

Game as a motivational tool in TEFL in elementary and junior high school lessons

Krzysztof Polok ✉

University of Bielsko-Biała

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0283-9665>

sworntran@interia.pl

Katarzyna Byrda

Cluster of Sport High School in Szczyrk

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7909-4227>

k.hetnal@wp.pl

Abstract

Gameplay has always been the subject of human interest. As small kids we play different games, and we discover the world with their help. They accompany us during our childhood, we spend time with friends playing them and improve our social skills as well. Unfortunately, gaming is not a popular technique during lessons in school. The article focuses on a supposition that it is possible to overturn this unfamiliar approach, mostly basing on the natural wish to create and produce the new and the unreachable most of people have. The truth is that gaming not only brings learners joy, but also helps in developing their skills in different fields. This topic was chosen in order to find out whether adding games to the lesson content could help enrich the whole process of material delivery on the one hand and also boost the learners' motivation and involvement in material study on the other. 76 students from primary school (6th grade) and junior school (1st grade) took part in the research. Initially the students were taught with the help of course-book content only, but during the second phase of the research we added various games to make the lesson content look more involving, so as to motivate the learners to help them gain strictly operationalized sets of achievements faster. The lessons and the topic management were separately supervised and assessed by two teachers, whose opinions were later compared and analyzed. The main purpose of assessment was not the teacher's behavior in the class, nor the way she

managed to transfer the topic content on the learners, but the learners themselves, i.e., their behavior and possible (hypothesized) growth of internal motivation and involvement to participate in the lessons. We found that course-book topics, appropriately enriched with various and purposefully selected and course-book topic-friendly games (all of them being either found online, or invented by us to upgrade the main line of material delivery), gave rise to evident growth of interest in the lesson content, what aligned with similar growth of intrinsic motivation of the learners.

Keywords: gameplay, EFL classroom, junior high school, primary school, intrinsic/extrinsic motivation,

1. Introduction

The Cambridge Dictionary defines a game as “an entertaining activity or sport that people play, usually needing some skills and played according to rules”. When people think about games, their thoughts mostly focus on pleasure and fun. It is something which brings joy not only for humans but also for animals. Gaming is a basic way of discovering the world by young beings (not necessarily human). In a current Foreign Language Core Curriculum (2024) concerning the ways primary school students could be familiarized with the contents of the new language, one can read that spontaneous gaming (i.e., the one performed without any help of a teacher) is a very important part of learners’ sustainable development. It concerns all senses and allows a child to “learn a world through actions” (p. 14).

Following the results of a collective study (Evans *et al.*, 2013) gaming (and video gaming, in particular) is concerned to perform an important function in everyday of older children and teenagers. Similar results were found in the educational sector (Oproiu, 2022). According to Lewis & Bedson (2014), the advantage of gaming is that such activities not only help involve learners but also bring joy; this is the main advantage for implementation them to EFL classroom. The authors notice gaming to be a natural way of interaction and discovery of the environment by children. Discussing the difference between a game and a language game, Lewis & Bedson (2014) claim that the latter is mostly of language task-based character; it provides not only pleasure but also helps language learners reach a goal.

2. Literature review

One of the roles of language gaming is a possibility of creating a sham of an authentic language situation (N'Diore Lazare, 1989). Its privilege is that it involves

imagination and simulation, letting a teacher introduce authentic situations in a highly creative way. One lesson the learners are on a train station, whereas another one lets them move to a British (or any other) cinema. Another characteristic feature of language games is their flexibility; one can apply games every time one needs. They can be used as a warm up (to engage and involve learners into lesson); they can be applied as a “filler” – when learners’ involvement weakens, but we want to have their attention focused on a topic one more time; as a cool down activity, which allows us to revise the whole material; or just as a form of relaxation (Polok & Starowicz, 2022). Games can also help organize a whole lesson; when we introduce new vocabulary and/or grammar structures, gaming may be an idea for preparing a kind of necessary workshop (Wessels, 1994).

The division of games is never simple or obvious. One of the reasons of the development of technology observed in 20th century was the invention of computers and gaming consoles, what resulted in the development of various computer-related leisure suggestions, one of them being games. One of the consequences of such a rampart development of games was their division into online and offline ones. In both groups of games, EFL technology development can be seen; one of its visible results is a division into games played by groups and these played by individuals both in and out of classrooms.

Generally, the division of games is not always clearly assigned to possible game users. as all of them can occur in different configurations. For example, teachers may basically implement a word game normally played individually, but due to the oncoming necessity to be played in team-like conditions, a team word quiz may be organized instead. There exist numerous possibilities and the only things that limit them are the teacher’s creativity and imagination (Polok et al., 2024).

Stojkovic & Jerotijevic (2011) offer a division of EFL games into the ones aimed at mastering one (or more than one) language skills; thus one can find listening games, speaking games, reading games, spelling games, discussion (debate) games, etc.. There are also games which develop various language skills, like grammar and/or pronunciation. What is more, there are games combining more than one skill at the same time. Thus, language learners may practice not only the skill of reading, but also the one of listening, writing or speaking as a subsequent requirement of a game actually applied by the teacher (Wessels, 1994). The possibilities are unlimited, because there exists no one, fixed pattern for gaming – teachers and learners can modify them in any way they fit the topic. Thus, very broadly speaking, all games can be split into the ones mostly practiced individually and the ones requiring a team.

Lewis & Bedson (2014) offer a different classification of language games dividing them into: (1) movement games (such games involve body movement, gestures and physical activities; children develop their manual skills, use their

bodies in order to acquire the language); (2) card games (games that require cards or flashcards; they can be used for presenting new vocabulary, or grammar structures); (3) board games (they involve moving markers along paths; such games can be designed and created by teachers themselves); (4) dice games (games that require the use of dice, pictures, colours or letters); (5) drawing games, requiring the implementation of various drawing activities; (6) guessing games, whose principal aim is to find answers to questions, or to guess a password, thus fitting the requirements of a competition; (7) singing and chanting games, mostly focusing on the development of learners' pronunciation skills, being often connected with body movements, dancing and/or music; (8) word games, which mostly practice the skills referring to spelling and writing, aimed at developing learners' vocabulary and letting them discover new words in an automatic manner; and, finally (9) role-play games, which can either be improvised or prepared; these games, following Doff (1990), are closely connected with drama activities acting out every day events in a realistic way. All the types of games presented above are broadly used in foreign (second) teaching as they are believed to highly induce the learners' motivation and even enthusiasm for their unforced practice of the new language. Being able to create the atmosphere of competition they involve in foreign (second) language learners a desire to check themselves on the one hand and/or be better than other game participants on the other.

The topic of motivation is the one widely discussed and researched (cf. McClelland, 1982; Deci & Ryan, 2005; Gardner, 2005; Ellis et al., 2010; Dörnyei 2010). Following Kordziński (2007), as well as a number of other motivation-studying researchers, (a few of them mentioned above), the two most common forms of motivation are called intrinsic (or internal) and extrinsic (also called external, or instrumental). The intrinsic type of motivation has been discussed/described in an unlimited number of ways. For example, according to (Noels et al., 2000), learners feel motivated, because they want to improve their skills; in this moment they are not looking for any benefits coming from the outside. They possess internal willingness to be knowledgeable and they do not especially care for any external reward to feel satisfied. The only reward they want is mastering the foreign language in the level that could let them safely communicate their thoughts; such behavior is called intrinsic motivation. Also Ryan and Deci (2000) notice intrinsic motivation as occurring during and in the final phase of the process of learning. One's internal curiosity makes the students look for additional knowledge. Thus, a student, who is motivated in an intrinsic way, is much easier to teach. As they observe, a teacher does not have to be very highly attentive in helping such a student become more knowledgeable, because both of them (i.e., the teacher and the student) are mostly aware that learning is important and beneficial for her/his student.

One more trace to the analysis of human behavior can be found in the self-determination theory also authored by Ryan and Deci (2000). The theory, briefly

speaking, presents a psychological framework aimed at the exploration of human motivation, well-being, and personality development. As the authors indicate the theory focuses on the importance of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which have been recognized as being essential for fostering intrinsic motivation and overall well-being. As concerns education (L2 education included) it is easy to imagine the influence of any earlier designed activities on the general process of L2 knowledge storage on condition any of the earlier indicated psychological needs has been cautiously aimed at. This is also what Gardner (2005) briefly defined in his short but extremely easy to accept description of motivation, when he beheld motivation as one's desire becoming the direct result of his/her earlier effort.

The issue of one's effort (as well as its immediate result, i.e., achievement) is also strongly underlined in Wiegand and Geller's (2004) article discussing the ways achievement motivation and positive reinforcement can improve workplace performance and well-being. One of important assets of the article is its exploration of the strategies that promote success-seeking over failure-avoidance, as well as putting stress on the importance of positive reinforcement in achievement motivation fostering, increasing one's self-efficacy, fostering organization appreciation processes, and encouraging well-designed learning-based approaches. Although the key points of their article concern everyday functioning of different organizations the processes where achievement motivation can be harnessed so as to come up with a series of success-seeking behaviors rather than simply avoiding failure, it can be also addressed to schooling conditions and the processes that could help students learn in a more efficient way. The article proposes a wide range of possibilities, which, with prior appropriate development, can be successfully used in school conditions. Not only can such steps strengthen students' sense of achievements, but also motivate them to work hard enough to obtain results that are subjectively recognized as being satisfactory to them.

Also noteworthy is the emerging conclusion that the very fact of hard work does not have to be unequivocally associated with boring, monotonous work that kills all energy and positive motivation to do it. On the contrary, because the external envelope of each form of activity can always be appropriately adjusted to the individual needs and capabilities of the student, whether the student will work more or less intensively depends to a large extent on the teacher's previous didactic plans, and thus the entire organization of classes. Harmer (2001) describes the process of encouraging students to familiarize themselves more thoroughly with the subject matter being studied in detail and finds it to be the gate to any further educational activity developed either in or outside the class. Without a doubt, one of such encouraging educational forms can be designated to the function of various types of games, various video games with educational values included.

In this paper we will mostly focus upon this (i.e., intrinsic) kind of motivation as it seems to largely prevail in the joint processes of gaming and FL education. According to Mozelius and Olsson (2014), games for students who are motivated intrinsically should be demanding and interesting. They must be given a chance to awake their curiosity in order to let themselves explore new notions and/or develop themselves in some other way. The games must be personalized and challenging for such students. It can be worth using authentic materials, like maps or original texts, to create the impression of learning in natural, authentic conditions. Thus, teachers whose learners are intrinsically motivated, should apply the games that keep focusing on language production and promoting the work with other students as much as possible (Bieńkowska et al., 2021). Drama games will be effective here, because of their integrative shape (learners collaborate with each other) and a possibility to create an authentic context.

Remembering about all these positive aspects, Wong and Looi (2010) observe that a person motivated in an extrinsic way becomes far more challenging for the teacher. Following Ryan and Deci (2000), this type of motivation, in contrast to intrinsic one, occurs when somebody does a particular thing in order to be appropriately rewarded (i.e., what s/he considers as a just reward for the work done). This kind of motivation resembles a transaction where the teacher gives some kind of reward for the learners (it does not have to be a material thing, but, for example, a mark, a sticker, or an activity that students like doing). This kind of motivation focuses on different forms of interpersonal relationship. Learners usually want to develop their language skills, because of their willingness of being communicative. They also want to discover different cultures, as they are mostly curious about the world (Polok & Harężak, 2018).

One more way of deliverance of extrinsic motivation, albeit generally disapproved but still present in a limited number of classes, is with the help of external force, usually hidden under a call of necessarily fulfilled obligation. What usually occurs is a form of instruction, paired with a demand-like request to complete a given task or homework assignment till a given (earlier indicated) period of time. Just because the learners are being constantly reminded that they are expected to fulfill their education tasks laid upon them by both their teachers and their parents, they usually have no other choice, but obediently listen to such indications even when they do not see any place for themselves there. The natural consequence of this predicament is completing the tasks for the tasks' sake even when the processes of genuine self-education should never (or hardly ever) be met. Actually, following the analysis of the whole situation carried out by Hulleman and Harackiewicz (2015), what such learners are primarily interested in is not the education content, nor even their grades, but the emotional result (mixed with some form of satisfaction) they could earn as a consequence of this form of behavior.

Hulleman & Harackiewicz (p. 4) look quite decisive when they claim that “[d]espite popular belief in education, grades do not motivate students to do their best work, nor do they lead to better learning or better achievement”. In many cases, this is because many of these students do not find grades appropriate illustrations of their educational achievements, many of which not even being assessed. The scope of motivation they experience urges them to do the assignments just for the sake of doing them, not even counting on being praised or recognized as having earned a pinch of success. This type of motivation focuses on the people who take care of what others think about them (earning the teacher’s satisfaction by some students). Pintrich and Schunk (1996, as cited in Tengku and Jafari, 2012) claim that such learners may not be self-confident sometimes because of the external pressure they may experience and a fear of being judged by others, that assists them at the same time. Students of this type of motivation need more care and attention from the teacher. They ought to be encouraged to work on their own, and it is the teacher’s role to inject the love to foreign languages inside of them¹.

Gardner and Lambert (1972, p. 121) use a narrower expression of instrumental motivation defining it as the type of motivation that “[...] suggests and implies that a learner learns the language in support of a purpose relating to occupation or further useful motive”. Learners treat language as an instrument (a tool) to achieve a particular goal. For example, a learner wants to work in a company in Australia, however s/he does not know the language and has no chance to get this job because of this fact (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Thus s/he starts studying English because, due to the level of determination to get this job s/he experiences, English is only a tool which should help her/him in achieving this goal. In this way, when teaching such students, we should ask them about the purpose for learning English and, as far as possible, adjust the vocabulary and the phrases to meet their needs (Nunan, 1996).

Thus, when talking about games for extrinsically motivated students, teachers have to be very careful in their activities connected with selection of appropriate games. One has to remember that such learners/gamers are often not fully involved in language learning, so the moments they do not feel a necessity to learn for themselves, but for external benefits, may clearly prevail. It seems important to use such gaming strategies that could not only engage the learners in a maximal way, but also provide them with rewards that might result in rapid forms of language production. These learners who can see they are able to communicate in a short enough period of time, will also be able to appreciate the

¹ It is also of interest how far inherent teacher’s motivation (which should, preferably, be of internal type) may be responsible for the further correct development of FL learners’ proficiency. This, obviously, is a topic for a separate discussion.

sense of learning, in this way letting the intrinsic type of motivation become the leading one in the whole process encouraging them to produce language on their own.

3. Methodology

The research was planned to carry out the data to be collected with the help of a mixed method – both qualitatively (observation sheets) and quantitatively (a short questionnaire; pre- and post-tests). The leading question of the research was to find how far introducing appropriately selected/designed games could induce the learners to become intrinsically motivated and willing to develop their instructed language (English) in an unforced way. The participants were the students of a public school located in a large town in southern Poland. The research participants consisted of higher elementary class learners (6th and 7th classes), whose parents had been notified about the research activities and their consent was obtained in respect to each student taking part in the research. Also the school headmistress had been informed about the planned study and we got her approval. The total number of the participants was 76 (36 girls and 40 boys). As they were elementary school students, all of them lived in the school's nearby area. We also found out that 16 of them, (mostly the ones attending the 7th class), had additional classes of English in the two language schools located in the same town.

The whole research consisted of three separate components. At the very beginning, the learners got a questionnaire with the two questions (RQ) to assess the current level of their motivation when participating in language lessons (RQ 1); and to evaluate their attitude to the process of learning English (RQ 2). They were also requested to assess their FL proficiency in the way offered by the forms of assessment found at Likert scale (1 – very poor, 10 – excellent). The same questions were asked to the students once again i.e., at the end of the research – after having participated in 16 game-filled lessons.

The research has been planned to be based upon the four units of a course-book normally used by the learners (*Steps Plus VI* and *Focus 1*). The first two units were introduced by the teacher, who taught the pupils in the traditional way. The two remaining units were elaborated in the way that made possible to deliver them to the learners with the help of various language games. Each of the sections of the research consisted of 16 lessons. All the lessons were observed and assessed by the class teacher, as well as by another teacher; the assessment tool consisted of specially designed observation sheets, that included the issues concerning the learners' FL involvement (1), classroom use of L1/L2 (2), as well as the levels of internal (3) and external (4) motivation revealed by them during the whole time of the study. Here again the Likert scale assessment (1-10) were

introduced. The whole assessment scale looked as follows: 1 – no motivation/involvement at all; 2 – extremely poorly motivated/involved; 3 – poorly motivated/involved; 4 – poor/average motivation/involvement; 5 – average motivation/ involvement; 6 – average/increasing motivation/involvement; 7 – average/high motivation/ involvement; 8 – high motivation/involvement; 9 – very high motivation/involvement; 10 – extremely high motivation/involvement.

The most important aim of the research was to widely examine the practical usability of applying gaming in the lessons of English. It was meant to not only evaluate the level of intensity of the learners' motivation that could be obtained to due to purposeful game application, but also the consequences such motivated learners may came to, i.e., far better results of their FL proficiency. This achievement was found on the grounds of the learners' general involvement in different language games they took part during the lessons (mostly as a warm-up activity) and the average amount of time they required to complete them. We were slightly surprised with this marker as initially we did not think about measuring it at all. Only later, when some more advanced students were evidently out of work for having completed their tasks, did we find that this issue had been overlooked by us and not included into the research procedures. In order to keep these learners busy we initially had to offer them extra tasks for completion or, later on, we simply prepared two types of warm up activities (i.e., more and less linguistically developed) to be voluntarily chosen by all learners. In the final part of the study we discovered that these language tasks that required more individual involvement of a student in a task were preferred by a slightly larger group of the learners taking part in the research (mostly the ones who had reported to additionally attend language schools). Even when these learners were not always ready to complete the tasks during the (usually short) warm-up periods of time, they still wanted to take them home and bring them completed for the next meeting. In this way, motivation was perceived a dependent variable in our research, whereas games as such were found to be functioning as an independent one.

There also appeared a couple of limitations that might disturb the whole process of the research, the three most significant ones being student absences, the duration of the whole research and the limited time for conducting the lessons.

4. Research findings

4.1. Questionnaire analysis

The two questions the researched students were requested to answer twice (i.e., before the research and after its completion) were focused on the supposed

growth of their motivation. The students were expected to insert their answers into a Likert-like 0-10 point scale, where 0 meant *not at all*, whereas 10 was *excellent*.

While assessing the results of the first question (Table 1), we found that the largest number of the participants marked 2, which meant they were very poorly motivated to learn the language. The second highest score was point marked 4, one more time indicating their low level of motivation. What is more, 12 out of 76 participants of the survey (i.e., 15.79%) claimed that they were not motivated at all (the indicated number being 0). This suggests, that almost one class out of the four that took part in our research was not motivated at all to learn English as the second language.

After the completion of the lessons, whose principal role was to implement gaming activities in the lessons of English, the students received the same questionnaire, with the same questions. As expected, generally, the score improved. The learners mostly claimed that they were motivated at a higher level: although four of them (5.26%) still did not feel motivated at all, and eleven (14.47%) felt motivated in a very low way; at the same time, thirty examined students (39.47%) claimed that their motivation is either average or high. The general score appeared to be satisfactory, especially when the duration of the research could be taken into account. As for the most commonly indicated number it was 6, which means that the learners did not know whether their motivation was high or low.

Table 1 How motivating can you rate your lessons of English? N = 76 (Source: Own research)

Score	Questionnaire 1 results (pre-study)		Questionnaire 2 results (post-study)	
	No. of marked answers	%	No. of marked answers	%
0	12	15.80	4	5.20
1	20	26.30	6	7.90
2	8	10.50	5	6.50
3	10	13.10	0	0.00
4	16	21.05	8	10.50
5	4	5.20	15	19.70
6	2	2.60	4	5.20
7	4	5.20	13	17.10
8	0	0.00	10	13.50
9	0	0.00	6	7.90
10	0	0.00	5	6.50

The results of the second question were better than the previous one (Table 2). There even were two students who claimed their attitude towards learning English was excellent. On the other hand, 21.05% of the learners marked

point 1 on the scale, which meant that their involvement to the language learnt was bad. Generally, while answering this question, the learners' answers were mostly put in the middle of the scale. Their involvement towards learning English as a FL appeared to be not so negative as their motivation. This suggests, that there could be a chance to improve the learners' general attitude and motivation when the teaching techniques were changed.

Table 2 How can you rate your attitude towards learning English? N = 76 (Source: Own research)

Score	Questionnaire 1 results (pre-study)		Questionnaire 2 results (post-study)	
	No. of marked answers	%	No. of marked answers	%
0	10	13.10	5	6.50
1	16	21.00	8	10.50
2	12	15.70	12	15.70
3	24	31.50	4	5.20
4	2	2.60	1	1.30
5	4	5.20	6	7.90
6	1	1.30	2	2.60
7	4	5.20	10	13.10
8	1	1.30	8	10.5
9	0	0.00	16	21.00
10	2	2.60	4	5.20

While analyzing the second question that concerned the learners' attitude toward English lessons they participated in, the results show that average level of learners' attitude towards English lessons also improved. The number of the learners who revealed positive attitude towards learning English was definitely higher than in the same question in the previous questionnaire. 16 students (21.05%) out of 76 claimed that their attitude was very good, in this way revealing their positive feelings towards the lessons of English they had been offered. On the other hand, the number of students who were not satisfied with these lessons of English did not change – we found 12 (15.79%) such students. We can see that there exist two opposites. On the one hand, there are learners who are satisfied with their lessons of English; on the other hand, however, the group of ambivalent (or even negative) representatives is still strong. Generally, however, one can see that the improvement did take place and in contrast to the situation when these questions were answered for the first time, more students with positive feelings towards English can be found (this time the most commonly indicated number was 7).

4.2. Analysis of the observation sheets

The second part of our research was divided into two sections. First of all, the assessment sheets were filled up separately by the class and the second teacher while watching each of the lessons given in a traditional way. Next, the sheets were filled up one more time by the same tandem team during the game-based period of material deliverance (i.e., the two remaining lessons). The total number of observation sheets per class was 16 (8 filled by the class teacher, and the remaining 8 by the second teacher), which gives us 64 sheets to be analyzed. The observation sheet analysis covered the following issues: (1) willingness to participate, (2) level of extrinsic motivation, (3) level of intrinsic motivation, (4) learners' positive reaction to tasks and, finally, (5) level of interaction. All the grades awarded by each of the teachers followed the Likert scale specification. The final results were counted separately by each of the lesson assessors (Table 3).

Table 3 Observation sheets results (in %) Source: Own research

Who filled in:	Score	Extrinsic motivation	Intrinsic motivation	Level of interaction	Positive reaction to tasks
Class teacher	Very high	5	4	4	2
	High	20	12	13	15
	Medium	42	20	13	45
	Low	17	38	20	32
	Very low	15	25	50	6
	Very high	0	25	15	35
Second teacher	High	15	38	39	20
	Medium	50	26	32	40
	Low	19	10	10	5
	Very low	16	1	4	0

The first most visible result is the assessment given to each of the four observed issues by the class and the second teacher. Whereas the grades given by the class teacher appear to be a little bit more lenient, generally the forms of assessment given by the second teacher look far more serious, what indicates that the two teachers saw the approach to the lessons revealed by the learners in a different way.

First of all, the focus was put upon the learners' willingness to participate in the language lessons. As expected, their willingness to participate in the lessons improved in the second part of the research, i.e., when the deliverance of the lessons was based on different types of games. When contrasted with the results obtained when traditional lesson techniques were introduced, one could observe considerable rise of the learners' interest, i.e., during the first part of research the total rate of high level of willingness to participate was estimated at the level of 2.00%, whereas at the end of research, the score increased up to

30.00%. When asked to indicate their level of willingness to participate in the lessons, high level of willingness was indicated by 6.72% of the students during the first part of the research, with 47.06% during the second one.

Another issue we examined with the help of observation sheets was the level of extrinsic motivation. To examine this form of motivation, both the teacher and we had prepared some rewards for the students during our material deliverance processing activities. The teacher following the traditional course of teaching gave pluses to reward the learners (3 pluses equaled a very good mark). In turn, we gave them stickers with smiling faces and praised their good answers. The difference between the results found in the first and the second phase of the research was not so visible as in previous cases; the level of extrinsic motivation was slightly higher during the first phase of the research (although the difference did not exceed 6.03%), mostly because the learners preferred to work in order to get a more basic reward. Praising the learners and giving them colorful and lovely looking stickers, would not be as rewarding as the pluses distributed on account of their further better grades. Here the most interesting results could be observed within the groups of neither fully convinced nor fully interested learners; in the initial phase of the research the indicated number referring to the first mentioned sub-group was 15.79%, only to fall down to 11.92% in the second (i.e., game-based) period of teaching (i.e., when no pluses were delivered). In respect to the second specified sub-group, the decrease is even more impressive, falling from 32.34% in the first phase of the research down to mere 2.03% in the final one. As one can see, the form of lesson deliverance does influence the students' willingness to participate in the lessons, what means their level of extrinsic motivation gets higher and they, generally, become more open to the knowledge delivered to them in a standard way. That is why the extrinsic motivation was found to be higher during traditional lessons.

The second type of motivation measured during the research (i.e., the intrinsic one) also gave quite interesting results. Here the difference is more visible; the growth of intrinsic motivation in the second part of research is approximately high (from 4.44% to 54.09%). The learners wanted to take part in the tasks, they created language situations on their own, they also were willing to do the tasks themselves, and – what is especially important when the lessons are based on the Communicative Approach – they tried to create their own tasks being clearly interested in successful communication. Also, what was mentioned above, their willingness to actively demonstrate their current knowledge was most noticed during the warm up activities when more demanding tasks were voluntarily requested by a slightly larger group of learners. The improvement of intrinsic motivation could grow because the learners were constantly stimulated and they had to be engaged in the tasks. They were having fun and they wanted to continue the tasks that brought evident pleasure to them.

One more issue the assessment sheets helped us to examine was the level of the learners' positive reaction to tasks. The reaction to individual tasks is significant when talking about motivation. By looking at it, we can measure the level of positive feelings learners express to do a given exercise. Game-playing is a specific technique, because learners mostly perceive it as a situation that keeps offering fun and pleasure to them. When being accustomed to take part in the traditional methods, based on the course-book, the blackboard and the teacher's voice explaining something to the students in a monotonous way, such a teaching technique where they could do something themselves could be received as being particularly interesting and unusual by them. Actually, our suppositions found full evidence in the learners' reaction to the forms of the teaching techniques they were offered. When the students passed on into the second phase of the study, their reaction to gaming indicated that they found it truly attractive; it looked as if they hardly believed that games could become an inherent part of lessons. Thus, the high score of positive reaction to the tasks we received may result from their disbelief and confrontation with attractive forms of conducting lessons. The learners so far accustomed to totally different forms of material deliverance, suddenly had to face the new form, something they had remembered from their childhood.

The last issue we examined with the help of the observation sheets was the level of students' in-lesson interaction. It turned out the level of interaction was evidently higher during the lessons that contained elements of gaming. During the lessons conducted by the class teacher, high level of interaction was observed to occur only on 5.87% of the learners, with the score increasing to 32.85% during the second phase of the research. Clearly, one of important reasons of such growth could result from the natural possibilities of games themselves, as these usually require communication in order to complete a particular task. As some of the games we introduced were role-play ones (based upon task deliverance), the rate of speaking and interaction activities had to go up (what actually did take place). These lessons, enriched by different elements of games, also included a considerable number of communication games which showed everyday activities (e.g., shopping, monopoly), they involved usage of synonyms (guessing games) and developed team work (e.g., brain-storming games, or games with the use of the *Kahoot!* mobile application).

The results the observation sheets provided us with, helped us to examine the general level of students' motivation and their willingness to participate in language lessons. In this way we were able to see that the teaching technique does matter in the process of teaching. They also made us more convinced that the type of lesson activity makes learners more or less reactive to the material delivered to them and that even more difficult topics may be easier comprehended by the

learners if only the technique of topic deliverance matches the general level of interest aroused in message receivers.

Learners are generally able to accept any form of learning they are being offered because of many different reasons. One of them is that the educational forms they are offered are the ones schooling tradition has approved of and regardless how senseless they could be, they have to be endured. Some other teaching forms reveal closer connection with the teacher; in this case, learners mostly agree with the stance that there are different teachers and what makes the difference here is the amount of talent for teaching different teachers possess. Our research has demonstrated that there is one more option at least. This option is connected with the cognitive (and creative) approach (of both the teachers and the learners) to the teaching/ learning activities performed in the class. A well-designed lesson with evident elevation of the learners' active part in it, is always welcomed by the learners, who can find sense in what they are requested to participate. A lesson based upon gaming is an evident example of this option.

5. Conclusion

Game-playing is a wide and multifaceted issue, which may be implemented in numerous ways. One of the problems found here is that many teachers do not treat it seriously, because offering excessive fun is usually not associated with learning. There are many teachers who are most probably of opinion that school is an institution which must make learners suffer, as what prevails here is external force aimed at making the learners willful to swot for the future exams. Clearly, this way of thinking is not only misleading, but also poorly motivating.

Gaming is one of natural ways of discovering the world. It may not only be implemented for young learners, but also in classes consisting of (often rebellious) teenagers. Creating a diverse gaming fun-entailing environment that will be friendly for the learners is definitely one of the symptoms of artful teaching. Teachers should observe their class, their reaction and engagement, because language games must fit the learners' needs. Fortunately, the range of language games is unlimited; what is more, teachers can feel free to create their own games what they can either do themselves or with the help of students. Not only could their learners feel proud to have been asked to co-organize the whole language learning process, but also recognize themselves to be highly motivated to perform it in the best way they can.

Plenty of additional material to think about could also be found in the observation sheets. One of the most strikingly appearing indications is the way of learners' involvement in the lesson content on conditions two aspects have been

met; first, the lesson material has been delivered in an interesting way; and second, the learners' feel they are truly expected to have such lessons successfully completed. Any task based upon the material content delivered to the learners in the way requiring them to be effectively involved in it, evidently influenced the processes helping them raise their level of intrinsic motivation, more willingly participating in the activities planned to be dealt with during such lessons and – what is equally important – recognizing such lessons as worth taking part in.

When contrasting the levels of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation of all participants of the study, one could also notice straight dependence between the form of lesson content deliverance and immediate reaction of the learners. Traditional, course-book based forms of teaching, with not additional involvement of any ICT tools (even when such tools were limited to effective management of different language games, mostly *Wordwall* and *Kahoot!*), were generally recognized as being far more productive with different levels of extrinsic motivation. In contrast to this finding, the learners' intrinsic motivation went strikingly up if only more attractive forms of lesson content deliverance had been proposed to them. As we mentioned above, the learners' level of involvement in the lesson contents as well as their will to achieve faster observed and experienced success (when doing *Kahoot!* requiring tasks, for example) became one of the most prominent forms of their in-lesson behavior. Not only did they try to get involved in the proposed tasks as quickly as possible, but also – what was equally easy to observe – in most cases they openly demonstrated their understanding of the method aimed at material deliverance proposed to them, finding much sense and pleasure in its realization.

The final (?) issue that can be also found when the analysis of the observation sheets is being effected is the assessment of the lessons and – strongly connected with it - the all-over forms of classroom management by the two teachers, whose principal task was the assessment the levels of extrinsic and intrinsic forms of students' motivation. Although the aim of the assessment was not the teacher but the learners, one could not easily separate the ways of teaching proposed to the learners and their response to any of these forms of lesson content delivery. It could be then claimed that there does exist a connection between the content of a lesson and its further presentation in the classroom on the one hand and the additional forms of content boost applied by the teacher on the other. The more personalized, individualized and customized such a lesson content delivery is, the higher the level of involvement and achievement-aimed forms of motivation of the learners. These forms of lesson content presentation that do not recognize the class as one and unified body, but allow for individual approach to the topic by each of the learners offer much higher level of the students' intrinsic motivation in return. The long-living postulate of sustainable development to be effected in the classroom, a language classroom included, first

proposed by Hargreaves and Fink (2004), could be positively tested even when such minimal pro-student approach has been introduced.

Another strong point of EFL games is also the time we want to spend on playing. Nobody said games should cover the whole lesson; there may be quick up to five minutes' long gaming activities to raise interest in the learners, and catch their attention (cf. Woodward, 2015). Gameplay is a flexible tool, which can be used by creative teachers to make their lessons more effective. Games can be either prepared, copied and ready-made, or improvised, created off-hand by the time the students are playing. They can include one individual, teams or the whole class. There are numerous ways to use them, but only the teacher's imagination is the limit there.

References

- Bieńkowska, I., Klimczok, A., Polok, K., & Modrzejewska, J. (2021). Use of mobile assisted language learning (MALL) in teaching vocabulary to ESP students. *The International Journal of Research in Teacher Education*, 12(3), 81-95.
- Cambridge Dictionary Online. (n.d.). <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/>
- Doff, A. (1990). *Teach English: A training course for teachers, trainer's handbook*. *Modern Language Journal*, 73(3), 343.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2010). *Questionnaires in second language research: Construction, administration, and processing* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Ellis, J. D., Arendt, S. W., Strohbehn, C. H., Meyer, J., & Paez, P. (2010). Varying influences of motivation factors on employees' likelihood to perform safe food handling practices because of demographic differences. *Journal of Food Protection*, 73(11), 2065-2071.
- Evans, M., Anderson, N., Change, M., Deater-Deckard, K., & Balci, O. (2013). Youth and video games. *Zeitschrift für Psychologie*, 221(2), 98-106.
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). Motivational variables in second language acquisition. In R. C. Gardner & W. E. Lambert (Eds.), *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning* (pp. 119-216). Newbury House.
- Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2004). The seven principles of sustainable leadership. *Educational Leadership*, 61(7), 8-13.
- Hulleman, C. S., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (2015). Promoting interest and performance in high-school science classes. *Science*, 326(5958). <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1177067>
- Kordziński, J. (2007). *Motywacja - tajemnica szkolnych sukcesów*. Verlag Dashoffer.
- Lewis, G., & Bedson, G. (2014). *Games for children*. Oxford University Press.
- Michałowski, B., Umińska, M., Siuta, T., & Reilly, P. (2020). *Focus 1*. Pearson Education.
- N'Dioure Lazare, K. (1989). *Creating a simulated natural environment as an alternative approach to foreign language teaching: Suggestions to improve the teaching and learning of foreign languages in Cote d'Ivoire* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Massachusetts Amherst.
- McClelland, D. C., & Boyatzis, R. E. (1982). Leadership motive pattern and long-term success in management. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 67(6), 737-743.
- Noels, K. A., Pelletier, L. G., Clément, R., & Vallerand, R. J. (2000). Why are you learning a second language? Motivational orientations and self-determination theory. *Language Learning*, 53(S1), 18-27.
- Nunan, D. (1996). *Syllabus design*. Oxford University Press.
- Mansour, O., & Mozellius, P. (2014). Game-based learning and game construction as an e-learning strategy in programming education. *Digital Universities International Best Practices and Applications*, 3(2-3), 59-71.

- Oproiu, G. (2022). Video games and their influence on the learning process. In *European Proceedings of Educational Studies: 9th International Conference Edu World 2022* (pp. 118-125). <https://doi.org/10.1540/epes.23045.12>
- Pintrich, P. R., & Schunk, D. H. (1996). *Motivation in education: Theory, research & applications*. Prentice-Hall.
- Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej. (2017). *Podstawa programowa kształcenia ogólnego dla szkół podstawowych [Core curriculum for general education for primary schools]*. <https://men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/1c.pdf>
- Polok, K., Jeleśniański, D., & Przybysz-Zaremba, M. (2024). Shaping the bilingualism of game-addicted players. *International Journal of Instruction*, 17(4), 269-288.
- Polok, K., & Starowicz, K. (2022). The usefulness of various technological tools in enhancing vocabulary learning among FL Polish learners of English. *Open Access Library Journal*, 9, Article 1104732. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.2022.1104732>
- Polok, K., & Haręzak, J. (2018). Facebook as a beneficial tool while used in learning second language environment. *Open Access Library Journal*, 5, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1104732>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2005). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68-78.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25, 54-67.
- Stojkovic, M., & Jerotijevic, D. (2011). Reasons for using or avoiding games in an EFL classroom. In *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Foreign Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (pp. 118-125).
- Tengku Sepora, T. M., & Jafari, S. (2012). Language and culture. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(17), 231-235.
- Wessels, C. (1994). *Drama*. Oxford University Press.
- Wheeldon, S., Falla, T., Davies, P., & Shipton, P. (2012). *Steps Plus VI*. Oxford University Press.
- Wiegand, D. M., & Geller, S. E. (2004). Connecting positive psychology and organizational behavior management: Achievement motivation and the power of positive reinforcement. *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*, 24(1-2), 3-24.
- Woodward, T. (2013). A framework for learning creativity. In A. Maley & N. Peachey (Eds.), *Creativity in the language classroom* (pp. 150-157). The British Council.
- Wong, L. H., & Looi, C. K. (2010). Vocabulary learning by mobile-assisted authentic content creation and social meaning-making: Two case studies. *Journal of Computer and Assisted Learning*, 26(5), 421-433.