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Міністерство освіти і науки України

Закарпатський угорський інститут ім. Ференца Ракоці II

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Qualifying paper

GAMIFICATION IN THE ENGLISH LESSONS

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ЗМІСТ

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Abstract

This work seeks to find out if didactic games can be integrated into English language classes as a good means of teaching. It examines the consequences of using games on ESL students' second language acquisition, motivation and general experience in class. The work contains theoretical background, practical examples, and a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of didactic games in the English classroom.

The aim of this work is to present the advantages that gamification can bring to classroom teaching, as well as to raise awareness of the challenges that may arise during its implementation. It is essential to develop a broad and comprehensive understanding of the positive impact gamification can have for both teachers and students.

To achieve this, we outlined the theoretical foundations of gamification, explored effective implementation strategies, identified its key benefits, and addressed the potential challenges and considerations associated with its use in educational contexts.

The core part of our work — the analysis of research results and data evaluation — is discussed in the final chapter. Data was collected using Google Forms, and Microsoft Excel was employed for processing and analyzing the responses. The results are illustrated through charts and tables for clarity and better comprehension.

Based on the analysis, we gained a clear insight into the effectiveness of gamification: how it influences students, how frequently it can be integrated into lessons, which age groups are most frequently engaged through games, why it is considered important, and in which areas of classroom learning gamification proves to be most beneficial — such as vocabulary development, skills practice, or enhancing student motivation.

Introduction

Motivation is a cornerstone of success in learning foreign languages, particularly English, which holds increasing importance in a globalized world. Extensive research has explored motivation in various educational contexts, yet there remains a significant gap in understanding how gamification—integrating game-design elements into non-game settings—can enhance motivation and learning outcomes in English language lessons. This gap is particularly evident in the context of secondary schools in Transcarpathia, where traditional teaching methods may not fully address the diverse needs of learners. The subject matter of this course paper is the impact of gamification on the motivation and English language acquisition of secondary school learners in Transcarpathia. The object of the research is the implementation of gamification techniques and their effects on student engagement and performance.

The relevance of this topic is underscored by the unique multilingual environment of Transcarpathia, which presents both challenges and opportunities for English language education. While studies have examined motivation in foreign language learning in this region, and gamification has been explored in broader educational settings, few investigations have specifically addressed its application to English lessons in this context. Research by Stott and Neustaedter (2013) highlights gamification's potential to boost engagement by reducing the perceived cost of failure, yet its specific impact on language learning in Transcarpathia remains underexplored. This study seeks to bridge this gap by examining how gamification can address motivational challenges and enhance learning experiences.

Drawing on this foundation, it is hypothesized that incorporating gamification techniques into English lessons will positively influence students' motivation and improve their language acquisition outcomes. The aim of this research is to investigate these effects within Transcarpathian secondary schools and to identify practical strategies for effective implementation. To guide this exploration, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. To what extent does gamification enhance student motivation in English lessons?

2. What measurable impacts does gamification have on English language learning outcomes?

3. Which gamification strategies prove most effective in this context?

This bachelor thesis comprises an introduction, three main parts, and concluding sections including conclusions, and references. Part 1 establishes the theoretical foundations of gamification in language education, synthesizing key concepts and prior findings. Part 2 details the methodology, encompassing the participants—English teachers in Transcarpathian secondary schools—along with research tools such as surveys and data analysis methods using Google Forms and Microsoft Excel. Part 3 evaluates the benefits of gamification, presenting research findings on engagement, retention, and skill development, supported by charts and tables.

The scientific novelty of this study lies in its focused application of gamification to English language education in a multilingual region, offering fresh perspectives on its efficacy. Practically, the findings provide educators with actionable insights into leveraging gamification to boost motivation and learning outcomes, enabling them to adapt these strategies to their own teaching contexts and enhance English language instruction.

Figure 1. Children in the classroom

(https://www.researchgate.net/publication/363028771_Applying_Gamification_in_English_Learning)

PART I

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

1.1 Didactic Gaming Overview; Educational Theories Supporting Game-Based Learning

An in-depth examination of what constitutes didactic games, their place in language education and their relevance to modern educational theories. This section will explore the underlying theories surrounding didactic gaming with reference to interactive and experiential learning endorsed by established educational theories.

1.2 Advantages of Incorporating Games into Language Classes

The discussion is detailed; it covers enhanced retention among students, increased student engagement as well as the development of critical thinking skills. A "UK study concluded that simulation and adventure games - such as Sim City and RollerCoaster Tycoon, where players create societies or build theme parks, developed children's strategic thinking and planning skills. Parents and teachers also thought their children's mathematics, reading and spelling improved.

The investigation into the habits of 700 children aged seven to 16 also found that, far from being a solitary activity, children preferred to play games in pairs or small groups" (BBC NEWS, 2002).

These findings highlight the educational potential of simulation and adventure games in enhancing children's cognitive and academic skills. Beyond promoting strategic thinking and planning, such games also foster collaboration, as children often choose to play together rather than alone. Overall, digital games, when thoughtfully integrated, can serve as powerful tools for both intellectual and social development.

Figure 2. The teacher is playing with the whole class

(https://www.researchgate.net/publication/363028771_Applying_Gamification_in_English_Learning)

1.3 How can teachers effectively implement these gamification strategies in their English lessons for primary school students?

Teachers can effectively implement gamification strategies in their English lessons for primary school students by considering several key factors:

1. Understanding Student Backgrounds: Teachers should take into account the backgrounds, educational contexts, and learning preferences of their students. This understanding will help in designing games that are engaging and relevant to the learners.

2. Designing Appropriate Game Mechanics: Successful gamification involves integrating game mechanics such as points, levels, badges, and ranking lists into the learning process. These elements can make learning more attractive and interactive, encouraging students to participate actively.

3. Creating Engaging Content: The content of the games should be both entertaining and educational. Teachers can use popular games that students are already interested in, which can help them learn English more effectively while enjoying the process.

4. Balancing Learning Objectives with Game Activities: It is crucial for teachers to align the learning objectives with the game activities. For instance, if the goal is to learn new vocabulary, the game should facilitate this without taking too much time away from the learning process.

5. Encouraging Interaction: Gamification can enhance interaction between students and teachers. By incorporating competitive elements and role-play, teachers can create an immersive learning environment that fosters collaboration and communication.

6. Addressing Diverse Learning Styles: Teachers should be aware of the different personalities in the classroom, such as extroverted and introverted learners. They can design games that cater to these differences, ensuring that all students feel comfortable and engaged.

7. Monitoring Engagement and Adjusting Strategies: Teachers need to observe how students respond to gamified lessons. If some students are easily distracted or not engaging with the material, adjustments may be necessary to maintain focus on learning.

8. Utilizing Technology: With advancements in technology, teachers can incorporate digital tools and platforms that support gamified learning, making it easier to implement and manage game-based activities in the classroom.

By carefully considering these factors, teachers can create a gamified learning experience that not only motivates primary school students but also enhances their English language skills effectively (Li, Liu, 2022).

Figure 3. The teacher is playing TPR games with the class
(https://www.researchgate.net/publication/363028771_Applying_Gamification_in_English_Learning)

Types of Didactic Games

1.4 Vocabulary Matches; Grammar Plays

Instances and approaches for introducing didactic games to help strengthen vocabulary acquisition. Examples of games meant to make learning grammar interactive and fun.

Figure 4. Cards game for educational purposes

(https://clab.iat.sfu.ca/pubs/Stott-Gamification.pdf)

1.5 Communication and Role-Playing Games

Demonstration on the ways communication-oriented games can improve language proficiency in practical situations.

Figure 5. Live Action Role Play (LARP) for educational purposes

(https://clab.iat.sfu.ca/pubs/Stott-Gamification.pdf)

1.6 Educational Board Games; Promoting risk taking through gamification

Scrutiny of traditional and digital games for board adapted for language learning. "Gamification is the application of game dynamics, mechanics, and frameworks into

non-game settings" (Stott and Neustaedter, 2013) and both the research and the pedagogical communities view it as a useful educational tool. One of the primary advantages of using gamification in an educational setting is that it lessens the cost of making an error in the eyes of the learners, thus promoting them to be more risk taking. Furthermore, emphasizing the concept of 'freedom to fail' and encouraging learners to feel comfortable to take risks, allows learners to shift from being mostly outcome oriented to being able to focus on learning, and this shift in focus is viewed as favorable by modern pedagogy (Stott and Neustaedter, 2013) (Shatz, 2015).

PART II

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

2.1 Incorporation into Teaching Plans; Customizing for Different Levels of Proficiency; Technology-Based Games

Integrating gamification into education involves adding game-like features—such as points, badges, or leaderboards—to enhance learning. However, this process comes with significant hurdles. One major challenge is the time and effort required to design and implement these systems effectively. Additionally, technological barriers often impede progress, as "the lack of proper technological support is one of the major obstacles for applying game elements to education" (Dicheva, Dichev, Agre, Angelova, 2015). Teachers must choose game elements that suit their students' needs, considering factors like age and skill level, since "the teacher has to take into consideration certain variables, when she chooses games for the activity" (Dicheva, Dichev, Agre, Angelova, 2015)

Another difficulty is ensuring that gamification enhances learning without distracting from it. The document warns that "gamification has the potential to improve learning, if it is well designed and used correctly" (Dicheva, Dichev, Agre, Angelova, 2015), but poor design can shift students' focus to rewards rather than educational goals. Schools also need robust technological infrastructure, as "the effective classroom adoption of gamification implies both certain technological infrastructure coupled with an appropriate instructional framework" (Dicheva, Dichev, Agre, Angelova, 2015).

Educators can overcome these obstacles with targeted strategies. One approach is to apply flexible gamification principles, such as "freedom of choice", which lets students pick tasks that match their abilities and interests. This can involve "multiple routes to success, allowing students to choose their own sub-goals within the larger task" (Dicheva, Dichev, Agre, Angelova, 2015). Similarly, "freedom to fail" encourages resilience by allowing students to retry tasks without penalty.

Technology can also help. Tools like learning management systems (LMS) with gamification plugins, such as "Moodle, the Diagnosys tool, or the collaborative learning environment Curatr" (Dicheva, Dichev, Agre, Angelova, 2015), simplify implementation. However, "the general population of instructors lacks the necessary skills and time for

creating, adapting, and/or maintaining an appropriate supportive technological infrastructure" (Dicheva, Dichev, Agre, Angelova, 2015). To bridge this gap, schools could offer training or adopt ready-made solutions (Dicheva, Dichev, Agre, Angelova, 2015).

<center>**Motivation's Role in Gamified Education**</center>

Motivation is key to effective learning, and gamification can boost it in unique ways. The document states that "gamification has the potential to improve learning" (Dicheva, Dichev, Agre, Angelova, 2015) by blending extrinsic rewards (like badges) with intrinsic drivers (like engagement). Features such as "social engagement" and "storytelling" can make learning more immersive and personally meaningful.

For students who see little immediate value in subjects like English beyond exams, gamification can provide the external push needed to stay engaged. Yet, success hinges on careful design, as "the concept of gamification may look simple, [but] gamifying learning effectively is not" (Dicheva, Dichev, Agre, Angelova, 2015). More research is needed to understand "the motivating effects of using single game elements in specific educational contexts" (Dicheva, Dichev, Agre, Angelova, 2015), ensuring that gamification aligns with students' strengths and preferences (Dicheva, Dichev, Agre, Angelova, 2015).

2.2 What specific gamification strategies or techniques have been found to be most effective in enhancing engagement and motivation among primary school students learning English?

The sections provided highlight several effective gamification strategies and techniques that enhance engagement and motivation among primary school students learning English:

1. Game Mechanics: Utilizing game design elements such as points, levels, ranking lists, and badges can significantly increase learner engagement. These mechanics make learning more attractive and interactive, encouraging students to participate actively in their learning process.

2. Interactivity and Role-Play: Incorporating competitive elements and role-playing into lessons can create an immersive learning experience. This approach not only makes tasks more enjoyable but also enhances the overall satisfaction of both teachers and students.

3. Physical Activity: Encouraging physical activity through games can shift students from a passive learning mode to a more active and engaged state. This is particularly effective for primary school students, who may find traditional learning methods less stimulating.

4. Personalization: Successful gamification considers the backgrounds, educational contexts, and learning preferences of students. Tailoring games to fit the specific needs and interests of learners can lead to better engagement and motivation.

5. Creativity and Problem-Solving: Gamification enriches information and encourages learners to think creatively. By presenting challenges that require problem-solving, students are motivated to engage with the material more deeply.

6. Feedback and Progress Tracking: Providing immediate feedback through game mechanics helps students understand their progress and areas for improvement, which can motivate them to continue learning.

7. Balancing Entertainment and Education: A successful game design should be both entertaining and educational. Games that students find genuinely interesting can help them learn more effectively and retain knowledge longer.

These strategies collectively contribute to a more engaging and motivating learning environment for primary school students learning English, making the educational experience both enjoyable and effective (Li, Liu, 2022).

Case Studies

2.3 Examples of Implemented Didactic Games; Student Feedback and Learning Outcomes

This comprises specific examples where various didactic games are used to meet different language learning needs.

Review of students' experiences, perspectives, and academic results upon inclusion of didactic games into a class setting.

"From students' presentations, it could be discovered that the majority students proposed 3 games to be valuable for language learning. These 3 games are Pet Society, Country Story, and City Ville. They were mentioned by more students. Participants tended to regard them to be obliging education resource for language learners and field workers. The reasons these 3 games are applicable are in the later parts. First of all, several students pointed out the game's descriptions were different languages, including English and Mandarin. Two interfaces could be switched to each other, so game functions of translating and being a mentor can support their language learning. Game players could read in Mandarin first for fully understanding the descriptions. Following, they played the same game by switching the screen into English interface for better understanding. The game contents contained adequate new words, so language learners could enjoy reading to enter the next stage for higher-level game sessions (Lin, Tsai, & Chien, 2011) ."

BENEFITS OF GAMIFICATION

2.4 Enhanced Engagement; Improved Retention for Language Knowledge Acquisition Purposes; Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills Developmental Process; Promoting Positive Learning Environment

Deep analysis on how an engagement in educational play enhances student participation, motivation, interest towards foreign languages. Proof that the use of computer games can enhance the retention of speech abilities.

A debate on how didactic games contribute to advancing critical thinking and problem solving skills. Didactic games for the English Language Teaching (ELT) according to the learning styles of the students.

"For the visual student the following didactic materials are recommended:

Use language cards.

Use graphic organizers (maps, diagrams, graphs)

Suggest diagrams and synoptic chart in all the lessons.

Look at the students when you are speaking to them.

Use films, videos, CD, among others.

For the auditory students the following materials are suggested:

Tape the lessons.

Use listening materials.

Always read the instructions aloud.

Assign to other partners or students to explain the instructions to the others.

For the Kinesthetic students the following materials are suggested:

Suggest cards with words or draws to find relationship between language and meaning.

Use maps or diagrams.

Paint maps and cut them as puzzles.

Use cards to study.

Design the teaching means or use real objects.

Examples of didactic games for the ELT according to the learning styles of the students.

Title: Hangman

Objective: to practice the vocabulary studied in classes in order to develop the Methods: independent word.

Skills: Speaking Listening Writing   Reading

Teaching means: board, and chalk

Instructions: Guess the missing letters to form the words.

Procedures: This classic game is a favorite for all students but it can get boring quite quickly. This game is best used for 5 minutes at the start to warm the class up or 5 minutes at the end if you've got some time left over. It works no matter how many students are in the class. Think of a word and write the number of letters on the board using dashes to show many letters there are. Ask students to suggest a letter. If it appears in the word, write it in all of the correct spaces. If the letter does not appear in the word, write it off to the side and begin drawing the image of a hanging man. Continue until the students guess the word correctly (they win) or you complete the diagram (you win) (Romero, Rosales, 2022) ."

2.5 Are there any particular age groups or skill levels that benefit more from these gamification strategies in English lessons?

Yes, primary school students, particularly those who are non-native speakers of English, benefit significantly from gamification strategies in English lessons. Gamification is particularly effective for younger learners because they are generally more outgoing and proactive, embracing various games. The design of successful gamification must consider the learners' levels and skills, ensuring that the games are appropriate for their age and language proficiency. This approach helps to engage students, improve their motivation, and enhance their learning experiences. Additionally, the sections highlight that gamification can help students retain knowledge and see real-world applications of what they learn, making it a rewarding experience for this age group (Li, Liu, 2022).

2.6 What are the benefits of applying gamification in English learning?

Increased Engagement: Gamification makes learning more attractive and interactive by incorporating game elements such as points, levels, and badges. This heightened engagement can lead to improved student participation and motivation in English language lessons.

Enhanced Learning Experience: By integrating game mechanics into English learning, students can enjoy a more enjoyable and rewarding learning process. Gamification can help learners retain knowledge more effectively, learn new concepts, and apply their English language skills in practical scenarios, making the learning experience more engaging and relevant.

Improved Satisfaction: Gamification can boost students' satisfaction and happiness in learning. It can also increase the engagement of introverted students, making the classroom environment more inclusive and enjoyable for all learners.

Motivated Behavior: Successful gamification strategies can motivate students to change their behavior, develop new skills, and solve problems more effectively. This can create a positive learning environment where students are actively involved in their own learning journey.

By leveraging gamification in English learning, teachers can create a dynamic and engaging educational setting that fosters student participation, enhances learning outcomes, and promotes a positive attitude towards language acquisition (Li, Liu, 2022).

CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

2.7 Potential Barriers; Addressing Concerns

Identification as well as appraisal of challenges related to using educational games, including time management and technology. The ways which deal with challenges and pass over possible hindrances in integrating didactic games.

"The teacher has to take into consideration certain variables, when she chooses games for the activity. The variables are the following: the age of the pupils, the level of the classroom, the pupils' interests. The teacher has to explain the rules and once something was settled, s/he should stick to what has been said. Otherwise pupils will lose interest and consider the teacher unfair. Teachers use role play, grouping games, card games and movement games very rarely. They explained their choice in terms of noise management, because movement games cause a lot of noise. Computer games are almost never used due to the lack of computers in the classroom. The teacher can be considered funny and friendly but at the same time strict. The most important is for him not to break his own rules and to shout in order to be heard. S/he should talk in a low and calm voice or to stop and give pupils time to make silence. They should be aware of the fact that for each minute the teacher loses over discipline matters, extra homework will be assigned. Our recommendation is to try and get over technology barriers or barriers attributed to exterior factors and work for the child's best interest. Didactic games are one of the most attractive techniques that teachers of English use with young learners, and not only, in the didactic process. They are interactive, communication based, challenging and most of all fun. Games stimulate and motivate pupils to achieve a new level in the mastery of a foreign language. Through playing, pupils want to learn more and are more confident in their ability to use the language. Games help teachers when they want to practice speaking, without neglecting spelling, reading and writing. They develop contexts where pupils can practice language in a useful manner. On the other hand, the teacher has to encourage pupils in their work, not highlight every mistake they make. S/he should be fair and honest, but also

understand the fact that being fair is not about being authoritarian and making faces when pupils make mistakes." (Padurean, 2013)

2.8 How can teachers design successful gamified activities

1. Sustaining Engagement and Focus: To keep learners motivated, gamified tasks should include clear goals, instant feedback, and storyline elements. For instance, "progress bars, points, and leaderboards" have been shown to boost learners' attention and persistence by providing visible markers of advancement (Chan, Lo, 2024). Embedding narrative contexts or themed challenges helps students feel immersed—much as Duolingo's daily streaks or Classcraft's cooperative quests do—so that they are eager to return and continue practicing.

2. Balancing Costs and Practicality: Implementing gamification often requires a trade-off between available technology and the time teachers can dedicate to course design. While teachers can adopt no-cost tools like Kahoot! or Quizlet Live to introduce game elements quickly, more sophisticated solutions (e.g., VR simulations or AI-driven scenarios) may demand institutional backing. Chan and Lo (2024) report that roughly half of educators cite "limited preparation time" as their biggest obstacle, highlighting the need for scalable templates and shared repositories of ready-made activities.

3. Aligning with Learning Goals: Successful gamification always ties back to clear language objectives—whether that's mastering new vocabulary, reinforcing grammar patterns, or improving conversational fluency. Scenario-based tasks that mimic real interactions (e.g., role-plays in a virtual marketplace) have been shown to strengthen speaking skills, while quiz-style mini-games can support rapid recall of target structures. The authors stress that every game element must serve **"formative assessment purposes, enabling teachers to monitor progress against curricular standards"** (Chan, Lo, 2024).

4. Tailoring the Learner Experience: Effective designs recognize that students benefit from customized pathways and low-pressure competition. Adaptive difficulty—such as Duolingo's algorithmic leveling—ensures that tasks remain challenging yet attainable. At the same time, team-based quizzes or cooperative puzzles (for example, Quizlet Live) foster social interaction and reduce speaking anxiety by providing a "safe environment for trial and error" (Chan, Lo, 2024).

5. Adapting to Context and Culture: When transplanting game elements into different settings, cultural and demographic factors must guide the design. In more individualistic contexts, public leaderboards can spur healthy rivalry; but in collectivist classrooms, small-group quests or shared point pools often yield better results. Chan & Lo (2024) also note the importance of **"localizing narrative themes"**—for instance, using historical storylines with older teens and more whimsical, fantasy motifs for younger learners—to keep content relevant and engaging. (Chan, Lo, 2024).

2.9 What challenges do teachers face when implementing gamification?

1) Resources and Time Investment (Aligning with Cost and Time Constraints): The research highlights that effective gamification necessitates a significant investment of time and effort from educators in the design phase. While the study does not explicitly quantify financial costs, the emphasis on the need for careful and intentional design of game mechanics implicitly suggests that educators must dedicate considerable time to planning and development. This aligns with the user's concern regarding time constraints. Moreover, external sources corroborate this, stating that designing practical gamification elements demands effort, creativity, and often funding. The need for educators to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to design and implement gamified activities effectively further underscores the time commitment involved. This suggests that the initial outlay of time and potentially financial resources is a significant hurdle that educators must consider when contemplating the use of gamification in their classrooms.

2) Focus on Rewards vs. Learning (Aligning with Student Distraction): The study discusses the potential for "superficial outcomes" when game elements are not strongly and relevantly integrated with the underlying learning objectives. It argues that if the game mechanics are not carefully aligned with educational goals, students might focus primarily on earning rewards, such as points or badges, without engaging in deep learning or fully understanding the material. For instance, simply awarding points for correct answers in a quiz might add an element of competition but may not necessarily enhance genuine understanding if the questions are not challenging or relevant. This echoes the user's concern that students might become more focused on the entertainment aspect of the game rather than the intended learning objectives. The research indicates that the key is to design gamified activities where

the game mechanics are intrinsically linked to the learning content, ensuring that engagement with the game naturally leads to the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

3) Catering to Diverse Learners (Aligning with Personalization): The research explicitly addresses the challenge that gamification may not be equally effective for all learning styles. Some students may prefer more structured and linear learning environments and might not find the open-ended and exploratory nature of many gamified experiences conducive to their learning. Additionally, students may have varying preferences for motivational factors, with some being less motivated by typical game elements like points, badges, and leaderboards. Furthermore, the study acknowledges that students with certain learning disabilities or cognitive differences might find it difficult to engage with gamified activities, especially those involving complex visual or textual elements. This directly aligns with the user's concern about the difficulty of personalizing gamified activities to cater to the diverse needs of all learners. The research suggests that educators need to consider a range of teaching methods alongside gamification to accommodate different learning preferences and ensure inclusivity for all students.

4) Motivation and Engagement (Including Extrinsic vs. Intrinsic): The study delves into the complexities of motivation in gamified learning environments, highlighting the potential for an over-reliance on extrinsic rewards to undermine intrinsic interest in the subject matter. While extrinsic motivators like points and badges can be effective in the short term, they might not foster a genuine passion for learning or lead to deep and lasting understanding. If students are primarily motivated by the desire to earn rewards, their engagement might diminish once those rewards are no longer available, and they may not develop an inherent desire to learn for its own sake. This resonates with the user's need to ensure that games are motivating and engaging for all students to achieve the desired learning outcomes. The research emphasizes the importance of balancing extrinsic rewards with elements that promote intrinsic motivation, such as a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, to ensure sustained engagement and a deeper commitment to learning.

5) Competition-Induced Stress and Hindrance of Collaboration: The study raises a significant challenge concerning the potential for gamification to foster a competitive culture that may not be conducive to collaborative learning and could induce stress in some students. Elements like leaderboards, while intended to motivate, can create anxiety for students who are not high achievers and might discourage them from participating. Furthermore, an intense

focus on individual success in a competitive environment can make students less willing to collaborate with their peers, hindering the development of teamwork and shared learning experiences. While the user's initial text does not explicitly mention competition, this is a related aspect of student engagement and the overall learning environment that the research highlights as a potential drawback of poorly designed gamification. Educators need to carefully consider the balance between competition and collaboration when implementing gamified activities to ensure a positive and inclusive learning environment for all students.

6) Lack of Understanding and Effective Integration: While not directly mirroring a specific point in the user's initial text, the research and other sources underscore a fundamental challenge: the need for educators to possess a thorough understanding of gamification principles and how to integrate them effectively into the curriculum. Simply adding game elements without a clear pedagogical rationale or alignment with learning objectives is unlikely to yield meaningful educational benefits. Educators need to understand how to design gamified activities that not only engage students but also promote the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills. The failure to integrate gamification thoughtfully into the curriculum can lead to superficial implementation and may not address the diverse needs of learners. This suggests that professional development and resources are crucial to equip educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to leverage gamification effectively and avoid potential pitfalls (Fuchs, 2023).

2.10 Solutions to the challenges that English teaching, particularly in the context of gamification, is currently facing

Solutions to the challenges that English teaching, particularly in the context of gamification, is currently facing.

Thorough Understanding of Classroom Dynamics: Teachers should have a detailed understanding of their classroom dynamics, including students' personalities and what they are learning. This knowledge can help in designing games that align with the learning objectives and cater to the needs of the students, thereby improving motivation and participation.

Ensuring Fitness of Games: Teachers need to ensure that the games used in English teaching are a good fit for the students. By establishing the fitness of the games, learners can avoid challenges that hinder their English learning progress.

Balancing Technology Integration: Educators must strike a balance between integrating gamification technologies and ensuring that the games are beneficial for students. This involves considering students' abilities and the educational value of the games to enhance learning experiences and promote English language acquisition effectively.

By implementing these solutions and adapting teaching strategies to address the identified challenges, educators can optimize the use of gamification in English teaching to enhance student engagement, motivation, and overall learning outcomes (Yanes, Bououd, 2019).

Recommendations for Teachers

2.11 Career Growth Opportunities; Mutual Support and Sharing of Available Materials

Recommend how teachers can use didactic games to improve their careers as they advance through teaching, by using them as life-long learning and adjustment tools. Insist on friendly relations among teachers that should foster sharing of educational games' materials, tactics, and effective examples towards unity advancement.

2.12 Constant Investigation and Modification

Emphasize the fluidity of language teaching and urge that tutors be conversant with emerging pedagogical game programs, regularly adjusting them as students demand it or when technological advancements occur.

"Many teachers are enthusiastic about using games as "learning tools", but they often view games as mere time-fillers, "a break from the monotony of drill" or frivolous. are taken as actions. Most teachers often ignore the fact that real learning takes place in a relaxed environment and that students use language they have encountered and practiced before.

All games or exercises in a foreign language open the way to the magical world of words. Therefore, I think that every person who wants to be a real foreign language teacher should be creative, i.e. adapt to the students' knowledge without always using the same games, and use their words every time. you can change, choose the appropriate one, create new ones, and generally make the lesson more interesting and enjoyable with the help of these games (Dilnoza, Ruhshona, 2023)."

PART III

EXAMINING GAMIFICATION IN ENGLISH CLASSES

3.1 Participants

The integration of gamification into educational practices, particularly in English lessons, presents a transformative opportunity for secondary English teachers in Transcarpathia, Ukraine. This comprehensive analysis explores the responses from a questionnaire administered to 25 teachers, providing an in-depth examination of their experiences, perceptions, and challenges with gamified lesson planning. Each of the 16 questions is meticulously analyzed, incorporating demographic patterns, qualitative insights, cross-question correlations, and practical implications tailored to the region's unique context. The goal is to present the advantages that gamification can bring to classroom teaching, as well as to raise awareness of the challenges that may arise during its implementation. It is essential to develop a broad and comprehensive understanding of the positive impact gamification can have for both teachers and students.

3.2 Research tool

I conducted an empirical study to see how fellow English teachers actually use games. I designed a Google Forms questionnaire with questions on:

- **Demographics:** Age and years of teaching experience.

- **Frequency:** How often do they include games?

- **Age groups:** Which student ages benefit most?

- **Game types:** Quizzes, board games, role-plays, memory games, matching activities.

- **Objectives:** Making lessons enjoyable, boosting participation, fostering competition/cooperation.

- **Implementation:** Interactive whiteboards, cards, live role-plays.

- **Focus areas:** Vocabulary expansion, skill development (speaking, writing, reading, listening), or revision of previous material.
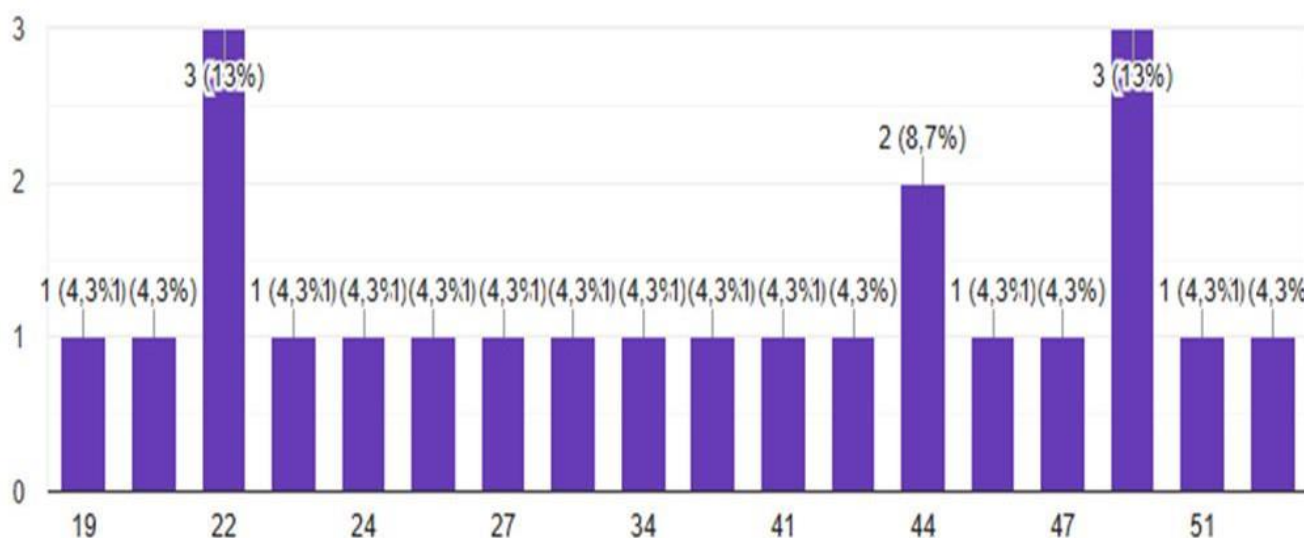
I piloted the survey with a small group, refined the questions, then invited teachers from a variety of schools to respond. After collecting the data, I analyzed both quantitative responses (e.g., frequency charts, experience distributions) and qualitative comments (open-ended insights about the most effective game formats and common obstacles).

3.3 Findings and their discussion

Based on the analysis of the results, a clear picture of the success of gamification was gained: its impact on students, how frequently it can be implemented, the age groups with whom games are most often used, the reasons why gamification is considered important, and the areas of learning where it proves to be the most effective during lessons.

Since teaching experience also plays a crucial role in the accuracy and relevance of our findings, a question was included for participating English teachers: "How many years of experience of teaching English do you have?" Most respondents reported having more than one year of experience, and an impressive 34 years of teaching practice in the field was even shared by one participant. This diversity in experience enriched the data and a more nuanced understanding of how gamification is perceived and applied across various levels of teaching expertise was provided.

In the first question of my questionnaire, the age of the respondents was examined. The respondents are between 19 and 56 years old, showing that they come from different age groups and have different levels of experience (figure 6).

The number of years of English teaching experience among respondents is revealed by the data in figure 7. A diverse range of experience levels, spanning from one to 28 years, is reflected in the data. It is shown by the results that a medium amount of experience is held by many teachers. The most common amounts of experience are four, six, and eight years, with each of these being reported by three teachers, while the peak is reached at an impressive 34 years. It is demonstrated that a good amount of experience is possessed by many teachers, along with both practical skills and the ability to adapt.
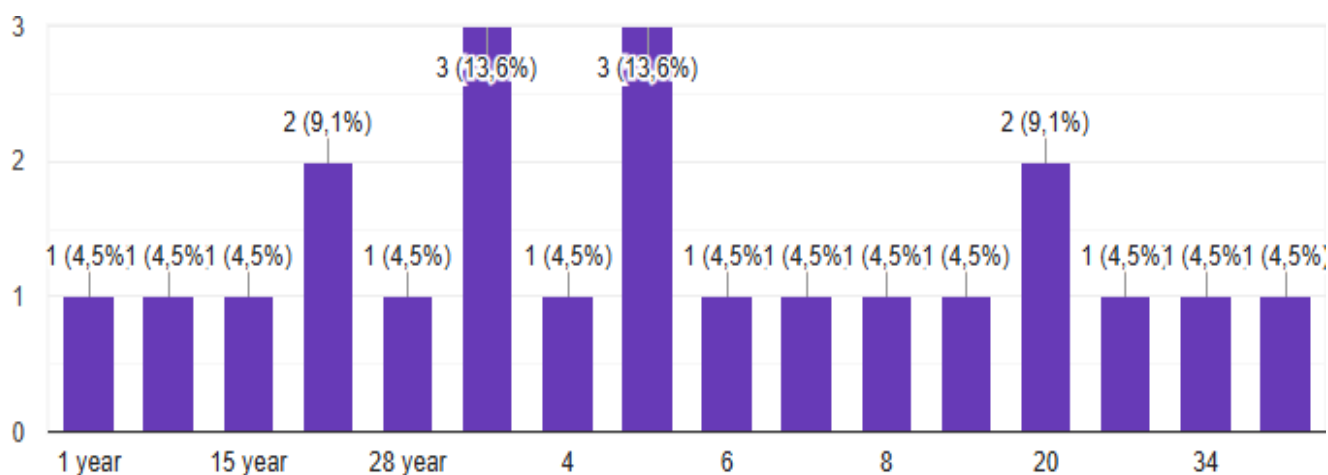
Figure 7. How many years of English teaching experience the respondents have

It is shown by the data in Figure 8 that games are used by teachers with children of all ages, ranging from the youngest in elementary school (such as 6-10-year-olds) up to older teenagers (like 15-17-year-olds). However, the preference for games that can be used with "any grade" is demonstrated by many teachers, indicating a desire for games that can be easily adapted and applied to different age groups. Such games are likely considered highly useful in situations where limited teaching materials are available or where students of varying ages and skill levels are taught in the same class.
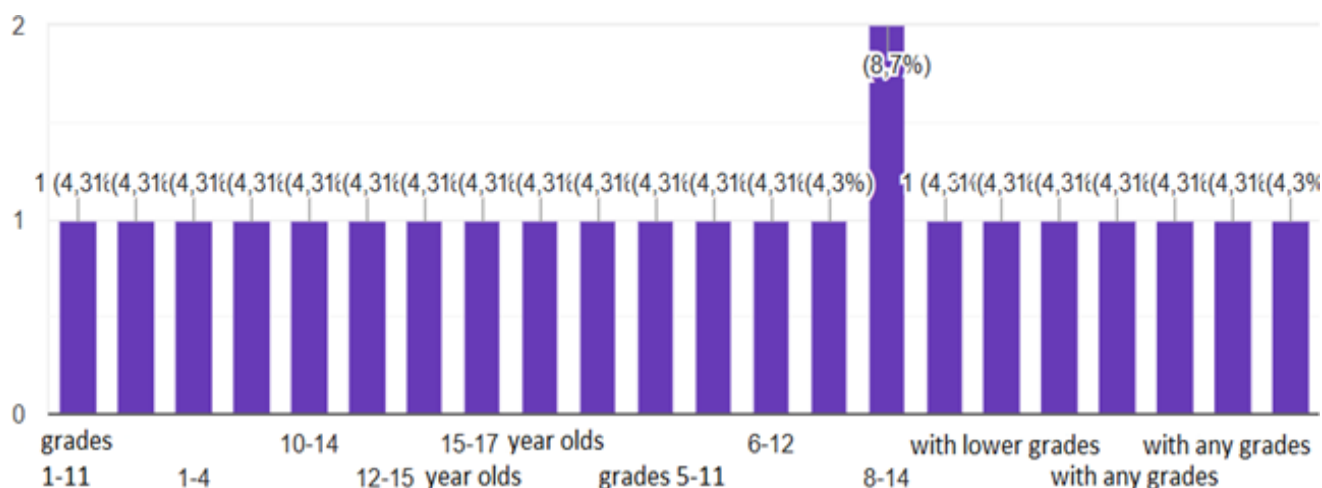
Figure 8. Age groups with which educators most frequently use games

It was stated by all respondents (100% of them) that games are used in their English lessons. This demonstrates that the value of using games in teaching is recognized by every single respondent. Regardless of age, experience level, or student type taught, it is agreed that games are considered an important and useful part of language learning. This also indicates that gamification (the use of games in teaching) is widely accepted and appreciated by the participating teachers A key role is played by gamification in making lessons more enjoyable, keeping students engaged, and enhancing their language skills.

The frequency of game use (Figure 9) is varied, reflecting different teaching styles and classroom dynamics:

• **Weekly**: Games are used once a week by approximately 72.7% of the teachers, making this the most common frequency. A balanced approach is suggested, where games are integrated regularly but not overwhelmingly.

• **Every Lesson**: Games are incorporated into every lesson by about 13.6% of the teachers, indicating a strong reliance on gamification, particularly with younger learners.

• **Less Frequently (or depends on topic):** Games are used less often by about 9% of the teachers, with responses such as "rarely" or "depends on the topic and material planned." This flexibility indicates that game use is tailored by some teachers to specific lesson needs.

This demonstrates that games are employed in classes quite frequently, though not constantly. Games are utilized alongside other teaching methods, showing they are combined withdifferent pedagogical approaches.
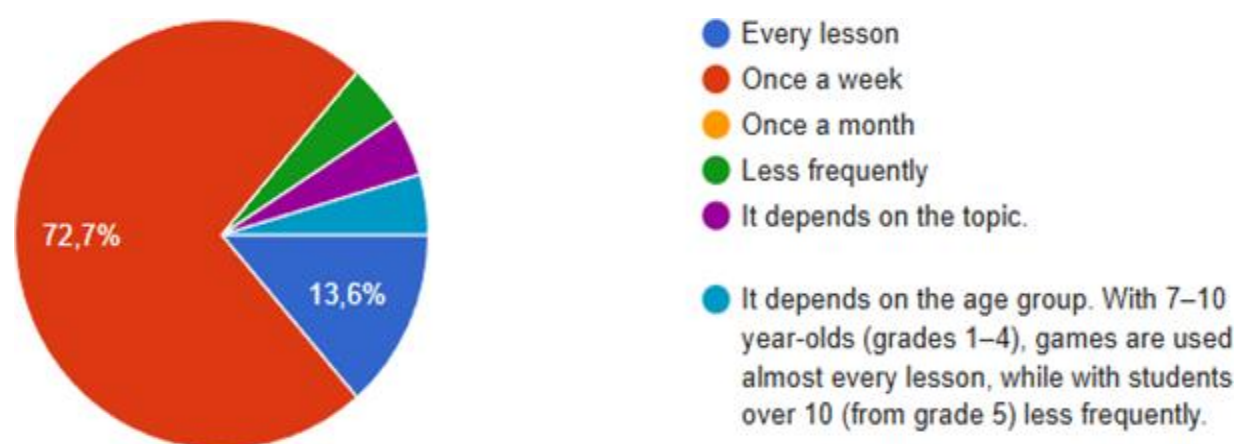

Figure 9. Frequency of Game Use

The question "What types of games do you use?" was included in the questionnaire (Figure 10). A diverse array of games was reported to be used by teachers, each serving different educational purposes:

• **Quizzes:** This type was mentioned most frequently by 12 teachers, likely because they are easily implemented and effective for quick assessments or vocabulary drills.

• **Role-Playing Games:** These were noted by five teachers, with real-life scenarios being simulated to enhance communication and contextual language use.

• **Matching Games:** These were utilized by three teachers, being ideal for vocabulary to be paired with meanings or concepts, thus reinforcing memory and understanding.

• **Memory Games:** These were mentioned by two teachers, with focus being placed on recall and cognitive skills, typically targeting younger learners.

Various game types are employed by many teachers. The games that work best for their students' needs and lesson objectives are selected by them.
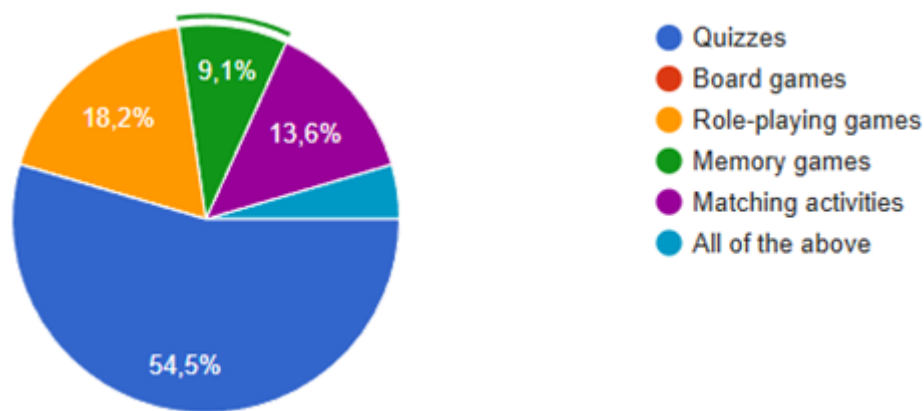
Figure 10. Types of Games Used

The question "What is the purpose of using games?" was included in the questionnaire (Figure 11). The primary purposes for incorporating games were identified by teachers as follows:

• **Enhancing Active Participation:** This purpose was cited by 16 teachers as being dominant, with games' role in actively engaging students in the learning process being emphasized.

• **Making Lessons More Enjoyable:** This motivational aspect was noted by 5 teachers, with the monotony of traditional methods being broken through game implementation.

• **Fostering Competition and Cooperation:** This dual potential was mentioned by 1 teacher, with both competitive and collaborative dynamics being stimulated based on game design.

The rationale behind game usage was found to align well with the core concept of game-based learning. The objectives were determined to be making learning more enjoyable and interactive, while greater focus was placed on student-centered approaches. Through this method, learning was made more entertaining and engaging for students.
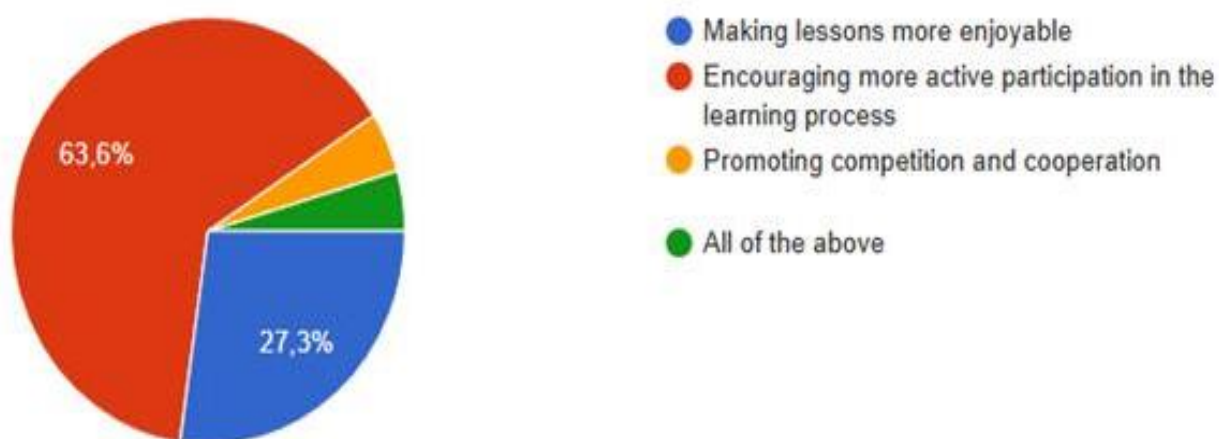
Figure 11. Purposes for Using Games

The question "Why do you consider it important for children to play games during English lessons?" was included in the questionnaire. Detailed reasons for the essential nature of games were provided by teachers, revealing their educational value:

• **Learning Through Play:** A recurring theme was identified (e.g., "kids learn most easily through play" - Teacher 14 or "they don't notice they're learning" - Teacher 3), indicating that a relaxed, enjoyable atmosphere is created by games where language acquisition is experienced as natural rather than forced.

• **Enhancing Motivation:** Responses such as "increases motivation" and "makes lessons more enjoyable" (Teacher 13) suggested that English is made more appealing by games, especially for students who might otherwise lack interest.

• **Improved Retention:** It was noted by teachers that material is remembered better by students (e.g., vocabulary or grammar) due to the interactive nature of games (Teacher 8).

• **Skill Development Without Pressure:** Comments including "they practice unconsciously" and "overcome inhibitions" (Teacher 2) demonstrated how English skills are practiced naturally by students through games, particularly speaking and listening.

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• **Fostering Positive Attitudes:** Statements like "they grow to love the language" (Teacher 5) and "creates a friendly environment" (Teacher 16) showed how long-term interest in learning English can be maintained by games.

From these findings, it is demonstrated that games are not merely supplementary in English teaching. They are recognized as a crucial component for effective language instruction, with learning outcomes being improved and student enjoyment being enhanced through their use.

The question "How do you use games?" was included in the questionnaire (Figure 12). Various methods for integrating games are employed by teachers, depending on available resources and objectives:

• **Interactive Whiteboards:** This digital tool is utilized by 13 teachers, being popular for quizzes and interactive activities. A reliance on technology in modern classrooms is reflected through this method.

• **Cards:** Physical cards are cited by 4 teachers as being commonly used for matching or memory games. A tactile, low-tech option is offered by this approach.

• **Role-Playing:** This method is mentioned by 2 teachers as a standalone technique, where scenarios are acted out by students, often without additional tools being required.

• **Mixed Methods:** Some responses (e.g., "cards, role-playing, crosswords") indicate that methods are combined by teachers, with adaptations being made according to lesson content and student preferences.

It can be observed that smart boards are being used in many classrooms for learning games, representing a shift toward digital game implementation. However, traditional methods such as card games, role-playing activities and crosswords continue to be utilized as well.
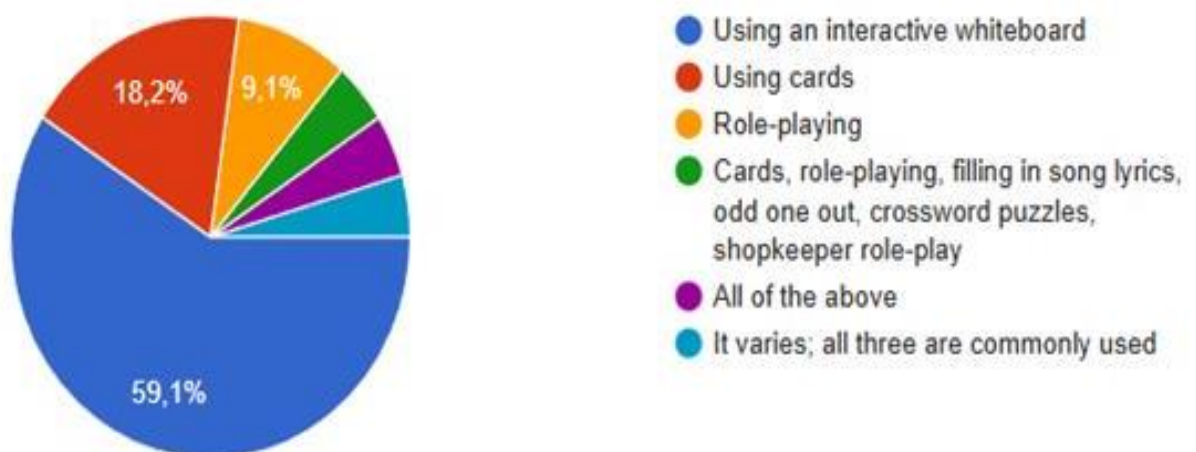
Figure 12. Methods of Game Implementation

The question "What is the primary focus of the games: vocabulary development, skills development (speaking, writing, reading, listening) or revision of previously learned material?" was included in the questionnaire (Figure 13).

It was observed that games help students to be improved in many different areas of language learning, with multiple benefits being highlighted simultaneously by teachers. The main goals identified for game usage in English lessons were reported as follows:

1. **Vocabulary Expansion (Learning New Words):** This was found to be the most common purpose for game implementation, being mentioned by 14 teachers either directly or indirectly. New words were reported to be learned more easily and remembered better through games. Since vocabulary building is considered one of the most crucial aspects of language learning, this area is frequently supported by game-based activities. Greater engagement is maintained by students when new vocabulary is learned and used in context through games.

2. **Skill Development (Improving Language Skills):** Language skills were reported by 12 teachers to be enhanced through games. Improvements were noted in speaking (including pronunciation practice), listening, reading, and occasionally writing. Increased confidence in speaking English and better communication abilities were also

attributed to game usage by many teachers. Due to their interactive and enjoyable nature, more participation is encouraged from students in speaking, listening, and classroom activities.

3. **Reinforcement of Learned Material (Review and Practice):** Games were stated by 9 teachers to be utilized for reviewing previously covered material. Previously learned lessons were found to be reinforced through games, with grammar rules, vocabulary, and sentence structures being better remembered. Material review was reported to be accomplished in an enjoyable way, often without students realizing they were studying again.

4. **Multiple Simultaneous Goals:** Games were explained by many teachers to be particularly useful because different learning objectives can be combined within a single activity. For example, new vocabulary acquisition, speaking practice, and material review were described as being achievable simultaneously through one game. Phrases such as "all three areas" or "vocabulary and skills" were used by teachers to demonstrate the versatility of games in supporting various aspects of language learning. Consequently, games were recognized as both efficient and enjoyable classroom methods.
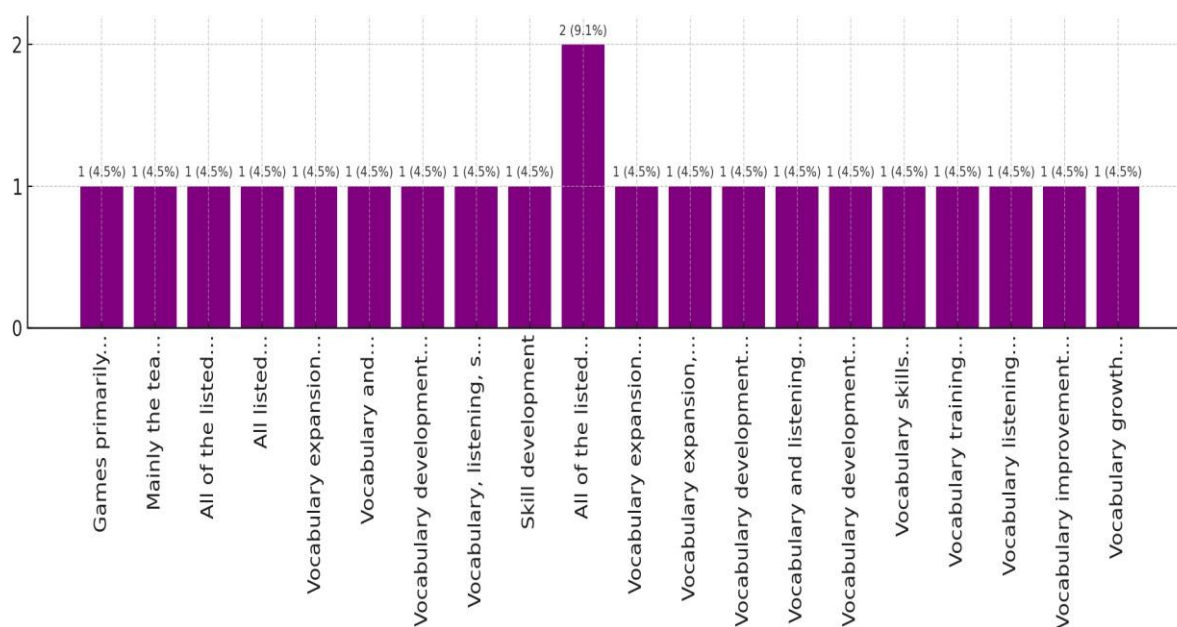
Figure 13. Focus Areas of Games

In conclusion, educational games were found to effectively support vocabulary expansion, language skill development, and the reinforcement of previously learned material. Teachers emphasized the multifunctionality of games, highlighting their ability to address multiple learning objectives within a single activity. Overall, games were recognized as engaging, efficient tools that enhance both student participation and learning outcomes in English language education.

CONCLUSION

The integration of gamification into English language teaching (ELT) has proven to be a powerful strategy for enhancing student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes in secondary schools of Transcarpathia. This bachelor's thesis investigated the effects of gamification on English language acquisition, focusing on its implementation in a multilingual region with unique educational challenges and opportunities. The research combined theoretical analysis with empirical data collected from English teachers via Google Forms, revealing that gamification is universally adopted and highly valued for its ability to transform traditional lessons into dynamic, student-centered experiences.

The findings demonstrate that gamification, supported by theories of interactive and experiential learning, significantly boosts students' motivation and participation. All surveyed teachers incorporate games into their lessons, with the majority doing so weekly, using a variety of formats such as quizzes, role-playing, and matching games. These activities cater to diverse age groups and skill levels, proving adaptable and effective for vocabulary development, skill enhancement (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), and material revision. Teachers reported that games foster a supportive environment where students feel confident to take risks, improving their language proficiency and attitudes toward English learning.

Despite its benefits, gamification presents challenges, including time constraints, resource limitations, and the need for careful design to ensure educational depth over mere entertainment. Studies underscores the importance of aligning game mechanics with specific learning objectives and balancing extrinsic rewards (e.g., points, badges) with intrinsic motivators (e.g., autonomy, mastery). Addressing these challenges requires professional development for teachers and institutional support to provide scalable, accessible tools.

In summary, gamification offers a promising approach to English language education, enhancing motivation and acquisition in a multilingual context. Future efforts should focus on creating adaptable game-based resources, investigating long-term impacts, and fostering collaboration among educators to share strategies and overcome practical barriers. By leveraging gamification thoughtfully, teachers can cultivate an engaging and effective learning environment that meets the diverse needs of their students.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Мета дослідження: Ця кваліфікаційна робота присвячена дослідженню впливу
гейміфікації на мотивацію та академічну успішність учнів середніх шкіл Закарпаття під
час вивчення англійської мови. Основною метою було з'ясувати, як використання
ігрових елементів у навчальному процесі може підвищити зацікавленість учнів,
покращити їхні мовні навички (говоріння, слухання, читання, письмо) та визначити
оптимальні способи адаптації гейміфікації до потреб сучасного освітнього середовища.
Особлива увага приділялася унікальному багатомовному контексту Закарпаття, де учні
часто стикаються з кількома мовами (українською, угорською, російською тощо), що
може ускладнювати вивчення англійської. Гейміфікація розглядається як інноваційний
підхід, який здатен зробити процес навчання більш динамічним, інтерактивним і
привабливим для учнів із різноманітним лінгвістичним досвідом.

Дослідження ґрунтується на двох ключових компонентах: теоретичному аналізі
літератури з гейміфікації та емпіричному опитуванні вчителів англійської мови,
проведеному за допомогою Google Forms. Теоретична частина включала огляд
сучасних джерел, які описують принципи гейміфікації, її переваги та можливі виклики
в освіті. Емпіричне опитування охопило 22 вчителів англійської мови із середніх шкіл
Закарпаття. Анкета складалася з кількох блоків питань:

- Демографічні дані: вік учителів, стаж роботи, тип школи (міська чи сільська).

- Частота використання ігор: як часто вчителі застосовують ігрові методи (щодня,
  щотижня, щомісяця).

- Вікові групи учнів: молодші класи (11–13 років) чи старші (14–17 років).

- Типи ігор: які саме ігри використовуються (наприклад, вікторини, рольові ігри,
  ігри на зіставлення).

- Цілі використання: які освітні завдання ставляться (розширення словникового
  запасу, розвиток навичок, мотивація).

- Методи впровадження: як вчителі інтегрують ігри в уроки (індивідуально, у
  групах, з використанням технологій).

Отримані дані були оброблені за допомогою Microsoft Excel, що дозволило систематизувати відповіді та представити результати у вигляді графіків і таблиць для наочності й зручності аналізу. Наприклад, графіки показували частоту використання ігор, а таблиці — розподіл типів ігор залежно від вікових груп учнів.

Усі опитані вчителі повідомили, що застосовують ігри на своїх уроках англійської мови, причому більшість робить це щотижня. Найпоширенішими типами ігор виявилися:

- Вікторини: швидкі тести для перевірки знань або закріплення лексики (наприклад, "Guess the Word" чи "Quiz Time").

- Рольові ігри: симуляція реальних ситуацій (наприклад, "At the Airport" чи "Shopping"), які розвивають комунікативні навички.

- Ігри на зіставлення: завдання на співвідношення слів із їхніми значеннями чи картинками, що сприяють запам'ятовуванню.

Ці активності спрямовані на досягнення кількох цілей: розширення словникового запасу учнів, удосконалення їхніх мовних навичок (говоріння, слухання, читання, письмо) та повторення раніше вивченого матеріалу. Наприклад, рольові ігри допомагають учням практикувати англійську в реальних контекстах, а вікторини дозволяють швидко перевірити прогрес у засвоєнні нових слів чи граматичних конструкцій.

Результати показали, що гейміфікація значно підвищує мотивацію учнів, їхню впевненість у своїх силах і готовність активно використовувати англійську мову на уроках. Учителі зазначили, що ігри створюють невимушену атмосферу, де учні почуваються комфортно, а процес навчання сприймається як цікава пригода, а не як обов'язок.

Незважаючи на позитивні результати, учителі зіткнулися з низкою труднощів:

- Обмеження часу: підготовка ігор вимагає значних зусиль, що може скорочувати час на пояснення нового матеріалу чи виконання інших завдань із програми. Наприклад, створення сценарію для рольової гри чи підготовка матеріалів для вікторини може займати кілька годин.

- Брак ресурсів: не всі школи мають доступ до сучасних технологій (комп'ютерів, проєкторів) чи навіть базових матеріалів (картки, ігрові дошки). У сільських школах ця проблема є особливо гострою.

- Ретельне планування: без належної підготовки ігри можуть стати розвагою, а не навчальним інструментом, що призводить до поверхневих результатів. Учителі наголосили на необхідності підбирати ігри, які відповідають рівню знань учнів і конкретним цілям уроку.

Ці виклики вказують на потребу в додатковій підтримці вчителів, наприклад, через професійні тренінги чи доступ до готових ігрових матеріалів.

Гейміфікація виявилася ефективним інструментом для покращення вивчення англійської мови в Закарпатті, особливо в його багатомовному середовищі. Вона не лише сприяє розвитку мовних навичок, а й створює сприятливе навчальне середовище, яке підвищує мотивацію учнів і покращує їхні академічні результати. Щоб досягти максимального ефекту, учителям рекомендується:

- Узгоджувати ігри з конкретними навчальними цілями (наприклад, гра на повторення граматики має фокусуватися на відповідних структурах).

- Адаптувати ігри до потреб учнів, враховуючи їхній вік, рівень знань і культурний контекст.

- Використовувати прості й доступні формати ігор, які не потребують складних ресурсів.

Майбутні дослідження могли б зосередитися на розробці гнучких ігрових ресурсів, які легко адаптувати до різних класів і тем. Наприклад, створення онлайн-бази шаблонів ігор, які вчителі могли б налаштовувати під свої уроки, значно полегшило б їхню роботу. Також варто проаналізувати довгострокові ефекти гейміфікації: як вона впливає на збереження мовних навичок через рік чи більше після використання ігор? Чи сприяє вона кращому засвоєнню англійської в порівнянні з традиційними методами? Такі дослідження могли б включати контрольні групи та тривалі спостереження за учнями.

Гейміфікація відкриває нові можливості для викладання англійської мови в Закарпатті, де традиційні методи можуть бути менш ефективними через мовну різноманітність регіону. Створюючи цікаві й захопливі уроки, учителі можуть допомогти учням

подолати бар'єри в навчанні та розвинути позитивне ставлення до англійської мови. У перспективі це може сприяти кращій інтеграції учнів у глобальний світ, де знання англійської є важливим активом.

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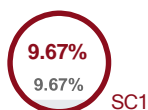
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