

GAMIFICATION AS A TOOL TO MOTIVATE EFL LEARNERS

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In the modern education system, the activity of the student, independent thinking and high motivation in the educational process are among the most important pedagogical criteria. In particular, if students do not develop sufficient motivation in the process of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), the effectiveness of language acquisition decreases significantly. Therefore, the need to use innovative methods and approaches in the educational process is currently increasing. Among them, one of the methods that has become widespread and has yielded practical results in recent years is gamification. Gamification is a modern pedagogical technology that serves to increase students' interest in learning by adapting game elements to the educational process. This approach is based on the psychology of personal motivation, theories of cognitive development and socio-pedagogical principles. The main essence of gamification is to involve students in active learning not through compulsory learning, but through internal motivation. Mechanisms such as game elements, competition, scoring, ratings, rewards, and leveling up make the learning process interesting and interactive. As a result, students do not get bored in the process of learning English, but rather strive to actively participate.

Gamification is especially effective in English language education. Because language learning requires continuous practice and active communication. There is a decrease in interest in learning grammar among students, and increasing vocabulary is often achieved through boring exercises. Gamification enlivens this process and turns the language learning process into an interesting adventure or interactive training. For example, platforms such as Quizizz, Kahoot, Duolingo, Classcraft, Mentimeter, Wordwall are widely used in the education system and provide high efficiency in English lessons.[1]

Gamification also serves to teach students based on a competency-based approach. Gamified tasks develop not only knowledge, but also practical skills and communicative competencies of students. In this case, the student learns to use the language in real situations, develops independent thinking, and teamwork skills. At the same time, gamification also supports a differentiated form of education: each student can achieve results at his own pace, based on his own abilities.

The relevance of this topic is that modern youth is growing up closely connected with the digital world. For representatives of the □digital generation□, motivation and interactivity play an important role in the learning process. Therefore, gamification is one of the promising directions for the modernization of EFL education, in combination with the digital transformation of education. The introduction of gamification into English lessons activates the individual abilities of students, teaches them to think creatively, and encourages them to work on themselves.

Analyzing the mechanism of application of gamification in education, it is first necessary to consider its psychological and pedagogical foundations. Uzbek pedagogical scientists such as D. Obidov and N. Azizkhojyeva emphasize that the main goal of innovative educational technologies is to put the student at the center of education. From this point of view, gamification stands out as a method that, in comparison with the traditional teaching approach, brings students into an active state and consciously involves them in the learning process.[2]

According to the Self-Determination Theory, put forward by the well-known motivation theorists E. Deci and R. Ryan, a person's intrinsic motivation is based on three factors:

Autonomy (independence)

Competence (feeling capable)

Relationship (need for communication with others)

Gamification stimulates these three factors. For example, students complete assignments based on independent thinking (autonomy), receive points or badges for their success in class (competence), and exchange ideas through group

discussion (connectedness).

Gamification is especially effective for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students, because in the process of learning English, many students face problems such as language barriers, poor vocabulary, and fear of speaking. Gamification overcomes these psychological barriers:

Reduces stress, increases personal confidence.

Stimulates speaking activity (especially in speaking and listening sections).

Strengthens lexical and grammatical knowledge.

Helps in collaborative teaching.[3]

For example, using gamification platforms such as Kahoot, Quizizz, Wordwall, Duolingo, Classcraft in English lessons increases student active participation. In addition, gamification elements can be added to traditional classroom methods: rating systems, giving □achievement badges□ for lessons, organizing competition between groups, and assessing assignments based on projects.

Analysis of the benefits of gamification

Analysis shows that gamification not only increases motivation, but also develops students' communicative competence. According to the results of the study:

Students' activity in participating in the lesson increases by 35 □ 50%;

Lexical knowledge is mastered by 40%;

The level of participation in speech exercises increases significantly (up to 70%);

Students are more inclined to think creatively and solve problem situations.

Along with the advantages of gamification, there are also some problematic aspects:

Lack of technical capabilities - most schools and colleges do not have access to the Internet and computers for all students.

Time constraints - planning and conducting a gamified lesson takes more time.

Teacher qualifications - not all teachers can freely use information technologies.

Problems with the assessment system - some students should be motivated not to collect points or badges, but to gain real knowledge.

Gamification creates a psychologically favorable environment for language learning.

It is an effective motivational strategy for EFL students.

It increases the quality of education, encourages students to be active.

If properly organized, it enhances creative thinking and competitiveness.[4]

Gamification is one of the most effective innovative technologies for increasing motivation in English language teaching. It strengthens the internal need of students to learn a foreign language, makes the educational process interesting, effective and meaningful. Therefore, gamification is not only of didactic importance, but also requires scientific research as one of the important areas of modern pedagogy.

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