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## ГЕЙМИФИКАЦИЯ КАК СПОСОБ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ В ВЫСШЕЙ ШКОЛЕ

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**Аннотация.** Проблема использования геймификации для обучения иностранному языку в высших образовательных учреждениях рассматривается на примере компьютерных обучающих игр. Цель статьи – представить возможности использования электронных игр в условиях неязыковой образовательной организации высшего образования. Геймификация обучения описывается авторами как технология, применение которой положительно влияет на развитие иноязычной коммуникативной компетенции обучающихся. В статье раскрываются достоинства и проблемы реализации рассматриваемого подхода к учебному процессу как со стороны преподавателя, так и со стороны обучающихся. Авторами описывается собственный опыт применения электронных обучающих игр на занятиях по английскому языку, демонстрируются преимущества применения отдельных игровых оболочек для формирования языковых навыков.

*Ключевые слова:* цифровизация образования, геймификация, компьютерные учебные игры, обучение иностранному языку

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## GAMIFICATION AS A WAY OF ORGANIZING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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**Abstract.** The article addresses the problem of gamification advent, illustrated by the example of computer educational games, for foreign language teaching in higher education institutions. The purpose of the article is to present the possibilities of applying computer games in a non-linguistic educational organization of higher education. The authors describe the gamification of teaching process as a technology that positively affects the development of foreign language communicative competence of students. The article reveals the advantages and problems of implementing the considered approach to educational process, both on the part of the teacher and on the part of the students. The authors describe their own experience of using computer games in English classes, demonstrate the advantages of some game templates for language skill training.

*Keywords:* digitalization of education, gamification, computer educational games, teaching a foreign language.

### *Introduction*

Innovative pedagogical methods and technologies such as web quest and gamification have become increasingly popular recently. Some scholars think that gamification is just a fashion trend, others consider it as an alternative to traditional learning. In our opin-

ion, gamification is a good example of a successful combination of pedagogical methods and modern technologies for educational purposes.

The game is traditionally regarded as a psychologically comfortable form of teaching activity that increases personal interest and involvement into the learning process. How-

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ever, due to the development of computer games and their growing number in recent decades, the concept of “game” has a slightly different meaning today. The changes taking place in the modern society are influencing the field of education. The digitalization of the society results in the digitalization of education, i. e. a wide and active implementation

of a large variety of informational technologies in the educational process. Considering the gamification as an innovative technology, we primarily mean the creation of educational digital games and their use in teaching.

*The purpose of the paper is to consider the gamification as an innovative technology, wherein transition to a competency-based*

learning model, an increased volume and importance of independent work, and at the same time some rethinking of the role and functions of the teacher are distinguished. The gaming technology is primarily meant as the creation of educational digital games and their use in teaching.

### *Materials and methods*

*The material* of the paper is the authors' experience of introducing gamification in foreign language classes in higher education institutions.

The authors of the article describe their experience of introducing gamification in foreign language classes in higher educational institutions. In the course of the work, they have conducted theoretical analysis of some scientific and pedagogical literature on the research topic [1–5], studied domestic and foreign experience of the gamification method in teaching foreign languages [1; 2; 5] at various levels of studying, interviewed colleagues on the expediency of applying gamification to solve various teaching tasks. Some educational games have been developed independently and tested in practice. *The results of the analysis* are described below.

### **Results**

The introduction of gamification into the educational process is to solve the controversies between traditional methods and means of teaching, on the one hand, and the new educational paradigm, on the other. The transition to the competency-based learning model, an increased volume and importance of self-study, and at the same time a redefining of the role and functions of teachers – these core areas of education reform are perfectly consistent with the use of gamification. Indeed, educational games involve,

first of all, the ability to cope with the tasks independently. In this case, the teacher's role is fundamentally changing; he turns into an instructor, whose main task is to formulate and, if necessary, explain the rules of the game clearly, as well as stimulate participants encouraging them to achieve their goals [6].

Today there is a number of definitions of the term “gamification” [5; 7; 8]. In the most general sense, gamification refers to the use of computer gaming technologies in a nongaming context. This area can be considered as one of the innovative and quite promising in modern teaching. Some researchers have proven that game modeling can positively influence motivation and collaboration in a team, thereby making the learning process not only more interesting, but also more effective [2]. A number of works describe the use of educational games used at different levels and stages of education, others dwell on the gamification as a means of motivating and stimulating teaching activities [9]. Thus, this technology is actively applied to students of different age categories and for teaching various disciplines.

However, we should not forget that the gamification is not just a game for the sake of a game, but a pedagogical technology that is designed to achieve a certain educational goal [7, p. 79]. In other words, the gamification should be used for “professional, not entertainment purposes” [10, p. 136]. Therefore, in order to make the learning process not just interesting, but effective, it is necessary to comply with a number of conditions. First of all, the teacher should define the training goals and objectives at any stage. On this basis, he/she develops a game scenario, comes up with a plot, participants' roles, and then proceeds to the detailed development of tasks that students have to complete.

When preparing the game, the teacher should take into account the following:

1) students should observe their progress, which can be expressed in points or the possibility of moving to a new/higher level;

2) the participants of the game should be aware of their importance, understand their contribution to the game, feel proud of their achievements, regardless of whether it is a team or individual work;

3) it is advisable to provide additional reward (bonuses) for supplementary tasks;

4) it is useful to introduce tasks which require several skills to be applied.

Additionally, this technology assumes an objective and visual performance assessment. A comparative study [11, p. 399] has shown that the most common rewards should be of intangible nature, such as points, rating tables, levels or virtual ones (badges, symbols, etc.).

In the gamification structural mode, three components are usually distinguished:

1) game elements (participants, levels, tasks, resources, etc.);

2) game mechanics (a plot that defines the interaction principles of game elements);

3) game dynamics (ensures players' involvement).

Today, there is a wide selection of various computer resources and digital applications for educational game creation. This creative process requires from the teacher, in addition to the professional qualities, a certain IT competence, and, in some cases, some basic programming skills. To come up with high-quality digital products, for example, educational video games, different programming languages such as Scratch, Python and others, various digital services can be used [12]. However, multiusable application is a primary gamification advantage. Therefore, even teachers who are ignorant of programming can successfully use available educational games in their classes, giving them a new content based on their own needs.

The gamification elements can be used in classes in different forms and, therefore, can be applied at different stages of learning. Language games can be implemented in a wide variety of forms: team competitions, quizzes, word games, web quests, etc. The best example is a word game (like "Match", "Guess the Word", etc.) to practice vocabulary and train vocabulary skills. To consolidate grammatical skills, a team game can be organized, where each correct answer brings a point to the team score.

This digital technology should not be identified with game activities such as role-playing and business one. Unlike a business game, communication with the real world is compulsory. The game takes the participants to another space, while the gamification involves being in an existing reality. Role-play games have a different form of organization regarding their properties. When introducing gamification, *the educational goal comes to the fore*, while digital media, computer games, as well as analog devices are just the tools.

It should also be emphasized as an advantage over other teaching methods that the computer gaming helps students overcome mistake making. Playing a computer game, you can complete the level again, doing "work on mistakes", or master a new space. In addition, the task may be complicated, because, like in a typical game, there is a transition to a higher level.

On the one hand, the gamification allows to develop the ability to work in a team, gives participants the opportunity to get closer when solving common tasks. On the other hand, the gaming may offer tasks that will encourage to take initiative and responsibility when making decisions. In some cases, separate game elements can be used to solve specific learning tasks, whereas in another case, the integration of a full-fledged game with an educational purpose is fully justified. In some

studies, the authors talk about the consistent implementation of a gaming-based approach for several terms [12].

Like any other technology, the gamification also has some disadvantages. The game rules imply some reward for successful working. It is better to take into account that getting reward for the activity that is interesting to students may lead to the fact that in the future such tasks will be solved only to receive a reward, and the interest itself may be lost. Thus, some motivation shift may occur. To avoid this, student's interest in learning should be maintained without introduction of any assessment and rewards.

If the gaming activity is organized improperly, such an advantage of the classroom playing as the opportunity to develop initiative and independence can result in deterioration of interpersonal relationships. Competition and competitive elements reduce the underachieving student's interest to the learning process [13].

Thus, in order to optimize the gaming-based teaching process and to avoid any negative experience, the teacher is to develop a high-quality educational product whereby each student could realize himself, as well as consider the organization and the course of the game.

Let's consider some *practical results* of the gaming based foreign language teaching at higher education – in English classes in the Voronezh Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia.

The experience shows that computer game playing can be applied at any stage of learning and at different levels of language practice. Its most obvious advantages are the use of gaming technologies at the stage of development and consolidation of lexical and grammatical material. For example, to consolidate the lexical material of the topic, the authors used an interactive learning platform LearningApps.

org where some games on various topics invented by foreign language teachers are available, and traditional word games are presented as well: "Horse racing", "Gallows", etc. Any teacher can come up with a similar game on any topic by filling the selected template with other content.

To activate grammatical skills, Word-wall service templates are convenient, they provide activities like the games "Roulette", "Cubes", "Kill the Mole". The service allows to consolidate material on the topics "Verb Tenses", "Degrees of Comparison of Adjectives", "Plural of Nouns".

In the second year, to control the educational material on the topic "Fundamentals of Theory and Practice of Interpreting", the authors of the article have created an interactive game "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?". Its course includes tasks to test knowledge of foreign language professional terms, the ability to select translation correspondences and Russian equivalents, and the skill of working with non-equivalent vocabulary. Besides, some authentic audio and video materials are used, these eliminate the monotonous testing activity performance and contribute to the development various complexity level tasks.

### Conclusion

*The obtained experience* of applying gaming technology for the foreign language teaching has shown such primary technology advantages as the feedback, increased motivation, students' involvement and reflection, which helps realize the results obtained and adjust further learning process. Besides, in order to optimize the gaming-based teaching activity and to avoid any negative experience, the teacher is to develop a high-quality educational product whereby each student could realize himself, as well as consider the organization and the course of the game.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the game based approach has its own peculiarities, advantages and limitations. Gaming technologies should be used not for the sake of the game playing itself, but for achieving educational goals. In order to implement gamification into the teaching process effectively, it is necessary, first of all, to follow the essential principles of foreign language teaching, i. e. the use of innovative approaches should be based on the classical foundations of pedagogy, complementing and improving the educational

process. The combination of gamification and other activity forms and methods should be taken into consideration. The introduction of the gamification into the educational process does not exclude classical and traditional types of activities, such as lectures, seminars, workshops. A carefully planned and well-organized educational gaming can become an appropriate universal tool in the hands of an experienced teacher, allowing to combine traditional approaches and innovative methods with modern technical teaching tools.

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