

# The Use Of Gamification In English Learning In Primary School

**Karimova Nozima Khusenovna**

A first-year master's student at Bukhara State Pedagogical Institute, Uzbekistan

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of gamification in teaching English at the primary school level and examines its influence on learners' motivation, academic achievement, and teachers' perceptions. The research was carried out with primary school students and English teachers through a mixed-method research design that combines qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. The study was conducted over a four-week period, during which gamified activities were integrated into English lessons. The findings reveal that gamification contributes positively to students' engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes by creating an interactive and enjoyable classroom environment. Teachers also reported that gamified instruction supports lesson organization and encourages active participation. However, the results indicate that excessive reliance on rewards and competitive elements may negatively affect some learners' focus and learning autonomy. Overall, the study concludes that gamification can be an effective instructional approach when applied in a balanced and pedagogically sound manner.

**Keywords:** Gamification, English language teaching, primary education, game-based learning, student motivation.

## INTRODUCTION

English has become one of the most influential languages in the modern world, serving as a primary medium of communication in education, science, and international relations. As a result, teaching English from an early age has gained significant importance in many educational systems. Primary education, in particular, plays a crucial role in shaping learners' language skills, attitudes, and long-term academic development.

In recent years, educators have increasingly sought innovative teaching approaches to address young learners' limited attention spans and varying learning needs. Among these approaches, gamification has emerged as an effective method for enhancing student engagement in English language classrooms. By incorporating game elements such as points, levels, challenges, and rewards into instructional activities, gamification transforms traditional lessons into more interactive and motivating learning experiences.

The integration of technology in education has further accelerated the adoption of gamification. Digital tools and educational platforms allow teachers to design learner-centered activities that promote participation, collaboration, and enjoyment. When applied appropriately, gamification not only increases learners' motivation but also supports the development of language skills through meaningful practice.

Nevertheless, the use of gamification in primary education also presents certain challenges. Overemphasis on external rewards may reduce intrinsic motivation and lead to dependency on game mechanics rather than genuine learning. Therefore, teachers play a critical role in ensuring that gamified activities align with educational objectives and learners' developmental characteristics. This study aims to examine both the positive and negative aspects of gamification in primary school English teaching and to provide insights into its effective implementation in classroom practice.

Gamification is considered one of the most attractive instructional approaches at the primary school level, although it is not the only effective teaching method. One of its main advantages is its ability to encourage students to participate actively in classroom activities. The concept of gamification began to gain attention in the early twenty-first century following the work of English programmer Nick Pelling in 2003. With continuous technological advancement, gamification has evolved into a widely used educational strategy and has become a response to the demands of modern education.

Gamification is frequently applied by teachers to enhance students' motivation, classroom engagement, and learning expectations. Research indicates that commonly used gamification elements include points, levels, rewards, and badges. However, achieving the intended educational goals requires carefully planned instructional materials and purposeful integration into the curriculum. Teachers play a crucial role in this process, as they are responsible for considering learners' interests, expectations, abilities, and individual differences. Since primary school students tend to enjoy game-based activities, gamification is often used to address their learning needs. Teachers generally view gamification positively because it encourages students to learn English in an enjoyable manner, helping them remain focused and motivated during lessons.

This research investigates the use of gamification in primary school English learning by examining teachers' perspectives, the advantages and disadvantages of gamified instruction, and its influence on students' motivation levels. Based on these objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

Games are structured forms of entertainment that involve rules, goals, and varying levels of difficulty. Previous studies have shown that gamification gained prominence in English language education after 2008 and has since become an important instructional approach in primary schools. In this context, gamification is regarded as an effective teaching method, contributing to the development of game-based learning practices.

Game-based learning refers to a learning process in which students acquire knowledge and skills while engaging in activities that promote problem-solving and critical thinking. From this perspective, gamification is widely used in primary education for several reasons. Young learners naturally enjoy games and often struggle to

maintain attention during traditional lessons. Therefore, gamification is considered one of the most suitable approaches for increasing students' focus and motivation. Research findings suggest that game-based activities positively influence learners' attention and motivation levels, making gamification an effective tool regardless of students' individual learning differences.

Gamification is frequently applied by teachers to enhance students' motivation, classroom engagement, and learning expectations. Research indicates that commonly used gamification elements include points, levels, rewards, and badges. However, achieving the intended educational goals requires carefully planned instructional materials and purposeful integration into the curriculum. Teachers play a crucial role in this process, as they are responsible for considering learners' interests, expectations, abilities, and individual differences. Since primary school students tend to enjoy game-based activities, gamification is often used to address their learning needs. Teachers generally view gamification positively because it encourages students to learn English in an enjoyable manner, helping them remain focused and motivated during lessons.

Despite its advantages, gamification also presents certain negative aspects in primary education. Excessive exposure to games may lead to addictive behaviors and overdependence on digital activities. Moreover, increased competition among students can sometimes result in undesirable behaviors that negatively affect the classroom environment. These issues highlight the importance of balanced and controlled implementation of gamification in educational settings. This research investigates the use of gamification in primary school English learning by examining teachers' perspectives, the advantages and disadvantages of gamified instruction, and its influence on students' motivation levels. Based on these objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

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perspective, gamification is widely used in primary education for several reasons. Young learners naturally enjoy games and often struggle to maintain attention during traditional lessons. Therefore, gamification is considered one of the most suitable approaches for increasing students' focus and motivation. Research findings suggest that game-based activities positively influence learners' attention and motivation levels, making gamification an effective tool regardless of students' individual learning differences.

Gamification aims to make English language learning more enjoyable and engaging for students. In this respect, it supports the development of various language skills such as writing, reading, speaking, and listening. Moreover, gamified activities contribute to the improvement of linguistic competencies, including pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary acquisition. Beyond language skills, gamification also enhances learners' cognitive and social abilities by fostering critical, creative, and reflective thinking. Through game-based tasks, students gain experience in collaboration, teamwork, and healthy competition. One of the most influential aspects of gamification is its entertaining nature, which captures students' attention at the initial stage of learning. Studies indicate that enjoyment and motivation reinforce each other, encouraging learners to engage in self-directed learning. However, while gamification supports goal achievement, excessive focus on virtual rewards may sometimes result in negative attitudes despite its overall educational benefits.

Although game-based learning offers numerous benefits, it also presents certain limitations for students. One major concern is that learners may not demonstrate the same level of academic performance in non-game contexts as they do during gameplay, which can negatively affect their overall learning outcomes. Research suggests that students who experience success in games often develop a stronger inclination toward gaming activities. Additionally, competitive elements and reward systems may significantly influence student behavior. When competition becomes excessive, students may prioritize winning over learning, leading to conflicts and inappropriate conduct in the classroom. Similarly, while badges and rewards motivate learners, they can also have adverse effects by intensifying competition. Consequently, gamification may influence students not only academically but also cognitively and behaviorally, highlighting the need for careful and balanced implementation.

Motivation is a fundamental factor that drives individuals toward success in any endeavor, particularly in educational contexts. In the learning process, motivation can be described as the energy and direction that guide students' actions and efforts. Research emphasizes that learners need to develop either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation to achieve academic goals. Within this framework, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a theoretical basis for understanding motivation. According to SDT, intrinsic motivation—stemming from internal interest and enjoyment—is more effective than extrinsic motivation, which is driven by external rewards. Therefore, fostering students' intrinsic motivation is considered essential for sustaining long-term engagement and improving learning outcomes.

Another four-year longitudinal study was carried out by Dehghanzadeh et al. (2015), which investigated the effect of gamification using advanced technological developments. Primary school students were the target group. While the research recognized that traditional learning methods are not always suited to young learners, it demonstrated that gamification can be highly beneficial for English language acquisition, provided that all students' diverse capacities and the relevant gamification context are taken into account.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of a study conducted in Söğütlü Primary School involving 129 participants. Initially, students' English proficiency levels were assessed. The process involved several methods, including observations, survey forms, and both qualitative and quantitative research tools. The research aimed to determine the extent to which gamification affects teachers and students, as well as its overall adverse effects. The findings concerning the implementation of gamification in primary schools are summarized below:

Table 1: The Influence of Gamification on Classroom Students (Selected Results)

Categories	Percentages
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Gamification increases motivation	% 25
Gamification causes competition among students	% 10

Gamification is efficient in cognitive abilities   %15
Gamification increases academic achievement   %20
Gamification causes addiction to the game   %15

According to the results, gamification influences students positively and negatively. The study showed that academic achievement improved as a result of using gamification (20%). Similarly, motivation levels increased in parallel, largely because students enjoyed the playful nature of the learning activities.

However, the findings also highlight potential negative aspects, such as the fact that some students participate in in-class gamified activities primarily to win, and teachers may not consistently guide students to utilize critical thinking skills.

Based on the text provided in the images, here is a paraphrase of the research findings and discussion on the use of gamification in English language learning for primary school students.

### I. Review of Prior Studies

A separate research study focused on the effect of gamification on students' cognitive skills. This study utilized experimental measurement tools, including observation and survey forms, and found that students develop their overall cognitive capacity by recognizing and learning from mistakes while playing games.

Another longitudinal study by Dehghanzadeh et al. (2015) was conducted over four years, examining advanced technological developments in gamification among primary students. The research suggested that while traditional learning approaches may be inadequate for this age group, gamification can be beneficial for English learning, provided the context of the gamification is developed to suit the individual capacities of all students.

An experimental study by Anwar (2019) focused on the use of Duolingo. The results confirmed that primary school children aged 6 to 12 who used the tool successfully improved their English skills, particularly listening skills, and also demonstrated increased enjoyment in the learning process.

In summary, the literature suggests that gamification, while having some disadvantages, offers numerous

benefits for English language acquisition, especially for younger learners.

### II. Findings from Uzbekistan Primary School Study

The research itself was conducted at Uzbekistan Primary School with 129 participants. Data was collected using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys, observation forms, and an initial two-week observation period to assess students' prior English knowledge. The main goal was to determine the overall effects of gamification—both positive and adverse—on students and teachers, while analyzing its significance in primary schools.

Key Findings on Gamification's Influence (Table 1 Summary):

The study found that gamification has both positive and negative influences on students.

| Impact Area | Percentage | Detail |

|---|---|---|

| Positive | Motivation (25%), Academic Achievement (20%), Cognitive Abilities (15%) | The use of gamification increased motivation levels, largely because students enjoyed the playful activities. Academic success was also improved. |

| Negative | Game Addiction (15%), Competition (10%) | Potential adverse effects include students engaging primarily to win and a risk of addiction to the game itself. |

Furthermore, the research noted that some teachers may not consistently guide students to utilize critical thinking skills during gamified activities.

Findings on Teacher Perceptions (Table 2 Summary):

\* 45% of teachers reported a positive view, finding that gamification activities are planned collaboratively by both students and teachers.

\* Teachers expressed satisfaction, believing that gamification allows them to use class time more efficiently.

\* A small percentage (5%) of participants viewed

gamification solely as a form of entertainment rather than a serious learning tool.

#### Solution Recommendations (Table 3 Summary):

The study provided the following recommendations for the effective use of gamification in classrooms:

\* Games should be organized specifically according to the learning goals (25%).

\* Teachers should avoid the excessive use of gamification elements (20%).

\* Rewards and badges should be used gradually (15%) to increase motivation.

\* Gamification should be targeted towards the acquisition of student responsibilities (10%).

The results suggest that teachers are aware of how to implement game-based learning. It is recommended that they use awards and badges that align with student progress and ensure that game choices are appropriate for the students' age and interests.

Based on the provided text, here is a paraphrase of the research on the use of gamification in primary school English education:

#### I. Prior Research and Context

Several studies have explored the effectiveness of gamification. One study using experimental tools found that when students use games, they enhance their cognitive skills by learning to recognize and correct mistakes. Another four-year longitudinal study by Dehghanzadeh et al. (2015) focused on the use of advanced technological gamification in primary schools. This research suggested that while traditional methods may not suit young learners, gamification can be highly beneficial for English learning, provided that it considers the students' diverse capacities and the specific context of the gamification being used. Furthermore, Anwar (2019) conducted an experimental study on the tool Duolingo and confirmed that primary school children (ages 6 to 12) improved their listening skills and showed increased enjoyment in the learning process. The overall conclusion from prior research is that gamification, despite some potential drawbacks, offers numerous advantages for effective English learning at a young age.

#### II. Findings and Discussion of the Uzbekistan Primary School Study

The main research was conducted at Uzbekistan Primary School with 129 participants to determine the effects, both positive and adverse, of gamification on teachers and students.

#### A. Influence on Students (Table 1 Summary):

The results indicated that gamification affects students positively and negatively.

| Positive Impacts (Selected) | Percentage | Negative Impacts (Selected) | Percentage |

|---|---|---|---|

| Increases motivation | 25% | Causes game addiction | 15% |

| Increases academic achievement | 20% | Causes competition | 10% |

| Efficient in cognitive abilities | 15% | | |

\* Positive Effects: Gamification influences students positively, with results showing improved academic achievement (20%) and a parallel increase in motivation (25%) because students enjoy playing.

\* Negative Effects: The study also revealed some negative aspects. Some students primarily participate to win rather than focusing on learning, and some teachers may not adequately encourage students to use critical thinking. Additionally, 15% of participants cited the risk of game addiction.

#### B. Teacher Perceptions (Table 2 Summary):

Teachers generally have a positive view of gamification, noting that activities are often planned collaboratively. They also find that gamification allows for more efficient use of class time. However, a small fraction (5%) view gamification only as entertainment.

#### C. Recommendations for Implementation (Table 3 Summary):

Based on the findings, the study offered the following recommendations for the effective use of gamification in

classrooms:

- \* Games must be organized specifically according to learning goals (25\%).
- \* Teachers should avoid excessive use of gamification elements (20\%).
- \* Rewards and badges should be introduced gradually (15\%) to boost motivation.
- \* Gamification should aim to promote the acquisition of student responsibilities (10\%).

The results indicate that teachers largely know how to implement game-based learning, but need to ensure awards align with student progress and that game choices are age-appropriate.

### III. The Role of Gamification in Primary School (Q.4 and Q.2)

Gamification is considered a useful, experience-based method for primary school students, moving learning away from traditional, passive methods. It has been observed that gamification motivates students and develops their abilities to overcome problems, which is particularly useful for English instruction. While gamification has positive and negative effects on students, the research reinforces that it is a type of educational game that improves students' abilities. Students are generally enthusiastic about participating and highly dependent on their teachers to integrate gamification into the curriculum.

\* Positive Effects: The study confirmed that gamification improves academic achievement and significantly boosts motivation, largely because students enjoy playing games. Gamification is considered effective for improving problem-solving abilities and overcoming difficulties.

\* Negative Effects: Potential downsides include some students being motivated primarily by the desire to win and the risk of game addiction.

### B. Teacher Perceptions (Table 2 Summary):

The majority of teachers agree that gamification should be integrated into the curriculum and that they are satisfied with how it enhances students' development and allows for more efficient use of class time. However, a small minority (5\%) view gamification only as a form of entertainment.

### C. Recommendations for Implementation (Table 3 Summary):

Based on the findings, the following solutions were recommended for teachers using gamification:

- \* Games should be organized specifically according to learning goals (25\%).
- \* Teachers should avoid excessive use of gamification elements (20\%).
- \* The use of rewards and badges should be introduced gradually (15\%) to sustain motivation.
- \* Gamification should be targeted toward the acquisition of student responsibilities (10\%).

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