

EXPLORING LOWER SECONDARY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF GAMIFIED GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION IN EFL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract:

This study explores lower secondary school students' perceptions of gamified grammar instruction in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. While grammar is widely recognised as a central component of communicative competence, it is often associated with low motivation, anxiety, and limited engagement. In response to these challenges, gamification has been proposed as a pedagogical approach capable of enhancing learners' affective and motivational experience.

The study adopts a classroom-based, exploratory design involving 37 students aged 12–15. Data were collected through pre- and post-intervention questionnaires examining students' attitudes toward grammar learning, self-perceived competence, confidence, and emotional responses. During the intervention phase, a range of game-based activities was integrated into regular grammar instruction.

The findings indicate a shift toward more positive learner perceptions following the introduction of gamified activities. Students reported increased engagement, greater confidence in using grammatical structures, and a more positive emotional experience during grammar lessons. At the same time, the results reflect learners' subjective evaluations and should not be interpreted as evidence of measurable gains in grammatical competence.

The study contributes to ongoing discussions on gamification in language education by providing insight into how low-tech, classroom-based game strategies may influence the affective dimension of grammar learning. The findings suggest that gamification can function as a supportive pedagogical tool within traditional instruction, particularly in fostering learner engagement and reducing negative emotional responses. However, further research using controlled designs and objective measures is needed to assess its impact on language development.

Keywords: *Gamification; Grammar teaching; EFL; Student Engagement; Lower secondary education.*