

## GAMIFICATION AND TBLT: A COMBINED APPROACH TO ENHANCING ENGAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION AMONG ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS.

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### **Abstract**

*Gamifying Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) improves the teaching of English. Due to the rapid advance of technology and the global use of English, new and innovative ways to teach English, which focus on the students' learning experience, are necessary. This research used a qualitative design and semi-structured interviews with six Cambridge O-Level English teachers selected via purposive sampling. The interviews revealed interesting results regarding the use of TBLT gamification and showed that the use of gamified TBLT improves student motivation, engagement, and confidence. In addition, students who received a gamified TBLT method found it improved their vocabulary retention, helped them finish tasks more quickly, and resulted in them taking a more active role in learning via the use of game-like components such as points, challenges, missions, and digital quizzes. In conclusion, the gamified TBLT approach also provides opportunities for students to communicate collaboratively and productively while utilizing the English language, ultimately allowing them to utilize the English language in a meaningful manner. Based on the results of this study, gamified TBLT should be utilized on a broader scale to increase student success*

### **Introduction**

The 21st century has brought it with a series of changes, most especially scientific and technological progress, as well as progress in common languages with new approaches. People who have deeply affected and modified daily life. Whether this concern is that it is important to mention the rapid aggressive event of globalization, which is created English a world language. The 21st century has brought it with a series of changes, most especially scientific and technological progress, as well as progress in common languages with new approaches. People who have deeply affected and modified daily life. Whether this concern is that it is important to mention the rapid aggressive event of globalization, which is created English a world language. Having that mind, author such as Kachru and Nelson (2001, as cited in Kuo, 2006) state "that English has developed from the native language of a relatively small island nation to the most widely taught, read, and spoken language that the world has ever known".

Over time education has sought different ways to teach. Methodologies have changed and these changes are based on the context and needs of each culture. Nowadays, technology is part of many people's lives, and that is why teachers should be equipped to use technology in their classes. Considering that the use of games in the classroom increases learners' interest in learning English (Mee et al., 2020), gamification is a tool that has been used to mix the learning process with game experiences,

Gamification is a concept that has proven to be a new trend in learning in the 21st century. It uses technology and sports principles in the classroom to change and support behavior (Nervento, Kholifah, Ahadhiyano and Samsudin, 2021); It is a mix of many teaching and learning principles to achieve complex tasks because it includes mechanics and methods that people think in a game to solve problems and inspire participation (Andeker & Özdaml, 2017). Gamification was created based on the idea that games help create interesting learning activities that are not only focused on fun, but also on promoting values that most of the lessons from games help change some behavior under non-marriage. (Mii et al., 2020).

According to me, TBLT is an approach to language teaching where students use the target language to perform meaningful tasks that show real-life conditions (Nunan,2004). And gamification is the use of game design elements in non-playing contexts (Deterding et al., 2011).

According to Bonila (2022), gamification has a game theory that uses progress by achieving levels and creating an environment that promotes inspiration. In addition, the use of positive response during the teaching process helps students improve the learning process, as gamification creates a dynamic environment where students know about progress and know what needs to be done to achieve the next levels. The main idea of a gamified class is to introduce game design elements and create a game. However, these games should not only be regarded as the center of the classroom, but as a change to solve problems, increase the inspiration of students and the commitment students' thinking as a change (Dichev and Dicheva, 2017).

Remembering a cognitive and emotional approach plays an important role in inspiration for learning and learning. The fact is given that sports produce such stimulation. Dale (2014) said that the work that is part of the gaming improves players' attention and commitment that played experiences is nice environment (Mulins and Sabarwal, quoted in 2020). Mainly, players are focused on achieving the goal, which is why it creates positive and negative emotions. In order to achieve these feelings and the learning process that were asked to contact Muliner and Sabarwal (2020), muffling should be more focused on cognitive procedure than in the emotional process. On the other hand, it is important to include different aspects for a classroom game.

According to Bonila (2022), the use of sports in the language class should contain three main elements. First, conflict, which means that to overcome different difficulties, is presented as a challenge. Second, collaboration and/or competition: Use of collaborative education where one must be able to work in groups to achieve something, not only learning, but also reward, because inspiration should work and receive prizes. Finally, the strategy and chance are to create experience by increasing the level of solving the problem and developing creativity and enthusiasm.

According to Willis (1996), tasks are meaningful activities done by the students to achieve a goal. For this reason, they should be communicated with the goals of the course and have a series of characteristics to be part of this approach. Mainly, tasks should have an opinion and good use of communication to solve a problem that must be related to the actual reference to the students. Lifelong Learning Program (N.D.) mentions that it is important to create conditions where oral communication is necessary for a task, and provides opportunities to use the language learned in different contexts.

### **Research Objectives & Research Questions**

#### **Research Objectives**

1. To investigate the efficiency of TBLT in improving English Language Learning Skills.
2. To examine the role of motivation in improving English Language Learners.
3. To study the role of gamification in supporting English Language Learning.
4. To analyze the combined impact of gamification and TBLT on learner engagement.

#### **Research Questions**

1. How effective is “Task-based language teaching (TBLT)” in strengthening English language learning skills?
2. What is the role of motivation in improving the performance of English language students?
3. How does gamification help in English language learning?

4. What is the combined effect of Gamification and Task-Based Language Learning (TBLT) on student engagement?

**Literature Review**

**Gamification:**

Over time, education has explored different ways of teaching. The methods have changed, and these changes are based on the context and needs of each culture. Today, technology is part of many people's lives, which is why teachers must be equipped to use technology in the classroom.

Considering that the use of games in the classroom increases students' interest in learning (Me et al., 2020), Gamification is a tool that has been used to combine the learning process with gaming experiences.

Gamification learning motivation and engagement arouses playing aspects, including points, marks, rewards, and achievements in the educational context (Kalogiannakis, Papadakis, and Zouoramakis, 2021;).

Zourampakis, Papadakis & Kalogiannakis, 2022. The elements of dynamics, mechanics, and the correct components are combined to learn to reach the intended outcomes of learning such as positive behavior when learning occurs and raising the motivation of the student (Bisen and Kocakoyun, 2018; Cape, 2012). Calogiannakis, Papadakis, and Zouampakis, (2021) emphasize that the learning process could be enhanced with the help of gamification that can stimulate motivation and engagement, learn success, and social interaction. Moreover, the students have language working in their favor, Kaymbagioglu, Octe, and Celik (Phuong, 2020 (2020)).

The Gamification concept receives great recognition in different walks of society, Like education, technology, and culture. Zicherman (2010) described gamification as the use of game design ideas to solve problems and interact with the audience. Expansion On this idea, the cupp (2012) emphasized that good gamification not only uses mechanics, but also aesthetics and inspiration.

**Task -Based Language Teaching (TBLT)**

Task -based language teaching (TBLT) was aimed at the Indian learned N.S. As Prabhu is formulated in the Bangalore project [1], students in the classroom should be assigned specific tasks in the foreground. The method is student -centered instruction as opposed to teacher -centered teaching. The teacher plays the role of a facilitator when the students start the set task in order to assist the students. The study of English -language teaching using TBT since 1990s has been swinging between theoretical and teaching practice. Tasks are terminologies that refer to meaningful learning activities and learning outcomes which enable students to engage [1] [2] [3] [4]]. The task guidance of the students on how to accomplish the assignment based on a clear goal in classroom and the guidance and assistance of the teacher in the learning process of the student are both a task -oriented teaching strategy. TBLT focuses on the idea that students are able to apply the language learnt in practical situations and scenarios. In other words, meaningful communication and practical communication skills ought to be offered on the fore in teaching the second language [5].

In TBLT, the curriculum is ideally structured around meaningful tasks-which mimics the real activities that people think about when planning, directing or remembering their day "(Long, 2015, p. 6) as visiting the doctor, attending a job interview or organizing a trip. These tasks are designed not only as classroom exercises, but as communicative events that reflect real social interactions, which increases the student's involvement and relevance to the learning process. This approach, although not the only one, constitutes a strong version of the CLT above, as it "provides the tasks that form the basis for the entire language plan", thus creating commitment.

Noonan (2004) saw TBT broken down into three stages, ie understanding, manipulation and production of meaningful language. Tasks, from which the approach takes its name, are the focus of teaching and take place in specific situational and linguistic contexts. Willis (1996) defined it as learning or achieving by achieving a goal

Through activity that includes solving a problem, completing a puzzle, playing a game, or even sharing and comparing experiences, while Ellis (2003: 16) as a "Action planning requires the pupil to treat language pragmatically to give a result that can be evaluated in the form of correct and appropriate propositional content". It may be possible to conclude that:

- Language learning occurs as problem-solving in the tasks.
- TBLT is a dynamic process, which is communication-based.
- It is the emphasis on meaning, and not form.
- The work is appraised based on results or task accomplishment.

Lastly, Skehan (1998) gave a list of significant task characteristics:

Meaning is primary,

Tasks should be realistic and student-centered,

TBLT develops in stages: a) A pre -pre-assignment where the subject, task, and instructions are introduced by the teacher, b) a time or during the assignment where students work on the task with the teacher who observes the process and provides further feedback when needed, c) a post-assignment where analysis of the language with relevant exercises is introduced. The TBLT criteria that need to be checked in VG are: a) Problem-solving situation, b) Dynamic communication process, c) Focus on the message, d) Final assessment in tea.

### **The motivational role of learning English language**

Motivation is very critical in learning any language, including English. According to Detuell, R.C (2012), the students with positive attitudes to the English-language learning are highly motivated both instrumentally and interactionally. He also argued that extrinsic factors do not influence the motivation of the student.

In a study on the types of motivation required to learn a foreign language, Engin (2009) established that instrumental motivation is anchored on a practical approach, whereas the integrative motivation relies on personal desire and the desire to seek something. Moinwaziri. M (2009) did not agree with researchers who considered that instrumental motivation was relevant to EFL learning. They came up with the conclusion that instrumental and integrative motivation are significant in English-language learning.

Al-Otaibi (2004) goes on to state that motivated students are better able to learn a foreign language and are able to afford and offer greater costs and victims to reach their targets in L2 learning. Brown (2001) says that motivation is the driving force behind the strength of his or her internal desire to learn. A student who has an integrative orientation is one who teaches L2 socially and culturally. The drive towards attaining objectives may be high or low.

Although Al-Hazemi H. (2000) explained that a strong desire to learn L2 is an important factor that helps the students to reach high levels of competence and success in accomplishing language learning objectives. Based on the results of four studies on L2 performance, Lai (1999) came to the conclusion that Chinese students in Hong Kong were instrumentally motivated and career-oriented.

### **Student's engagement**

According to Lamborn et al. (1992) is defined as psychological attempts and investment of the pupils to learn, appreciate or grasp skills, crafts or learning that the curriculum is supposed to advance (p. 13). Shines et al. (2009) had defined student engagement as the

quality and quantity of involvement or relationship of students with an educational effort and hence with activities, values, people, goals and place involved (p. 495). According to Rent et al. (2018), the commitment to the pupil is the period during which the students dedicate themselves to successfully carry out educational tasks and activities. Chang et al. (2016) also indicated that student engagement has been defined as the level of student involvement in education situations like face to face or face to face situations and the level of energy they expend on educational projects. Broadly speaking, when it comes to language learning, the study of commitment might help in shedding light on how students think, believe, and feel during the learning processes (and Haha-Baldwin, 2019). Pick et al. (2021) also claimed that the engagement construction of the student is multidimensional and consists of various characteristics, including emotional, cognitive, and behavioral ones. He pointed out that through the accomplishment of a language learning process, students are able to engage in the classroom not only physically, but also cognitively. According to him, these aspects interact to define the optimism of the students towards the process of learning. According to Diners et al. (2019), some behaviors like doing work, attending classes, and engaging in interactive sessions with teachers in regard to questions and answers, are associated with behavioral engagements. As Mercer (2019) explained, involvement and motivation differ because of the behavioral aspect of engagement. Another definition of emotional commitment by Diners et al. (2019) was the emotional reactions of pupils in a classroom situation. Additionally, he defined cognitive commitment as the propensity of the student to employ complex learning strategies as opposed to simple learning strategies. According to Reschli and others (2020), behavioral engagement is the one that is correlated with cognitive and affective commitment significantly.

Gelichli et al. (2022) have established that each element of language learning motivation showed a strong correlation with the engagement of the student. Their research also found that there was the strongest significant relationship between cognitive involvement and language learning motivation. According to another study on the connection between negative emotions and student engagement, the paper by Zhao et al (2021) demonstrated that the academic interest of the student has a strong correlation with the mindset of student. They also observed that such negative feelings as stress express the connection between learning engagement and growth tank.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a qualitative research methodology as it aimed to explore in depth the teachers' perspectives, lived experiences, and instructional practices related to the integration of gamification and “task-based language teaching (TBLT)” in English language classrooms. Qualitative research allowed for rich, detailed, and descriptive data that quantitative methods could not capture. Study participants included six Cambridge O Level English teachers from the same school. They were selected through targeted selection to ensure that only people with relevant teaching experience and knowledge of classroom pedagogy were included. I personally contacted each teacher on the school's campus and invited them to participate in a face-to-face interview. Before data collection, I obtained their informed consent and formal permission to ensure that they clearly understood the purpose of the research and their right to withdraw at any time.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed flexibility for follow-up questions while maintaining consistency between participants. All interviews were audio recorded with a mobile recorder to maintain accuracy for subsequent transcription. The interview protocol included the following six open-ended questions: (1) How long have you been learning or teaching English, and what kind of learning environment do you work in? (2) What factors motivate you to learn or teach English? (3) In your experience, does

gamification make learning more fun, more competitive or effective? Why? (4) Can you describe an example where gamified TBLT activities improved your engagement or performance? (5) What types of games or gamified tasks do you find most useful for language learning? (6) Should the combined approach of gamification + TBLT be implemented more widely? why or why not?

Data saturation occurred after the fifth and sixth interviews, when no new insights emerged. Therefore, the interview process was completed after all six interviews had been completed, which provided sufficient data for robust thematic analysis.

**Major Theme and Codes:**

Theme	Codes	Insights from interviews
1. Teaching/Learning Experience & Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6–8 years of experience</li> <li>Traditional environment</li> <li>Task-based learning</li> <li>Technology-enhanced tools</li> </ol>	<p>Most participants started in traditional classrooms. Gradual shift toward TBLT and technology-enhanced learning.</p> <p>Mixed environment improved students' communication and participation.</p>
2. Motivation for Learning/Teaching English	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Career advancement</li> <li>Communication needs</li> <li>Personal growth</li> <li>Student progress</li> </ol>	<p>Motivated by career opportunities and academic growth. Teachers motivated by student progress and learning improvement. Learners enjoy English media (songs, movies).</p>
3. Perceptions of Gamification	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fun and enjoyable</li> <li>Healthy competition</li> <li>Active engagement</li> <li>Better retention</li> </ol>	<p>Gamification increases enjoyment and fun in learning. Boosts participation and focus. Reduces stress and increases retention.</p>
4. Effectiveness of Gamified TBLT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased engagement</li> <li>Faster performance</li> <li>Collaborative learning</li> <li>Confidence building</li> </ol>	<p>Students complete tasks faster and more confidently. Encourages collaboration and real-life communication. Builds confidence, especially through role-plays.</p>
5. Examples of Gamified TBLT Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timed vocabulary challenges</li> <li>Mission-based tasks</li> <li>Role-plays (shopping, mystery games)</li> <li>Digital quizzes (Kahoot/Quizizz)</li> </ol>	<p>Activities like role-plays, missions, and quizzes improve learning. Students enjoy point-based and competitive tasks. Activities strengthen speaking, listening, and vocabulary skills.</p>
6. Helpful Gamified Tasks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quizzes</li> <li>Storytelling games</li> <li>Role-play</li> <li>Word puzzles &amp; team challenges</li> </ol>	<p>Interactive tasks help in quick revision and meaningful communication. Role-plays and challenges make learning practical and student-centered. Vocabulary retention improves through word puzzles and matching tasks.</p>
7. Recommendation for Wider Implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly recommended</li> <li>Student-centered approach</li> <li>Real-life language practice</li> </ol>	<p>Gamified TBLT should be widely used in classrooms. Supports mixed-ability learners. Makes learning</p>

	4. Higher motivation & participation	dynamic, interactive, and enjoyable.
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### Results and Findings

Analysis of the interview statistics discovered that the contributors generally had positive views on the usage of gamified mission-primarily based language learning (TBLT) in the English language study room. Most teachers had six to eight years of experience and mentioned that despite the fact that they initially taught through conventional, textbook-driven techniques, they progressively transitioned to more interactive and era-improved techniques. This trade created an extra student-centred learning environment and accelerated scholar engagement. Participants expressed strong motivation to research and teach English, attributing this motivation to instructional and expert needs, conversation purposes, and the impact on of digital media such as songs, games, and memories. Across all interviews, gamification was perceived as a a laugh and motivating approach that reduced college students' stress levels, advocated healthy competition, and advanced retention of vocabulary and grammar principles. The findings confirmed that gamified TBLT notably multiplied participation, cooperation, and confidence inside the study room, specifically during speaking and function-play obligations. Teachers found that students finished duties faster and with extra enthusiasm when sport factors, which include points, rewards, or demanding situations, had been included. Various sports have been frequently used, such as vocabulary-demanding situations, quests, looking for grammar clues, narrative duties, role-playing, and virtual quiz platforms. Participants agreed that these sports made the lessons extra dynamic and interactive and supported conversation talents. Overall, the findings indicate that gamified TBLT is an effective instructional method that promotes engagement, motivation, cooperative studying, and genuine language use, making it a broadly endorsed technique.

### Conclusion

A comparison of the effectiveness of the two techniques (Gamification and TBLT) resulted in positive results for students' ability to learn English. The introduction of gamification created significant increases in motivation, confidence, and participation while reducing anxiety among teachers and their students. Examples of Gamification include role-playing, digital quizzes, and Missions or Vocabulary Games. It also allows students to engage in collaborative communication through accomplishing tasks in a more effective way than traditional classroom methods.

The findings of this study indicate that the combination of Gamification and TBLT offers significant benefits for students: they will develop teamwork skills, have greater access to the authentic use of language, and have improved vocabulary acquisition and conversational fluency. Therefore, we recommend that Gamified TBLT be used more widely with students of all levels of proficiency in a collaborative and motivating environment. Our overall intent is to promote a learner-centered perspective.

Overall, there is evidence of the potential for combining Gamification with TBLT as a means of improving the learning experience for students while increasing their level of engagement.

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