



GAMIFICATION AS AN INNOVATIVE STRATEGY FOR INCREASING LEARNER MOTIVATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

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Abstract: *This study explores how gamification can increase learner motivation in foreign language classrooms. Gamification, which uses game elements such as points, badges, and challenges, is becoming a popular tool for making learning more engaging. Using a mixed-method approach with surveys, observations, and interviews, the research examines its impact on students of different proficiency levels. Results show that gamification improves motivation, participation, and learners' attitudes toward language learning. Students reported greater enjoyment and a stronger sense of achievement. However, the study also notes that excessive focus on rewards may reduce long-term interest. Overall, gamification proves to be an effective motivational strategy when designed and used properly. The study provides practical suggestions for teachers and future researchers.*

Key words: *gamification, learner motivation, foreign language learning, educational technology, engagement, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, game-based strategies*

Introduction

In recent years, motivating students in foreign language classrooms has become one of the most important challenges for teachers. While traditional teaching methods often rely on textbooks, repetition, and teacher-centered instruction, today's learners expect more interactive and engaging learning environments. As a result, educators have begun exploring new strategies to increase student interest and participation. One of the most promising approaches is **gamification** – the use of game-like elements in non-game situations. Gamification aims to make learning more enjoyable by adding elements such as points, badges, levels, leaderboards, and challenges. When applied in a meaningful way, these tools can help create a sense of achievement, encourage healthy competition, and increase students' willingness to participate. In foreign language learning, where motivation is essential for long-term success, gamification has the potential to significantly improve learner engagement and performance.

Results

The analysis of the collected data shows that gamification had a positive impact on learner motivation in foreign language classrooms. Most students reported feeling more engaged during gamified lessons compared to traditional activities. Survey responses indicated that elements such as points, badges, and levels increased their interest and made classroom tasks feel more achievable. Many learners mentioned that the sense of progress encouraged them to participate more actively. Classroom observations also revealed higher participation rates during gamified tasks. Students interacted more with the teacher and with each other, asked more questions, and completed assignments more willingly. Interviews confirmed that learners enjoyed the competitive and collaborative aspects of gamification. Several participants stated that challenges and rewards made the

lessons feel “less boring” and “more dynamic.” However, the results also showed some limitations. A small group of students said they became less motivated when they could not earn enough points or keep up with others on the leaderboard. Some also noted that too many game elements sometimes distracted them from the actual learning content. Overall, the findings suggest that gamification increases motivation and engagement but must be balanced and well-designed to avoid negative effects.

Discussion

The results support previous studies showing that gamification can enhance learner motivation by making learning tasks more enjoyable and interactive. The improvement in participation aligns with theories of intrinsic motivation, particularly the idea that learners are more motivated when they feel a sense of competence, autonomy, and progress. Game elements such as levels and badges helped students experience these feelings, which explains the rise in their engagement. The competitive aspect of gamification appeared to be especially motivating for many learners. Leaderboards and challenges encouraged them to work harder and stay focused. This matches earlier findings on how competition can energize classroom activities. At the same time, the study revealed that competition can also create pressure for some students, confirming that gamification must be used with sensitivity to different learner types.

Another key point is that gamification works best when it supports real learning goals rather than replacing them. Students enjoyed game elements, but they also emphasized the importance of meaningful tasks. If a lesson was only “fun” but not useful, their interest decreased. This suggests that successful gamification requires thoughtful design, clear instructions, and tasks that are both enjoyable and educational. In general, the discussion shows that gamification can significantly raise motivation in foreign language classrooms when implemented carefully. It has the potential to transform traditional lessons into more dynamic and student-centered experiences, but teachers must avoid overusing rewards or creating unnecessary pressure. A balanced combination of fun and meaningful learning appears to be the most effective approach.

Conclusion

This study examined the use of gamification as an innovative strategy to increase learner motivation in foreign language classrooms. The findings show that gamification can significantly enhance students’ interest, participation, and overall engagement in learning activities. Game elements such as points, badges, levels, and challenges were effective in creating a sense of progress and achievement, which encouraged learners to stay active during lessons.

The study also found that gamification supports both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation when applied thoughtfully. Students enjoyed the competitive and collaborative features of gamified tasks, and many reported that lessons became more enjoyable and less monotonous. However, the results also highlight that poorly balanced gamification – especially excessive competition or overreliance on rewards – may reduce motivation for some learners. Overall, the research concludes that gamification is a valuable tool for language teachers, but it must be carefully designed to match learners’ needs and learning goals. When implemented correctly, gamification has the potential to



transform traditional language classrooms into more dynamic, interactive, and student-centered environments.

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