

## Transformation of English Vocabulary Learning in Elementary Schools Through Gamification

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to determine teachers' perceptions of the concept of gamification learning models in vocabulary learning in Elementary Schools. Several opinion analyses are discussed in depth, reviewed from the topic of readiness for learning implementation, effectiveness, and its influence in improving vocabulary memorization skills. This type of research is descriptive qualitative with elementary school teachers from a number of schools and different grade levels as subjects. The data collection technique was carried out through interviews, namely by displaying a number of questions in a form that was filled in directly in the form of an opinion description. The results of the study showed that teachers were not yet ready to apply the gamification learning model, because their provisions and foundations in developing new teaching methods were still minimal. Teachers need technical guidance regarding insights into planning and technological innovation. However, teachers believe that the concept of gamification will be effective if applied in teaching English vocabulary. This model is quite interesting, presenting interactive features in it that can form a collaborative learning between peers so as to foster social values, skills and enthusiasm for learning.*

**Keywords:** gamification, vocabulary, elementary school

### ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi guru mengenai konsep model pembelajaran gamifikasi pada pembelajaran vocabulary di Sekolah Dasar. Beberapa analisa pendapat menjadi pembahasan mendalam yang ditinjau dari topik kesiapan penerapan pembelajaran, keefektifan, dan pengaruhnya dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menghafal vocabulary. Jenis penelitian ini adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan subjek guru SD dari sejumlah sekolah dan tingkat kelas yang berbeda. Teknik pengambilan data dilakukan melalui wawancara, yakni dengan menampilkan sejumlah pertanyaan dalam sebuah form yang diisi secara langsung dalam bentuk uraian pendapat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru belum begitu siap untuk menerapkan model pembelajaran gamifikasi, karena bekal dan dasar mereka dalam mengembangkan cara ajar baru masih minim. Guru membutuhkan bimbingan secara teknis mengenai wawasan inovasi perencanaan dan teknologi. Namun, guru meyakini terhadap konsep gamifikasi akan efektif apabila diterapkan dalam pengajaran vocabulary bahasa inggris. Model ini cukup menarik, menghadirkan fitur interaktif di dalamnya yang dapat membentuk sebuah kolaborasi belajar antar sebaya sehingga menumbuhkan nilai sosial, keterampilan dan semangat belajar.*

**Kata kunci:** gamifikasi, vocabulary, Sekolah Dasar

## A. Introduction

Effective learning is the mainstay in the development of educational aspects. Effective learning methods encourage students to make it easier to understand the material and achieve competencies. (Primary, 2024). Components in learning planning include approaches, strategies, methods, media and techniques. all are collected in one design and form a model. The selection of these components is not arbitrary, there is a basis that serves as a guideline in determining it. Then, it becomes a must for teachers to understand learning theory to design effective learning. While the focus of researchers in realizing effective learning tends to be more on the concept of implementing learning media. Learning media is referred to as a useful tool for creating interactive communication between teachers and students. Where a well-established interaction process will be able to support the quality of the learning process (Belva Saskia Permana et al., 2024).

The digitalization era with massive technological developments has become a trend in the development of learning. Integration between learning media and technology must be done, considering the interests of today's students. (Wiliyanti et al., 2024). Technology in learning plays a role in improving understanding of concepts through visualization of objects such as moving interactive audio-visual elements. (Maulid et al., 2024). The essence of learning does not focus on achieving material concepts, but also prioritizes changes in mindset and behavior in it. Gamification in the development of learning media is needed to achieve this. (Febriansah et al., 2021). Digital game elements that combine interactive audio visuals in the learning process for students present interesting and meaningful lesson content. (Syuhada et al., 2023). Some indicators of the success of implementing gamification include; demonstration of skills use of technology, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that appears to be maintained, and awareness in completing tasks (Putra et al., 2024).

In reality, the emergence of this trend is influenced by advances in technology,

information, and communication. Certainly, with the capabilities of today's educators, they are able to utilize technology as a learning resource, by transforming more adaptive teaching methods through gamification. Even so, English learning in Elementary Schools which is usually carried out by teachers with a classic model such as delivering material using simple media and monotonous strategy designs. Of course, this learning model is less interactive and less in demand by students. So the game element is worth considering as a teacher's tool to increase motivation and interest in students in the learning process. (Purba et al., 2024). The elements of open access digital games can involve students in exploring materials and questions using more interesting methods in game mechanics. (Suparmini et al., 2024).

Several recent studies have proven the effectiveness of gamification in learning in Elementary Schools in terms of increasing student learning motivation. A study has analyzed the implementation of gamification in increasing student learning motivation, the facts found are the formation of a competitive atmosphere between students and a positive impact in the form of active feedback. (M. Mahmubi & Homaidi, 2016). This shows that gamification in the learning process can lead to positive change and suggests the importance of teaching innovation by teachers as the main subject in the transformation of education in elementary schools.

The concrete operational stage in the theory of cognition proposed by Piaget states that children aged 7-11 years begin to think logically, but require real objects to understand a concept and solve problems. Abstract concepts are still very difficult to digest in their thinking. Departing from this problem, as in the analysis of needs in the field, students need a concrete learning media. Mastery of vocabulary is fundamental in mastering English, the main ingredient in developing speaking, listening and writing skills. The application of a more varied vocabulary will encourage students to practice actively in speaking (Aziza & Aliyyah, 2024). The key to mastering English vocabulary is through various

activities such as memorizing and understanding its use. Audio-visual media can help build long-term memory, these supporting tools can project abstract vocabulary through real image colors.

Based on data quoted from the Indonesia Scholarship Center showing the rating of English speaker ability throughout the world. Facts show that Indonesia is ranked 79 out of 101 countries, below Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, and even Vietnam. Departing from this reality, there are things that need to be changed from the mindset and learning methods applied in schools. First, instilling the importance of English as a means of communication for the international community in networking or establishing broad connections. Second, learning methods emphasize more on approaches that encourage active participation and the use of appropriate media to help acquire vocabulary.

Research by Nenden et al., (2024) shows English language learning activities accompanied by gamification media to support the development of students' learning outcomes, social and psychological skills. The acquisition of English vocabulary is increasing, as a reminder that the process is not based on the compulsion to memorize and repeat. However, through a truly interesting experience with game-based collaborative learning. Gamification keeps students motivated and increases students' understanding of learning.

This study provides insight into the potential application of gamification-based learning media in the content of vocabulary mastery by students in Elementary Schools. Teachers' perceptions will strengthen the concept of learning that is considered worthy of consideration in efforts towards transforming changes in better learning methods. Furthermore, this learning concept can be developed into an innovation asset that is worthy of being widely disseminated.

## **B. Research Method**

This study applies a descriptive qualitative method, aiming to analyze the views of elementary school teachers

regarding the opportunities for using game-based media in mastering English vocabulary. This analysis is based on the phenomenon of technological developments reviewed from the impacts received and significant changes oriented towards new learning innovations. Some data related to the demonstration of teacher understanding were obtained from the interview process which was summarized systematically and factually. The interview was conducted by presenting several questions in a google form link. Through this link, teachers can describe a number of answers to randomly arranged questions or share a little experience in teaching using the writing method. The situation in the field along with long experience in teaching learning, of course, is the main basis for teachers to construct their opinions. Meanwhile, the background of teachers in different schools and classes accommodates a lot of information to be studied more widely. The focus of the research also explores the idea of a learning concept that is designed to be developed more innovatively.

## **C. Result and Discussion**

### **Readiness to Design a Gamification Strategy**

The main task as an educator is to accompany students to achieve the desired competencies to prepare for future needs. Knowledge and skills are provided by teachers through learning activities delivered in various ways such as teaching, discussion and experimentation. This process is an interaction that occurs between the subject of learning and the object of learning. Therefore, the teacher's ability to organize learning activities is needed to achieve competency. Everything needs to be prepared in advance, including initial observations to understand the needs and development of students. Strategies, methods, media, and approaches should be adjusted to the characteristics of students in a learning environment.

Likewise with game-based learning strategies, this design begins with developing TP (Learning Objectives) independently. This process is recommended

to pay attention to the planning aspect first. The main guideline in designing initial activities, core activities to closing is to refer to the determination of learning objectives. After that, it is customary to make a game design plan. Developing game-based learning media for English vocabulary material is actually not that difficult. The initial step begins with determining the theme in selecting several vocabularies, then showing videos and sentences. The teacher invites students to observe the story that has been visualized and find several vocabularies. The stage in doing repetition is developed in a vocabulary guessing quiz through the quiziz, Kahoot, or word wall platforms.

IT-based understanding and insight are really needed, although technology-based media are currently available on quite a lot of platforms. Without coding skills, even graphic design is still possible to produce learning media. There are various websites and provider applications such as quiz-based media, flash media, and multimedia that allow teachers to use them as tools in teaching vocabulary material. The reality is that teacher competence in the field of technology is not yet completely good.

Based on the data, one of the teachers said; the implementation of game-based vocabulary learning media in schools is likely still difficult. The main reason is that schools in urban areas have adequate facilities with the availability of laptops and projectors as supporting devices in the implementation of learning. While in rural areas there are still minimal facilities, teachers tend to still use makeshift tools in teaching. In addition, teacher competence in the field of digital technology is still minimal, some of them are even technologically illiterate.

Teachers, within themselves must have a strong desire and tenacity to continue developing skills. It is a requirement for teachers to be able to adapt to current conditions with the major influence of technology in the field of education. Training and mentoring agendas are generally often obtained by teachers in the school environment or teaching community. However, the fact is that not all teachers

have strong intrinsic motivation in developing their abilities. Moreover, senior teachers with quite a long teaching experience or aged 50 years are certainly less proficient in technology. The assumption that age affects the ability to master technology is not entirely true, this can be proven by. More precisely, the desire and interest in individual teachers are quite low to upgrade their abilities, due to administrative tasks that are quite burdensome or the environment that is actually less supportive.

The contribution of technology in the field of education has a huge influence in optimizing the effectiveness and efficiency of the learning process. (Kharismawan et al., 2025). Moreover, our daily lives are inseparable from technological devices that are used as communication tools and to increase information. Furthermore, it is up to us as educators to think about developing technological opportunities to improve English language skills, especially the acquisition of new vocabulary. There are quite a few applications that provide features that support language acquisition activities, such as Duolingo, Fandi, and Hello Apps. All of them have easy access to be used by various groups, and should also be through proper control.

### **Success Indicators of Gamification of Vocabulary Material**

The concept of game-based learning has several elements in it, including: points, levels, challenges, and prizes<sup>16</sup>. Whatever media is applied, whether it is multimedia or three-dimensional, these elements should be included and implemented in the steps of the activity. The main learning in the core activity displays games accompanied by elements of competition between students to be the best at their level. The principle of gamification is to create a lively classroom atmosphere, meaning avoiding a boring passive atmosphere. So how do you know the signs of success of game-based learning? There is a valid method to find out, namely by evaluating the process and results. Filling out the observation sheet by the assessor is considered more objective, if you observe the progress of activities in the classroom

directly. Based on the results of these observations, the continuity of all student learning activities will be depicted. There will be two conclusions obtained, namely "gamification increases activity or gamification does not affect activity".

The main capital in active English language skills is abundant vocabulary mastery. The impact provides convenience for students later in conveying sentence ideas effectively, English language skills will shape them to establish better communication in the future. (Sondari et al., 2024). A teacher at Muhammadiyah Comal Elementary School in Pemalang Regency said that the indicator of gamification achievement is (quantitative indicator). This means that in this learning, at least students are able to master a large amount of vocabulary. Memorizing is the process of remembering objects with periodic repetition to store long-term information. (Hasibuan et al., 2025). Students' difficulties in memorizing are usually caused by low concentration and motivation, as well as difficulty in pronouncing words. (Mulatsih, 2021). This problem can be used as a consideration for teachers in presenting learning in class, so that the concept of gamification is truly able to answer this problem. Apart from that, learning needs to be packaged in such a way, in the sense of adapting to the needs and conditions of students so that competency can be achieved as expected.

Conventional learning generally uses a less varied learning model and often makes students bored while in class. This learning process only revolves around the exchange of information from teachers to students, this method is actually no longer relevant in today's era. Given the development of technology that has changed the way students view learning, they can access information so quickly via the internet with high accuracy and abundance. Actually, learning independently is an option to gain skills, it is not denied that learning English is also very effective if done independently. There are many platforms that facilitate the meeting of people from all over the world to gather virtually in a language community. They can network and form a learning

environment that can support the ability to speak a foreign language. So, actually teachers or tutors are not really needed if you only want to achieve the target of being proficient in the language.

So, gamification in learning is considered important as aligning technological progress with education. The learning environment is always a solution in developing academic, social and skill abilities in a balanced way. A child's personal development will be much better if the teacher controls it at all times, especially in the process of increasing knowledge or insight. Teachers can create a comfortable environment for children, for example by implementing gamification through games, competitions and giving rewards. Activities that have been carried out together with both teachers and students should provide experiences that are full of meaning and value. Without realizing it, the collaboration that was established explicitly made everything easier. Students work together to complete assignments or help each other memorize vocabulary. The creation of a comfortable atmosphere in students' learning activities is one of the turning points in the success of the gamification strategy.

English is a foreign language that is quite difficult to learn, with word and sentence structures that are very different from Indonesian. More varied vocabulary sometimes makes us confused in its use. In fact, this subject has been studied since elementary school to high school. The length of time studying does not affect the improvement of language skills, learning from teachers sometimes does not bring any changes. When teachers only focus on the manual, that's where there is no process of creation and innovation. The real impact on students is the lack of interest in learning a material, especially vocabulary mastery which spurs the process of memorizing continuously. Giving excessive demands will actually reduce interest in the learning process, it is better to present the right way or method that will increase students' willingness to learn. In line with what was conveyed by Srimuliyani, (2023) like gamification, which has been proven effective in increasing students' learning

motivation to follow the learning flow from start to finish.

### **Effectiveness of Gamification Implementation**

The application of gamification combines two elements, namely games in a medium and games in the form of activities. Both have differences, such as in the media, the content usually contains quizzes in the form of digital visualization, while the form of activity emphasizes the syntax or structure of the activity. Careful planning will determine the level of success of the process based on the psychological conditions and interests of students. Each activity design should be reviewed first by considering the structure of its implementation. The process of implementing learning is in accordance with what is expected, namely the realization of the concept along with the achievement of competence.

Based on the results of the interviews conducted, several opinions were obtained from teachers regarding the effectiveness of gamification on vocabulary mastery skills. The summary of the results explains that some of them assume that the learning strategy by implementing a game system creates an interactive and enjoyable learning experience. The interactive process will certainly affect student learning outcomes. There are also those who say that gamification would be more suitable in lower grades, namely grades I to IV. The reason is because in grades V and VI they no longer pay attention to an approach that is too childish. Then gamification is also considered very suitable and effective in increasing motivation, involvement and retention of English vocabulary learning, depending on how the teacher delivers the material being taught, so that the class becomes lively and enjoyable for students.

The conclusion of the interview results by a number of teachers, it was concluded that the views on the application

of the gamification concept in vocabulary learning are optimistic and pessimistic. Teachers are very sure that this step is a new innovation that can inspire educators to implement game-based learning models at every opportunity. Games embody a way of learning that provides many interesting experiences for students. The teacher's pessimism arises due to the lack of insight into the concept of gamification or never having encountered the application of the model directly.

The involvement of students in learning, eliminates the principle of teacher exploration. The information center is not only the object of the teacher, but also the experience gained from the process of peer cooperation in an activity. The role of the teacher is more focused as an innovator who initiates collaboration or as a concept designer. The teacher's task is also to direct students to always be active in the process of acquiring English vocabulary through the media applied. Interactive experiences seem to occur naturally, even though they have been designed in such a way. In relation to what was conveyed by Mazna et al (2024) explains that interactive learning is a peer-to-peer approach process and teachers that emphasizes academic, social and skills. This process is formed because of the support of the applied learning media so that it influences changes in interest and motivation in students to improve their English vocabulary material skills.

English is studied at all levels, from lower to upper grades. Learning English in elementary school aims to introduce and instill the value of urgency in the future to face the challenges of the rapid flow of change by the development of technology and information. Meanwhile, on the other hand, this ability also improves students' ability to communicate. Effective communication can be seen from how to build story telling when speaking in a public interaction or personal interaction that does not cause double meanings by the listener English helps train communication skills in social interactions that are established in a

learning environment. Obstacles in implementing English subjects in elementary schools are often found related to the content and interests of students. Gamification is present as a solution in compiling the concept of a different learning model with new media, methods, and strategies. This learning model is suitable for actualization in elementary school children by adjusting the level of development and needs. A concrete example is the use of flashcard vocabulary media from the image display side in the lower class showing full animation while in the upper class showing more realistic images. The explanation is, the visualization of an object depends on the level of experience experienced by the individual. The more the students' thinking power develops, the more they tend to prefer something real than fantasy.

The role of the teacher is very important in implementing the gamification learning system, a good concept will not work if the teacher as a guide does not understand the conditions of his students. Therefore, special skills are needed for teachers to deliver material and direct students to more active activities. Learning management is needed in an effort to convey information and drive student motivation. The importance of understanding students in the context of interaction, success will be achieved if there is a connection between the two. The gamification process with several features such as games, challenges, reward badges, and points in vocabulary learning aims to eliminate learning boredom and spur student motivation to be more enthusiastic about memorizing vocabulary lines.

### **The Effect of Gamification in Vocabulary Mastery**

Related to the variable of game influence in English vocabulary acquisition, it is important to listen to all teachers' views on the context of the topic. Questions raised by researchers received direct responses. Teachers did not just make up answers but based on experience or flying hours that were not small. They revealed that vocabulary mastery through the gamification method can be increased, the approach in it is interactive and positive so that the

memorization process becomes easier. The reward system or giving prizes encourages students to be enthusiastic about participating in learning, there is an element of reciprocity in it, namely the response and stimulus that apply to previous activities. Furthermore, gamification with the use of game elements in learning is said to have a significant positive influence on elementary school students' English vocabulary mastery.

Memorizing is an activity that aims to attach a word or sentence in the mind. The process that is usually gone through is repeating words with a lot of pronunciation intensity, basically this method is quite effective by repeating continuously (Nurdiniawati, 2020) English vocabulary is usually pronounced in consonants that are different from the letters that are composed. Pronunciation in English has a unique pronunciation and is not the same as Indonesian spelling. This is a challenge for individual students and teachers in learning it. So that the assumption arises that English is a difficult language. Especially for class teachers with an educational background as elementary school teachers, not many have adequate competence to teach English. Hasnani & Sukmawati, (2025) stated that although English has become a compulsory subject in the national curriculum, it is still limited by resources due to inadequate facilities and also the lack of teacher competence in English language skills. Meanwhile, training and mentoring as a driving force for teachers to innovate are rarely obtained.

This article contains new insights into English language learning innovation, worthy of being used as a guideline for teachers to develop students' abilities in this field. One of the main assets in English language skills is an abundant vocabulary. Not only abundant but also attached to the minds and hearts of our students, the concept of gamification offers a teaching solution that will provide an interesting impression and experience. The steps of gamification begin with developing CP and TP based on the teacher's book, then preparing teaching modules. All learning patterns and designs have been structured in the module, as well as models that will run

in line with its implementation. In addition, supporting media is mandatory to be used as a support for the learning process. The media developed are varied such as multimedia, visual media, audio-visual media that are oriented towards competition and game activities. The implementation of media is intended not only to display information, where the learning media designed is to project abstract nature into reality. Then allows students to be directly involved in its use through planned activities. The involvement of students in a group work pattern will form an active collaboration that causes positive interaction. As expressed by Dewi et al (2024) Collaborative learning emphasizes interactive aspects to improve skills and social in addition to academic values. Improvement in students' learning outcomes is seen from the evaluation conducted at the end of learning with indicators of success in the form of increased and understanding vocabulary.

Game elements can be designed in such a way by the teacher while still paying attention to field conditions as stated in the previous opinion. Collaborative learning in games is arranged in groups, member selection is based on different abilities or based on other considerations. The actual description of the game can be explained through a scheme like this; the teacher delivers material related to vocabulary through a story in the video being played, students are asked to listen and analyze what vocabulary is in the video. The teacher invites students to choose vocabulary that appears in the story through multimedia-based media (tends to be packaged in the form of a game). After several vocabularies are found, the teacher and students can correct together regarding the material displayed. The multimedia can also contain a flashcard or double-sided card in the form of words and pictures. The card is used by the teacher to guide students to pronounce vocabulary together according to the correct pronunciation. This step is repeated continuously (this stage is called repetition), sometimes it is necessary to involve students to lead in their pronunciation.

While the game element is more directed towards competition activities, teachers can apply the Teams Games Tournament (TGT) learning model starting by preparing several boxes containing illustrated questions with vocabulary material. Previously, the teacher also explained the rules that apply in the game to uphold the values of honesty and competitive sportsmanship. The applicable rules are that students are invited to take question cards after the signal starts and take turns between group members, with the winner criteria determined based on speed and accuracy in working on the questions. After the competition ends, the teacher and students evaluate together by reviewing the results of the work on the questions starting from the winning group. Rewards are distributed directly by the teacher to the winning group or to all groups that actively participate. The end of the activity is an important activity for teachers to reflect on the meaning of learning about the importance of the values of cooperation, enthusiasm for learning, honesty, and respect.

#### **D. Conclusion and Suggestion**

Teachers' readiness to welcome the era of digitalization of learning through the gamification model requires assistance in the form of training or technical guidance to improve competence in the field of learning planning and mastery of English language materials. The desire of teachers to innovate in applying the concept of gamification to vocabulary material will be moved if they have adequate insight. The creativity of teachers in elementary schools is still quite low due to burdensome tasks, responsibilities are more focused on administrative burdens and functional tasks. Competency updates for teachers should be carried out routinely at all times initiated directly by teachers in a learning community or local office. The forum is a platform that should be a place for teachers to develop their abilities and exchange ideas about learning innovations, especially in teaching English. Class teachers are required to have the ability to teach all subject areas, including English. So, no matter how



difficult it is, teachers are required to study the material so that learning input can be easily processed by students so that students' abilities are in accordance with what is expected.

Vocabulary mastery is the basis of English language skills, sentences arranged in a conversation or writing come from vocabulary. The main key in acquiring English vocabulary is the quality of the memorization process, where this process is carried out by saying words repeatedly with the correct pronunciation of course. Gamification makes it easy for students to memorize, namely by presenting interesting experiences that come from the media displayed and game elements in the learning steps. In addition, gamification affects interest and motivation in the learning process. Collaboration that is established between peers can foster social values and sensitivity among learners to help each other improve their academic achievements.

Game-based learning will be suitable for all grade levels, because the features in it are oriented towards a fun process through a humanist approach. Students can be actively involved in interacting directly using learning media to explore the material. This learning concept is very different from the conventional way that emphasizes vocabulary mastery through abstract memorization instructions, on the other hand gamification tries to invite students to a realistic experience in remembering and understanding vocabulary.

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