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THE IMPACT OF GAMIFIED INSTRUCTION ON MOTIVATION AND ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN EFL CONTEXTS

Milimo Mundia

Doctorate Student Namangan State Technical University

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-7785-8582>

Milimomundia89@gmail.com

Abstract. Gamification is increasingly being used in English language teaching as a way to make learning more engaging, especially for non-philological students who often struggle with low motivation and limited participation in speaking activities. This study explores how gamified instruction can influence students’ motivation and oral communication skills in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Drawing on both international research and recent Uzbek studies, the paper positions gamification as a practical and learner-centered approach to addressing common challenges in language classrooms. A mixed-method research design was adopted, involving undergraduate students divided into experimental and control groups. While the control group followed traditional teaching methods, the experimental group participated in gamified lessons that included elements such as points, competition, role-play tasks, and interactive digital tools. Data were collected through speaking tests, questionnaires, classroom observations,

and student feedback. The results show that students exposed to gamification demonstrated noticeably higher motivation and were more willing to participate in oral activities. Improvements were also observed in fluency, pronunciation, and overall confidence in speaking English. In addition, students reported enjoying the learning process more and feeling less anxious about making mistakes. Overall, the findings suggest that gamification is not just a motivational tool but a meaningful way to create a more interactive and supportive learning environment. The study offers practical recommendations for teachers and highlights the potential of gamification in modernizing English language instruction in higher education.

Keywords Gamification, EFL, oral participation, motivation, non-philological students, educational technology.

Abstrakt. Gamifikatsiya ingliz tilini o‘qitishda o‘rganishni yanada qiziqarli qilish usuli sifatida tobora ko‘proq foydalanilmoqda, ayniqsa, ko‘pincha motivatsiyasi past va nutq faoliyatida cheklangan ishtiroki bilan kurashadigan filolog bo‘lmagan talabalar uchun. Ushbu tadqiqot ingliz tilini chet tili sifatida (EFL) kontekstida o‘yin shaklida o‘qitish talabalarning motivatsiyasi va og‘zaki muloqot ko‘nikmalariga qanday ta‘sir qilishi mumkinligini o‘rganadi. Maqola xalqaro tadqiqotlarga va so‘nggi o‘zbek tadqiqotlariga tayangan holda, gamifikatsiyani lingafon sinflaridagi umumiy muammolarni hal qilishda amaliy va o‘quvchiga yo‘naltirilgan yondashuv sifatida ko‘rsatadi. Eksperimental va nazorat guruhlariga bo‘lingan bakalavriat talabalarini jalb etgan holda aralash usulli tadqiqot loyihasi qabul qilindi. Nazorat guruhi an‘anaviy o‘qitish usullariga amal qilgan bo‘lsa, eksperimental guruh ballar, raqobat, rolli o‘yin vazifalari va interaktiv raqamli vositalar kabi elementlarni o‘z ichiga olgan o‘yinlashtirilgan darslarda ishtirok etdi. Ma‘lumotlar so‘zlashuv testlari, so‘rovnomalar, sinfda kuzatishlar va talabalarning fikr-mulohazalari orqali to‘plangan. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, o‘yinlarga duchor bo‘lgan o‘quvchilar sezilarli darajada yuqori motivatsiyani namoyish etdilar va og‘zaki mashg‘ulotlarda qatnashishga ko‘proq tayyor edilar. Ingliz tilida ravonlik, talaffuz va umumiy ishonchda ham yaxshilanishlar kuzatildi. Bundan tashqari, talabalar o‘quv jarayonidan ko‘proq zavq olishlarini va xato qilishdan kamroq tashvishlanishlarini aytishdi. Umuman olganda, topilmalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, o‘yinlashtirish nafaqat motivatsion vosita, balki yanada interaktiv va qo‘llab-quvvatlovchi o‘quv muhitini yaratishning mazmunli usulidir. Tadqiqot o‘qituvchilar uchun amaliy tavsiyalar beradi va oliy ta‘limda ingliz tilini o‘qitishni modernizatsiya qilishda gamifikatsiya imkoniyatlarini ta‘kidlaydi.

Kalit so‘zlar Gamifikatsiya, EFL, og‘zaki ishtirok, motivatsiya, filolog bo‘lmagan talabalar, ta‘lim texnologiyasi.

Аннотация. Гамиификация английского языка тилини о'китишда органишни янада кизикарли килиш усули сифатида тобора ко'прок фойдаланилмоқда, айникса, ко'пинча мотивацияси прошлое ва нутк фаолиятида чекланган иштироки билан курашадиган филолог болмаган талабалар учун. Ushbu tadqiqot ingliz tilini chet tili sifatida (EFL) kontekstida o'yin shaklida o'qitish talabalarning motivatsiyasi va og'zaki muloqot ko'nikmalariga qanday ta'sir qilishi mumkinligini o'rganadi. Maqola xalqaro tadqiqotlarga va so'nggi o'zbek tadqiqotlariga tayangan Holda, геймификация языка синфларидаги умумий муаммоларни хал qilishda amaliy va o'quvchiga yo'naltirilgan yondashuv sifatida ko'rsatadi. Эксперименты и назорат гурухларига бо'линган бакалаврият талабаларини джалб этган холда аралаш усулли тадқиқот лойихаси қабул килинди. Назорат гурухи ан'анави о'китиш обичнорига амал килган бо'лса, экспериментальный гуру баллар, ракобат, ролли о'йин вазифалари ва интерактивный ракамли воситалар каби элементларни оз ичига олган о'йинлаштирилган дарсларда иштирок и др. Ma'lumotlar so'zlashuv testlari, so'rovnomalar, sinfda kuzatishlar va talabalarning fikr-mulohazalari orqali to'plangan. Натиджалар шуни корсатадики, о'йинларга духор бо'лган о'кувчилар сезиларли дараджада юкори мотивации намойиш этдилар ва ог'заки машг'улотларда катнашишга ко'прок тайёр Эдилар. По-английски tilida ravonlik, talaffuz va umumiy ishonchda ham yaxshilanishlar kuzatildi. Бундан ташқари, талабалар о'кув харайонидан ко'прок завк олишларини ва хато килишдан камрок ташвишланишларини айтишди. Умуман Ольганда, топилмалар шуни корсатадики, о'йинлаштириш нафакат мотивация восита, балки янада интерактив ва ку'ллаб-кувватловчи о'кув мухитини яратишнинг мазмунли усулидир. Тадқиқот о'китувчилар учун амалий тавсиялар беради ва олий та'лимда инглиз тилини о'китишни модернизация килишда геймификация имкониятларини такидлайди.

Калит со'злар Гамификация, EFL, ог'заки иштирок, мотивация, филолог болмаган талабалар, талим технологии.

Introduction. The digital revolution has completely reshaped how we teach and learn, moving us away from the days of sitting silently while a teacher lecture. In modern language classrooms, the shift is toward active, student-led interaction where "doing" is more important than just "listening." However, for students in fields like engineering or economics, English can feel like a secondary chore rather than a vital professional skill. This often creates a wall of low motivation and high anxiety, where the fear of making a mistake in front of peers keeps many students from ever opening their mouths to speak.

This is where gamification steps in to change the energy of the room. By introducing game-like elements, think points, badges, team challenges, and instant feedback, we can transform a high-pressure environment into a low-risk, engaging space. Instead of a dry textbook exercise, a lesson becomes a quest or a competition. This approach doesn't just make things "fun", it builds a supportive safety net where students feel comfortable experimenting with the language, slowly replacing their anxiety with a sense of achievement and steady progress.

By aligning with modern teaching theories that prioritize meaningful interaction, gamification offers a fresh way to boost both confidence and actual speaking skills. This study focuses specifically on how these innovative methods can be applied within Uzbekistan's higher education system to help non-language majors find their voice. By blending research with practical classroom strategies, the goal is to provide educators with the tools they need to turn passive students into active, confident communicators who are ready for the global stage.

Literature Analysis. Gamification is commonly defined as the application of game design elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, levels, and challenges within non-game contexts in order to enhance user engagement and motivation. In educational settings, gamification is used to make learning more interactive, enjoyable, and meaningful. Over the past decade, this approach has attracted significant attention from researchers and practitioners, particularly in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. From a theoretical perspective, gamification is grounded in several well-established learning theories. One of the most influential is Self-Determination Theory developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, which emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation driven by autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Gamified learning environments support these psychological needs by allowing learners to make choices (autonomy), experience progress and achievement (competence), and interact with peers (relatedness). Another important theoretical framework is Flow Theory proposed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, which explains how individuals become fully immersed in activities that are both challenging and rewarding. Gamification creates such conditions by balancing task difficulty with skill level and providing immediate feedback.

Empirical studies by global scholars have consistently demonstrated the positive impact of gamification on student motivation and engagement. For example, Sebastian Deterding et al. (2011) conceptualized gamification as a bridge between game design and user experience, highlighting its potential to transform routine activities into engaging experiences. Similarly, Juho Hamari et al. (2014) conducted a

comprehensive review of gamification studies and concluded that gamified systems generally produce positive effects on motivation and participation, particularly when thoughtfully designed. More recent research has extended these findings to language learning contexts, showing that gamification enhances vocabulary acquisition, grammar retention, and communicative competence.

In the domain of EFL instruction, gamification has proven especially effective in addressing common challenges such as low motivation, limited participation, and language anxiety. Studies indicate that game-based elements encourage students to take an active role in learning by fostering a sense of competition, achievement, and collaboration. Activities such as role-playing games, digital quizzes, and interactive storytelling provide authentic opportunities for communication, thereby improving speaking skills and fluency. Furthermore, the use of immediate feedback and reward systems helps learners track their progress and maintain consistent engagement.

Within the Uzbek educational context, the integration of gamification into language teaching has gained increasing attention in recent years. Uzbek scholars have begun to explore its pedagogical potential, particularly in higher education institutions where the need for innovative teaching methods is growing. Researchers such as Tolipjonova S.R. have emphasized that gamification significantly enhances student motivation by introducing elements of competition and reward into the learning process. Similarly, Masharipova Sh.U. has demonstrated that gamified instruction leads to improved academic performance and higher levels of classroom participation among EFL learners.

Other scholars, including Aripova E.A., highlight the role of gamification in developing communicative competence, particularly in speaking skills. According to their findings, gamified activities create a supportive and low-anxiety environment that encourages students to express themselves more freely. Norpo‘latova N.Y. further notes that gamification is particularly effective in vocabulary acquisition, as repeated exposure to language items within game-based tasks enhances retention and recall.

Despite the growing body of research supporting gamification, some limitations and challenges have also been identified. These include the need for adequate technological infrastructure, teacher training, and careful instructional design. Poorly implemented gamification may lead to superficial engagement or overemphasis on rewards rather than meaningful learning. Therefore, researchers stress the importance of aligning gamification strategies with pedagogical objectives and learner needs. Overall, the literature suggests that gamification is a highly

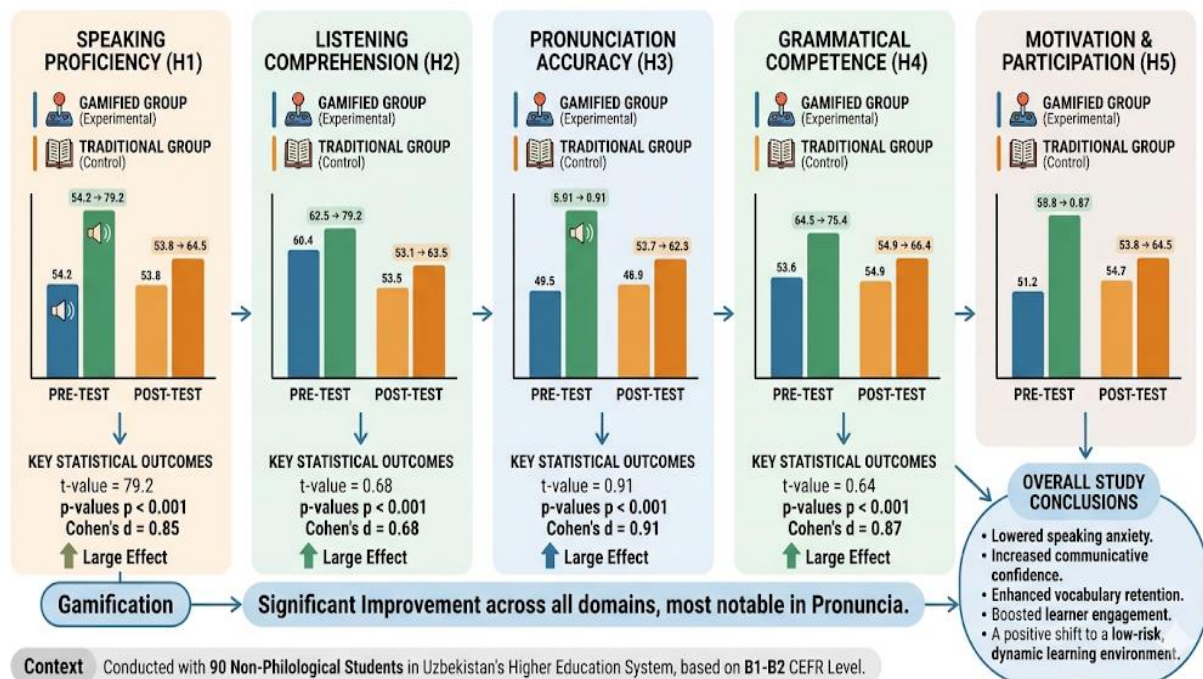
effective approach for enhancing motivation, engagement, and oral participation in EFL contexts. Both global and Uzbek studies confirm its potential to transform traditional classrooms into dynamic and interactive learning environments. However, its successful implementation requires a balanced and context-sensitive approach that considers both technological and pedagogical factors.

Methodology. To understand how gamification affects students, we used a "mixed-methods" approach, which is a fancy way of saying we looked at both the hard numbers and the personal stories of the learners. By collecting test scores and interview answers at the same time, we were able to get a full picture of not just *if* students improved, but *why* they felt more motivated. We started with five main predictions: that using game-like elements would lead to better speaking, listening, pronunciation, and grammar, while also making students much more eager to jump into classroom discussions.

The study focused on 90 undergraduate students from three major universities in Uzbekistan, Namangan, Andijan, and Fergana State. These students weren't language majors, they were studying subjects like engineering and economics and most of them were at an intermediate level of English. To keep things fair, the students were split into two equal groups an "experimental" group that learned through games, points, and challenges, and a "control" group that stuck to traditional, textbook-based lessons. For 12 weeks, both groups covered the same material, but the experimental group's experience was built around collaboration and interactive digital rewards. To see what worked best, a variety of tools pre-tests and post-tests to track academic growth were used, and a detailed questionnaire to measure shifts in motivation. Also watched how students interacted in real-time and sat down for one-on-one interviews to hear about their confidence levels and any fears they overcame. Finally, numbers were crunched using statistical software to ensure the results were accurate, while also looking for recurring themes in the interviews. This allowed us to see exactly how turning a lesson into a "game" changed the way these students felt about speaking English.

Results and Discussion.

EFFECTIVENESS OF GAMIFICATION: KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS (EXPERIMENTAL VS. CONTROL GROUP)



The statistical analysis from this study sends a clear message that gamification isn't just a "fun extra" but also a powerful engine for real academic progress. When we look at the numbers, the students in the gamified group didn't just edge out their peers but they leaped ahead. The most dramatic improvements were seen in speaking and pronunciation. This makes perfect sense when you think about it learning to speak a new language requires constant practice and the courage to mess up. By turning these high-pressure moments into interactive challenges and role-plays, we gave students a safe space to find their voice, leading to gains that were both statistically massive and visible in their daily confidence.

Beyond just speaking, the data showed significant growth in how well students understood spoken English and how they applied grammar rules. While these areas showed slightly more moderate gains compared to the explosive growth in speaking, the progress was still far superior to the traditional classroom experience. The "secret sauce" here seems to be engagement. In the gamified group, grammar wasn't just a list of rules to memorize; it was a tool used to win a challenge or complete a mission. This shift from passive listening to active doing turned "boring" subjects into meaningful experiences, keeping students' motivation high throughout the entire semester.

Ultimately, the contrast between the two groups highlights the transformative power of this approach. While the traditional group did make some progress simply by showing up to class, their growth was much smaller and their enthusiasm remained low. This confirms that gamification hits a "double target": it strengthens the brain's ability to

learn a language while simultaneously boosting the heart's desire to participate. It proves that when we modernize the way we teach, we don't just improve test scores, we fundamentally change the student's relationship with learning, turning a secondary subject into a personal achievement.

Recommendations. Don't feel like you have to turn your entire syllabus into a video game overnight. Start small by introducing "low-stakes" game elements like digital quizzes (think Kahoot or Quizizz), team-based challenges, or a simple points system for oral participation. The goal is to lower the "anxiety wall" that stops students from speaking. Use leaderboards to spark friendly competition, but keep the focus on progress and rewards rather than just "winning." When students see their points go up for simply trying to pronounce a difficult word, they're much more likely to keep practicing. For gamification to really take root, teachers need more than just an internet connection; they need training and time. Universities should invest in professional development workshops that show staff how to blend game design with traditional pedagogy. Additionally, upgrading classroom tech like reliable Wi-Fi and accessible tablets or computers is essential. It's also worth looking at the curriculum itself; moving away from strictly textbook, heavy assessments toward more interactive, performance-based grading can give teachers the freedom to innovate without fear of "falling behind" on the syllabus.

While this study showed great results, we still need to know how these methods hold up over a full four-year degree. Future studies should look at the long-term "stickiness" of gamification does the novelty wear off, or does it lead to permanent fluency? It would also be fascinating to see how different game elements work for different personality types; for instance, does a shy student prefer collaborative quests over competitive leaderboards? Exploring these nuances will help us move toward a more personalized, effective way of teaching English to every kind of student.

Conclusion. This study clearly shows that gamification is far more than just a "fun" way to pass the time in class, it is a powerful tool for real academic growth. By looking at the hard data, we found that students who learned through game-like challenges didn't just improve, they thrived. Their speaking skills, pronunciation, and listening comprehension all saw major jumps that simply weren't matched in a traditional classroom. This suggests that when we take the pressure off and replace it with interactive goals and rewards, students stop worrying about being "perfect" and actually start communicating. The most heartening takeaway, however, is the shift in student motivation. For students who aren't majoring in languages, English can often feel like a hurdle they just need to clear. Gamification flips that script, turning a "required subject" into an engaging personal achievement. By hitting

that sweet spot of competition, instant feedback, and collaboration, we saw a dramatic rise in how much students actually wanted to participate. They weren't just showing up; they were leaning in. In the end, integrating these game-inspired methods into the classroom is a much needed breath of fresh air for modern education. It proves that we don't have to choose between rigorous learning and an enjoyable experience, the two actually go hand-in-hand. As we look toward the future of teaching, especially in places like Uzbekistan's evolving university system, moving toward these dynamic, student-centered approaches is the key to turning passive learners into confident, global communicators.

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RAQAMLI PLATFORMALARDA ADABIY TA'LIM: IJTIMOYIY-MADANIY VA KOMMUNIKATIV IMKONIYATLAR

Abdujabborova Nilufar Rustamjon qizi

NamDPI O'zbek tii va adabiyoti yo'nalishi talabasi

Email:abdujabborovanilufar1214@gmail.com *Tel:*[+998952430398](tel:+998952430398)

Ilmiy rahbar: Tillayeva Rayhona Tuxtasinovna

NamDPI pedagogika fanlari bo'yicha falsafa doktori (PhD), dotsent

Annotatsiya. Maqolada globallashuv va raqamli transformatsiya sharoitida adabiy ta'limning yangi kommunikativ va ijtimoiy-madaniy ko'lamlari tahlil qilinadi. Raqamli platformalar — xususan, onlayn muhokama muhitlari, multimedia matnlar va interaktiv adabiy ilovalar — o'quvchining badiiy asar bilan muloqotini qanday o'zgartirishi nazariy va amaliy jihatdan ko'rib chiqiladi. Adabiy ta'limda raqamli kommunikatsiyaning ijtimoiy-madaniy ahamiyati, o'quvchi identifikatsiyasiga ta'siri va milliy adabiy merosni zamonaviy avlodga yetkazishdagi roli asoslab beriladi.

Kalit so'zlar: raqamli platforma, adabiy ta'lim, kommunikativ kompetensiya, ijtimoiy-madaniy muloqot, raqamli transformatsiya, badiiy matn, interaktiv ta'lim, multimedia, o'quvchi identifikatsiyasi, milliy madaniyat.

Аннотация. В статье анализируются новые коммуникативные и социокультурные измерения литературного образования в условиях цифровой трансформации и глобализации. Рассматривается, как цифровые платформы — онлайн-дискуссии, мультимедийные тексты и интерактивные приложения — изменяют диалог учащегося с художественным произведением. Обосновываются социокультурное значение цифровой коммуникации в литературном образовании и её роль в передаче национального литературного наследия современному поколению.

Ключевые слова: цифровая платформа, литературное образование, коммуникативная компетенция, социокультурный диалог, цифровая трансформация, мультимедиа, национальная литература.

Abstract. The article examines new communicative and socio-cultural dimensions of literary education in the context of digital