

METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING KEY COMPETENCIES IN 10TH–11TH GRADE STUDENTS THROUGH GAMIFICATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Ismoilova Gulchiroy Hasan kizi

davronov87@gmail.com

Secondary School No. 52, located in Ohangaron district of Tashkent region.

Annotation: This thesis focuses on the application of gamification in English language teaching as a means to develop essential key competencies among 10th–11th grade students. In today's rapidly evolving educational environment, there is an increasing demand for learners to acquire not only linguistic knowledge but also broader competencies such as critical thinking, collaboration, digital literacy, and communication skills. The integration of game-based methods in English classes has proven to be an effective approach to enhance student motivation, engagement, and performance. By incorporating digital tools like Kahoot, Quizizz, and Wordwall, teachers can transform traditional lessons into interactive experiences that encourage active participation and meaningful learning. The thesis presents findings from a practical implementation where gamified instruction led to noticeable improvements in vocabulary retention, speaking fluency, and overall classroom dynamics. Moreover, it explores how gamification fosters a positive and inclusive learning environment that supports students' emotional and social development. This research contributes to the field of innovative pedagogy by providing methodological recommendations for secondary school educators aiming to implement gamification as a tool for building 21st-century competencies in English language learners.

Keywords: Gamification, English language teaching, key competencies, secondary school education, interactive learning, 10th–11th grade students, motivation, digital tools, language acquisition, communication skills, critical thinking, collaborative learning, student engagement, educational innovation, learner autonomy.

In the contemporary educational landscape, developing key competencies among high school students has become a fundamental goal. With rapid advancements in technology and the growing need for 21st-century skills, educators are constantly seeking innovative strategies to enhance learners' engagement and effectiveness in the classroom. One such promising approach is **gamification** — the use of game design elements in non-game educational contexts — which has shown significant potential in language teaching, particularly in fostering motivation, active participation, and competency development.

This thesis explores the role of gamification in enhancing the key competencies of 10th–11th grade students in the context of English language teaching. At this level, students are expected to consolidate their knowledge and apply language skills in both academic and real-life scenarios. However, many learners face challenges such as lack of interest, limited confidence in communication, and difficulties in collaborative learning. Gamification offers a solution by transforming conventional lessons into interactive experiences that appeal to students' intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and competitive spirit.

Key competencies, as defined by educational frameworks such as OECD and UNESCO, encompass a broad range of skills, including communication, collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking,

digital literacy, and self-directed learning. These competencies are essential not only for academic success but also for personal and professional development in the future. English, being a global lingua franca, provides an ideal platform for nurturing such competencies. Through the integration of gamified methods, English teachers can create dynamic learning environments where students take ownership of their learning and develop both linguistic and life skills.

The practical implementation of gamification in English classrooms involves the use of digital tools and platforms like **Kahoot**, **Quizizz**, **Wordwall**, and **ClassDojo**, which allow teachers to design game-based tasks aligned with curricular goals. For example, students may participate in a vocabulary race, grammar battle, or storytelling quest that rewards them with points, badges, or level-ups. These elements not only reinforce the content but also create a sense of achievement and engagement. Moreover, group missions or competitions foster teamwork, leadership, and communication, while time-based challenges improve focus and decision-making under pressure.

In a small-scale action research study conducted as part of this thesis, two groups of high school students were observed over the course of ten weeks. The experimental group was exposed to gamified lessons, while the control group followed traditional methods. Data collected from classroom observations, student surveys, and pre/post-tests indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group in several areas, including vocabulary retention, speaking fluency, and participation. More importantly, students reported increased confidence, enjoyment, and a stronger sense of responsibility in their learning process.

Gamification was particularly effective in reducing speaking anxiety and encouraging even shy students to participate in role-plays and peer interactions. The use of avatars, progress bars, and digital rewards created a low-stress environment where students felt safe to make mistakes and learn from them. Additionally, the integration of technology helped students improve their digital competence and adapt to blended learning formats — a critical skill in today's information-rich society.

Despite its benefits, gamification also presents challenges. Teachers need adequate training and preparation time to design meaningful game-based lessons. There may be limitations in terms of access to digital devices or reliable internet connections, especially in rural schools. Furthermore, educators must ensure that gamification does not overshadow the educational objectives or lead to excessive competition among students. A balanced approach that combines fun and pedagogical rigor is essential for long-term success.

In conclusion, gamification represents a powerful methodology for developing key competencies in English language learners at the secondary school level. It supports not only the acquisition of language skills but also fosters creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking — all of which are crucial in preparing students for the demands of modern life. By aligning gamified strategies with curriculum standards and focusing on student-centered learning, English teachers can make their classrooms more engaging, inclusive, and future-oriented. Further research and professional development are recommended to expand the use of gamification and adapt it to various educational contexts.

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