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Enhancing Writing Skill with Gamified Learning: Developing Sentence and Vocabulary for Fifth Grade Students at Sri Aman Suksa School

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Abstract

This study is aimed at examining the effectiveness of gamified learning for enhancing English writing skills, particularly focusing on sentence construction and vocabulary enrichment, towards the fifth-grade students at Sri Aman Suksa School, Thailand. The research utilized a quantitative methodology incorporating pre-test and post-test frameworks. There were 25 students engaged in the research, undertaking a writing pre-test prior to the treatment and a post-test subsequent to the implementation of gamified learning activities. To address the abnormal distribution in the post-test data, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was utilised to assess the significant difference between pre-test and post-test outcomes. The results indicated that students' preliminary writing proficiency was average, characterized by recurrent grammatical inaccuracies and restricted vocabulary utilization. Following the implementation of gamified learning activities, their post-test performance improved by 19 points on average (from 53.44 to 72.44), a statistically significant enhancement (p = 0.000). The effect size analysis revealed a Cohen's d value of 1.15, indicating a substantial and significant effect. The findings indicate that gamified learning fostered engaging and motivating learning, allowing students to formulate more precise sentences and effectively broaden their vocabulary. In conclusion, gamified learning is an effective educational approach for enhancing writing skills in primary-level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. It underscores the potential of a gamified learning approach to improve students' writing skills. Furthermore, it provides significant implications for English language instruction at the primary education level.

Keywords: *Gamified Learning, Writing Skills, Sentence, Vocabulary.*

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Introduction

Writing is a fundamental skill that plays a vital role in communication, academic achievement, and personal expression (Cahyani et al., 2023). It is not limited to the ability to form sentences but also encompasses organizing ideas coherently and expressing thoughts with clarity and accuracy. Scholars recognize writing as a complex cognitive process that involves planning, drafting, revising, and editing, each stage contributing to the production of coherent and persuasive text (Wang & Zhou, 2017). These processes require not only linguistic knowledge but also higher-order thinking skills such as analysing, synthesizing, and evaluating ideas. When supported with appropriate strategies and technological innovations, students can develop these skills more effectively. For instance, Fathimatuzahro and Rizkiyah (2025) argue that interactive feedback and stimulating exercises enabled by technology can significantly enhance learners' writing performance and vocabulary growth. Similarly Jumariati et al., (2024) emphasize that critical thinking is essential in writing as it helps learners organize ideas logically and select appropriate terminology to communicate effectively.

Despite its importance, writing proficiency remains a major challenge for elementary students, particularly for those in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. Writing involves multiple sub-skills, including sentence formation, vocabulary selection, and text organization, which many young learners struggle to master (Guzel & Yilmez, 2024). The lack of foundational English knowledge, such as understanding phrases and clauses, often hinders students from constructing meaningful sentences (Sagala & Syahputra, 2022). In addition to linguistic limitations, cultural factors influence students' attitudes toward writing. In some contexts, making grammatical mistakes is perceived as embarrassing, which reduces learners' confidence and willingness to write (Nissa et al., 2024). These issues highlight the need for pedagogical approaches that not only teach language structures but also foster engagement, motivation, and confidence in young learners (Mardiah, 2020).

To address these challenges, this study investigates the effectiveness of gamified learning in improving key components of writing sentence construction and vocabulary enrichment among fifth-grade EFL students. Specifically, the research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How are the writing skills of the fifth-grade students at Sri Aman Suksa School for sentence construction accuracy and exposure of vocabulary before the implementation of a gamified learning approach?
2. Are there any significant effects of implementing gamified learning activities on the English writing skills specifically sentence construction and vocabulary of the fifth-grade students at Sri Aman Suksa School?

Gamified learning, which incorporates game like elements such as points, badges, leader boards, and challenges into instructional activities, has gained attention as an innovative strategy to make learning more engaging (Suryani &

Permana, 2024). Unlike traditional instruction, gamification creates an interactive and enjoyable environment where learners actively participate in tasks rather than passively receiving information. Immediate feedback provided in gamified platforms enables students to identify and correct their mistakes quickly, promoting self-regulation and continuous improvement (Satriani et al., 2024). Furthermore, gamified approaches can help reduce writing anxiety by framing tasks as fun challenges, which is particularly important in cultural settings where errors are stigmatized (Nissa et al., 2024).

Within the various elements of writing, sentence construction and vocabulary development are two essential components for effective written communication. Sentence construction involves the ability to produce grammatically accurate and structurally varied sentences that convey precise meaning (Wang & Zhou, 2017). Mastery of sentence structures allows learners to progress from simple forms to more complex constructions through the use of conjunctions and diverse syntactic patterns, improving the overall quality of their writing. Vocabulary, on the other hand, equips learners with the linguistic resources necessary to express ideas vividly and avoid redundancy. As Osadhi (2024) notes, vocabulary knowledge is a cornerstone of comprehensive language mastery, including writing skills. A rich vocabulary supports creativity and enables writers to adapt their language to different contexts and purposes. The ability to create grammatically correct and varied sentences reinforces vocabulary usage, helping students understand word meanings and contexts more deeply (Sahnan & Daulay, 2025).

Previous studies highlight the importance of syntactic complexity and lexical diversity for producing high-quality texts. Xu and Li (2021) demonstrate that variation in sentence length and structure enhances textual coherence by sustaining reader engagement, while McNamara et al., (2024) report that essays with greater syntactic and lexical sophistication exhibit higher clarity and persuasiveness. Similarly, Skar et al.,(2024)) show that even in early education, students who develop varied grammatical patterns and vocabulary achieve superior writing outcomes. These findings underscore the need for instructional approaches that simultaneously target both sentence and vocabulary development.

Gamification has emerged as a promising solution to address these needs. Integrating game elements into educational activities promotes engagement and motivation, making learning enjoyable and reducing resistance to challenging tasks. Recent research demonstrates that gamified approaches can improve student attitudes and performance in writing tasks. This is exemplified, Mohamad et al., (2024) found that the integration of game mechanics into writing instruction significantly increased students' motivation and engagement in learning activities. Similarly, Pingmuang and Koraneekij (2022) reported that combining gamification with corrective feedback significantly improved students' writing proficiency.

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However, most of these studies discuss writing skills broadly and provide limited evidence on specific sub-skills such as sentence construction and vocabulary development. Moreover, there is a scarcity of research on gamification in primary-level EFL contexts, particularly in Thailand.

Addressing this gap, the present study explores the impact of gamified learning on sentence construction and vocabulary enrichment among fifth-grade students at Sri Aman Suksa School. By providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of gamification for targeted writing components, this study contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical implementation strategies for EFL instruction in primary education.

Method

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design, specifically a pre-experimental one-group pretest–posttest approach, which enables the researcher to systematically examine the effect of an intervention on a single group without the use of a control group (Farhady, 2013). The central aim is to evaluate the effectiveness of gamified learning in enhancing fifth-grade students' English writing skills, with particular attention to sentence construction and vocabulary use. As Creswell (2012) notes, such a design allows the same participants to serve as both the treatment and control group, making it possible to compare their performance before and after the intervention. This design is considered appropriate for the present study as it provides an initial but reliable exploration of how gamified learning may influence writing proficiency while reducing potential confounding variables.

Research Participants

The study's participants were 25 fifth-grade students from Sri Aman Suksa School in Thailand, comprising 10 boys and 15 girls. Their ages ranged from 10 to 11 years, and their English proficiency levels were identified as beginner to lower-intermediate based on classroom observations. The students had no prior experience with gamified learning platforms. Given the small population size of the fifth-grade class, a total sampling technique was employed to include all students in the sample. This approach is considered appropriate when the entire population under investigation is relatively small, as noted by Etikan (2016).

Instrument

To measure students' writing skills, written tests were utilized. The test required students to observe a series of provided pictures, generate related vocabulary, and subsequently construct grammatically correct and coherent sentences. Student writing performance was assessed using a comprehensive scoring rubric designed to evaluate grammatical accuracy, sentence variety, and

coherence. The objectivity and consistency of the scoring relied on a single experienced primary school English teacher, who served as the sole rater. Given the use of a single rater and the lack of a second grading session for comparison, intra-rater reliability could not be established. This is a recognized limitation of the study. However, to ensure content validity, the rubric underwent rigorous review by this same expert teacher, whose feedback confirmed that the rubric items effectively assessed the targeted writing components at a level appropriate for fifth-grade students.

Data collecting technique

The data collection and intervention processes were systematically structured into three sequential stages. In the pre-test stage, students completed a written test to establish their baseline writing skills. This initial phase also involved the collection of essential demographic data, including age, gender, and English proficiency, while confirming participants had no prior exposure to gamified learning. The treatment stage involved a four-week, eight session gamified learning intervention using the Wordwall platform. Each 45-minute session consistently followed a structured approach, beginning with picture observation and vocabulary generation, followed by sentence construction. Core to the intervention were specific gamified activities on Wordwall, such as matching words to images, building sentences, and engaging in quiz games, which reinforced learning. A points and rewards system, alongside the researcher's immediate, constructive feedback, was integrated to foster motivation and engagement.

In the final post-test stage, students re-took the same written test to evaluate the intervention's impact by comparing their scores with those from the pre-test. Throughout the study, rigorous ethical protocols were observed, including securing written informed consent from parents and formal approval from Sri Aman Suksa School. All participation was voluntary, and data were anonymized to ensure the privacy and well-being of the students.

Data analysis technique

For data analysis, the researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A Paired-Samples T-Test was performed to identify any statistically significant differences between the pre-test and post-test scores. Creswell (2014) highlights that this method is particularly appropriate when analyzing two sets of related data from the same group, making it suitable for assessing the effectiveness of the intervention in this study.

However, the Paired-Samples T-Test was subsequently excluded from this study due to the abnormal distribution of the post-test data. As Pallant (2020) asserts, the paired-samples T-Test is valid solely when the differences between paired observations adhere to a normal distribution; otherwise, the results may

lack reliability. Consequently, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, a non-parametric alternative that does not assume normality, was utilized to accurately evaluate the difference between pre-test and post-test scores. Field (2017) emphasizes that non-parametric tests, such as the Wilcoxon test, are robust when the assumptions of parametric tests are breached, rendering them especially appropriate for small sample sizes or data that do not conform to a normal distribution.

This study employed a single-group pre-test/post-test design, which inherently limits the ability to definitively attribute observed changes solely to the intervention. Without a control group, potential confounding variables such as maturation, historical events, or other concurrent learning experiences cannot be entirely ruled out as contributing factors to any observed improvements. The small sample size (N=25) also limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of fifth-grade EFL students. Future research could benefit from a larger sample and a quasi-experimental design incorporating a control group to strengthen causal inferences.

Results
Students' skill in sentence construction accuracy and vocabulary before the intervention

Before the intervention, it was crucial to assess pupils' foundational writing abilities. The pre-test aimed to evaluate their competence in two essential areas: sentence construction accuracy and vocabulary utilization. This evaluation emphasized students' preliminary skill levels, which formed the foundation for assessing the intervention's effectiveness.

Table 1. Results of normality test and descriptive statistics for pre-test and post-test scores.

Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smimov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
PRE TEST	,087	25	,200*	,946	25	,200
POST TEST	,177	25	,043	,866	25	,044

The findings from the normality test indicate that the pre-test scores followed a normal distribution, evidenced by a Shapiro-Wilk significance value of 0.200 ($p > 0.05$). However, the post-test scores were not normally distributed, with a Shapiro-Wilk significance value of 0.044 ($p < 0.05$). Descriptive analysis also revealed a mean score of 53.44 and a standard deviation of 19.57, suggesting that students' initial performance was moderate with considerable variability among individuals.

The effects of gamified learning on sentence construction and vocabulary

Following the implementation of the gamified learning intervention, the students' writing performance was re-evaluated using a post-test. The results of the normality test (refer to Figure 1) demonstrated that the post-test scores were not normally distributed (Shapiro-Wilk Sig. = 0.004, p < 0.05). The paired-samples T-Test could not be used due to the need for both sets of scores to be regularly distributed. To address this constraint, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, a non-parametric test appropriate for linked samples with non-normal distributions, was performed.

Table 2. Results of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test comparing pre-test and post-test

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The median of differences between PRE-TEST and POST TEST equals 0.	Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	,000	Reject the null hypothesis

The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test findings indicated a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This outcome resulted in the dismissal of the null hypothesis, affirming a statistically significant enhancement in students' writing performance following the gamified learning intervention. The disparity between the pre-test and post-test scores was not attributable to chance but was directly linked to the teaching technique employed.

The effect size was computed to ascertain the extent of the improvement.

Table 3. Means, standard deviations, and effect size (Cohen's) for pre-test and post-test

	PRE-TEST	POST TEST
MEAN	53,44	72,44
SD	19,568427	12,60648
SD Pooled	16,459749	
Cohen's d	1,1543311	

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As illustrated in the table, the mean score rose from 53.44 on the pre-test to 72.44 on the post-test. The Cohen's d value was 1.15, which, by Cohen's (1988) criteria, is classified as a large effect size (0.2 = small, 0.5 = medium, 0.8 = big). This signifies that the intervention exerted a substantial influence. A Cohen's d of 1.15 indicates that the average student achieved a score exceeding one standard deviation higher post-intervention compared to pre-intervention, signifying a substantial improvement for an educational intervention.

The practical implications of these findings are considerable. After the intervention, students exhibited significant enhancements in sentence building, generating grammatically correct phrases with increased syntactic precision and reduced errors in tense and subject-verb concord. Furthermore, their vocabulary utilization grew more diverse and contextually suitable, with students incorporating new lexical items into their writing with greater confidence. The gamified learning exercises probably facilitated this advancement by providing a dynamic combination of challenge and fun, timely feedback, and possibilities for active participation in language tasks.

Discussion

This study's findings demonstrate that gamified learning significantly enhanced the English writing skills of fifth-grade students at Sri Aman Suksa School, Thailand particularly in sentence construction accuracy and vocabulary usage. The results indicated a statistically significant enhancement in post-test scores with a large effect size, providing robust evidence of the intervention's efficacy. The substantial increase in writing performance suggests that gamified learning fostered a highly engaging and stimulating environment, which was effective in helping students generate more precise sentences and expand their vocabulary.

The observed improvements strongly align with constructivist learning theory, which posits that knowledge is actively built through meaningful practice and engagement. The gamified exercises provided frequent opportunities for students to actively construct sentences and use new vocabulary. The immediate feedback, a key component of the intervention, allowed learners to correct errors and solidify their understanding in a low-anxiety environment. This active, feedback-driven approach likely helped alleviate some of the common apprehension associated with writing tasks, empowering students to experiment with language and internalize grammatical rules and new lexical items in a practical context.

These findings also resonate with a growing body of research, such as that by Jayanti et al., (2024) and Suryani & Permana (2024), which consistently highlights the positive impact of gamification on students' linguistic competencies in elementary education. From a practical perspective, this study offers compelling evidence that educators can implement gamified methods to improve both the enjoyment and academic outcomes of writing instruction. The structured activities,

points, and collaborative challenges likely resonated with the fifth-grade students, a factor that may be particularly effective in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context where engagement can be a challenge. Educators can move beyond traditional, teacher-cantered approaches by consistently integrating gamified elements into writing lessons. This can help students internalize grammar rules and expand their vocabulary within a context that is both motivating and academically productive.

Despite the robust findings, this study possesses certain limitations. The sample was confined to 25 fifth-grade students from a single school, which restricts the generalizability of the results to a broader population. Moreover, the study assessed only immediate post-test performance, leaving open the question of long-term retention. Future research should employ a longitudinal design to determine whether the reported improvements are sustained over time. Additionally, future studies could explore how the specific cultural or educational contexts, such as those within the Thai EFL environment, might influence the effectiveness of various gamification models. Investigating and contrasting different gamification platforms could also help to identify which features are most effective in enhancing specific dimensions of writing proficiency.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study shows that gamified learning has a significant impact on improving the English writing skills of fifth-grade students at Sri Aman Suksa School, especially in sentence construction accuracy and vocabulary use. Before the intervention, students' writing was still at a moderate level, with many grammatical errors and limited vocabulary choices. After the application of gamified learning, their performance increased significantly, with statistical results confirming that the method was highly effective. The large effect size further indicated that the improvement was not only meaningful in numbers but also substantial in practice, with students showing much better mastery in writing compared to before the intervention.

These findings suggest that gamified learning successfully created a more engaging and motivating classroom environment, allowing students to participate more actively in writing tasks. The interactive activities and rewarding system encouraged them to practice more frequently and confidently, which in turn helped them build more accurate sentences and use a wider range of vocabulary. The results also highlight that enjoyable and creative learning methods can address common challenges in writing, such as low motivation and limited language resources, by providing students with the encouragement and tools they need to improve.

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Practically, this research highlights the potential for teachers to integrate gamified learning strategies into instructional practices in primary school level. By including challenges, points, and motivations into writing tasks, teachers can foster a more engaging and interesting learning environment, leading to measurable enhancements in students' writing skills. Although this study was limited to a small sample in one school and measured only short-term outcomes, the results point to the promise of gamified learning as an innovative strategy to support writing development in similar contexts.

Overall, this study concludes that gamified learning is not only effective in raising students' writing achievement but also in making the writing tasks more enjoyable and meaningful for young learners. It provides evidence that combining motivation with structured practice can lead to real progress in writing, particularly in mastering sentence and expanding vocabulary. The results also open opportunities for further researches to explore the long-term effects of gamified learning and its application in wider and more diverse educational settings.

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