

DEVELOPMENT OF GENIALLY-BASED GAMIFIED INTERACTIVE LEARNING MEDIA TO ENHANCE THE ENGLISH LEARNING MOTIVATION OF EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS

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Abstract

Low motivation to learn English among junior high school students is still associated with the dominance of lectures and textbooks and the scarcity of interactive media. This study aimed to develop gamified interactive learning media using Genially to enhance the learning motivation of eighth-grade students at SMP Al-Islam Krian, and to test its validity, practicality, and effectiveness. It was a research and development (R&D) study using the ADDIE model. Validation involved subject-matter, media, and instructional design experts. Trials involved nine students in a small group and 36 students in a large group using a pretest–posttest design on reading material. Data were collected through validation sheets, questionnaires, observation, and tests, and analyzed descriptively. Results showed a validity score of 96.07% (highly feasible) and a practicality score of 96.78%. Mean reading comprehension rose from 68.7 to 90.1, with an N-Gain of 0.69. Observations and student comments indicated increased enthusiasm, participation, and motivation. The media were declared valid, practical, and effective, making them a feasible option for English teachers.

Keywords: *interactive learning media; gamification; Genially; learning motivation; English language learning*

A. Introduction

Twenty-first-century education demands a shift from conventional methods toward learning that fits the characteristics of a digital generation familiar with interactive, game-based worlds. In many junior high schools, low drive to learn English is a distinct problem because students often regard the subject as boring, difficult, and irrelevant. This condition was evident in eighth-grade classes at SMP Al-Islam Krian, where many students tended to be passive, rarely took part in discussions, and showed little

interest in lessons. Initial observations showed that instruction was still dominated by textbooks, worksheets, and lectures. Yet mastery of English is vital to equip students for global challenges. According to Smith (2024), the main goals of English teaching are to increase motivation, develop language skills, and facilitate effective communication. Instructional strategies therefore cannot stop at knowledge transfer; they must stimulate students' internal drive to participate actively.

One approach widely studied in response to this problem is gamification,



the use of game design elements in non-game contexts, including education (Deterding et al., 2011). Points, levels, challenges, and rewards are considered capable of increasing student engagement. Domínguez et al. (2013) reported that gamified learning can encourage active participation, while Kapp (2012) argued that gamification supports more active and deeper learning. In English instruction, Adrefiza (2022) concluded that gamification increases learning motivation and enthusiasm, leading to satisfactory learning outcomes. A systematic review by Vitty et al. (2024) likewise showed that gamification makes learning more engaging through points, challenges, and dynamic visuals, thereby promoting engagement, focus, and learning outcomes.

Gamification needs a suitable technological vehicle, and Genially is one web-based online platform that teachers can use. It allows text, images, audio, video, animation, quizzes, and game elements to be integrated in a single display without complex programming skills. Rezky et al. (2024) showed that Genially makes it easy for teachers to build points, quizzes, and challenges into media, while Suspito et al. (2023) emphasized that its web-based nature allows access anytime and anywhere as long as an internet connection is available. These characteristics align with Smaldino et al. (2011), who argued that interactive media let learners receive and give feedback directly, moving them from passive recipients of information to active participants.

Psychologically, the effectiveness of gamification is explained through Skinner's operant conditioning theory, which views points and badges as positive reinforcement, and through Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, realized through adaptive challenges (Smith, 2024). With instant feedback and clear progress tracking, students can quickly recognize mistakes, adjust how they study, and follow learning paths at their own pace. In English learning, the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing must be mastered in an integrated way because difficulty in one skill can hinder progress in the others (Smith, 2024). Reading comprehension, for example, is often hindered by limited vocabulary and by difficulty drawing inferences from texts.

Despite its potential, gamification and interactive media are not without weaknesses. Smith (2024) warned of the risk of superficial learning and overemphasis on rewards, in which students are driven only to chase points or badges without mastering concepts. Implementation also demands design time, teacher digital competence, adequate devices, and a stable internet connection. Sabariah et al. (2024) showed that teacher training improves the ability to integrate technology into learning media development, enabling teachers to design innovative and interactive media. Gamification must therefore be designed in a structured way and integrated with curriculum goals rather than serving as mere game decoration.

A review of previous studies reveals several gaps. Kholisna and



Sukasih (2025) developed RADEC-based gamified media with Genially for elementary students and obtained results that were highly valid, practical, and effective, with an N-Gain of 0.73 for reading comprehension. Romualdi et al. (2023) developed Genially interactive multimedia for history material in junior high school and obtained a highly valid rating, but did not test effectiveness in depth and did not include gamification. Rezky et al. (2024) developed Genially gamification for seventh-grade social studies and concluded that the product was highly valid and increased learning motivation. Azizah et al. (2025) tested Genially-based gamified media in elementary science using a one-group pretest–posttest design, which limits internal validity. Research in English instruction has also remained a literature review (Adrefiza, 2022), a classroom action study using a non-digital board game in elementary school (Fitri et al., 2025), or focused on other platforms. In short, studies that systematically develop Genially gamified media for junior high school English, with motivation as the main variable, remain very limited.

This study uses a research and development (R&D) approach because it not only maps problems in the field but also produces a tangible, tested product. The model used is ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation), first designed in 1975 by the University of Florida Learning Technology Center for United States military needs (Rayanto & Sugianti, 2020). This procedural model was chosen because its steps are sequential and

systematic, from needs analysis to final evaluation. The study also aligns with the Merdeka Belajar policy direction, which encourages teachers to adapt to technology and to students' needs.

The novelty of this study lies in combining gamification elements with the development of Genially interactive media, with emphasis on increasing English learning motivation at the junior high level. Motivation is viewed as a dynamic affective state that can be seen in students' engagement and persistence (Adrefiza, 2022). Strong motivation helps students face learning challenges, including the fear of making mistakes in public that often hinders speaking skills (Hadi & Emzir, 2016). Based on this background, the aim of this study was to develop gamified interactive learning media using Genially for eighth-grade English at SMP Al-Islam Krian, and to test its validity, practicality, and effectiveness in increasing student motivation. The results are expected to benefit students who experience learning fatigue, teachers who need a ready-to-use product, and future researchers who need a validated development model. The study's conceptual framework starts from the problem of low motivation caused by simple, monotonous media, and then offers a solution in the form of gamified interactive media developed step by step through ADDIE and evaluated through expert validation, limited trials, and field trials.

B. Research Method

This study is classified as development research using a Research



and Development (R&D) approach. The product developed was gamified interactive learning media using Genially for eighth-grade English at SMP Al-Islam Krian. The development procedure followed the ADDIE model, chosen because it is systematic and staged, ensuring careful planning, structured implementation, and comprehensive evaluation (Rayanto & Sugianti, 2020).

In the analysis stage, the researcher conducted classroom observations and interviews with the English teacher and students to identify motivation levels and the teaching methods in use. The researcher also analyzed the curriculum, learning materials, student characteristics, and the availability of devices and internet connections. The design stage included formulating learning objectives, drafting a storyboard containing the navigation flow, the gamification scheme (points, badges, leaderboard, challenges), and Genially's interactive features, and preparing the research instruments. The development stage turned the design into a draft product, which was then validated by three experts: an English subject-matter expert, a media expert, and an instructional design expert. The product was revised based on the validators' suggestions before being tried out.

The implementation stage took place in two steps. A small-group trial involving nine students identified technical problems and assessed initial practicality. After minor revisions, a large-group trial involved 36 eighth-grade students using a pretest–posttest design on reading comprehension material. The English teacher also gave an assessment as

a peer reviewer. The evaluation stage consisted of formative evaluation, namely validation results and improvements made during development, and summative evaluation, namely final analysis after the large-group trial.

The research data were quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data included expert validation scores, student and peer questionnaire scores, and pretest and posttest scores. Qualitative data included validators' suggestions, field notes, observation results, and student comments. The instruments were an expert validation sheet using a 1–5 scale (very poor to very good), a student response questionnaire of 25 statements on a 1–5 Likert scale across five aspects (ease of use, media appearance, engagement, feelings when using the media, and ease of learning the material), a peer questionnaire, an observation sheet, and a field-note sheet.

The research subjects were the media developed, while the trial participants comprised the teacher and students at the needs analysis stage, three expert validators, eighth-grade students of SMP Al-Islam Krian in the field trial, and the English teacher as a peer reviewer. The validation sheets covered content feasibility, language, material presentation, gamification, interactivity, technical quality, layout, typography, color, and navigation.

Validity and practicality were analyzed using percentages, that is, the score obtained divided by the maximum score and multiplied by 100%, and the results were categorized, with high percentages indicating the highly feasible



category. Product effectiveness criteria were grouped as highly effective ($\geq 85\%$), effective (70–84%), and less effective ($< 70\%$). Effectiveness was analyzed by comparing pretest and posttest scores using N-Gain, while qualitative data were analyzed descriptively to explain students' activeness, enthusiasm, and interaction when using the media.

C. Results and Discussion

1. The Developed Product

The needs analysis showed that English instruction at SMP Al-Islam Krian still relied on textbooks, student worksheets, and lectures, so students were less active and less enthusiastic. Some students considered English difficult, and the teacher needed media that were more interactive and better suited to students' characteristics today. This finding supports Adrefiza (2022), who explained that the greatest obstacle in English teaching is a lack of motivation and enthusiasm, and that monotonous methods worsen the problem.

Based on this analysis, the researcher designed the media with an opening page, main menu, material pages, activity pages, and evaluation pages. Bright, contrasting colors such as blue, yellow, and green were chosen to increase attention. Material was arranged progressively from simple to complex, covering reading, writing, listening, and vocabulary. The integrated gamification elements included challenges at the end of each topic, multiple-choice and matching quizzes, a point system, learning levels, digital badges, a progress bar, a simple leaderboard, and automatic feedback.

This design agrees with Smith (2024), who held that gamified media must provide instant feedback and progress tracking so students always know their achievements.

The researcher also prepared four feasibility instruments (expert validation sheets for subject matter and media, and teacher and student response questionnaires) built on theories of instructional media, motivation, and gamification. Arranging the material on the principle of scaffolding aimed to help students grasp concepts step by step according to their abilities, so that the learning experience would be active, positively competitive, and enjoyable.

2. Validity of the Media

Validation was carried out by three experts. All rated the media in the highly feasible category, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Expert validation results

Validator	Score	Maximum score	Percentage	Category
English subject-matter expert	97	100	97.00%	Highly feasible
Media expert	107	110	97.27%	Highly feasible
Instructional design expert	89	95	93.68%	Highly feasible
Total	293	305	96.07%	Highly feasible

The subject-matter expert gave perfect scores for material presentation and gamification, while content feasibility received 97.50% and language 90.00%. The media expert gave perfect scores for language standardization and technical



quality, with interactivity and gamification each at 95%. The design expert gave the lowest score, yet still highly feasible, with navigation and interactivity at 90.00% and the other aspects above 93%. These results are consistent with Romualdi et al. (2023), who found Genially-based media highly valid when developed according to interactive instructional design principles, with mean expert ratings of 4.7 for content and 4.1 for media, and with Rezky et al. (2024), who reported the validity of Genially gamification above 4.09.

The high gamification scores indicate that the game elements were judged relevant to the material, the challenges matched students' abilities, and the point system supported learning motivation. This matters because Smith (2024) cautioned that gamification not tied to content mastery becomes mere entertainment.

The validators also offered suggestions. The English expert asked for learning outcomes to be clarified, the language adjusted to students' level, and the depth of the material increased. The design expert suggested improving word choice and enlarging the font in the Genially games. The media expert judged the media already highly feasible and suitable for prompt registration of intellectual property rights.

3. Product Revisions

Validator suggestions and trial findings were followed up through five revisions. First, the learning outcomes and the criteria for achieving learning objectives were clarified, usage instructions were improved, and

examples were made more contextual. Second, the visual appearance was refined by adjusting font size, color combinations, and icon placement, and by adding white space on pages that were too crowded. Third, gamification elements were strengthened through the point system, badges, challenges, and quizzes with immediate feedback. Fourth, navigation was improved with more representative icons, more proportional buttons, and navigation instructions on the opening page. Fifth, activities were adjusted to the aim of reading comprehension, namely finding the main idea, locating detailed information, understanding vocabulary from context, and drawing conclusions.

The navigation improvements matter because unintuitive navigation can increase cognitive load, so students' attention goes to operating the media rather than understanding the material. The revisions also anticipate the risk noted by Smith (2024) and Rezky et al. (2024) of gamification becoming mere entertainment.

The revisions also correspond to Smith's (2024) warning that poor gamification design can trigger unhealthy competition or frustration when challenges are too hard or feedback is unclear. For this reason, question difficulty was adjusted and instructions were made clearer so that students would not lose motivation when facing failure.

4. Practicality of the Media

Practicality was assessed through student questionnaires, peer questionnaires, and observation. In the small-group trial (nine students), all aspects were in the very positive category:



ease of use 97.78%, media appearance 99.11%, engagement 91.11%, feelings when using the media 91.11%, and ease of learning the material 92.00%. Some students still needed guidance the first time they used the interactive features.

In the large group, all aspects were again in the very positive category: media appearance 98.67%, ease of use and ease of learning the material 94.67% each, feelings when using the media 93.00%, and engagement 91.00%, with a mean of 94.40%. Engagement received the lowest percentage but remained very high. The peer response reached 94% (highly feasible), with the highest aspect at 96%. Overall, practicality reached 96.78% (Table 2).

Table 2. Practicality scores

User	Score	Maximum score	Percentage
Students	4,365	4,500	97%
Peer reviewer	353	375	94%
Total	4,718	4,875	96.78%

The highest score for media appearance indicates that the combination of colors, relevant illustrations, organized layout, and interactive animation successfully drew students' attention. The high ease-of-use score shows that simple navigation, clear instructions, and an easily understood menu structure allowed students to access features independently, so the media met the principle of user-friendliness. On ease of learning the material, structured presentation, contextual examples, interactive activities, and immediate feedback helped students

build understanding, so the media did not merely deliver information but also supported knowledge construction.

Observation results reinforced these figures. Lessons followed the syntax in the lesson plan, the teacher was able to operate Genially, and most students could use the media without significant difficulty. Students appeared more enthusiastic, tried to earn points and rewards, helped one another, and worked together to complete challenges. The problems found were difficulty understanding new vocabulary, some students who focused on the game rather than the content, and a need for teacher help at the start of use. The teacher addressed these through additional explanations, simple examples, mentoring, and efforts to link each gamification activity to the material. The finding that some students fixated on the game is a concrete example of the risk of overemphasizing rewards noted by Smith (2024), and the teacher's role is key to managing it.

The media also provided varied activities, namely interactive quizzes, individual tasks, group discussions, simple presentations, and challenge completion. This variety let students engage according to their abilities and confidence, some through quizzes and others through discussions and presentations. Students who had previously been passive began to show better engagement. In addition, students understood new vocabulary more easily when the teacher displayed images, video, and animation, and appeared more focused because of the interactive display.



These findings show that the media functioned as a digital learning environment supporting active engagement rather than merely a means of delivering information.

5. Student Responses and Comments on Motivation

The questionnaire showed 94% for the learning motivation aspect, 95.78% for the media attractiveness and presentation aspect, and 94.22% for the participation and activeness aspect, all very positive. Student comments were consistent with these figures. One student stated that the activities made them excited because they were fun and different from regular lessons. Another said the quizzes made them want to answer more questions and earn better scores, while another felt that learning was like playing. Comments about images, animation, and video showed that multimedia elements helped understanding. Several students also felt more confident when discussing and presenting group work. This is important because Hadi and Emzir (2016) identified the fear of making mistakes in public as a main barrier to speaking skills, and an environment that supports pressure-free practice is a prerequisite for overcoming it.

6. Effectiveness of the Media

Effectiveness was tested on 36 students through a reading test before and after instruction. The mean score rose from 68.7 to 90.1, an increase of 21.4 points, with an N-Gain of 0.69 (Table 3).

Table 3. Comparison of reading pretest and posttest scores

Indicator	Pretest	Posttest	Improvement	N-Gain
Identifying the main idea	71.8	91.2	19.4	0.69
Finding detailed information	69.5	90.8	21.3	0.70
Understanding vocabulary from context	67.9	89.7	21.8	0.68
Drawing conclusions from the text	65.4	88.6	23.2	0.67
Mean	68.7	90.1	21.4	0.69

All 36 students improved, from a pretest range of 57–87 to a posttest range of 82–100. The indicator for vocabulary from context rose by 21.8 points, which shows that images, illustrations, video, and interactive activities helped students grasp word meanings without always relying on direct translation. The indicator for detailed information rose by 21.3 points with an N-Gain of 0.70, which is attributed to interactive quizzes and reading exercises that trained students to locate specific information, while the main-idea indicator rose by 19.4 points.

The largest gain occurred in drawing conclusions (23.2 points), which had been the lowest indicator at the start. This is important because difficulty grasping implied meaning and limited vocabulary are common problems in reading instruction. An N-Gain of 0.69 falls in the medium-to-high category and is close to the finding of Kholisna and Sukasih (2025), who obtained an N-Gain



of 0.73 with similar Genially gamified media for reading comprehension.

The researcher links this improvement to three characteristics of the media. First, multimedia presentation helps students connect new information with prior knowledge, especially in understanding vocabulary from context. Second, interactivity through quizzes, exercises, and immediate feedback pushes students to focus on finding key information in the text. Third, gamification creates a challenging and enjoyable atmosphere that motivates students to finish reading tasks. This pattern agrees with Deterding et al. (2011) and Kapp (2012) on the role of game elements in engagement, and with Domínguez et al. (2013) on increased motivation and participation in gamified learning. Instant feedback and staged learning paths also match the zone of proximal development discussed by Smith (2024), because students can progress at their own pace.

7. General Discussion and Limitations

Overall, the media developed met the criteria of valid, practical, and effective. This is consistent with Adrefiza (2022), who found that gamification increases motivation and enthusiasm in English classes, and with Suspito et al. (2023), who found that Genially media support learning independence. This study also fills a gap because the product was developed systematically with ADDIE, validated by three experts, tried out on two groups, and focused on English at the junior high level.

From the perspective of the development model, applying ADDIE

gave every design decision an empirical basis. Needs analysis set the focus on motivation and reading comprehension, design translated those needs into a storyboard and gamification scheme, development produced a validated product, implementation tested the product in a real classroom, and evaluation brought all the data together to judge final quality. This sequence reflects the character of a procedural model followed step by step from beginning to end (Rayanto & Sugianti, 2020).

From the perspective of media, the results support Smaldino et al. (2011), who held that interactivity and two-way feedback are at the core of good instructional media. Features such as exploration buttons, quizzes with immediate feedback, and drag-and-drop activities in Genially let students not only read but also respond to and manipulate content directly. Its web-based character also supports independent learning because students can revisit material at their own pace (Suspito et al., 2023). Compared with studies at the elementary level (Fitri et al., 2025; Kholisna & Sukasih, 2025), this study shows that a similar approach can also be accepted by junior high students, who have different characteristics and motivational needs.

The teacher's role cannot be overlooked either. Guidance at the start of use, additional explanation of difficult vocabulary, and efforts to link the game to learning goals were factors that kept the media focused on content mastery. This supports Sabariah et al. (2024), who found that teachers' competence in integrating



technology determines the quality of the learning media produced.

The results should be interpreted cautiously. First, the trial was carried out in one school and over a short period, so the results cannot yet be generalized and long-term effects are unknown. Second, a pretest–posttest design without a control group cannot separate the influence of the media from other factors such as maturation or learning experience, a weakness also noted in similar research (Azizah et al., 2025). Third, the reported N-Gain measures reading ability, whereas motivation is shown mainly by questionnaires, observation, and student comments rather than by a pretest–posttest motivation scale. Fourth, use of the media depends on devices and internet connections that cannot be fully controlled. Further research should use a control group, wider participants, a longer duration, and other variables such as the four language skills, accompanied by training for teachers in designing digital media.

D. Conclusion

This research and development study produced gamified interactive learning media using Genially for eighth-grade English at SMP Al-Islam Krian, built with the ADDIE model. The media contain material, quizzes, challenges, points, badges, and immediate feedback designed on the basis of an analysis of student and teacher needs.

First, the media were declared valid. Validation by the subject-matter, media, and instructional design experts yielded a feasibility score of 96.07%, in the

highly feasible category. Second, the media were declared practical. Student and peer questionnaires yielded a practicality score of 96.78%, and observation showed that the teacher could operate the media and students used them easily. Third, the media were declared effective. Mean reading ability rose from 68.7 to 90.1 with an N-Gain of 0.69, and observation and student comments showed increased enthusiasm, participation, and learning motivation. Fourth, applying interactive quizzes, challenges, points, badges, and immediate feedback was shown to create more engaging, student-centered learning.

The final product was revised in learning outcomes, appearance, gamification, navigation, and reading activities, so it is ready for use in teaching. Practically, these results show that teachers can use an online platform to deliver more interactive English lessons without complex programming skills. Theoretically, the study supports the view that interactive media offering immediate feedback and structured game elements can foster student engagement, provided they are designed systematically and tied to learning goals.

The aim of producing valid, practical, and effective media was therefore achieved. These findings should be read with the study's limitations in mind: a single school, a short trial period, and a design without a control group. Teachers are advised to use the media while guiding students so that they do not merely chase rewards. Schools need to provide adequate internet networks and devices as well as teacher training. Future



researchers are advised to test the media with a controlled experimental design, broaden the language skills measured, and add adaptive features.

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