Peek-A-Boo, Where Are You? A Preliminary Study on Students' Perception in Using Gamification to Learn ESP

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ABSTRACT: The tenet in teaching English in the 21st century pays major attention in ensuring learning to be fun and engaging. Teachers are in charge of assisting the students in a way that the classroom setting works in a multidimensional way. A research report elaborated on the idea of using game-based approach in classroom as a catalyst for a bigger positive effect especially in engaging the students in developing their interest in learning. This is the foundation for this study and therefore constitutes a preliminary one. The aim of this study is to establish constructs on how gamification can be embedded in teaching and learning processes among engineering students who are taking English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and thus, the effectiveness of using the approach can be measured in the next research. A total of 102 students were involved and their feedback was collected through a survey that reflects their responses in terms of having gamification as part of the exercises in the classroom. The samples were asked questions related to their awareness about gamification approach in the classroom apart from their readiness to have it to be implemented thoroughly later on.

Keywords: *Gamification; English for Specific Purposes; Language Learning*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Kumar (2018) stated that there is a strong demand for learning the language and in this context, structuring it according to the specific needs of the learners. For an example, teaching English language in terms of communication skills for engineering students will require different approaches compared to teaching the same language to medical students. ESP itself focus more on a specific group of learners according to a special need or requirement and it may entail a different teaching and learning approaches.

Teaching and learning for ESP require an intensive and specially designed curriculum and approaches since that it caters to different kind of students with different traits. A general understanding would be a one-size-fits-all kind of medium but in reality, ESP is actually meant for a smaller subset of aims according to the different traits of the students and the purpose it is introduced.

This study was conducted among engineering students in a private higher learning institution in the east coast of Malaysia involving 102 respondents. Among the conventional practices in teaching the students are through exercises, drilling and role-play where at the end of every semester, feedback from the students were gathered and improvisation elements will be introduced later. In the recent theoretical development, there are many other tools that have been identified as a supplementary method to deliver an effective and efficient knowledge transfer between a teacher and the students and one of the methods is through gamification. The overall goal of this study was to assess students' awareness and readiness in using gamification in the learning process as a basis for a more detail investigation on the effectiveness of the approach in the future.

2. METHODOLOGY

Introducing gamification to students who are taking English for Specific Purposes (ESP) was conducted according to the ADDIE instructional design model and they were introduced to a digital board game that is specially designed and developed to assist the learning process. ADDIE model is being used in this study as it is commonly integrated in designing an effective curriculum (Eri and Susiana, 2019). Additionally, it is also being used because of the phases in the model that are designated for each of the development, execution and evaluation aspects.

Abide that ADDIE model was used at this stage only for the developmental part of the digital board game and also to get the feedback on the introduction of gamification in the classroom while not testing on the effectiveness of the method yet. In this preliminary study, 102 students were selected randomly to test the digital board game based on their existing knowledge added with experiences playing with the game. Ten questions were given to them right after they have tested the digital board game. Feedbacks were collected in terms of Likert-Type Scale ranging from 1 to 5 denoted for Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree and the questions given are categorized under face validity since that it really asks the respondents about their opinion and feedback on using the digital board game where the answers measured it accordingly.

On overall, ADDIE instructional design model was selected because of the phases that it offers in developing

the digital board game and at this stage, the study is meant for collecting feedback from the students on their opinion and responses on using gamification to teach ESP. Even though the findings will be only at an early stage, a thorough and detail study can be conducted later in terms of testing the effectiveness of using the digital board game in the classroom in the context of enhancing the learner's ability to grasp the knowledge given.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In relation to the developmental part of the digital board game, a survey was conducted on 102 students to identify their feedback on using gamification to learn ESP and the findings were then analysed using descriptive analysis of preferences.

From the study conducted, the findings showed that majority of the students are interested and keen on the usage of digital board game as part of their learning tools in the classroom. The digital board game was developed on the basis to tap on the learners' interest by accommodating to their preferences, which is in this context the gamification approach by focusing on the key component of ADDIE model.

The significance of the study is to substitute the traditional method of using exercise book where the learning activities rely heavily on the presence of teachers. The shift to using the digital board game that strives to meet the learners' learning preferences (gamification) is an optimization for a more meaningful language learning among the engineering undergraduates.

As an end product, the digital board game is likely to be a solution to the amounted rise of academic workload and the heightened demands for students' interaction and participation in the classroom learning. It is however vital to restrain that the digital board game is simply not an act of replacing the teachers but more on supplementing the learning materials to the extent of variety.

4. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, it is found that this study can help the researchers to build a strong and valid construct for a further research to be conducted on the effectiveness of using gamification among engineering and technical students especially related to ESP. Nevertheless, the feedbacks received showed that gamification can help the students to gain attention, stimulate recall of prior learning, and provide learning guidance that eventually help in ensuring a smooth teaching and learning processes. On the other hand, a more thorough study can further be conducted in overseeing the reasons why students choose the other indicator for the questions given in order to produce an auxiliary solid gamification approach that can benefit both the instructors and the students. Whenever an instructors consider to embed gamification in the teaching and learning processes, they might have to think about the instructional design or the level of difficulty for the students to have it or for the approach to be conducted. Sometimes, the gamification itself need to be created according to the level of ability

among students for them to really gain what is the purpose of playing it specifically in the context of ESP for engineering and technical background.

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