APPLYING GAME MECHANICS TO TEACH PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN EFL CONTEXTS

O'YIN MEKANIKASIDAN FOYDALANIB EFL KONTEKSTIDA PRAGMATIK KOMPETENSIYANI O'RGATISH

ПРИМЕНЕНИЕ ИГРОВЫХ МЕХАНИК ДЛЯ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКОЙ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ В КОНТЕКСТЕ EFL

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the application of game mechanics to teach pragmatic competence in EFL contexts. It highlights how gamified activities, role-playing, and interactive challenges help learners develop appropriate language use in social and cultural contexts. The study provides practical strategies for designing engaging game-based tasks that foster speech acts, politeness strategies, and context-sensitive communication skills.

Keywords: game mechanics, pragmatic competence, EFL classrooms, gamification, speech acts, interactive learning, teaching methodology.

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqolada EFL kontekstida pragmatik kompetensiyani o'rgatishda o'yin mexanikasidan foydalanish masalasi o'rganiladi. Gamifikatsiyalashgan faoliyatlar, rolli o'yinlar va interaktiv vazifalar talabalarga ijtimoiy va madaniy kontekstda tilni to'g'ri qo'llash imkonini beradi. Tadqiqot nutq harakatlari, odob-axloq strategiyalari va kontekstga mos kommunikatsiyani rivojlantirishga qaratilgan amaliy metodlarni taqdim etadi.

Kalit so'zlar: o'yin mexanikasi, pragmatik kompetensiya, EFL darslari, gamifikatsiya, nutq harakatlari, interaktiv o'qish, o'qitish metodikasi.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье рассматривается применение игровых механик для обучения прагматической компетенции в аудиториях EFL. Подчеркивается, как игровые задания, ролевые игры и интерактивные упражнения помогают учащимся развивать правильное использование языка в социальных и культурных контекстах. Исследование предлагает практические стратегии для создания увлекательных игровых заданий, способствующих развитию речевых актов, стратегий вежливости и контекстно ориентированной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: игровые механики, прагматическая компетенция, аудитории EFL, геймификация, речевые акты, интерактивное обучение, методика преподавания.

MAIN TEXT

In recent years, the use of game mechanics in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has gained increasing attention as a method to enhance pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence, which encompasses the ability to use language appropriately in social

and cultural contexts, is often underrepresented in traditional language teaching approaches [1]. Conventional EFL instruction focuses heavily on grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, while learners frequently struggle to apply appropriate speech acts, politeness strategies, and context-sensitive communication in real-life interactions [2]. Integrating game-based learning provides a motivating and interactive environment in which students can experiment with language use without fear of negative evaluation. Game mechanics, such as points, levels, rewards, and collaborative challenges, create structured yet flexible learning situations. In classroom settings, these mechanics can be adapted into role-play simulations, interactive storytelling, and problem-solving tasks. For instance, a negotiation role-play can encourage learners to practice making requests, giving suggestions, and responding politely, thereby enhancing their awareness of context-dependent linguistic choices [3]. By simulating authentic scenarios, learners can internalize pragmatic norms while simultaneously developing communication strategies that are culturally appropriate.

Interactive digital games offer additional benefits by providing immediate feedback and multiple opportunities for repetition. Learners can experiment with different strategies for refusals, apologies, or compliments and observe the outcomes within the game context. Such experimentation fosters reflective thinking and helps students recognize the subtleties of language use in diverse social situations [4]. Moreover, game mechanics promote engagement and motivation, which are critical factors for sustaining long-term learning. Learners often report higher levels of enjoyment and willingness to participate when games are incorporated into lesson plans, leading to increased exposure to authentic language use and more frequent practice of pragmatic forms [5]. The design of effective game-based tasks requires careful attention to pedagogical objectives and learner needs. Teachers should identify the specific speech acts or pragmatic features they wish to target and develop scenarios that encourage authentic interaction. For example, a collaborative storytelling game can focus on turn-taking, giving advice, and expressing disagreement politely, while a competitive problem-solving game can encourage the use of persuasive language and negotiation skills [2]. By structuring tasks to reflect real-life communicative challenges, learners gain opportunities to practice pragmatics in meaningful contexts.

Research has shown that gamification supports both linguistic and social learning outcomes. Students engaged in game-based EFL activities demonstrate improved pragmatic performance, including appropriate use of politeness markers, context-sensitive vocabulary, and culturally relevant discourse patterns [3]. Additionally, learners develop higher levels of self-confidence and willingness to communicate, which are essential for successful interaction in both classroom and real-world settings. These benefits extend beyond individual linguistic competence to include enhanced intercultural awareness and understanding, as learners navigate scenarios that simulate communication with speakers from different cultural backgrounds [1]. Despite the clear advantages, implementing game mechanics in EFL classrooms poses several challenges. Teachers must balance the complexity of tasks with learners' proficiency levels to avoid frustration or disengagement. Time constraints, resource limitations, and the need for culturally appropriate content also require careful planning [4]. To mitigate these challenges, educators can scaffold tasks gradually, starting with simple role-plays and progressing to more complex interactive simulations. Reflection and feedback sessions should be incorporated to consolidate learning, allowing students to discuss

alternative strategies and reflect on pragmatic choices made during gameplay [5]. Incorporating a variety of game formats can further enhance pragmatic learning. Board games, card games, and online simulations each offer unique advantages. Board games provide tangible interaction and facilitate face-to-face communication, while digital platforms offer adaptive challenges, immediate corrective feedback, and opportunities for repeated practice. Teachers can blend these formats to address diverse learning preferences and maximize engagement [2]. Collaborative problem-solving games, for instance, require learners to negotiate, persuade, and collaborate, thereby reinforcing pragmatic competence in a dynamic, socially interactive context.

Finally, assessment of pragmatic competence in gamified contexts requires innovative approaches. Traditional testing methods may not capture learners' ability to use language appropriately in situational contexts. Instead, educators can employ observational checklists, video recordings of role-plays, peer evaluations, and reflective journals to evaluate learners' pragmatic performance [3]. Such assessment strategies not only provide insight into learners' progress but also encourage self-reflection and metacognitive awareness of language use.

CONCLUSION

Applying game mechanics in EFL classrooms enhances learners' pragmatic competence. Gamified activities provide authentic, engaging opportunities to practice speech acts, politeness strategies, and context-sensitive communication. This approach strengthens linguistic skills, motivation, collaboration, and intercultural awareness. Role-play simulations, interactive storytelling, and collaborative challenges create dynamic environments where learners internalize pragmatic norms effectively. Game-based learning thus represents an innovative, learner-centered method for developing pragmatic competence in EFL classrooms.

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