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TOPIC: GAMIFICATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH DIGITAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPING CULTURAL TOLERANCE IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract

The integration of digital technologies into preschool foreign language education creates new possibilities for combining language development with the formation of children's positive attitudes towards cultural diversity. One of the promising approaches is digital gamification, which transforms educational tasks into interactive activities involving play, choice, cooperation, and achievement. This paper examines the potential of gamified digital educational resources for developing cultural tolerance in preschool children during foreign language learning. The purpose of the study is to substantiate a methodological approach in which digital games simultaneously support foreign language acquisition and the development of children's cultural awareness, positive attitudes, and respectful interaction. The proposed approach is based on culturally oriented game situations in which children encounter different languages, traditions, everyday practices, symbols, and forms of communication. Particular attention is given to cooperative digital games, virtual missions, matching activities, interactive quests, and culturally oriented problem-solving tasks. The paper proposes a methodological sequence consisting of cultural motivation, digital interaction, foreign language practice, cooperative action, and reflection. The study argues that properly designed gamified digital resources can create emotionally positive learning situations in which preschool children learn to recognize cultural differences, discover similarities, and cooperate with others. The findings provide a methodological basis for integrating digital gamification into preschool foreign language education within the framework of Theory and Methodology of Teaching and Upbringing.

Keywords: preschool children, foreign language learning, cultural tolerance, digital educational resources, gamification, digital games, intercultural education, early language education.

Introduction

The development of cultural tolerance has become an important educational objective in contemporary societies characterized by increasing cultural and linguistic diversity. Although tolerance is often discussed in relation to older learners, its foundations are established much earlier. Preschool children gradually develop their understanding of social relationships, similarities and differences between people, and appropriate ways of interacting with others.

Foreign language education provides a particularly favorable context for this process. Learning a foreign language introduces children to unfamiliar sounds, words, characters, customs, celebrations, and everyday practices. Consequently, language education can become an environment in which children develop not only communicative abilities but also an initial understanding of cultural diversity.

At the same time, preschool education is increasingly influenced by digital technologies. Interactive applications, multimedia games, digital picture activities, animated environments, and other digital educational resources provide new forms of interaction with learning content.

However, the mere use of digital technology does not guarantee the development of cultural tolerance. Digital resources must be methodologically designed so that cultural content, foreign language learning, interaction, and positive social behavior are connected.

Gamification offers one possible solution. By introducing game elements into educational activities, teachers can create motivating situations in which children actively explore cultural content and use foreign language expressions while completing meaningful tasks.

The purpose of this paper is to substantiate the methodological potential of digital gamification for developing cultural tolerance in preschool children during foreign language learning.

Digital Gamification in Preschool Foreign Language Education

Gamification refers to the use of selected game elements and principles in non-game educational contexts. In preschool education, its value is associated with the natural importance of play in children's learning and development.

Digital gamification may include:

points and rewards;
virtual characters;
missions;
interactive challenges;
levels;
matching tasks;
digital puzzles;
choice-based activities;
cooperative challenges;
virtual journeys

For foreign language education, these elements can provide contexts for practicing vocabulary and simple communicative expressions.

For example, instead of simply memorizing words for food, children can complete a digital mission in which they help virtual characters prepare a meal using culturally diverse food items. During the activity, children hear and use foreign language vocabulary while becoming familiar with different food traditions.

Thus, the language objective and cultural objective are integrated into a single learning situation

Cultural Tolerance as a Goal of Digital Game-Based Learning

The development of cultural tolerance requires more than factual knowledge about other cultures. Children need opportunities to encounter cultural differences in positive emotional and interactive situations.

A digital game can support three interconnected dimensions of cultural tolerance.

Cognitive Dimension

Dgital games can introduce children to basic information about different cultures.

Children may learn to recognize:

different languages;
greetings;
traditional clothing;
food;
music;
celebrations;
children's games;
everyday objects.

The information should remain simple and visually accessible.

Emotional-Value Dimension

Game environments can create positive emotional associations with cultural diversity.

For example, a child may receive a virtual reward after successfully learning a greeting from another language or helping a digital character from another cultural background.

The purpose is not to reward tolerance itself mechanically, but to create positive learning experiences associated with cultural discovery and cooperation.

Behavioral Dimension

The strongest methodological potential of gamification appears when children need to cooperate to complete a task.

For example, two or more children can work together to solve a digital puzzle involving characters from different cultures. The game can require them to exchange information, make decisions together, and complete a shared objective.

This transforms cultural tolerance from an abstract concept into observable interaction.

Types of Culturally Oriented Digital Game

Several types of digital games can be incorporated into preschool foreign language education.

1. Digital Matching Games

Children match words, pictures, sounds, or cultural objects.

For example, children can match greetings with appropriate characters or match traditional foods with corresponding pictures.

Such activities develop vocabulary while introducing basic cultural information.

2. Interactive Cultural Quests

A virtual character can invite children to complete several simple tasks connected with different cultural contexts.

For example:

Mission 1: Learn a greeting.

Mission 2:Identify a traditional object.

Mission 3Listen to a short song.

Mission 4:Complete a foreign language vocabulary task.

Mission 5:Helptwo characters cooperate.

The sequence combines language learning with cultural exploration.

3. Cooperative Digital Games

Two or more children can work together to achieve a common goal.

This format is particularly relevant to cultural tolerance because the learning objective includes cooperation.

Children can be asked to complete a digital puzzle together, select objects for different characters, or solve a simple communication problem.

4. Digital Choice-Based Situations

Children are presented with a social situation and several possible responses.

For example:

A new child joins the group but speaks another language. What can you do?

Possible responses may include:

ignore the child;

laugh at the child;

invite the child to play;

try to learn a greeting.

The teacher then discusses the selected response with the children.

Such situations can connect digital learning with social and behavioral development.

Methodological Principles

The integration of digital gamification into the formation of cultural tolerance should follow several methodological principles.

Principle of Cultural Authenticity

Cultural content should be based on reliable and respectful representations of cultural practices. Digital games should avoid stereotypical or exaggerated images.

Principle of Age Appropriateness

Tasks should correspond to preschool children's cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and motor abilities.

Principle of Integration

Foreign language objectives and cultural objectives should be incorporated into the same educational activity.

Principle of Cooperation

Whenever possible, digital tasks should encourage children to communicate and cooperate rather than focus exclusively on individual competition.

Principle of Teacher Mediation

The teacher should guide children's interpretation of cultural information and encourage discussion after digital activities.

Principle of Digital Balance

Digital games should be combined with physical movement, face-to-face communication, creative activities, and traditional play.

A Methodological Model

A culturally oriented digital game lesson can be organized according to the following sequence:

Cultural Motivation → Digital Exploration → Foreign Language Practice → Cooperative Challenge → Cultural Reflection

Cultural Motivation

The teacher introduces a cultural theme through an image, object, sound, or simple question.

Digital Exploration

Children enter a digital game environment and encounter culturally relevant information.

Foreign Language Practice

Children repeat and use vocabulary or simple expressions connected with the game.

Cooperative Challenge

Children work individually or in pairs to solve a culturally oriented task.

Cultural Reflection

The teacher discusses what children discovered and encourages them to identify similarities and differences.

This final stage is essential because it transforms a digital game experience into a meaningful educational experience.

Example of a Digital Learning Scenario

Consider the topic "Greetings Around the World."

At the beginning of the activity, children observe pictures of children from several cultural contexts.

The digital game then introduces simple greetings. Children listen to each greeting and repeat it.

Next, a virtual character asks children to select the appropriate greeting for a particular situation.

The children then work in pairs to complete a digital matching task.

After completing the game, the teacher asks:

* "Did the children greet each other in the same way?"
* "What was different?"
* "What was similar?"
* "Can we learn different ways to say hello?"
* "How can we greet a new friend?"

The final questions connect digital learning with cultural tolerance and real-life communication.

Assessment of Educational Progress

The effectiveness of the methodology can be assessed through three groups of indicators.

Cultural awareness indicators include the ability to recognize basic cultural differences and similarities.

Attitudinal indicators include interest in unfamiliar cultural information, positive emotional responses, and willingness to learn about other cultures.

Interaction indicators include cooperation, respectful communication, willingness to include others, and appropriate responses to culturally diverse situations

Game-based assessment can be integrated naturally into educational activities. Instead of formal testing, the teacher can observe children's choices, participation, communication, and responses duing digital missions and cooperative tasks.

Discussio

The methodological value of digital gamification lies not simply in making lessons more entertaining. Its significance is associated with the possibility of creating structured educational situations in which children actively interact with language and cultural content.

A culturally oriented digital game can provide an environment where children encounter differences without experiencing them as threatening or difficult. When cultural diversity is connected with exploration, cooperation, and successful completion of meaningful tasks, children may develop more positive attitudes towards unfamiliar cultural elements.

At the same time, gamification should be used carefully. Excessive competition may contradict the objective of developing tolerance. Therefore, cooperative game mechanics may be more appropriate than competitive ranking systems for this particular educational purpose.

The teacher's role also remains essential. Digital environments cannot independently explain cultural meanings or respond adequately to children's emotional reactions. Teacher mediation is therefore necessary to connect game experiences with broader educational objectives

Conclusion

Digital gamification represents a promising methodological approach for integrating foreign language learning and cultural tolerance development in preschool education. Interactive games, virtual missions, cooperative challenges, and choice-based situations can provide children with meaningful opportunities to encounter cultural diversity while practicing foreign language skills.

The proposed methodological sequence — cultural motivation, digital exploration, foreign language practice, cooperative challenge, and cultural reflection — enables digital resources to function as part of a structured pedagogical process rather than as isolated technological tools.

An important methodological conclusion is that the most appropriate digital games for developing cultural tolerance should emphasize cooperation, cultural discovery, positive emotional experiences, and communication, rather than excessive competition.

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