



Reduction of Student Motivation in the Conditions of Distance Learning and Ways to Maintain it Using the Example of Games for Learning English Grammar

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Abstract: *Distance learning came into the life of higher education teachers when the pandemic struck in 2020 and is now an integral part of our work. Being organised solely through telecommunication technology, distance learning has a number of features and we must acknowledge the negative impact it has on the motivation of our students. The present article discusses the main features of distance learning and how motivation works, why language games can be an effective tool to students' motivation at a high level. The author gives a detailed description of several English grammar games adapted to the needs of the virtual classroom, which have received positive feedback from students and teachers and can potentially be used as a reference point for creating other language games for distance learning.*

Keywords: *distance learning, motivation, games, virtual classroom.*

Distance learning in higher education, which has gained popularity in recent years due to advances in technology, has become a necessity and a new reality during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic and quarantine restrictions. Many foreign language teachers,

Many foreign language teachers, who are not technically well prepared, face a range of challenges. Teachers' ability to adapt to rapidly changing realities - traditionally one of the key requirements for professional competence - has been elevated to an absolute.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the negative impact of distance learning on the most important component of the educational process - motivation - and to find means to mitigate this impact. In order to achieve the declared goal, we have set the following tasks:

- to study the features of distance learning;
- to understand the mechanism of motivation formation, referring to the history of research on this issue;
- to identify the connection between potential motivation enhancement and game activities;
- to analyze the options of game activities that can be implemented in distance learning conditions.

The relevance of our study lies in the urgent need to look at the distance learning process from a different angle due to the declining level of students' motivation.

The scientific novelty consists in proving the positive influence of games on students' motivation for learning and self-development.

The theoretical significance of the present study is that, Our findings about the main characteristics of games for distance learning in English have prospects for future research in the field of theory and methodology of foreign language teaching.

The practical significance of the paper is that the examples of game activities for mastering English grammar in a distant format can be successfully applied both in virtual and real classrooms.

We see distance learning as an educational process, in which the interaction between the teacher and the students is carried out via Internet technology or other interactive opportunities. It is important to understand that all the goals, organisational forms and traditional education remain unchanged. Of course, this process has its own specific features, advantages and disadvantages.

The main feature is the physical distance between the student and the instructor. The main feature is the physical distance between students and teachers. of the university can be better spent. On the other hand, even with a stable Internet connection, good sound and high quality video most of those involved note the lack of human contact, which has a negative effect on their work.

Another feature arising from the first, however, is asynchronous communication between the student and the instructor. In distance learning, questions can be posed in class and, with a high probability, answered immediately, but any other matters have to be dealt with by e-mail. However, any other business has to be conducted via email, which in some ways complicates communication.

Distance learning is fully realised through the use of modern technology: for some students and teachers, depending on their generation, it is a plus, for others quite the opposite. Opponents of the excessive use of For some students and teachers, depending on their generation, this is a plus, and for others it is just the opposite. Scientists say makes the parts of the brain responsible for learning and memory work harder. Information and memory in general.

Distance learning also involves a slightly modified form of assessment and evaluation: oral and written exams are administered according to a special set of rules that may include the use of special software to track students' software that tracks student activity on their virtual desktops; points are redistributed because it is not possible to do some of the types of work involved in traditional teaching.

If there is no experience of interacting with such a system, both students and teachers experience nervous tension affecting their work in general.

Finally, in the context of distance learning, the student's ability to work independently and be disciplined is of great importance. The psychological stimulus that comes naturally from being physically within the university walls is absent, and the student has to create it for himself/herself in order to continue learning and developing.

In our opinion, the above-mentioned negative aspects of the features of distance education (lack of direct contact between students of direct contact between students and teachers, somewhat impeded communication, constant work with computer or other devices, stress and the need to develop self-discipline) primarily affect the key component of any learning - motivation.

"Motivation" as a concept appeared in the works of the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer in the early 19th century. In his doctoral dissertation "On the Fourfold Root of the Law of Sufficiency" [1] he assumed that all our actions and judgments, which are not dictated by natural law or external circumstances, are the result of an act of the will, which has a definite motive (from Latin "moveo" - "to move"). Motives, in turn, he divided into internal and external, which in the works of other scientists, who began to study this topic after Schopenhauer, were called "natural" and "acquired". It is the opposition of the internal to the external or, as psychologists call it, "extrinsic" and "intrinsic" motivation is of particular interest to our study. Extrinsic motivation stems from actions produced by others: rewards or, conversely, punishments. Intrinsic motivation is a much more complex phenomenon and is still controversial still controversial in the scientific community. One of the concepts that we think it necessary to cite in this study belongs to the American psychologist Richard de Charms. Intrinsic, or "primal" motivation according to de Chars It is the desire of a person to feel his or her effectiveness, to feel himself or herself as a the source of change in the world around them. Interestingly, external factors, be it environmental pressure, rewards or censure, have a dramatically negative effect on this self-affirmation: they reduce it to the point where

the individual may begin to feel helpless, "a pawn" [2]. [2]. Another closely related to the one mentioned above, is the work of another Hungarian-born American psychologist, Mihály Csikszentmihalyi.

According to him, the main characteristic of intrinsic motivation is a certain emotional state - the joy of activity. Csikszentmihalyi also introduced the concept of "flow" to denote the state of complete unity with the process that delivers this joyful feeling [3]. Interesting is the fact that Following the logic of this concept, the distinction between work and play is erased, i.e., a person performing an activity for which he or she has an intrinsic motivation, does not get bored with the process, but rather enjoys it.

Distance education significantly reduces the level of extrinsic motivation, but gives the student the opportunity to work with intrinsic motivation, increase its level by getting a positive psychological reinforcement from self-affirmation. The learning process can begin to be perceived by the student. The learning process can start to be perceived by the student as an entertaining game without losing its main qualities.

Studying the issue of students' motivation to learn, we cannot but mention another. The classification proposed by the Soviet psychologist V.T. Vilyunas [4]: he divides motivation into positive and negative. Both types can come from the individual himself or from outside, but in the first case the individual expects positive results from some activity: feelings of joy, relief, pride, perhaps a material reward, whereas in the second performance of the activity is motivated by not getting negative results, be it a feeling of defeat, anxiety or punishment.

In our opinion, higher education has traditionally given too much attention to the negative motivation of students. Even the grading system, which at a certain stage may be perceived as a reward, is in fact directly related to the receipt or non-receipt by the student of important material resources: for example, a substantial tuition discount. Credits and examinations are also classic examples of negative motivation.

In distance education, this pressure is only intensified because negative motivation is considered the quickest and most effective way to correct student behaviour and performance at a distance.

Based on our experience as a foreign language teacher, positive motivation should never be neglected. If our goal is not just to get the student to pass certain tests or exams, We need to use the tools available to us. Learning a language in its most effective form does not happen from lesson to lesson, but continuously. In our opinion, it is necessary to create conditions in which the student's intrinsic motivation for this activity will be consistently high. Our point of view comes into some contradiction with the concept of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation discussed above, However, we are convinced that, with the right approach, intrinsic positive motivation can be in part externally stimulated. For the purposes of this paper we do not system of rewards or rewards, we are much more interested in activities that awaken students' intrinsic motivation and thus give them a resource for independent activity in the right direction. One such activity is undoubtedly play.

Games have been used by man as an educational resource since antiquity and throughout our history. Plato is one of the first philosophers to identify the practical value of play in education, outlining in his Laws, his work on the education of children and young people, the idea of "learning by playing", referring to the fact that play is not only practical but also enjoyable [5]. In addition, Aristotle mentions games as an integral part of the learning process in several of his works.

Initially, games were not formally included in the educational process, but thanks to the development of pedagogy, psychology, philosophy, anthropology and sociology, the official educational system finally made turn in their direction and begin to take advantage of all the benefits they offer.

As various studies show, games not only contribute to language development, which is especially important in the context of this article, but also engage creative thinking, problem-solving skills,

stress and anxiety management, the ability to quickly grasp new things, and the ability to use the necessary tools.

Linguist and teacher R.S. Constantinescu in his article "Learning by playing: Using computer games in teaching English grammar to high school students" (In his article "Learning by playing: Using computer games in teaching English grammar to high school students" he brings several other interesting advantages of including games in the educational process [6]:

1. "Games increase motivation and desire for self-improvement" - in this statement we find confirmation of our thesis that the level of intrinsic motivation of students can be raised externally with the help of games;
2. "Interdisciplinary approach. Students use knowledge from other classes, too." Interdisciplinary. Students use knowledge from other classes, too." By appropriately choosing games for our purposes, we can increase student's involvement not only in learning a foreign language but also in other subjects, which can be especially relevant for distance learning.

For the purposes of this paper we will use the definition of a game given by Jill Hadfield, English teacher and author of many A game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun" ("A game is an activity with rules, a certain a goal, and an element of fun") [7]. As we can see, the most priority points are rules and a goal, to formulate them is the teacher's task. The aim of the game may be to practise a certain aspect of a foreign language, we will focus on grammar. We will concentrate our attention on grammar.

According to the New Zealand teacher and linguist Scott Thornberry, "grammar is "the forms or structures that are possible in a language" [8]. The British writer and author of many English grammar books, Michael Swan adds that "grammar is the rules that indicate how words join together to form stable types of meaning" ("grammar is the rules that display in what way words are joint, settled to present firm types of meaning") [9].

In learning foreign languages in general and English in particular, grammar has traditionally been considered the most difficult aspect which requires an exclusively conventional approach: learning the theory, doing exercises. We by no means deny the importance and effectiveness of such a method, but if we use it alone, it is extremely difficult to keep a student's attention of the student for a long time, even in the conditions of regular class work. In the context of distance learning, the effectiveness of this approach is dramatically reduced.

Prolonged monotonous activities start to be carried out mechanically, which hampers the learning process.

The most preferable way of combating routine is through games. There are a huge number of different options aimed at working through grammar, but the vast majority are not adapted to the peculiarities of distance learning. For the purposes of this study, we provide a list of requirements for game activities for distance learning, as well as some ready-made and tested games for working on the grammatical aspect of the English language.

What should be an effective game in a distance learning option?

1. In the absence of real human contact such activity should involve all participants of the learning process as much as possible, create the illusion of being physically in the same space.
2. This kind of activity should preferably be developed in real time.
3. If it is possible to involve kinesthetic (tactile) way of learning, and not only auditory and visual, it should be done.
4. Such an activity should have a positive impact on the level of intrinsic motivation of the student.

We give ready variants of games according to the following structure: name, goal, indicative time of performance, rules, preparation, description.

As it was mentioned above, all of them were tested under the conditions of a virtual classroom. classroom and they have received positive feedback from both students as well as from teachers.

1. "It has been moved!" (literal translation "It has been moved!").

The aim is to consolidate the passive voice in English. Approximate 15-20 minutes. The rules are as follows:

- ✓ Only the passive voice may be used, the active voice may not be used;
- ✓ You may use the tenses Present Perfect or Past Simple;
- ✓ You have to construct at least two non-proposal sentences for each object in the passive voice.

Preparation consists of learning the passive voice of the tenses we are interested in, and you may also need to repeat the table of irregular verbs.

The game is played this way: the teacher or students place several objects on the table in a certain order and film this with a camera phone. You can start with the teacher to give the students an example, but we recommend letting the students do the arrangement themselves, to increase their involvement and to engage the tactile aspect. The picture is shared: depending on the application you use, it can be sent either by email or directly to into a chat room. While others study the initial arrangement of the objects, the author changes the some could be rearranged, some could be removed. They take a picture again and send it to the public chat room. Students can now start comparing (If the aim is to train their memory, the first image can be deleted or the students can be asked not to refer to it. or ask the students not to refer to it). If students see that an object has either been moved or disappeared, this should be expressed in English in the passive voice. Examples of statements: "One piece of chocolate has been hidden. It has been eaten!" hidden. "The post-it was moved to the right side of the picture. It "The post-it was moved to the right side of the picture. It was stuck on the pencil.

The intercom of students among themselves and with the teacher in this game goes beyond the usual boundaries in this game goes beyond the usual boundaries. We also involve the immediate physical environment, which raises interest in the process. An additional advantage of the game can be considered learning or repeating words, small everyday objects, which are often not in the such as chargers, stickers, erasers, packs of chewing gum or jelly beans. The students are easily involved in this activity, they are more willing to continue speaking the foreign language afterwards, the rest of the class is with greater commitment.

2. "You must have overslept". The aim is to practice using modal verbs in the sense of assumption (must, may, might, could, can't) in combination with different forms of the infinitive. The estimated running time is 15-20 minutes. There are only two strict rules:

- To express a supposition, it is required to use exclusively Only modal verbs have to be used, the corresponding lexical forms are not accepted;
- The infinitive forms must be varied within a single answer.

It should be stated that for this activity the use of webcams is fundamental. If for some reason the student is unable to connect from video, they can be given the opportunity to send a recent photo of themselves in front of the room.

Preparation, depending on the level of the group, can include not only the study of modal verbs and infinitives, but also Aspect and phase features in English tenses, or even repeating irregular verb forms.

The whole group attends a virtual activity with the webcam on. The teacher explains the activity: make at least 5 assumptions about any of the participants (including the teacher), based on an image of the person and the visible part of the room where he/she is.

The teacher makes sure that each student makes a number of assumptions (depending on the size of the group). Examples of statements are: "You must be really into sports, I can see a basketball hoop

on the wall", You must be really into sports: I can see a basketball hoop on your wall", "You can't have sent the Math assignment on time, you look worried", "You may have been experimenting with your hair, it seems like it's a different colour", "You must be doing great, you look wonderful".

In a distance learning environment, students miss the usual interaction with their classmates. The game is partly an imitation of normal conversation, and the setting can be informal. Students interact with each other, perhaps even get to know each other better, which has a positive effect on their emotional state and, consequently, on their level of motivation. At the same time not the easiest grammar topics are reinforced, but by shifting the focus from complexity to practice in friendly conversation we increase the likelihood of students' successful mastery of these structures.

3. "Let me programme you".

If we remember about the possible interdisciplinarity of games, this activity will be especially useful for students studying information technology or related fields.

The interdisciplinary benefit of this game is that students remember the basic principle of computer operation: it does only what it is instructed, and these instructions must be as precise as possible. The aim in terms of the English language can also be prepositions of finding and moving in space, Complex Object ("I want you to"), the use of forms of the imperative inclination. The execution time is 20 minutes.

The only rule is to stick to the target grammatical structures. The preparation also depends on the goal set: repetition of prepositions, explanation of the bases of a compound complement or imperative.

The activity is done in pairs, so it is advisable to check in advance, that the software used allows students to be separated. Webcams are switched on. One student in the pair acts as the programmer, the other as the robot, then they switch. For each round they have to choose a simple task, which the "robot" does by following the instructions of the "programmer": for example, "pick up a book from the shelf and place it on the table, for example. Example a chain of statements: "I want you to pull out the chair and get up. Turn 180 degrees and walk straight until you reach the shelf on the wall". chair and stand up. Turn 180 degrees and walk straight until you reach the shelf on the wall.)

This game engages both auditory, visual and tactile aspects of learning. The student's intrinsic motivation to learn a foreign language and other subjects. The level of involvement is very high, as everyone is actively involved in the process.

To sum up, it should be noted that, due to its distinctive features, distance learning cannot but have a negative impact on students' motivation. Therefore, it is crucial to look for tools that help reduce this pressure. In this study we have proved that games are such a tool because they have a number of features: create conditions in which the learner's intrinsic motivation is enhanced, can bring in knowledge from other subject areas, alleviate the lack of habitual communication and physical presence in one place, help to turn a routine and complex activity into a natural and exciting one.

In our opinion, the adaptation of foreign language games for distance learning is an underdeveloped area and, as a consequence, extremely promising for further research. The subject of future articles may be the creation and description of game activities for this type of learning, as well as a more detailed classification with the aim of forming simple algorithms for the use of almost The subject matter of future articles may be the creation and description of game activities for this kind of learning.

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