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Integrating Game Technologies into the Language Training Process for Future Military Specialists

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Abstract: The article deals with the basic information about gamification and the peculiarities of its implementation in the educational process, the use of game technologies in the process of language training of future military personnel to ensure greater activity, motivation and interest in the learning process. Different types of gamified tools (gaming platforms) are also considered, which makes it possible to determine the advantages of introducing gamification into the process of teaching foreign languages. Based on the data obtained the usefulness and expediency of using game technologies has been revealed, which certainly increases the interest of participants in foreign language classes.

Keywords: gamification, educational process, game techniques, language training, game elements.

Introduction

The basic idea behind gamification is that students learn best when they have fun. When they have goals and the opportunity to be recognised and rewarded for achieving those goals, it makes the learning process more interesting and dynamic, which in turn leads to better engagement. Gamification is the process of adding game elements or game techniques to the learning process. It is an attempt to move to new tools that motivate and stimulate participants in the educational process. It is the desire to adapt to new realities, new people, lifestyles, competition and leadership.

The concept of gamification as an innovative technology in the educational process has emerged relatively recently. Nevertheless, there are already many scientific studies devoted to the interpretation of this phenomenon. Analysing scientific publications on this topic, we can conclude that the scientific community does not yet have a single interpretation of this term. Karl Kapp, professor at the Institute for Interactive Technologies at the University of Bloomsberg, who was at the origin of gamification, explains that gamification is using game-based mechanics, aesthetics and game thinking to engage people, motivate action, promote learning, and solve problems (Kapp, 2012). According to Olena Sagan, gamification is a strategy that uses game mechanics and rewards to motivate users to complete tasks, including educational ones (Sagan, 2022). Alec Davison shows how to use role-play, games and simulations as a key everyday tool for active learning in all subjects at all levels of education (Davison, 1978). Andrzej Marczewski, a British evaluation expert and author of *Even Ninja Monkeys Like to Play: Gamification, Game Thinking, and Motivational Design*, predicts that gamification will enter our lives in the same way as social or digital media and become part of the standard set of tools for designing learning (Marczewski, 2015). So far, there are no clear guidelines for methodological support of gamified classes, but the direction of further research has already been set.

The purpose of this article is to provide a theoretical overview of gamification as a promising new method of teaching foreign languages and to substantiate the feasibility of its further use in the process of language training of military specialists.

Research Results

What is the reason behind the gaming industry bigger than any other industry now? The answer lies in the fact that gaming is an activity for the sake of the process, not the result, it is pleasure. And for the educational process, it is valuable to make learning enjoyable. Learning can sometimes be boring and routine. Gamification can solve this problem. It motivates participants, inspires them to solve tasks effectively, and encourages them to experiment. The possibility of defeat is not frightening, because the participants can start again, they can win, but they cannot lose completely. This approach is very useful in developing the leadership skills of future military professionals. Thinking outside the box, creativity and the habit of not giving up after losing play a key role in professional training.

Gamification is based on our natural desire to compete. Elements of gamification stem from the natural human need to compete and succeed. They help to activate people and engage them. It also motivates participants to work harder - they want to beat the person with the highest score, move up the rankings, or get another reward. As participants progress through different game levels, they receive immediate feedback and evaluate their performance. This allows for further training of skills and consciously building a future strategy. Examples of gamification include:

- Dividing learners into groups to compete in tasks;
- The ability to earn points for tasks and then receive rewards for those points;
- Topic-specific worksheets or other materials used in the learning experience;

- Badges that show completion of a task or mastery of a skill;
- Rolls of a die to determine the order of answers or assignment of tasks.

The main advantage of gamification is that game elements are easy to incorporate into the curriculum, as they do not change the content of the training, but only supplement it. Gamification can be used both for synchronous learning (when participants learn together) and asynchronous learning (when they complete certain modules independently at their own convenience). On the other hand, gamification can be successfully applied to multi-module programmes. In this case, it can act as a glue for various elements, such as online and offline training sessions or self-study on an online platform. A gamified process will definitely help maintain engagement among participants over a longer period.

A modern foreign language teacher has the opportunity to use dozens of digital didactic games, templates, constructors, and game platforms. Let's look at a few examples of online resources that will help teachers create a gamified lesson:

- Kahoot is a game-based learning site that allows teachers and learners to create, explore and play a wide range of learning games. Kahoot is simple and easy to use and can be played on any device;.
- Quizizz is a game-based learning tool that teachers can use to engage students in a deep and meaningful learning experience. Using the Quizizz editor, teachers can create their own tests by embedding different types of questions (multiple choice, open-ended, survey, fill-in-the-blank, etc.) and media (images, videos, audio, and voice recordings);
- Riddle is a simple and convenient test generator that allows teachers to create a variety of interactive tests and surveys. This resource provides an opportunity to use ready-made test templates or create your own test from scratch. Riddle offers a variety of publishing options, including embedding quizzes on a website or blog, or sending them via email. As your audience completes the quiz, Riddle generates detailed analytics reports, allowing you to access data on views, shares, completion rates, and more.
- Classcraft is an online learning platform that allows teachers to create a game-like atmosphere in the classroom. In Classcraft, each learner creates his or her own character that can evolve in the course of learning. Each character has its own characteristics, such as health, energy and power. Classcraft can be used for any subject, from English to Math. The platform increases motivation and helps reduce boredom in the classroom.

The process of incorporating gamification methods into the educational process is very specific, and therefore it is necessary to take into account some specific features of the method, as well as to adhere to its basic principles. With the right methodological support, gamified classes can achieve high results. The use of gaming techniques in language training classes not only attracts the attention of learners but also helps them to learn and consolidate new material. They can be used at the stage of warming up, lead in, vocabulary or grammar presentation, vocabulary or grammar practice. The game can simultaneously include lexical, grammatical and phonetic material.

Teachers can choose to either plan or spontaneously introduce game techniques during a specific part of the lesson to enhance the engagement of the learners in the educational experience. They can occupy a certain stage of the lesson or permeate the entire lesson. Gamified foreign language classes have a multifaceted purpose:

- form interest in the discipline being studied;
- motivate cognitive activity;

- maintain sustained interest and engagement in learning;
- stimulate the desire for leadership and fruitful competition;
- help to avoid routine and diversify classes.

Gamification in education tries to focus on harnessing the basic desires of learners to engage them more deeply in the process and achieve significant performance and high results. Participants experience excitement while playing, and it is a natural way to acquire skills. Another important aspect is that gamified learning promotes the manifestation of true character, as the participant demonstrates his or her true self in stressful or problematic situations. This can be a good method of selecting specialists without relying on previous assessments or characteristics.

Conclusions

Successful teaching is a requirement of the modern world. A future military specialist is a person of a new generation who grew up surrounded by modern digital technologies and interactive media. This means that in order to interest such a learner and keep his or her attention, it is necessary to use the latest technologies in teaching. One of these innovative technologies is gamification. Gamified classes help to build a strong interest in learning foreign languages, motivate to achieve results, make the learning process interesting and dynamic, improve memorisation and facilitate the development of new vocabulary, help to maintain feedback from learners, and stimulate learning and cognitive activity. Gamification acts as an incentive to master foreign languages, as language skills are trained not by boring textbook exercises, but by interesting games with the right to make mistakes, and the effect of competition increases the activity and productivity of learning. The theoretical review of gamified learning technologies is a way to develop recommendations for further use in the process of language training of future military specialists.

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