


Chapter 7

How Does Gamified L2 Learning Enhance Motivation and Engagement: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the popularity of gamification has gained momentum with the growing numbers of publications as well as the mass appeal among learners for its potential to stimulate motivation, engagement, and positive experiences. However, this vein of research has mainly focused on the effects of game mechanics and how they can be incorporated within a gamified learning context to enhance users' positive experiences. In L2 teaching and learning, the literature states that most studies on gamification lack theoretical principles that can guide the design of gamified learning experiences that promote learners' motivation and engagement. To make the picture more coherent, this chapter synthesizes the existing literature on gamification L2 learning, focusing on empirical findings related to factors affecting L2 learning, current L2 gamified design models, gamification affordances, and their inherent motivational and engagement outcomes. For this review, thematic and content analysis of 73 publications dating from 2017 to late 2022 were examined.

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INTRODUCTION

A large body of extensive research into technology-based learning environments revealed that digital textbooks, multimedia, the internet, and several other forms of learning materials enhance learners' knowledge and language proficiency (Alobaid, 2021; Putri & Sari, 2020; Sari, 2020). However, the teaching of English in non-English-speaking environments (e.g. Quebec) does not escape several difficulties such as the lack of authentic contexts to practise it and the lack of motivation and engagement on the part of learners (Moghari & Marandi, 2017). This can hamper the learning process and lead to lower performance (Kruk, 2021). In this regard, the use of game-based language learning has increased significantly in recent years and has received considerable attention from educators and researchers for their potential to enhance the language learning experience. Over the past decades, several research studies have indicated that game play has positively influenced a range of factors involved in the language learning process, mainly motivation, willingness to communicate and language socialization (Reinders, 2017).

There are more and more teachers who, in search of resources to enhance the engagement of their students, introduce several elements of games into their teaching using technological supports (Goethe, 2019; Siemon & Eckardt, 2017). In this perspective, gamification is seen as an enjoyable and effective teaching methodology, the main objective of which is to provide a language learning experience that generates student engagement and interest (Nahmod, 2017; Tulloch, 2014). While several studies have revealed that gameful L2 environments can provide a sheltered, low anxiety space and opportunities for higher willingness to communicate (Reinders, 2017), there has been too little experimental work on how to design gamified teaching methods that address key issues in second/foreign language learning and how gamification can support a positive L2 learning experience. Besides, the recent scientific literature suggests that the gamified environments for learning English as a second language could enhance learners' motivation and engagement (Azzouz Boudadi & Gutiérrez-Colón, 2020; Dehghanzadeh et al., 2021; Pujolà & Appel, 2020). Nevertheless, gamifying learning through game elements can enhance or undermine motivation and engagement, depending on how they are used. In fact, more research on how gamification can address learners' motivational processes will inform future implementation and enrich design approaches to education and training. Further, more than 50 gamification design frameworks have been proposed, but it is still early to argue that the current design taxonomies and models provide clear guidelines on how to select and group gamification elements for an effective use (Azouz & Lefdaoui, 2018; Dichev & Dicheva 2017; Toda et al., 2019).

Using gamification in second/foreign language learning has been the focus of several recent literature reviews (Azzouz Boudadi & Gutiérrez-Colón, 2020;

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