



GAMIFICATION AND ONLINE TOOLS IN EFL TEACHING: TURNING DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT INTO LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

In today's digital age, teaching English as a foreign language requires more than traditional classroom instruction. Digital generation learners are familiar with technology, visual content, instant feedback, and interactive learning environments. Therefore, EFL teachers need to use methods that increase motivation, participation, and learner autonomy. This article discusses the importance and effectiveness of gamification and online tools in EFL teaching. It focuses on how gamified activities and digital platforms can support different language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar. The article also analyzes several widely used tools such as Kahoot, Quizizz/Wayground, Wordwall, Padlet, Google Forms, Canva, Liveworksheets, Duolingo, Google Docs, and Mentimeter. The findings suggest that these tools can make EFL lessons more engaging, interactive, and learner-centered when they are used with clear pedagogical aims.

Keywords: EFL teaching, gamification, digital generation, online tools, language skills, learner engagement

Introduction

Аннотация

В современную цифровую эпоху преподавание английского языка как иностранного требует большего, чем традиционное аудиторное обучение. Обучающиеся цифрового поколения хорошо знакомы с технологиями, визуальным контентом, мгновенной обратной связью и интерактивной



образовательной средой. В связи с этим преподавателям английского языка как иностранного необходимо использовать методы, направленные на повышение мотивации, активности и учебной автономии обучающихся.

В данной статье рассматриваются значимость и эффективность геймификации и онлайн-инструментов в преподавании английского языка как иностранного. Особое внимание уделяется тому, как геймифицированные задания и цифровые платформы могут способствовать развитию различных языковых навыков, включая аудирование, говорение, чтение, письмо, словарный запас и грамматику. В статье также анализируются широко используемые цифровые инструменты, такие как Kahoot, Quizizz/Wayground, Wordwall, Padlet, Google Forms, Canva, Liveworksheets, Duolingo, Google Docs и Mentimeter. Полученные выводы показывают, что при использовании с чётко определёнными педагогическими целями данные инструменты могут сделать занятия по английскому языку как иностранному более увлекательными, интерактивными и ориентированными на обучающегося.

Ключевые слова: преподавание английского языка как иностранного, геймификация, цифровое поколение, онлайн-инструменты, языковые навыки, вовлечённость обучающихся.

The development of digital technologies has changed the way students learn, communicate, and interact with information. Modern learners, often called the digital generation, are used to fast access to information, visual materials, mobile applications, and interactive platforms. As a result, traditional methods of teaching English as a foreign language may not always be enough to keep students motivated and actively involved in the learning process.

In EFL classrooms, one of the main challenges is maintaining students' interest and confidence. Many learners feel anxious when they speak English, make grammar mistakes, or cannot remember new vocabulary. Gamification can help reduce these barriers by turning learning tasks into more enjoyable and meaningful activities. Gamification means using game elements such as points, levels, challenges, competition, rewards, and progress tracking in non-game



learning contexts. For the digital generation, gamification is not only a way to make lessons entertaining. It is also a pedagogical strategy that supports motivation, active participation, collaboration, and repeated practice. Since language learning requires regular exposure and continuous practice, gamified learning can help students revise vocabulary, grammar, and communication patterns in a more natural and engaging way.

Online tools also play an important role in modern EFL teaching. Platforms such as Kahoot, Wordwall, Padlet, Google Forms, Canva, Liveworksheets, Duolingo, Google Docs, and Mentimeter allow teachers to design interactive tasks, provide quick feedback, support collaboration, and personalize learning. However, technology should not be used only for entertainment. It should be selected according to lesson objectives, students' level, and the language skill being developed.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the importance of gamification and online tools in EFL teaching and to show how different digital tools can be used effectively for specific language skills and classroom top

This article uses a descriptive-analytical approach. It analyzes the pedagogical value of gamification and selected online tools in EFL teaching. The tools discussed in this article were chosen because they are commonly used in language classrooms and support different types of learning activities, including assessment, vocabulary practice, grammar revision, collaborative writing, speaking preparation, project work, and independent learning.

The analysis focuses on three main questions:

1. Why is gamification important for digital generation learners in EFL classrooms?
2. How can online tools improve the effectiveness of EFL teaching?
3. Which tools are suitable for specific language skills and classroom topics?

Gamification is highly relevant to EFL teaching because it increases students' motivation and encourages active learning. In many traditional classrooms, students may become passive listeners. They may understand the teacher's explanation but hesitate to use English actively. Gamified tasks, however, invite learners to participate, answer questions, compete in a friendly way, and learn from their mistakes. One of the strongest advantages of gamification is that it



makes repetition less boring. Vocabulary, grammar forms, irregular verbs, prepositions, and sentence structures need regular revision. When these topics are practiced through quizzes, challenges, matching games, or team competitions, students are more likely to stay focused and remember the material. Gamification also creates a safer emotional environment. Learners may feel less afraid of making mistakes when an activity is presented as a game. Instead of seeing mistakes as failure, they begin to see them as part of progress. This is especially important in speaking activities, where confidence and willingness to communicate are essential. For digital generation learners, gamification is effective because it matches their learning habits. They are familiar with scores, badges, levels, progress bars, instant responses, and interactive content. When these elements are used wisely in EFL lessons, they can support engagement, autonomy, and long-term learning.

Kahoot

Kahoot is a game-based learning platform that allows teachers to create interactive quizzes and learning games. Its official platform presents it as a tool for gamified learning, real-time engagement, and instant feedback. (Kahoot!)

In EFL teaching, Kahoot is especially useful for grammar revision, vocabulary practice, reading checks, and quick formative assessment. For example, teachers can use Kahoot to review tenses, articles, prepositions, phrasal verbs, irregular verbs, or topic-based vocabulary. Students answer questions in real time, and the competitive format increases attention and excitement.

Kahoot is effective because it gives immediate feedback. Students can see whether their answers are correct, while teachers can quickly identify which items need further explanation. It is particularly suitable for warm-up activities, revision lessons, and end-of-lesson checks.

Quizizz / Wayground

Quizizz is now known as Wayground. The official website describes Wayground, formerly Quizizz, as a platform that helps teachers create and adapt resources, differentiate instruction, and track student learning. (Wayground)



In EFL classrooms, Quizizz/Wayground can be used for grammar practice, vocabulary quizzes, reading comprehension, and listening follow-up tasks. Unlike some live-only quiz tools, it is also useful for self-paced learning. This means students can complete activities at their own speed, which is helpful in mixed-level classrooms.

The tool is effective because it supports differentiated learning. Teachers can design easier or more challenging questions depending on students' levels. It can also be used for homework, independent revision, or diagnostic assessment before starting a new topic.

Wordwall

Wordwall allows teachers to create interactive and printable classroom activities. Its official website highlights that teachers can create activities quickly and choose from many activity types. (Wordwall)

Wordwall is highly effective for vocabulary and grammar practice. It offers activity formats such as matching, missing words, group sorting, true or false, word search, and sentence ordering. These formats are useful for learners who need visual and interactive support.

In EFL teaching, Wordwall works well for teaching word groups such as food, clothes, jobs, transport, emotions, daily routines, and classroom objects. It can also be used for grammar topics such as parts of speech, comparative adjectives, modal verbs, prepositions, and sentence order. Wordwall is especially helpful for younger learners and lower-level students because it presents language in a clear, visual, and playful way.

Padlet

Padlet is a digital collaboration platform where students and teachers can create visual boards, share ideas, post text, images, videos, links, and other materials. Its official website describes it as a space for visual collaboration and creative work in education. (Padlet). In EFL teaching, Padlet is very useful for writing, speaking preparation, brainstorming, and reflection. For example, before a speaking lesson, students can post their ideas about a topic such as "My dream



job” or “The advantages of learning English.” These ideas can later be used for pair work, group discussion, or oral presentation.

Padlet is also effective for shy learners. Some students may not be ready to speak immediately, but they can first write their ideas on Padlet. This gives them time to organize their thoughts and become more confident before speaking.

Google Forms

Google Forms is an online form and survey builder that allows users to create forms, quizzes, and collect responses. Google Workspace describes it as a tool for creating forms and surveys and gathering data from anywhere. (Google Workspace). In EFL teaching, Google Forms is effective for assessment, feedback, exit tickets, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and grammar tests. Teachers can create multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, checkboxes, and self-assessment forms. One of the main benefits of Google Forms is automatic response collection. Teachers can quickly see students’ results and identify common mistakes. This helps teachers plan follow-up lessons more effectively. For example, after a listening task, students can answer comprehension questions through Google Forms, and the teacher can immediately see which parts were difficult.

Canva

Canva is an online graphic design tool used to create presentations, posters, videos, infographics, and other visual materials. Canva’s education page also notes that teachers and students can create lesson plans, infographics, posters, videos, and more. (Canva) In EFL teaching, Canva is very useful for project-based learning. Students can create posters, presentations, brochures, infographics, or visual stories. These tasks support both writing and speaking skills because students first prepare written content and then present it orally. For example, students can design a travel brochure, a healthy lifestyle poster, a biography presentation, or an infographic about environmental problems. Through these tasks, they practice vocabulary, grammar, organization of ideas, and public speaking. Canva is effective because it combines language learning



with creativity. It helps students develop not only English skills but also digital literacy, visual communication, and presentation skills.

Liveworksheets

Liveworksheets is a platform that allows teachers to create interactive, self-checking worksheets. Its official website describes it as a tool for creating engaging worksheets that support learning and save grading time. (Liveworksheets). In EFL classrooms, Liveworksheets is effective for grammar, vocabulary, listening, and reading practice. Teachers can transform traditional worksheets into interactive exercises with matching, drag-and-drop, gap filling, multiple choice, and audio-based tasks. This tool is especially useful for homework and independent practice. Students can complete tasks outside the classroom and receive feedback. Teachers can also use it to reinforce lessons after explaining a grammar or vocabulary topic. Liveworksheets is practical because it connects traditional worksheet-based learning with digital interaction. It is suitable for both classroom practice and home assignments.

Duolingo

Duolingo is a language-learning platform that offers short, game-like lessons. Its official website describes it as a free, fun, and effective way to learn languages through quick, science-based lessons. (Duolingo) In EFL teaching, Duolingo can be used as an additional practice tool rather than a complete replacement for classroom instruction. It is useful for vocabulary revision, pronunciation practice, listening, grammar patterns, and daily learning habits. The strength of Duolingo is consistency. It encourages students to practice regularly through short tasks, progress tracking, and gamified motivation. This is valuable because language learning requires daily exposure and repeated use. However, teachers should guide students when using Duolingo. It is most effective when it supports classroom learning, homework, or extra practice, rather than replacing communicative classroom activities.



Google Docs

Google Docs is an online word processor that allows users to create, edit, and collaborate on documents in real time. Google Workspace describes it as a tool for creating online documents and collaborating from any device. (Google Workspace). In EFL teaching, Google Docs is one of the most useful tools for writing. It can be used for paragraph writing, essay writing, peer correction, collaborative writing, and teacher feedback. Students can work on the same document, edit each other's sentences, and receive comments from the teacher. Google Docs is especially effective for academic writing because it helps students improve organization, coherence, grammar accuracy, punctuation, and vocabulary choice. Teachers can give feedback directly in the text, and students can revise their work step by step. This tool also supports process writing. Instead of submitting only the final version, students can draft, revise, edit, and improve their writing over time.

Mentimeter

Mentimeter is an interactive presentation and audience engagement tool. Its official website describes it as a platform that helps teachers and presenters get everyone participating through questions, real-time answers, and live insights. (Mentimeter) In EFL teaching, Mentimeter is useful for warm-up activities, brainstorming, opinion sharing, vocabulary activation, and reflection. Teachers can ask students a question and collect answers through word clouds, polls, scales, or open-ended responses. For example, before a lesson about the environment, the teacher can ask, "What words come to your mind when you hear the word environment?" Students submit words, and a word cloud appears on the screen. This activates background knowledge and prepares students for speaking or reading activities. Mentimeter is effective because it gives every student a voice. Even quiet students can participate without the pressure of speaking in front of the whole class immediately.



Tool	Most Suitable Skills	Suitable Topics
Kahoot	Grammar, vocabulary, reading checks	Tenses, prepositions, articles, vocabulary revision
Quizizz	Grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening checks	Irregular verbs, phrasal verbs, comprehension questions
Wordwall	Vocabulary, grammar	Word groups, sentence order, matching activities, parts of speech
Padlet	Writing, speaking, collaboration	Opinion writing, brainstorming, discussion topics
Google Forms	Assessment, reading, listening, grammar	Tests, exit tickets, comprehension tasks
Canva	Speaking, writing, project work	Posters, presentations, brochures, biographies
Liveworksheets	Grammar, vocabulary, listening, reading	Gap-filling, matching, drag-and-drop tasks, worksheets
Duolingo	Vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, listening	Daily practice, revision, individual learning
Google Docs	Writing, peer feedback, collaboration	Essays, paragraphs, reports, group writing
Mentimeter	Speaking, vocabulary, reflection	Warm-up activities, word clouds, opinion questions

The analysis shows that gamification and online tools can make EFL teaching more effective when they are used with clear educational aims. These tools help teachers create interactive lessons, support different language skills, and respond to the needs of digital generation learners. However, the effectiveness of digital tools depends on how they are used. A tool does not automatically improve learning. For example, Kahoot can make grammar revision exciting, but if the questions are poorly designed, the learning result may be limited. Similarly, Canva can develop speaking and writing skills, but only if students are required to use meaningful English, organize ideas, and present their work clearly. Therefore, teachers should choose tools according to the learning objective. If the aim is vocabulary practice, Wordwall, Kahoot, Quizizz/Wayground, and Duolingo may be suitable. If the aim is writing development, Google Docs and Padlet are more effective. If the aim is speaking preparation, Canva, Padlet, and Mentimeter can be useful. For assessment and feedback, Google Forms and



Quizizz/Wayground are practical choices. Another important point is balance. Digital tools should support the teacher's methodology, not replace it. EFL teaching still requires meaningful communication, teacher guidance, interaction, correction, and cultural context. Online tools become powerful only when they are integrated into a well-planned lesson. For digital generation learners, gamification and online tools increase motivation, reduce anxiety, and encourage participation. They also promote learner autonomy because students can practice outside the classroom, receive feedback, and track their own progress. This makes learning more flexible and student-centered.

Considering these points, gamification and online tools have become important components of modern EFL teaching. They respond to the learning needs of the digital generation by making lessons more interactive, motivating, and practical. Gamified activities help students practice language in an enjoyable way, while online tools support specific skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar.

The tools discussed in this article each offer different pedagogical benefits. Kahoot and Quizizz/Wayground are effective for revision and assessment. Wordwall supports vocabulary and grammar practice. Padlet encourages writing, speaking, and collaboration. Google Forms is useful for feedback and testing. Canva develops creativity, presentation, and project-based learning. Liveworksheets supports interactive practice and homework. Duolingo promotes regular independent learning. Google Docs improves writing and peer feedback. Mentimeter increases participation and idea sharing.

In conclusion, digital tools should be used purposefully, not randomly. The teacher's role remains central in selecting, adapting, and guiding technology-based activities. When gamification and online tools are integrated with clear pedagogical objectives, they can significantly improve the quality of EFL teaching and create a more engaging learning experience for students.

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Official web addresses of the tools

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