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***Eunny Dwi Lestariningsih***

has attended

**6th English Language & Literature International Conference (ELLiC)**

**"Transforming Paradigm, Diversity, and Challenges in English Language Learning,  
Linguistics, Literature, and Translation"**

as

***Presenter***

on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023

at Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang

Dean of FBBA

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## Gamification and Task-Based Language Teaching in Writing: In-Service Teacher's Perceptions & Challenges

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### ABSTRACT

Website tutorial learning lasted almost three years at Open University, Semarang, Central Java. However, in its implementation in writing classes, there were many challenges in writing scientific papers. Therefore, this study aims to describe the perceptions and challenges of teachers towards implementing gamification and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in learning to write scientific papers. The research used a mixed method design, namely a combination of quantitative and qualitative, primarily explanatory design. The subjects of this study were 35 elementary school teachers in *Pokjar Jepara* who were currently studying for their bachelor's degree at the Open University of Semarang. The teachers are, on average aged 25 to 50, with four males and 31 females. In addition, this study used research instruments, namely questionnaires and interviews. The study's results found positive perceptions and teacher challenges as indicators for implementing gamification and TBLT, namely learning independence, motivation, and positive collaboration in writing scientific papers. In conclusion, elementary school teachers who are continuing their undergraduate studies are encouraged to be better able to manage their time and themselves so they can write productive and popular scientific papers.

**Keywords:** gamification, task-based language teaching, in-service teachers, perceptions, challenges

### INTRODUCTION

Students and teachers in every corner of the globe can now access a suite of digital writing tools rapidly growing in scope. According to Astuti et al., (2020), the evolution of the teaching model brought on by the proliferation of digital resources has resulted in an infinite and time-consuming method. According to Hockly & Dudeney (2018), it is believed

that the great variety of capabilities offered by technology is beneficial to students' language learning. Consequently, students have more opportunities to gain linguistic competence through informational training and bridging with their respective teachers. The production of instructional materials, which were traditionally authored by hand, is increasingly transitioning to the use of technology. In addition, it has raised the bar for the traditional education model and moved it to a higher level. Moreover, using technology for writing, such as a computer, the internet, gamification, or an android to assist in writing, is just as legitimate as the more conventional practice of writing on paper (Alhumsi & Alshaye, 2021; Gu et al., 2020; Han et al., 2021; Lam et al., 2018; Turmudi, 2020).

However, it is common for students to need more interest in or motivation for writing tasks provided to them within classroom learning activities. It is because writing is a skill that requires practice. It is now the responsibility of the instructors to investigate and put into practice a method that can be relied upon for training students in written form. Writing is a skill that requires students of English as a foreign language to concentrate on determining the concept and applying the coherence structure. To assist their students in becoming better writers, teachers need to be aware of this requirement. Everyone wins when English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students pay attention and when teachers present models of solid writing.

Similarly, Khongput, 2020; Rahimi & Fathi, 2022; Sundari & Febriyanti, 2023) claimed that students could improve their writing by reproducing and working with the model lecturers offer. This argument follows the same logic as the previous one. More elaboration is necessary for writing teaching that uses technology in the classroom to foster students' competency and encourage self-regulation, such as integrating task-based language teaching and gamification in the writing process.

Gamification and language based on tasks are two topics discussed with the application of technology to the instruction of the writing process and the enhancement of students' writing abilities. The use of teaching as an alternate way for instructing students, particularly service learners who are learning how to write academic papers, has become increasingly common. The Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) instructional approach is characterized by its emphasis on the utilization of real examples of the target language in the completion of meaningful activities. One way to look at communicative language teaching (CLT) is as an umbrella concept that TBLT falls under. This training method is predicated on the idea of having students do various kinds of tasks. When evaluating a learner's progress, the outcome of a task, rather than the learner's ability to accurately utilize the target language, is given the most weight in the evaluation process.

TBLT focuses on the significance of words and phrases when interacting with others. Students are strongly encouraged to use innate

problem-solving abilities in the target language. They are also encouraged to complete the task with their classmates (Ji & Pham, 2020; Pingmuang & Koraneekij, 2022; Shirafkan et al., 2022). Most importantly, TBLT is geared toward helping students grasp the meaning of the target language to do tasks that have practical applications in the actual world. TBLT integrates the traditional focus on forms with its primary emphasis on meaning to create a unified approach to teaching grammar. The goal is to ensure that students don't prioritize speed and complexity in their language development at the expense of precision. Therefore, TBLT creates the methodological justification of emphasis on form as a middle ground, where the focus of language learners is shifted to language forms within the framework of meanings (Rajabi & Hashemian, 2015). Students in TBLT initially focus on the meanings of the words they are learning, but when they encounter communication difficulties while performing a task, their focus shifts to the forms of the words they are learning. With TBLT, students are pushed toward an independent study of the functional grammar structures they'll need to complete their assignments. Corrective feedback as a kind of implicit instruction is also required (Chong & Reinders, 2020; Ellis, 2017; Hastuti et al., 2023; Lyu, 2021). This method of teaching grammar suggests that students put less emphasis on grammatical rules that are presented explicitly. Many experts in second language education consider TBLT the gold standard because it helps students efficiently learn the language by completing communicative tasks (Ellis, 2017). When the potential advantages of TBLT are considered, the increasing interest in TBLT in China's higher education system is not surprising.

However, the local application of TBLT may need to be improved by the prevalence of traditional teaching and learning practices. This is the case since the English curriculum in China is known for strictly following the structural syllabus to impart knowledge of specific grammatical structures (Du et al., 2017; Sultan, 2023).

This is primarily a result of the examination-oriented culture in China (Ji & Pham, 2020), which prioritizes grammatical structure knowledge and understanding in English tests. There is a high likelihood of pushback from teachers and students if TBLT is introduced into English schools in China without focusing on grammar. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance for academics and educators to examine and identify solutions for potential discrepancies between TBLT and the traditional teaching and learning methodologies already in China if they want to see TBLT adopted successfully in English classrooms there. By developing culturally relevant educational strategies, this study helped bridge the gap and better prepare educators in China to use TBLT within the context of their own nation.

Consequently, it is generally accepted that TBLT is an alternative method for establishing fluency in the target language and boosting student confidence. Gamification in educational settings and language learning environments can boost students' motivation and critical thinking levels,

fostering an environment conducive to healthy competition (Bal, 2019; Hasanah & Aziz, 2021; Lam & Chiu, 2018; Lestariningsih et al., 2022; Pingmuang & Koraneekij, 2022). According to Kapp (2012), gamification incorporates game features into non-game settings, such as using levels, points, and prizes. According to Ozcinar et al. (2019) and Yamani (2020), gamification can boost students' enthusiasm and interest in the content of e-learning and mobile-learning platforms.

Moreover, "gamification" refers to incorporating aspects of video games into students' academic endeavors to involve and excite them about those endeavors more actively (Hasanah & Aziz, 2021; Samosa et al., 2021). Participating in competitive gaming is an essential part of the day-to-day activities of a student in the modern world. They spend a considerable portion of their time playing games, which could be better spent to provide students with an even better overall educational experience, a pedagogical strategy known as gamification was put into practice. Gamification is characterized by applying game mechanics and design principles to non-game contexts. In addition, putting this technique into practice can help foster the growth of active learning, cater to various distinct learning styles, and provide more malleable education.

Based on this information and these specifications, it has been concluded that the deployment of digital gamification is necessary for students to feel fulfilled in the instructional process and to be associated with writing activities both in and outside of school. This conclusion was reached due to the analysis of this information and these specifications. It is advantageous because it can contribute to the growth of one's writing skills, which is considered beneficial. Gamification is suitable for students because it will allow them to feel like they fit into the class while improving and amplifying their writing talents. It is an additional reason why gamification is seen as beneficial for students (Hasanah & Aziz, 2021).

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There currently needs to be research that has been conducted that investigates task-based language instruction (TBLT) and gamification in the context of writing academic articles that build on students' challenges and points of view. Many researchers restricted the scope of their studies to TBLT challenges and viewpoints (Chong & Reinders, 2020; Du et al., 2017; Ellis, 2017; Hastuti et al., 2023; Lyu, 2021; Sultan, 2023), the effectiveness of gamification, implementation, and gamification impacts on learners skills (Afrilyasanti & Cahyono, 2022; Anderle et al., 2022; Ghawail & Yahia, 2022; Kilic, 2022; Lin, 2022; Pingmuang & Koraneekij, 2022; Portero & Rodríguez, 2022; Wiethof et al., 2021; Yavuz et al., 2020; Zainuddin & Keumala, 2021; Zhihao & Zhonggen, 2022). The research community has yet to attempt to combine TBLT and gamification while considering students' challenges and perspectives. The only subjects being explored here are those directly relevant to the functionality of TBLT and gamification.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that this study found a gap in describing the in-service teachers' challenges and perceptions in writing academic articles.

## **METHOD**

The research used a mixed method design, namely a combination of quantitative and qualitative, primarily explanatory design. Because quantitative and qualitative data were collected, analyzed, interpreted, and integrated into more than one study, research was carried out utilizing a mixed-methods methodology (Cresswell, 2009, 2014; Cresswell & Plano, 2018). It was done because the findings of these studies were combined. During this study, in-depth information was gathered using two distinct methods: first, an analogous time-series design was utilized to collect quantitative data; second, a case study methodology was utilized to acquire qualitative data. This study was conducted with the goals of not only providing evidence for the conclusions utilizing data acquired via numerous methodologies but also supplementing the limits of quantitative research with qualitative research, which adds greater context and nuance (Bakir, 2014). The data used in this study were gathered using a variety of methods. In addition, Cresswell & Plano (2018) emphasize two benefits that come along with the use of mixed research methods. Triangulation, which provides cross-data validation, is utilized first and foremost in this method.

Second, it improved over previous methods since it made the most of the advantages of a single methodology.

This study aimed to shed light on the research subject by using a sequential collection of qualitative and quantitative data; hence, the mixed method approach was utilized and explanatory (Cresswell, 2014; Cresswell & Plano, 2018). The explanatory model is the most effective research strategy, incorporating quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Using this strategy, the quantitative data were first clarified, then the qualitative data were integrated with the quantitative data to produce a more complete picture of the current study. According to Cresswell, (2009, 2014); Cresswell & Plano, (2018), the explanation process is best described as a two-stage hybrid system design, also called the sequential design. During the design phase, collecting and analyzing quantitative data started first, followed by collecting and analyzing qualitative data. The inquiry produced quantitative findings significantly different from expected and required more clarification. According to (Cresswell, 2014) the explanatory design was the hybrid method involving the fewest moving parts. The subjects of this study were 35 elementary school teachers in Pokjar Jepara who were currently studying for their bachelor's degree at one of the Open University Indonesia. The teachers are, on average aged 25 to 50, with four males and 31 females. In addition, this study used research instruments, namely questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were adopted from Shirafkan et al., (2022) and (Samosa et al., 2021) which consisted of six indicators; TBLT, gamification, and teacher education; TBLT, gamification, & learners' expectation; TBLT and challenges with gamification; TBLT, gamification, & time limitations for teachers; TBLT, gamification, and teachers' characteristics; the feasibility of TBLT and gamification resources.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The study had two instruments, such as; questionnaires and interviews. The challenges and perspectives in implementing gamification and task-based language teaching had six indicators which can be interpreted in Table 1.

**Table 1:**  
**Challenges & Perspectives in Implementing Gamification & Task-Based  
 Language Teaching**

Indicators	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
TBLT, gamification, and teacher education	2.5	16.5	31.0	39.4	10.6
TBLT, gamification, & learners' expectation	2.5	10.0	27.5	52.6	7.4
TBLT and challenges with gamification	2.0	6.5	21.5	61.0	9.0
TBLT, gamification, & time limitations for teachers	2.0	9.5	28.5	50.0	10.0
TBLT, gamification, and teachers' characteristics	2.5	9.0	27.5	49.6	11.4
the feasibility of TBLT and gamification resources	2.0	8.4	29.6	50.0	10.0

The challenges and perspectives in implementing gamification and task-based language teaching, as shown in Table 1. was revealed from six indicators. 70% of service teachers could face challenges in implementing TBLT and gamification in writing. They can achieve their communicative needs with gamification media such as; android-based media, Kahoot, and quizzes. Then, 71% of service teachers got a positive perception and expectation from learners when using TBLT and gamification. The learners participated sufficiently in the teaching-learning process with some sequences of phases in TBLT and gamification framework, which can give a simultaneous learning environment. The learners also tended to be active in class and not bored when they did some writing-related activities. These results give a more insightful understanding of the integration of TBLT and



