

# GAMIFICATION AS A METHOD OF INCREASING MOTIVATION OF STUDENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE ON THE EXAMPLE OF ENGLISH

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**Abstract.** *Gamification is a fairly new concept that involves the use of game elements in a non-game environment. Studies have been conducted proving that gamification can increase motivation in learning foreign languages, but not everything is so clear and there are many contradictory research results reporting the negative sides of this method. Due to the large number of positive research results, many teachers decide to use gamification in educational institutions. This article is an analysis of gamification, the purpose of which is to determine how to correctly use this method in educational settings, primarily in foreign language classes in higher educational institutions.*

**Keywords:** *gamification, learning a second language, motivation, student involvement, Kohut.*

Nowadays, society is undergoing serious changes and, undoubtedly, these changes have a direct impact on modern education. A modern and improved education system is an absolute necessity for the 21st century. The world in which we live is constantly changing, and this entails the emergence of some completely new needs. The responsibility of the teacher of the XXI century is to be able to adapt to this new situation, in which the worldview of students is increasingly expanding and strengthening through the use of new technologies.

Learning English as a foreign language is crucial for international, political and cultural communication, and is also necessary for successful group work in classrooms with students from around the world. With the development of new digital technologies, there is a rapid escalation of the need to learn a second foreign language to communicate with students from different countries. Such a rapid demand for a foreign language requires a transition from traditional teaching methods to more modern and advanced ones. This shift is especially important because students often complain that learning a second language is a complex process that causes stress, especially when it comes to applying its various skills (for example, speaking, writing, reading, listening) in real life situations.

Students usually note that learning and memorizing new English words and the correct form of verbs is a tedious learning activity, since students must be physically, mentally and emotionally involved in learning in order to be able to successfully master a new language. There are several other factors, such as motivation, attitude to the subject and learning ability, that can affect the processes and results of learning a new language. For example, when students cannot memorize a new vocabulary or have difficulties with making a large number of mistakes, their self-confidence decreases, as a result they may lose motivation and interest and, thus, refuse to

continue their studies. Various scientific articles and studies conclude that the game environment can increase the motivation, interest of students and provide them with the opportunity to make mistakes in the learning process without fear. Thus, it is important to consider the attitude of students to gamification while learning a foreign language. Teaching methods and strategies should be developed in a way that takes into account the experience of students and should increase their motivation and interest to meet the needs of an ever-growing number of students.

What is the goal of gamification? First of all, we will talk about raising the motivation of students, in particular students whose specialization is not directly related to the study of foreign languages and linguistics. Motivation can be external and internal, internal is lame, therefore, with the help of various modern technological means, it is possible to achieve a significant increase in the external motivation of students. Research shows that the use of games in the classroom has many advantages. Firstly, games are a huge part of the life of modern youth. Many teachers claim to use digital media for teaching. Speaking about studying at a university, we can note that by immersing themselves in the daily life of a student and bringing games to the audience, teachers reasonably hope to encourage students to work more actively, to arouse their interest. And it seems that they succeed: the use of games in the classroom, indeed, increases motivation to learn, which has a positive impact on the attitude of students to the university and the teacher. Moreover, it leads to an improvement in independent work skills. Students become more creative, learn to work in a team, and also develop more complex skills, such as the ability to solve problems by using a foreign language to find the necessary information. Thus, electronic games become a methodological material that develops the competencies of the XXI century, which are absolutely necessary for existence in modern society. Although Uzbek university teachers share a positive attitude towards information and communication technologies and believe in their positive impact, the actual use of games in Uzbek universities is quite rare, due to the dense curriculum and limited number of hours. Very often, teachers simply do not know electronic games, and therefore it is difficult for them to choose which ones are really educational. They just don't have enough digital literacy to integrate games into their daily activities. As the well-known in the West pedagogical model TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge Framework) says: to effectively introduce games into educational activities, teachers need not only knowledge of the subject, but also high digital literacy; an audience equipped with the necessary technical means and, of course, the availability of mobile devices for students.

The game element has always been an integral part of language teaching and learning. Traditional games that used paper and pens were replaced by Power Point slides, which have been effectively used in the classroom work of universities for years. The use of computers in seminars and lectures has become absolutely commonplace. Despite the wide availability of technologies for the learning process, traditional lectures are still the basis of teaching at the university, and even when a computer is used, PowerPoint presentation most often replaces the blackboard in the methods of preparing and providing new information, but not in the essence of the form or content.

Gamification (from the English game) is a concept already quite widely known. It is defined as the use of game elements and game design techniques in a non-game context. It is used in various formats, for various purposes and at almost all levels of education. In higher educational institutions, it was found that the use of electronic games increases interactivity, dynamics and, in general, student academic performance. There is strong evidence showing a link between play and increased motivation. There are more and more educational electronic games that help in learning the language. There are certain game elements that can be used in non-game contexts to cause

effective interaction on participants, as well as to persistently motivate them to study the subject. The idea is that when learning games, students are so passionate that they learn without even realizing it. Thus, games can become an integral part of lectures and seminars as new methods of learning, motivation and engagement.

Educational electronic games are becoming increasingly recognized in the audiences of universities and schools, as the advantages of digital learning and immediate feedback are increasingly appreciated in modern education.

The primary advantages of gamification in education are related to the fact that they encourage freedom in the educational process. Scott Osterwale, creative director of the Massachusetts Institute of Educational Technology, calls this the "four freedoms of play": freedom to make mistakes, freedom to experiment, freedom to play a role, freedom to concentrate. Let's analyze each of these aspects in more detail.

One of the fundamental features of video games is that the player is given several "lives", i.e. a certain number of attempts, and after completing the puzzle, lists of records appear. All this is due to the fact that the game involves making repeated mistakes necessary for learning the gameplay. In other words, the game openly provides freedom to make mistakes. In life, however, people are extremely afraid of mistakes and defeats, there is even a phobia - atihophobia - a pathological fear of failure. A natural property inherent in most people is an attempt to avoid a scenario in which defeat is possible. The situation is aggravated by the real negative consequences for students who failed the test. Since the mechanics of the game itself shows that mistakes can and most likely will be made, excitement fades into the background, and the efficiency and activity of students is not limited to tension and excitement.

When students find themselves in an environment where making mistakes is not forbidden, their freedom to experiment also increases. Experiments in education make it possible to expand the volume of assimilable material, especially when it comes to learning foreign languages. When studying such an ephemeral living substance as language, it is simply necessary to experiment and improvise. Instead of operating with a limited amount of vocabulary and structures, experiments lead students along new paths, and in order to succeed, they have to comprehend new information. In addition, the game environment sets a goal for students, but often leaves them the right to choose, implying a number of alternative ways to achieve it. This forces students to look for new strategies, show their personal qualities and develop creative thinking.

One of the key roles of entertainment is escapism. Escapism is an attempt to escape from everyday, boring reality by reading, thinking about something more interesting, it is a kind of escape from reality. His goal is to try to temporarily find himself in another world, to try himself in a different social role, to live a different life. This is the most important mechanism of many children's games, and can also be an extremely useful pedagogical tool. Playing the role of another person in a role-playing game, students get a valuable opportunity to look at the world from a different angle, immerse themselves in the field of knowledge that allows them to realize this new point of view. In role-playing games, students often have to communicate the way the person they are portraying would. This simultaneously increases motivation, involving students in the game, helps to relax, because this is only a temporary role, a kind of mask that helps more constrained students to open up; this is useful for language skills, in particular, when studying stylistic aspects of a foreign language, and also inspires the development of empathy.

Most games have their own special internal rhythm, whether it's a group or a single game. Group games are characterized by alternating transmission of the move; the student concentrates

his attention on his turn and can rest in the remaining time. In single-player games, such a change of periods of attention and rest is achieved by game designers by adding moments of relative inactivity. This change in the degree of involvement in the process reduces the fatigue of the players. In addition, if we talk about a fully gamified course, it is possible to achieve automation of teaching. In other words, processes such as the teacher's assessment of manually written tests by students in a gamified course can be carried out without the participation of a teacher, and the program can independently evaluate student responses. In the context of learning foreign languages, one of the best examples of the implementation of this idea is the program "UioNpdo", which provides students with instant feedback, showing the correct answer. Not all questions have the only correct answer that an automated system can check, but such software allows you to spend more time in the classroom with a real teacher to discuss more complex topics.

#### Disadvantages

Gamification, however, is not a panacea in the field of education, and if this method is used improperly, it can lead to a decrease in the favorability of the educational environment. Among the potentially harmful effects of gamification can be identified distraction, social tension, external rewards.

Gamification involves the creation of systems in which a game goal, such as getting points or prizes, is achieved by studying or working out the necessary material. This technique allows you to combine the students' goal (points) and the teacher's goal (mastering the material). However, if there were shortcomings in the course development, students can find a simplified way to their goal, which excludes learning. Thus, the attention of students can be diverted to finding a gap in the system that will allow them to succeed without exerting effort.

Group video games usually include a training mode for each individual player, which allows you to learn the rules and features of the gameplay in an environment where mistakes will not spoil the result of the team. This gives players the freedom to make mistakes, which is so important, as we described earlier. While video games have provided for the features of social dynamics and have formed their structure taking into account these features, the organization of game exercises in the classroom often ignores them. Group exercises can be an effective pedagogical tool that encourages learning and teamwork. At the same time, they create difficulties, as in the case when the whole team receives one assessment, regardless of what contribution each of its participants made, in particular. In such situations, gamification can create a tense atmosphere and hinder learning.

Despite the fact that the use of gamification technology is not a mandatory method for learning English, in recent years many online resources and applications based on this technique have been created. Below is a list with a brief description of some of these tools. Although there are a huge number of applications that can be used in the process of gamification, it is the services presented below that we can use specifically for teaching and learning a foreign language.

#### Kahoot

Choosing from a variety of new and unknown to most teachers services for game training, it is worth noting the Kahoot program! This is a popular e-learning tool that can be easily used for a variety of tasks, increasing student engagement and metacognitive support in the classroom, while requiring a minimum of the participation of the teacher himself.

The effect of using new technologies will depend on the degree and frequency of their application in the educational process. Using Kahoot helps to maintain students' meta-awareness by providing immediate feedback. Kahoot also offers the opportunity not only to evaluate students'

conceptual understandings, but also to support the formation of new knowledge and understanding by further explanation during or after the game. In general, it is noted that the use of Kahoot is a positive experience that fills classes at the university with activity and focus and provides an opportunity for all students, not just extra-vert students, to participate and contribute to the learning environment.

#### Duolingo

A language learning platform built on improving learning progress by reaching new levels. The program works on iOS and Android devices and also has a WEB version. It covers the areas of speaking, listening, grammar and develops the vocabulary necessary for teaching a foreign language, and the content of tasks is always presented in the form of whole sentences. The user can choose from a variety of languages, including English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German and French. Feedback occurs instantly, and the student can easily track their progress. Teachers can use the app as part of their daily homework. This motivates student work along with communication and collaboration.

#### Routine wars

One aspect of gamification is that, while helping to increase motivation, it also increases the level of competition between participants in a particular gaming event. But this is not a competition that will end in discord, this is a healthy competition, the purpose of which is to attract people to achieve a certain goal. This type of competition is presented through the game "ChoreWars", which is often used to motivate employees or children helping to clean the house.

Summing up, it can be stated that the use of gamification in teaching a foreign language has a positive effect on the learning experience. Gamification helps foreign language learners in many cases. The student moves from an introverted manner of behavior to a more motivated one based on positive feedback and the game elements used. Gamification promotes learning to write, read and speak, and also gives students an incentive to start communicating and interacting with others.

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