

THE ROLE OF GAME-BASED LEARNING IN IMPROVING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS' SPEAKING SKILLS

Ruziyeva Muxlisa Azim kizi

Master's degree student of UzSWLU

muxlissalimova34@gmail.com

Scientific supervisor: Akhmadalievа Khosiyatposhsho Abdukhayotovna

Acting Associate Professor of the Department

“Theoretical Aspects of the English Language”

strong-girl5@mail.ru

Abstract: The article reveals that speaking skills require students to practice a lot to improve their fluency, confidence and language proficiency. Game-based learning improves how well students speak by involving them in fun activities where they can practice a lot. When they play games, students get feedback right away, so they can fix mistakes and speak better. This way of learning makes students feel confident about speaking and makes them want to join in more.

Abstrakt: Ushbu maqola gapirishi mahorati ravonlik, muloqotda o'ziga ishonch va tildagi tajribani oshirish uchun ko'p mehnat talab qiladi. O'yinga asoslangan o'rganish uslubi o'quvchilarni qiziqarli o'yinga jalb etgan holda, gapirish mahorati ustida ko'proq shug'ullanishga zamin yaratadi. O'quvchilar o'yin o'ynash bilan bir qatorda, bevosita fikr-mulohazaga ham ega bo'lishadi, natijada, xatolarni to'g'irlab, xorijiy tilda yanada yaxshi gapirishadi. O'rganishning bu usuli o'quvchilarda xorijiy tilda gapirishga bo'lgan ishonch hissini oshiradi va ularni mashg'ulotlarda faol qatnashishga undaydi.

Аннотация: В статье отмечается, что навык разговорной речи требует от студентов много практики для улучшения своей беглости, уверенности и языковой компетенции. Обучение на основе игр улучшает уровень устной речи учеников, вовлекая их в увлекательные занятия, где они могут много практиковаться. Когда они играют в игры, студенты получают обратную связь сразу же, так что они могут исправлять ошибки и говорить лучше. Такой способ обучения делает студентов уверенными в своих способностях к разговору и заставляет их хотеть присоединиться к нему еще больше.

Keywords: *Game-based learning, English language learners, speaking skills, engagement, contextual learning, interactive practice, personalized learning, progress tracking.*

Speaking skills involve being able to share thoughts, ideas, and information well through talking. This includes how clearly you speak, your pronunciation, using the right words, and having good grammar. Speaking well means not only talking but also listening carefully, replying appropriately, and having meaningful conversations. Learning to

speak better is important for communicating effectively in different situations, like at work or with friends, because it helps you express yourself confidently, connect with others, discuss things, work together, and explain ideas convincingly.

Learning a new language can be a challenging endeavour, particularly when it comes to improving speaking skills. For English language learners (ELLs), effective practice in speaking is essential for achieving fluency and confidence in communication. According to Harmer [7], the ability to communicate through speech is crucial for humans, as it is challenging to exist without engaging in either monologues or dialogues. Traditional language learning methods often struggle to engage students and provide meaningful opportunities for speaking practice. However, with the rise of technology and innovative teaching approaches, game-based learning has emerged as a powerful tool for enhancing ELLs' speaking abilities. According to The Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics [3], games are defined as “Games are described as activities that are organized and typically include a specific task or goal, a set of rules, competition among players, and communication using spoken or written language” [3p. 89]. Game-based learning involves the use of games, simulations, and interactive activities to facilitate learning and skill development. In the context of language learning, games provide an engaging and immersive environment where students can practice speaking in a fun and interactive manner. Chen agrees with this idea, indicating that games are effective because they can quickly grab students' attention, which in turn boosts their motivation and improves their English skills [2]. These games can range from simple vocabulary quizzes to complex role-playing simulations, depending on the learning objectives and students' proficiency. Language game is fusion of language and play [4]. Moreover, it serves as a helpful method to enhance children's vocabulary learning in a way that mimics the natural process of play, as suggested by Angelova & Lekova [1].

One of the primary advantages of game-based learning is its ability to motivate and engage students. Traditional language learning methods often rely on rote memorization and repetitive exercises, which can quickly become tedious and demotivating for students. In contrast, games offer a dynamic and interactive learning experience that captures students' attention and encourages active participation. By incorporating elements of competition, exploration, and problem-solving, games create a sense of excitement and challenge that motivates students to learn and improve their speaking skills. Whether it's through virtual reality simulations, multiplayer games, or gamified language apps, students are drawn to the immersive and entertaining nature of game-based learning, leading to increased engagement and retention of language concepts.

Games provide learners with a context-rich environment where they can apply language skills in authentic situations. Through role-playing games, simulations, and interactive storytelling, students are exposed to real-life scenarios that require them to use English in meaningful ways. This contextual learning approach helps students understand how language is used in different contexts, leading to better comprehension and retention of vocabulary and grammar structures [5]. For example, a role-playing game set in a

restaurant might require students to take on different roles, such as waiter, chef, or customer, and engage in conversations using restaurant-related vocabulary and phrases. By immersing themselves in these scenarios, students not only learn new language skills but also develop cultural awareness and communication strategies that are essential for effective spoken communication.

One of the key benefits of game-based learning is its ability to provide students with ample opportunities for interactive speaking practice. Whether it's through speaking challenges, collaborative activities, or virtual language exchanges, games encourage students to actively engage in conversations and express themselves in English [6]. For instance, language learning apps like Duolingo and Rosetta Stone incorporate speaking exercises where students are prompted to repeat phrases, engage in dialogues, and record their own speech for feedback. Similarly, multiplayer games such as Minecraft and Among Us allow students to communicate with each other in English as they work together to solve problems and achieve objectives .

Game-based learning offers a high degree of flexibility and customization, allowing educators to tailor activities to meet the diverse needs and preferences of individual learners. With a wide variety of games available, educators can select activities that align with students' interests, proficiency levels, and learning goals. For example, a student who enjoys puzzle games might benefit from word search or crossword puzzles that focus on vocabulary acquisition, while a student who prefers storytelling might thrive in a narrative-based role-playing game where they can create characters and develop plots in English. By providing students with choices and autonomy over their learning experience, game-based learning empowers them to take ownership of their learning journey and progress at their own pace.

Games often incorporate elements of gamification, such as points, levels, and rewards, to motivate students and track their progress over time. By setting clear goals and providing immediate feedback, games encourage students to continue practicing and striving for improvement. Moreover, educators can use analytics tools to monitor students' performance, identify areas of strength and weakness, and adjust teaching strategies accordingly. This sustained engagement and progress tracking contribute to more effective language learning outcomes and empower students to monitor their progress and set goals for improvement.

While game-based learning offers many benefits for improving ELLs' speaking skills, it's essential to recognize and address potential challenges. One challenge is ensuring that games are culturally and linguistically appropriate for diverse groups of learners. Educators must carefully select games and activities that reflect students' cultural backgrounds and language proficiency levels to ensure relevance and inclusivity. Additionally, it's important to strike a balance between using games as a supplement to traditional instruction and integrating them seamlessly into the curriculum. Games should complement classroom instruction and reinforce key language concepts rather than serving as a standalone teaching tool. Furthermore, educators must provide adequate

support and guidance to students as they engage in game-based learning activities. This includes scaffolding activities, providing clear instructions, and offering feedback to help students navigate challenges and maximize learning opportunities. One more difficulty in using games to help ELLs speak better is making sure all students can use the technology and materials, especially those who have less access to them. Schools might need to buy enough devices, internet, and software licenses so everyone can join in. Also, some students might find it hard to understand the language used in the games, especially if their English isn't very good. Teachers might need to help these students more or change the games to fit different language levels. Lastly, it can be tricky for teachers to know how well game-based learning is working and if students are getting better at speaking. Teachers might need to find good ways to check this that match the fun and interactive way games are used.

In conclusion, game-based learning holds tremendous potential for improving ELLs' speaking skills by fostering motivation, providing contextual learning experiences, offering interactive practice, facilitating personalized learning, and enabling progress tracking. By harnessing the power of technology and innovation, educators can create dynamic and engaging language learning environments that empower students to become confident and proficient speakers of English. As game-based learning continues to evolve and integrate into language education, it's essential for educators to explore new tools, strategies, and best practices for effectively incorporating games into their teaching practice. By embracing game-based learning, educators can inspire students, ignite their passion for learning, and equip them with the skills they need to succeed in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world.

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