# GAMIFICATION AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING MOTIVATION

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**Keywords**: *Gamification; Learner Psychology; English Language Motivation; Engagement; Intrinsic Motivation; Classroom Dynamics.*

**Abstract**: *This paper examines how gamification influences the psychological aspects of students' motivation in English language learning. The conclusions are based on my classroom observations and a short student questionnaire rather than an experimental study. Overall findings show that game-based elements—such as badges, points, levels, and group competitions—boost learners' enthusiasm, reduce hesitation, and contribute to stronger intrinsic motivation. These results echo insights from previous studies, which argue that gamified environments support learners' sense of competence, autonomy, and emotional involvement. The study suggests that when applied thoughtfully, gamification can be a useful method for increasing motivation in English language classrooms.*

## INTRODUCTION

Motivation has long been recognized as one of the core factors that determine the success of second language learners. Psychological variables such as confidence, interest, and emotional comfort strongly affect how actively learners participate and how consistently they continue studying. In recent years, the idea of gamification—using game-like features in non-game settings (Deterding et al., 2011)—has become widely used in education as a way to strengthen learner engagement. Researchers such as Deci and Ryan (2000), Kapp (2012), and Sailer et al. (2017) highlight that gamification can encourage intrinsic motivation by making progress visible and providing meaningful choices.Despite increased use of gamification, its specific psychological impact on English language learning still requires deeper exploration. This study attempts to contribute by analyzing classroom behavior and gathering students' personal reflections on how gamified tasks influence their motivation and emotional state.

A considerable number of researchers have explored gamification in educational contexts. Kapp (2012) notes that game-based techniques make

classroom processes more interactive and meaningful. Hamari et al. (2014) emphasize that gamification works best when learners can clearly observe their achievements and progress. According to Seaborn and Fels (2015), challenges, rewards, and immediate feedback support emotional engagement by creating a sense of enjoyment.

The psychological foundation for these motivational effects is grounded in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which proposes that motivation becomes stronger when individuals feel competent, autonomous, and socially connected. Gamification naturally supports these needs by offering structured challenges, instant feedback, and opportunities for collaboration.The emotional dimension of gamification has also been widely discussed. Zainuddin et al. (2020) state that game-based tasks reduce classroom anxiety, while Kaya and Çilsalar Sagnak (2022) found that secondary students tend to show more enthusiasm, energy, and willingness to participate in gamified English lessons. These studies suggest that gamification reshapes the classroom atmosphere in a positive way.

Several English lessons were observed and compared. In traditional activities, many students hesitated to participate or showed minimal interest. During gamified tasks—such as point-earning vocabulary games or small group competitions—students appeared more energetic, confident, and eager to contribute. Quieter students were also more willing to speak.

A short questionnaire was distributed to 52 students. The items measured how enjoyable, motivating, and emotionally comfortable gamified tasks felt to them. Students rated their experiences using a Likert scale. The results provided insight into how game elements influence motivation and anxiety.

**RESULTS:**

Students' Attitudes Toward Gamified Lessons:


Figure 1. Students' overall reactions to gamified English lessons.

Most participants stated that gamified tasks helped them feel more motivated. This corresponds with findings from Seaborn and Fels (2015), who reported that game-like activities enhance enjoyment and capture students' interest.

Motivation in Traditional vs. Gamified Lessons:

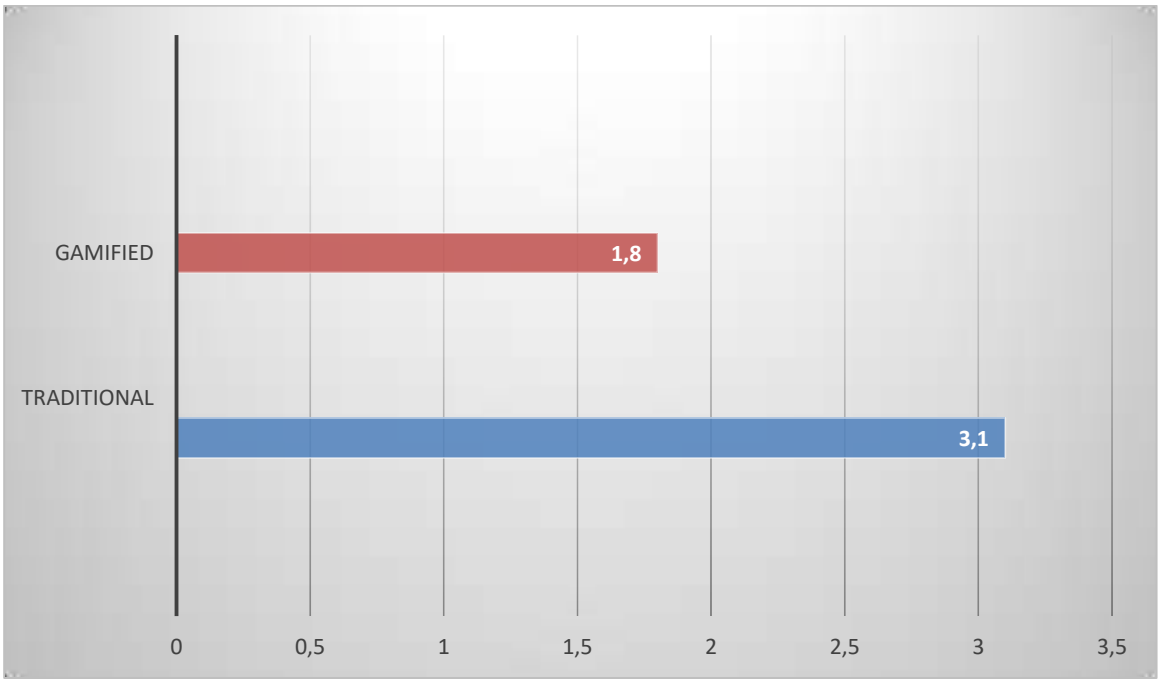


Figure 2. Comparison of motivation levels in traditional and gamified lessons.

The graph demonstrates a noticeable increase in motivation during gamified tasks, which agrees with the conclusions of Hamari et al. (2014), who found that gamification significantly elevates learner engagement.

The collected data shows that gamification not only influences motivation but also contributes to building a more supportive and less stressful classroom environment. Many students commented that they felt less afraid of making mistakes during game-based tasks because the activities shifted attention from correctness to participation. This emotional safety appeared to encourage students to take risks and use English more actively. Such findings align with Nicholson's (2015) argument that meaningful gamification creates experiences where learners participate for genuine interest rather than external rewards. This suggests that gamified lessons can play a significant role in nurturing confidence and positive attitudes toward language learning.

The study indicates that gamification has a strong psychological influence on students' motivation in English language learning. It increases enjoyment, lowers anxiety, and promotes active engagement. When game elements are applied with clear objectives and balanced rewards, they can significantly

improve students' willingness to participate. Future research may explore long-term effects or compare various types of game elements to understand which components are most effective.

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