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## Gamification in ESL/EFL Studies: Unlocking Career Potential in the Digital Era

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### ABSTRACT

Gamification has recently become one of the most effective approaches to ELT. The research paper discusses the theoretical framework of gamification in learning and assesses the effectiveness of applying this concept, particularly on the proficiency of ESL/EFL learners in higher education. Research evidence supports learner engagement, retention, and motivation through gamification. At the same time, recent statistical reports on the gamification industry reveal thriving career options for ESL/EFL learners. So, the present study discusses the possibilities of gamification in the career enhancement of advanced learners. The research focused on the,

- a. previous research on gamification for improving language proficiency and
- b. current trends in the gamification industry which could unlock career potential and aid in the recruitment drives for ESL/EFL learners

The systematic study and research findings were promising and encouraging in alignment with the digital innovations of the 21st century.

**Keywords:** ESL/EFL Learners, Gamification, English Proficiency, Higher Education, Career Potential.

### 1. Introduction

Gamification is an approach to incorporating game-design features to teach, inspire, and motivate people. There is a growing demand for interactive and, task-based activities. The learner can improve confidence levels, develop a positive attitude, and become motivated to learn the target language. In this article, the researcher emphasized the concept of gamification as an approach to sort out conventional issues in ELT. At the same time, gamification has a major impact on organizations, workspaces, online communities, consumers, workers, vendors, and partners. Gamification has the

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potential to make major changes to training and recruitment processes. Thus, the present research focused on the

- a. theoretical framework for improving the proficiency levels of ESL/EFL learners through gamification and
- b. current trends in the gamification industry which can unlock career prospects and aid in the recruitment drives for ESL/EFL learners.

## 2. Literature Review

Latest studies show that gamification leads to improvement in understanding of the English language among learners especially those learning English as a Foreign/ Second Language. Research has shown that the use of game-based teaching enhances the level of learning and enhances students' confidence and interest in their lessons. This paper summarizes several important conclusions about the application for gamification in developing students' achievement in ESL/ EFL classes.

A study conducted by Tayeh et al. (2024), *The Effect of Using Gamification to Improve EFL Students' Academic Performance* revealed empirical evidence for hypothesis that the implementation of gamification within the EFL classroom is beneficial in increasing learners' achievement and participation levels. The mean score indicated 74.44 percent for the participants who were in the gamified group; and 69.31 percent for the participants who were in the control group. The study also noted that gamification proved most effective towards varied aspects of language learning such as; vocabulary, grammar, and reading competency. The paper recommends that educators should adopt the use of gamification to teach EFL students. It is the observation of positive effects in this present study that supports the fact that gamification may be a useful approach for the improvement of the language learning experience. (Tayeh et al., 2024).

A study conducted by Ravichandran et.al., (2024) on *Gamifying Language Learning: Applying Augmented Reality and Gamification Strategies for Enhanced English Language Acquisition* focused on how the ideas of gamification and augmented reality impact the overall enhancement of language learning. An interactive setting investigates the effect of augmented reality on language acquisition in which the real interactions of a student may occur with virtual objects that are fully integrated into the real world. The findings offered useful insights to teachers, and curriculum designers on this innovative approach for creating a personalized learning environment to enhance second-language acquisition. (Ravichandran et.al., 2024)

A study by Nathan, Harwati, and Hashim (2023) on *A Systematic Review on Gamified Learning for Improving Language Skills in ESL Classrooms* claimed that digital gamification is an extremely entertaining approach to help ESL learners. The research studied 16 papers between 2016 and 2021 which showed that gamification has a positive impact on learning experiences. The learning outcomes revealed improvement in learner's content language learning, engagement, motivation, and satisfaction through gamification learning.

Zippia's (2023) statistics revealed, "67% of U.S. students prefer gamified learning experiences to traditional education methods, and nearly 70% find gamified classes more engaging and motivating."

Takeuchi, L. M., & Vaala, S. (2014) reported, "Nearly 74% of K-8 teachers use digital games for instructional purposes in the United States."

### Gamification industry

A study by Eleonor et.al., on *Gamification for business development* estimated that at least 70% of the Global 1000 organizations work on gamification by 2020, a major change within organizational work culture. It provided literature-supported evidence that using elements of games in the workplace increases motivation and engagement, and optimizes organizational performance. The paper also

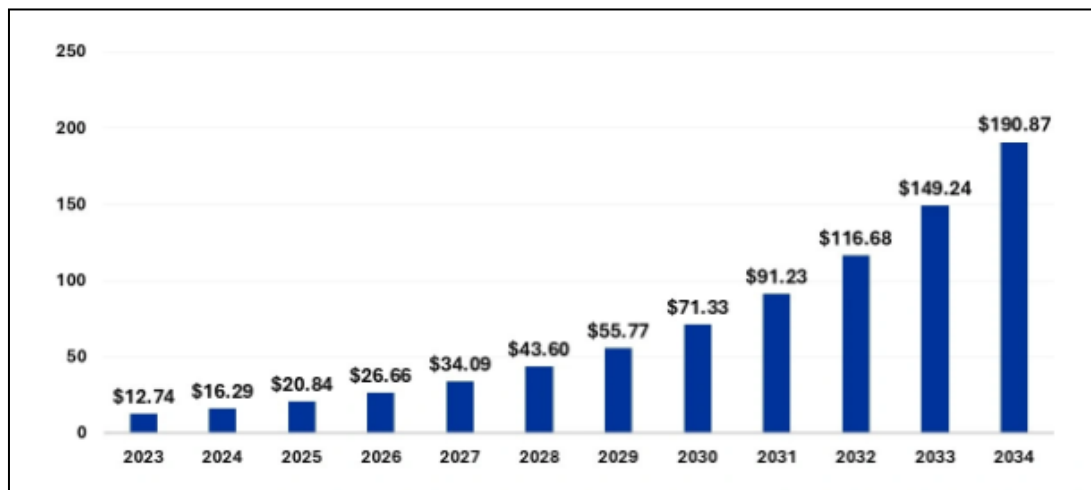
outlined a case study of Šiaulių banks in Lithuania and presented how gamification promotes service quality, captures a loyal customer base, retains the customers, and benefits the stakeholders in financial sectors. Therefore, the paper stressed that gamification has immense scope for integrating new changes in business development and suggested further empirical and practical investigations across disciplines to understand the significant role of gamification in the business world. (Eleonora et.al., 2019)

A recent report by Precedence Research on *Gamification Market Size, Share, and Trends 2024 to 2034* reveals interesting trends in the gamification field. The research reported that students appreciate gamification because

- learning is more interactive with a fun environment
- interactive, and digital media content is more engaging compared to rote learning techniques used in traditional online learning.

The marketing trends indicate promising growth as follows:

- The global gamification market size was USD 16.29 billion in 2024 and reaches approximately USD 190.87 billion by 2034 at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 27.90% between 2024 and 2034.



**Fig 1: Gamification Market Size 2023-2034 (USD Billion)**

(Source: <https://www.precedenceresearch.com/gamification-market>)

- The retail and e-commerce sectors expect increasing number of mobile phone users and web traffic for regional market growth. The comparative study shows that the United States can enhance specific employee management competencies and the organizational work culture in a short period. Hence, the country has witnessed the rise of new startups especially those related to gamification.
- Europe expects to record the most growth in gamification. Governments and key players in countries including the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and others invested in organizing conferences and events to create awareness of gamification solutions. In addition, Germany and Spain expect to gain momentum in the retail and healthcare industries.
- There is an expectation that Asia Pacific (China, India, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, and the Philippines) will grow exponentially. Currently, the Asia Pacific region is one of the most suitable areas to involve gamification marketing participants. According to recent reports, China expects to occupy the largest market of gamification by using features such as membership cards, and reward points.

- Gamification solutions continue to grow in Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa. The number of new and indigenous software companies is increasing across Latin America.
- The growing interest in E-learning and game-based education in Brazil shows stimulating progress.
- Microsoft Corporation, MPS Interactive Systems Limited, Ambition, Aon plc., Axonify Inc., BI WORLDWIDE (Bunchball Inc.), Callidus Software Inc. (SAP SE), Cognizant, G-Cube, and Iactionable are the companies showing promising progression in gamification field. (Precedence Research, 2024)

**Resign Design:** The research design focused on the comprehensive review of various research articles on the efficacy of gamified environments for improving the proficiency of ESL/EFL learners in higher education. It also advocated the digital integration of teaching and learning evolution for developing critical thinking, analytical skills, and collaboration for a fun-filled, engaging, and interactive learning space to suit the learner's learning styles and needs. Additionally, the personalized and immersive learning space can revolutionize learners' search for better jobs in a technology-driven society. Hence, the research has the following questions:

1. What are the Gamification Tools in ESL Education that support learner engagement and improve proficiency skills?
2. What are the employment opportunities for ESL/EFL learners?
3. What are the current marketing trends for gamification in the job market?

### Gamification Tools

Gamification in English as a Second Language (ESL) education gives scope for varied learning styles, creates personalized learning experiences, and supports individualized recognition of the learners. Gamification platforms for ESL/EFL learners give scope for digital integration fostering 21st-century skill development. Some gamification applications for enhancing language proficiency:

- a. **Classcraft** is an educational application of Role-Playing in a classroom. It forms virtual groups and assigns characters; gives *Experience Points* (XP) to earn for getting involved in the class activities, answering questions correctly, and assisting fellow teammates: Instructors get *immediate feedback* indicating who among the class is participating and what result is being achieved. In addition, there is a carrot and stick that can be featured in the platform to uphold *good behavior* and order in the classroom. Although there are rivalry aspects, *collaboration rewards competition*. Classcraft is an interesting and valuable tool that facilitates connection with other teaching platforms.
- b. **Kahoot** employs the concept of a *Leader Board* which shows the best players thus making the players compete with each other. It gives *points and grades* where the teachers allot scores to each question so that the learners earn points for every right answer. Educators can create *student-centered activities and interactive lessons* and share *live game sessions* in the classroom or through an online conference, with questions on the shared monitor for independent and collaborative learning. Learners can access a *question bank* and *visual report/grade card* for assessment.
- c. **ClassDojo** offers solutions for teaching and classroom management. Teachers can share *photos, videos, and classroom activity status* on a *newsfeed* that is not accessible to anyone in the public domain. It also allows teachers and parents to exchange messages more privately. The learners receive *points and rewards* for good manners and accomplishments. This way, teachers can offer *invitations and notifications* to ensure everyone is participating. The students can develop *portfolios* of their work and skill details. The other features include *multimedia integration*,

collaboration, progress reporting, and remote learning support for effective distance teaching and virtual classes.

- d. **Edpuzzle**, an 'interactive video tool provides *interactive video lessons* picked from YouTube, Khan Academy, and TED-Ed. Teachers can create their videos, and transform them into a teaching lesson by adding questions, audio notes, and voiceovers. The tool provides *comprehension quizzes* within videos to ensure comprehension and interactively evaluate the student. Other features include *audio notes and voiceovers: Video editing* to rename, shorten, and select passages in videos to match the goals of learning; *Curriculum library database* of already produced lessons matching different subjects and grades; *Flipped learning interface*; *Collaboration facility* among teachers; and *Real-Time analytics* where the teachers can get real-time responses on the level of engagement and performance of the students which helps them to modify the delivery of the content and simplify grading process. Edpuzzle is a great tool for delivering substantial, meaningful, and interesting learning content.

Many gamification tools make the learning environment enjoyable. The learners can explore Quizizz, Duolingo, Prodigy, Blooket, Socrative, Xperiencify, Lingopie, knudge.me, Busuu, LingoDeer, Drops, and Preply.

ESL/EFL learners can engage in multimodal and digital classroom settings with innovative and energizing platforms. This kind of exposure and learning platform explores excellent career options suitable for 21st-century skill development and employment opportunities.

### Employment Opportunities in Gamification for ESL/EFL learners

Gamification in learners' engagement is becoming common in learning environments. The ESL/EFL learners can further broaden their scope towards creating an employment opportunity.

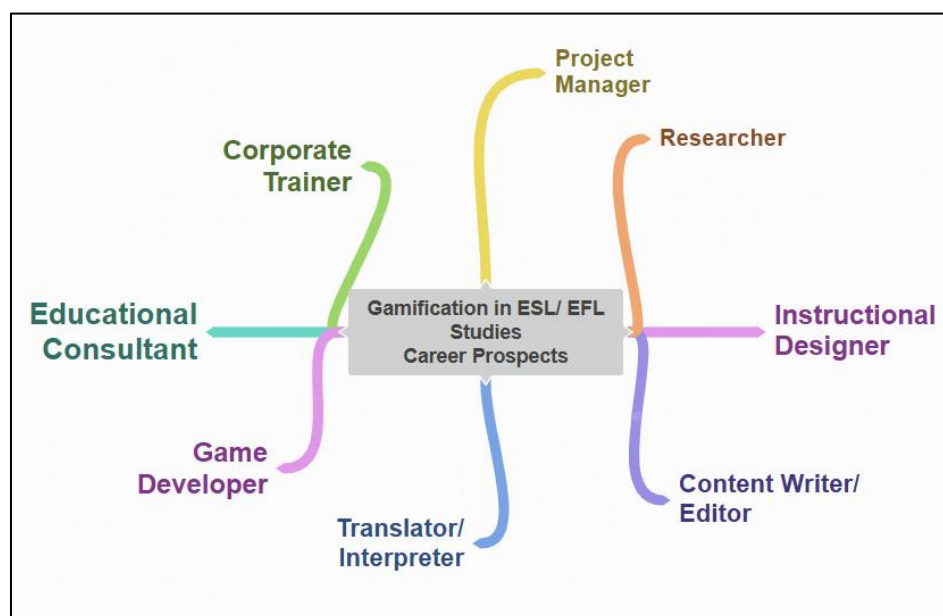


Fig 2: Gamification in ESL/ EFL Studies: Career Prospects Created from Coggle. (Own work)

### Some potential roles in the gamification field

- a. **Instructional Designer** has several responsibilities. She/he involves in content development by creating exciting content including gamification features such as points, badges, rankings, and quests; setting specific instructional goals and behavioral goals; developing supplementary materials that will complement the instructional content with audio, videos, animations, or simulations; evaluate the efficiency of assessment patterns; collaborate with freelance

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instructional designers, developers, and educators to design and modify the gamification interface, determine effective methods of gamification for learners; and *lead projects* by controlling timeframes, and maintaining documentation.

The entry-level package is 3 to 5 lakhs, and employees with 10+ years of experience earn up to 15 lakhs.

- b. **Content Writer/ Editor** who specializes in gamification works uniquely and innovatively. She/ he conducts extensive research on the best practices of gamification, current trends, and possible approaches capable of creating engaging and effective content; incorporates relevant articles, blog entries, scripts, and instructional materials; creates captivating stories including gamification features to keep audiences interested; collaborates with instructional designers, developers, and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) team to ensure that the content aligns with the learning objectives, technical requirements, and creates noticeable content; reviews and improves the content standards of the chosen level; analyze qualitative and quantitative results of the viewers' engagement to make any modifications to meet evaluation and performance goals. The content writers can lead project management, supervise content development projects, and set timelines to deliver a unique and innovative gamified concept. The Editor involves in the final proofreading, ensures 100 percent accurate content, and takes responsibility for quality products.
- c. **Translator/ Interpreter** performs multiple roles including translating texts, dialogues, and instructions to retain the linguistic tone and mood; localization and adaptation of the material addressing cultural sensibilities; checking the translations, reviewing, and editing them to make them accurate, precise, clear, and interesting; consulting with game developers and designers for integration of varied approaches in gamification; and cooperating with voice actors to ensure translation of audible and authentic materials.
- d. **Educational Consultant** specializing in gamification for ESL education conducts a wide and intensive survey on potential requirements and difficulties of teaching ESL learners using a digital platform. She/ he designs and develops ESL lesson plans considering gamification elements to strengthen the learner's interest and improve learning achievement; provides continuing professional development opportunities for educators to contextualize the content; builds resources and collaborates to disseminate instructional material; analyzes the effectiveness of game-oriented learning to improve language skills; involves in extensive research in the field of gamification and ESL Education to guarantee relevant and culturally sensitive instructional inputs.
- e. **Researcher** plays an important role that demands literature surveys, and current investigations on gamification and ESL education. The researcher has to design frameworks that outline conceptual approaches for investigating the effects of game-based learning on ESL students; collect information from ESL learners, teachers, and other stakeholders; analyze the data to reveal a correlation; disseminate and publish the research output for future requirements; consider new and potential technologies of gamification and the possibility of their use in teaching ESL upholding integrity, data privacy and ethical standards, discuss policies and make recommendations for the educators and policymakers and propose evidence-based effective gamified ESL curriculum and instruction.

Corporate trainers, educators, instructors, and teachers can also unlock opportunities in e-learning platforms, curriculum development, course creation, and content writing to bring a learner-centered approach to their workspace.

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## The role of Multinational Companies (MNC) in gamification and educational sectors

Multinational Companies (MNCs) have produced and offered a great number of educational products and *Microsoft* regularly provides services for instructional designers and content developers for improved learning conditions. *IBM* offers several courses in education and training and employs people to design such programs. *Google* has a variety of educational projects and very often seeks instructional designers and content developers to design educational content. It has volunteers and local nonprofit organizations to obtain speech data in multiple Indian languages in an endeavor to incorporate support for language learning and access and develop AI models. *Adobe* creates educational products and services and seeks instructional designers and content developers. *McKinsey* implements training & development in organizations and facilitates the employment of instructional designers who design learning interventions. The salary package ranges between 3-4 lakhs for an entry position to 14-15 lakhs per annum for employees with 10+ experience. *Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)* has come up with Immersive Learning Content Services which employs Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), Gaming, and Simulation to bring engaging and personalized cross-device digital instructional services to improve language learning.

Research shows multinational companies (MNCs) such as *Google*, *American Express*, and *AT&T* offer competitive salaries. *Google's* average package is 96,413 dollars and *Meta's* package is 93,002 dollars.

### Conclusion

The gamification environment requires sophisticated facilities for learners. Studies show the impact of gamification on the educational sector despite challenges like limited internet resources, large classrooms, lack of professional development programs, and digital illiteracy. Career prospects show increasing demand for digital skills and prerequisite credentials to fit in the gamification world and become successful learners and employees.

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