

The Modern Principles of Gamification in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract: In this article the didactic phenomenon of gamification as a universal tool for optimizing the educational process among pupils of primary school and any other actors of the educational process is substantiated. The aim of the article is to analyze the views of present-day scholars on the leading aspects of gamification of the educational linguodidactics process, to determine the structural, methodological and psychological features of the elements of game at the lessons of English as a foreign language in primary school and to illustrate these features with fragments of the authorial experience.

Research methods are the following: theoretical analysis and generalization of scientific literature; qualitative methods of finding out the essence, features and benefits of gamification; methods of modeling and representation of ways to use elements of a game at English lessons.

The epistemological and pragmatic context of the article is determined by the digital gamified environment of the child's life and activity, which has acquired global dimensions and has affected onto all spheres of life, including education. The main ideas of the article that were proved and discussed are: a) primary school age is the most sensitive for the learning of foreign language directly in the game; b) gamification occupies one of the leading places in increasing a motivation and involvement pupils for the high level educational activity; c) with the appropriate organization and methodological support of gamified classes, it is possible to achieve effective synergy of game and innovative forms of work; d) it is possible to formulate at least 5 basic principles of gamification (actually game or those that are naturally realized during the didactic game); e) gamification is a universal methodological tool for achieving various didactic goals at any stage of a lesson.

The international significance of this article is determined by: a) the entry of gadgets, virtual and gaming reality in all areas of a human cognitive activity; b) the spread of English as the first international language in the world; c) the need for inventory, definition of functions and efficiency of a gamified educational space.

Keywords: *game situation, gamified reality, educational and game experience, motivation, the optimization of educational process, naturalness, self-efficacy.*

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1. Introduction

A foreign language is an important means of communication and cognition of enviroing world in a globalized society. It occupies a special place owing to the universality of social cognitive and communicative functions. It is very important to make the perspective and natural foundation in the initial studying of a foreign language. This incites to pay attention onto postmodernism and its cultural and educational implications, which involve using game as a universal tool for cognition, learning and self-expression.

In the 2000s, it is become traditional the using of new technologies at foreign language lessons thanks to the invention of tablet computers and smartphones, the speed development of applications for them, the means of information and communications technology (ICT). The implementation of online games and smart technologies into the traditional lesson is nominated as gamified activity, and the newly created educational conditions are nominated as gamified reality (Kim, 2000; Veljkovic, 2017). M. Veljkovic identifies and analyzes the most optimal free game programs and smart applications and proves their positive impact on increasing motivation, forming of the new linguistic structures, ease of understanding, if necessary for ease and speed of translation, and the main one is forming a positive attitude to the subject matter.

The pupils of elementary and middle grades are the most sensitive to game forms, but the game as a way of relating to the world is characteristic to the human postmodern consciousness of any age (Nerubasska & Maksymchuk, 2020; Nerubasska et al., 2020; Onishchuk et al., 2020). This is especially important in sphere of game and performative learning of English, which is increasingly strengthening its trends in the world. We don't see any reasons to stop this process. Therefore, the problem of intensive studying of English and searching new effective methods is currently an urgent issue.

A game is always a certain interaction between "human - human" or "human - environment" with a pragmatic or hedonistic goal, which nowadays has acquired a trendy, mass and natural character. On the other hand, the spread of games, especially at the beginning of education, as well as the search for encouraging educational methods and techniques have led to the emergence of the gamification concept and phenomenon. This is a group of innovative technologies for organizing game situations within the learning environment (Kapp, 2018). Such situations are almost always focused on the positive, and maximum naturally actualize the multi-channel

perception of information, easily overcome demotivation. In this regard S. Kapsargina and J. Olentsova note: the competent and rational use of gamification methods in the educational process can have a powerful effect on stimulating educational achievements and motivation of pupils and students, provide feedback in the studying process (2019).

The abovementioned positive features and the prospects of gamification determine the **topicality** of this article, the **purpose** of which is threefold: to consider the views of modern scholars on gamification in general and its linguodidactics potential, to identify key principles and features of gamified educational process and to illustrate game fragments of the author's experience through learning English as foreign language by the pupils of elementary school.

The **methodology** of our article is consisted of analytical (theoretical analysis and generalization of the main directions of gamification research in the scientific and methodological literature); qualitative methods (clarification, generalization and formulation of principles, key features and benefits of gamification; forecasting its effectiveness), method of modeling and representation of concrete game situations for visual demonstration.

Scientists have already studied some aspects of gamification: motivational-managerial, optimizing, modeling etc. For example, J. Hamari, J. Koivisto and T. Pakkanen proved the high organizational potential of gamification. In this case the time factor is not noticed, but the result increases. Researchers conducted a psychometric analysis of gamification and concluded that its participants are in a synergistic environment, balance of the goals awareness, actions and feedback (Hamari et al., 2014). Herein, self-control transforms into the unconscious automatic mode, and sense of time is lost. Gamification is an effective tool for control of human behavior without coercion, using positive incentives, sports principles (acmeology, point scoring, competitiveness).

The practical experience to use gamification in teaching of the most complex languages of the world (on the example of Polish) has proved the effectiveness and universality of the game approach. Thus, E. Danowska-Florczyk and P. Mostowski (2012) in teaching Polish as a foreign language with the use of online gaming platforms are able to avoid the typical difficulties that arise in traditional teaching (Herger, 2017). The experiment showed an increase of educational competition, the level of motivation, inspiration, group and individual activity (Danowska-Florczyk & Mostowski, 2012). As a result, gamification allows to optimize the teaching of Slavic languages as one of the most difficult ones without increasing a didactic pressure to a pupil.

Using Henry's game theory as part of an experiment in learning French as a foreign language, the researchers were able to develop a four-dimensional analytical model of teaching, self-study, and self-diagnosis of French by the Belgian high school pupils. The program had a character of the situational game inclusions within the project training. It turned out that pupils can independently support course of the educational process, if it has character of a game (Cruaud, 2018).

Similar experiments were conducted in the teaching of other European languages. Thus, the analysis of data from the quasi-experimental study of Spanish as a foreign language by the primary school pupils showed significant dynamics of academic self-efficacy upon condition gamification using in the form of daily use by the language didactic mobile applications (Rachels & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2018). The synergy of smart technologies and game technologies promotes self-regulation of English-speaking pupils when they learn Spanish.

As we can see, most researchers delve into a particular aspect of game learning. However, the scientific discourse lacks holistic research, designed for the practical use of English by a teacher in high school. English as a foreign language is being studied all over the world, and the dynamics of its study by the latest means is growing. This determines the international relevance of the article.

2. The concept, essence and principles of gamification

The basis for mastering a new kind of activity is a personal motivation. It is a resource for acquiring and implementing of new competencies in life. In teaching a foreign language, a teacher constantly asks him/herself a methodical question: "What is interesting for pupils?"; "How to activate the cognitive potential of a pupil or student?". It is a natural answer on these questions: the most interesting thing for children and young people is a game that is manipulation and transformation of elements of environment according established or own rules. Educational methods and technologies that use these natural mechanisms of a human psyche are generally called "gamification", which in a broad sense includes the use of certain elements of a game in non-game practices (educational, psychological, social, etc.).

In a narrow sense, gamification in studying is using of the game rules (Tekinbas & Zimmerman, 2003) from the computer and gadget online games, which are highly valued in children's environment and motivate pupils to achieve real learning goals in the study of a concrete subject.

The most relevant and mostly positive features of gamification in the educational process are the following:

- A positive background, fun.
- An instant feedback.
- The complicating and increasing number of the game tasks.
- A rapid development of game skills, tactics, mastery.
- The availability of clear indicators of progress (balls, points, presence of a leader, etc.).
- Strengthening and development of social ties.
- The dynamic moderation, and management of the process participants.

The modern education system corresponds to technological progress. A distance education, personalization, gamification, interactive textbooks, learning through video games are five educational trends reported by “Forbes” but four of ones belong to gamification (Levin, 2011).

Gamification is a way of influencing onto human behavior based on the use of game elements. Transforming experience by virtue of games, gamification overcomes social and psychological limitations, which allows the human potential release. In order to name process as gamified, it must contain 4 characteristics identified by Jane McGonigal (2011): clearly defined goals provide motivation to participate in a game; logical and consistent rules that fix limits and frameworks for achieving of goals; a stable feedback system that ensures achievement of goals but players follow the rules; voluntary consent to participate in game and follow the rules to achieve the goal.

Sebastian Deterding and colleagues consider four concepts, and game is its core idea: gamification, serious games, entertainment and game design (2011). The differences between them lie in two dimensions:

A. Games/entertainments (gaming/playing) indicate a direction and regulation of activity;

B. Whole game/partial game (whole/partial) points to the degree integration of game elements into a process.

In addition, we can classify the gamification manifestations on:

- Serious games that have a specific goal, aimed at solving real life situations.

- Toys are games that do not have clear rules and are not aimed at a specific result or goal; they are focused only on the positive emotions experiencing or casual research.

- Playful design also does not have a specific purpose, which is supported by the rules; it is used to make the process more humane, enjoyable and easy to understand.

At the core of gamification lies the idea of using a game approach to make teaching and learning more interesting. Many teachers saw a potential of gamification in complementing and expanding the traditional learning opportunities. But if we deal with this phenomenon seriously, we can find such unique learning opportunities as involvement into the learning process, high motivation, autonomy and a personal sense content (Kelberer 2014, p. 144). Thus, gamification is not the creation of a full-fledged game, but only the use of certain elements. This creates more compliance with the desired goals. In other words, due to a game boring task become interesting, desirable, and difficult become simple.

Gamification is a way of influencing on pupils. The real value of gamification is that game principle contributes to creation of a meaningful learning experience. Russian researches investigated the specifics and features of a game and game activity in the process of education and upbringing. They concluded: "A game technology that is used in the educational process, we recognize extremely effective, universal, easily reproducible, suitable for any academic discipline and solves almost all developmental and educational tasks" (Igna, 2011, p. 186).

Game thinking is probably the most important element of gamification; it gives precisely special meaning to simple actions, adding elements such as competition, collaboration, research, etc. The purpose of any game is to create a system in which players have some abstract task that involves testing and the emergence of difficulties in its execution. The key point of gamification is to involve the participant, that are to capture their attention in the process of educational game, but a game technology in pedagogical practice means the creation of certain conditions for achieving tasks, modeling a special game reality with its internal laws. The game has certain rules, and has a high interactivity and causes a positive emotional reaction. The mechanism of a game is to earn points, bonuses, advance to the next level and it is an important foundation of the whole gamification process.

Thus, it should be noted the most valuable potential of a game learning helps for pupils to see a task, topic or model in context as part of a system. Unlike memorization, rote memorization, and questionnaires, which are often criticized for their focus onto individual facts, games force pupils to see objects and phenomena in their relationships. Any task becomes useful because it is part of a larger multisystem. But game is only one way to

motivate, it is not a panacea. Gamification will not work without a quality educational content.

In order to introduce gamification into a lesson, first of all, we need a fascinating story, plot, and quest. To do this, a teacher needs to define the goal, distribute roles among pupils, as well as invent hardship and rules of the game world (a gamified reality). To achieve the optimal result, we should gradually increase the complexity of tests in the study process, to create less competition and more teamwork. Use the following game elements: tasks, chances, competitions, cooperation, feedback, the accumulation of resources, rewards, agreements, moves, the condition of victory.

Therefore, we have a problem, the school educational space lags behind the real children's world, the gap between reality and learning. School creates an artificial environment that contradicts to children's interests and limits their perception and development of the world around them. In fact, a teacher and a pupil speak different languages. That is why, the non-application of modern educational technologies complicates and deprives pupils' interest to the educational process.

Thus, we can talk about gamification as a new way of the studying organization, which has a huge pedagogical potential. Based on a set of the literature sources and scientific articles, it should be noted that gamification in the educational process is the specially created conditions thanks to the game elements that immerse pupils into the unreal game world, but all created conditions are aimed at achieving real goals and tasks. Inherent mechanisms for gamification allow us to launch the same higher level of activity, which "is the primary source of the child's activity, which has a creative, transformative nature" (Dobychina, 2013, p. 155). Herein, person is stimulated to study more active without exit from reality.

3. The using of games at the lessons of English in primary school

In order to implement game forms at the lessons of English in primary school, it is important to remember the psychological and pedagogical characteristics of first-level pupils. We also need to pay attention to all the problems that may be encountered during the introduction of a game. These problems should be clearly written in a lesson plan, indicating possible solutions.

The more visual aids, various associative subjects, and multimedia are used at a lesson, the faster and more efficiently elementary pupils will be able to memorize and understand new material. The learning process will go faster, and there will be also variety during a lesson.

There is a set of psychological techniques to solve abovementioned problems, which is based on the general principles of psychodiagnostics, but the last one has own **specifics**:

- The principle of individual approach. This principle is realized in case of a certain standardization of methods it is provided some variability of a language and a game diagnostic material, taking into account the age of a child.

- The principle of the diagnosis and correction unity. It allows for us to identify current problems of a child, and as well as to make prognostic conclusions.

- The principle of the activity approach. This principle means the maximum possible activity of a child during the diagnostic talking.

To achieve these principles in the process of examination the environment of educational and game activities should be created (Derkach, 1991, p. 127).

The preparatory stage, which precedes the implementation of the game teaching methods, requires a diagnostic research of pupils in a class. This research consists of **three stages**:

1. The first stage is a set of activities aimed at identifying the pupils with language problems in learning English.

2. The second stage is an individual psychological and speech therapy examination aimed at identifying language problems in teaching of English.

3. The third stage is analysis and statement of problem, as well as a forecast that allows us to build the correctional and developmental program.

Learning of a foreign language is not easy for all children. There are pupils who have difficulty in mastering pronunciation, intonation, structure of language patterns. This could cause dissatisfaction, uncertainty in his/her potentialities, weakening of interest in learning a foreign language. Interest is known as the driving force that provides high quality and strength to master all necessary skills and abilities. Therefore, the teacher's task is to find a way to increase pupils' interest to academic subject.

Numerous conditions influence onto the formation of motivation. The first is the level of novelty. Pupils with a sufficient level of language and speech competence lose interest in repetitive tasks. Concerning pupils with weak training, they prefer to perform already familiar tasks, as their

execution allows them to re-experience positive emotions, which has a beneficial effect on increasing the motivation level.

The next condition is the degree of complexity of a task, which is estimated to pupils on the basis of compliance with that task, which pupil has ability, means and time to do. The pupil's self-esteem has a great importance in this regard. The teacher's help allows transferring a difficult task to the category of easier, therefore to increase motivation for execution of this exercise.

Thus, it is important that a teacher does not stop to inspire confidence for pupils, providing them with support. Another condition for the motivation development is the availability of opportunities for pupils to show independence. Independent work emotionally colors the activities of pupils, thereby contributing to the development of their motivation. Great importance is also has the time given to prepare a task. In a short time, pupils get into a stressful situation and almost stop working. Finally, another condition is the influence on the formation of motivation by personal example and role behavior of a teacher (Bim, 2002).

The studying process, in contrast to life situations, cannot guide pupils through all possible, the real-life communication situations, so the speaking skills should be formed in the conditions of the educational communicative situations that model and simulate a real language communication.

Let us consider on example of the language cards that help to describe a person. The information contained in such cards is real and trains the topic of "Appearance", which is often used in everyday life, when describing yourself, your friend, mentioning about someone. On the basis of such cards and such a popular topic as appearance, we can develop fun interactive games to describe a particular person (pupil), guess a person by description, creation a cartoon description etc.

The goals of such lexical communicative games at different stages are:

- acquaintance of pupils with new words and their combinations;
- training of pupils to use vocabulary baggage in situations close to the natural environment;
- activation of pupils' speech activity;
- development of pupils' speech reaction.

There are direct correlations in the use of communication strategies between native and foreign languages, it can be assumed that consciously or unconsciously pupils will use them in their foreign language activities. A

teacher must be tolerant of this, with a full understanding of the importance of finding a way out of a difficult situation. There are also strategies that use speaking by foreign language.

Properly organized group/team work and communicative oriented construction of the educational process in primary grades will have a great importance for the success of speaking.

In primary school game activity is very popular as during primary school age a gradual change of leading activity, gradual transition from game to educational activity is made. Based on this, the game should be an important part of classroom and extracurricular activities. Game will be the means of the pupils' learning skills development. We can also start a lesson in the form of a game. Speaking of primary school, we note that at this age a child perceives new information in the game form. Therefore, it is advisable to conduct lessons with toys, imitating their voice. This is the beginning of gamification at a lesson.

We want to share the experience of using Bunchems constructor during a lesson. Its elements in appearance resemble a creative burdock. They are made of plastic, and the myriad of small hooks is on the entire surface. This is a velcro constructor, from which we can collect all sorts of shapes in limits of your imagination. The 1.5 cm diameter balls are attached to each other with a slight touch, they are held tightly, but ones can be easily detached if you wish to make a new shape.

This constructor can be used at English lessons to create different shapes for children. For example, we make letters out of balls when learning the alphabet, constantly pronouncing them. Sounds are much easier to learn with the use of this constructor, when we call sound, and boys need to collect this sound out of balls in pairs.

Through training vocabulary on the topic "Parts of the body", we also often do group work, where pupils collect the necessary part of a body, and at the end present it, describing the color, and name the part of the body. Then the parts of the body are constructed together, and a person emerges who can already be described as a whole.

A highly effective language didactic game is also the use of toys such as kinder-surprises. A toy and its yellow egg can be easily used in the learning process. Toys are perfect for modeling different situations, such as acquaintance situations. Composing dialogues becomes much more interesting when a child holds a toy from a kinder-surprise.

An yellow egg is also great for playing at English lessons in elementary school. We write a word on one part of a kinder, we attach a picture on the other. Pupils construct two corresponding halves.

We can hide different items in several kinder. A child takes a "surprise" from a package, looks at it, and others have to guess what is hidden in a kinder. Next questions could be asked. "Is it an animal?", "Is it big?", "Is it blue?". Whoever guesses gets the next kinder from a teacher.

A special type of linguodidactics game is a phonetic speech charging with using patters. The experience of teachers confirms that the use of patters in foreign language lessons today is an effective way to maintain interest in learning, increase activity and efficiency of pupils in the classroom, as they help to introduce an element of game and competition in the language learning. A set of patters allows to use them successfully at all degrees of education with different levels of the children language training.

Patter 1. Sound practice [k].

- How many cookies could a good cook cook if a good cook could cook cookies?

- A good cook could cook as many cookies as a good cook who could cook cookies.

Patter 2. Sound practice [b].

- Betty Botter bought some butter,

- But, she said, the butter's bitter.

- If I put it in my batter,

- It will make my batter bitter.

Patter 3. Sound practice [p].

- Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

- A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.

- If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,

- Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

This type of game techniques is aimed at practicing the correct pronunciation of some sounds and sound combinations of English. For younger pupils, such phonetic games are relevant, as they allow them to learn the articulatory nuances of the studied. For example, when we learn a new sound, a teacher names 6-7 words where this sound occurs. The task for children is to name a sound (for middle grades this game can be complicated: to guess a sound or sounds and write a transcription sign, for elder is to add a number of words with the same sound).

An effective game for studying and practicing transcription signs, which begins with the teacher's question: "How many sounds are depicted?". A teacher gives pictures of different objects for children, then names the

sound (we can also write it on a blackboard), and children have to show the pictures with that sound. In parallel with the main task, we can propose for children to write a sound and a word, thus starting to practice lexical material.

4. Discussions and conclusions

In summary, gamification is the application of the game elements and principles in non-game contexts. Gamification in studying is the use of game rules that serve as motivators for learning a foreign language and achieving real educational goals in the course of studying a subject. The process of including gamification methods in the educational process is very specific, and therefore it is necessary to take into account the main features of a method, as well as to adhere to its basic principles. Due to the provision of competent methodological support for gamified lessons, we can achieve high results in learning based on the use of the innovative technologies. This fact confirms the viewpoint by E. Foomani on the technological change in the educational conditions of modern language didactics: the combination of gaming and information and communication technologies has led to a paradigm shift in e-learning (Fleming, 2018; Foomani & Hedayati, 2016). The latter has become a total way of learning about the world, as it is part of the daily and continuous digital interaction of man with the world: artifacts, natural and social objects, other people, educational environment.

For all this the principles of gamification (actually game or those that are easily embodied during the didactic game) facilitate:

1. The principle of competition, achieving a situation of success in simulated reality.
2. Understanding and living learning and gaming experience.
3. High variability of game situations, language material for diagnosing of pupils.
4. Inseparability of diagnostics of language competences from their adjustment in the course of game.
5. The principle of inclusion, activity and activity.

In the article we confirmed the opinion of Kapsargina, S. A. and Olentsova J.A. that in the study of a foreign language especially effective game technologies are in non-core institutions, schools and universities of non-humanitarian specializations. Participants in the educational process in such institutions need additional motivation and harmonization of attitudes to isomorphic disciplines (natural, technical, mathematical, humanities). The

educational game is the catalyst for such harmonization (Kapsargina & Olentsova, 2019).

Game aims to attract students' attention to the educational process and to learn not only new material, but also to consolidate it. Game can be used at the stage of warming up, lead in, vocabulary or grammar presentation, and vocabulary or grammar practice.

This, of course, is not a complete list of games used of English lessons in primary school: it can be replenished indefinitely. Moreover, one game can carry lexical, grammatical and phonetic material at the same time. This conclusion correlates with opinions by S. Meske, C., T. Brockmann and others (2016) that gamification uses elements of the game, but the basis of the process remains unchanged. However, the boundaries between these concepts are rather theoretical, while in practice they can be successfully combined (Meske et al., 2016).

Game can be planned or it can be improvised. It can be wedged in at any stage of a lesson or permeate the entire lesson. And for this it is not necessary to invent complex costumes and other attributes, sometimes to immerse ourselves in an interesting game we only need modern toys that will make our lesson interesting, and we can easily increase pupils' motivation to learn a foreign language.

Game at English lesson has a multilevel purpose, such as educational, developmental and upbringing, namely: a) helps to explain the certain language features; b) develops learning abilities; c) forms an interest in the subject matter.

We have proved and illustrated the gamified English lessons in various didactic situations game technologies can be used at any stage of a lesson: a) when teaching new material; b) bringing the use of new material to automation in practice; c) consolidation of acquired knowledge; d) as a checkpoint for checking the assimilation of information. This confirms the opinion of scientists who conducted empirical studies of game potential at the lesson: gamification as a universal methodological tool can be used for various didactic purposes. Pre-test and post-test control within the experiment (Karatekin, 2017) testified that gamification, compared to other methods, does not increase the actual level of foreign language skills, but is a multimodal method of optimizing many aspects of the educational process, especially motivation, positive atmosphere, nature educational activities; changes in the attitude to the subject, team, teacher, pupil to oneself.

The main conclusion of the article is as follows: the biggest obstacle in children's learning a foreign language is weak motivation, when the teacher is in constant search of activating the cognitive interest of students.

Instead, the educational game is an ideal natural environment with an uncertain outcome and a "built-in right to make mistakes". It allows you to think outside, motivate and purposefully, act creatively and develop in the "spirit of the times".

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