

Role of Gamification in Language Learning

Dr. N. Prathyusha,

Lecturer, Department of English

St. Ann's College for Women,

Hyderabad, India- 500004

Abstract:

Language learning plays a prominent role in the present scenario, as English is language for communication not just in Education, but also in Business, Sports, Trade, etc. Different theories and strategies have been introduced to make learning more interesting according to the needs of the learner. The use of Games is an innovating way to learn language which has been gaining popularity. Gamification for language learning, is very motivating and inspiring for the learner as it has many challenges to be covered, goals to be achieved and finally win many rewards.

Keywords:

Gamification, language learning, rewards, leader boards, motivation

Globally, Gamification is considered to be one of the most popular and preferred trends of learning among the students. Games are a way where learning occurs through Intense experiences where the students have fun, satisfaction in completing a task.

According to Suzanne Holloway

Gamification is the use of game design and mechanics to enhance non-game contexts by increasing participation, engagement, loyalty and competition.

The use of Games in educational institutions toward language L2 learning involves pedagogical approaches, methodologies, and strategies. Gamification in education is an approach which is being developed at a rapid phase to engage and motivate the students by incorporating game design elements in the educational institutions. According to Werbach and Hunter (2012), Gamification is the use of game elements and game design techniques in non-game contexts. It is based in the success of the gaming industry, social media, and decades of research in human psychology. Using games in education helps in motivating the students, enhancing friendly competitions among peers, and the cognitive and behavioral changes. Seaborn & Fels (2015) opined that Gamification is a multidisciplinary concept spanning a range of theoretical and empirical knowledge, technological domains and platforms and is driven by an array of practical motivations. Different people has defined Gamification in different ways as

According to Deterding, Dixon, Khaled, & Nacke, 2011

‘the use of game design elements in non-game contexts’

Hamari, Koivisto, & Sarsa, 2014 expressed that

‘the phenomenon of creating gameful experiences’

Werbach, 2014 further said that gamification is

‘the process of making activities more game-like’

Realizing the motivating factors, incorporating games in education has taken a positive step. Introducing game design elements and gameful experiences in the designing of teaching-learning processes can be referred as Gamification. Caponetto et al. (2014) expressed that Gamification in Education has been adopted to support learning in a variety of contexts and subject areas and to address related attitudes, activities, and behaviors, such as participatory approaches, collaboration, self-guided study, completion of assignments, making assessments easier and more effective, integration of exploratory approaches to learning, and strengthening student creativity and retention. Sailer, Hense, Mandl, and Klevers (2013) explained the significance of games for achieving the goals as follows

The term game is usually understood to imply the following situational components: a goal, which has to be achieved; limiting rules which determine how to reach the goal; a feedback system which provides information about progress towards the goal; and the fact that participation is voluntary”.

The concept of Gamification is unique and if properly implemented has several advantages like rewards, quests, graphs, avatars, social elements, Leader boards, performance graphs etc. Each game element used enhances the language capacity, confidence of the learner and finally helps in accomplishing their goal of learning the target language. The use of games in the classroom is simplifying the work of the teachers and builds support system among the learners.

According to the NMCHorizon Report (2014), as mentioned by Jorge Francisco Figueroa Flores (2015) in his article ‘Using Gamification to Enhance Second Language Learning’

the Gamification of education is gaining support among educators who recognize that effectively designed games can stimulate large gains in productivity and creativity among learners.

The following are few Apps for Gamification to Motivate and Enhance Second Language Learning

The concept of Gamification for Language learning uses many tools to enhance the process of language learning and to inspire the learners. In a gamified classroom setting, the language app will serve the purpose according to the needs and requirements of the target group. Some of the Gamification apps which are frequently used in L2 learning: Duolingo, Edmodo, Class Dojo, Zondle, Languagenut, FluentU, , Socrative, Brainscape, The Language Game and MindSnacks



Duolingo

(image Source: <https://www.duolingo.com/>)

With the caption ‘Gamification poured into every lesson’, this language learning app is a place where learners progress and learn through various levels. Frederic Lardinois (2018) expressed that there are 300 million users worldwide. The learner can learn any of the six languages i.e. English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German, and French and it works well for iPhone, Android, iPod and iPod Touch. Duolingo lessons adapt to the individual learner’s learning style as the exercises are tailored to help them learn and review vocabulary effectively. This app effectively covers all the areas of speaking, grammar, listening and vocabulary. According to STEVIE D.,

Duolingo gets you to do a series of gamified language learning tasks, such as translating words and phrases back and forth, listening to a phrase and typing what you hear, pronouncing target language words into your phone’s mic or building sentences in your target language.

Retrieved from <https://www.fluentu.com/blog/language-learning-gamification/>

Different themes are organized, with tasks delivered with the help of micro lessons. Virtual currency is rewarded upon successful completion of the task. This currency can be used to buy prizes (i.e. extra lessons, bonus skills, cool outfits for the Duolingo mascot, Duo the owl). Not just this, Duolingo also rewards the learners by presenting “Sharpshooter” badge to a student who completes a new lesson without making mistakes. The “Triple Digits,” is

given to the learner who earns 100 points in one day. Since the feedback for all the tasks is given immediately, keeping a track on the progress is much easier. This app is liked by most of the educators, as it motivates student-driven work along with communication and collaboration.

Edmodo

(Image Source: <https://www.edmodo.com/>)

Edmodo is a safe social networking platform for all educational level students, which has a similar interface like Facebook with 87.4 million users as mentioned in Edmodo.com. According to Edmodo

Edmodo is an educational technology company offering a communication, collaboration, and coaching platform to K-12 schools and teachers. The Edmodo network enables teachers to share content, distribute quizzes, assignments, and manage communication with students, colleagues, and parents.

Edmodo is used as an extension of the classroom with Gamification elements like badges and quests. As in Facebook, learners can comment on posts, submit their assignments, and finally track the progress. Jorge Francisco ;Figuroa Flores(2015) opined that this app is useful as

Educators can post polls, open discussion boards, design quizzes, and post assignment. It's a great motivating tool for L2 instruction because it promotes collaborative learning, teamwork, and parents have an account where they can receive feedback from the instructor.

Apart from this the learners can also practice spelling and grammar through various conversational postings. The peers can also create differentiated instruction through small groups and shared folders. Edmodo application can be used with any, iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad, Android, Windows Phone, Web browser.



Class Dojo

(Image Source: <https://www.classdojo.com/>)

With the caption “Bring every family into your classroom” ClassDojo application is presented as a perfect example of Gamification.

According to the website ‘Class Dojo’

ClassDojo is a school communication platform that teachers, students, and families use every day to build close-knit communities by sharing what's being learned in the classroom home through photos, videos, and messages.

Retrieved from <https://www.classdojo.com/>

Chaykowski, Kathleen (2017) further mention from Class Dojo that

its app is used by teachers, children and families in 95% of pre-kindergarten through eighth grade schools in the United States, as well in a further 180 countries.

This app motivates the elementary level language learners with the use of different strategies that bring together avatars, leader boards and points. Class Dojo provides the facilitator with a platform for learner behavior management. The Teachers persuade learner for any skill or value they possess like working hard, being kind to all, helping others or anything else. The Students in turn can display and share their learning and ideas by adding photos and videos to their individual portfolios. This app facilitates the involvement of parents who can connect with the

educator and keep a track on the progress of the student, since the feedback is immediate after submission of project. Class Dojo can be accessed via the Web interface or iOS app or an Android.



Zondle

(Image Source: <https://twitter.com/zondle/photo>)

Zondle is a Game Based Language Learning app that incorporates Gamification as the learner can create quizzes and has plenty of content available for learning. While the student is engaged in the games, it is considered as a reward upon completing their tasks or homework. According to Zondle

Zondle is a website where teachers can go to actually create custom games that teach kids with questions and answers integrated into a game environment.

All the Zondle users i.e. both the teacher and student can customize their own Zondle character. They can choose the color, eye style, hair and e.t.c. The Zondle app helps the learners with the exercises/quizzes it has. Gaming elements like avatars, leaderboards, and Zollars motivate the learners to complete their tasks better. EdTech Review expressed their opinion saying

Zondle is a very nice GBL platform specially for kids. The prebuilt games, questions and question formats help teachers to manage their work easily. Also, the games are very engaging and the question types are also impressive. The level of customizability is very handy and helps the teachers to create personalized environment for their students. Also, the avatars are very creative.

Learners can access Zondle thru web browsers, Tablets and smartphones and tablets.



Languagenut

(Source: <https://www.languagenut.com/en-au/>)

Languagenut is a language learning platform which was initially designed to be integrated into classroom instruction, which consists of stories, songs, tests and games.

Languagenut consist of gamified language learning elements with not just points and gold medals but also leaderboards which motivates the students to complete the tasks more effectively to see their name on a higher rank. Different varieties of games are presented involving an educational twist which adds more spark to the students.

According to Zoë Worth

Languagenut is a great resource as it enables pupils to reinforce their vocabulary, whilst simultaneously practicing the four keys skills of Modern Foreign Language learning, namely Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. There are also many other languages apart from French which the children can try out.

Retrieved from <https://www.languagenut.com/asia/>



FluentU

(Image Source: <https://www.fluentu.com/>)

FluentU is a unique language app with authentic target language resources, which the learners learn through various games. Stevie,D further expressed that

With FluentU, you get to watch diverse video clips including real-world interviews, movie trailers, YouTube clips and much more. The magic starts to happen as you watch and explore the interactive subtitles. Click any word you're interested in and you'll get a definition, translation, pronunciation and usage. You can even cross reference the word and see other videos that contain it, so you can have more contexts for its use.

Retrieved from <https://www.fluentu.com/blog/language-learning-gamification/>

This language learning app works well for mobiles, tablets, and computers. This Hong Kong-based company. Initially started with teaching Chinese, later started English, Korean, Russian, French, Italian and German through that specializes in learning through videos, such as movie trailers, music videos, or news broadcasts.



(Image Source: <https://blogs.umass.edu/onlinetools/assessment-centered-tools/socrative/>)

The caption for the Socrative app says “Your classroom app for fun, effective engagement and on-the-fly assessments.”

Socrative is a dynamic smart learner response application that engages students to a formative and summative assessment, where the language learning takes place effortlessly, leaving the stress involved in trials and errors, which lowers anxiety .According to Nicole Nawalaniec(2015)

Socrative is a free online assessment tool that allows instructors to administer in-class quizzes, view responses in real time, and generate reports to monitor and visualize student learning. It, therefore, provides a means for carrying out pre-class testing so that instructors understand what students know prior to the session, as well as conduct formative and summative assessment.

This app includes strategies like live results, immediate feedback, and effortless data analysis upon importing images to the question items. Socrative can be used in ChromeOS, iOS, and Android



Brainscape

(Image Source: <https://www.brainscape.com/>)

Brainscape also known as confidence-based repetition is a very interesting and challenging app, which integrates customizable flashcard to track student progress.

The app explains, Brainscape as

The World's Smartest Flashcards

Learn twice as fast, and remember longer.

Proven by decades of cognitive science.

It further explains that

Brainscape's Confidence-Based Repetition method is proven by decades of cognitive science research into how we learn and retain information

Brainscape a great enhancer as demands learners to think critically for answering questions regarding their vocabulary learning. Automatic feedback, support and precise phrases in the target language along with sentence construction are the significant features of the app. To top this Audio is also provided for the language cards which, makes it more interesting. This app is compatible with all the smart phones and devices.

The Language Game



Source: <https://greatlanguagegame.com/>

The Language Game is a Gamification app which consists of mini-games where a learner plays with another language learner, even when two people are studying different languages. This unique feature creates competition as the game adjusts to the learner's language when it's their turn to play. This app doesn't need an internet connection to play, once the app is downloaded into the system.

The motivating factor about this app is that instead of playing the game with some anonymous learner on the other side of the world, the person they are playing with is someone they know, may be a friend, cousin or relative. It makes language learning not only fun but also very competitive and challenging as they can tease and make fun of the other person online.



MindSnacks

(Image Source: <https://www.mindsnacks.com/>)

MindSnacks, "games for your brain," got awarded as "Best Education Apps of the Year." In 2011 by the Apple Store, which consists of around nine games and about 1,000 vocabulary words to learn Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Chinese and Japanese

Each player has an avatar, which levels up the more the player plays the games. MindSnacks keeps the learner glued to the game as it takes care of an evolving avatar i.e. starting from being a harmless egg to an increasingly awesome creature. The learner gets the feeling that they are raising a pet while learning the target language since the graphics of the app look cute and cuddly. This app is presently accessible for iPhone, iTouch and iPad devices.

Bibliography

Caponetto, I., Earp, J., & Ott, M. (2014). Gamification and education: a literature review. In 8th European Conference on Games Based Learning (pp. 50–57). Germany: ECGBL. ISBN 978-1-910309-55-1.

Chaykowski, Kathleen (2017). "*How ClassDojo Built One of the Most Popular Classroom Apps by Listening to Teachers*". Forbes. Retrieved August 4, 2017.

<https://educationaltechnologyjournal.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s41239-017-0042-5>

<https://www.intechopen.com/books/socialization-a-multidimensional-perspective/a-review-of-research-on-gamification-approach-in-education>

Deterding, S., Dixon, D., Khaled, R., & Nacke, L. (2011). From game design elements to gamefulness: defining gamification. In 15th International Academic MindTrek Conference: Envisioning Future Media Environments (pp. 9–15). New York, NY: ACM.

EdTech Review(2013).Zondle- Game Based learning platform for kids. Retrieved from <https://edtechreview.in/>

- Hamari, J., Koivisto, J., & Sarsa, H. (2014). Does gamification work? – A literature review of empirical studies on gamification. In 47th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, Hawaii, USA (pp. 3025–3034). doi:10.1109/HICSS.2014.377
- Holloway, Suzanne (2018). Gamification in Education: 4 Ways To Bring Games To Your Classroom. Retrieved 31 March 2020 from <https://tophat.com/blog/gamification-education-class/>
- Jorge, Francisco; Figueroa, Flores(2015) Using Gamification to Enhance Second Language Learning. Digital Education Review - Number 27, June 2015 Retrieved from <http://greav.ub.edu/der/>
- Lardinois , Frederic (2018). Duolingo hires its first chief marketing officer as active user numbers stagnate but revenue grows. Retrieved from <https://techcrunch.com/2018/08/01/duolingo-hires-its-first-chief-marketing-officer-as-active-user-numbers-stagnate/>
- Languagenut, Retrieved from <https://www.languagenut.com/asia/>
- Nicole, Nawalaniec(2015). Socrative by MasteryConnect. Socrative.com. 2015 May 26; [cited. 2015]. Retrieved from <http://www.socrative.com/index.php>
- Sailer, M., Hense, J., Mandl, H., Klevers, M. (2013). Psychological Perspectives on Motivation through Gamification. *Interaction Design and Architecture(s) Journal - IxD&A*, N.19
- New Media Consortium. (2014). Horizon Report on Technology and Higher Education
- Seaborn, K., & Fels, D. I. (2015). Gamification in theory and action: a survey. *International Journal of Human Computer Studies*, 74, 14–31.
- Stevie, D. *What's the Most Fun Path to Fluency? 5 Addictive Language Learning Gamification Sites*. Retrieved from <https://www.fluentu.com/blog/language-learning-gamification/>
- Werbach, K. (2014). (Re) Defining gamification: a process approach, persuasive technology. *Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, 8462, 266–272.
- Werbach, K and Hunter, D. (2012). *For the Win: How Game Thinking Can Revolutionize Your Business*. Philadelphia, PA: Wharton Digital Press.