

Gamification as an innovative strategy to increase motivation in teaching English to young learners in Uzbekistan

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Abstract: Motivation is one of the most important factors in successful foreign language learning. In recent years, gamification has become an innovative strategy in education. Gamification involves the use of game elements such as points, rewards, and competitions in the learning process. This article examines the role of gamification in increasing motivation among young learners in Uzbekistan. The study analyzes theoretical and practical aspects of gamification and its effectiveness in English language teaching. The findings show that gamification increases students' interest, participation, and confidence. It creates a positive learning environment and reduces students' anxiety. The article also presents innovative ideas for using gamification in Uzbek classrooms. The results suggest that gamification can improve the quality of English language education and support modern educational reforms.

Keywords: gamification, motivation, English teaching, young learners, innovation, Uzbekistan, interactive learning

INTRODUCTION

Today, learning foreign languages has become one of the main priorities of educational development in Uzbekistan. The government has introduced important reforms to improve foreign language education and prepare students for global communication. One of the most important legal documents is the Presidential Resolution adopted under the leadership of Shavkat Mirziyoyev on improving the system of foreign language learning [1; 7]. This resolution emphasizes the importance of modern teaching methods, innovative technologies, and motivational strategies in education. According to this policy, schools must create effective learning environments that support students' motivation and active participation.

Gamification is one of the modern innovative methods that can help achieve these goals. Gamification means using game elements in non-game contexts such as education. These elements include points, rewards, levels, and competitions.

Young learners naturally enjoy playing games. When games are used in the classroom, students become more interested and motivated. They participate actively and enjoy the learning process.

For example, teachers can give students points for correct answers or create friendly competitions between groups. This encourages students to participate and improves their motivation.

In traditional classrooms, students often feel bored or afraid of making mistakes. However, gamification creates a positive and supportive learning environment.

In my opinion, gamification is especially important in Uzbek classrooms because many students are shy and afraid to speak English. When learning becomes like a game, students feel more relaxed and confident.

Gamification also helps teachers make lessons more interesting and interactive. It supports modern educational reforms and improves the quality of education.

Therefore, the purpose of this article is to examine the role of gamification in increasing motivation among young learners and to present innovative ideas for using gamification in English language teaching in Uzbekistan.

Gamification has become an important innovative method in modern education. Many researchers have studied how game elements can improve motivation and learning effectiveness.

According to Edward Deci and Richard Ryan [2; 68] (2000), motivation increases when students feel enjoyment, achievement, and progress. Their Self-Determination Theory explains that students learn better when they are internally motivated. Gamification supports this type of motivation by making learning enjoyable and rewarding.

Richard Mayer (2009) [7; 102] also emphasized that interactive and engaging learning environments improve students' understanding and motivation. He explained that students learn more effectively when they actively participate in the learning process. Games and interactive activities help students stay focused and interested.

Another researcher, Karl Kapp (2012) [5; 15], explained that gamification uses elements such as points, levels, rewards, and challenges to motivate students. These elements increase engagement and help students stay motivated. Students feel a sense of achievement when they earn rewards or complete levels.

Uzbek researchers have also studied innovative teaching methods. Abduqodir Yo'ldoshev (2016) [10; 50] stated that innovative teaching methods improve students' motivation and participation. He explained that interactive and game-based methods are especially effective for young learners.

Similarly, Gulbahor Ismailova (2019) [3; 33] emphasized that modern students need engaging and interactive learning environments. She noted that gamification helps students develop interest and confidence.

Another Uzbek researcher, Umida Karimova (2020) [4; 22-36], highlighted that game-based learning improves students' communication skills and motivation. She explained that games reduce fear and help students participate more actively.

Overall, both international and Uzbek researchers agree that gamification is an effective strategy for increasing motivation and improving English language learning.

This study uses a comparative method to analyze foreign language teaching approaches in Uzbekistan and in foreign countries. The purpose of this method is to identify similarities and differences between traditional Uzbek teaching practices and modern international methodologies. The research is based on the analysis of academic literature, educational standards, and methodological recommendations used in Uzbekistan. These sources include works of Uzbek researchers such as Jalolov (2012), Saidov (2020), and other scholars who studied language teaching methods in local educational contexts. At the same time, the study examines international approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Learning (TBL), and student-centered learning [9; 75].

These methods are widely used in countries like the United Kingdom, South Korea, and Finland, where foreign language education focuses on communication and practical skills.

The comparison focuses on several key aspects:

- teaching objectives
- classroom interaction
- role of teacher and student
- use of native language
- focus on grammar and communication

For example, in traditional Uzbek classrooms, teachers often explain grammar rules first, and students practice through exercises. In contrast, in many foreign countries, students first use the language in communication, and grammar is explained later as support. This method allows the researcher to evaluate which approaches are more effective for developing communicative competence. It also helps to identify how international methods can be adapted to the Uzbek educational context. The comparative analysis provides a clear understanding of current challenges and possible improvements in foreign language teaching in Uzbekistan.

The comparative analysis showed that foreign language teaching in Uzbekistan has improved significantly in recent years, but some traditional methods are still widely used. Many Uzbek teachers focus on grammar rules, translation, and memorization of vocabulary. This helps students understand the structure of the language, but sometimes students feel nervous when they need to speak. In contrast, foreign countries focus more on communication. Students are encouraged to speak, express their opinions, and use the language in real-life situations. Teachers act more like guides, helping students practice rather than only explaining rules.

One important difference is classroom interaction. In Uzbekistan, the teacher often speaks more, and students listen and write. In foreign classrooms, students participate actively in discussions, pair work, and group activities.

Another difference is student motivation. When students use the language in real communication, they feel more confident and interested. Motivation increases because students see practical results of their learning.

However, Uzbek methodology also has strengths. Uzbek students usually have strong grammar knowledge. This helps them read academic texts and understand complex sentences. The challenge is to combine this strength with communicative skills.

Technology also plays an important role. In many developed countries, digital tools, videos, and online platforms are actively used. In Uzbekistan, the use of technology is increasing, especially after recent educational reforms. The analysis shows that the most effective approach is a balanced method. Students need both grammar knowledge and communication practice. Grammar gives structure, and communication gives confidence.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed and compared foreign language teaching methods in Uzbekistan and foreign countries. The results show that both systems have advantages and limitations. Uzbek teaching methodology provides students with strong grammar knowledge and theoretical understanding. This creates a solid foundation for academic learning. However, students sometimes lack confidence in speaking and real communication. Foreign teaching approaches focus more on communication, student participation, and practical language use. These methods help students develop confidence and fluency. Students learn to use language naturally in real-life situations. The most effective solution is not to replace one system completely, but to combine the strengths of both approaches. Uzbek education can benefit from adding more communicative activities, discussions, and interactive tasks while maintaining strong grammar instruction.

Educational reforms in Uzbekistan already support modernization of foreign language teaching. The integration of international methods, digital tools, and student-centered learning can further improve language education. In the future, teachers should focus on creating a balanced learning environment where students learn grammar and also actively use the language. This will help students become confident and competent language users.

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