

The Application of Gamification in College English Video Course

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Abstract

This paper explores the application of gamification in college English video courses, analyzing how gamification elements such as interactivity, task challenges, and level systems enhance learning motivation and language proficiency. Through the case of *Diversity and Inclusion* in *21st Century College English Integrated Course*, it demonstrates the organic combination of gamification and course content, which has enhanced students' classroom participation and language practice effectiveness. The research emphasizes the potential of gamification in language teaching and looks ahead to the role of technologies such as virtual reality in driving the innovation of future teaching models.

Key words: gamification, college English, video courses, language teaching

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of information technology, gamification has become one of the important trends in modern educational innovation. The traditional teaching model of college English video courses struggles to fully mobilize students' enthusiasm and initiative. In contrast, gamification teaching can create a more interactive, interesting, and challenging learning environment. Especially with the progress of various educational technologies, the combination of gamification elements and English teaching has opened up new possibilities for improving students' language proficiency and learning interest. The theory of embodied cognition posits that learning is based on physical perception and interaction, and learners construct knowledge through multi-sensory participation (Tai, 2022). Therefore, under the guidance of the embodied theory, introducing gamification strategies into college English video courses can facilitate a shift from "passive reception" to "active participation," inspiring students to engage in the learning process with a more positive attitude (Lee, 2020). However, currently, the application of gamification in college English video courses is still in the initial exploration stage, and both theoretical research and practical applications require further

deepening. Thus, from the perspective of the embodied theory, this study analyzes the connotation of the application of gamification in college English teaching, and explores effective implementation strategies, aiming to provide theoretical references and practical guidance for improving the effectiveness and quality of college English teaching.

2. Literature Review of Gamification

2.1 Definition and Development of Gamification

Gamification in education refers to the use of game elements to enhance students' sense of participation and learning motivation, ultimately improving learning outcomes (Caponetto et al., 2014). By introducing competitive spirit and reward systems in games, it can enrich the traditional learning environment. Notably, Smiderle et al. (2020) found that gamification has a positive impact on learning behavior and engagement, and it shows significant variations depending on students' personality traits, indicating that customization can optimize educational effects. Similarly, Caponetto, Earp, and Ott (2014) observed that an increasing number of people are using gamification to cultivate highly engaging and interactive learning experiences. This finding is consistent with the research of Domínguez et al. (2013), who reported an increase in students' motivation and engagement in gamified environments. To further support these findings, the studies of Hamari, Koivisto, and Sarsa (2014) also emphasized the wide applicability of gamification in different educational levels and contexts, and pointed out its ability to significantly improve students' participation and retention rates. The empirical research of Hanus and Fox (2015) demonstrated that gamification not only enhances students' motivation but also creates a competitive and cooperative environment that can improve academic performance. However, the effectiveness of gamification may be influenced by many factors, including the educational environment, the specific gamification elements employed, and learners' personal characteristics such as personality traits and motivation levels (Goehle, 2013). Overall, although gamification in education is a promising tool for enhancing students' learning experiences, educators should consider these factors when integrating gamification elements into courses to ensure that they can effectively achieve the expected educational goals.

Pinto et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review of the impact of virtual reality in foreign language education and discussed interesting developments in this field. They found that combining virtual reality with gamification not only increases learners' motivation but also greatly enhances the language learning process by providing immersive experiences that simulate real - life interactions. This is particularly evident in simulated environments where learners can practice language skills and receive immediate feedback and context - based learning opportunities. In addition, the combination of mobile technology and gamification has also shown positive results in language education. Dehghanzadeh (2020) explored the adoption of gamified mobile applications in language learning, highlighting how these platforms provide learners with flexible and engaging ways to improve their language skills outside the classroom.

Based on previous literature, three main gamification strategies can be summarized: task challenges, point systems, and achievement rewards. Task challenges motivate students to enhance their self-efficacy, participation, and learning motivation by setting challenging learning tasks and solving problems. Point systems allow students to quantify their learning progress by providing point rewards, stimulating them to maintain their enthusiasm for participation. Achievement rewards enhance students' motivation by setting clear goals and providing corresponding rewards, helping them stay engaged and persistent in the learning process. Combining these gamification strategies can effectively enhance students' learning experiences and outcomes (Sailer & Homner, 2020).

2.2 Theoretical Basis of Gamification: Embodied Cognition Theory

The embodied cognition theory posits that cognition is not an abstract operation in the brain but an embodied process relying on physical perception and movement (Leitan & Chaffey, 2014). Cognitive activities occur in specific physical and cultural contexts, which not only provide clues and meanings for cognition but also shape the way of cognition (Foglia & Wilson, 2013). Physical movement activates the cognitive process, and there is a high degree of integration among the cognitive subject, the cognitive object, and the environment. Organisms actively act on the environment through physical actions, forming an interactive process that is both cognitive and emotional, thus constructing a meaningful world beneficial to themselves (Wilson & Golonka, 2013).

The embodied theory has many congruences with learning activities and can provide a new theoretical perspective for learning (Shapiro & Stolz, 2019). Firstly, the embodied theory emphasizes the influence of context on cognition, which is consistent with the contextual nature of learning. Learning requires the design of a contextualized environment. Secondly, the embodied theory believes that physical movement can promote cognition, providing support for physical participation in learning. Learning not only depends on the brain but also requires hands-on operation and experience to deepen understanding. In addition, the interactive integration view of the embodied theory is consistent with the principle of subjectivity in the learning activity view, emphasizing that learning is an interaction between individuals and the environment and requires the initiative of learners. The application of digital technologies, such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), provides new possibilities for the design of embodied learning environments.

Embodied cognition also pays special attention to physical interaction and multi-sensory participation (Kosmas & Zaphiris, 2018). Gamification often uses AR and VR technologies to provide immersive interactive experiences, helping learners embody knowledge through situations in the physical world. For example, language learning applications use AR technology to allow learners to interact with language elements in the real environment, thus stimulating multi-sensory perception and deepening the understanding and internalization of language knowledge. The integration of multiple senses, such as vision, hearing, and touch, helps learners improve the efficiency of information memory and retrieval through multi-channel encoding.

The embodied theory emphasizes that cognitive activities are inseparable from specific

contexts. Gamification can create virtual environments to simulate real-life situations and provide application scenarios for learning. For example, medical simulation games can simulate the operating room environment, helping learners master relevant knowledge in real - life situations and apply it to practice. In addition, gamification stimulates learners' internal motivation and emotional responses through goal - setting, reward and punishment mechanisms, etc. This emotional stimulation helps to maintain long - term learning interest and motivation. Physical participation is also crucial in gamification. Interacting with the virtual environment through gestures, movements, etc., such as gesture control in VR games and physical movements in AR games (Pinto et al., 2021), is consistent with the relationship between behavior and cognition in embodied cognition, which can promote the internalization and transformation of knowledge.

In summary, the embodied cognition theory provides theoretical support for gamified education, explaining how gamification optimizes the cognitive process through mechanisms such as multi-sensory participation, physical engagement, and emotional stimulation, thereby enhancing learning efficiency and experiences. Educators should design gamified teaching activities based on this theory to maximize its educational potential.

2.3 Advantages of Gamification in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

Learning is an embodied experience activity that requires learners to dynamically integrate physical, environmental, and sociocultural resources in a specific context (Dehghanzadeh & Dehghanzadeh, 2020). Cognition originates from exploratory physical actions and is generated in actions. Its essence is a "doing" process to guide practice. The learning model of the embodied cognition theory emphasizes the contextual, subjective, and experiential nature of learning. Learners construct knowledge and skills through physical perception and movement and interaction with the surrounding environment. The embodied cognition theory provides a new perspective for teaching activities, inspiring us to attach importance to creating rich learning contexts, supporting students' independent exploration, and paying attention to experience and reflection, as well as the internalization process of knowledge in teaching design.

Language learning is a long-term process, and students' lack of participation and motivation is a major obstacle to their progress (Gilakjani et al., 2012). Gamification can effectively address this issue. Research shows that integrating gamification elements such as reward mechanisms, leaderboards, and badge systems into the language learning environment can significantly enhance students' participation and learning persistence (Dehghanzadeh & Dehghanzadeh, 2020). These elements not only stimulate students' competitive spirit but also set clear learning goals and feedback mechanisms for them, making language learning more challenging and interesting.

In addition to promoting participation, gamification can also improve language learning performance. By integrating gamification elements such as points, levels, and achievement systems into language courses, students can more effectively master language skills such as vocabulary and grammar (Hamari et al., 2014; Hanus & Fox, 2015). This interactive learning method based on gamification not only creates a relaxed and pleasant learning atmosphere

but also stimulates students' internal motivation to explore language knowledge independently. At the same time, gamification can also promote students' collaborative abilities, cultivating a spirit of cooperation in competition and providing more opportunities for language practice.

3. Exploration of Gamification Strategies for College English Activities

3.1 Problems in the Current Application of Gamification in College English Activities

The current application of gamification teaching in college English classrooms faces a series of problems. Firstly, the integration of gamification and college English teaching is at a low level. Although the concept of gamification teaching has gradually been accepted by teachers and educators, in actual teaching, the application of gamification often remains at a superficial level, lacking in-depth integration with curriculum objectives. Many teachers, when designing classroom activities, focus more on the introduction of game elements while ignoring their organic combination with the core objectives of English language learning. As a result, gamified activities become formalistic and cannot truly improve students' language abilities.

Secondly, the development of innovative teaching models is relatively slow, and teachers' understanding and application abilities of gamification teaching need to be improved. Although some teachers have started to try to introduce gamification into the classroom, due to a lack of in-depth understanding of gamification and a shortage of relevant training and support, they often find it difficult to design effective gamified activities that meet teaching objectives. In addition, some teachers are accustomed to traditional teaching methods and lack acceptance of new technologies and models, which hinders the wide application and further development of gamification teaching.

Furthermore, the application of gamification elements is too formalistic and fails to truly integrate into the core objectives of language learning. Many gamified activities in the classroom often remain on the surface, emphasizing external incentives such as reward mechanisms and point systems, without effectively supporting students' language acquisition process. For example, some classroom activities have designed point and ranking systems, but these elements are not closely related to students' actual language learning needs. As a result, students have a high level of participation, but the language learning effect is not satisfactory. The ultimate goal of gamification should be to improve students' language abilities through innovative means, rather than simply pursuing classroom fun. Therefore, how to effectively integrate gamification elements into the core objectives of language learning is a key issue that teachers need to consider when designing gamified teaching.

Overall, although gamification shows certain potential in college English teaching, there are still many problems in its actual application, which urgently need further exploration and improvement. Teachers need to enhance their understanding and application abilities of gamification teaching, develop more innovative teaching models, and ensure the in-depth combination of gamification elements and language learning goals, so as to truly give play to

the role of gamification in enhancing language abilities and learning experiences.

3.2 Core Elements of Applying Gamification to College English Teaching

The key to the successful implementation of gamification teaching lies in selecting appropriate gamification elements and organically combining them with course content. In college English teaching, the design of gamification content should focus on interactivity and contextuality to simulate real-life language communication scenarios, thereby enhancing students' language output and comprehension abilities. By introducing incentive mechanisms, interactive tasks, and contextualized language learning experiences, it is possible to effectively enhance students' learning motivation and language proficiency.

3.2.1 Storylines and Themes

Integrating language learning into engaging storylines or themes helps to provide contextual clues for students, enhancing their understanding and memory of vocabulary, grammar, and cultural backgrounds (Goodwyn & Branson, 2013). For example, by setting the course content in a specific cultural context, students can not only learn relevant language knowledge but also experience the unique charm of that culture. Through the advancement of the plot, students gradually master more complex language structures, forming natural language accumulation. This plot-based learning method can stimulate students' learning interest and provide practical contextual support in actual language use.

3.2.2 Tasks and Challenges

Setting challenging language tasks, such as oral conversations, writing exercises, or listening comprehension, can enhance learners' sense of participation and achievement. The design of gamified tasks should take into account the needs of learners at different levels and provide diverse difficulty levels to adapt to the learning progress of various students. For example, beginners can build confidence through simple word and short-sentence exercises, while advanced learners can further improve their language abilities through complex situational dialogues or writing tasks. The completion of tasks can be linked to a reward system, helping students gain continuous motivation through small-scale success experiences.

3.2.3 Level and Achievement Systems

Drawing on the level and achievement systems in games, language skills can be divided into multiple levels and corresponding to language proficiency standards. Students earn points or rewards by completing specific tasks or tests and gradually level up, thus improving their visual perception of progress. The achievement system not only helps students see their growth but also can stimulate their upward - going spirit by setting clear goals. For example, students can obtain achievement badges or other forms of rewards after mastering a certain number of words or passing a grammar test, which will further strengthen their learning motivation and willingness to continue participating.

In actual language courses, the above-mentioned gamification elements need to be closely combined with specific teaching objectives to ensure the effectiveness and pertinence of gamification design. For example, the level system can be linked to standards such as the

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to help students clarify their phased progress in language learning. Dialogue tasks can be set in culturally rich scenarios, allowing students to not only learn the language but also experience cultural differences in the context. The acquisition of achievement badges can be achieved through participating in classroom activities, completing after - class assignments, or passing tests.

In addition, when applying gamification teaching, teachers should flexibly use different gamification elements, comprehensively considering students' needs, ability levels, and course objectives. In this way, gamification can not only increase the fun of the classroom but also enhance students' initiative, persistence, and language application abilities in the process of language learning. Ultimately, the effective use of gamification will bring more interactive and innovative opportunities to college English classrooms and improve students' comprehensive language literacy.

3.3 Case of Applying Gamification to College English Teaching

Taking *Diversity and Inclusion of 21st Century College English Integrated Course* as an example, the application of gamification teaching can effectively enhance students' understanding of the theme of diversity and inclusion and their language proficiency. By designing gamified activities closely related to the unit theme, it can not only stimulate students' learning interest but also cultivate their critical thinking and cross-cultural awareness through interaction and cooperation.

3.3.1 Storyline and Interaction Design

In the unit of *Diversity and Inclusion*, teachers can construct a virtual international community where students play roles from different cultural backgrounds and participate in solving issues related to diversity and inclusion in society. Each student role has a different identity background, such as gender, race, culture, or economic status. They explore and solve various social issues by completing plot - driven tasks. For example, teachers can design a series of discussion tasks, asking students to discuss how to promote inclusion in virtual society from the perspective of their roles. This method can not only help students understand complex cultural and social issues but also enhance their English expression abilities.

3.3.2 Tasks and Challenges

To strengthen the effect of language learning, teachers can integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills into specific tasks. For example, Task 1 can be designed as a simulated diversity conference, requiring students to express their opinions and respond to others' views, which exercises students' oral expression and impromptu conversation abilities. Task 2 can be writing a written report, where students need to propose solutions to social inclusion issues. These tasks are graded according to difficulty and are rewarded with corresponding points or rewards upon completion, motivating students to challenge themselves and increase their learning participation. At the same time, the task design is closely related to the course content. Students not only master knowledge about diversity and inclusion through language learning but also cultivate critical thinking and teamwork

abilities.

3.3.3 Level and Achievement Systems

Throughout the learning process of the course, teachers can introduce a level and achievement system. Students earn points by completing each task in the unit and can level up when they accumulate a certain number of points. For example, after completing the oral discussion task, students can obtain the "Discussion Master" achievement badge related to this task. After passing the review of the written assignment, students can obtain the title of "Writing Expert". This level and achievement system not only allows students to clearly see their progress in language learning but also enhances their learning motivation and sense of achievement, driving them to continuously participate in course activities.

3.3.4 Multimodal Interaction and Feedback

Gamification teaching does not only rely on in-class activities but can also be extended to after - class through technical means. Teachers can use multimedia tools to provide students with videos, audio, and interactive exercises. For example, interactive games or quizzes related to the theme of *Diversity and Inclusion* can be released through an online platform. Students can strengthen the language skills learned in class by participating in these interactive activities and can also receive immediate feedback after class, which helps them adjust their learning strategies. The timeliness and personalized design of feedback can further promote students' language internalization and application.

3.3.5 Social Competition and Cooperation

To enhance students' sense of participation and cooperation awareness, teachers can design team challenge projects. For example, divide the whole class into several groups, and each group solves different diversity and inclusion issues in the virtual society through teamwork. This competition not only stimulates students' competitive spirit but also enhances their cooperation ability. In addition, group achievements can be displayed on a leaderboard, allowing students to see their own group's position and compare it with other groups. This kind of social competition and cooperation mechanism not only enriches the form of classroom activities but also helps students develop cross - cultural communication and teamwork skills in the process of language learning.

4. Practical Implications of Gamification in College English Teaching

The practical exploration of gamification in college English teaching has far-reaching implications for improving the quality of language teaching and students' learning experiences.

4.1 Improving Student Engagement

Gamification can effectively enhance students' engagement in English learning. By designing interesting storylines, challenging tasks, and attractive reward systems, it can stimulate students' internal motivation and make them more willing to actively participate in classroom

activities. In the gamified environment, students are no longer passive recipients of knowledge but active explorers and participants. They are more likely to immerse themselves in the learning process, which is conducive to improving their language learning efficiency and quality.

4.2 Cultivating Comprehensive Language Skills

Gamified teaching activities usually integrate multiple language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For example, in the case of the *Diversity and Inclusion* unit, students need to express their opinions orally, write reports, listen to others' views, and read relevant materials. Through these comprehensive language practice activities, students can improve their overall language proficiency and gradually develop the ability to use English for real - world communication.

4.3 Fostering Critical Thinking and Cross-cultural Awareness

Gamification often presents complex social and cultural issues in the form of tasks and challenges. In the process of solving these problems, students need to think critically, analyze different perspectives, and respect cultural differences. For instance, in the virtual international community designed in the *Diversity and Inclusion* unit, students play roles from different cultural backgrounds and face various diversity - related problems. This experience can help students develop cross - cultural awareness and the ability to think critically about complex social issues, which is very important for their future development in an internationalized context.

4.4 Promoting Teacher Professional Development

The application of gamification in teaching also requires teachers to continuously update their teaching concepts and skills. Teachers need to understand the principles and methods of gamification, design appropriate gamified teaching activities according to the characteristics of the course and students, and use modern educational technologies to support teaching. In this process, teachers' professional knowledge and teaching ability can be effectively improved, which is beneficial to the long - term development of the teaching profession.

5. Limitations and Future Directions

This study explores the application of gamification in college English listening, speaking, and viewing teaching. Through literature review and case analysis, it is found that gamification has significant potential in improving students' learning motivation and language proficiency. The introduction of gamification elements such as storylines, tasks, level systems, and achievement rewards can create a more engaging and challenging learning environment. The case of *Diversity and Inclusion* in *21st Century College English Integrated Course* demonstrates that gamification can be effectively combined with course content, enhancing students' classroom participation, language practice effectiveness, and the cultivation of comprehensive abilities.

5.1 Limitations of the Study

Although this research has achieved certain results, there are also some limitations. Firstly, the research sample is relatively limited. The case study only focuses on a single unit in a specific textbook, and the findings may not be fully representative of all college English courses. Secondly, the research lacks long - term follow - up. The impact of gamification on students' long - term language learning and development needs further in - depth research. In addition, the research mainly focuses on the application of gamification in classroom teaching, and the exploration of its combination with extracurricular learning and self - directed learning is relatively insufficient.

5.2 Future Research Directions

In the future, more in-depth research can be carried out in the following aspects, with a special emphasis on the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) to revolutionize college English gamification teaching.

Firstly, expand the research scope to cover different types of college English courses and a wider range of students. This comprehensive approach will not only improve the universality and applicability of the research findings but also allow for a more nuanced understanding of how gamification can be tailored to diverse learning needs. By leveraging AI, researchers can analyze large-scale data on student performance, preferences, and learning styles across various courses. For example, AI-powered learning analytics can identify patterns in how different groups of students respond to gamified elements, enabling the customization of teaching strategies for maximum effectiveness.

Secondly, conduct long - term follow - up studies to explore the long-term impact of gamification on students' language learning and comprehensive development. AI can play a crucial role in this area by providing continuous and real-time assessment. Machine learning algorithms can monitor students' language progress over extended periods, tracking improvements in vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and writing skills. Moreover, AI can analyze non - cognitive factors such as motivation, engagement, and self-efficacy, which are often difficult to measure accurately. This data-driven approach will help educators understand the long-term benefits and potential drawbacks of gamification in college English teaching.

Thirdly, strengthen the research on the combination of gamification and extracurricular learning. AI can be used to develop highly intelligent gamified learning apps or online platforms to support students' self-directed learning. These platforms can use natural language processing (NLP) to interact with students in real - time, providing instant feedback on their language usage. For instance, an AI-powered chatbot can simulate English conversations, correct grammar mistakes, and offer personalized learning suggestions. Additionally, AI can analyze students' extracurricular learning activities, such as reading English articles or watching English movies, and recommend relevant gamified exercises to reinforce learning.

In addition, with the rapid development of emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR)

and artificial intelligence, future research should explore how to integrate these technologies into gamification teaching to create more immersive and personalized learning experiences. AI can enhance VR - based gamification by adapting the virtual environment to individual students' needs. For example, AI can adjust the difficulty level of language tasks in a VR game based on the student's real-time performance. It can also generate personalized storylines and scenarios in the VR world, making the learning experience more engaging and relevant.

Overall, gamification shows great potential in college English teaching, especially when combined with the power of artificial intelligence. By continuously exploring and improving these innovative approaches, it is expected to provide a more effective and interesting way for college English teaching and learning. This will not only help students better master English language skills but also enable them to adapt to the dynamic requirements of future social development in an increasingly globalized world.

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No additional data are available.

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