



Gamifying Portuguese Language Learning: A Case Study Examining a Quest-Based Website to Prompt Oral Production and Interaction in Learners of Portuguese L2

Gamificando a aprendizagem linguística de português: estudo de caso que examina um site com uma atividade baseada em missões para promover a produção e interação entre alunos de português L2

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ABSTRACT: One of the major challenges when teaching second language learners is to maintain them motivated and eager to learn and work on the proposed activity. The literature showed that a combination of social constructivism and technology-integrated learning is crucial for achieving the goals set by modern educational objectives. However, in order to have a robust response from students, one should take into account the psychological aspect of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This paper proposes a gamified activity in Portuguese L2 that aims to intensify the students' motivation. Ten undergraduate students participated in this study. Their responses show that novel studies based on awards and gamification can boost the students' motivation when learning Portuguese.

KEYWORDS: second language acquisition; language teaching; gamification; technology and education.

RESUMO: Um dos maiores desafios ao ensinar alunos de segunda língua é mantê-los motivados a trabalhar em uma atividade nova. A literatura mostrou-nos que a combinação de construtivismo social e aprendizado integrado à tecnologia é crucial para alcançar os objetivos estabelecidos pelos objetivos educacionais modernos. No entanto, para obter uma resposta robusta dos

alunos, deve-se levar em consideração o aspecto psicológico da motivação intrínseca e extrínseca. Este artigo propõe uma atividade gamificada que visa intensificar a motivação dos alunos. Dez estudantes de graduação participaram deste estudo. As suas respostas mostram que estudos baseados em prêmios e gamificação podem aumentar a motivação ao aprender português.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: aquisição de segunda língua; ensino de línguas; gamificação; tecnologia e educação.

1 Introduction

The use of technology for foreign language learning takes place in a technology-suffused and rapidly changing environment in which the teacher and their students have access to an abundance of information, tools (e.g. mobile learning devices, online applications, etc.), and the capacity to collaborate and contribute on an unprecedented scale (MALITA; MARTIN, 2010; YA-TING; WAN-CHI, 2012). Teachers in this new millennium face the challenge of preparing and equipping learners with the skills required to affront the challenges of 21st Century citizenship.

The literature on pedagogy and technology use has advocated a focus on core subjects, critical thinking, and learning motivation, along with information and technology literacy (ROBIN, 2008). Many researchers have suggested that an ideal combination of technology-integrated learning and social constructivism is essential for attaining the objectives set by modern educational objectives (NEO; NEO, 2010; SADIKU, 2015).

The social constructivism principles highlight the importance of using learning activities and available tools to create an environment in which the students can construct and reconstruct their ideas and beliefs (VYGOTOSKY; COLE, 1978). These principles posit that students are not passive recipients of knowledge, but active participants in the construction of new knowledge. This construction of knowledge should be idiosyncratic and derived from the learner's prior and new knowledge (STEEP-GREANY, 2002). Here, the role of the teacher is of being a facilitator rather than a purveyor of knowledge (KERN, 1996). In other words, high quality learning outcomes should result from the interplay between the curricula, teaching methods used, and students' learning efforts (MEYERS, 2008). However, the two main challenges in applying the social constructivism principles are to get the students to engage and feel motivated when working on the proposed activity.

The literature on technology-oriented strategies in teaching showed that the integration of Web 2.0 moved the second language learning process away from the typical classroom setting (PRENSKY, 2001; SIEMENS, 2005). That is, it increased the students' engagement in the activity proposed. However, Figueroa-Flores (2015) claims that in order to have a robust response from the students, one should take into account the psychological aspect of motivation. This claim is also supported by Lent, Brown and Hackett (1994) who see the motivation as a necessary personality factor that would support the learners second language acquisition. Thus, one should aim for a strategy that enhances the students' motivation and engagement when acquiring their second language (henceforth L2).

From all the strategies that exist, Gamification showed to constantly promote motivation. According to Werbach and Hunter (2012) the use of game design technics and elements in non-game contexts (e.g. in the classroom) deals with the two clusters of motivation that are necessary in the L2 learning experience: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Many researchers have shed some light on how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation work and are used to motivate L2 learners (CAPONETTO; EARP; OTT, 2014; WERBACH; HUNTER, 2012; among others). However, only some have proposed activities using Gamification strategies which aim to improve the students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (FIGUEROA-FLORES, 2015; STEPP-GREANY, 2002; YA-TING; WU, 2012). This study aims to present a gamified real-life activity that can be applied in L2 classrooms. This activity is underpinned by the Communicative Approach notion that communicative competence is both the linguistic knowledge and the skill in using it (ELLIS, 1994, 1996).

Thus, the purpose of this study is to promote and improve the students' reading, writing, listening and oral skills in Portuguese language. Specifically, it aims to propose an activity that would intrinsically and extrinsically motivate the learners to communicate in their second language.

Activities fomenting the student's reading, writing, listening and oral skills serve many valuable purposes: they give learners scaffolded support, opportunities to create and use real-information, evidence of their own ability and most important, confidence (SADIKU, 2015). These purposes are important because they boost the students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Hence, improving the students' retention of new content.

This paper proposes a gamified activity created to boost the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of Portuguese second language learners. The topic of this activity is job hunting and interview, which is a widely used topic in language coursebooks. The validity of this topic increases when teaching undergraduate students, since they may be either looking for internships or jobs, or they will start looking for them soon. Thus, an activity that allows them to practice and talk about the challenges they will have to face when writing their CVs and Cover Letters might serve as a motivation boost. Moreover, it aims to give the students some tips on how to behave in interviews, which might serve as a good intrinsic motivation. In addition, some game elements such as badges were also used to boost the students' extrinsic motivation. Thus, providing the perfect environment to practice and learn a second language.

2 Gamification in second language learning environments

The concept of Gamification and its use in education is basically new. This concept was coined in 2012 and it comes from the idea of using game elements and game design techniques in non-game contexts (WERBACH; HUNTER, 2012; KAPP, 2012). This concept is based on the success of the gaming industry, social media, and decades of research in human psychology.

Gamification's main objective is to increase the participation of people, also called users, and motivate them by incorporating game elements and techniques, such as points, badges, leaderboards, progress bars, progression charts, immediate feedback, levels, avatars, rewards, among others. All these elements have different purposes and can be adapted to an education-related environment since they enhance automatically the teaching and learning process of L2 (see FIGUEROA-FLORES (2015) for a detailed explanation on how the Gamification elements can enhance learning).

Most of the games we know integrate three basic elements: meta-centered activities, rewards, and progression (DICKY, 2005; FIGUEROA-FLORES, 2015). All game activities are meta-centered because they are oriented towards a specific objective which ultimately focuses on winning by defeating obstacles and other conditions (SMITH-ROBBINS, 2011). Prizes promote an additional commitment and engagement by the player (GLOVER, 2012). This type of reward occurs in games where the player is able to unblock extra activities or levels after successfully accomplishing

the previous ones, one aspect which can be also found in L2 learning where the students have to learn a set of rules and vocabulary before moving on to a new unit or topic.

Koster (2005) suggested that learning based on challenges and games works so well because the pleasure provided by the game makes the students learn better. For Koster and Kapp (2012), the act of playing games whilst learning serves as a natural learning drug to our brain since it promotes an environment in which the participants feel motivated to invest their time and energy in solving a task. In another words, it can serve as an extra stimulus for human learning.

The students' motivation arrives in the way of acceptance or blending in. If the learners receive recognition for their achievements, they will feel motivated to move to another level or reach an additional reward. Dickey (2005) suggested that progression is a very important element of engagement and motivation since its main objective is to maintain the players informed on how much progress they have achieved in the level. In the L2 classroom the teacher can implement progression by systematically promoting a healthy competition in the group whilst showing the progress of each learner. Students who are able to see their progress tend to become risk takers since they are motivated to move on or continue (FIGUEROA-FLORES, 2015).

Gamified activities provide alternatives for L2 teachers who would like to rethink their practices based on the similarities they find in games. As already mentioned, one of the greatest advantages of implementing Gamification is that the student may feel motivated to complete a level. If this is translated to the psycho-pedagogical aspect, the student may move forward after successfully completing a unit or task in which the language learning is assessed thru a variety of game like experiences (PINTRICH, 2003; FIGUEROA-FLORES, 2015). However, in order to have a successful activity one should plan carefully the learning tasks, the vocabulary needed, the level of difficulty and the learning outcomes. In what follows the rationale and goals for the activity discussed in this paper are presented.

3 Methodology

This section describes in detail all the steps taken when creating the Gamified activity described in this paper. The method used and the website

preparation was thoroughly explained taking into account the literature and the steps the researcher had to take when creating this activity.

3.1 Participants

The participants were 10 English native speakers' students of Portuguese L2. There were at the equivalent to the B1 level, according to the Common European Framework, and spoke at least another foreign language (e.g. Spanish, French or a combination of both). Their mean age was 20 years old. These students started to learn Portuguese at the University of Surrey as part of their degree program in Language and Literature.

The activity described in this paper was part of the Curriculum of this course and was presented in class. However, the participation in the study was voluntary and only the students who volunteered to assess the activity were mentioned here. Moreover, this study followed the ethical considerations proposed at the guidelines for ethical approval from the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG).

3.2 Methods

The activity described on this paper is a pilot study based on the Educational Gamification Five Step Model that was adapted from Huang and Soman (2013). This pilot study is part of a bigger study that aims to create a wide range of Gamified materials to boost the learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The graphic below illustrates this model. Each step proposed below was followed when creating the Gamified activity discussed in this paper.

FIGURE 1 – Educational Gamification Five Step Model, picture taken from Figueroa-Flores (2015)



In order to deal with the first step, *Understanding the Target Audience and the Context*, the language teacher needs to know who their students are. It is important to know their target audience along with analysing the context in

which they are inserted (e.g. group size, environment, skills sequence, and length). It is at this point in the activity that the ‘pain points’, as Figueroa-Flores (2015) calls them, come to surface.

The pain points are several aspects that can prevent students from progressing such as: focus, motivation, skills, pride, learning environment, nature of the course, physical, mental and emotional factors. The teacher will be only able to determine the Gamification after taking into account and understanding these points.

The participants in this study are undergraduate students attending the Portuguese lessons at the University of Surrey (see 2.1 for a detailed description of the subjects in this study). The students were highly motivated to learn Portuguese since they selected to learn Portuguese from a pool of 11 languages offered. Besides, they were credited students, which meant that their success or failure in the course would affect their transcripts and overall average.

Some of the students had family members, boyfriend or girlfriend who were native speakers of Portuguese, which helped to increase their interest in learning the language. The students were very good speakers, but some of them were very shy and over conscious of their mistakes, characteristics which could be seen as an obstacle in the activity progressivity. In order to have a smooth activity, the students should engage in conversation and use the new vocabulary learned during the warm-up section (see steps two and three). It was important for them to feel enough comfortable and encouraged to communicate in their second language since they were supposed to role-play a job interview.

Another obstacle to overcome was the fact that the lessons occurred two times a week (on Wednesdays and Thursdays), the lesson on Wednesday would last for one hour while the one on Thursday lasted two hours. In total we would meet for three hours a week, which did not leave the researcher and the students a lot of time to work on scrutinizing details such as reviewing all the grammatical points (e.g. present and past tenses, how to address someone formally, etc) and reviewing vocabulary. As a matter of fact, these topics were taken for granted since the students, who were at B1 level, had already covered extensively the topics mentioned above at levels A1 and A2.

Additionally, given the short number of weekly hours, the activity was spread throughout three weeks. At the end of the activity, the hours in class

as well as the time the students were expected to expend working on their assignments and homework (extra 10 hours per week) proved to be enough to work on the activity proposed.

At home, the students were expected to select a job, from the website advertisement page (*anúncios de empregos tab*), to apply for. Additionally, they were supposed to write their CV and Cover Letter, tailor-making them to better suit the job requirements. The CV and the letter were supposed to be handed in together when placing ‘their job application’. Finally, the students were expected to prepare themselves for their job interview, and to interview their classmates.

Whilst in class, the students worked on the vocabulary and grammar topics necessary to tackle the activity (see below, Step two, *Defining the Learning Objectives*). The students had also the opportunity of talking about the differences in register and formality, which proved to be essential to succeed in the task at hand. The students and teacher were supposed to cover the topics proposed at unit 10 from *Português em Foco 2* (COELHO; OLIVEIRA, 2017) as the activity went along.

The final challenge or obstacle faced was to maintain the students’ interest and engagement, since they were supposed to write their CV and Cover Letter, as well as to prepare for their interview at home, and to interview their peers. Here, it is important to highlight that the activity was not assessed, which could be seen as a demotivating aspect. It is known that some students may tend to prioritize projects and activities that are part of their final mark over the ones that are not. To overcome this issue, the activity was gamified and badges were given after the completion of each task.

The researcher opted to use badges to signal the progress in the game since a system based on points would have meant to keep track of each point lost or won, which proved to be challenging in previous experiences. A game based on points tend to work better in activities that start and finish on the same lesson. Instead an award system based on badges proved to be more efficient in activities that were meant to last more than one lesson since they facilitate to keep track of the students’ progress. Step two, *Defining the Learning Objectives*, is always necessary for a successful teaching and learning experience. This is the cornerstone of the activity discussed here since it sets the general instructional goals, specific learning goals, and behavioural goals. In this activity, the learning objectives are divided into three groups:

vocabulary, grammar and behavioural goal. In what follows each group is presented in detail, specifying the learning goals;

Group 1 – Vocabulary

- a) To learn the vocabulary related to job hunting and interview
- b) To learn the difference between formal and informal speech
- c) To learn the difference between an informal and formal letter

Group 2 – Grammar

- a) To revise: the past tenses (perfect and imperfect), the near future tense, the future and future conditional, as they take part in the activity
- b) To learn Personal Infinitive

Group 3 – Behavioural goal

- a) To boost the students' confidence in talking and interacting in the target language.
- b) To use a ludic activity that involves all the four skills: speaking, reading, writing and listening.
- c) To award the students' effort after each task
- d) To increase the students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in learning Portuguese.

Step three, *Structuring the Experience*, aims to break down the activity and identify the main points of action. At this stage, the teacher needs to prepare and quantify what the students (players) need to learn and achieve by the end of each stage in the game. If students fall behind, it is up to the teacher to re-think the activity and provide a push for motivation in order for the student to complete the stage.

The activity described on this paper was based on blended modalities comprising both face-to-face and e-learning sessions. Before winning the first Badge (CV Badge), the students had to read and answer a text. In this text, one of the characters is job hunting. The text used in this activity is part of an introductory conversation (see pages 134 and 135) presented in Unit 10, from *Português em Foco 2* (COELHO; OLIVEIRA, 2017). This text is used to introduce the vocabulary they will need to know in order to champion the activity proposed on the website. Here, the learners had to answer questions

based on the text they read. This exercise was used as a warm-up activity which meant to prompt the students to talk about their future and career plans. In this task, the students had to use either their smartphones or their computers to search for more information about the professions they liked or would like to apply for.

These two activities (text comprehension and oral practice) lasted for eighteen minutes (twelve minutes to read and answer the questions from the introductory text, two minutes to correct, and another three minutes to talk about their career prospects). This activity led to the introduction of the grammatical topic covered in unit 10: Infinitive (also known, in Portuguese, as *Infinitivo Pessoal e Impessoal*). Fifteen minutes were allocated for the presentation and explanation of this grammatical topic.

Fifteen more minutes were allocated to work on and to correct two exercises. At this stage, it was predicted that the students could have difficulties in relating this grammatical rule to real life interactions. For this reason, the students were asked to come up with a short job advertisement in pairs.

Each pair was supposed to talk about the profession they have chosen and how to write a job advertisement. Twelve minutes were allocated for this activity. The students were expected to talk about the differences between informal and formal registers. The answers were corrected by the students themselves. Each group would correct their peers' answers. Throughout this exercise, the role of the teacher was to serve as a mere supervisor. After this activity the website which contained the gamified activity was presented. This activity was just a pilot study of a bigger project that aims to create materials to boost the students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation when learning Portuguese.

The students were asked to read and select one of the adverts on the *anúncios de emprego tab*. The website presentation should not take longer than twelve minutes, out of which five minutes were allocated for the students to explore it. During the presentation, the badges and the rules of the game were presented. Basically, whenever the students would finish a task, they would receive a badge.

The students had four main tasks: to write their CVs and Cover Letters, to interview their colleagues, and to attend an interview, which, if successful, would lead to the fourth and last badge (the trophy). The last badge (the trophy) was only given to the students who had successfully

passed all the phases and got hired. As mentioned above, the Gamification and the distribution of badges were meant to boost the students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. As a matter of fact, one of the biggest challenges of this whole activity was to keep the students motivated and willing to carry on working on the activity proposed.

In order to help the students when writing their own CVs, a text with tips on how to write a CV was read and discussed in groups. Each group had to talk about three Dos and three Don'ts one should follow when writing a CV. This activity should last ten minutes, in which one minute would be used to teach the new vocabulary, two minutes would be used to read the text, and seven minutes to work on the list per se.

Another three minutes was planned to correct and discuss the students' answers. Finally, the students would have to read *texto F* (on page 137) and fill in a table with the relevant information about Samuel's CV. Three minutes would be used to present the new vocabulary and listen/ read to the text on page 137. Another six minutes would be allocated for filling in the table with the relevant information and two minutes for its correction.

Towards the end of this lesson, a model of Cover Letter and a power point presentation containing some rules and examples of formal letters were prepared and used to teach the students the difference between formal and informal letter and how to write one. This presentation should last fifteen minutes. Another five minutes should be allocated to an open discussion in which the teacher would write on the board at least six tips on how to write a Cover Letter. These "tips" should consist on suggestions and advices prompted from the students. For homework the students were asked to write their CVs and Cover Letters and email them to the teacher one day before the next class. It is important to bear in mind that this activity started on Thursday and the following lesson would be on Wednesday. Thus, the students' deadline to email their homework was on Tuesday.

Receiving the CVs and Cover Letters before the next lesson would enable the teacher to correct and hand them in time before sharing them with the students. On the actual day of the lesson, the students would be paired up and would exchange their CVs and Cover Letters. It was predicted that students who did not email their CV and letter before the lesson, would have to have their interview delayed, thus delaying the whole activity.

Thus, the teacher should monitor the students' submission and try as much as possible to avoid any delays. When that would not be possible, it was

up to the teacher to pair up students who had already submitted together. For the ones who did not manage to submit on time, they would be put in the same groups or pairs and, whenever possible would receive their CV and letters and exchange them via email to save time. However, this last option was not needed since all the students submitted their homework on time.

During the second meeting, the students who successfully submitted their CVs and Cover Letters received their badges. Additionally, they read a text taken from *Português XXI* (TAVARES, 2016) on pages 174 and 175, in which one of the characters is doing her job interview. The students are asked to read the text and then listen to its audio and put the dialogue in the correct order. This activity was meant to prepare the students for their own interview since it presents the format of an interview and the vocabulary expected. Since this text is not part of unit 10 from *Português em foco 2* (COELHO; OLIVEIRA, 2017) photocopies were provided during the lesson. Here, it was predicted that some of the students might have found the vocabulary or the structure of the job interview complex. In order to solve this problem, they were paired-up and had to use the text from the handout as model to role-play a short interview. The whole activity should not take more than ten minutes. Besides, two minutes should be allocated for correction.

The students were also asked work on another listening activity, but this time from their book (see page 142). This activity consisted on an audio in which someone would give relevant advices to be followed before and during the interview. This activity was meant to serve as an extra example on how to prepare for and conduct an interview. Two minutes were allocated to work on the new vocabulary and eight minutes were allocated for the activity in itself. The students were supposed to listen to the audio file three times. Another two minutes were allocated for correction.

After being exposed to two different examples of job interviews, the students would be paired up and asked to exchanged their CVs and Cover Letters. They would have eight minutes to read their colleagues' application and to start to brain storm how their interview would be organized. They were asked to read their peers' application and ask questions about their colleagues' application. This round of questions was meant to help them to come up with the questions the interviewers would ask during the interview. The interview would be role-played on the next lesson. In terms of organisation, it was up to the pair to decide if they would like to share

the questions before the interview or not. In case they chose to, they could also prepare the answers together. At this moment, the teacher asked the students to exchange their emails since they were supposed to work together on their interview before the next class. Two predictable problems could have occurred during this activity:

- 1) Students had different timetables. This could have been one of the biggest hurdles to concluding the activity.
- 2) Students may lose their motivation and/or may give priority to other assignments.

Both issues were solved by monitoring closely each pair's progress and rewarding the students after each task. A summary of their progress was also weekly issued to foster a healthy competitive environment (FIGUEROA-FLORES, 2015). Yet, it was still possible to have students demotivated and falling behind. In this case, it would be up to the teacher's own discretion to closely monitor them and boost their students' morale.

On the third meeting the students would be asked to seat in pairs and role-play their interview. Here, each pair had to talk between themselves. The researcher did not ask the students to present their dialogue to the rest of the class since this could have blocked their spontaneity and inhibit the students who are overcautious about their mistakes and language skills. The students were given two minutes each to role-play their interviews. In total, the students spent four minutes working on this activity. They were responsible for tracking their time. This allowed them to swap places and roles. An extra two minutes were allowed, in case the pair did not managed to finish the activity on time.

As for the decision if the interviewee would get job or not, it was up to each pair to decide the terms and conditions to hire the candidates. Finally, after successfully passing the interview the students who got hired, would receive their final badge to award their quest.

The final step, four, *Applying Gamification Elements*, was done together with the students after planning thoroughly the activity in itself and creating the website. As mention, this game was presented in parallel with unit 10 from *Português em Foco 2* (COELHO; OLIVEIRA, 2017). Both the unit and the website were supposed to complement each other, since one could not work without the other. As described above, the students were supposed to refer back to the job agency website, created by the teacher, when applying

for their “jobs”. They were also supposed to refer back to the website whenever they would like to have an overall idea of the stages they would have to go through. The website in itself, gave the students an idea of the activity’s structure and organization since it helped the students and their teacher to know what would come next. Moreover, unit 10 also helped to delimit a structure and order to be followed.

3.3 Website creation

The website used in the activity proposed and discussed in this paper was created using a free website generator called wix.com. The advantage of using wix.com was that it has a vast library containing a variety of user-friendly templates and functions. One can select a specific template and apply it to their new webpage without needing to have a vast knowledge of IT or website creation. Besides, the videos and images are similar to the ones used in professional websites which can enhance the students’ experience, since it looks very similar to what a job agency website would look like in real life.

The choice of using authentic and real-world teaching materials proves to be relevant for the learning processes since it maximizes the quality of student learning outcomes (BIGGS, 2003). Activities such as the one proposed here provide a challenge, interest and motivation to learn. Here the students are not spoon-fed with the content to be learned and acquired, but they are expected to engage with progressive higher-order cognitive processes.

3.3.1 The layout of the website

The website layout was taken from the website generator www.wix.com. To be loyal to the information one could find in real job hunting websites (e.g. www.vagas.com.br, www.empregos.com.br, jobs.ac.uk and indeed.ac.uk), the website was written in the target language (Portuguese) and contained an introductory page (*início*), about us (*quem somos*), the jobs adverts (*anúncios de empregos*), the stages in the candidate selection (*fases do processo de seleção*) and the establishment’s address. The website created for this activity is the following: <https://carlacmx.wixsite.com/agenciadeempregos>.

FIGURE 2 – Screenshot of the first page of the website

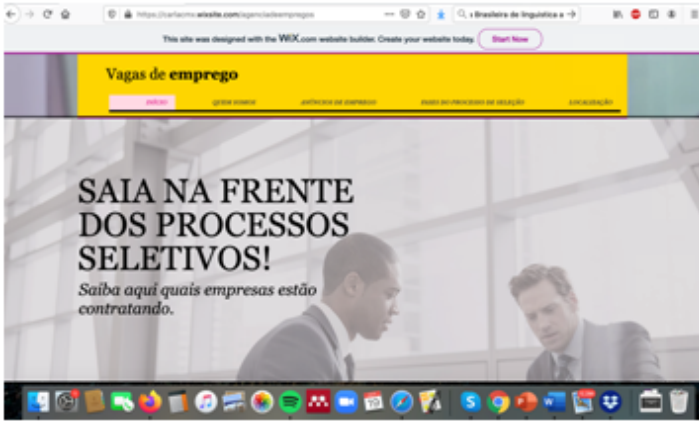


FIGURE 3 – Screenshots of the first page of the website

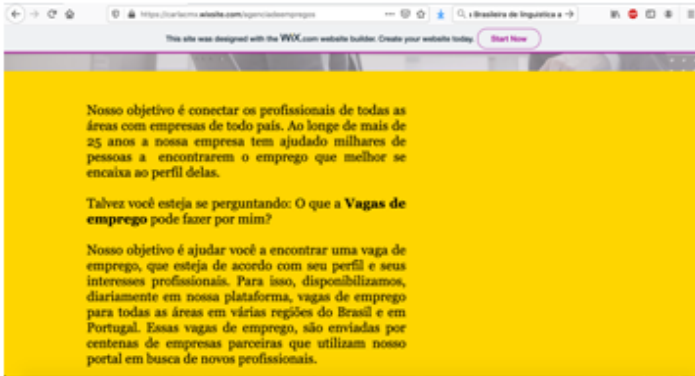


FIGURE 4 – Screenshot of the page Quem Somos.



FIGURE 5 – Screenshot of the text on the page Quem Somos.



FIGURE 6 – Screenshot of the page containing the Agência de Emprego contact details



The activity proposed starts at “*fases do processo de seleção* (stages in the candidate selection)”. In this section, the students are presented with the tasks and stages they have to complete in order to win the game proposed. Here the use of badges to reward the students’ achievements is imperative for the development of the game. Badges and levels tend to extrinsically motivate the learners to improve engagement while intrinsically motivating towards the achievement, mastery, autonomy, and sense of belonging (FIGUEROA-FLORES, 2015; LEPPER, 1988; MUNTEAN, 2011).

FIGURE 7 – Screenshot of the page containing the badges



The job adverts section (*anúncios de empregos*) was also an important part of the activity because the students had to consult it to select the job they would like to apply for. Here, the students could talk to their peers about the job they applied for. Equally important, were the introductory page (*início*) and about us (*quem somos*). Although, these pages were not directly related to the activity proposed, they were created to maximize the experience of using a real-world job hunt website (BIGGS, 2003; MEYERS; NULTY, 2009). Thus, triggering an intrinsic motivation.

FIGURE 8 – Screenshot of the page containing the job adverts



3.3.2 Badges

The badges were created using the free badger generator <http://www.onlinebadgemaker.com/> and were inserted in the activity when the layout for the website was ready. Each badge was confectioned individually, and their pictures were directly related to the phase or task the students were supposed to perform. Each badge was handed to the students upon completion of its respective task.

FIGURE 9 – Screenshot of the page containing the badges



The literature has vastly discussed the benefits awards and prizes promote when trying to boost the players/students' engagement and commitment (FIGUEROA-FLORES, 2015; GLOVER, 2012; KAPP, 2012). The use and integration of badges has grown tremendously due to the development of game consoles and online gaming (FIGUEROA-FLORES, 2015). For the L2 learner, badges are important to boost motivation in the way of acceptance and blending in. If the students receive recognition for something they have achieved, they will be motivated to move to another level or reach additional reward. This sense of progression is a very important element for games, and it increases the students' motivation and self-awareness, since it maintains the player informed on how much progress they have in the level (KAPP, 2012).

Additionally, it gives the player (student) the necessary information about their journey since it informs them about the goals that were

completed and the necessary tasks to complete the level (WERBACH; HUNTER, 2012). In the L2 classroom, the teacher implements progression by systematically promoting a healthy competition every time the game's progression is shown. It is at this moment that the L2 learner is able to see their progress. Their progress motivates them to become risk takers, thus enabling the students to carry on with the activity proposed (FIGUEROA-FLORES, 2015).

3.4 Questionnaires

In order to prove the efficiency of the activity, the participants were asked to evaluate it. Questionnaires (see APPENDIX I) were handed to each participant at the end of the activity. Each questionnaire contained 13 questions to evaluate if the activity proposed was important to boost their motivation, and if so, how did it do it. The questionnaire contained polar and open questions. The open questions were answered using a Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 5. Here, the students would evaluate if the question or the activity proposed was either relevant or not. They also had to say if they like it or not.

The questionnaire was useful to map how the activity described in this paper had an influential impact in boosting the students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In this study, the students' feedback was crucial to understand if the main goal of the activity was actually achieved. That is, if the activity, in itself, really boosted the students' motivation.

4 Analysis and results

Before the activity described in this paper started a certificate is awarded (see appendix II) from the hands of the teacher to the students. The certificate was created using a template from the Jotform website.¹ This award aimed to trigger students' attention and motivation. After the award of the students were told that they should look for a job. Here, it was up to the student to choose their undergraduate area and expertise. This was the trigger of the story. From this moment onwards, the story started to unfold.

¹ <https://www.jotform.com/pdf-editor/202983058539061?template=1>.

Similar to any job selection, the student must go through several stages before being hired. First, they should send their CV and Cover Letter to the recruitment specialist. If their application was successful, they would be called for an interview. Only students who were awarded the CV and Cover Letter badges were selected for the interview.

As described in detailed in section 2.2, the activity was meant to be blended and it happened throughout three meetings. The first and second meetings used the whole lesson, while the last meeting used just part of the time allocated for the lesson. For the last meeting 25 minutes were allocated for interview, feedback to the students and completion of the questionnaires.

In this activity, both the website and the interview should be as realistic as possible. The idea was to create an environment in which the candidate (student) would be immersed in the job-hunting experience intensely. Thus, placing them in all the stages that a candidate must go through in real life.

The stages and tasks to be followed were presented in the website, but they were also based on unit 10 from *Português em Foco 2* (COELHO; OLIVEIRA, 2017), which helped the students and the researcher to organize themselves better since they could check, whenever they wanted, the next steps to follow. The tasks also served to motivate the students since they could also visualize the badges and the tasks, they had to champion in order to win them.

As defended by Figueroa-Flores (2015) the badges proved to be important for boosting the students' motivation and giving them a sense of control or ownership in the game they were inserted in. As a matter of fact, all the students mentioned in their questionnaires the importance of the badges in boosting their morale and motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic. Moreover, the badges gave them a sense of progression and completion, which the students mentioned to be really important when participating in long activities, which is also in line with Kapp's (2012), Werbach and Hunter's (2012) and Koster's (2005) studies. Additionally, the badges were also important in stimulating performance and collaboration among students who were involved in the process.

The novelty of the activity in itself proved to be an advantage since it boosted the students' curiosity and motivation to know what it would come next. So far, none of the students had ever participated in a similar activity. This meant that many of them were curious to know how it would unfold. This feeling was even more boosted by the badges, as they helped

to create a healthy competitive and rewarding environment. In fact, none of the students claimed to feel pressured or demotivated whenever they moved on or were hold back a stage, thus proving Figueroa-Flores' (2015) theory that a healthy competition could only boost the students' motivation.

When creating the activity, the researcher cogitated to use a system based on points, however it could have been harder to keep track of the students' progression since the activity would extend for three lessons. Moreover, the badges served as constant reminders of what each of them had achieved. For the most competitive students it served as constant reminder of their achievement, which in itself helped to boost the students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Another fact that could have influenced in this activity was the fact that the group analyzed was small, which helped the researcher when keeping track of the tasks and the number of students who had completed them. Moreover, the students were all good friends since it was the second year they were studying together. Maybe in a bigger group or in a group in which the students did not feel so relaxed and comfortable, the results would had been different.

In addition, the layout and extra work put into creating the materials served as an extrinsic motivator since the students were happy to have an activity that it was tailored-made for each of them. Activities similar to this one pay-off in motivating students, but it is time consuming and complex to be created. Such characteristics could demotivate the teachers, especially if they have many students. Nevertheless, once it is created it can be reproduced as many times as needed.

An interesting and unexpected result was the promotional aspect this activity. Due to its novelty, the students taking the course, talked about this activity when conversing with their friends and peers taking other languages courses. Although, it was never meant to serve as a promotional act, it helped to increase the interest in learning Portuguese.

Despite the success in the students' feedback, the activity had also drawbacks. One of them was the number of participants. A bigger number of students could have given us an even wider picture on how Gamification can improve the students' motivation. Nevertheless, this was just a pilot study. The results obtained in this preliminary study will enable the researcher to fix any problem or issue that may have occurred during its confection or procedure.

In the future it would also be interesting to test this model of Gamification with other languages to check if this kind of activity could be transferable. A quick survey looking at six different books (two books to teach Italian (*Nuovo Espresso* and *Foundations Italian 2*, two books to teach English (*Headway* and *Face2Face*) and two books to teach Spanish (*Living Language Spanish* and *Foundations Spanish 2*) showed that the topic in itself is widely taught in these languages.

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APPENDIX I – Questionnaires

Feedback activity- site de empregos

Please give your comments and feedback. Thank you!

1. Do you think that this activity helped you to understand better how to write a CV?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No
 Other: _____

2. Do you think that this activity helped you to understand better how to write a XXX letter ?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No
 Other: _____

3. Do you think that you would be better prepared to look for a job in a Portuguese speaking country?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

4. Was the activity stimulating ?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
not really	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	very much

5. Did you fell motivated whilst doing the activity?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
not really	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	very much

6. Did you like to layout of the website?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No
 Other: _____

7. Do you think that the website helped you to feel more motivated whilst doing the activity?

Mark only one oval.

- 1 2 3 4 5
not really very much

8. Did the badges motivated you to carry on with the activity?

Mark only one oval.

- 1 2 3 4 5
not really very much

9. What was the most motivating aspect of this activity?

10. Have you ever worked on an activity which uses real-life material?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

11. Did you like the activity?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No
 Other: _____

12. **Would you like to work on more activities similar to this one in the future?**


Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Other: _____

13. **Any additional comments?**

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 Google Forms

APPENDIX II - Certificate

Certificate

This certificate is presented to

Pierre Coniché

for attending the Marketing Product seminar held at the University of Surry on November 19th 2019.

Signature



Create your own automated PDFs with [JotForm PDF Editor](#)



Data de submissão: 31/12/2019. Data de aprovação: 26/10/2020.