GAMIFICATION-BASED ENGLISH TEACHING: WAYS TO INCREASE STUDENT MOTIVATION

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Abstract. *This article discusses the pedagogical possibilities of teaching English based on gamification in increasing student motivation. Methods for effective use of gamification elements, including scoring, ratings, levels, awards, tasks and competitions in the educational process are analyzed. The impact of game mechanisms on students' interest in the lesson, active participation, independent work and desire to communicate in English is also considered. The article substantiates the possibilities of increasing the effectiveness of the lesson by combining gamification with communicative exercises, interactive tasks and digital educational tools. The results of the study show that the targeted use of gamification creates a positive educational environment in learning English.*

Keywords: *gamification, English, student motivation, interactive education, game technologies, digital education, communicative competence.*

Today, in the process of effective English teaching, the formation of students' interest in the lesson and internal motivation is one of the important pedagogical tasks. In traditional lessons, the teacher's focus on explaining new grammatical rules,

memorizing vocabulary and completing written exercises can lead to passivity in some students. In particular, the regular repetition of the same type of tasks weakens students' attention. Therefore, gamification, one of the modern pedagogical approaches, is gaining importance as a means of organizing English lessons in an interesting, active and goal-oriented way.

Gamification is not a method of turning the educational process into a complete game, but a method of using game mechanisms for educational purposes. It uses elements such as points, levels, ratings, badges, awards, competitions, tasks, time limits and gradual development. In an English lesson, such elements can turn a student from a simple task performer into an active participant.

One of the main advantages of gamification is the formation of a clear goal that can be achieved by students. For example, a teacher can announce at the beginning of the lesson: “A student who scores 50 points at the end of today’s lesson will receive the ‘Language Explorer’ level.” In this case, the student can see the result of his/her activity in advance. 5 points can be given for each correct answer, 10 points for an oral statement using a new word, and 5 points for active participation in the group. As a result, the student not only demonstrates his/her knowledge, but also strives to advance to the next level. For example, the “Vocabulary Challenge” game can be used to study the topic “Food and Drinks”. The teacher places 20 food names on the board. Students are divided into three groups. In the first stage, they match the pictures with their English names. In the second stage, they make sentences from the given words. In the third stage, they try to explain the word their partner said without translation. A different number of points is awarded for each stage. For example, correct matching — 1 point, grammatically correct sentence — 2 points, explanation of the word in English — 3 points. Thus, vocabulary development turns from a simple memorization process into an active communicative exercise. Gamification can also be effectively used in teaching grammar topics. For example, to reinforce the topic “Present Simple”, you can organize a “Grammar Detective” task. The teacher displays 10 sentences with grammatical errors on the screen or on handouts.

Students, as “detectives”, find errors and correct them. 2 points are awarded for each identified error, and an additional 3 points are awarded for explaining the reason for the error in English. For example, if a student explains the error in the sentence “She goes to school every day” by using “goes” instead of “go”, they receive an additional point. This approach encourages the student to understand the essence of the grammatical rule, not just to find the answer. Another important element of gamification is the level system. In order for students to gradually develop their knowledge and skills, conditional levels such as “Beginner”, “Explorer”, “Communicator”, “Language Master” can be introduced. Specific tasks are set to achieve each level. For example, to reach the “Explorer” level, a student must know 30 new words, complete 5 grammatical tasks and be able to compose a short dialogue in English. This system allows the student to track his progress.

However, caution is required when using the rating system. While the rating can increase the spirit of competition in some students, it can lead to a decrease in self-confidence in others. Therefore, rather than a rating aimed only at identifying the “best student”, a system that encourages personal development is more appropriate. For example, a student’s current result is compared with his previous result. If he scored 40 points in the previous lesson and 55 points in the next lesson, he is encouraged with the “Personal Progress” sign. This method reduces excessive competition between students and focuses on individual development. The use of role-playing gamification tasks can also be highly effective in developing English speaking skills. For example, in the “Airport Mission” game, students are given the roles of a passenger, airport employee, tourist or airline representative. They complete the task by conducting a conversation in English. “Passenger” asks about the ticket, “Airport Officer” provides information about the route, and “Tourist” tries to find the right place. At the end of the game, students are assessed for grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and communication activity.

Combining gamification with digital technologies also expands the possibilities of modern English lessons. Through interactive tests, electronic quizzes,

digital cards, and team online tasks, students can complete a large number of exercises in a short time. For example, a teacher creates a digital quiz with 10 questions to master new words. Students who answer the questions quickly and correctly receive a high score. In this, not only speed itself, but also the accuracy of knowledge should be taken into account.

When developing gamification tasks, it is important to take into account the age characteristics, language level, and psychological needs of students. While flashcards, pictures, short competitions, and action games are effective for elementary students, problem situations, role-playing games, strategic tasks, and team projects can be more engaging for senior students.

For example, the gamification project “Plan a Journey” can be used to teach the topic “Travel” in grade 7. Each group is given a conditional budget. Students choose a travel destination in English, determine a means of transportation, and choose a hotel and attractions. They must explain each decision in English. At the end, the groups present their projects. The best project is evaluated not only on aesthetic grounds, but also on the criteria of correct use of language, creativity, logical reasoning, and teamwork.

To enhance the impact of gamification on motivation, rewards do not have to be material. Symbolic badges such as “Best Speaker”, “Creative Thinker”, “Vocabulary Star”, “Team Player” can motivate the student. It is important that the reward is associated with a specific positive action of the student. Then the student will understand why he is being encouraged.

At the same time, excessive use of gamification is also inappropriate. If each task is associated with points or a reward, the student may strive for the reward rather than the acquisition of knowledge itself. Therefore, the teacher should combine gamification elements with the goal of the lesson, maintaining a balance between play and education. Gamification should not be considered the goal of the lesson, but rather a pedagogical tool that serves to achieve this goal.

In general, gamification creates an effective opportunity to increase motivation in teaching English, increase student activity in the lesson, develop communicative skills and encourage independent work. When its elements such as points, levels, tasks, competitions, roles, rewards, and digital interactivity are properly selected, the learning process becomes meaningful and interesting.

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