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**GAMIFICATION AS AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO LEARN FOREIGN
LANGUAGES**

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Learning English is currently a pressing issue due to the growing number of activities in which it is used. Nonetheless, mastering language skills continues to be a demanding process for a vast number of learners. Concurrently, there is a notable surge in societal engagement and interest across various games. This clearly confirms the statement of A.V. Lunacharsky: "Play is, to a large extent, the basis of all human culture." [4] Scientists have found that people absorb information more easily when it is presented in a game format. This raises the question: Is it possible to combine learning English and gameplay? [7]

Gamification of various everyday tasks is currently gaining popularity. Scientists believe that gamification is an effective tool for increasing engagement (by 30-50%) and motivation, especially in educational and corporate settings. However, they also believe that gamification of content can have negative consequences.

The purpose of this article is to explore the possibilities of gamification and justify the effectiveness of game-based foreign language learning.

In our work, we set the following objectives:

Theoretical: to define the term "gamification", classify its types, and analyze the key advantages and disadvantages of this method, identify the main challenges in learning English and propose effective solutions.

Practical: to demonstrate our own example of integrating game mechanics into the English language teaching process.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the fact that, based on the analysis of the possibilities of gamification, a creative approach to the application of this method in English language classes at KuzSTU was proposed.

The theoretical significance of this study lies in the substantiation of the possibility of making changes to the content of work programs, applying the principles of a student-centered approach to the organization of foreign language teaching in a non-linguistic university.

The practical significance of the study opens up opportunities to take a creative approach to applying the principles of collaborative pedagogy to enhance students' motivation.

The study uses the **method** of analyzing scientific literature and media sources on the stated topic to update the novelty of the research.

To reach the theoretical objective of the study, we will consider the basic concepts and definitions based on the analysis of authoritative sources.

Gamification is the application of techniques and approaches typical of various computer games to application software and websites to attract users, increase their engagement and motivation. [1]

In other words, gamification is a way to increase learner motivation and engagement in a process through the use of various techniques and approaches typical of games.

In scientific and pedagogical literature, a distinction is made between heavy gamification and light gamification.

Heavy gamification is characterized by the learner's complete immersion in the game environment and the presence of clear time constraints. Participants assume a role, a task, manipulate game resources, and follow a predetermined game scenario. [2,9]

Light gamification of the learning process is characterized by its ease of implementation and requires less time and money. Light gamification promotes immersion in the learning process and eliminates physical and time constraints; that is, the learning process is not transformed into a game, but is supplemented with various game elements. Classes will be conducted with the addition of game mechanics and elements: competitions, projects, team exercises, business games, and quests and quizzes. [2,9]

Experts highlight the following advantages of gamification:

Transforming boring tasks into a game increases user engagement and motivates them to put in more effort. This improves task completion and increases student engagement, preventing English language learning from becoming a chore.

Gamification elements promote better retention of information by making the learning process engaging rather than forced.

Learners immediately see the results of their actions, which increases their motivation and desire to continue learning, and promotes engagement.

Gamification allows for mistakes, allowing them to be corrected without negative emotions. This is especially important in learning, as students often abandon English learning due to failures and obstacles.

Gamification of learning platforms allows for the creation of flexible learning systems with a personalized approach. For example, rewards, difficulty levels, leaderboards, and corporate competitions can be incorporated, significantly increasing student engagement and satisfaction. [8]

It is also possible to consider students' personal preferences and adapt tasks to their level, interests, and goals. This makes the process not only more effective but also more enjoyable.

To enhance the effectiveness of game-based foreign language learning, it is recommended to use visualization and multimedia elements. Visual materials facilitate associations, making learning more sustainable. For example, memorization of new words in the context of images and videos significantly outperforms traditional methods thanks to mnemonic strategies. [6]

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that the game-based learning format is understandable to both children and adults — it does not require special skills and is easily integrated into everyday life.

However, despite a number of advantages, gamification also has some drawbacks:

If game mechanics are monotonous or too simple, users quickly lose interest. This can be avoided by making the game mechanics varied and complex, or by adding more visual effects to attract learners' attention.

Effective gamification requires resources: script development, design, and technical implementation. This problem can be solved by attracting external funding, which, however, is not an easy task.

There is a risk that participants will focus exclusively on earning points, ignoring the actual development of skills. Shifting the emphasis to the practical application of skills can reduce this negative effect, but it is not a complete solution.

Incorrectly configured leaderboards can destroy team spirit, promoting excessive competition instead of cooperation. While competition can serve as an incentive, in this case it is a destructive factor, reducing the effectiveness of learning. To minimize competition among learners, shift the focus from individual excellence to shared success and diversity of contribution.

Let's consider the current challenges of English language learning, combined with practical solutions to these problems: [3]

The psychological barrier arising from understanding the scale of learning tasks often provokes stress and reduces motivation to learn. Gamification addresses this issue: thanks to its non-invasive and engaging nature, games change the perception of difficulties, turning learning into an intuitive and engaging process [5].

Lack of motivation and the absence of a clearly defined program often lead to premature termination of learning. Gamification addresses this issue by introducing competitive mechanics, reward systems, and elements of social interaction. Teamwork and personal achievements transform a routine process into a highly engaged learning environment.

The lack of clear goal setting confuses learners and slows progress. Gamification addresses this issue through a structured system of levels: from basic tasks to complex scenarios. The presence of specific missions and an achievement system at each stage visualizes progress, ensuring that content is adaptable to the user's current level.

A lack of practical application leads to the loss of acquired knowledge and reduced learning effectiveness. Regular application of skills in real-world situations is the key to their reinforcement. Gamification compensates for the lack of a language environment through interactive formats ensuring deep immersion and the development of communicative skills.

An incorrect approach to learning often boils down to the monotonous memorization of rules and vocabulary without taking into account the individual characteristics and preferences of the student. Of course, the approach to learning is key. The right strategy helps overcome other obstacles.

To achieve the practical goal set at the beginning of the article we'll describe a project we've completed.

The curriculum for the foreign language course developed for the students of KuzSTU, the major 09.03.03 – Applied Computer Science. Programming and Development of Intelligent Information Systems includes the study of topics “My specialty. Potential areas of activity”.

We were given an assignment to develop an interactive quiz aimed at learning phraseological units in business English. Here are some examples:

Each assignment began with a description of the phraseological unit, for example:

A person who attracts key clients or huge profits to a company.

The description was accompanied by an image metaphorically expressing the essence of the phraseological unit. This not only increased student engagement but also engaged associative thinking for improved memorization.

After reading the description, students were asked to choose one of four options:

Bean counter;

Dead wood;

Paper pusher;

Rainmaker.

Immediately after choosing, the correct answer was highlighted, allowing for prompt knowledge correction.

After the answer was recorded, a slide was presented with a detailed description of all incorrect answer options:

Bean counter - A derogatory term for an accountant or financial controller;

Dead wood - Useless employees who bring no benefit to the company;

Paper pusher - A bureaucrat whose work is devoid of creativity and real meaning;

Rainmaker - A person who brings in huge amounts of money for a company, closes incredible deals, or attracts top clients.

Let's give another example.

Another slide contains a sentence:

How else can you say that a person stays late at work?

As in the previous question, four phraseological units are given:

Burn the midnight oil;

Watch the clock;

Pass the buck;

Keep one's head above water.

The next slide provides a description of phraseological units:

Burn the midnight oil - Staying up late working.

Watch the clock - Counting down the minutes until the end of the working day.

Pass the buck - Shift responsibility.

Keep one's head above water - Barely making ends meet.

Let's turn to one more slide.

As in the previous examples, students are first given a sentence:

Work hard and continuously.

Students are again asked to choose one of four answer options:

Cut corners;

Call it a day;

Keep your nose to the grindstone;

Ride someone's coattails.

The next slide provides explanations for these phraseological units:

Cut corners - To do a bad job to save time or money.

Keep your nose to the grindstone - To work hard and continuously at something boring or difficult.

Call it a day - A strong-willed decision to wrap things up and finish work for today

Ride someone's coattails - Using other people's success and influence for your own advancement.

There were more than ten such questions, and each question contained unique phraseological units, which sparked interest in new phraseological units and allowed students to expand their vocabulary.

By implementing a point system and the ability to receive a grade based on the quiz's results, we were able to create healthy competition and maintain students' concentration throughout the lesson.

Thus, using this format effectively introduced students to a large amount of complex vocabulary, avoiding monotonous memorization and maintaining a high level of academic motivation.

In conclusion, it's worth emphasizing that gamification of foreign language learning is a promising and innovative method capable of quickly achieving significant results by increasing motivation and engagement of KuzSTU students. However, as with any method, success depends on a person's sincere desire and intrinsic motivation to learn. Despite its growing popularity, this approach still requires further research and refinement. Nevertheless, it's safe to say that gamified learning is a modern, accessible, and engaging way to master foreign languages, opening new horizons for learners of all ages.

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