

Research Article

Assessing the Effects of Gamification on Developing EFL Learners' Idiomatic Knowledge: Do Attitudinal Factors Contribute to the Learning of the Idioms with the Game?

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Regarding the attractiveness of educational games for EFL learners, the present research intended to investigate the effects of gamification on improving Iranian EFL learners' idiomatic knowledge. In addition, the current research examined the attitudes of Iranian EFL learners towards using gamification in English learning in the Iranian EFL context. Firstly, to carry out this research, the researchers administered the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) to 84 Iranian EFL learners and selected 50 upper-intermediate participants. Secondly, they divided the selected participants into an experimental group (EG) and a control group (CG). Thirdly, the researchers gave an idiom pretest to the participants of both groups to assess their idiomatic knowledge before starting the treatment. Fourthly, the EG was taught the new idioms using game-based instruction, while the CG received traditional idiom instruction. Following the instruction of 70 idioms to both groups, the participants received an idiom posttest to determine the influence of the treatment on their idiomatic knowledge. The EG was then provided an attitude questionnaire, and 15 members of the EG were interviewed as a result of the questionnaire. In the idiom posttest, the data were evaluated using paired samples and independent samples *t*-tests, and the findings revealed that the EG performed significantly better than the CG on the posttest of idioms. In fact, gamification helped EFL learners develop their idiomatic knowledge. The results indicated that Iranian EFL learners presented positive attitudes toward gamification in learning English idioms. In addition, the results revealed that enjoyment, fun, reducing anxiety, involvement, and immediate feedback were the factors that the students mentioned for the instructional games. The implications of this research can encourage English teachers to implement different educational games in their teaching.

1. Introduction

Gamification is a relatively new trend in education. This method relies on game components, such as points and prizes, to accomplish its goal. Gamification is the process of incorporating game features into settings [1]. Additionally, according to Sheldon [2], gamification “is the utilization of game elements to nongame activity” (p. 75). Other researchers like Zichermann and Cunningham [3] state that gamification engages students through game procedures. Another definition of gamification is highlighted by Khaleel et al. [4] as using game elements to improve students’ engagement with the computer to solve problems with E-applications. Gamification now refers to a problem-solving strategy that employs game features and game-design techniques in traditionally nongame contexts [5].

Using gamification in second language learning is beneficial. The primary purpose of gamification is to give students learning experiences in exciting and effective ways. Gamification can be used to make students motivated. It opens the doors for students to practice the language quickly and acquire some skills that can be beneficial to solve different tasks [6]. Moreover, gamification provides a social atmosphere among students, which allows them to interact and communicate without any obstacles. In gamification, social context encourages students to express themselves and their feelings [7, 8].

Educational games may help students learn more effectively, and the usage of games in the classroom has shown to be quite valuable for pupils [9, 10]. When faced with failure, learners may be quick to give up, but they respond differently when faced with failure while playing games. To be successful in video games, players must have tenacity, intellect, practice, and learning on their side. In their research, Lee and Hammer [11] discovered that educational games could meet three categories of intellectual demands in learners (specifically, cognitive, emotional, and social benefits), resulting in good emotional experiences. The improvement of problem-solving abilities is one of the cognitive advantages. Before going to the next level, players must finish the previous level successfully. The incentives earned for completing each level serve as a steady source of encouragement while also helping players to improve their abilities. Gamification may also be used to meet the emotional requirements of kids. To succeed, players must endure several failures, and with each loss, they gain valuable experience and knowledge [12, 13]. Online games provide an enjoyable learning environment, which is particularly beneficial for younger learners who are less engaged in the learning process [14, 15].

Using games can develop the EFL learners’ idiom knowledge. An idiom is often described as a set of words that have been established by use as having a distinctive meaning that cannot be deduced from the meanings of the individual words that make up the idiom in question [16]. “An idiom” is defined by Simpson and Mendis [17] as “a combination of words that appear in a more or less fixed phrase whose overall meaning cannot be anticipated by studying the meaning of its individual pieces” (p.423). Also stated in the article is

that “the term idiom invokes images of a kind of language that is regarded to be fun and engaging as well as casually appealing, colorful, and memorable” (p. 419). “A phrase whose meaning cannot always be simply deduced from the conventional meaning of its parts,” according to the definition used in this research. Webster’s Dictionary [18] states that “it is difficult to discern from the exact meaning of the individual terms.”

The use of idioms is problematic because they are a low-frequency vocabulary [17, 19], so they must be taught through appropriate strategies such as explicit instruction [20–22] or the use of materials that provide deliberate access to the idioms. On the other hand, spending valuable class time teaching particular idioms is not optimal since a more familiar and generalizable rule-based grammatical point or more commonly used vocabulary items can be a more desired teaching topic to emphasize instead. In this sense, materials that are rich in idioms (such as a book, a recorded conversation, a movie, or a computer game) may promote learning outside of the classroom in two ways: first, by providing opportunities for students to practice their language skills. First and foremost, numerous encounters are necessary for language acquisition [23]. Second, the resources give many chances for students to participate in self-directed learning, and the students are encouraged to develop further ideas and views on each idiom as a result of their experiences with the tools. With the widespread use of digital technologies, games have been identified as effective resources for language learning [24] and the concept of gamification (Deterding & Werbach, 2012; [5, 25]) is being implemented to online educational games [26] following the widespread use of digital technologies [24]. This article investigates the impact of gamification on the idiomatic understanding of Iranian English as a foreign language student.

2. Review of the Literature

Even though idioms are an unavoidable aspect of speech, they are essential for L2 learners to be familiar with to grasp English. Acquiring idioms has always been a challenge for second-language students. There are various reasons why idioms are challenging to achieve in a second language, and each one is discussed here. First and foremost, idioms are figurative expressions; their meaning cannot be deduced from their constituent components. Furthermore, most idioms have literal analogues, which makes understanding them that much more difficult. Second, while speaking to second-language learners, idioms are often eliminated from the conversation. When speaking to second-language learners, native speakers refrain from utilizing idioms and instead rely on daily terminology to communicate. Third, even when learners acquire the meanings of idioms, learning how to apply them appropriately is sometimes a challenging task. It is also possible that the absence of appropriate resources for teaching idioms is one of the contributing factors to the problems in learning them [27, 28]. As one of the essential areas of foreign language acquisition for both instructors and students, it would be required to utilize

efficient approaches to teach idioms, one of which is gamification, another of which is the usage of games.

In an age when interactive media and games are commonplace, gamification in the classroom may be an enticing and inspiring concept for learners [29]. Gamification is a recently established phrase to describe a social phenomenon emerging among a generation of technologically savvy individuals. This pattern began to appear in 2010 and has continued today [30, 31]. The fascination with gamification stems from the notion that it can influence behavior. Curiosity, irritation, and delight are all strong emotional reactions elicited by games, among others [32]. Furthermore, it is believed that when individuals play games, they are more engaged and more efficient [33, 34]. Learners might be inspired to learn in novel ways or to appreciate tiresome chores if gamification was used in the classroom.

Gamification is a form of digital literacy where many layers of meaning-making and processing occur through a gamified application as a medium. This literacy is defined as New Media Literacy Studies (NMLSs). The NMLS deals with making meaning and gaining meaning from media [35, 36]. Gamification contains multiple features for constructing meaning, for instance, sound, images, words, and colors. Students learn to acknowledge the relationship between numerous features in the educational context to comprehend the game. Gee [37] denotes that perceiving the relations and combination of various elements (images, words, actions, symbols, artifacts, etc.) as a multifaceted system is substantial to learning. Students study, build, associate, and synthesize the relationship of these features. As such, learning becomes more meaningful, purposeful, and motivating.

One aspect of gamification that can play a fundamental role in the students' learning English is the competitive atmosphere among students in the classroom. All students attempt to complete the activities to achieve specific points or rewards, increasing competition among their classmates. According to Lee and Hammer [11], learners who participate in gamification learn in a competitive setting since they attempt to win an award. Alsawaier [38] claimed that gamification is appropriate for allowing learners to compete with one another by accumulating points as quickly as feasible in this context.

Another aspect of gamification is the collaborative atmosphere. This feature makes students work collaboratively through pair or group work because all the activities can be solved individually or in groups. Besides, this gamification aspect makes students more engaged and participate in the class. In this regard, Buckingham [39] asserted that gamification could facilitate designing tasks shared in the classroom. Also, Denny [40] and Grant and Betts [41] highlight that gamification improves students' participation and their activity among their classmates. Specifically, gamification introduces a productive environment that provokes students to continue self-learning and also provides appropriate and unlimited tasks for students in an attractive gamified way. Al-Smadi [42] stated that gamification and its elements could allow students to discover and have them learn in a social context.

Game designers utilize behaviorist elements, cognitivist elements, constructivist elements, and often different combinations in designing games for learning purposes [43]. Constructivism is another theory that supports game-based learning. Constructivism is the concept of "learning by doing," and this can be applied in this digital age by game-based learning, where learners can learn how to solve their problems and make decisions via games [44].

Several empirical studies were performed considering the impacts of gamification on English language learning. Poondej and Lerdpornkulra [45] studied the effect of a gamified course on Thai university students' engagement in learning. The participants were five hundred seventy-seven undergraduate students assigned to EG and CGs. A questionnaire was adopted to collect the data. The findings revealed that the students in the EG were more engaged in their learning than the CG. This result indicated that gamification was more effective than the conventional teaching method. Rachels [46] examined the effect of gamification on third and fourth-grade students' achievement. The participants were one hundred seventy-six Spanish students classified into CG and EGs. A pre-posttest was used to gather data. The findings revealed no differences among the students who were taught by gamification or conventionally.

Buhagiar and Leo [47] investigated the effect of a gamified course on one hundred and six American university students' academic achievement. A pre-posttest was used to collect the data. The outcomes disclosed that students' achievement improved after using gamification. El Tantawi et al. [48] investigated the effect of using gamification on university students in Saudi Arabia. The participants consisted of ninety-two male students enrolled in an academic writing course. The results indicated considerable progress in students' academic writing skills that were attributed to the use of gamification.

Chen et al. [49] investigated the effect of using gamification on fifty-five fifth-grade students' reading performance in Taiwan. A pre-posttest was used to gather the data. Findings pointed out no statistically significant differences between the study groups who taught by the conventional method and by the gamification method. This result means that gamification was not effective in teaching reading.

Setiawan and Wiedarti [50] examined the effects of mobile games on improving students' learning motivation and shifting the boring to fun and exciting class atmosphere. They conducted their study on 65 Indonesian EFL learners and found that games increased learners' motivation and interest.

Abusa'aleek and Baniabdelrahman [51] explored the impact of gamification on the reading comprehension of Jordanian EFL sixth-grade students who were learning English as a second language. The research respondents were 71 children from two entire sections of the sixth-grade pupils from a public school in Jordan who were included in the research. They were divided into two groups using a random number generator: an EG ($n = 35$) and a CG ($n = 36$). A pre-test and a posttest were developed, with three levels of reading comprehension being assessed (the literal, inferential, and critical levels). The EG was taught via the use of the

ClassDojo Website's instructional program of gamification, while the CG was taught through the use of the Teacher's Book of Action Pack 6's traditional training. The findings revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the EG and CG participants on the overall reading comprehension posttest, as well as in each level of reading comprehension (i.e., the literal, inferential, and critical level), with the participants in the EG who were taught utilizing gamification scoring higher on the overall reading comprehension posttest and in each level of reading comprehension (i.e., the literal, inferential, and critical level).

Fithriani [52] investigated the impact of gamified vocabulary acquisition in a mobile-assisted language environment on the vocabulary learning outcomes of Indonesian adult EFL learners. She found that it was successful. This research included two classes of 74 first-year students attending a General English course at a public university in Indonesia. The students were divided into two groups, then randomly allocated to the EG and CG groups. Apart from pre- and posttests, data were collected by online questionnaires, which were then analyzed using the SPSS 20 software program. In general, the data suggested that pupils in the EG outperformed their counterparts in the CG in terms of academic performance. Besides that, they validated the advantages of mobile-assisted gamification for their vocabulary acquisition in three different areas: learning outcomes, pleasure, and motivation.

Using an action classroom research approach, Waluyo and Bucol [53] incorporated a two-cycle of vocabulary learning for ten weeks at a university in Thailand, encompassing very low-level students ($N = 65$; 18.5 percent male and 81.5 percent female) who had previously failed the university proficiency test and were required to take an introductory English remedial course during their first academic term. The target vocabulary consisted of 500 academic English words at the A1-A2 levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Quizlet was chosen as the gamification tool because previous research had shown significant potential for use. The participants acquired vocabulary without the assistance of Quizlet during the first cycle of the study (5 weeks), and then they learned vocabulary with the help of Quizlet supplied by the instructor during the second cycle (5 weeks). It was created to aid students in their vocabulary study at home via Quizlet. Weekly in-class vocabulary examinations were used to assess the students' progress in their learning outcomes. The findings of paired-sample t -tests revealed a substantial improvement in both conditions: before and after the Quizlet activities were completed and before and after the vocabulary exam. It is suggested by these findings that gamified vocabulary learning may be implemented into vocabulary learning instruction since it can solve significant concerns in vocabulary learning.

Rashid Al-Eqabi and Mohammed Alnoori [54] investigated the effects of digital games on students' vocabulary learning depending on a literature review. Their study showed that games are utilized not only for making students successful in EFL classes but also, more importantly, for increasing their motivation and cooperation. In addition,

the results indicated that there are merits and demerits in utilizing games for learning English vocabulary.

Gamification in learning and teaching the English language is not widely known. In addition, most studies reported above examined the effects of games on vocabulary learning. In fact, there is a scarce of studies about applying gamification in English idiom learning in the Iranian EFL context. Besides, the students' attitudes about games were overlooked in most of the studies mentioned above. Thus, the present research intended to investigate the potential effects of gamification on Iranian EFL learners' idiomatic knowledge. The following research questions were posed based on the objectives of this study:

RQ1. Does gamification develop Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners' idiomatic knowledge significantly?

RQ2. What are Iranian EFL learners' attitudes towards using gamification in learning English?

3. Methodology

3.1. Design of the Study. The research followed a quasiexperimental study with the quantitative (pretest, posttest, and attitude questionnaire) and qualitative (interview) methods in the data collection procedure. This study consisted of one experimental group and one control group and had an independent variable (gamification) and a dependent variable (idiomatic knowledge). The control variables of the study were gender, age, and proficiency level of the participants.

3.2. Participants. To conduct this study, 50 upper-intermediate English as foreign language students were recruited from a pool of 84 students at an English institution in Ahvaz, Iran. According to their performance on the OQPT, their level of English language competence was evaluated. The ages of the participants ranged from 20 to 37 years old. The participants in this research were all guys. The participants were divided into EG and CG, which were allocated at random. Each group included a total of 25 participants.

3.3. Instruments. The OQPT was the first tool employed in the present experiment to homogenize the respondents. Its purpose was to aid the researcher in gaining a complete picture of the respondents' proficiency levels (elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, and upper-intermediate). This exam consisted of 60 multiple-choice questions, and the participants who scored between 45 and 55 were classified as upper-intermediate and were selected to be the target sample for this research, according to their findings.

Pretests of idiom, which were developed by the researcher and used in the current study, were the second instrument used. The pretest consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions based on the students' coursebook material. The test's reliability and validity were computed, presenting the results. In reality, three English academics reviewed the pretest to ensure that it was genuine on both the face and the content levels. That is, three English university instructors reviewed the exam and advised certain revisions based on the clarity, simplicity, and representativeness of the test questions to ensure that the Content Validity Index (CVI) of the test items was

accurate. Because of this, the researchers adjusted some of the test questions and piloted the exam on 15 students who had characteristics comparable to those of the target groups. Then, using the KR-21 formula ($r = 0.87$), the reliability of the pretest was determined and reported.

The third instrument utilized in this study was an idiom posttest, which the researchers developed. The posttest of the study was based on a modified version of the pretest used in the research. All of the parameters of the posttest, including the kind of questions and the number of items, were the same as those of the pretest. The only slight difference between this exam and the pretest was that the sequence of questions, and choices was modified to exclude the possibility of recalling the answers from the pretest. It was given to the students to evaluate the therapy's impact on their idiom learning abilities. Three English experts checked the validity of the posttest, and its reliability was computed by using the KR-21 formula ($r = 0.81$).

To determine the views of EFL students on the use of gamification in English learning, the researcher created an attitude questionnaire that was administered to them. This questionnaire had 15 questions concerning the use of gamification in the context of English language learning. The questionnaire employed a Likert scale with responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "disagree," to "neutral," to "agree," and "strongly agree" to reflect the degree of disagreement and agreement among the participants on gamification. The responses to each questionnaire item were given number values based on the answers provided by the participants. So, when someone indicated strongly agree on an issue, he or she earned a five on that particular item. A numerical value of 4 was given to show agreement, to indicate neutrality, 3, to indicate disagreement, 2, and to indicate strongly disagree, a numerical value of 1. The reliability of this questionnaire was determined by utilizing Cronbach's alpha ($r = .82$), which indicates that it was reliable.

The other instrument for gathering the data was an interview. A semistructured interview with a total of five open-ended items was developed to gather the participants' views on the application of gamification; to get sure about the validity of five open-ended items, two experienced English professors read them and made some changes and modified some wordings. The researcher did believe that answering more than five open-ended items would tire the respondents, and less than five items would not be adequate to collect reliable and valid data. The researcher recorded the participants' voices during each interview, and after each interview, the answers were transcribed. When the interviews were completed, the transcribed data were checked, and some of them were omitted if the data were repetitive or unrelated to the study's questions. The transcribed data then were ready to receive adequate analysis depending on the nature of the data and the purpose of the study.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure. To perform the current study, the researchers gave the OQPT to 84 Iranian EFL participants to determine their level of English proficiency. The researchers selected 50 upper-intermediate EFL students and divided them randomly into two groups; one EG ($n = 25$)

TABLE 1: Descriptive statistics of the idiom pretests.

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
Scores	CG	25	14.72	2.52	.50
	EG	25	15.04	2.30	.46

and one CG ($n = 25$). Then, both groups were pretested by an idiom test. Afterward, the EG learned the idioms through gamification, and the CG, on the other hand, engaged in the regular program of the classroom.

The EG used a game called *Idiomatico* to practice the selected idioms. Throughout the game, there were 521 idioms in all, divided into 28 categories. The idioms picked for the game include names of bodily parts and, as a result, some more health-related idioms. With audio and text, each idiom was presented in a sentence context, and three potential solutions were provided as possible translations of that phrase. The students were required to select the correct answer. This process continued till teaching 70 idioms. The CG was taught the idioms in a traditional class, the students attended the course, and the teacher taught the idioms to them directly. The idioms were translated for the students, and the students were asked to practice them both in the class and at home. After teaching the idioms, a posttest was given to the participants of both groups to measure the students' progress as a result of the instruction. Then, the mentioned questionnaire was distributed among the participants of the EG to check their attitudes towards using gamification. Finally, a semistructured interview with five open-ended items was done with 15 participants of the EG to examine their views on gamification.

3.5. Data Analysis. To answer the study questions, data analysis was carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 22 to answer them. On the first occasion, descriptive statistics such as the means and standard deviations were computed. Secondly, a paired samples *t*-test and two independent samples *t*-tests were run to investigate the treatment's influences on the Iranian EFL students' idiomatic knowledge. Thirdly, to determine the attitudes of the Iranian students concerning the use of gamification in idiom learning, one samples' *t*-test was applied. Finally, the data of the interviews were analyzed qualitatively.

4. Results

The results of the study are shown in the following tables.

In Table 1, the descriptive statistics—means and standard deviations—of both groups are presented. The CG's mean score is 14.72, and the EG's mean score is 15.04. This means that both groups had almost the same level of idiom knowledge before receiving the treatment.

On the pretest, the mean scores of both groups were compared using an independent samples *t*-test, which is shown in Table 2. Since the Sig (.64) is more than 0.05, the difference between the groups is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Both groups received identical results on the idiom pretest, which was not surprising.

TABLE 2: Inferential statistics of the idiom pretests.

		Levene's test for equality of variances		<i>t</i> -test for equality of means				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference
Scores	Equal variances assumed	.13	.71	-.46	48	.64	-.32	.68
	Equal variances not assumed			-.46	47.58	.64	-.32	.68

Table 3 reveals both groups' descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) on the idiom posttest. The CG's mean score is 15.32, and the EG's mean score is 17.44. It seems that the EG outperformed the CG on the postidiom test. An independent samples *t*-test was used in the following table to see if the difference between the EG and the CG is significant or not.

Table 4 indicates that the differences between the performances of both groups on the idiom posttest are significant at ($p < 0.05$) because Sig (.00) is less than 0.05. In fact, the EG participants had better performance than the CG on their idiom posttest.

In Table 5, for each group, two paired samples *t*-tests are used to compare the results of the pre- and posttests in the table above. Unlike the CG, the difference between the idiom pretest and posttest is not statistically significant because Sig (.10) is more than 0.05, but the difference between the EG's pretest and posttest is statistically significant since Sig (.00) is less than 0.05.

Table 6 shows that the statistic *T* value is 41.78, Df = 14, and the significance level is 0.00, less than 0.05. This implies that Iranian EFL learners held positive attitudes toward using gamification in learning English idioms.

After conducting the interview, some attitudinal factors were extracted from the participants' responses to the interview questions. Enjoyment and fun were the main attitudinal factors that the students mentioned for their positive attitudes towards gamification. Reducing anxiety was the other attitudinal factor that the participants provided for supporting their positive attitudes. In fact, the students believed that learning with games helps reduce their learning anxiety. In addition, involvement was the other attitudinal factor that the students mentioned as a reason for presenting positive attitudes towards gamification. They stated that using games can encourage them to be more involved in language learning. Immediate feedback is another reason that the students mentioned for their positive attitudes.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

After gathering the data through pretest, posttest, questionnaire, and interview, they were analyzed using independent samples, paired samples, and one samples' *t*-tests. The results of the current research showed that the difference between the posttests of the EG and CGs was significant at ($p < 0.05$) since Sig (.00) was less than 0.05. Indeed, the EG who had received a game-based instruction outperformed the CG on the idiom posttest. In addition, the results of the questionnaire and interview indicated that Iranian EFL

TABLE 3: Descriptive statistics of the idiom posttests.

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
Scores	CG	25	15.32	2.23	.44
	EG	25	17.44	1.22	.24

learners had a positive attitude about using gamification in learning English idioms.

The results gained in this study agree with Poondej and Lerdpornkulra [45], whose results indicated that the students in the EG that were trained via gamification were more engaged in their learning than the CG. Their results showed that gamification was more effective than the conventional teaching method. Also, our results are in line with Buhagiar and Leo [47], who investigated the effects of a gamified course for one hundred and six American university students' academic achievement and demonstrated that students' achievement improved after using gamification.

Moreover, our research is supported by El Tantawi et al. [48], who inspected the influences of applying gamification on Saudi Arabian university students. Their findings discovered a significant enhancement in students' academic writing skills that was ascribed to the use of gamification. In addition, the current research results are in accordance with Fithriani [52], who investigated the effects of gamified vocabulary learning in a mobile-assisted language environment on Indonesian adult EFL learners' vocabulary learning. His results showed that the students in the EG outflanked their counterparts in the CG. Additionally, our study is advocated by Abusa'alek and Baniabdelrahman [51], Waluyo and Bucol [53], Rashid Al- Eqabi, and Mohammed Alnoori [54], who confirmed the positive effects of using games on developing learning English in different contexts. The current study results lend support to constructivism theory stating that in the digital age, students can learn how to solve their problems and make decisions by using games [44].

One justifying explanation for our results can be that games provide a more enjoyable learning context for EFL learners. Enjoyment is indeed one of the essential agents behind the adoption of games in EFL classrooms [55]. When students enjoy playing the games, their explorative, competitive, attentive, and persistent instincts by which learning occurs are supposed to develop. These findings reinforce those of the past studies stating that enjoyment can be a factor in the usefulness of gamification for EFL learning [56, 57]. Ebrahimzadeh and Alavi [56] asserted that improving enjoyment via digital games can assist learners in

TABLE 4: Inferential statistics of the idiom posttests.

		Levene's test for equality of variances		<i>t</i> -test for equality of means				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference
Scores	Equal variances assumed	6.58	.01	-4.16	48	.00	-2.120	.50
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.16	37.31	.00	-2.12	.50

TABLE 5: Paired samples' *t*-test: comparing the idiom pre- and posttests of each group.

		Paired differences			95% confidence interval of the difference		<i>t</i>	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	CG pre/post	-.60	1.75	.35	-1.32	.12	-1.70	24	.10
Pair 2	EG pre/post	-2.40	2.06	.41	-3.25	-1.54	-5.82	24	.00

TABLE 6: One-sample test of the questionnaire.

Test value = 0						
<i>t</i>	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the difference		
				Lower	Upper	
41.78	14	.00	4.11	3.90	4.32	

keeping up with the lengthy and time-consuming effort of English language learning.

The other rationale underlying the current research results is the competitive nature of the games. Competition to win the games can persuade the learners to involve themselves deeply in the learning process. Among the natural features of digital games is competition, which motivates the players to display a sense of achievement and accomplishment while using them [52]. One more rationale may be that the game-based setting is a more comforting and exciting experience for EFL students than they have never had in a conventional environment. In addition, game-based instruction is more student-centered, putting the learning responsibility on the students' shoulders.

The use of gamification can be attractive for learners. It can engage them in learning outside of the class environment, encourage self-study among the learners, and increase the students' self-confidence. These characteristics can be why the EG outperformed the CG on the posttest.

This research investigated the impacts of gamification on Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners' idiom learning. The present study results indicated that the difference between the posttests of the EG and CGs was significant at ($p < 0.05$), and the EG had better performance than the CG on the idiom posttest. Moreover, the results indicated that the participants showed a positive attitude towards gamification in language learning and teaching. According to the obtained findings in this research, it can be claimed

that it is helpful to make students familiar with different kinds of educational games. Applying the old strategies in teaching English can be tedious for EFL learners and may be demotivating for them. Instructors must use other novel methods like games to capture the students' attention in EFL contexts.

We can conclude that the games are a crucial tool that can be used to supplement the EFL face-to-face classes. Gamification has been revealed to make education more exciting and engaging. It aids pupils to get more motivated toward learning due to the positive feedback they get from the game, which then stimulates them to learn. If games are well-planned, they can develop learners' engagement, motivation, and cognitive development. This research shows that gamification can boost learners' attitudes towards language learning, and that the proper use of gamification can improve learning.

6. Implications and Limitations of the Study

This study has some implications for EFL learners. Students can learn language using games in their free time, even outside class. Using games in teaching can increase students' participation, develop their social and emotional learning, and motivate them to learn at their own time and pace. In addition, this study can help students to learn a language in a more lively setting by applying different types of instructional games. Learning by games can lead to autonomy among learners, so they experience less stress in a learning environment, since learners have the chance to use language with a goal in the conditions presented, playing games in the classroom may significantly improve students' ability to utilize language in their daily lives. A study conducted by Hadfield [58, 59] confirms that games offer students the same amount of concentrated practice as a traditional drill. More pertinently, games provide students the opportunity for authentic communication, albeit within artificially defined

boundaries, and thus serve as a link between the classroom and the real world. The results of this research can encourage EFL learners to use different mobile game-based learning applications to extend and improve their English language skills both individually and in the group.

This research offers some pedagogical implications suggesting the utilization of games and mobile technology for EFL teachers. The adoption of games in classroom practices can minimize issues related to limited teaching time and provide learners with more opportunities to self-learn, practice, and produce language outputs. This study can help teachers to improve their teaching. When considering the benefits of games, educators should evaluate how they might engage and engage learners' attention, reduce students' stress, and provide them the opportunity to communicate in real life. Teachers can use games in their teaching to have more exciting classes. Instructors may promote and enhance collaboration among pupils by playing games with them. Games are very motivating since they are enjoyable and engaging to participate in. Instructors may utilize them to provide practice for all language skills and a variety of other sorts of communication exercises. The outcomes of this research may be relevant to syllabus designers who are tasked with creating courses for EFL learners of varying levels of proficiency. It is recommended that while creating courses for language learners, instructors use communicative activities such as games to enable the students to benefit from their favorable impacts on their learning. If feasible, curriculum writers should incorporate both interesting games and require the students to exert the greatest amount of effort possible to achieve this goal.

There were certain limitations to this research, as previously stated. One of them was the relatively limited number of participants, owing to a difficulty with the availability of students. Another was the comparatively high cost of participation. Thus, it is important to proceed with caution when evaluating the representativeness of the participants. This study was conducted in a private language institute. Another study needs to be investigated among high school students. This study was done on male students, and the female students were overlooked.

In future research, it is suggested that the effects of gamification on important skills, writing, speaking, reading, and listening, be examined. Similar topics are recommended to be worked in rural areas. Also, it is offered to the subsequent studies to include more learners to gain more valid results. The next researchers can work on both genders to improve the quality of their studies.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The author(s) declare(s) that they have no conflicts of interest.

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