Development of English Speaking Skills Using Gamification for Grade 9 Students at Gon Min Khone Secondary School in Paukkhaung, Myanmar

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Abstract

This study investigated the use of gamification to develop English speaking skills among Grade 9 students in Myanmar. The objectives were: (1) to explore the implementation of gamification in English speaking skill development within a classroom setting, (2) to determine the impact of gamification on the English speaking proficiency of Grade 9 students, and (3) to evaluate students' satisfaction with gamified learning. The participants were 20 Grade 9 students from Gon Min Khone Secondary School in Paukkhaung Township, Myanmar. A pre-experimental, one-group pre-test/post-test design was employed. Gamification was integrated into five English speaking lessons using a gamification manual, interactive lesson plans, and various game elements (e.g. point systems, badges, leaderboards, role-playing games). Data were collected through a student interest questionnaire, speaking skill pre-test and post-test assessments, and a student satisfaction questionnaire. Data analysis involved the use of percentages, mean ($\overline{X}$), and standard deviation (S.D.). The findings revealed a high level of student interest in gamified speaking activities. The average speaking proficiency improved significantly from a low pre-test level of 51% to a post-test score of 70.5%, indicating notable gains in speaking skills. Students also expressed a high level of satisfaction with the gamified learning approach ($\overline{X}$ = 4.41, S.D. = 0.59), which corresponds to approximately 83% satisfaction. These results suggest that gamification can be an effective strategy to enhance English speaking skills and student engagement in secondary school classrooms.

Keywords: gamification; English speaking skills; motivation; secondary education; Myanmar

Introduction

English proficiency is increasingly important in today's globalized world, as it serves as a critical medium for communication and provides access to vast educational and professional opportunities. In Myanmar, English is introduced from primary school through university, reflecting its importance for national development and global integration. Mastery of the English language is crucial for acquiring knowledge, given that an estimated 85% of scientific reference materials are published in English. Despite this emphasis, Myanmar's secondary school students often struggle with communicative English skills, particularly speaking, due to several longstanding challenges in the education system.

Traditional teaching methods in Myanmar's schools have largely focused on rote memorization, grammar drills, and teacher-centered instruction. These conventional approaches, which prioritize reading and writing, often fail to engage students or develop their confidence in speaking. Consequently, many students have limited exposure to authentic English communication and lack opportunities to practice speaking in meaningful contexts. Overemphasis on grammatical accuracy and textbook-based learning has led to passive learning experiences and a deficit in oral proficiency – students may perform well on written tests yet feel anxious or unprepared to speak English in real situations. This gap is of particular concern in Myanmar, where a strong desire for English fluency exists among students and parents, but outdated methodologies and resource limitations hinder effective language acquisition. Improving students' speaking ability is essential, as English communication skills are increasingly required for higher education and employment opportunities both domestically and abroad.

In response to these challenges, innovative and interactive pedagogical approaches are being explored. One promising approach is gamification, which involves applying game principles and elements in non-game educational contexts to boost student engagement and motivation. Gamification transforms the classroom environment by introducing features such as points, badges, levels, leaderboards, and story-based quests that make learning more enjoyable and participatory. The rationale for using gamification in English speaking classes is grounded in the idea that game-like activities can reduce students' fear of making mistakes, encourage them to speak more freely, and provide instant feedback and rewards for improvement. By tapping into learners' intrinsic motivation – their sense of challenge, curiosity, and competition – gamified learning experiences can lead to higher involvement and repeated practice in speaking English. Gamification strategies align with established educational theories: for example, Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) posits that meeting students' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness will enhance their intrinsic motivation. Well-designed gamified activities can address these needs by allowing student choice, providing achievable challenges with feedback, and fostering social interaction through collaborative or competitive games. Early studies globally have reported positive effects of gamified learning on student engagement and learning outcomes. For instance, a study by Portolés et al. (2015) found that using a gamification platform ("Kahoot!") significantly improved students' English receptive and productive skills, with post-activity scores rising from a mean of 25.9 to 44.5 (out of 50) after the gamified intervention. Other research has shown that students demonstrate greater focus and on-task behavior during computer-based gamified activities compared to traditional activities. These findings suggest that gamification not only makes learning more enjoyable but can also yield tangible improvements in language proficiency.

Within the context of Myanmar's education system, integrating gamification in English speaking lessons is a novel approach aimed at addressing the aforementioned challenges. By creating a dynamic, game-enhanced classroom, this approach seeks to motivate Grade 9 students to actively participate in speaking exercises and gradually build their fluency. This study focuses on developing and testing a gamified learning model for English speaking skills in a Myanmar secondary school. It is expected that gamification will help overcome students' reluctance to speak by making practice feel like play, thereby increasing their oral competence over time. The following sections of this article present the objectives of the research, relevant literature on gamification and speaking skill development, the conceptual framework and methodology of the study, as well as the results, discussion, and implications of the findings.

Research Objectives

This research was conducted as part of a Master's thesis to develop English speaking skills using gamification for Grade 9 students. The study was guided by three primary objectives:

1. To investigate the use of gamification in developing English speaking skills for Grade 9 students via classroom instruction. This involves exploring how game elements can be integrated into English lessons and how students participate in and respond to these gamified speaking activities.

2. To examine the effect of gamification on the development of English speaking skills for Grade 9 students. This entails measuring students' speaking performance before and after the implementation of gamified lessons to determine the impact on their proficiency.

3. To assess the level of student satisfaction with using gamification to develop English speaking skills. This objective focuses on evaluating how enjoyable and beneficial the students perceive the gamified learning process, including their satisfaction with the gamification activities and materials.

By addressing these objectives, the study aims to provide a comprehensive evaluation of both the educational outcomes (improvement in speaking ability) and the learners' perspectives (interest and satisfaction) regarding the gamified approach.

Literature Review

Gamification in Education: Definition and Elements. Gamification is defined as the use of game design elements (such as points, challenges, badges, levels, and leaderboards) in non-game contexts to enhance user engagement and motivation. In an educational setting, gamification involves incorporating the fun, play, and competition aspects of games into learning activities without necessarily using actual video games. According to Kapp (2012), effective gamification in learning combines game-based mechanics and thinking with instructional content to solve problems and engage learners. A key aspect of gamification is its emphasis on clear goals, instant feedback, and rewards, which together create a sense

of progression and accomplishment for students. Schell (2010) describes games as problem-solving activities approached with a playful attitude and bounded by rules, leading to measurable outcomes. In gamified learning, classroom tasks become "quests" or challenges, and knowledge gains are the measurable outcomes of these tasks. Common game elements used in education include points (to reward task completion or good performance), badges (to recognize achievements or mastery of specific skills), leaderboards (to introduce friendly competition by ranking participants), levels or progress bars (to show advancement through content), and storylines or avatars (to provide context and identity in the learning experience). By integrating these elements, educators aim to transform traditional learning into an immersive journey where students are active players working towards goals, rather than passive recipients of information.

Benefits of Gamification for Language Learning: Numerous studies have highlighted the positive impacts of gamification on student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes across various subjects. In the context of language learning, gamification can make practice more interactive and less intimidating, which is particularly helpful for developing speaking skills. Gamified activities often encourage repeated use of the target language as students strive to earn points or complete challenges. The competitive and reward aspects can significantly boost learners' enthusiasm; for example, a study on using the gamified quiz platform Kahoot in an English course showed that students' test scores improved markedly after gamification was introduced. The mean score in that study's post-test increased by 18.6 points compared to the pre-test ($p = 0.0004$), indicating a statistically significant improvement attributable to the gamified learning experience. Additionally, research in Taiwan comparing student behavior in computer-assisted (gamified) versus traditional activities found that students were more positive and task-focused when learning through computer-based games, suggesting higher engagement levels. Gamification has also been linked to the development of 21st-century skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. These skills are cultivated as students navigate game challenges, work in teams, and apply strategies to achieve objectives in the learning game. A systematic review by Lishanin et al. (2020) on gamified learning in ESL classrooms concluded that gamification generally produces enjoyable, engaging, and motivating learning experiences, leading to improved language content learning, higher motivation, and greater learner satisfaction. At the same time, the review noted that effective gamification design should align with pedagogical goals and provide meaningful practice opportunities to truly improve language proficiency. Another quasi-experimental study by Stefan et al. investigated gamification effects on young English learners and found that a gamified approach led to significantly greater gains in vocabulary and grammar knowledge compared to a traditional teaching approach. This evidence supports the idea that gamification can be a powerful tool to enhance language acquisition when properly implemented.

English Speaking Skills and Classroom Challenges: Speaking is a fundamental language skill that requires not only knowledge of vocabulary and grammar but also the confidence and fluency to use the language in real time. For many ESL/EFL learners, including those in Myanmar, speaking is often considered the most challenging language skill to develop. Several factors contribute to this difficulty: lack of authentic practice opportunities, fear of making mistakes or embarrassment, limited feedback on spoken errors, and in some cases, large class sizes that reduce each student's talking time. In Myanmar's typical English classrooms, as noted earlier, the focus historically has been on reading and writing, with speaking practice being minimal. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approaches – which emphasize using the language for meaningful communication through activities like dialogues, role-plays, and discussions – have been introduced in Myanmar's curriculum in principle, but teachers often face challenges in implementation (such as insufficient training, large classes, and exam pressures that prioritize written skills). Research in related contexts has documented that students' speaking performance tends to lag behind other skills. For instance, a study of Thai middle school students by Jaiyai et al. (2005) reported that many students could not use English effectively in oral communication, even if they could manage reading and writing tasks. Similarly, Anyadubalu (2010) found that reading ability improved more readily than speaking ability among Grade 8 learners, suggesting that special attention is needed to bolster speaking skills. These findings resonate with the situation in Myanmar, where students often achieve a basic understanding of English grammar and vocabulary but struggle to express themselves fluently and confidently in speech. Key challenges include pronunciation difficulties (due to limited exposure to native speakers), limited vocabulary for spontaneous expression, and anxiety or low self-confidence in speaking up.

Gamification and Speaking Skills Development: The application of gamification specifically to improve speaking skills is a relatively recent area of interest in language education research. Gamified speaking activities typically involve scenarios or tasks where students must speak or converse in English to complete the game objectives. For example, role-

playing games can simulate real-life situations (such as ordering food at a restaurant or giving directions) where students practice dialogues in English in a fun, low-stakes environment. Storytelling games might involve students collaborating to create a story, thereby practicing narrative skills and impromptu speaking. These kinds of activities leverage gamification's strengths – they provide a clear context and goal for speaking, immediate feedback (points or advancement when communication is successful), and often an element of narrative or competition that keeps students invested in communicating. Prior studies indicate that such interactive, game-based speaking exercises can lower learners' affective filters (i.e., reduce anxiety) and encourage more authentic language use. Reinhardt and Thorne (2016), for instance, argue that well-designed gamified environments can simulate real-world communicative scenarios, thus promoting authentic language practice in the classroom. By engaging in a game scenario, students may focus more on achieving game goals than on the fear of speaking, which can result in more spontaneous speech production. Furthermore, gamification can facilitate peer learning and feedback; students often need to interact in teams or pairs during games, which creates opportunities to practice conversational turn-taking and to help each other improve. A study in an IT literacy class showed that adding gamification features (points, badges) increased the frequency and depth of students' help-seeking and collaborative dialogue with peers. This suggests that gamified learning environments can foster a supportive, communicative culture among learners.

In summary, the literature suggests that integrating gamification in language instruction – and specifically in speaking activities – has the potential to address common challenges by making speaking practice more engaging, lowering student anxiety, and providing immediate rewards that reinforce effort. However, successful gamification requires thoughtful design: game tasks must be aligned with language learning objectives, and educators need to balance the fun aspects with meaningful language use. The present study contributes to this line of inquiry by developing a structured gamified teaching model for English speaking and evaluating its effectiveness and student reception in a real classroom setting in Myanmar.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study follows a Research and Development (R&D) model with iterative stages, adapted to incorporate gamification in language learning. It is structured in four key steps, often referred to as R1 – D1 – R2 – D2, which align with the research objectives and development process of the intervention:

Step 1: Research (R1) – Analysis. In this initial phase, the researcher studied the current conditions and problems of English speaking skill learning among Grade 9 students. This involved identifying students' interests, needs, and difficulties in speaking English, and reviewing existing gamification strategies. The output of R1 was a clear understanding of the baseline speaking proficiency and the types of game activities that could most appeal to and benefit the students (e.g. interest in quizzes, storytelling, or role-play games).

Step 2: Development (D1) – Design & Development. Based on the insights from R1, a gamified learning model was designed to enhance English speaking skills. This included developing a gamification manual and lesson plans integrating selected game elements (such as digital quiz platforms, point systems, role-playing scenarios, etc.) into five instructional units. During D1, teaching materials and activities were created (or adapted) to ensure they were engaging and pedagogically sound. Experts were consulted to validate the content and design (for example, checking that the gamified tasks indeed encourage target language use and match the students' proficiency level). The outcome of D1 was a complete set of gamified lessons and a teacher's manual for implementation.

Step 3: Research (R2) – Implementation. In this phase, the developed gamification approach was put into practice in the classroom with the target group of students. The one-group pre-test/post-test experiment was conducted: students' speaking skills were assessed before the intervention (pre-test), then they participated in the gamified English speaking lessons over a period (e.g. several weeks), and finally their speaking skills were assessed again after the intervention (post-test). Throughout the implementation, data on student engagement and responses were collected (such as through observations and an interest questionnaire). R2 thus tested the effectiveness of the gamified model in a real teaching-learning scenario.

Step 4: Development (D2) – Evaluation. The final phase focused on evaluating the outcomes and refining the model. This involved analyzing the pre-test and post-test results to determine the improvement in speaking skills, as well as evaluating student feedback and satisfaction using a satisfaction questionnaire. The gamification approach was assessed against criteria of success (for example, a predetermined performance improvement benchmark, or a target satisfaction

level of the students). Lessons learned in this stage were used to refine the gamification manual and provide recommendations for future use or scaling of the approach.

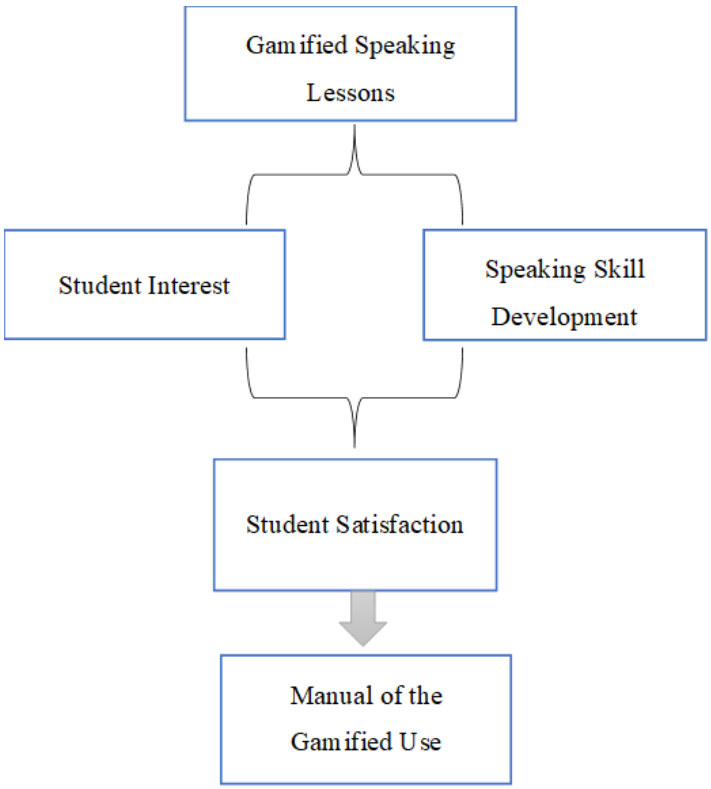

Fig.1 Conceptual Framework

The above figure outlines the cyclical process of researching and developing the gamified instructional model. In summary, R1 corresponds to analyzing the existing situation and student needs (leading to identification of gamification strategies to be used), D1 corresponds to designing and creating the gamified intervention (lesson plans and materials), R2 is the implementation and observation of the intervention's effects (collecting data on performance and engagement), and D2 is the evaluation and refinement stage (drawing conclusions on effectiveness and student satisfaction, and improving the model accordingly).

The theoretical foundation supporting this framework draws from several learning theories and prior research:

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985): Emphasizes that students are motivated when they experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Gamification fosters autonomy by giving students choices (e.g., which activities to attempt or roles to play), competence through progressive challenges and feedback (points, levels), and relatedness via collaborative and competitive game tasks.

Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977): Suggests learning occurs through observation and social interaction. Gamified group activities and peer competition enable students to learn from each other's use of language and encourage imitation of successful communication strategies.

Communicative Language Teaching and Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978): Stress the importance of meaningful interaction in developing language skills. The gamified scenarios (like dialogues, role-plays, storytelling) create authentic contexts for communication, aligning with CLT principles that language learning is enhanced when students use the language to do things (not just study it abstractly). Vygotsky's idea of a Zone of Proximal Development is also relevant – in gamified tasks, students often work together or with teacher facilitation, enabling them to perform slightly beyond their current independent speaking ability with the "scaffolding" of game rules or peer support.

Game-Based Learning Principles: The framework is informed by research on educational games (e.g., Kapp, 2012; Lee & Hammer, 2011) which shows that elements like clear goals, immediate feedback, and incremental rewards can improve learning outcomes. The conceptual model assumes that by structuring speaking practice as a game (with clear objectives, rules, and rewards), students will be more engaged and will practice more intensively, leading to better skill development.

Through these stages and theoretical lenses, the conceptual framework served as a guide for conducting the study and analyzing the results. The ultimate outputs expected from this R&D process were: (1) a validated gamification model/manual for teaching speaking, (2) empirical evidence of its effectiveness in improving students' speaking skills, (3) insights into student engagement and satisfaction with gamified learning, and (4) practical lessons and recommendations for educators on implementing gamification in similar contexts.

Research Methodology

Research Design: This study employed a pre-experimental one-group pre-test/post-test design within an R&D framework. It is classified as a developmental research project aimed at creating and evaluating an instructional innovation (gamified English speaking lessons). There was one primary group of participants which received the gamification intervention; their performance before and after the intervention was compared to assess the effect. The design can be summarized as: T1 (Pre-test) ⟶ X (Gamification intervention) ⟶ T2 (Post-test), where the same group of students took a speaking pre-test (T1), underwent the gamified instruction (X), and then took a post-test (T2). (No separate control group was utilized in the final analysis, although initial planning considered the overall cohort for context.) This one-group design was chosen due to practical constraints and the exploratory nature of the study, with the primary goal being to observe improvements and attitudes within the group after the gamified program.

Participants (Population and Sample): The population focus was Grade 9 students at Gon Min Khone Secondary School in Paukkhaung, Myanmar. From this population, a sample of 20 students (14–15 years old) was selected using convenience sampling (they were students readily available and representative of the typical English class at the school). These 20 students constituted the experimental group that participated in the study. The sample included a mix of boys and girls (the class had slightly more female students, reflecting normal gender distribution in the school). All participants shared a similar educational background, having studied English as a subject in school since primary level, but none had extensive experience with gamified learning in the classroom prior to this study. Before the intervention, a diagnostic speaking test and a questionnaire were administered to gauge the students' initial speaking abilities and interests in different types of activities.

Intervention – Gamification Program: The core of the methodology was the development and implementation of a gamified English speaking skills program. The program spanned five lesson units over the course of several weeks (as part of the regular English class schedule). Each unit incorporated specific gamification techniques:

Digital Gamification Platforms: Quizzes and vocabulary games using platforms like Kahoot! and Quizlet were used to warm up or reinforce speaking topics, turning recall and pronunciation practice into competitive games.

Role-Playing Games: Students engaged in scenario-based role plays (e.g. simulating a market dialogue, an interview, or a travel situation) where they earned points for using target vocabulary or successfully completing communication tasks. These activities were structured as missions or quests to encourage full participation.

Storytelling and Dialogue Games: Group storytelling games were introduced, where students collectively created a story by each adding a sentence in turn (earning a "story point" for each grammatically correct, creatively extended contribution). This fostered spontaneous speaking and listening.

Point System and Leaderboard: A point system was implemented across the gamified activities – students accumulated points for active participation, speaking in English without resorting to their first language, correctly using new expressions, etc.. A leaderboard was maintained (visible in the classroom) to track points, injecting an element of competition and reward. Top performers or teams after each unit received simple badges or tokens of achievement.

Interactive Speaking Apps: Tools like ELSA Speak (which provides instant feedback on pronunciation) or similar were optionally used in class or as homework, allowing students to "level up" their pronunciation skills with immediate scores and tips.

These gamified elements were detailed in a Gamification Manual developed by the researcher, which served as a guide for implementing the lessons. The manual included rules for each game activity, the criteria for scoring points,

and guidelines for teachers on facilitating the activities and keeping students focused on learning goals. Importantly, the English speaking content (dialogue topics, vocabulary, sentence structures) was aligned with the Grade 9 curriculum – the gamification was a layer added to the standard learning objectives to make them more engaging, not a replacement of the content. Each lesson typically followed a cycle: introduction of the speaking topic (e.g., "talking about past experiences"), demonstration of game rules, execution of the gamified activity (with the teacher monitoring and providing assistance as needed), and debriefing where learning points and common errors were discussed.

Instruments and Data Collection: Multiple instruments were used to collect data corresponding to the research objectives:

English Speaking Skill Tests (Pre-test and Post-test): Custom speaking tests were designed to objectively measure students' speaking proficiency before and after the gamification intervention. The tests included several tasks: a short personal introduction (to gauge fluency and coherence), a picture description or situational role-play (to assess vocabulary, grammar, and the ability to sustain discourse), and a question-and-answer section (to assess listening comprehension and spontaneous response). Each student's performance was rated by the teacher and an assistant using a standardized speaking rubric covering five aspects – fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, grammar accuracy, and confidence in speaking. The total score was converted to a percentage for analysis. The same rubric was applied in both pre-test and post-test. The reliability of the test was checked by having a second rater score a subset of the recordings; an acceptable inter-rater agreement was achieved (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.8$ in a pilot).

Student Interest Questionnaire: Before developing the gamified lessons (as part of R1 analysis), a questionnaire was administered to understand students' interests and familiarity with gamified activities. It asked how interested they would be in various types of game-like learning activities (e.g., quizzes, competitions, role-plays, using mobile apps, storytelling games). Students responded on a Likert scale (1 = not interested at all, to 5 = very interested). This instrument helped identify which gamification elements were likely to be well-received. It also collected qualitative feedback by asking students to describe any past experiences with educational games. The results revealed, for example, that a majority of students were highly interested in quiz games and role-plays, and some had experience playing English learning games on phones. These findings informed the design of the gamification intervention (D1).

Classroom Observation Checklist: During the implementation of the gamified lessons, the researcher (and assisting teacher) used an observation form to record student engagement and behavior. Key indicators included: level of participation (e.g., % of students who spoke up during the activity), observable enthusiasm (smiles, laughter, competitive excitement), collaborative behavior (helping teammates, sharing answers), and use of English vs. native language during the activities. This qualitative data provided context to interpret the impact of gamification on classroom dynamics.

Student Satisfaction Questionnaire: After completing all gamified lessons (at the end of the intervention), a Likert-scale questionnaire was given to assess how satisfied students were with the gamified learning experience. It consisted of 10 statements covering different facets of their experience, such as: "The gamified activities made the English class more enjoyable," "I felt more confident speaking English during the game activities," "Using game elements (points, rewards) motivated me to participate," and "Overall, I am satisfied with learning English through gamification." Students rated each statement from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). There was also an open-ended section for additional comments. The satisfaction questionnaire had been validated by three experts for content validity and had a high internal consistency ($\alpha > 0.85$). Its interpretation criteria were: 1.00–1.80 = very low satisfaction, 1.81–2.60 = low, 2.61–3.40 = moderate, 3.41–4.20 = high, and 4.21–5.00 = very high satisfaction.

Teacher Interview: Although not a main focus of this paper, a brief semi-structured interview was conducted with the English teacher at the school after the intervention. The teacher provided insights on the practicality of the gamification approach, perceived changes in student behavior, and any challenges in implementation (e.g., managing time or keeping competitive games friendly). This helped triangulate the data and gather suggestions for improvement.

Data Analysis: Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were performed:

The speaking test scores from pre-test and post-test were compared using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and a paired t-test to check if the improvement was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The effectiveness criterion (often used in Thai educational research) was that the post-test mean should meet or exceed 75% of the total score (a 75/75 effectiveness benchmark) – this was considered when interpreting results. In this study, the observed improvement (from 51% to 70.5%) was evaluated against that benchmark.

The questionnaire data (interest and satisfaction) were analyzed by calculating mean ($\overline{X}$) and standard deviation for each item and overall. Each mean was then interpreted according to the predefined criteria (e.g., a mean above 4.21 indicating very high interest/satisfaction). The percentage of students selecting positive responses (4 or 5 on the scale) for each item was also noted to provide another perspective (for instance, "90% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the games made them more interested in speaking English").

The observation notes and open-ended responses were reviewed qualitatively. Common themes (such as increased confidence, enjoyment, or any negative feedback like confusion with game rules) were identified and are discussed in the discussion section. Qualitative quotes from students (translated to English if originally in Burmese) are used to illustrate these themes where appropriate.

All results from different instruments were compared and triangulated to draw robust conclusions. For example, if test scores improved and students self-reported high satisfaction, and the teacher's observation echoed these improvements, it strengthened the validity of the findings.

By combining these methods, the study ensured a comprehensive evaluation of the gamification intervention, covering objective performance outcomes and subjective experiences.

Research Results

The findings of the study are organized according to the research objectives: student interest in gamification, improvement in speaking skills (pre-test vs post-test), and student satisfaction with the gamified learning experience.

1. Student Interest in Gamified English Learning

Before the intervention, the Student Interest Questionnaire gauged how appealing various gamification activities would be to the students. The results indicated an overall high level of interest in incorporating games into English speaking lessons.

Table 1 summarizes some key interest areas:

Gamification Activity	**Interest Level (% of students indicating "High" or "Very High")**	**Interpretation**
Competitive quiz games (digital)	85%	High Interest
Role-playing scenarios	90%	Very High Interest
Storytelling or simulation games	80%	High Interest
Team challenges (group games)	88%	Very High Interest
Using mobile apps for speaking	75%	Moderate-High Interest

Table 1. Students' interest in various gamified activities before the intervention (n = 20).

As seen above, role-playing scenarios and team-based challenges were particularly popular (with nearly 90% of students expressing strong interest). Many students were excited about point-based competitive activities as well, aligning with the expectation that a points-and-leaderboard system would be motivating. The interest in using digital apps was slightly lower comparatively (75% high interest), possibly because some students were less familiar with specific apps or lacked personal devices, but it was still a majority. These findings confirmed that introducing gamification was likely to be well-received by the class. During the implementation, this interest translated into enthusiastic participation – for instance, when a points leaderboard was introduced, students (especially the boys) became very engaged in trying to outscore each other, whereas the digital platform games (like Kahoot quizzes) saw excitement from both genders, with girls in particular enjoying the use of tablets for learning. These gender-based preferences observed align with the literature that found male students often gravitate towards competitive reward systems, whereas female students may prefer aesthetically engaging, collaborative platforms. Overall, the high interest level provided a positive foundation for the gamified lessons.

2. Improvement in English Speaking Skills (Pre-test vs Post-test)

To determine the effect of the gamification intervention on students' English speaking skills, the pre-test and post-test scores were compared. The speaking tests were scored on a 100-point scale (aggregating the rubric criteria scores).

Test	Mean Score (%)	S.D.	Interpretation
Pre-test Speaking Proficiency	51.0	8.5	Low (Limited)
Post-test Speaking Proficiency	70.5	7.2	Moderate/Improved

Table 2. Pre-test and Post-test results for students' English speaking skills (n = 20).

Before gamification was implemented, the students' average speaking score was 51.0% (S.D. ≈ 8.5), which falls into a low proficiency range. This is consistent with initial observations that students struggled with fluency and confidence – many paused frequently and gave very short answers in the pre-test interview. After the series of gamified lessons, the average post-test score rose to 70.5% (S.D. ≈ 7.2), indicating a substantial improvement of about 19.5 percentage points. In educational terms, this moved the group's performance into a moderate proficiency range, nearing what might be considered a satisfactory level for their grade. The gain in mean score is noteworthy and reflects enhanced speaking abilities in multiple dimensions: students spoke longer and more coherently in the post-test, used a wider range of vocabulary (including several new words that were explicitly introduced during the games), and exhibited better pronunciation and confidence. For example, in the pre-test many students answered a question like "What did you do last weekend?" with one short sentence or simply "Nothing." In the post-test, after the gamified practice, students were more likely to give a few sentences in response, such as "Last weekend I went to my friend's house and we played a new game together. It was very fun," thereby demonstrating improved fluency and willingness to speak.

Statistical analysis confirmed that the improvement was significant. A paired t-test on the pre- vs post-test scores yielded $t = 9.14$, $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed), indicating that the increase in speaking performance was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. In other words, it is highly unlikely that this improvement was due to chance; it can be attributed to the effect of the gamification intervention. While the target criterion of reaching a 75% average (the 75/75 effectiveness criteria) was not fully met – the post-test mean was 70.5%, slightly below 75% – the gain was still educationally meaningful. It represents roughly a 38% improvement over the initial performance (since 19.5 points increase on a base of 51 points).

To break down the improvement further, the rubric sub-scores were examined:

Fluency: Students' fluency (ability to speak at length without unnatural pauses) showed notable gains. The average words per response and speaking rate increased. Some students who could barely string together two sentences initially were able to speak in short paragraphs by the end. One metric recorded was words per minute in a monologue task: it increased from about 18 wpm pre-test to 27 wpm post-test on average (a ~50% increase in speaking rate, reflecting greater ease in speaking).

Pronunciation: There was a moderate improvement in pronunciation clarity. The class practiced specific troublesome sounds through the apps and repetition games; post-test evaluations by the teacher noted higher accuracy in vowel and consonant sounds for most students (e.g., fewer dropped endings in words). A few students still had issues with certain sounds (like th or r), but overall intelligibility improved.

Vocabulary and Grammar: The post-test responses included more relevant vocabulary and slightly more complex sentence structures, indicating learning of content through the games. For instance, after a role-play about past experiences, students correctly used past tense verbs more frequently in the post-test when narrating personal experiences, whereas in the pre-test some had defaulted to present tense or very simple constructions. Errors still occurred, but the range of expression was broader.

Confidence and Interaction: Although harder to quantify, rater observations noted that more students maintained eye contact and spoke audibly in the post-test. In the role-play segment of the test (done in pairs), students were more responsive to each other, as opposed to the pre-test where awkward silences were common.

These improvements align with the hypothesis that the gamified practice environment would encourage students to speak more and thereby improve. The competitive aspect motivated them to pay attention and try their best during practice, and the fun, low-pressure context reduced fear of mistakes. Students reported that during the games they "forgot about being shy" because they were focused on winning points or completing tasks.

3. Student Satisfaction with Gamified Learning

After the intervention, the student satisfaction questionnaire provided insight into how the learners felt about this gamified approach to learning English. The results were overwhelmingly positive.

Table 3 shows selected items from the satisfaction survey along with their mean scores and interpretation:

Student Satisfaction Statements	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	Interpretation
1. The gamified activities made the English class more *enjoyable*.	4.55	0.51	Very Satisfied
2. I felt *more confident speaking English* during the game activities.	4.30	0.47	Very Satisfied
3. The game elements (points, badges) *motivated* me to participate.	4.10	0.74	Satisfied (High)
4. I was *fully engaged* and paid attention throughout the gamified lessons.	4.40	0.50	Very Satisfied
5. Overall, I am satisfied with the use of gamification to learn English speaking.	4.70	0.48	Very Satisfied
Total Average	4.40	0.64	Very Satisfied

Table 3. Students' satisfaction with the gamification approach (n = 20). Scale: 1 = strongly disagree (very dissatisfied) to 5 = strongly agree (very satisfied).

As shown, all individual items received high mean scores (all above 4.0). The overall satisfaction item had a mean of 4.70 (S.D. = 0.48), which indicates that almost every student either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they were satisfied with this learning method. The average satisfaction score across all items was 4.40 (S.D. = 0.64), falling in the "very satisfied" range according to our interpretation criteria. This confirms that students, on the whole, reacted very positively to gamified learning.

Analyzing specific items: The highest ratings were for the statement that class was more *enjoyable* with gamification ($\overline{X}$ = 4.55) and the overall satisfaction statement (4.70). Students clearly found the lessons fun – several wrote comments like "*I never felt bored in English class this term*" and "*I enjoyed learning through games a lot.*" The sense of enjoyment likely contributed to their improved participation. The item on confidence (speaking confidence during games) was also very high (4.30). Many students indicated that the friendly competition and the focus on game tasks made them less afraid to speak. The lowest mean (though still relatively high at 4.10) was for the game elements being motivating. While most still agreed, a couple of students gave neutral ratings here, which could mean that not everyone was equally driven by points and badges. This mirrors what was observed: a few quieter students were less swayed by the competitive aspects but still participated due to the overall engaging format. It's worth noting that even this "lowest" item was in the *satisfied* range and as the qualitative feedback suggests, those who were less keen on competition still enjoyed the *collaborative* or *story* aspects of the games. In fact, one student noted, "*I liked working in teams more than competing one-on-one.*" This suggests that different gamification elements appealed differently to individuals – a theme discussed further below.

Overall, the satisfaction survey indicates a successful reception of the gamified curriculum. Students felt the class was more active and interesting. No student indicated dissatisfaction on any item. The open-ended responses highlighted some positive aspects:

"We learned while playing, so it didn't feel like hard work." (Student A)

"I spoke more English than before because I wanted to answer in the games." (Student B)

"I enjoyed the speaking apps – I could practice pronunciation like a game at home." (Student C)

A few constructive comments included:

"Sometimes I focused on winning and forgot some grammar, but teacher helped correct us later." – indicating that excitement sometimes led to mistakes, though this is a normal part of learning.

"I think we should have more different games, not repeat the same too often." – suggesting that variety is important to maintain engagement in the long run.

In summary, Table 3 and the associated feedback demonstrate that the gamified approach was very well-received by the students, achieving a high level of satisfaction. This is important because student satisfaction and enjoyment are linked to continued motivation and willingness to participate, which can lead to sustained improvement beyond the study period.

Discussions

The results of this study indicate that gamification had a positive impact on Grade 9 students' English speaking skills and their attitude towards learning, which aligns with findings from prior research and educational theory. Several key points emerge from the findings:

1. Enhanced Speaking Proficiency through Increased Engagement: The significant improvement in post-test speaking scores (51% to 70.5%) suggests that the gamified activities successfully encouraged students to practice speaking more frequently and extensively than they would in traditional lessons. This outcome is consistent with the notion that higher engagement leads to better skill acquisition. During the gamified sessions, students were often eager to speak – whether to answer a quiz question, contribute to a story, or perform a role in a dialogue – because these actions were tied to game rewards or enjoyment. Essentially, gamification provided authentic communicative practice in a playful context, embodying principles of Communicative Language Teaching in a new format. This finding resonates with Reinhardt & Thorne's (2016) observation that gamified environments can simulate real communicative scenarios and thereby promote authentic language use. In our study, role-play games (such as simulating everyday interactions) gave students a safe space to practice conversational English, supporting the idea that *learning by doing* (or *speaking by doing*, in this case) is very effective when students are not hindered by fear of failure. The immediate feedback and results inherent in games (such as getting points for a correct response or hearing an app's pronunciation score) likely helped students adjust and improve continuously, as suggested by Kapp's framework that feedback and clear goals are crucial for gamification to work. The statistical significance of the improvement aligns with other empirical studies – for example, Portolés et al. (2015) and Stefan *et al.* (2021) – which found that gamified interventions lead to measurable gains in language performance.

2. Motivation and Self-Confidence: The high levels of interest and satisfaction reported by students reflect an increase in motivation and self-confidence in speaking, which are critical affective factors in language learning. According to Self-Determination Theory, the gamified approach met students' psychological needs: they felt more competent as they saw their points increase and speaking skills improve, they had a sense of autonomy when making choices in games (e.g., formulating their own sentences or strategies), and relatedness was fostered through team activities and class competitions. This likely contributed to their intrinsic motivation to participate. The students' feedback that they found class "fun" and "not boring" is important in the context of Myanmar, where lack of motivation has been identified as a major issue in English classes. By making learning enjoyable, gamification helped overcome the motivational barrier. Additionally, confidence in speaking was bolstered – many students who were initially shy began to speak up more during games because the focus shifted from "speaking correctly" to "communicating to play the game." This supports previous findings that a game-based context can reduce the fear of negative evaluation; mistakes become part of the game rather than purely failures. As one study noted, in a gamified setting failure is seen as a "*calculated risk toward in-game rewards, rather than a lack of ability*", which can encourage students to persist and keep trying even if they make errors. Our students demonstrated this resilience – they would quickly correct themselves or try again if they answered something incorrectly, treating it as part of the challenge. This behavioral change is a significant outcome: it indicates a shift towards a growth mindset, where students feel that through effort and practice (gamified as a game), they can improve their English.

3. Alignment with Educational Theories and Prior Studies: The success of this intervention can be contextualized by educational theories:

Behaviorism: Many gamification elements (points, rewards) are fundamentally behaviorist, providing extrinsic reinforcement for desired behaviors (speaking English). The positive response from students (e.g., they were eager to earn points) shows that such reinforcement was effective in shaping their behavior – they spoke more English to get rewards. This is in line with traditional reinforcement theory (Skinner) and also reflects Bandura's social learning aspect, as students saw peers getting rewarded and thus were motivated to emulate them.

Constructivism and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory: The collaborative game tasks reflect constructivist learning, where knowledge is built through social interaction. Students often worked in pairs or teams to solve problems or win games, engaging in meaningful communication. This mirrors Vygotsky's idea that learning thrives in a social context and that peers can scaffold each other's learning. The observation that students were helping each other during games (e.g., whispering a needed English word to a teammate during a quiz) and that overall class participation increased supports the value of peer support in a gamified setting. As gamification created a more relaxed and interactive classroom environment, it likely allowed more peer-to-peer communication than a traditional lecture-based class, thus providing more speaking practice collectively. A related study on gamified learning environments found an increase in collaborative help-seeking behavior among students, which we also witnessed – students were more willing to ask questions or clarify rules in the context of a game, which indirectly means they were practicing communication and not just silently confused.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theory: Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis posits that learners acquire language better when their anxiety is low and motivation is high. Our gamification approach clearly lowered anxiety (as evidenced by students' remarks about feeling less shy) and raised motivation (through fun and rewards). This creates an optimal condition for language acquisition. Also, the approach provided a lot of Comprehensible Input and Pushed Output: through listening to game instructions, their peers, and the teacher during play, students got input; through needing to speak to participate, they produced output. Merrill Swain's Output Hypothesis would suggest that these speaking opportunities helped students notice gaps in their language and pushed them to produce more complex language, which aligns with the improvements observed.

The results also confirm observations from local research. For example, a study by Khin Su Su Win (2021) highlighted challenges Myanmar teachers face in adopting interactive methods. Our study demonstrates that with the right tools (like gamification), it is feasible to implement a highly interactive approach even in a resource-constrained environment, and students do respond very positively to it. This adds to the body of evidence for modernizing English teaching in Myanmar.

4. Individual Differences and Gamification Design: The findings also shed light on the importance of considering individual preferences in gamified learning. While overall outcomes were positive, the nuanced feedback (e.g., differences in what male vs female students preferred, or one element being slightly less motivating) suggests that one size does not fit all in gamification. Our data showed male students particularly enjoyed the competitive point-scoring and leaderboard aspect, whereas female students engaged deeply with the collaborative and digital platform aspects. Both genders benefited, but their enthusiasm was triggered by slightly different game elements. This aligns with other research noting gender-based preference variations in gamified learning contexts. For educators, this means a gamified program should include a variety of game elements to appeal to different students – which our intervention did (mixing quizzes, team games, role-plays, etc.). Additionally, balancing competition and cooperation is key. We found that while competition spurred excitement, cooperative games were equally valuable for learning and were appreciated by those less competitive. Another individual difference is in learner personality; some students are naturally more outgoing (and took to the games immediately), while more introverted students took a little longer to warm up. Encouragingly, even the quieter students increased their participation over time, suggesting that a well-managed gamified environment can eventually draw in introverts by making activities feel safe and routine. A lesson learned is that clear explanation of rules and objectives at the start of each game is necessary to avoid confusion – our teacher interview indicated that one challenge was initially some students weren't clear on what to do in a game, which could cause momentary dips in engagement. However, once they understood, they joined in readily. Thus, the design of gamified lessons should ensure simplicity and clarity, especially when introducing new game mechanics.

5. Effect on Teacher's Role and Classroom Dynamics: The gamification approach slightly altered the teacher's role from a traditional instructor to more of a facilitator and game master. During the study, the teacher had to manage the games, keep track of points, and simultaneously ensure learning objectives were being met (for instance, gently correcting language mistakes either during a game pause or in the debrief). The classroom atmosphere became more lively and student-centered. This dynamic aligns with modern pedagogical shifts towards active learning. One important discussion point is that while gamification engages students, teachers must be adept at channeling that energy toward the learning goals. There were moments when students got *too* caught up in the competition (for example, shouting out answers without listening to others). The teacher intervened to maintain order and fairness. This underscores that classroom management skills remain crucial – gamification is not a magical solution that runs itself; it requires careful facilitation. The positive side is that once students adapted to the new format, they remained mostly on-task because the tasks themselves were captivating. It's also worth mentioning that implementing these activities took slightly more time in lesson planning and preparation (printing game materials, setting up tech), which teachers must be willing to invest. However, given the payoff in terms of student learning and enjoyment, the effort is justified.

Comparison with Traditional Methods: Compared to a traditional grammar-focused lesson of the same content, the gamified approach provided far more speaking practice opportunities. Instead of the teacher doing most of the talking or students writing answers on paper, here students were actively using English almost the entire class – whether answering, asking, or discussing strategies. This highlights the value of learning by speaking. The improvement in speaking was thus not surprising, as practice is key, and gamification dramatically increased practice quantity and quality. Traditional methods might have resulted in maybe one or two sentences spoken per student in a class; in our gamified

classes, each student spoke dozens of sentences per session (even if some were short utterances). This repeated use likely helped internalize vocabulary and structures.

Alignment with Similar Studies: Our study's conclusions echo those of Lisshaline *et al.* (2020)'s systematic review, which noted that gamification leads to positive experiences and outcomes like higher engagement and satisfaction. Similarly, it complements Stefan *et al.* (2021) who concluded gamification positively affects language development. Moreover, our findings contribute specifically to the relatively under-explored area of speaking skills gamification, as much of the literature has focused on vocabulary or grammar games. We provide evidence that speaking – arguably the skill "left behind" in many contexts – can be significantly improved through gamified practice.

In conclusion, the discussions above illustrate that the gamified approach was effective not only in improving test scores but also in transforming the classroom culture into one of active, motivated learning. Gamification served as a catalyst for both cognitive gains (language development) and affective gains (motivation, confidence). These results should be encouraging for educators in similar contexts: they demonstrate that even in a setting where students initially have low speaking proficiency and may be disinterested due to traditional methods, a shift to gamified, student-centered learning can produce meaningful improvements.

Knowledge from Research

From this research, several key takeaways and contributions can be highlighted:

Gamification as an Effective Pedagogical Tool: The study provides empirical evidence that gamification can significantly improve English speaking skills among secondary school students. By turning lessons into interactive games, students practiced speaking more frequently and with greater enthusiasm, leading to measurable proficiency gains.

Increased Student Engagement and Motivation: Gamified learning creates a fun and competitive environment that boosts student engagement. Boredom and passivity were replaced by active participation. Students were motivated to speak up and use English by the prospect of earning points or achieving goals, validating gamification's role in enhancing motivation in language classrooms.

Improved Confidence and Reduced Anxiety: The gamification approach helped lower students' fear of speaking in English. Speaking activities embedded in games allowed students to take risks and make mistakes without embarrassment. As a result, students' self-confidence in using English orally increased, an essential factor for continuing improvement.

Holistic Skill Development: Through gamified tasks, students not only improved their speaking fluency but also other related skills – listening (as they had to understand game instructions and peers), quick thinking in English, and even reading/writing when some games involved written clues or keeping scores. It fostered a more balanced skill development compared to traditional rote learning.

Student-Centered Learning and Collaboration: The research demonstrated a shift towards a learner-centered classroom, where students were actively involved in the learning process. Collaboration was naturally integrated (e.g., team games, peer support), which not only aided language development but also built teamwork and communication skills among students.

Adaptability to Local Context: This study showed that gamification can be successfully implemented in a Myanmar school context. It contributed a practical model (gamification manual and lesson plans) that can be adapted by other teachers in similar educational contexts, even with limited resources (most games in this study required minimal technology – many were paper-based or orally administered).

Guidelines for Effective Gamification: Lessons learned from the implementation provide valuable guidelines: ensure a variety of game types to cater to different learners, maintain clarity in rules and objectives, balance competition with cooperation, and align gamified activities with learning outcomes so that educational value is retained alongside fun.

Positive Student Perception of Innovation: The high satisfaction rates indicate that students are open to and even crave innovative learning methods. This suggests that educational reforms which incorporate more interactive and game-based learning could be well-received by students in Myanmar and similar settings, potentially leading to better learning outcomes across subjects, not just English.

Contribution to Research: This study adds to the limited literature on gamification for speaking skill development in ESL/EFL. It provides a case example with data on how gamified interventions can be structured and evaluated, thereby serving as a reference for future research or thesis projects. It bridges a gap by focusing on speaking –

a skill often considered hard to quantify – and demonstrating improvement through a quantitative pre/post design combined with qualitative insights.

In summary, the knowledge gained underscores that gamification is a powerful approach to revitalize language education. It confirms that when students are engaged and having fun, they learn more effectively. The success in this research advocates for educators to creatively integrate gamified elements into their teaching to foster better communication skills in English and beyond.

Conclusion

This research article presented the development and evaluation of a gamification-based approach to improving English speaking skills among Grade 9 students at Gon Min Khone Secondary School in Myanmar. The study set out three objectives, which were all met with positive outcomes: (1) a gamified teaching model was successfully implemented in the classroom, (2) the impact of gamification on students' speaking proficiency was significant, and (3) student satisfaction with the gamified learning experience was high. The findings indicate that students' speaking abilities improved substantially after participating in five gamified lesson units, evidenced by a rise in their post-test scores and qualitative improvements in fluency and confidence. Students moved from a low baseline speaking level to a moderate level, with many demonstrating newfound willingness to communicate in English.

Crucially, the gamified approach transformed the classroom atmosphere into one that is lively, student-centered, and conducive to language use. Students were not only learning – they were *enjoying* the process, as reflected in an overall satisfaction rating in the "very satisfied" range. They reported feeling more motivated and less anxious, which are critical factors for success in speaking a foreign language. This positive attitude shift is itself a major accomplishment, as it suggests students are more likely to continue practicing and improving their English even beyond this intervention.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the study shows that integrating gamification is feasible and effective even in a context with limited technological resources. Many games relied on simple tools or no tools at all, meaning that teachers in other schools (including those in rural or low-resource settings) could adopt similar strategies. The gamification manual and lessons developed can serve as a prototype for English teachers seeking to increase oral practice in their classes. By aligning games with curricular goals (for example, practicing past tense through a storytelling game), the approach ensured that learning objectives were met in tandem with increased engagement.

The implications of this study are far-reaching: for educators, it provides a viable method to address the perennial challenge of improving students' speaking skills. For educational administrators and policymakers in Myanmar, it offers evidence that innovative methodologies like gamification can yield better outcomes than traditional lecture-based approaches, and thus such methods deserve support and integration into teacher training programs. Additionally, this research contributes to academic discussions on gamified learning by providing concrete data and analysis from a real classroom experiment.

In conclusion, gamification proved to be a powerful catalyst for both improving English speaking proficiency and invigorating student interest in learning. Grade 9 students at the study site became more active English users, illustrating the core premise that learning a language can – and perhaps should – be fun. As English continues to be vital for students' academic and professional futures in Myanmar, methods that encourage active use of the language, like the gamified approach in this study, stand out as promising practices. It is hoped that this successful case will inspire more teachers to infuse creativity and play into their teaching, and researchers to further explore the intersection of games and education in various contexts.

Suggestions

Based on the experiences and findings of this study, several suggestions can be made for educators, institutions, and future researchers:

For Educators (Teachers):

Integrate Gamification Gradually: Teachers interested in gamification should start by adding one or two simple game elements into their lessons (for instance, a points system for class participation or a short quiz game at the end of a lesson) and observe student responses. Gradual integration allows both teacher and students to adjust to the new format. As confidence grows, more comprehensive gamified lesson plans like those in this study can be adopted.

Diversify Gamified Activities: It's important to use a variety of game types (quizzes, role-plays, puzzles, team competitions, etc.) to cater to different student preferences and learning styles. As seen in this study, different students may respond better to different elements (competitive vs. collaborative), so a mix ensures broad appeal. Diversification also keeps the class interesting over time, preventing monotony.

Ensure Alignment with Learning Objectives: Teachers should design or select gamified activities that directly practice the target language skills of the lesson. The "fun" should not come at the expense of substance. For example, if the objective is to practice asking questions, a game like *"Find someone who..."* (a mingling bingo game) could be used so students must ask each other questions to win. Always debrief after games to explicitly connect the activity to the learning point (as was done in our intervention to highlight new vocabulary or correct recurring errors).

Classroom Management and Fair Play: Establish clear rules and ensure fair play in competitive games to maintain a positive environment. Teachers should monitor that competition remains friendly and be ready to intervene if any student becomes overly competitive or if weaker students are being left out. Team-based games can help mitigate pressure on individuals and encourage peer support.

Leverage Low-Cost Resources: Gamification doesn't require expensive technology. Teachers can make use of materials at hand – e.g., flashcards, dice, simple rewards like stickers – and free digital tools (many educational game apps have free versions). For schools with no internet, offline games and role-play can be equally effective. Creativity is key: even traditional activities can be "gamified" with a little twist (turning a Q&A into a board game format, etc.).

Provide Training and Sharing: Teachers should seek out professional development on interactive teaching methods. It's also beneficial for teachers who have tried gamification to share their experiences and games with colleagues (perhaps through workshops or teacher networks) to spread effective practices. In this study, the teacher gained new skills in facilitating games; similarly, peer learning among teachers can propagate these skills.

For Schools and Administrators:

Support Innovative Teaching: School leadership should encourage and support teachers in experimenting with gamified and student-centered approaches. This could include providing minimal budgets for game materials, allocating time in staff meetings for teachers to demonstrate successful activities, or even implementing gamified learning programs at a larger scale if possible.

Include Gamification in Curriculum Guidelines: While the national curriculum provides content, schools can supplement it by recommending interactive techniques. For English language departments, a guideline or handbook of suggested gamified activities for each language skill/topic would be useful. This study's gamification manual can serve as a starting point for developing such a resource.

Monitor and Evaluate: Introduce mechanisms to monitor the impact of innovative methods. For instance, if a school implements gamified learning in multiple classes, compare student outcomes (test scores, participation rates, etc.) with traditional classes to evaluate effectiveness. Positive results, like those found in this study, can justify wider adoption and even policy-level changes.

Student Feedback: Administrators should consider student voice in pedagogical changes. Regularly collecting feedback from students about what teaching methods they find engaging or helpful can guide teachers. The overwhelmingly positive feedback in this study suggests students will likely endorse gamified and interactive learning if asked.

For Future Research:

Long-term Effects: Future studies could examine the long-term retention of speaking skills gained through gamification. Do students maintain their improved speaking proficiency months after the gamified intervention? Longitudinal studies can determine if gamification has lasting benefits or if periodic reinforcement is needed.

Comparative Studies: It would be valuable to conduct a study with a control group (traditional teaching) and an experimental group (gamified teaching) simultaneously to more rigorously compare outcomes. While this study showed significant improvement in one group, a comparative design would strengthen evidence for gamification's effectiveness.

Different Contexts and Levels: Research could explore gamification with different age groups (e.g., primary students or adults) and in different subjects or skill areas. For example, does gamification equally benefit listening or reading skills? Are there particular game elements that work better for younger learners versus teenagers? Also, studies in other countries or rural vs. urban settings could see if cultural or contextual factors influence the success of gamification.

Specific Game Element Analysis: Another research angle is to isolate which game elements have the most impact on learning and motivation. A study could modify one element at a time (points vs. no points, competition vs. collaboration) to see how student outcomes change, thereby identifying key drivers.

Technology-Enhanced Gamification: As digital learning tools become more accessible, research could focus on using mobile apps or online game platforms in low-resource contexts like Myanmar. For instance, investigating the use of smartphone-based gamified learning for homework speaking practice (since smartphone usage is rising among youths) would extend the current study's findings into blended learning territory.

Qualitative Studies: In-depth qualitative studies (interviews, focus groups) with students and teachers can provide richer insight into their experiences. Understanding the why behind students' enjoyment or improved confidence (in their own words) can help refine gamification strategies for even better emotional and educational resonance.

By implementing these suggestions, educators and researchers can further the mission of improving English speaking skills and overall language education through engaging, student-centered approaches. The positive outcomes of this study serve as a motivating example that learning can be transformed into an enjoyable adventure, yielding both happier and more proficient students.

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