbers et al., 2019). It makes learning more interactive and meaningful when elements that can enhance interactions are further maximized and exploited. Most importantly, it demonstrates a student-centered learning approach that is highly promoted to be implemented.

Using game elements in teaching is beneficial. However, some designs must be deliberately considered when selecting appropriate games or gamifying a lesson (Kijpoonpol & Phumchanin, 2018). It is imperative to understand the contexts in which gamification is effective in language learning (Buckley et al., 2017; Naggar & Berkling, 2020). Game designers and teachers should be aware of the expected outcomes of a specific game component within a particular learning context and audience (Antonaci et al., 2019). Therefore, An (2020) has listed "eight design considerations for gamification, including (1) meaning, (2) user-centered design, (3) challenges, personalisation, and feedback, (4) autonomy, (5) extrinsic rewards, (6) social interaction and relatedness, (7) competition vs. cooperation, and (8) failure as an opportunity to learn" (p. 63). In support, Naggar and Berkling (2020) added that for a reading activity, "games need a simple, short tutorial and sentences should be kept short of supporting beginning readers" (p. 65). These thoughtful designs should be a guideline for ESL teachers creating gamified learning in language lessons. Further, it does not necessarily involve using technology (Buckley et al., 2017) to make it more appealing to be integrated with any learning approach. Nonetheless, successful games consist of a narrative that provides students with engaging contexts and meaning (An, 2020). The design, implementation, and effectiveness of gamification are closely connected to the participants and the context of the application (Antonaci et al., 2019; Pham et al., 2021). It relates to students' performances and English ability when different styles and games are used (Kijpoonpol & Phumchanin, 2018).

In contrast, due to the differences in language competency level and other factors, students tend to have different problems regarding gamified learning. According to An (2020), "a challenge that is enjoyable to some students can be too difficult and frustrating to others" (p. 64). Also, too many games may cause ESL students to be overwhelmed, especially when they are supposed to play to learn language skills (Kijpoonpol & Phumchanin, 2018). Specific gamification techniques have both favorable and unfavorable effects on students' learning (Alomari et al., 2019). Employing appropriate gamification activities to contribute to intended learning outcomes in lessons is crucial. Successful implementation of gamified learning in English lessons is seen in a livelier learning environment, active engagement (Buckley et al., 2017; Ding et al., 2020), better English competency, and improved cognitive achievements from the various assessments and tasks (Hashim et al., 2019; Rahmani, 2020). Generally, regardless of mainstream learning techniques today, it is prudent to evaluate each trending technique and material before adopting it in the classrooms (Hanus & Fox, 2015). There are comprehensive alternatives that ESL teachers and other educators have access to. An (2020) has suggested that "future research to pay more

careful attention to design aspects, consider contextual factors, and contribute to developing research-based guidelines for designing effective gamified experiences" (p.67).

Motivation

The starting point to incorporate gamification is to design a fun, game-like lesson (Hashim et al., 2019; Mee et al., 2020) to attract and motivate students to learn (Kingsley & Grabner-Hagen, 2018; Vargas-Macias, 2020). When students show a lack of motivation toward their learning process, it is challenging to engage them in participating (Maasum et al., 2015). Essentially, motivation is crucial in learning English continuously and effectively (Boyinbode, 2018; Hashim et al., 2019). It is a binding force that may stimulate ESL students' interest in learning (Rafiq et al., 2019a). Maasum et al. (2015) believed that the English class activities that are non-game did not necessarily motivate the students. That becomes the reason for the growth of gamified and technology-based learning in ESL lessons. Rafiq et al. (2019b) have completed a study to identify students' perceptions towards gamified learning, and the findings showed that the said approach is motivating. The authors found that students displayed interest when motivated and consequently could accomplish better learning outcomes. Hence, along with the shift in education and increasing application of technology in teaching and learning, games can motivate students to stay focused, active, and enjoy tedious tasks assigned (Hanus & Fox, 2015; Tenorio et al., 2016).

A study by Kijpoonpol and Phumchanin (2018) related to the use of gamified teaching style to teach phrasal verbs has shown that using games encouraged Thai English students to understand phrasal verbs. The authors assured that students showed measurable improvement in their knowledge of phrasal verbs, could understand and remember more phrasal verbs after the lessons. However, since the duration of this study was short, it used fewer phrasal verbs and did not measure the students' long-term memory. Another study by Boyinbode (2018) on learning vocabulary has proven that games have enhanced students' English vocabulary skills and promoted learning interests among them. It is supported by Hashim et al. (2019) that English language games give an inexplicable learning experience for students to gain new vocabulary. A study in Turkish language lessons by Bal (2019) presented that gamification has positively affected students' motivation to actively participate in the writing process. The author insinuated that writing via digital gamification improved students' creativity and problem-solving skills in English language learning.

Gamification has its motivational structure and based on past studies, it is found that components in gamification that fit the lesson design can be highly motivating for students (Kijpoonpol & Phumchanin, 2018; Ding et al., 2020). The components such as points, badges, and scores are mainly seen as external rewards (Antonaci et al., 2019), and rewards stimulate students' desire to win and complete the activities assigned (Alomari et al., 2019). It initiates positive attitudes from students to complete the tasks (Anak Yunus & Hua, 2021). Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards arouse students to actively participate in the learning process even if they pose some challenges. If students show positive changes in behavior when gamification is implemented compared to the opposite, it indicates an improvement in their intrinsic motivation (Rahmani, 2020). However, according to Mekler et al. (2017), students' performance did not necessarily reflect their intrinsic motivation. However, their findings align with game elements' functions as extrinsic incentives that promote students' performance. The authors affirmed that gamification

components did not affect students' feeling competent and intrinsic motivation. It is worth noting that by evaluating the components and using theory to assess their effectiveness, ESL teachers could create ideal gamified learning that instills intrinsic motivation (Hanus & Fox, 2015).

The extrinsic rewards include the status and achievements of students (Desnenko et al., 2021). Another form of reward in gamification is the trophies to commemorate students' achievement in overcoming challenges (Antonaci et al., 2019). Besides, virtual currency, coins, gifts, and tokens are the types of rewards students look forward to when playing games. Students advancement to the next phase should be supported by the proposed task that will summarise their understanding (Desnenko et al., 2021). However, educators must apply extrinsic rewards more carefully and accordingly with other needed strategies (An, 2020). Reward-based gamification is identified as exclusively relying on external rewards to motivate students; thus, ESL teachers can find ways to sustain their motivation and enthusiasm for learning (Mee et al., 2020). In the novelty of gamified learning, it is to draw students' attention, incite excitement to learn, and motivate prolonged participation.

Engagement and Competition
Social interaction and collaboration skills are fundamental for students (An, 2020) and should be nurtured and developed in schools. It is mentioned that games enhance students' engagement in lessons and interaction regarding the subject matter and may increase their scores (Alomari et al., 2019) or learning outcomes. It is less stressful for students to learn English when there are no gaps between high-intermediate and low-intermediate students during the activities (Rahmani, 2020). Tenorio, Bittencourt, Isotani, Pedro, and Ospina (2016) have employed a study to deal with students' lack of motivation and engagement in peer assessment activities. The study verified that gamification increased engagement and positive influence, also due to better collaboration among students, time and costs to complete their assessments were vastly reduced (Tenorio et al., 2016). Students have the freedom to show their skills and abilities in practising English and collaborating with others in the team. It is visible that social environments can boost engagement with others and overall learning environments (Naggar & Berkling, 2020). Thus, besides communication skills, students can improve their teamwork skills while working with others (Rafiq et al., 2019b). These skills are vital in 21st-century learning to produce holistic students.

As aforementioned, in gamified learning, the addition of badges as rewards, scoreboards, exciting remarks, and rating is among the standard components when designing the lesson. The badges used in games improve social interaction and competitiveness, enhance social competence, and practice English in authentic contexts among students (Rahmani, 2020). Competitive spirit among students is also a way of showing engagement in the activities and lessons. Competition in gamified learning impacts students' drive to complete the tasks and challenge others. It can be generated through progress tracking and the fight to get the highest score (Buckley et al., 2017). An example of a game promoting competition is a matching game, as they can compete with other groups and cooperate to help each other in their respective group (Kijpoonpol & Phumchanin, 2018). The competition and cooperation aspects propose that gamification can serve a diverse class's learning needs and challenge students with a high ability (Tsay et al., 2018). Students can compete with one another in a safe environment (Pham et al., 2021), and use their critical thinking and problem-solving skills to find the best solution to complete the games (Chow et al., 2011;

Rafiq et al., 2019b; Mee et al., 2020; Bal, 2019). These are among the aspects of meaningful learning.

There are both negative and positive effects of competition. Hanus and Fox (2015) clarified that "the effects of competition may depend on whether it is a constructive competition or destructive competition" (p. 154). It is further explained that constructive competition refers to the fun experience and positive relationships among students, whereas destructive competition is harmful. The leaderboards are the element that could be perceived as either constructive or destructive for individually different students. It is because competition can create an adrenaline rush and the need for speed that is part of the enjoyment; however, not everyone likes to be in a constant state of competition (An, 2020; Tsay et al., 2018). Hanus and Fox (2015), whose longitudinal study assessed how particular gamification elements affected student satisfaction, motivation, enjoyment, empowerment to learn, and grades over time, have found meaningful findings compared to other findings related to gamified learning. When comparing the results between a control and treatment group, the authors found that "students from each course started at the same levels of intrinsic motivation, satisfaction, effort, social comparison, and empowerment" (p. 159). Nonetheless, over time "students in the gamified course tended to decrease in motivation, satisfaction, and empowerment relative to the non-gamified course" (p. 159). Hence, gamification elements should be carefully considered to suit students' level, background, and meaningful context.

Some students do not enjoy competition since failures can demotivate students (An, 2020; Buckley et al., 2017). Welbers et al. (2019), in their study, annotated that students feel bored and demotivated when their scores are poor or lower than average. In order to avoid such feelings among students, ESL teachers are responsible for creating a safe environment that supports students to learn through failures and take a risk (An, 2020). Mee et al., (2020) recommended providing students with the platform to actively compete in a friendly way. It is suggested that ESL teachers explore more approaches using gamification to increase students' motivation and dynamic performances instead of merely replicating the available and in-trend games into lessons (An, 2020). Generally, the findings on students' perceptions of gamified learning in language lessons indicated students satisfaction with the method compared to the traditional language learning method (Kijpoonpol & Phumchanin, 2018; Buckley et al., 2017). However, games and digital games may not be sufficient as the only tool used for language learning; instead, they are seen as an effective supplement to the teaching and learning of ESL (Adris & Yamat, 2015). Anak Yunus and Hua (2021) affirmed that it is significant "to embrace gamification in education to solidify the teaching and learning in the 21st century" (p. 104). Likewise, Rahmani (2020) concluded that gamification is the solution to a failing and passive English learning environment, as it may help ESL teachers create a more engaging and meaningful learning environment for students.

Conclusion

Past studies have presented the effectiveness of using game-like activities in language lessons. The implementation of gamification in ESL classrooms is reported to make a profound difference compared to traditional and non-game-like English lessons. Thoughtful designs can create effective gamified language learning experiences that boost students' motivation and enrich

engagement. The competitiveness allows them to learn actively and with purpose to complete the tasks assigned.

Overall, this review paper examined how gamification or gamified learning is applied in ESL teaching and learning. The competitiveness, incentive, and engagement in gamified learning support students' meaningful ESL learning. It has been discovered that gamification has a motivational framework to encourage active engagement from pupils. Gamification components that increase student engagement may also promote learning. Although students' engagement in ESL sessions is naturally sparked by competition, a safe setting is necessary to prevent students from becoming demotivated. Therefore, language teachers should be given sufficient support to design and implement safe and effective gamified language lessons. This review is relevant to add to the body of knowledge about gamified ESL teaching. It contributes to the area of interest by increasing awareness about the use of gamification in ESL teaching and learning effectively, the benefits of gamified learning, and consideration that should be made. As a result,

As noted previously, it is recommended that different language teaching and learning techniques be explored to maximize learning outcomes. Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of implementing gamified learning in ESL lessons is crucial for further improvement. It is suggested that future studies investigate the weaknesses of gamified ESL lessons in the local context of Malaysia and provide more solutions to tackle the problems.

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