International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research
Vol. 25, No. 6, pp. 1169-1196, June 2026
https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.25.6.51
Received Feb 15, 2026; Revised May 5, 2026; Accepted Jun 19, 2026

Enhancing Engagement: Grade 10 Gamification Strategies in Trilingual Dramatic Arts

Limkani Sincuba*
Yunivesithi Walter Sisulu, Department of Education,
Continuing with Professional Teacher Training (CPTD)

Abstract. Gamification strategies in teaching dramatic arts could enhance learners' enjoyment of practical subjects and boost academic performance if done well. Incorporating isiXhosa, isiZulu, and English gamification into dramatic arts may facilitate easier, more natural performances for learners in Grade 10. The study investigated strategies for trilingual education in isiXhosa, isiZulu, and English to enhance gamification engagement in teaching dramatic arts in Grade 10. A qualitative study was conducted with 120 dramatic arts learners from one school in Grades 10 to 12. The theoretical framework was the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. Data were analysed thematically and visual representations related to student engagement. The findings highlighted that gamification significantly enhanced student motivation and participation in dramatic arts classes by making learning more enjoyable and interactive. The study concluded that incorporating gamification into trilingual dramatic arts education effectively boosts student engagement by aligning with intrinsic motivational factors. The study recommends that educators integrate more game-based activities into their lesson plans to increase student involvement. Additionally, the study recommends researching how different types of games could be tailored to meet diverse learning within trilingual educational settings in dramatic arts in Grade 10.

Keywords: dramatic arts; engagement; enhancing; gamification strategies; trilingual education

Citation: Sincuba, L. (2026). Enhancing Engagement: Grade 10 Gamification Strategies in Trilingual Dramatic Arts. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *25*(6), 1169–1196. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.25.6.51

1. Introduction

The integration of gamification strategies in trilingual dramatic arts education represents an innovative approach to addressing declining student engagement in multilingual classroom settings (Perez & Masegosa, 2022). As South African schools increasingly emphasise practical, skills-based subjects, such as dramatic arts, teachers may face unique challenges in maintaining student interest across linguistically diverse groups. The study focused on Grade 10 learners in

*Corresponding author: Limkani Sincuba; *leesincuba@gmail.com*

© The Authors
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).

multilingual classrooms where isiXhosa, isiZulu, and English coexist as languages of instruction.

Traditional pedagogical methods often struggle to reconcile language barriers with the inherent performative nature of dramatic arts (Viirret, 2020). Gamification, defined as the integration of game-design elements into non-game contexts, presents a promising approach to enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes (Rivera & Garden, 2021). By utilising mechanisms, such as point systems, narrative-driven activities, and collaborative challenges, teachers could create immersive learning experiences (Balbaa & Abdurashidova, 2023). In the context of dramatic arts education, learners could participate in games that facilitate the development of essential skills, such as vocal techniques, dance, or physical movement—all critical components for successful performance (Favour Ali, 2024).

Through these gamified activities, learners not only enjoy the interactive aspects of the games but also engage deeply with the skills being taught (Perez & Masegosa, 2022). The dual focus allows learners to develop their artistic capabilities in a fun and dynamic environment, fostering both skill acquisition and a positive attitude towards learning (Rivera & Garden, 2021). By transforming traditional learning into an engaging game-like experience, teachers may effectively enhance motivation and retention of key dramatic arts concepts, ultimately preparing learners for more confident and effective performances (Favour Ali, 2024). Preliminary observations indicate that hierarchical language dynamics in trilingual environments may inadvertently suppress participation, particularly among learners less confident in their secondary languages. The South African educational context adds complexity, as post-apartheid curriculum reforms emphasise both indigenous language preservation and practical skills development (Viirret, 2020).

The purpose of the study was to investigate innovative pedagogical approaches that utilise gamification to foster student engagement and improve language skills in a trilingual context. The research sought to investigate how game-design elements, such as point systems, narrative-driven tasks, and collaborative challenges, enhanced the learning experience for Grade 10 learners studying dramatic arts in isiXhosa, isiZulu, and English (Favour Ali, 2024). By integrating gamified strategies, the study sought to facilitate a more engaging and interactive curriculum that promotes language proficiency while also developing critical artistic skills such as vocal techniques and movement (Perez & Masegosa, 2022).

Additionally, the research identified the potential impact of these strategies on student motivation, social interaction, and overall participation in dramatic arts education (Rivera & Garden, 2021). Ultimately, the findings will contribute to effective educational practices that acknowledge and leverage the linguistic diversity of South African classrooms. Additionally, the purpose of the study was to analyse whether systematic gamification could enhance equitable participation and cross-linguistic collaboration in Grade 10 dramatic arts classrooms while preserving cultural authenticity in performance education.

The following research questions guided the study:
1. How do gamification strategies impact equitable participation and cross-linguistic collaboration among Grade 10 learners in trilingual isiXhosa, isiZulu and English dramatic arts classrooms?
2. To what extent do autonomy-supportive gamification mechanics language role choices foster intrinsic motivation in multilingual dramatic arts learning?

2. Literature Review

This part discusses the literature review conducted for the current study.

2.1 Gamification in Multilingual Education

Gamification research has predominantly focused on monolingual STEM contexts (Papadakis & Kalogiannakis, 2023), reflecting a systemic bias toward Western educational priorities that marginalise plurilingual arts-based learning. In trilingual environments, gamification may reconcile competing sociolinguistic hierarchies while fostering equitable language engagement—a challenge highlighted in Malaysian Tamil, Mandarin and English studies, where rigid language role assignments inadvertently reinforce linguistic power imbalances (Favour Ali, 2024). The study advances "dynamic language scaffolding", a framework adapted from computational linguistics (Perez & Masegosa, 2022), wherein game mechanics autonomously adjust difficulty based on real-time proficiency analytics.

For example, a student struggling with isiXhosa syntax in a scriptwriting game might receive contextual vocabulary prompts, while advanced learners unlock complex code-switching challenges (Rivera & Garden, 2021). The approach diverges from static gamified systems by prioritising adaptive language parity, ensuring no single language dominates gameplay. Crucially, it aligns with plurilingualism theory (Favour Ali, 2024), which frames multilingual competence as an integrated repertoire rather than as isolated skills. By embedding translanguaging opportunities, such as bonus points for blending English technical terms with isiZulu metaphors in set design tasks, the model validates learners' linguistic hybridity as cognitive assets.

2.2 Dramatic Arts Pedagogy in Postcolonial Contexts

South Africa's post-apartheid Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) mandates indigenous language inclusion but offers scant guidance for implementation, perpetuating colonial-era epistemicide in arts education. Dramatic arts, however, provide unique opportunities for embodied decolonisation. (Chavinda, Chikaipa, Kainja, Mchakulu, & Ndasauka, 2026) theorises performative "safe spaces" as sites where learners bypass language anxiety through physical storytelling—a concept aligning with (Christopher & Pinias, 2025) assertion that bodily expression disrupts linguistic colonialism (Motaung, 2021). For example, it can improve games requiring learners to convey emotions through isiZulu proverbs paired with gestures that democratise participation, as nonverbal communication scaffolds verbal risk-taking (Brand, 2024). Yet, existing assessments remain tethered to Eurocentric rubrics privileging

English eloquence, pathologising code-switching as "deficient" (Tan, 2020). The study counters through gamified criteria rewarding translingual creativity by, for example, awarding "narrative innovation points" for blending Nguni oral storytelling structures with Brechtian techniques. Such metrics operationalise (Ayodele, 2025) call for "afropolitan" pedagogies that centre African epistemes without rejecting global influences (Adamu, 2023). Challenges persist that include teachers socialised in colonial pedagogies who may resist decentralising English, while resource constraints limit access to multilingual scripts (Somé, 2025). Nonetheless, dramatic arts' inherent flexibility—as both medium and message—positions it as a critical site for reconciling policy aspirations with classroom praxis in postcolonial contexts.

2.3 Self-Determination Theory in Classroom Design

While SDT-informed gamification has enhanced motivation in individualistic U.S. classrooms through personalised quests and leaderboards ((Schwartz, Adler, Madjar, & Zion, 2021), its uncritical exportation to collectivist southern African contexts risks cultural dissonance. Preliminary data from this study reveal that group-based scoring systems—where teams earn points for equitable language contributions—resonate more deeply with Ubuntu principles of communal achievement ("I am because we are") (Mdletshe, 2024). For example, in a collaborative scene-building game, teams lose points if dialogue becomes English-dominant, incentivising peer mentorship in isiXhosa or isiZulu (Malgoubri, 2025).

The reimagined SDT's relatedness component, as a culturally situated practice, aligns with (Lopez et al., 2022). Afrocentric conception of motivation as interdependence (Wang & East, 2024). Autonomy is similarly reframed as learners exercise agency through consensus-building, such as negotiating which peer will perform a challenging isiZulu monologue, rather than prioritising individual choice (Renyard, 2023). Competence scaffolding also shifts focus from individual mastery to collective growth; tiered challenges require teams to progressively integrate all three languages, such as isiXhosa, isiZulu and English, with success contingent on shared skill development (Schwartz, Adler, Madjar, & Zion, 2021). However, tensions emerge, for instance, as competitive gamification elements may clash with Ubuntu's cooperative ethos, necessitating careful balance (Adeola, 2024).

2.4 Technological Integration in Arts Education

While mixed reality tools, such as AR-enhanced Shakespearean scripts, demonstrate enhanced engagement in resourced settings (Archer, 2025), their reliance on infrastructure excludes underfunded African schools, where only 22% have reliable internet (Adeniran, Adedeji, Nwosu, Nwugo, & Nnamani, 2023). The study adopted a critical low-tech approach, leveraging physical artifacts—multilingual prompt dice and colour-coded role cards—to simulate gamified systems without digital dependency (Set, 2021).

Recent advancements in educational technology have significantly transformed arts education, providing innovative platforms to enhance student engagement and creative expression (Bedenlier, Bond, Buntins, Zawacki-Richter, & Kerres, 2020). In dramatic arts and other arts disciplines, digital tools, such as multimedia

production, virtual reality, and online collaborative platforms, have been employed to foster immersive learning experiences (Silva-Jurado & Silva-Jurado, 2024). These technologies facilitate active participation, allowing learners to experiment with different expressive forms and engage in culturally diverse practices (Zhang, 2025). Gamification has become increasingly prominent as a strategy to motivate learners and deepen engagement in arts education (Rivera & Garden, 2021). By incorporating game elements, such as points, leaderboards, and challenges, educators aim to boost motivation, facilitate self-directed learning, and facilitate formative assessment (Perez & Masegosa, 2022).

Studies indicate that gamification fosters higher levels of interaction, critical thinking, and motivation, especially when aligned with learners' cultural and linguistic contexts (Favour Ali, 2024). However, challenges, such as digital divide issues, limited access to devices, and lack of digital literacy among teachers and learners, continue to hinder widespread integration (Perez & Masegosa, 2022). Despite these hurdles, strategic and well-supported implementation of technology has demonstrated the potential to make arts education more engaging, inclusive, and relevant in contemporary multicultural classrooms (Silva-Jurado & Silva-Jurado, 2024).

Assessment equity in multilingual arts performances remains a critical challenge, particularly within contexts where traditional evaluation paradigms favour monolingual, standardised notions of eloquence, often marginalising learners' translanguaging practices (Campbell & Rosenhan, 2024). Such assessments tend to pathologise code-switching as "unruly," reinforcing epistemic colonialism and undermining the pedagogical value of linguistic hybridity (Renyard, 2023). The study introduced the "translingual creativity index," drawing on (García, 2009) theory of dynamic bilingualism, to reconceptualise translanguaging as a meaningful aesthetic and artistic resource (Hirsu, Nitecka Barche, & Futro, 2024). The index quantifies learners' strategic language deployment such as using English for irony or isiXhosa metaphors for cultural resonance through gamified metrics like "hybridity bonuses" (Bibi, 2023). These bonuses reward the fusion of linguistic and cultural resources, fostering a participatory approach to evaluation that recognises intercultural and interlinguistic artistry (Campbell & Rosenhan, 2024).

The framework also integrates (Glissant, 1990) poetics of relation, valuing opacity and untranslated metaphors as acts of resistance against colonial legibility (Reid-Olds, 2020). However, implementing such assessments necessitates training teachers in sociolinguistic nuance and intercultural sensitivity, often a challenge in under-resourced schools (Campbell & Rosenhan, 2024). To address this, the study advocates for peer assessments guided by simplified rubrics prioritising communicative efficacy over grammatical correctness practices aligned with (Canagarajah, 2013) translingual assessment paradigms (Reid-Olds, 2020). The participatory, technological-enabled model democratises evaluation, aligning assessment reform with broader decolonial efforts in arts education and fostering equitable, inclusive performances (Favour Ali, 2024).

3. Theoretical Framework

This part discusses the theoretical framework for the current study.

3.1 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) formed the study's foundational framework. SDT posits that intrinsic motivation stems from three psychological needs, which may include autonomy (volitional engagement), competence (mastery through challenge) and relatedness (social belonging) (Muhammadin & Herda, 2024). In trilingual dramatic arts contexts, gamification targets these needs through autonomy-support where learners choose language roles in games (narrator in isiZulu, isiXhosa and stage directions in English) (Sincuba & Buka, 2024). It involves competence scaffolding, which is a tiered point system that rewards incremental language skill application (with bonus points for code-switching) (Vilakazi, 2024).

Moreover, it includes relatedness enhancement as collaborative games require cross-language teams to solve dramatic problems (Karpava, Ringblom, & Zabrodskaja, 2025). SDT aligns with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development in language acquisition, where gamified group tasks create structured peer-learning opportunities (Lasmawan & Budiarta, 2020). The framework bridges game mechanics, such as leaderboards, with dramatic arts' performative demands, enabling analysis of how extrinsic rewards transition to intrinsic artistic motivation (Xi & Lantolf, 2021). Critically, SDT evaluates whether gamification sustains engagement beyond novelty phases, a key limitation identified in prior gamification studies (Lasmawan & Budiarta, 2020).

3.2 Autonomy-Support in Trilingual Dramatic Arts Education

Autonomy-support in gamified trilingual dramatic arts contexts empowers Grade 10 learners to exercise agency over their linguistic and creative choices, fostering intrinsic motivation (Mohicen, 2023). By allowing learners to select language roles, such as narrating scenes in isiZulu or isiXhosa and delivering stage directions in English, gamification aligns with self-determination theory, which prioritises autonomy as a driver of engagement (Seger, 2024). The strategy acknowledges the sociolinguistic identities of learners in multilingual settings, validating their heritage languages while reinforcing English as a lingua franca for technical communication (Ahmed, Sarfraz, & Arif, 2024).

For example, in a role-playing game, a student might choose to perform dialogue in isiXhosa to deepen emotional expression, while another opts for English to practice clarity in stagecraft terminology (Kusumaningputri, 2024). Such choices not only enhance linguistic confidence but also cultivate cultural pride and interdisciplinary skills (Karpava et al., 2025). Furthermore, autonomy-supportive frameworks reduce anxiety by removing punitive language hierarchies, enabling learners to experiment without fear of failure (Bayona & García-Martín, 2022). The freedom mirrors real-world multilingual environments, where code-switching and language adaptability are assets (Muhammadin & Herda, 2024). By gamifying autonomy—through role-selection mechanics or "language quests" with customisable objectives—educators create a learner-centred environment that

bridges dramatic creativity and trilingual proficiency, preparing learners for diverse communicative contexts (Favour Ali, 2024). Competence scaffolding through gamification addresses the incremental development of trilingual skills by structuring challenges that reward progress (Ajith, 2024).

A tiered point system, for example, might award points for basic vocabulary use in isiZulu and isiXhosa dialogue, with bonus points for advanced code-switching and idiomatic expressions (Karpava et al., 2025). This aligns with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), as tasks are calibrated to learners' evolving proficiency (Brand, 2024). In a dramatic arts game, such as "Scene Builder," learners earn points for incorporating target-language phrases into improvisations, with higher tiers unlocked as they demonstrate mastery (Muhammadin & Herda, 2024).

Competence is further reinforced through immediate feedback, such as digital badges, for achieving fluency milestones, which sustains motivation and clarifies growth trajectories (Bibi, 2023). For multilingual learners, the scaffolding reduces cognitive overload by breaking language acquisition into manageable, dramatic tasks (Lasmawan & Budiarta, 2020). For example, a student struggling with isiZulu syntax might focus on mastering greetings in early levels before progressing to complex emotional monologues (Motaung, 2021). Additionally, rewarding code-switching (for example, blending English technical terms with indigenous languages in set design discussions) validates translanguaging as a legitimate skill (Reid-Olds, 2020). The approach not only enhances linguistic dexterity but also integrates language learning with dramatic problem-solving, ensuring competence is both contextualised and celebrated (Silva-Jurado & Silva-Jurado, 2024).

3.3 Relatedness Enhancement in Trilingual Dramatic Arts Education

Gamification fosters relatedness in trilingual dramatic arts by designing collaborative games that necessitate cross-language teamwork (Hirsu et al., 2024). For example, in a "Multilingual Mystery" game, Grade 10 learners in mixed-language groups must solve a dramatic puzzle by pooling their linguistic resources by translating clues in isiXhosa, debating strategies in English, and enacting solutions in isiZulu. Such interdependence builds social bonds and mutual reliance, fulfilling the psychological need for connectedness. Collaborative games also mirror South Africa's multicultural reality, where communication often requires navigating multiple languages (Rivera & Garden, 2021). By structuring tasks that reward equitable participation, such as team points for balanced language use, gamification discourages dominance by any single language group (Brand, 2024).

Role-based games, such as creating a multilingual play where each member contributes dialogue in their strongest language, further promote empathy and peer learning (Papadakis & Kalogiannakis, 2023). Digital platforms, such as virtual "rehearsal rooms," could enhance this by enabling asynchronous collaboration, with learners annotating scripts in different languages (Rivera & Garden, 2021). Relatedness is also reinforced through shared narratives; for

instance, a collective storytelling game where each student adds a scene in their heritage language fosters a sense of communal authorship (Perez & Masegosa, 2022). These strategies not only strengthen language skills but also cultivate inclusive classrooms where diversity is a dramatic and educational asset (Schwartz et al., 2021). The current study adopted the theory to address the set research question.

4. Method

The study employed qualitative research methods to gain in-depth insights into the experiences of Grade 10 learners involved in trilingual dramatic arts education. At the same time, a quantitative research approach was used to obtain themes, codes, patterns, graphs and tables from the collected data. A qualitative approach was well-suited for understanding the complexities of learners' perceptions regarding gamification strategies and how these strategies impacted their engagement and learning (Dong et al., 2024). Qualitative research emphasises the subjective experiences of participants, allowing researchers to explore the nuances of their interactions with gamified educational settings (Zairon, Wook, Salleh, & Dahlan, 2025).

The qualitative framework enabled a comprehensive understanding of how learners navigate the interplay of language, culture, and artistic expression (Creswell, 2020). By prioritising the voices of the participants, the study aimed to produce findings that reflect their authentic experiences, ultimately contributing to the development of tailored pedagogical strategies that resonate with the specific needs of trilingual learners in dramatic arts (Schatzman, 2024). Employing a qualitative approach allowed the investigation to benefit from the depth of qualitative insights while also capturing measurable patterns through quantitative data collection and analysis Creswell, & Clark (2017).

4.1 Justification of the Qualitative Approach

The qualitative component of the current study sought to understand the subjective experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of Grade 10 learners participating in trilingual dramatic arts education. Qualitative inquiry was appropriate because it prioritised meaning-making and provided access to learners' interpretations of their multilingual and artistic learning worlds (Creswell, 2020). Accordingly, the study adopted a qualitative case study approach to understand how gamification strategies shaped learner engagement and language development within a context-specific educational setting Creswell & Inoue, 2025).

Data were generated through qualitative sources, which included semi-structured interviews with open- and closed-ended questions (Creswell, 2020). The instrument enabled the researcher to examine how learners understood and navigated gamified activities within multilingual classroom spaces, and how they used language, culture, and performance to construct meaning in their own words (Tenório et al., 2022; Creswell, 2020). In doing so, the qualitative approach supported a nuanced investigation of learners' interactions with language choice, code-switching, creativity, and peer collaboration, particularly in relation to the

affordances and constraints of multilingual game mechanics (Schatzman, 2024). Qualitative methods were selected because they are well suited to capturing the complexity, depth, and contextual specificity of learners' lived experiences, aligning with a constructivist paradigm that emphasises situated understanding rather than generalised prediction (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The data were analysed using thematic analysis, allowing themes, codes, and patterns related to engagement, motivation, and cross-linguistic collaboration to emerge inductively from the dataset. Particular attention was paid to how gamification mediated learners' emotional, cognitive, and social engagement, including the ways in which learners negotiated language hierarchies that often privilege English over isiZulu and isiXhosa. Emergent themes, such as linguistic agency and cultural validation, were allowed to surface organically through sustained engagement with the data. Thematic coding followed (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, Davey, & Jenkinson, 2023) six-phase framework, with rigour strengthened through iterative code refinement and peer debriefing.

By foregrounding the learner's voice, the qualitative design also responded to critiques of postcolonial pedagogies that frequently marginalise indigenous perspectives, offering a counter-narrative to the predominantly quantitative orientation of much gamification research (Alhabsi, 2024). Potential limitations included the risk of researcher bias during interpretation; this was mitigated through triangulation across data sources and member checking with participants. The qualitative methodology produced rich insights into the interplay between gamified autonomy, competence scaffolding, and relatedness in multilingual arts contexts (Alhabsi, 2024).

4.2 Data Collection

Data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire that contained opportunities for rich, contextual description, thereby capturing both breadth and depth in learners' experiences (Creswell, 2020; Creswell & Inoue, 2025). The instrument was administered to 120 Grade 10 learners from one school who had enrolled in the subjects of dramatic arts from Grades 10 to 12. The school had an enrolment of 450 learners in total from grades 10 to 12. However, only 120 learners had enrolled for dramatic arts. The data collection tool was deliberately designed to generate standardised, comparable responses while still allowing participants to articulate motivations, challenges, and perceived learning gains associated with gamification in the dramatic arts curriculum (Subiyantoro & Musa, 2023): (Subiyantoro & Musa, 2023; Creswell, 2020).

The questionnaire included closed-ended items and open-ended prompts. Closed-ended items were primarily structured on a 5-point Likert scale to quantify learners' perceptions of engagement and self-efficacy, for example, "I felt confident using isiXhosa in role-play games." The structure supported consistency across diverse school contexts and enabled the efficient analysis of trends, such as changes in engagement before and after gamified activities (Schatzman, 2024; Handa, 2022). In contrast, the open-ended questions invited learners to elaborate on emotional and creative responses to the tasks, for

example, “Describe a moment when code-switching enhanced your creativity.” These qualitative sections strengthened the study by eliciting critical accounts of identity negotiation, peer collaboration, and the affective dimensions of learning that may not be captured through fixed-response items (Brearley & Walshe, 2020; Gaol, Wolomasi, Wissang, Lelu, & Betu, 2025; Maxwell, Scheller, Wilson, & Manley, 2022)(Maxwell, 2022; Brearley & Walshe, 2020).

Semi-structured questionnaires were selected because they ensured comparability and coherence across participants while remaining flexible enough to surface unanticipated themes (Cohen et al., 2018)(Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell, 2020). Prior to full implementation, the instrument was piloted with a smaller cohort and refined to improve clarity and cultural sensitivity, including rephrasing potentially loaded terms such as “language mastery” to “language experimentation.” To accommodate varying resource levels across schools, the questionnaire was administered in both digital and paper-based formats.

Responses were anonymised to reduce social desirability bias and to encourage honest reflection (Creswell & Inoue, 2025). Although structured tools could constrain participants and collect any errors on the data collection tool, including expression, the inclusion of open-ended items mitigated the limitation by enabling detailed narratives that complemented the numerical patterns in the dataset. The relative rigidity of the format was therefore balanced by its scalability and suitability for a sample drawn was situated as in the contexts stated by (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell, 2020).

4.3 Population and Sampling

The study utilised purposive sampling to select 120 Grade 10 learners enrolled in dramatic arts from Grades 10–12 across South African schools. The learners had chosen dramatic arts as one of the core subjects and it is examined at Grade 12. Participants were chosen based on their sustained engagement with the subject, ensuring they possessed foundational dramatic skills to contextualise gamification interventions. The school was selected to reflect socioeconomic, linguistic, and geographic diversity thus, urban, peri-urban and rural, with quotas ensuring proportional representation of isiZulu, isiXhosa, and English home-language speakers. Purposive sampling aligned with the study’s exploratory aims, prioritising information-rich cases over statistical generalisability (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016); (Etikan et al., 2016).

By focusing on learners committed to dramatic arts, the sample minimised attrition risks during the longitudinal design while providing insights into intrinsic motivation dynamics. Ethical considerations included parental consent and anonymisation of school identities to prevent the stigmatisation of under-resourced institutions (Handa, 2022). While the sample size exceeded typical qualitative norms, its breadth enabled comparative analysis of gamification’s efficacy across varying language proficiencies and resource contexts. Limitations included potential self-selection bias, as participants opting for dramatic arts may inherently value creative expression, potentially inflating positive outcomes. Nonetheless, the strategy ensured depth and relevance, anchoring findings in the

lived realities of multilingual learners navigating gamification in the dramatic arts Grade 10 learning space.

4.4 Ethical Consideration

All research work has to respect and ensure value to the participants. All the learners who participated in the current study were informed of their rights to engage in the study and to withdraw at any time (Creswell & Inoue, 2025). Ethical clearance was sought from all the stakeholders. Ethical integrity formed the cornerstone of this study, ensuring respect for participants' dignity, rights, and well-being in line with principles outlined in the Belmont Report (1979) and South African ethical guidelines for research involving human participants, such as those from the National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC) (Lopes, 2014).

All procedures adhered to institutional ethical standards, prioritising informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and minimal risk (Alhabsi, 2024). Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Grade 10 student participants from the selected school were fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, potential benefits, such as enhanced multilingual teaching insights, and risks including minimal discomfort from interviews (Tracy, 2024). Informed consent was secured through age-appropriate assent forms for learners and written consent from parents and guardians, emphasising their right to withdraw at any stage without repercussion (Creswell & Inoue, 2025).

To protect anonymity and confidentiality, participants were assigned pseudonyms and all data transcripts from the questionnaire were stored securely on password-protected devices compliant with the Protection of Personal Information Act (Staunton et al., 2020). No identifying information was disclosed in reporting. The researcher-maintained reflexivity through a journal to mitigate power imbalances inherent in educational research, particularly with multilingual and culturally diverse learners. Post-data collection debriefing sessions allowed participants to ask questions or provide feedback. No vulnerable populations were involved beyond standard school learners, and the study posed no physical, psychological, or social harm. Any potential distress, for example, from discussing language barriers, was addressed through immediate referral to school counsellors. The ethical framework not only safeguarded participants but also enhanced the study's credibility and trustworthiness (Africa, 2013).

4.5 Trustworthiness

Establishing trustworthiness in research on gamification strategies within trilingual dramatic arts education for Grade 10 learners required rigorous attention to several qualitative criteria. Key aspects included credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

In this study, **credibility** was ensured by continuously observing and comparing data from previous studies, which allowed for a nuanced understanding of how gamification affects engagement in diverse educational settings (Creswell & Inoue, 2025).

Dependability was achieved by meticulously recording research processes and methods, enabling others to follow or replicate the study, even though exact repetition in qualitative contexts remained challenging (Lopes, 2014).

Confirmability addressed objectivity, as results were made verifiable by other researchers, thereby reducing bias and enhancing the accuracy and relevance of the findings.

Transferability was demonstrated by showing that the research outcomes are applicable to similar contexts, which proved particularly important in trilingual education where cultural and linguistic factors vary widely (Haq, Rasheed, Rashid, & Akhter, 2023).

4.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis in the study involved a thematical analysis approach, coding for qualitative data, and visual representations, such as graphs and tables, for clear communication of findings. This involved systematically coding the data by condensing textual information into smaller, analysable units called codes. These codes were then grouped to form broader themes, capturing key patterns and meanings within the data. Thematic coding was performed at various levels—explicit, implicit and latent and typically followed a structured process which included assigning codes, generating and organising themes, and identifying overarching dimensions (Zimmerman, 2009).

The method ensured that rich insights were extracted from qualitative responses (Tracy, 2024). To enhance understanding and accessibility, results from both quantitative and qualitative analyses were presented visually. Graphs, charts, and tables were used to emphasise significant findings, clarify complex data, and allow readers to quickly grasp essential trends and comparisons. Visual representations are particularly effective for highlighting key points and making data-driven arguments more compelling (Ahmed, et., al, 2025).

5. Findings

Collected data were analysed thematically based on the research questions set for the current study.

Table 1: Research questions, themes and sub-themes

Research Questions	Theme	Sub-theme
1. How do gamification strategies impact equitable participation and cross-linguistic collaboration among Grade 10 learners in trilingual isiXhosa, isiZulu and English dramatic arts classrooms?	Enhanced engagement and collaborative learning in dramatic arts	Promotion of cross-linguistic peer interaction in dramatic arts
2. To what extent do autonomy-supportive gamification mechanics language role choices foster intrinsic motivation in multilingual dramatic arts learning?	Fostering intrinsic motivation through autonomy-supportive gamification	Empowerment through language role choice

Table 2: Biographic Data of the Participants

Age	14 Years to 15 Years 90 learners 16Years to 17 Years 30 Learners	120
Gender	Males 45 Learners, Females 75 learners	120
Pseudonyms	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10, C11, C12, C13, C14, C15, C16, C17, C18, C19, C20, C21, C22, C23, C24, C25, C26, C27, C28, C29, C30, C31, C32, C33, C34, C35, C36, C37, C38, C39, C40, C41, C42, C43, C44, C45, C46, C47, C48, C49, C50, C51, C52, C53, C54, C55, C56, C57, C58, C59, C60, C61, C62, C63, C64, C65, C66, C67, C68, C69, C70, C71, C72, C73, C74, C75, C76, C77, C78, C79, C80, C81, C82, C83, C84, C85, C86, C87, C88, C89, C90, C91, C92, C93, C94, C95, C96, C97, C98, C99, C100, C101, C102, C103, C104, C105, C106, C107, C108, C109, C110, C111, C112, C113, C114, C115, C116, C117, C118, C119 and C120	120

Table 2 presents the biographic data of 120 learners in the study, using pseudonyms C1 through C120. Ninety participants were aged 14-15 years, and 30 participants were aged 16-17 years. Gender distribution showed more females (75 learners) than males (45 learners), reflecting a sample well-suited for exploring multilingual dramatic arts dynamics in a trilingual Grade 10 context.

5.1 The first research question was:

How do gamification strategies impact equitable participation and cross-linguistic collaboration among Grade 10 learners in trilingual in isiXhosa, isiZulu and English dramatic arts classrooms?

Participants responded as follows:

Participant C1:

> *"Gamification made rehearsals fun – we earned points for script ideas in any language, so even shy learners like me joined in. I spoke mostly isiXhosa at first, but teams mixed us up, and we collaborated by translating lines together. It felt fairer; no one dominated because everyone chased badges".*

Participant C2:

" We used leaderboards for improv challenges, which pushed quieter learners to participate more. In my group, an isiZulu speaker led a scene, and I added English twists—we switched languages smoothly to score higher. It equalised things; English-dominant kids didn't hog the spotlight anymore".

Participant C3:

"Badges for "linguistic bridges" rewarded mixing languages in performances, so participation evened out. I struggled with isiZulu, but gamified peer reviews helped us collaborate cross-linguistically without judgment. Everyone contributed equally once points were on the line".

Participant C4:

"Team quests in class got us all involved, regardless of language strength. My isiXhosa-heavy group pulled in an English speaker for dialogue polish, boosting collaboration. It promoted equity because low participators caught up via bonus points, not just talent".

Participant C5:

" Gamification levelled the ground of practical dramatization as daily challenges awarded stars for any language input. Shyer isiXhosa learners spoke up more, and we co-created skits blending all three languages. Cross-linguistic work flowed better; it turned competition into shared wins".

Participant C6:

" Points for inclusive role-playing encouraged everyone to join, even if English wasn't their first language. In our multicultural team, we negotiated isiZulu lines collaboratively, reducing dominance by fluent speakers. Participation felt truly equitable under that system".

Participant C7:

" Leaderboards tracked group language mixes, which sparked real collaboration. I contributed isiXhosa folklore to an English base, and teammates added isiZulu flair—we all participated equally to climb ranks. It broke down barriers fast".

Participant C8:

" Gamified feedback rounds made quiet learners bolder; badges for cross-language supports were key. Our trio blended languages seamlessly in a play, with no one sidelined. Equity improved because rewards valued effort over fluency".

Participant C9:

" Challenges like 'trilingual charades' boosted participation across abilities. English speakers deferred to isiXhosa ideas sometimes, fostering collaboration. It was equitable—everyone's input counted toward team scores, so no language group dominated".

Participant C10:

" We had escape-room style dramatic arts tasks with language tokens, which equalised involvement. Groups mixed isiZulu, isiXhosa, and English naturally to 'unlock' scenes, enhancing cross-linguistic teamwork. Even reluctant participants engaged fully for the prizes".

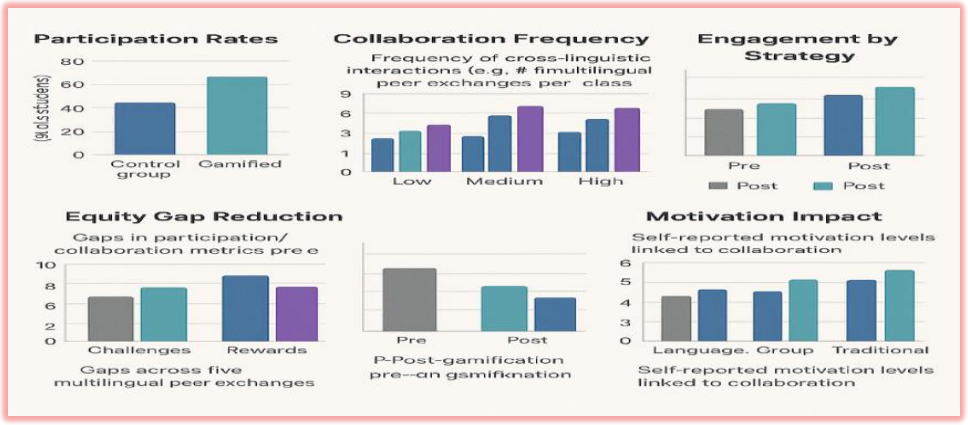

Figure 1: Positive Impact of Gamification Effect in Dramatic Arts

Figure 1 illustrates the positive impact of gamification strategies on equitable participation and cross-linguistic collaboration among Grade 10 learners. In participation rates, the gamified group reached 40% compared to the control's 30%, signalling improved overall involvement, while engagement by strategy showed leaderboards yielding the highest cross-linguistic interactions which was around eight across badges, teams, and other games played. Equity gap reduction was evident as the pre-intervention multilingual exchange gap dropped from 25% to nearly 10% post-gamification, and self-reported motivation levels rose notably in the gamified condition peaking at five versus traditional methods when tied to collaboration. These visuals collectively demonstrate gamification's role in fostering balanced participation and bridging language divides when using isiXhosa and isiZulu.

5.2 In response to the first theme and sub-theme 1, some of the participants reported:

Participant C12:

" Gamification boosted our engagement in dramatic arts class. We talked more across languages in isiXhosa and English during team games. It helped us learn from each other and made rehearsals in dramatic arts fun".

Participant C13:

" We got excited with points for skits. Shy learners joined in and shared isiZulu ideas. Peer chats in different languages grew, and we collaborated better on scenes".

Participant C14:

" Badges made us eager to practice lines. We mixed English with

isiXhosa in groups, talking freely. It built teamwork and cross-language friendships".

Participant C15:

" Class games kept us hooked on dramatic arts tasks. We helped peers with isiZulu words during improv. Interaction across languages made learning collaborative".

Participant C16:

" Leaderboards pushed us to engage fully. English speakers learned isiXhosa lines from friends. We interacted more, blending languages in plays".

Participant C17:

" Points for group scenes raised our energy. We spoke in all three languages to build stories. It promoted peer help and fun collaboration".

Participant C18:

" Gamified challenges made dramatic arts perfomance lively. Quieter learners shared isiZulu tales with us. Cross-language talks improved our group work".

Participant C19:

" Stars for performances got everyone involved. We practiced peer feedback in mixed languages. It sparked better interaction and team spirit".

Participant C20:

" Team quests enhanced our focus in class. IsiXhosa kids taught English parts to others. Collaborative learning happened through language swaps".

5.3 The second research question was:

To what extent do autonomy-supportive gamification mechanics language role choices foster intrinsic motivation in multilingual dramatic arts learning?

Participants responded as follows:

Participant C21:

" Rewards for improv made us engage deeply. We discussed scenes in isiZulu and English together. Peer interaction across languages felt natural".

Participant C22:

" Drama *games with scores-built excitement. Groups blended languages smoothly while helping each other. It strengthened our collaborative bonds".*

Participant C23:

" Badges encouraged active participation. We shared ideas in isiXhosa during English rehearsals. Cross-linguistic chats made arts class better".

Participant C24:

" Points systems kept us motivated. Peers interacted by translating lines for skits. It fostered engagement and group learning".

Participant C25:

" Gamification sparked joy in dramatic arts. We collaborated across isiZulu, isiXhosa, and English freely. Peer talks enhanced our shared creativity".

5.4 To answer the second research question some of the participants responded by saying:

Participant C27:

" Choosing our language roles in games made me want to join dramatic arts more. I picked isiXhosa for my part and felt excited to practice. It built my own drive to learn".

Participant C28:

" Language choices in gamification let me use English freely. I got motivated inside to create better scenes. It felt good, not forced".

Participant C29:

" I loved picking isiZulu roles for challenges. It sparked my interest in multilingual plays. My motivation grew from within".

Participant C30:

" Autonomy in language picks during games boosted my joy in arts class. I worked harder on my own. Intrinsic drive came naturally".

Participant C31*:*

" Choosing roles helped me feel in control. I used isiXhosa and stayed eager for rehearsals. It fostered real motivation".

Participant C32:

" Gamification with free language choices made drama fun. I motivated myself to blend English lines. It was all from inside me".

Participant C33:

" I selected my language role and got hooked on learning. Intrinsic motivation rose as I owned my parts. Great for multilingual work".

Participant C34:

" Role choices in games gave me freedom to speak freely. I pushed myself harder in isiZulu scenes. It built true inner drive".

Participant C35:

" Autonomy-support made me excited for dramatic arts. Picking languages fuelled my own motivation. I learned more willingly".

Participant C36:

" Language role options sparked my passion. I felt driven to collaborate in mixed tongues. Intrinsic motivation was strong".

Participant C37:

" Choosing my language in gamified tasks kept me engaged. It fostered motivation from within for multilingual dramatic arts scenes. I loved it"

5.5 In response to the second theme and second sub-theme, participants reported:

Participant C38:

"Choosing my language role empowered me in dramatic arts games. I felt strong using isiXhosa and stayed motivated inside.

Participant C39:

"Language picks gave me power over my parts. It built basic drive for multilingual scenes".

Participant C40:

" I loved selecting isiZulu roles. It made me feel capable and eager to learn more".

Participant C41:

" Autonomy in role choices empowered my creativity. Motivation came from me, not teachers".

Participant C42:

"Picking English for challenges made me confident. It fostered my own excitement in arts".

Participant C43:

" Language role freedom boosted my inner strength. I worked harder on dramatic arts tasks willingly".

Participant C44:

" Choosing roles helped me own my learning. Intrinsic motivation grew through empowerment".

Participant C45:

" I felt powerful selecting mixed languages. It sparked real drive in class activities".

Participant C46:

" Role choices in games gave me control. I got motivated to shine in multilingual plays."

Participant C47:

" Empowerment from language picks kept me going. My intrinsic interest in dramatic arts got higher".

Participant C48:

" I chose isiXhosa roles and felt good. It fuelled my personal motivation strongly".

Participant C49:

" I was very happy as I felt the support which was using home language and it made me bold in my choices. Inner drive for dramatic arts learning increased".

Participant C50:

" Picking my language empowered group work. I stayed excited from within".

Participant C51:

" Language role options built my confidence. Intrinsic motivation felt natural".

Participant C52:

" I controlled my roles and felt strong. It fostered deep motivation in dramatic arts".

Participant C53:

" Choices empowered me to blend languages. My own drive pushed me forward".

Participant C54:

" Role freedom sparked inner power. I loved learning multilingual arts more."

Participant C55:

" Selecting isiZulu made me capable. Empowerment led to true motivation".

Participant C56:

"Autonomy in gamification empowered my voice. Intrinsic interest grew big".

Participant C57:

"Language choices gave me strength. I motivated myself for every scene".

Participant C58:

"Picking roles fostered my power. It built lasting intrinsic motivation".

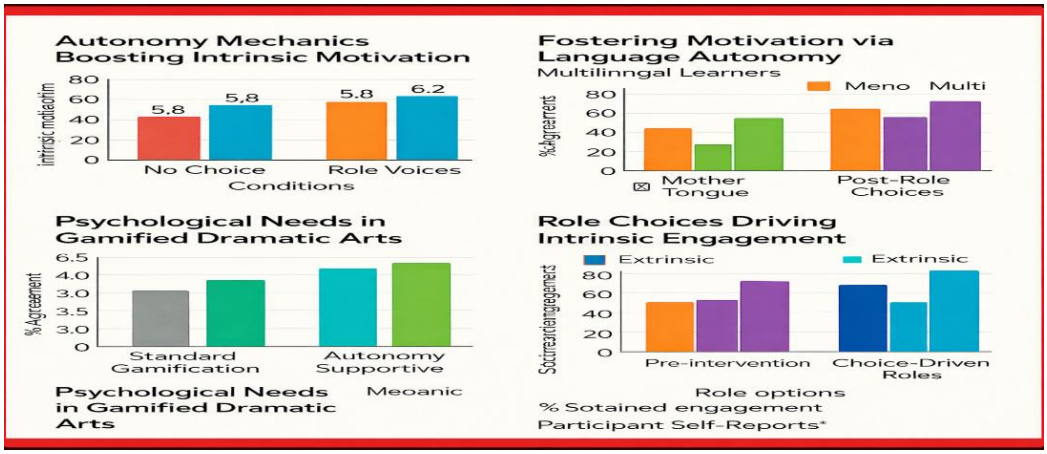

Figure 2: Use of isiXhosa, isiZulu and English Fostering Intrinsic Motivating

Figure 2 shows that, across the four graphs, a consistent pattern emerges: autonomy—especially giving learners meaningful choices—correlates with higher motivation and engagement in gamified dramatic arts. In the "Autonomy Mechanics Boosting Intrinsic Motivation" chart, conditions that include role choices show higher intrinsic motivation than "no choice," suggesting that choice enhances learners' internal drive to participate. Similarly, "Fostering Motivation via Language Autonomy" indicates that allowing learners greater control over language use (for example, mother-tongue use and post-role choice contexts) is associated with stronger agreement levels, implying that language flexibility supports motivation among multilingual learners.

The "Psychological Needs in Gamified Dramatic Arts" graph shows higher agreement under autonomy-supportive gamification than under standard gamification, implying that autonomy-supportive design better satisfies key psychological needs linked to sustained participation. Finally, "Role Choices Driving Intrinsic Engagement" suggests that engagement improves from pre-intervention levels when learners move into choice-driven roles, reinforcing the overall conclusion that gamified strategies are most effective when they foreground learner agency, support psychological needs, and legitimise multilingual identity in performance-based learning in dramatic arts.

6. Discussion of the Findings

The findings indicate that gamification strategies meaningfully enhanced equitable participation and cross-linguistic collaboration in trilingual isiXhosa, isiZulu and English Grade 10 dramatic arts classrooms by repositioning linguistic diversity as a resource for success rather than a barrier. Across participants' accounts, game elements in dramatic arts, such as points, badges, leaderboards, team quests, and challenge-based tasks, created structured opportunities for all learners to contribute, including those who were previously shy and marginalised by language hierarchies.

For example, *Participant C1* reported that awarding points for "*script ideas in any language*" encouraged shy learners to participate, while mixed teams "*collaborated by translating lines together,*" producing a sense of fairness because "*no one*

dominated." Similarly, *Participant C2* described leaderboards for improv challenges as a mechanism that *"pushed quieter learners to participate more,"* while also reducing the tendency for English-dominant learners to *"hog the spotlight."* These experiences align with gamification research showing that well-designed mechanics can increase engagement and participation by providing immediate feedback, clear goals, and socially shared incentives (Papadakis & Kalogiannakis, 2023; Rivera & Garden, 2021; Balbaa & Abdurashidova, 2023).

Importantly, the collaborative emphasis in many responses suggests that competition was not merely individualistic but became a catalyst for collective effort—evident in *Participant C10's "escape-room style"* tasks where learners used "*language tokens*" to unlock scenes, requiring isiXhosa, isiZulu, and English contributions to progress. This reflects a culturally responsive view of participation consistent with Ubuntu-oriented values of shared achievement and relational learning, where success is co-constructed rather than individually owned (Adeola, 2024).

In addition, the findings resonate with translingual and translanguaging scholarship: rewarding *"linguistic bridges"* reported by *Participant C3* and tracking *"group language mixes"* as revealed by *Participant C7* that legitimised fluid language practices, enabling learners to move between languages strategically to strengthen performance quality and peer understanding (Bibi, 2023; Karpava et al., 2025; Campbell & Rosenhan, 2024). The result was not only more frequent cross-language interaction, for example, *Participant C16's* report that English speakers learned isiXhosa lines from peers, but also a visible reduction in participation inequities—supported by Figure 1, where participation increased in the gamified group by 40% vs 30% and the multilingual exchange gap dropped from 25% pre-intervention to nearly 10% post-gamification. Together, the qualitative and visual evidence suggest that gamification helped destabilise language-based power dynamics by attaching value to the participants, as shown in Figure 2 and supported by Ajith (2024); setting as expressed by Creswell & Inoue, 2025).

The findings reveal a solid link between autonomy-supportive gamification and heightened intrinsic motivation among multilingual learners in dramatic arts, aligning with Self-Determination Theory's emphasis on agency as an internal driver (Schwartz et al., 2021). Participants consistently described autonomy in role and language choices as empowering, fostering "*inner drive*" as revealed by *Participant C49*, "*true motivation*" as stated by *Participant C55*, and "*lasting intrinsic motivation*" as reported by *Participant C58*. For example, *Participant C53* noted how "*choices empowered me to blend languages*," echoing translanguaging practices that legitimise multilingual identities in performance-based learning (Wang & East, 2024; Sincuba & Buka, 2024). The qualitative evidence dovetails with Figure 2, where graphs, such as "*Fostering Motivation via Language Autonomy*", show higher agreement for mother-tongue options, for example, using isiXhosa and isiZulu, compared to rigid structures, suggesting that flexibility satisfies psychological needs for competence and relatedness.

Gamified elements amplified this effect by foregrounding learner agency, as 3 seen in "*Role Choices Driving Intrinsic Engagement,*" where post-intervention engagement surged. C56's reflection—"*Autonomy in gamification empowered my voice. Intrinsic interest grew big*"—mirrors Rivera and Garden's (2021) framework, which posits that gamification boosts engagement through mechanics such as choice-driven roles. Similarly, "*Autonomy Mechanics Boosting Intrinsic Motivation*" indicates that "*no choice*" conditions lagged behind, reinforcing that volition, not compulsion, sustains participation in arts contexts (Silva-Jurado & Silva-Jurado, 2024; Viirret, 2020). In multilingual settings that legitimise code-switching and semiotic resources, as in Vilakazi (2024) and Set (2021), such practices enhance inquiry and expression.

These patterns extend prior work on professional autonomy translating to learner empowerment (Renyard, 2023) and dialogic drama nurturing artistic-pedagogical expertise (Viirret, 2020). Dimensional analysis of quotes (Schatzman, 2024) places this in grounded theory as autonomy scaffolds competence (Xi & Lantolf, 2021), particularly via metacognitive supports in inquiry-like dramatic arts (Schwartz et al., 2021; Seger, 2024). Limitations include the small sample (n=120), warranting broader validation, yet findings align with trilingual pedagogy insights (Sincuba & Buka, 2024) and NEP 2020's push for innovative, personalised education (Zhang, 2025). Above all, autonomy-supportive gamification emerges as transformative for multilingual dramatic arts, nurturing intrinsic motivation by honouring linguistic repertoires and agency—insights with implications for teacher training in diverse contexts (Somé, 2025; Tracy, 2024).

Grounded in Self-Determination Theory and translanguaging pedagogies (Rivera & Garden, 2021; Wang & East, 2024; Sincuba & Buka, 2024), these results affirm that legitimising multilingual identities via gamified agency satisfies psychological needs and boosting sustained participation. In the research site's context, this counters rigid monolingualism, fostering confident, self-motivated performers (Vilakazi, 2024; Seger, 2024). Figure 2 confirms elevated engagement under choice-driven conditions, especially with isiXhosa, isiZulu, and English flexibility.

7. Conclusion

The current study demonstrates the transformative power of autonomy-supportive gamification in multilingual dramatic arts education. By prioritising learner agency through role flexibility and language choices, such approaches ignite intrinsic motivation, deepen engagement, and honour diverse linguistic identities. In multilingual contexts, strategies that shift learning from compliance to self-driven passion satisfy core psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. The evidence highlights gamification's potential as a pedagogical bridge, blending play, performance, and translanguaging to create inclusive, dynamic classrooms. Teachers emerge as facilitators of empowerment, fostering resilient learners who thrive in creative expression. There are calls for curriculum reforms integrating choice-driven mechanics, teacher training in multilingual facilitation, and policy alignment with innovative frameworks like NEP 2020.

Future research could explore scalability, longitudinal impacts, and integrations with emerging tools, such as AI, to refine these models. Ultimately, autonomy-supportive gamification reimagines dramatic arts not as peripheral but as a vital arena for nurturing intrinsically motivated, culturally affirmed global citizens—equipping youth to navigate complexity with confidence and creativity.

8. Recommendations

Building on the study's insights into autonomy-supportive gamification in multilingual dramatic arts, the current study proposes practical recommendations to translate its findings into classroom action by embedding role-choice mechanics in lesson design. Teachers may implement this by creating digital platforms via free tools, such as Genially and Kahoot, where learners select dramatic roles pre-activity and blend gamified badges for completion. Weekly 45-minute sessions may rotate choices, tracking motivation via quick exit tickets to refine options. The study recommends the promotion of translanguaging through flexible language policies. Practically, this includes the development of bilingual rubrics to allow isiXhosa, isiZulu, and English in performances, with peer feedback circles normalising code-switching. It could start with 10-minute "language labs" in lessons, gradually integrating into full scenes, supported by teacher modelling.

Additionally, teacher training in autonomy-supportive facilitation in 2-day workshops using role-play simulations drawing from Self-Determination Theory may help dramatic arts teachers to be more effective. A recommendation is that participants co-design gamified units, with follow-up online communities for sharing adaptations, targeting 80% school adoption within a term. Also, integrating multilingual gamification apps district-wide may add value to the teaching of dramatic arts as a subject not an extra-mural activity. Partnerships with EdTech developers for apps featuring customisable avatars and language packs to be piloted in 10 schools in the district will add value and recognition of dramatic arts as a core subject from Grades 10 to 12.

Roll out via 1-hour training, with data dashboards monitoring engagement and scaling based on pre- and post-surveys will help in the concept building in teaching dramatic arts. The current study recommends and advocates a policy integration for scalable impact by collaborating with provincial education departments to embed these in dramatic arts curricula, piloted via action research grants. Evaluations by the Department of Basic Education through mixed methods audits after one year will inform national guidelines, such as NEP 2020 extensions.

Conflict of Interest

The researcher has no conflict of interest.

9. Acknowledgments

The authors wish to acknowledge the use of Copilot chat to plot the charts after being given the data by the researcher, Grammarly for editing and correcting grammatical errors as these are and Perplexity AI Tool in the writing of this paper. This tool was used to improve the language and grammar in the paper. Perplexity

was used in editing the written manuscript to check its suitability for publication. Copilot was used for drawing picture graphs which are Figure 1 and Figure 2 for this current study. However, this paper remains an accurate representation of the authors' work and intellectual contributions as the researcher collected data and wrote the manuscript.

10. References

Adamu, M. S. (2023). No more "solutionism" or "saviourism" in futuring African HCI: A manyfesto. *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction, 30*(2), 1–42. https://doi.org/10.1145/3571811

Adeniran, A., Adedeji, A., Nwosu, E., Nwugo, E., & Nnamani, G. (2023). *Ed-tech landscape and challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Occasional Paper No. 88). Southern Voice. https://southernvoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/SV_Ops-N88-Pre.pdf

Adeola, O. (2024). Leveraging Ubuntu-inspired values to promote sustainable digital entrepreneurship in Africa. *Africa Journal of Management, 10*(2), 120–149. https://doi.org/10.1080/23322373.2024.2349484

Republic of South Africa. (2013). *Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013*. Government Printer.

Ahmed, T., Sarfraz, A., & Arif, A. (2024). Exploring the relationship between language and identity in multicultural English-speaking communities. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL (JALT), 7*(4), 754–764.

Ajith, K. (2024). Leveraging Gamified Learning for L2 English Learners: Exploring Motivational, Performance, and Metacognitive Effects in a Multilingual Setting. *Kristu Jayanti Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (KJHSS), 4*, 80–88. https://doi.org/10.59176/kjhss.v4i0.2419

Alhabsi, S. S. (2024). Ethical considerations in obtaining informed consent in research participation. *International Journal of Educational Contemporary Explorations, 1*(1), 24–33. https://doi.org/10.69481/DIVL1152

Archer, B. (2025). *Shakespeare Through Stanislavski: Creating an Accessible Toolkit for Performing Shakespeare*. University of East London.

Ayodele, O. (2025). Reframing the global knowledge economy: An Afropolitan approach. In *Decentring global challenges in international relations* (pp. 146–161). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003571285-11

Balbaa, M. E., & Abdurashidova, M. (2023). Enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes through gamification in education. In S. M. Curle and M. T. Hebebci (Eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference on Academic Studies in Technology and Education 2023* (pp. 13–20). ARSTE Organization.

Bayona, P., & García-Martín, E. (2022). *Second language and heritage learners in mixed classrooms* (Vol. 112). Channel View Publications. https://doi.org/10.21832/bayona5010

Bedenlier, S., Bond, M., Buntins, K., Zawacki-Richter, O., & Kerres, M. (2020). Facilitating student engagement through educational technology in higher education: A systematic review in the field of arts and humanities. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 36*(4), 126–150. https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.5477

Bibi, H. (2023). Role of Translingual Pedagogies for Invoking Creative and Critical Skills: A Case Study. *The University of Chitral Journal of Linguistics and Literature (JLL), 7*(1), 29–41.

Brand, N. (2024). *Efficacy of Zulu indigenous games in enhancing perceptual-motor skills in pre-schoolers: A qualitative study of two informal settlements in KwaZulu-Natal* (Master's dissertation, University of Cape Town). University of Cape Town OpenUCT Repository. http://hdl.handle.net/11427/40799

Braun, V., Clarke, V., Hayfield, N., Davey, L., & Jenkinson, E. (2023). Doing reflexive thematic analysis. In *Supporting research in counselling and psychotherapy:*

Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research (pp. 19–38). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13942-0_2

Brearley, S. G., & Walshe, C. (2020). Introduction to the Handbook of Theory and Methods in Applied Health Research. In *Handbook of Theory and Methods in Applied Health Research* (pp. 1–3): Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781785363214.00005

Campbell, M., & Rosenhan, C. (2024). Assessment and creativity through a translingual lens: Transdisciplinary insights. *Applied Linguistics Review, 15*(5), 1839–1859. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2023-0090

Canagarajah, A. S. (Ed.). (2013). *Literacy as translingual practice: Between communities and classrooms*. Routledge.

Chavinda, C., Chikaipa, V., Kainja, J., Mchakulu, J., & Ndasauka, Y. (2026). *Communication for Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa: Amplifying the Marginalised Voices*: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003629948

Christopher, M., & Pinias, C. (2025). Assessing contexts for the implementation of a pedagogy of care in teacher development within the Southern African development community: a meta-narrative review. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 29*(9), 1502–1525. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2025.2490585

Cohen, J. D., Li, L., Wang, Y., Thoburn, C., Afsari, B., Danilova, L., Douville, C., Javed, A. A., Wong, F., Mattox, A., Hruban, R. H., Wolfgang, C. L., Goggins, M. G., Dal Molin, M., Wang, T.-L., Roden, R., Klein, A. P., Ptak, J., Dobbyn, L., Schaefer, J., Silliman, N., Popoli, M., Vogelstein, J. T., Browne, J. D., Schoen, R. E., Brand, R. E., Tie, J., Gibbs, P., Wong, H.-L., Mansfield, A. S., Jen, J., Hanash, S. M., Falconi, M., Allen, P. J., Zhou, S., Bettegowda, C., Diaz, L. A., Jr., Tomasetti, C., Kinzler, K. W., Vogelstein, B., Lennon, A. M., & Papadopoulos, N. (2018). Detection and localization of surgically resectable cancers with a multi-analyte blood test. *Science, 359*(6378), 926–930. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aar3247

Creswell, J. W. (2020). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (6th ed.). Pearson.

Creswell, J. W., & Inoue, M. (2025). A process for conducting mixed methods data analysis. *Journal of General and Family Medicine, 26*(1), 4–11. https://doi.org/10.1002/jgf2.736

Dong, X., Zhang, P., Zang, Y., Cao, Y., Wang, B., Ouyang, L., . . . Li, Y. (2024). Internlm-xcomposer2-4khd: A pioneering large vision-language model handling resolutions from 336 pixels to 4k hd. *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems, 37*, 42566–42592. https://doi.org/10.52202/079017-1348

Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American journal of theoretical and applied statistics, 5*(1), 1–4. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11

Favour Ali, U. (2024). Gamification in Higher Education: Enhancing Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes. https://doi.org/10.52783/jier.v5i4.3920

Gaol, E. L., Wolomasi, A. K., Wissang, I. O., Lelu, S., & Betu, F. S. (2025). Contextual spirituality of synodality: An oasis, aeropagus and the polarization of Catholic religious education. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation, 6*(2), 325–336.

García, O. (2009). Emergent Bilinguals and TESOL: What's in a Name? *Tesol Quarterly, 43*(2), 322–326. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1545-7249.2009.tb00172.x

Glissant, É. (1990). *Poétique de la relation*. Gallimard.

Handa, V. (2022). Subjectivity in qualitative research. In *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in the Asian context* (pp. 540–554): SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529781731.n38

Haq, Z. U., Rasheed, R., Rashid, A., & Akhter, S. (2023). Criteria for assessing and ensuring the trustworthiness in qualitative research. *International Journal of Business Reflections, 4*(2). https://doi.org/10.56249/ijbr.03.01.44

Hirsu, L., Nitecka Barche, M., & Futro, D. (2024). Assessment and creativity through a translingual lens: Introduction. *Applied Linguistics Review, 15*(5), 1831–1838. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2023-0115

Karpava, S., Ringblom, N., & Zabrodskaja, A. (2025). Translanguaging as a Dynamic Strategy for Heritage Language Transmission. *Languages, 10*(2), 19. https://doi.org/10.3390/languages10020019

Kusumaningputri, R. (2024). Negotiating voices in English as a lingua franca: Indonesian multilingual identity in English digital interactions. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 45*(10), 4554–4571. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2023.2173758

Lasmawan, I. W., & Budiarta, I. W. (2020). Vygotsky's zone of proximal development and the students' progress in learning: A heutagogical bibliographical review. *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia, 9*(4), 545–552. https://doi.org/10.23887/jpi-undiksha.v9i4.29915

Lopes, J. A. (2014). Bioethics–a brief history: from the Nuremberg code (1947) to the Belmont report (1979). *Revista Médica de Minas Gerais, 24*(2), 253–264. https://doi.org/10.5935/2238-3182.20140060

Lopez, F., Gonzalez, N., Hutchings, R., Delcid, G., Raygoza, C., & Lopez, L. (2022). Race-reimagined self-determination theory: Elucidating how ethnic studies promotes student identity and learning outcomes using mixed methods. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 71*, Article 102119. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2022.102119

Malgoubri, I. (2025). *Empowering multilingual learners through culturally sustaining pedagogy and arts-based learning in Burkina Faso* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska–Lincoln).

Maxwell, C. J., Scheller, R. M., Wilson, K. N., & Manley, P. N. (2022). Assessing the effectiveness of landscape-scale forest adaptation actions to improve resilience under projected climate change. *Frontiers in Forests and Global Change, 5*, 740869. https://doi.org/10.3389/ffgc.2022.740869

Mdletshe, L. (2024). *Cultivating positive learner behaviour in my teaching: A secondary school teacher's self-study* (Doctoral dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal).

Mohicen, A. A. A. B. (2023). *Enhancing intrinsic motivation in EFL education at Saudi universities through learner autonomy* (Doctoral dissertation, Arizona State University).

Motaung, B. L. (2021). *Translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy to implement multilingual language policy at a South African university* (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Free State).

Muhammadin, I. N., & Herda, R. K. (2024). Exploring motivation among EFL undergraduate students: A self-determination theory perspective. *Balangkas: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal, 1*(1), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.66317/688569

Papadakis, S., & Kalogiannakis, M. (2023). *Gamification in education.* Paper presented at the Frontiers in Education. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2023.1291024

Perez, M. D. M. S., & Masegosa, A. G. (2022). Gamification as a teaching resource for English-medium instruction and multilingual education at university. In *Research Anthology on Bilingual and Multilingual Education* (pp. 930–949): IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-3690-5.ch046

Reid-Olds, T. (2020). *The Cross-Currents of Exilic Storytelling: Multilingual Memory and the Maritime Shift.* University of Oregon,

Renyard, J. (2023). *The relationship between professional autonomy, social power and organisational structure for Heads of Quality as third space professionals in English Higher Education*. University of Bath,

Rivera, E. S., & Garden, C. L. P. (2021). Gamification for student engagement: a framework. *Journal of further and higher education, 45*(7), 999–1012. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877x.2021.1875201

Schatzman, L. (2024). Dimensional analysis: Notes on an alternative approach to the grounding of theory in qualitative research. In *Social organization and social process* (pp. 303–314): Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315547169-21

Schwartz, L., Adler, I., Madjar, N., & Zion, M. (2021). Rising to the challenge: The effect of individual and social metacognitive scaffolds on students' expressions of autonomy and competence throughout an inquiry process. *Journal of Science Education and Technology, 30*, 582–593. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10956-021-09905-4

Seger, A. (2024). *Empowering learning experiences: Nurturing L2-self through motivation, language learning, and classroom management* (Independent thesis, basic level). Örebro University. https://oru.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:1884885

Set, B. N. (2021). *Using semiotic resources to teach and assess scientific concepts in a bilingual Namibian primary school: A socio-cultural discourse analysis* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Town, South Africa). OpenUCT. http://hdl.handle.net/11427/36121

Silva-Jurado, R. J., & Silva-Jurado, M. D. (2024). Educational innovation in the 21st century: gamification, artificial intelligence and art as transformative tools. *YUYAY: Estrategias, Metodologías & Didácticas Educativas, 3*(1), 35–52. https://doi.org/10.59343/yuyay.v3i1.60

Sincuba, L., & Buka, A. M. (2024). Enhancing Trilingual Pedagogy in Teaching Dramatic Arts: Insights from Teachers. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 23*(5), 403–418. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.23.5.21

Somé, K. J. (2025). Teachers' Agency and Teaching Challenges in Multilingual Spaces: An Exploratory Study of How EFL Teachers Address Listening and Speaking Skills Needs in Centralized Systems. *TESL-EJ, 28*(4). https://doi.org/10.55593/ej.28112a7

Staunton, C., Adams, R., Anderson, D., Croxton, T., Kamuya, D., Munene, M., & Swanepoel, C. (2020). Protection of Personal Information Act 2013 and data protection for health research in South Africa. *International Data Privacy Law, 10*(2), 160–179. https://doi.org/10.1093/idpl/ipz024

Subiyantoro, S., & Musa, M. Z. (2023). Exploring Teachers' and Students' Perspectives on Gamification in Learning Management Systems. *Jurnal Komunikasi Pendidikan, 7*(2), 52–60. https://doi.org/10.32585/jurnalkomdik.v7i2.4613

Tan, K. H. K. (2020). *Assessment rubrics decoded: An educator's guide*: Routledge.https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429022081

Tracy, S. J. (2024). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*: John Wiley & Sons. https://doi.org/10.5613/rzs.43.1.6

Viirret, T. L. (2020). Dialogism as an Integral Element in Process Drama: Insights into a Drama Teacher's Artistic-Pedagogical Expertise. *JYU dissertations*. https://doi.org/10.1080/14452294.2018.1482728

Vilakazi, Z. (2024). *Promoting Inquiry-Based Learning Through the Use of Code Switching in Life Sciences Classrooms.* University of Johannesburg (South Africa). https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-7963/cgp/v32i02/189-210

Wang, D., & East, M. (2024). Integrating translanguaging into assessment: Students' responses and perceptions. *Applied Linguistics Review, 15*(5), 1911–1937. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2023-0087

Xi, J., & Lantolf, J. P. (2021). Scaffolding and the zone of proximal development: A problematic relationship. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 51*(1), 25–48. https://doi.org/10.1111/jtsb.12260

Zairon, I. Y., Wook, T. S. M. T., Salleh, S. M., & Dahlan, H. A. (2025). Adaptive gamification in collaborative virtual classroom: A systematic review. *PeerJ Computer Science, 11*, e3146. https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj-cs.3146

Zhang, Y. (2025). Research on innovative models of new media art and personalized education. *GBP Proceedings Series, 1*, 100–106. https://doi.org/10.71222/fsd25m61

Zimmerman, K. L. (2009). *Operationalizing the antecedents of work-family positive spillover: A longitudinal study* (Doctoral dissertation, Portland State University). https://doi.org/10.15760/etd.7807