

**STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF USING GAMIFIED
ACTIVITIES TO LEARN ENGLISH VOCABULARY :
A CASE STUDY AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

A THESIS

**Submitted to the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training as part of the
fulfillment of the requirements to obtain a Bachelor of Education degree**

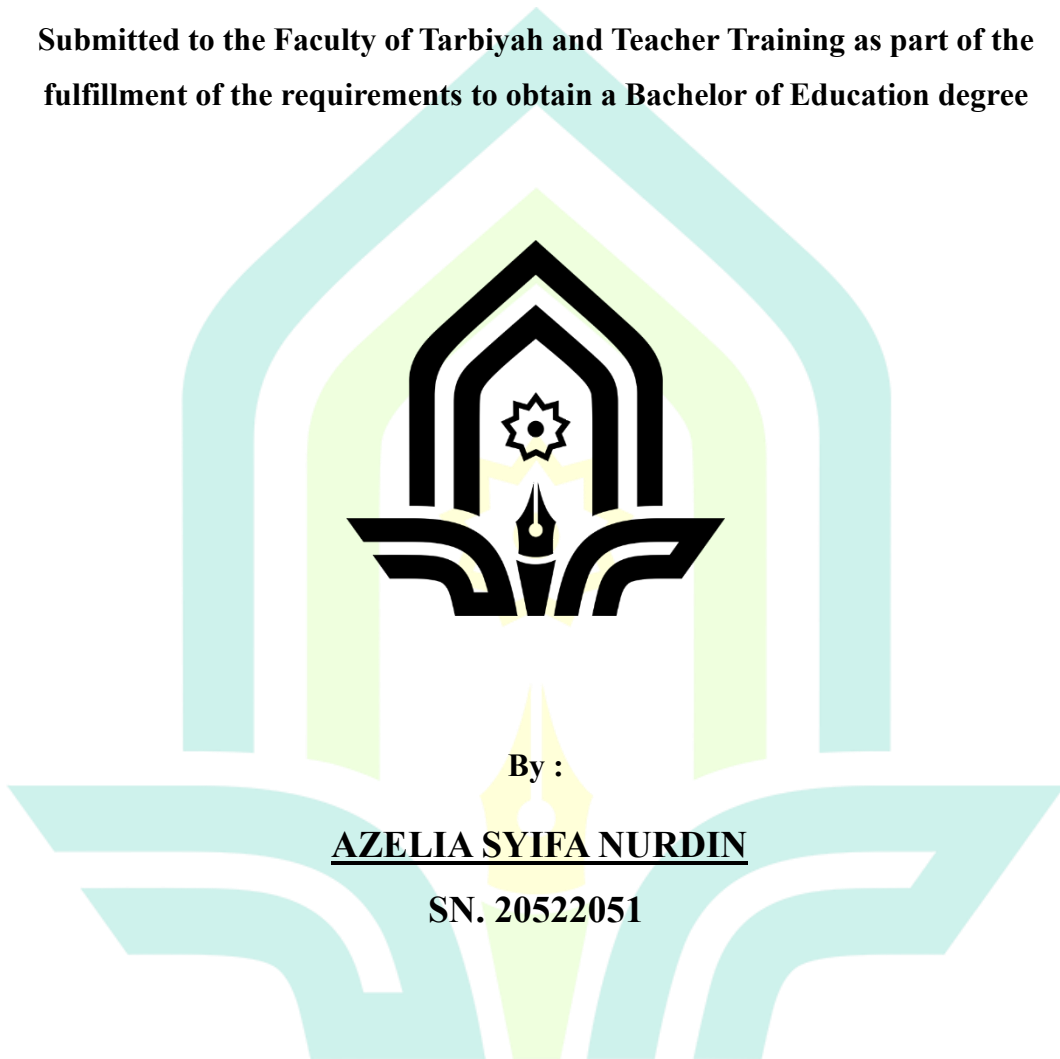


**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING
STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN
2026**

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2026**

SURAT PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN SKRIPSI DAN PENGGUNAAN BANTUAN KECERDASAN ARTIFISIAL

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Pekalongan, 8 Juni 2026

Yang membuat pernyataan,


Azelia Syifa Nurdin
NIM. 20522051

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Kepada

Yth. Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan

UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan

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di Pekalongan

Assalamu'alaikum, Wr. Wb.

Setelah melakukan penelitian, bimbingan dan koreksi naskah skripsi saudara:

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NIM : 20522051

Program Studi : Tadris Bahasa Inggris

Judul : **Students' Experiences of Using Gamified Activities To
Learn English Vocabulary : A Case Study At Junior High
School**

Saya menilai bahwa naskah skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan kepada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu. Keguruan UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan untuk diujikan dalam sidang munaqasyah.

Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya. Atas perhatiannya, disampaikan terimakasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum, Wr. Wb

Pekalongan, 8 Juni 2026

Pembimbing,



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The dean of Faculty of Education and Teacher Training. Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) K. H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, confirms that the undergraduate thesis by:

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NIM : **20522051**
TITLE : **STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF USING
GAMIFIED ACTIVITIES TO LEARN ENGLISH
VOCABULARY : A CASE STUDY AT JUNIOR
HIGH SCHOOL**

Has been examined and approved by the panel of examiners on Wednesday, 1st July 2026 as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Sarjana Pendidikan (S.Pd.) in English Education.

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MOTTO

*“Maka, sesungguhnya beserta kesulitan pasti ada kemudahan.
Sesungguhnya, sesudah kesulitan pasti ada kemudahan”.*

(Q.S. Al Insyirah: 5-6)

"Maka nikmat Tuhanmu yang manakah yang kamu dustakan?"

(Q.S. Ar Rahman : 13)

*“Ilmu lebih utama daripada harta. Ilmu menjaga engkau, sedangkan harta
engkau yang menjaganya.”*

(Ali bin Abi Thalib)

“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.”

(Albert Einstein)

“Life is a journey full of experiences, and you should enjoy it.”

(Azelia Syifa02)

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2. Mr. Ahmad Burhanuddin, M.A. as the Head of the English Education Department of Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.
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ABSTRAK

Nuridin, Syifa, Azelia. (2026). "Pengalaman Siswa Menggunakan Aktivitas Gamifikasi yang Dirancang Guru untuk Mempelajari Kosakata Bahasa Inggris: Studi Kasus di SMP." Skripsi. Program Studi Tadris Bahasa Inggris. FTIK UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, Pembimbing: Ahmad Burhanuddin, M.A.

Kata Kunci: *Studi Kasus, Kosakata Bahasa Inggris, Gamifikasi, Pengalaman Siswa, Aktivitas yang Dirancang Guru*

Di sekolah menengah pertama Indonesia, paparan di luar kelas yang terbatas dan pengajaran yang berpusat pada guru memperburuk rendahnya keterlibatan dan pemerolehan kosakata, sehingga dibutuhkan pendekatan yang lebih interaktif. Metode tradisional seperti menghafal seringkali membuat pembelajaran kosakata kurang menarik bagi siswa. Studi ini mengeksplorasi pengalaman siswa dalam menggunakan aktivitas gamifikasi yang dirancang guru untuk mempelajari kosakata bahasa Inggris di kelas sekolah menengah pertama Indonesia. Untuk mengatasi tantangan ini, pendidik semakin banyak menerapkan pembelajaran berbasis gamifikasi. Gamifikasi adalah penggunaan elemen permainan dalam pembelajaran untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif yang melibatkan satu guru bahasa Inggris dan empat siswa. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif kondensasi data, tampilan data, dan penarikan kesimpulan.

Temuan menunjukkan bahwa aktivitas gamifikasi yang dirancang guru menciptakan pengalaman belajar yang menyenangkan dan menarik bagi siswa. Aktivitas tersebut meningkatkan motivasi siswa, mendukung pemahaman kosakata melalui fitur visual dan audio, serta mendorong interaksi antar teman sebaya dan bimbingan guru sepanjang proses pembelajaran. Namun, penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi beberapa tantangan, termasuk kesulitan dalam memahami kosakata baru, kesulitan mengeja dan menulis, akses internet yang tidak stabil, kuota data yang terbatas, tekanan waktu, dan koordinasi kelompok yang tidak merata. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa aktivitas gamifikasi yang dirancang guru dapat mendukung pembelajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris dengan membuat kelas lebih interaktif dan memotivasi, tetapi harus disertai dengan panduan guru yang jelas, pengenalan kosakata yang terstruktur, dan strategi manajemen kelas untuk mengatasi tantangan teknis dan kognitif.

ABSTRACT

Nurdin, Syifa, Azelia. (2026). "Students' Experiences of Using Gamified Activities To Learn English Vocabulary : A Case Study At Junior High School." Thesis. English Education Department. FTIK UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. Supervisor: Ahmad Burhanuddin, M.A.

Keywords: *Case Study, English Vocabulary, Gamification, Student Experience, Teacher-designed activities*

In Indonesian junior high schools, limited out of class exposure and teacher centered instruction exacerbate low engagement and vocabulary acquisition, so a more interactive approach is needed. Traditional methods such as memorization often make vocabulary learning less engaging for students. This study explores students' experiences of using teacher-designed gamified activities to learn English vocabulary in an Indonesian junior high school classroom. To overcome this challenge, educators are increasingly implementing gamification based learning. Gamification is the use of game elements in learning to increase student engagement. The study employed a qualitative case study approach involving one English teacher and four students. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using an interactive model of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that teacher-designed gamified activities created a fun and engaging learning experience for students. The activities increased student motivation, supported vocabulary comprehension through visual and audio features, and encouraged peer interaction and teacher guidance throughout the learning process. However, the study also identified several challenges, including difficulties in understanding new vocabulary, spelling and writing difficulties, unstable internet access, limited data quotas, time pressure, and uneven group coordination. The study concluded that teacher-designed gamified activities can support English vocabulary learning by making classes more interactive and motivating, but must be accompanied by clear teacher guidance, structured vocabulary introduction, and classroom management strategies to address technical and cognitive challenges.

PREFACE

Praise be to Allah SWT, the Almighty, for all His grace and blessings, enabling the author to complete this thesis entitled “Students’ Experiences of Using Gamified Activities To Learn English Vocabulary : A Case Study At Junior High School.” This thesis is submitted to fulfill one of the requirements for a Bachelor of Education (S.Pd) degree in the English Language Education Department. The author observed significant challenges in modern English classrooms: students often struggle to remember vocabulary and lose motivation due to conventional teaching methods.

The process of conducting research and compiling this thesis has been a journey filled with valuable lessons, intellectual challenges, and personal growth. This process required patience, adaptation to classroom dynamics, and a continuous learning process. The author realizes that this work is far from perfect. Therefore, constructive criticism, suggestions, and input from readers, especially lecturers and fellow English teachers, are highly appreciated for the improvement of this research. Finally, the author hopes This thesis may contribute meaningful insights to the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) and inspire other English teachers to develop creative methods in their classrooms.

Pekalongan, 06 July 2026



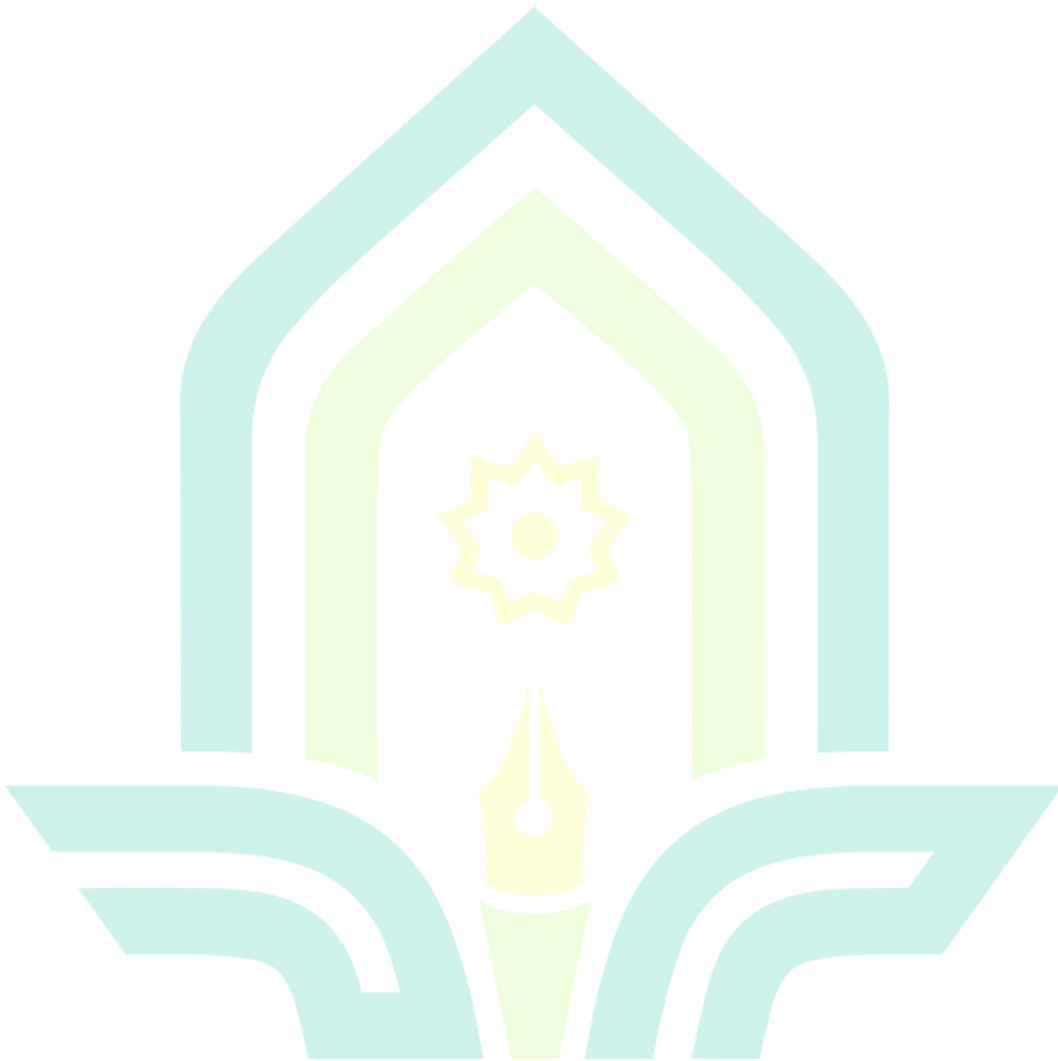
Azelia Syifa Nurdin

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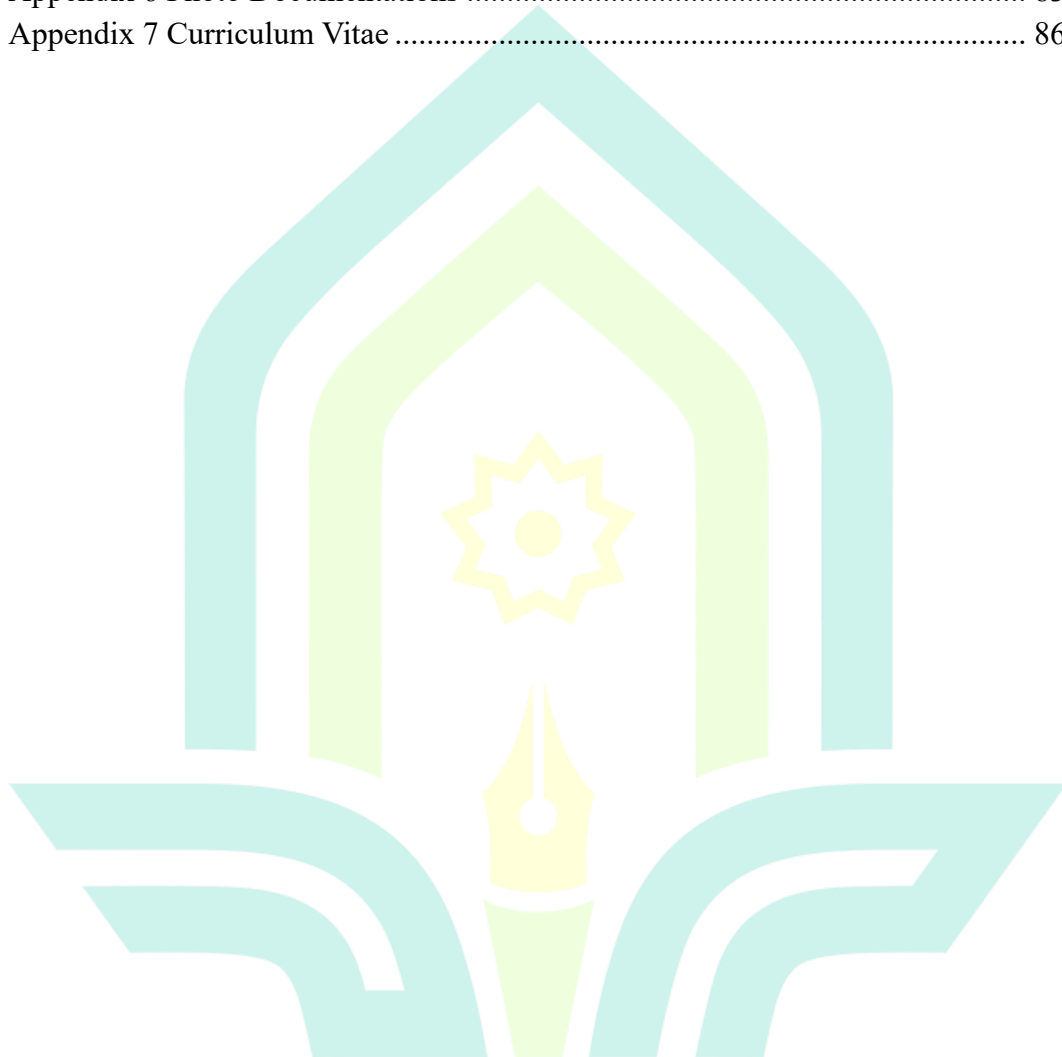
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

English vocabulary is essential for language learning because it supports students' ability to understand and use English in communication. (Nation, 2013; Thornbury, 2002). Vocabulary knowledge enables students to comprehend learning materials, express ideas, and actively participate in language activities. According to Nation (2013), vocabulary learning involves not only recognizing word meanings but also understanding word usage, forms, and contexts in meaningful communication. In this regard, vocabulary learning at the junior high school level must be carried out through meaningful and engaging teaching approaches that support students' active involvement in the learning process (Harmer, 2007; Richards & Renandya, 2002).

In the context of EFL, students in Junior High School often struggle to master English vocabulary they must understand word meaning, form, and use at the same time (Nation, 2013). Traditional methods such as memorization often make vocabulary learning less engaging for students. (Harmer, 2007; Richards & Renandya, 2002). In Indonesian junior high schools, limited out of class exposure and teacher centered instruction exacerbate low engagement and vocabulary acquisition, so a more interactive approach is needed.

To overcome this challenge, educators are increasingly implementing gamification based learning. Gamification is the use of game elements in learning to increase student engagement. (Deterding et al., 2011). In language learning, gamification can create an interactive learning environment through elements such as points, challenges, feedback, collaboration, and leaderboards, which encourage student participation and motivation (Huang & Soman, 2013; Hamari et al., 2014). Through these elements, learning activities become more interesting and meaningful for students.

In the Indonesian context, teachers have begun designing gamification activities tailored to classroom needs, such as digital quizzes and classroom-based games (Putri, 2021; Rahmawati, 2022). These activities aim to create a more interactive environment for vocabulary learning. However, previous studies have mostly focused on learning outcomes, while students' experiences remain limited. (Huang & Soman, 2013; Hamari et al., 2014). Studies in Indonesia, such as Putri (2021), emphasize motivation and mastery but neglect the sociocultural dimensions of classroom interactions.

Most gamification research has been conducted in higher education or using off-the-shelf digital platforms, which may not reflect the context of junior high schools in Indonesia (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative studies specifically exploring students' social experiences with teacher-designed gamified vocabulary activities are limited.

This study fills this gap through a qualitative sociocultural approach, exploring how students experience teacher-designed gamification activities

for English vocabulary learning in junior high school classrooms in Indonesia. These findings will contribute theoretically to the understanding of vocabulary processes (Nation, 2013) and social mediation in learning (Vygotsky, 1978), while also offering practical insights for teachers in designing student-centered activities.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

English vocabulary acquisition remains a significant cognitive challenge for junior high school students in Indonesia due to limited teaching methods and language exposure outside the classroom, leading to low engagement and slow learning progress. Although teachers have actively designed their own digital gamification activities to address this issue, the existing literature focuses heavily on quantitative outcomes from software, leaving a significant pedagogical gap regarding authentic qualitative student experiences and classroom interactions. The practical implementation of these games faces significant operational challenges, such as unstable internet connections, limited data quotas, intense time pressure, and uneven group coordination. In this case, a comprehensive qualitative investigation of students' actual experiences and challenges is urgently needed to optimize the integration of gamified vocabulary learning.

1.3 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background that has been described, there are several questions that need to be discussed in this research:

1. How do students experience the process of learning English vocabulary through gamified activities in the classroom?
2. What challenges are faced students when participating in gamified activities to improve their vocabulary?

1.4 Aims of Study

Based on these two problems, this study aims to:

1. To Explore students' experiences in the learning process using teacher-designed gamification.
2. To analyze students' challenges in participating in classroom learning activities.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on exploring the authentic and subjective experiences of junior high school students when engaging in gamification activities for English vocabulary learning. To maintain a sharp and manageable focus, the scope of this study is limited to junior high schools in Pekalongan, where gamification has been actively integrated into English classroom routines. Specifically, the participants are limited to one English teacher who use the gamification materials and four junior high school students selected as key informants. Contextually, the vocabulary learning

process is limited to the use of digital platforms such as Kahoot or Wordwall that have been explicitly customized by the teacher, with a focus on how these activities affect students' comprehension, spelling, and contextual word usage. Methodologically, this study is designed as a qualitative case study that aims to provide an in-depth, descriptive, and contextual understanding of students' real-life experiences and classroom interactions, rather than measuring quantitative learning outcomes, statistical improvements, or equivalence across a larger population.

1.6 Operational Definition

To avoid misunderstandings regarding the various terms in this research, the researcher provides several definitions related to the research as follows:

1. Student Experiences : Student learning experiences in the context of gamification reflect how students participate, interact, and actively engage in gamified technology-based learning activities, thus influencing their engagement in the learning process. (Tsay et al. 2018)
2. Gamification Activities : Gamification in English language learning (EFL/ESL) involves incorporating game elements such as points, challenges, leaderboards, quizzes and prizes into learning activities to increase student engagement, motivation and learning outcomes, and create a more interactive and engaging learning experience. (Zhang & Hasim, 2023)

3. **English Vocabulary** : Knowledge of vocabulary includes understanding word forms, meanings, and use in linguistic contexts, all of which are essential for effective English vocabulary mastery. (Nation, 2013).

1.7 Significance Of the Study

1. **Theoretical** : This Study will contribute to theoretical development in the field of English language teaching, particularly in understanding how gamified learning activities influence students' vocabulary acquisition (Kapp, 2012; Deterding et al., 2011). These findings can enrich the existing literature on educational gamification, vocabulary learning strategies, and students' affective responses to technology-based learning. (Schmitt, 2010; Nation, 2013).
2. **Empirical** : This Study provides concrete classroom-based evidence regarding the effectiveness and challenges of using teacher-designed gamified activities for English vocabulary learning. (Hamari et al., 2014). This study offers authentic data on how students perceive and experience these activities, including aspects of engagement, motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Domínguez et al., 2013).
3. **Practical** : This Study can provide useful recommendations for English teachers, curriculum designers, and schools (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). For teachers, these findings can help them design more effective and engaging gamification activities that support vocabulary learning (Lee & Hammer, 2011).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1 Conclusions

The first conclusion shows that the gamification activities designed by teachers using the Kahoot and Quizizz platforms successfully created a fun English vocabulary learning environment for eighth-grade students. The visual support, audio features, and immediate feedback provided by the games proved effective in increasing students' intrinsic motivation, maintaining their interest, and facilitating their recognition and retention of new words. Furthermore, these digital platforms also functioned as a social interaction medium that encouraged active collaboration among students and provided scaffolding from teachers in the classroom.

However, the effectiveness of this gamification learning was still limited by several real challenges from a cognitive, technical, and classroom management perspective. Cognitively, students still struggled to write and spell new vocabulary productively. Technically and operationally, unstable internet connections, limited data quotas, time pressure from the game's countdown timer, and uneven group coordination often disrupted the learning process. In this regard, digital gamification cannot stand alone and must be integrated with more structured teacher instruction.

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the conclusions above, the first recommendation is directed to English teachers and schools. Teachers are advised not to use gamification as the primary method, but rather only as a complementary tool to reinforce material combined with manual writing or spelling exercises. Teachers also need to clearly assign roles to group members to prevent certain students from dominating the game. Meanwhile, schools are expected to provide more adequate technological infrastructure support, such as stable classroom Wi-Fi access and backup devices, to minimize technical disruptions during the learning process.

The second recommendation is aimed at future researchers interested in developing this research topic. Future researchers are advised to further explore balanced learning models that combine game-based digital activities with traditional writing activities. Given that this research used a qualitative case study method that focused on subjective experiences, future researchers could employ experimental or mixed methods to quantitatively compare the impact of gamification on students' long-term vocabulary retention.

RESEARCH SCHEDULE

No	Activities	Nov 2025	Dec 2025	Jan 2026	Feb 2026	Mar 2026	Apr 2026	May 2026	June 2026
1.	Submission of research topic								
2.	Research topic approval								
3.	Writing research proposal								
4.	Proposal approval								
5.	Seminar examination								
6.	Conducting research								
7.	Estimation of thesis examination								

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