Jenglish: A Game for ESL Classroom

Siti Aishah Taib[1], Nadzrah Sa'adan[2], Nurul Izzati Mat Saberi[3], Nurul Aini Mat Suri[4], Nurfarah 'Aqilah Kasbullah[5], Fatin Akmal Nabilah Murtadza[6] & Nur Syahira Norhisham[7]

Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Johor Kampus Pasir Gudang, Masai, Johor

Email: aishah711@uitm.edu.my[1], nadzr210@uitm.edu.my[2],
2018637482@student.uitm.edu.my[3], 2018807152@student.uitm.edu.my[4],
2018235892@student.uitm.edu.my[5], 2018445276@student.uitm.edu.my[6],
2018460854@student.uitm.edu.my[7]

ABSTRACT

Gamification is not a foreign concept of language learning, and it has been extensively researched in the field of education. Jenglish is a language game produced by five ESL students under the supervision of a lecturer. Leslie Scott's popular Jenga game was adapted into this game. This paper aims to present the results of a case study in which a group of 22 ESL students participated in four ESL lessons while playing Jenglish. A set of questionnaires was distributed to the respondents of the study after the final lesson and they are expected to answer 3 research questions: 1) To investigate ESL students' opinions on the usefulness of Jenglish on ESL learning, 2) To investigate ESL students' opinions on the usefulness of Jenglish in relation to affective domain, and 3) To investigate ESL students' opinions on how Jenglish can be improved. The data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 and thematic analysis. The first and second research questions received positive feedback, while the game's presentation, content, and rules were suggested for improvement. Four themes emerged from an open-ended question about the respondents' opinions of the game which were Compliments, Suggestions to Improve the Game, Benefits, and Others. Although the results indicated that the game needed to be improved, it can be concluded that Jenglish was a useful language game for the respondents in language learning.

Keywords: *Gamification, language learning, language game, ESL learning.*

1.0 Introduction

In this present era of globalisation and modernisation, it is important for ESL educators to be imaginative in their teaching and learning sessions. Developing learning materials that can capture the interest of ESL students has been a major challenge for ESL educators. For the learners to participate, the learning materials must be engaged in the lesson practice. Any lesson in which the students are required to participate as active participants would encourage them to understand the knowledge more quickly (Resnik, 2004).

There are many approaches that can be used to make a lesson informative and enjoyable. One of them is to create a well-designed game-based activity that encourages students to persevere and strive for excellence. The 'gamification' approach is a popular technique that can be used. Gamification is a term used to describe gaming that has a consistent learning effect on the learner's vocabulary, logical thought, and problem-solving skills (Wahyuni & Junior, 2018). It is believed that by going through a thought process when playing games, would enable better involvement of students and inspire problem solving among them (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011). In order to increase player engagement, gamification technically includes elements that are usually associated with games, such as competitiveness, teamwork, gaining points, winning and losing, completing levels, and collecting rewards (Wahyuni & Junior, 2018). This learner-centered pedagogy used in the game-based learning activity would inspire the learners to participate positively in the learning activity.

Game-based learning shapes a region of proximal growth formed by scaffolding and mentoring strategies. The proximal development zone is characterised as the distance between the current developmental area and the future stage of development, as measured by the ability to solve problems with adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky , 1978). Scaffolding is used in game-based learning to make it easier for learners to advance from one stage to the next, which is needed to achieve the ultimate goal. In this sense, the teacher can provide scaffolding in the form of feedback or encouragement, while still keeping the lessons open and ready to fulfil the students' need for interaction (Ghazal & Singh, 2016). As the students are acquainted with the idea and can solve problems on their own, the instructional assistance is progressively decreased.

Another benefit of game-based learning is that it allows learners to be in constant motion. According to Paras and Bizzocchi, students can experience flow while playing the game if they are completely engaged in the practise (2005). Flow,

according to Csikszentmihalyi (1975), is a state in which one is fully consumed by an event to the point that external stimuli have no effect on one's attention. This means that the student has a high degree of intrinsic motivation and is entirely focused on the task, which allows him to unintentionally progress from one level to the next (Kurt & Kurt, 2018).

Games that are challenging but offer attainable challenges will capture the learners' imagination and keep them engaged for a long time (Ghazal & Singh, 2016). The gratification they get from seeing the results of their actions while playing the game inspires them to engage more, even though they are unaware of the game's extensive impact on vocabulary, grammar, and other facets of language improvement (Ghazal & Singh, 2016). Scrabble or simulation-based games, for example, intrinsically empower learners, which is good for improving player ability and effectiveness (Ghazal & Singh, 2016). These games are attention getters that add fun and excitement to the lesson (Kurt & Kurt, 2018).

Furthermore, communication skills can be developed by game-based learning. Students must work together in a game-based learning classroom to help others and accomplish a difficult task. When players engage in multiplayer games, they can develop their social skills while also gaining empathy for ethics and ethical decisions while they are in the position of the game (Ghazal & Singh , 2016). According to Fung and Min (2016), students were able to boost their self-confidence and sense of control by playing games because there was less pressure, which reduced the reluctance to speak up and created a positive peer learning environment.

As a result, the aim of this research is to contribute to the field of gamification in ESL learning by answering three key questions:

a) To investigate ESL students' opinions on the usefulness of the language game, Jenglish, on ESL learning
b) To investigate ESL students' opinions on the usefulness of the language game, Jenglish, in relation to affective domain
c) To investigate ESL students' opinions on how the language game, Jenglish, can be improved

2.0 Methodology

A group of 5 ESL students was given the task of designing and developing their language game in three weeks while being supervised by their teacher. They decided to adopt the concept from Leslie Scott's iconic game Jenga and develop a new collection of rules and tasks that were more suitable and engaging for ESL students. Following its completion, it was played by their classmates, 22 ESL students, in four ESL classes. After the fourth lesson, the participants were asked to fill out a survey to express their thoughts on the game, Jenglish, and their suggestions on how to improve it.

There were three main sections in the questionnaire:
a) the usefulness of the game on ESL learning (5 Likert-scale items)
b) the usefulness of the game in relation to affective domain (3 Likert-scale items)
c) suggestions to improve the game (1 checkbox item + 1 open-ended item).

The data were analysed and descriptive statistics were used to present the findings using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 to answer the three research questions. All Likert-scale items (8 items) were tested for normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test, and their reliability was calculated using Cronbach alpha. Thematic analysis was used for the open-ended item, and the concepts that arose from the analysis were addressed.

3.0 Findings and Discussion

a. Test of Normality

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
SKILLS	.304	22	.000	.773	22	.000
FUN	.290	22	.000	.740	22	.000
KNOWLEDGE	.274	22	.000	.828	22	.001
RECOMMEND	.240	22	.002	.817	22	.001
PLAY	.284	22	.000	.766	22	.000
MOTIVATE	.294	22	.000	.799	22	.000
EXCITED	.270	22	.000	.760	22	.000
CONFIDENT	.274	22	.000	.828	22	.001
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

The Sig. value of each Likert scale item for the Shapiro-Wilk statistic was either.000 or.001 in the table above, indicating that the presumption of normality was violated (Pallant, 2016). In order to report the descriptive study, the median (a non-parametric statistic) of each Likert scale item was used instead of the mean.

b. Research Question 1: ESL Students' Opinion on the Usefulness of Jenglish on ESL Learning

Table 2

	Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.916	.920	5

The table shows that the Cronbach's Alpha value for the 5 Likert scale items was 0.916, suggesting very good internal consistency reliability (Pallant, 2016).

Table 3

		SKILLS	FUN	KNOWLEDGE	RECOMMEND	PLAY
N	Valid	22	22	22	22	22
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Median		4.00	4.50	4.00	4.00	4.00
Std. Deviation		.631	.790	.811	.853	.907
Percentiles	25	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
	50	4.00	4.50	4.00	4.00	4.00
	75	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

The table above shows that all 5 Likert scale items in this section were rated positively by the respondents. They agreed that Jenglish helped in improving their English language skills (median = 4.00), helped in learning English while having fun (median = 4.50), improved knowledge about English language (median = 4.00), they would recommend the game to other people (median = 4.00), and they wanted to play the game in their English class (median = 4.00).

c. Research Question 2: ESL Students' Opinion on the Usefulness of Jenglish in Relation to Affective Domain

Table 4

	Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.835	.835	3

The table above shows that all 3 Likert scale items in this part had .835 as the Cronbach's Alpha value, suggesting very good internal consistency reliability for the scale with this sample (Pallant, 2016).

Table 5

		MOTIVATE	EXCITED	CONFIDENT
N	Valid	22	22	22
	Missing	0	0	0
Median		4.00	4.00	4.00
Std. Deviation		.774	.767	.811
Percentiles	25	4.00	4.00	4.00
	50	4.00	4.00	4.00
	75	5.00	5.00	5.00

The table above shows that all 3 Likert scale items were rated positively by the respondents. They agreed that playing Jenglish motivated them to use English (median = 4.00), made them excited to learn English (median = 4.00), and made them become more confident to use English (median = 4.00).

d. Research Question 3: ESL Students' Opinion on How Jenglish can be Improved

The respondents were also requested to give their opinions and suggestions to improve Jenglish. Data from the checkbox item were presented in the figure below.
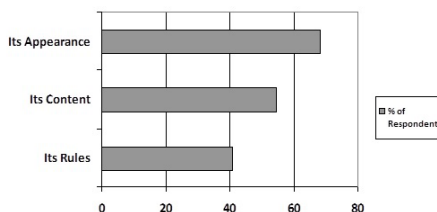

Figure 1

The figure shows that 68.2% (n=15) of the respondents thought that Jenglish needed to improve its content. Other than that, 54.5% (n=12) of the respondents chose the game's content and 40.9% (n=9) of the respondents chose the game's rules as the other 2 aspects that needed to be improved.

Table 6

Themes	Comments
Compliments	"nice" "I think this game is so great and nice" "good game" "good rules" "good" "I love it so much" "Its amazing" "Excellent" "Interesting" "Best" "i like this game" "gg yey" "Splendid" "A recommended english game"
Suggestions to Improve The Game	"The games should be more interesting" "More fun question" "Make more interesting the appearance" "its good game but more content and improve your game" "more creative" "The block of jenga beed to be more bigger" "Improve the rules of the game and the createria for finding the winner" "more questions needed" "Add more task or question to make it more fun." "More colourful" "Need to make it interesting while play the game" "they need to make the game become more interesting by give the participent the prize if they win the game" "the jenga make it bigger"
Benefits	"fun" "It is fun to play with others" "It is fun and intersting to play it."
Others	"Do the best" "trying not to give any excuses for the participant"

The comments were presented exactly as written (verbatim) by the respondents.

4.0 Conclusion

Jenglish, an ESL game created by ESL students, received positive reviews from respondents who had played the game four times in ESL classes. The game was found to be useful in ESL learning in the first research question, and in the second research question, it was found to be useful in relation to the affective domain. Despite these findings, the third research question revealed that the game's presentation, material, and rules needed to be improved, as shown by one of the thematic analysis' themes, Suggestions to Improve the Game.

Ultimately, from the perspective of other ESL students, a carefully designed language game by ESL learners can produce interesting positive results. Despite the fact that the game was directed and supervised by a language teacher, the respondents of the study proposed that certain aspects of the game should be enhanced for potential use in ESL lessons. Future research should look into the impact of this language game on ESL learners' English language skills as well as the effects of creating an ESL game on ESL game developers.

References

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1975). Beyond boredom and anxiety. CA: Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Fung, Y. M., & Min, Y. L. (2016). Effects of board game on speaking ability of low-proficiency ESL learners. International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature, 5(3), 261-271.http://journals.aiac.org.au/ index. php/IJALEL/article/viewFile/2289/2004

Ghazal & Singh (2016). Game-Based Language Learning: Activities for ESL Classes with Limited Access to Technology. ELT Voices, 6 (4), 1-8.http:// eltvoices.in/Volume6/Issue_4/EVI_64_1.pdf

Kurt, P. Y., & Kurt, H. (2018). Instructional Practices that Motivate Students to Learn English. Journal of Education and Future-Egitim Ve Gelecek Dergisi, (14), 119-130.http://dergipark.gov.tr/download/article-file/542033

Pallant, J. (2016). SPSS Survival Guide Manual 6th edition. Two Penn Plaza.

Paras, B., & Bizzocchi, J. (2005). Game, motivation, and effective learning: an integrated model for educational game design. Proceedings of DiGRA 2005 Conference: Changing Views – Worlds in Play.

Resnik, M. (2004). Edutainment? No Thanks. I Prefer Playful Learning. MIT Media Laboratory. Retrieved February 27, 2014, from https://llk.media.mit. edu/papers/archive/edutainment.pdf

Vygotsky, L. (1978). Mind in Society. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Wahyuni, S., & Junior, E. G. (2018). Gamification in English Language Teaching: Taboo and Timeline. The Fourth International Conference on English Across Cultures (P. 250).

Zichermann, G., & Cunningham, C. (2011). Gamification by Design; Implementing Game Mechanics in Web and Mobile Apps. Sebastopol: O'Reilly Media, Inc.