

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GAMIFIED-BASED APPLICATION
AMONG EFL TEACHERS: BENEFITS AND BARRIERS**

A Thesis by

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English Education Study Program



FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

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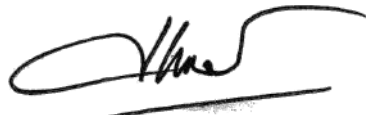
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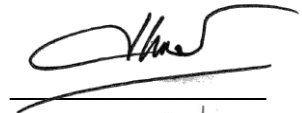
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LETTER OF STATEMENT

Saya menyatakan dengan sebenar-benarnya bahwa seluruh data, informasi, interpretasi serta pernyataan dalam pembahasan dan kesimpulan yang disajikan dalam karya ilmiah ini, kecuali yang disebutkan sumbernya adalah merupakan hasil pengamatan, penelitian, pengelolaan, serta pemikiran Saya dengan pengarahan dari pembimbing yang ditetapkan.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers implement gamification-based applications in the classroom, along with the perceived benefits and challenges encountered during implementation. A qualitative case study design was employed at SMA Plus Negeri 17 Palembang during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. Two EFL teachers experienced in integrating digital gamification applications were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews using an interview guide validated by two experts (Aiken's $V = 0.90$) and analyzed through data reduction, coding, data display, and thematic interpretation. The findings revealed that both teachers viewed gamification as a planned instructional strategy, not just digital tools, consistently aligning gamification activities with learning objectives throughout the planning and implementation stages. Gamification was found to create a more interactive classroom environment, increase student participation, and support formative assessment through tracking features and leaderboards, although its influence on students' self-confidence was conditional. The main challenges identified were technical issues and limited resources, students' characteristics, and the time required for preparation, which teachers addressed through various adaptive strategies. This study concludes that the effectiveness of gamification in EFL classrooms largely depends on teachers' competence and readiness in managing these challenges.

Keywords: *gamification, EFL teachers, perceived benefits, challenges, qualitative case study*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the research, the limitations of the problems, the research problems, the research objectives, and the research significances.

1.1 Background of the Research

Rapid technological advancements and globalization have transformed teaching and learning practices, requiring educators to adopt innovative approaches that support twenty-first-century life skills. Education is now challenged to keep pace with technological developments and respond to changing social demands. As a result, the purpose of education is no longer limited to knowledge acquisition but also includes preparing students to face future challenges.

These changes have shifted the focus of education toward developing students' 4C competencies, namely critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity (Maryam, 2024). These competencies are considered essential because students are expected to analyse information critically, communicate ideas effectively, collaborate with others, and develop innovative solutions to complex problems. Mishra (2019) argues that modern education should also foster adaptability and digital literacy to help students respond to future challenges. This shift shows that learning is no longer viewed only as a process of mastering content.

Instead, students need opportunities to apply their knowledge in meaningful contexts while developing skills that are relevant to their future lives.

The growing demand for these competencies has also changed the roles of teachers and students in the classroom. As a result, learning has gradually shifted from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning, an approach that positions students as active participants who construct their own understanding rather than passively receiving information (Gumede et al., 2023). Within this approach, teachers act as facilitators who guide and support the learning process, while students take greater responsibility for their own learning through critical thinking and collaboration.

Technology has become an important part of supporting this shift. It enables teachers to create more flexible, interactive, and personalized learning experiences that meet students' diverse learning needs (Bedenlier et al., 2020). In addition, Technology provides students with wider access to learning resources and encourages them to engage in self-directed learning (Mishra et al., 2020). However, introducing digital tools into the classroom does not automatically improve learning quality. Teachers still need to choose appropriate instructional strategies that can maintain students' motivation and engagement.

Student motivation is widely recognized as one of the key factors influencing students' participation and learning outcomes. Jiang (2023) states that learners who feel engaged tend to show greater interest, participate more actively, and persist longer in learning activities. Therefore, teachers must design learning

environments that are both meaningful and enjoyable (Amelia et al., 2025). One promising strategy to foster engagement and sustain participation is gamification.

Deterding et al. (2011) define gamification as the use of game elements and game design principles in non-game contexts to increase users' motivation and participation. In educational settings, gamification incorporates elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, rewards, levels, and challenges into learning activities to create more engaging experiences (Vrcelj et al., 2023). These elements encourage students to participate actively, monitor their progress, and receive immediate feedback on their performance.

In recent years, gamification-based applications have been increasingly used in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Applications such as Quizizz, Kahoot and Wordwall allow teachers to design interactive activities that support language practice and classroom interaction. The use of these applications has gradually changed conventional teaching practices by creating learning experiences that are more engaging, enjoyable, and motivating (Fatah, 2025). As a result, gamification is often considered a promising approach for addressing students' motivational challenges in English language learning.

Many of studies have reported positive outcomes from the use of gamification in EFL learning. Chan and Lo (2024) found that gamification improved students' motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. Similarly, Demirbilek et al. (2022) reported that gamification increased students' participation and made the learning process more enjoyable. These findings suggest that

gamification can be a useful strategy for creating a more engaging learning environment.

However, the implementation of gamification also presents several challenges. Titania (2024) found that limited technological skills, inadequate facilities, and time constraints were common obstacles faced by teachers. In addition, Demirbilek et al. (2022) identified technical problems and limited internet access as challenges in implementing gamification. Spathopoulou and Pitychoutis (2024) also explain that teachers' acceptance of gamification may be influenced by factors such as age, teaching experience, and perceptions of its usefulness.

The growing use of gamification-based applications can also be seen in Indonesian secondary schools, particularly in English language learning contexts. Based on preliminary interviews conducted on March 10th, 2026, at SMA Plus Negeri 17 Palembang, it was found that two EFL teachers have begun to integrate gamification into the learning process. However, teachers also experience several challenges when implementing gamification in the classroom.

Although research on gamification in EFL contexts has increased in recent years, several gaps remain. Most studies have examined gamification in EFL settings; most of them focus on its impact on students' motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes using quantitative approaches. Studies that explore teachers' experiences in implementing gamified applications through a qualitative case study approach are still limited, particularly in Indonesian secondary schools. In addition, few studies have examined both the benefits and barriers of gamification from teachers' perspectives within a real classroom context.

Considering these issues, this research was conducted at SMA Plus Negeri 17 Palembang to gain a deeper understanding of how two EFL teachers implement gamification-based applications in their classrooms. This research explores the benefits teachers perceive and the barriers they encounter during implementation. By employing a qualitative case study design, this research seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences and the contextual factors that influence the use of gamification in English language teaching.

By doing so, this research offers several contributions. Empirically, it provides context-specific insights into the use of gamification within an Indonesian EFL setting. In terms of research method, it adopts a qualitative case study approach to capture the complexity of classroom practices, which remains less explored in prior research. Conceptually, it advances a more detailed understanding of how gamification is carried out in real classroom contexts, particularly in relation to teachers' experiences, teaching decisions, and contextual challenges.

1.2 Limitation of the Problems

In terms of scope, this research focused on investigating EFL teachers' experiences in using gamified applications in English language teaching. Furthermore, this research was limited to a specific case within a particular educational context, and the findings were not intended to be generalized to all EFL teachers or institutions. The results were contextual and based on the participants' experiences within the selected research setting. This research focused on the implementation of gamified-based applications among EFL teachers in classroom

settings. The research was limited to exploring how English teachers implemented gamified-based applications, as well as identifying the perceived benefits and barriers encountered during the implementation process.

1.3 Research Problems Formulations

Based on the background of the research and the limitations of the problem, the research problems were formulated as follows:

1. How did EFL teachers implement Gamified-Based Application in their classroom?
2. What were the benefits of Gamified-Based Application perceived by the English teachers?
3. What were the barriers encountered by the English teachers in implementing Gamified-Based Application?

1.4 Research Objectives

Based on the research problem formulations, the research objectives were stated as follows:

1. To explore how the EFL teachers implementation of Gamified-Based Application in their classroom.
2. To explore the benefits of using Gamified-Based Application as perceived by English teachers.
3. To explore the barriers encountered by English teachers in implementing Gamified-Based Application.

1.5 Research Significances

This research is expected to contribute to English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly in understanding the implementation of gamified applications in EFL classrooms. By examining how EFL teachers implement these applications, their perceived benefits, and the challenges they encounter, this research provides valuable insights for classroom practice, academic understanding, and future research. The significance of this research is viewed from the perspectives of English teachers, the researcher, and future researchers.

1.5.1 For English Teachers

For English teachers, this research provides insights into the use of gamified applications in EFL classrooms. It offers practical ideas on how to integrate gamification applications into English language teaching and align them with learning objectives. The findings also help teachers understand the benefits and challenges of using gamified applications, enabling them to choose appropriate strategies and improve the teaching and learning process.

1.5.2 For Researcher

For the researcher, this research provides an opportunity to better understand how EFL teachers use gamified applications in the classroom, including the benefits and challenges they experience. It also helps the researcher improve academic knowledge and professional skills in analysing classroom practices and understanding the use of gamified applications in English language teaching. In addition, this research provides valuable experience in conducting a qualitative case

study, especially in collecting, analysing, and interpreting data to gain a deeper understanding of educational practices.

1.5.3 For Other Researchers

For other researchers, this research provides qualitative evidence on how EFL teachers use gamified applications in the classroom, including the benefits and challenges they experience. The findings can serve as a reference for future studies on gamification in English language teaching. In addition, this research may encourage further research in different educational levels, learning contexts, or types of gamified applications, using qualitative or mixed-methods approaches to expand understanding of gamification in language learning.

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