Svitlana Horobets,

student,

Faculty of Foreign Languages,

(Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University,

Uman)

OVERVIEW OF CONCEPTS «PLAY ACTIVITIES», «GAMES», AND «GAMIFICATION»

Games and play activities both involve engaging in activities for entertainment, enjoyment, and recreation. However, there are some key differences between them.

Defining the concept of play is challenging, and there is no widely agreed-upon definition. Play is typically intrinsically motivated, and it is an activity that is done for its own sake and not for its outcome. During play, children typically exhibit feelings of happiness and fully engage in the activity, often for an extended period [2].

A game is a structured activity with a set of rules, objectives, and outcomes. This is a commonly accepted definition of what a game is and it can be found in various articles on the related topic. Games often involve competition, strategy, and decision-making. Players follow the rules and work towards a specific goal or outcome, such as winning the game. Examples of games include chess, soccer, and video games.

On the other hand, play activities are more open-ended and unstructured. Play involves exploration, imagination, and creativity, and there are typically no set rules or objectives. Play activities can be solitary or social, and they can involve anything from drawing to building with blocks to pretending to be a superhero.

Another key difference between games and play activities is the level of formality involved. Games are often more formal and structured, with clear rules and expectations, while play activities can be more spontaneous, flexible, and unstructured.

To sum up, while games and play activities both involve having fun and engaging in enjoyable activities, games tend to be more structured and purposeful, while play activities are more open-ended and focused on exploration and creativity.

Gamification in education refers to the process of adding game-like elements, such as points, badges, and challenges, to non-game context in order to increase learners' engagement and motivation; it's the process of transforming typical academic components into gaming themes. The goal of gamification is to make activities that might be considered as boring more interesting and enjoyable by incorporating elements of fun and competition and moreover is to enhance learning by increasing student engagement [1].

Gamification promotes engagement among students in the following ways:

- increases competition,
- involves creativity and students' choice,

- gives immediate feedback (through peer feedback, teacher response, progress bars, etc.)
- allow students to easily track theirs progress towards academic goals [1].

Nowadays, gamification has become increasingly popular in the field of education and learning languages in particular. Teachers can use educational apps which include gamification to encourage students to complete assignments, quizzes, training modules or achieve specific goals.

We believe that incorporating «play activities», «games», and «gamification» in the ELT classroom will promote learners' creative and critical thinking, their ability to learn, and develop their communication skills. Besides, if they are used appropriately in the classroom and don't overshadow the learning objectives, they can be considered as an effective tool to inspire learners.

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