

AN INTEREST-DRIVEN LEARNING STRATEGY TO TEACH ENGLISH GRAMMAR: EXPLORING THE ONLINE GAMING PLATFORM PUBG AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL

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Abstract. The theory of "Interest-Driven Learning" emphasizes leveraging students' existing interests and passions as a starting point for teaching and learning. It can enhance motivation, participation, and retention of knowledge by tapping into students' intrinsic curiosity and enthusiasm for topics that resonate with them. Gamification has always been a successful tool in every teaching endeavour. This article concentrates on how the online game PUBG (PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds) can be used as a tool to create interest in the teaching of English Grammar. The learners can be guided to create writing exercises like Gameplay Instructions, Quest Descriptions and Creative Writing Prompts. The article focuses on technology integration where digital tools are utilised as innovative strategies to enhance language learning experiences. Such methodologies prepare students for success in an increasingly interconnected and diverse global society.

Keywords: *Interest-Driven Learning, Gamification, PUBG (PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds), Gameplay Instructions, Quest Descriptions, Creative Writing Prompts.*

Introduction. The universe has always marveled at the latest updates and findings at the each stage of its growth and development. And in this decade, everywhere, everyone is amazed at the innumerable possibilities of Artificial Intelligence. Even the primary class students play with AI tools and the world is still spellbound as to what more to witness in the coming years. In this context, the teaching methods and pedagogical tools are challenged as to how to face the students of this decade while designing the learning objectives and teaching aids.

In recent years, the integration of digital technologies into language teaching has provided educators with innovative opportunities to engage students and enhance learning outcomes. Among these technologies, online gaming platforms have emerged as promising tools for promoting interest-driven learning experiences in the English language classroom. This study investigates the effectiveness of leveraging the popular online gaming platform PUBG (PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds) as a pedagogical tool for teaching English grammar. Grounded in the principles of interest-driven learning and situated within the context of digital language education, this research explores the potential of PUBG to motivate language learners, facilitate authentic language use, and foster meaningful language learning experiences. By examining the impact of an interest-driven learning strategy centered around PUBG, this study aims to inform educators,

curriculum developers, and policymakers about the possibilities and considerations associated with integrating online gaming platforms into language education practices.

UNESCO’s Proposal for a Change in Education Policy

In the report *Reimagining Our Futures, A New Social Contract for Education (2021)*, UNESCO made a remarkable study of the present situation in the world and schools from an extensive viewpoint. The report proposes a change in education policy that takes up the challenges in the future such as digitalization, globalization, climate and environmental issues, exclusion issues, human rights and more. UNESCO advocates for an educational strategy geared towards preparing students for future challenges by promoting a more liberating approach. This approach emphasizes collaborative and interactive learning, positioning students alongside teachers in dialogic, embodied, socio-cultural, and critical engagements. Consequently, there is significant relevance in exploring the potential of video game-supported learning as a means to advance this educational objective and discuss its implications for political reform in schools and education systems. (UNESCO, 2021.)

Interest-Driven Learning Strategy to Motivate Learning

In the modern era, a major reason for the failure of the teaching efforts is that it most often starts from the teacher. The student and the teacher sit in two independent water-tight compartments and the teacher invites the student to come out and enter into the environment the he creates! Albert Einstein has put it rightly – ‘I never try to teach my students anything. I only try to create an environment in which they can learn.’ Hence, it is the need of the time that the teacher has either to create an environment that caters to the interests of the student or he has to enter into the student’s environment and create a learning space out there. John Dewey, the famous American educationalist and psychologist said, “Give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking; learning naturally results” (Dewey, 1916, p. 191). Dewey believed that education should be based on the interests and experiences of the learner. He emphasized the importance of engaging students' curiosity and allowing them to explore topics that are personally meaningful to them. According to Dewey, interest-driven learning promotes engagement, critical thinking, and deeper understanding of the subject matter.

When Edelson & Joseph (2004) created the *Interest-Driven Learning Design Framework (IDL Design Framework)*, their intention was to provide guidelines for designing learning activities that achieve the benefits of interest as a motivator for learning. The IDLDF was inspired by the recognition that there is a difference between the motivation to engage in activity and the motivation to learn. The premise of the Interest-Driven Learning Design Framework is that the motivation to learn is elicited when students perceive a reason to acquire knowledge or skills based on how they can be used. The IDLDF draws on the personal goals of learners to provide them with a reason to learn. The proponents of IDLDF call the form of interest that results interest based in *usefulness*. Through their analysis of existing interest-driven curricula, they have identified five

sources of usefulness that can be used to generate interest. The first and prominent one is *pleasure*. When an individual recognizes an opportunity to learn something that will enhance their ability to experience one of the forms of pleasure in the future, they are motivated to learn based on the usefulness to that source of pleasure. Definitely, games take the peak position for the students as it is a great source of pleasure for them. And for the present generation, if it is a digital game, it is the highest peak of their pleasure.

Digital Game-Based Learning to Engage Learner

Game-based learning has been a recognized educational approach for some time, but its utilization has surged in recent years, especially in classrooms aiming for more interactive learning environments. Over the past three decades, digital game-based learning has evolved alongside advancements in information technology and the Internet, resulting in its heightened usage and appeal (Brom, Sisler, & Slavik, 2010). By integrating computer and video games into educational settings, educators can elevate the learning experience and foster a classroom environment that aligns with 21st-century learning objectives. We can define Digital game-based learning as an “Instructional method that incorporates educational content or learning principles into computer or video games with the goal of engaging learners” (Coffey, 2017, para. 1)

In the book, "Digital Game-Based Learning", Marc Prensky (McGraw-Hill, 2001) explores how digital games can be effectively integrated into educational settings to enhance learning outcomes, including language learning. He discusses the potential benefits of using games for language acquisition, such as increased engagement, motivation, and opportunities for authentic language use. Prensky also provides practical guidance and examples for educators interested in incorporating digital games into their language teaching practices. The most recent cohorts of K-12 students have grown up in a world where technology has always been readily available to them. This includes not only computers but also devices like digital music and video players, smartphones, gaming consoles, and various other gadgets that rely on technology. Because of this access to technology, Prensky puts ahead the point that today's students think and process information fundamentally differently than their predecessors.

In this context he coins two titles for two different groups of people: the first group is called ‘digital immigrants’ who are the teachers, who were not born into the digital world but have, at some later point in our lives, become fascinated by and adopted many or most aspects of the new technology. The second title is ‘digital natives’ which he uses to describe students who were born in the era of technology and have always been surrounded by it. Prensky recommends that in order for teachers to adapt their instruction to meet the needs of students, they can implement computer or digital-based games as learning tools in the classroom. These games can be used in various subject areas and in a variety of ways (Prensky, 2001, p. 1-2).

The Popularity of the oOnline Game PUBG (PlayerUnknown’s Battlegrounds)

PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) emerged as a groundbreaking online multiplayer battle royale game that revolutionized the gaming industry upon its release in

March 2017. Developed by PUBG Corporation, a subsidiary of the South Korean gaming company Bluehole, PUBG was inspired by the Japanese film "Battle Royale" and the popular gaming trend of battle royale gameplay. Its origin can be traced back to the creative vision of Brendan "PlayerUnknown" Greene, an Irish game designer who previously worked on mods for other games, including ARMA 2 and DayZ. PUBG quickly gained traction for its innovative gameplay mechanics, which dropped 100 players onto a deserted island where they scavenged for weapons and resources while fighting to be the last person or team standing. The game's intense, adrenaline-fueled gameplay, combined with its realistic graphics and immersive experience, captivated millions of players worldwide. PUBG's popularity soared, fuelled by its availability on multiple gaming platforms, including PC, consoles, and mobile devices. The game's success paved the way for the rise of the battle royale genre, inspiring numerous imitators and establishing PUBG as a cultural phenomenon in the world of online gaming.

PUBG Mobile was already starting to ascend in 2019, but with the coronavirus pandemic, the game has skyrocketed in both downloads and revenue. In March 2020 when the world went into its first lockdown, PUBG Mobile made \$270 million a month in revenue. PUBG Mobile was the third highest grossing game in 2022, generating \$1.1 billion. 30 million people play PUBG Mobile daily, and 50 million more play Game for Peace (its Chinese version) and 34 million play BGMI (its Indian version). PUBG had over 764,034 peak concurrent players in the last recorded month, March 2024. The highest number of concurrent players was recorded in January 2018 at 3.24 million.

Framing PUBG as a Pedagogical Tool

However, when WHO released the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) in mid-2018 it included gaming disorders in it and thus PUBG also came under this broad list. The psycho-social and physical impact of PUBG on its players, especially the students is a highly debated issue and there are innumerable events of PUBG-addicts scoring lesser marks in the examinations. However, this article tries to make an enquiry as to whether is it possible to find a theory that focuses on the positive side of negatively impacting games like PUBG. One theory that suggests the potential for extracting positive aspects from negative games for educational purposes is called "Transformational Play" or "Resonant Play." This theory, proposed by Kurt Squire and Constance Steinkuehler, argues that even games with violent or negative themes can provide opportunities for learning and personal development when properly contextualized and framed within an educational setting.

Transformational Play suggests that rather than dismissing negative games outright, educators can leverage the engagement and interest generated by such games to facilitate meaningful learning experiences. By analyzing and reflecting on the themes, narratives, mechanics, and dynamics present in negative games, students can explore complex issues, develop critical thinking skills, and gain insights into topics such as morality, ethics, social justice, and empathy. In his book, *Video Games and Learning: Teaching and Participatory Culture in the Digital Age*, Kurt Squire provides strategies by emulating

the teaching philosophy of Montessori education. To facilitate game-based learning, teachers should refrain from didactic instruction and become committed to interest-driven learning as “coaches, advisors, and producers” (Squire, 2011, p. 59).

Creating English Grammar Lessons from PUBG

In the PUBG game, communicating with teammates in a group is very important, otherwise, they will not be able to get chicken dinner (expressing the victory in the PUBG game). Therefore, if PUBG players have not communicated well in a team, it will cause mass communication, and they will lose the game. They communicate using language; therefore, someone needs to have language as a means of communication. The language used by gamers has its characteristics in expressing their feelings when playing games. Besides the use of language to direct their team, the gamers also blurted out a lot of blasphemous or cursed words that indicate resentment or happiness. These kinds of taboo words and expression could be found as part of the PUBG game communication. As they are too colloquial and blasphemous this article does not support to use them for language teaching.

Taking the game PUBG in its totalilty, an English Language teacher can think of the following types of grammar lessons:

1. Writing Prompts: Encourage students to write short stories or descriptions inspired by their PUBG gaming experiences. This can involve describing in-game scenarios, characters, or strategies using proper grammar and vocabulary.

2. Role-Playing: Have students role-play different characters or situations from PUBG, incorporating proper grammar usage into their dialogue and interactions. This can help them practice speaking and writing in English while also having fun acting out scenarios from the game.

3. Vocabulary Building: Introduce new vocabulary words related to PUBG gameplay, such as weapons, locations, actions, and strategies. Encourage students to use these words in sentences or short paragraphs to reinforce their understanding and usage.

4. Collaborative Storytelling: Engage students in collaborative storytelling activities where they take turns adding to a story based on PUBG gameplay elements. This can help them practice grammar structures like past tense, conditional sentences, and conjunctions.

5. Game Analysis and Discussion: Analyze in-game texts, such as mission briefings, item descriptions, or character dialogues, to explore grammar concepts in context. Discuss how grammar rules are applied in different types of written communication within the game.

6. Creative Writing Projects: Assign creative writing projects where students create their own PUBG- inspired stories, scripts, or fan fiction. Encourage them to focus on using proper grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure while developing their narratives.

The above points are a few suggestions and a more creative lesson designer can generate still more interesting pedagogical tools from the game.

Using PUBG in Teaching English Grammar Passive Voice

This part of the article proposes how the PUBG gaming platform can be utilized to teach Passive voice lessons. The following are a few suggested techniques:

1. Gameplay Instructions: Many aspects of PUBG, such as rules, tips, and instructions, are conveyed through written text. Select instructional materials that include passive voice sentences and use them to teach passive voice grammar rules. Discuss when and why passive voice is used in instructional contexts.

2. Quest Descriptions: Many online games, including PUBG, have quest descriptions or mission briefings. Select quest descriptions that contain examples of passive voice sentences. Discuss these sentences with students, highlighting the passive voice construction and its usage.

3. Character Dialogues: In PUBG, characters often communicate with each other through dialogues or voice lines. Identify instances of passive voice in these dialogues and use them as examples for passive voice lessons. Discuss the structure of passive voice sentences and their significance in different contexts.

4. Player Reports: Analyze player reports or in-game messages that describe past actions or events using passive voice. Ask students to identify passive voice sentences in these reports and discuss why passive voice might be used in these situations.

5. Creative Writing Prompts: Create creative writing prompts inspired by PUBG gameplay scenarios. Encourage students to write stories or descriptions using passive voice to describe actions, events, or character interactions within the game world.

6. Game Reviews: Explore online game reviews or analyses of PUBG gameplay. Look for passive voice constructions in these reviews and use them as examples for passive voice lessons. Discuss the tone, style, and effectiveness of passive voice usage in game reviews.

The following section is an example of Game Review, prepared in the Passive Voice format:

1. A team of 4 was formed including me and my friends.
2. A plan was formed by one teammate to drop at a place where no one would go.
3. A plan was created by my team to drop at a “hot-zone” because it would be fun.
4. Many good weapons were found by my teammates.
5. Some ammo (or bullets) were asked by my teammate as he couldn’t find enough.
6. Many enemies were defeated by my teammates’ co-ordination.
7. A jeep was found near a house.
8. The jeep was being driven by my teammate so that we could find more enemies to defeat.
9. On our way, an AirDrop was spotted by my teammates from a distance.
10. Red smoke was emitted from the Air Drop to signal its location.

11. The Air Drop was rushed by other enemies at the same time
12. After defeating the enemies, special weapons were found in the Air Drop.
13. A Ghillie Suit was worn by teammates so enemies wouldn't be able to see him.
14. An AWM sniper gun shot was heard from a faraway building.
15. The sniper gun was favoured by all my teammates.
16. Enemy's location was marked by my teammates.
17. The enemy's location was rushed by my teammates.
18. Before entering the building, a grenade was thrown at the enemy's window.
19. The enemy was defeated by the grenade before a fight could happen.
20. The players on the island were being pushed to the center of the island by the Blue Zone.
21. My teammate got injured by an enemy.
22. Help was provided to my teammate by me.
23. My teammate was revived by me.
24. A First-Aid kit was given to my teammate by me.
25. So his health could be regained.
26. An open field was surrounded by the blue zone.
27. All the players were avoiding getting seen by their enemies.
28. Players were covered by grass to avoid getting seen.
29. Grenades and Molotov were thrown at random locations to defeat their unseen enemies.
30. Finally, the game was won by me and my teammates.

Conclusion. In conclusion, this study highlights the potential of interest-driven learning strategies in enhancing English grammar instruction, particularly through the utilization of online gaming platforms like PUBG. It is the need of the time that the distance between the digital natives and the digital immigrants is to be reduced soon to create a comfortable learning environment. By tapping into learners' intrinsic motivation and engagement with digital environments, educators can foster more immersive and effective learning experiences. The findings underscore the importance of incorporating contemporary technologies into language education practices, thereby catering to the evolving needs and preferences of 21st-century learners. As educators continue to innovate and adapt pedagogical approaches, leveraging the affordances of online gaming platforms holds promise for promoting linguistic proficiency and fluency in diverse educational settings.

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