

USING NON-EDUCATIONAL GAMES IN TEACHING ENGLISH: BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS

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Abstract. This paper examines the role of non-educational video games in English language learning, highlighting their ability to improve vocabulary, motivation, and learner engagement through interactive and real-life communication. However, it also points out several limitations, such as unequal access to technology, weak development of speaking and writing skills, and potential distraction from learning goals, concluding that their effectiveness depends on proper guidance and balanced use in education.

Keywords: video games; English language learning; vocabulary learning; learner engagement; motivation; educational technology; language acquisition.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilini o'rganishda video o'yinlarning tutgan o'rni tahlil qilinadi hamda ularning interaktiv va hayotiy muloqot orqali o'quvchilarning so'z boyligi, motivatsiyasi va faolligini oshirishdagi imkoniyatlari yoritiladi. Shuningdek, unda hamma o'quvchilarda ham texnika bor emasligi, nutq va yozish ko'nikmalarining sust rivojlanishi hamda ta'limiy maqsadlardan chalg'ish ehtimoli kabi ayrim cheklovlar ham ko'rsatiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: video o'yinlar; ingliz tilini o'rganish; so'z boyligini o'rganish; o'quvchilarni jalb qilish; motivatsiya; ta'lim texnologiyasi; tilni o'zlashtirish.

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается роль развлекательных видеоигр в изучении английского языка, их влияние на словарный запас, мотивацию и вовлечённость учащихся через интерактивное и приближённое к реальной жизни общение. Также отмечаются такие ограничения, как неравный доступ к технологиям, слабое развитие навыков говорения и письма, а также возможное отвлечение от учебных целей.

Ключевые слова: видеоигры; изучение английского языка; изучение лексики; вовлечённость учащихся; мотивация; образовательные технологии; освоение языка.

Introduction

In recent years, English language teaching has increasingly shifted toward learner-centered approaches that emphasize interaction, engagement, and meaningful communication. Young learners are addicted to playing mobile games, and the use of non-educational games can be as helpful as to redirect this addiction to education especially in language learning process. This paper aims to explore the role of non-educational games and its limitations in teaching English based on several research papers.

Video games were initially created to test and demonstrate technology, then became number one entertainment tool in today's technology age, and now it reached

to its new stage – assisting young learners in language acquisition. Nowadays, they are being regarded as a resource for education – acquiring skills and developing language (Mikio A. Brooks, 2025).

Video games are known to relieve stress and develop cognitive skills by simulations of real life situations. Likewise, they also are considered an effective tool for enhancing language skills, especially vocabulary acquisition by means of interactions with the other players who are native speakers. There are basically two types of video games: multiplayer online games and narrative-based games. Multiplayer online games facilitate an authentic interaction between the learners and native speakers, while narrative-based games provide learners with mission contexts which could enhance reading comprehension in target language. According to a research conducted in four public schools in Thailand, 86.80 percent of participants who responded to online questionnaires reported that they have learnt some English vocabulary through non-educational games like PUBG, DotA. When they were interviewed individually, they mentioned that they learnt some English vocabulary by interacting with the co-players they play with, and also playing them every day helps them to remember those words (Chalermwut Khongsakun, 2020). It is also proven that learning a language through video games is more effective than learning in a formal classroom setting as there is no fear of being judged because of their pronunciation and grammar mistake; learning process can be easier and motivating for them as they share common interests, like video games with their co-players.

Another research conducted by H. U. Hashim with ten undergraduate university students observed that non-educational games can turn boring and complex writing activities into interesting and engaging ones. During the research, students were asked to pick a few words or phrases they use while playing video games and to write a narrative story by using those words they chose. Students showed more engagement and active participation, sharing their personal experiences. They efficiently used phrases like “have fun”, “stay alert”, “safe zone” in their narrative writing.

Although video games make the learning process more engaging and interactive, it has its own limitations when it comes to availability of technologies and the Internet, especially in the countryside. Purchasing one's personal computer and the software which helps game function can be hard to afford for learners from middle and low-income families. Moreover, playing digital games help learners mostly improve their comprehensive skills (reading and listening) low chance of practicing fluency and accuracy in productive skills (speaking and writing). Merely spending more time on video games does not improve their oral speech or writing skills, unless an educator integrates them to classroom lessons. Another vital limitation of non-educational games is the more focus on game itself rather than language acquisition. Most teenagers can be distracted by the visuals, actions, enthusiasm for winning and the vibe of the game, showing less focus on language use.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while non-educational video games can significantly enhance engagement, motivation, and vocabulary acquisition in English language learning, their effectiveness depends on proper integration into educational contexts. Despite their benefits, limitations such as unequal access to technology, limited development of productive skills, and potential distraction from learning goals highlight the need for guided and balanced use by educators.

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