



GAME-BASED LEARNING AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING
SPEAKING FLUENCY AND CLASSROOM INTERACTION IN EFL
CONTEXTS



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***Abstract:** Game-based learning has increasingly attracted attention as an instructional approach capable of creating interactive and communicative learning environments in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Speaking fluency and classroom interaction remain central yet challenging objectives of language instruction, particularly in contexts where learners have limited opportunities for authentic communication. This study investigates the effectiveness of game-based learning in developing speaking fluency and enhancing classroom interaction among EFL learners. A mixed-method research design was employed, combining experimental instruction, fluency-based speaking assessments, interaction analysis, questionnaires, and classroom observation. The findings indicate that learners exposed to game-based learning demonstrate improved speech fluency, increased participation in oral interaction, and greater confidence in spontaneous communication. The scientific novelty of the study lies in its integrated examination of fluency development and interactional behaviour within a structured academic*



context. The results contribute to applied linguistics by providing empirical evidence supporting game-based learning as an effective pedagogical approach for developing spoken language competence in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: *game-based learning, speaking fluency, classroom interaction, EFL teaching, applied linguistics*

Annotatsiya: *Mazkur tadqiqot ingliz tilini xorijiy til sifatida o'qitishda o'yin asosidagi ta'limning og'zaki nutq ravonligi va sinfdagi muloqotni rivojlantirishdagi samaradorligini o'rganishga bag'ishlangan. Og'zaki nutqni rivojlantirish va faol muloqotni ta'minlash EFL ta'limining muhim vazifalaridan biri bo'lib, an'anaviy dars shakllari ko'pincha bu imkoniyatni yetarli darajada ta'minlamaydi. Tadqiqot aralash metodologiya asosida olib borilib, eksperimental darslar, nutq ravonligini baholash, o'zaro muloqotni tahlil qilish va dars kuzatuv usullari qo'llanildi. Natijalar o'yin asosidagi ta'lim o'quvchilarning og'zaki nutq ravonligini oshirish, muloqotdagi faolligini kuchaytirish va spontan nutqqa bo'lgan ishonchini mustahkamlashini ko'rsatdi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *o'yin asosidagi ta'lim, og'zaki nutq, ravonlik, sinfdagi muloqot, EFL*

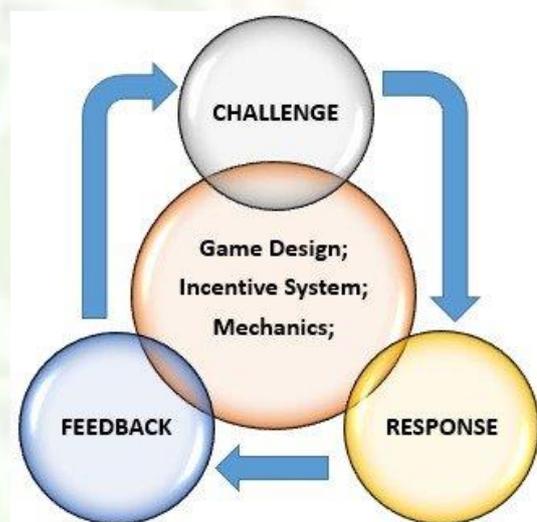
Аннотация: *В статье рассматривается эффективность использования обучения на основе игр для развития беглости устной речи и взаимодействия обучающихся в классах английского языка как иностранного. Развитие устной речи и активного взаимодействия остаётся одной из ключевых задач языкового образования. Исследование основано на смешанном методологическом подходе и включает экспериментальное обучение, оценку беглости речи, анализ взаимодействия и наблюдение. Результаты подтверждают, что игровое обучение способствует повышению беглости речи, активизации взаимодействия и росту уверенности обучающихся в спонтанной устной коммуникации.*

Ключевые слова: *игровое обучение, беглость речи, взаимодействие, EFL, методика преподавания*

Introduction

Speaking fluency and classroom interaction are widely recognised as essential components of communicative competence in EFL learning. Learners' ability to produce speech smoothly, with minimal hesitation, and to participate actively in interactional exchanges plays a crucial role in successful language use. However, in many EFL contexts, speaking instruction remains constrained by limited classroom interaction, high levels of learner anxiety, and an overemphasis on accuracy-oriented tasks. Traditional approaches to speaking instruction often prioritise controlled practice and teacher-led questioning, which may restrict learners' opportunities for spontaneous communication. As a result, learners frequently demonstrate fragmented speech, excessive pauses, and reluctance to participate in oral interaction. These challenges have prompted educators to seek alternative pedagogical approaches that create supportive, engaging, and interaction-rich learning environments.

Game-based learning has emerged as a promising instructional framework capable of addressing these challenges. Unlike gamification, which focuses on adding game elements to existing activities, game-based learning involves the use of actual games or game-like tasks as the core learning activity. Through role-playing games, simulations, problem-solving challenges, and competitive or collaborative tasks, game-based learning encourages learners to use language purposefully and interactively. Recent studies (2019–2025) indicate that game-based learning positively influences learner motivation and engagement; however, fewer studies have examined its direct impact on speaking fluency and classroom interaction in formal higher education EFL settings. The present study aims to fill



this gap by investigating how game-based learning contributes to the development of speaking fluency and interactional competence.

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. How does game-based learning affect speaking fluency in EFL learners?
2. What impact does game-based learning have on classroom interaction?
3. How do learners perceive the use of games in speaking-focused instruction?

Methods

The study adopted a mixed-method research design integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of speaking development and interaction. Participants were 70 undergraduate EFL students enrolled in a university language programme. All participants demonstrated an intermediate level of English proficiency and were divided into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group received speaking instruction



through game-based learning activities over a twelve-week period. These activities included role-play games, simulation tasks, information-gap games, and problem-solving scenarios designed to encourage spontaneous

oral interaction. The control group followed traditional speaking instruction based on textbook dialogues and teacher-led practice.

Data collection instruments included pre- and post-speaking tests assessing fluency indicators such as speech rate, pause frequency, and mean length of utterance. Classroom interaction was analysed through observation checklists and interactional coding of recorded speaking tasks. Learner perceptions were examined



using questionnaires and reflective responses. Quantitative data were analysed using comparative statistical methods to identify differences between groups, while qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis. Reliability was ensured through consistent instructional procedures and inter-rater agreement in fluency assessment. Validity was strengthened through triangulation of multiple data sources.

Results

The results revealed significant differences between the experimental and control groups following the instructional intervention. Pre-test data confirmed that both groups exhibited comparable levels of speaking fluency and interactional behaviour at the beginning of the study. However, post-test results indicated notable improvement among learners exposed to game-based learning. Learners in the experimental group demonstrated increased speech rate and reduced hesitation during speaking tasks. The frequency of pauses and self-repairs decreased, indicating greater fluency and confidence in spontaneous speech production. These improvements were particularly evident during interactive speaking tasks such as role-play games and problem-solving activities.



Classroom observation data revealed a marked increase in interactional engagement in the experimental group. Learners initiated turns more frequently, responded more actively to peers, and sustained interaction for longer periods. Collaborative games encouraged negotiation of meaning and peer support, contributing to more dynamic classroom interaction. Questionnaire data further indicated positive learner perceptions of game-based learning. Participants reported reduced anxiety, increased enjoyment, and greater willingness to speak English during class activities. These findings demonstrate that game-based learning positively influences both speaking fluency and interactional participation.



Discussion

The findings of the study provide strong empirical support for the effectiveness of game-based learning in developing speaking fluency and classroom interaction in EFL contexts. From a cognitive perspective, game-based activities promote repeated exposure to meaningful language use, which facilitates automatization of speech production processes. This contributes to increased fluency and reduced hesitation. From an interactional perspective, game-based learning creates communicative contexts that require learners to negotiate meaning, take turns, and respond spontaneously. These interactional demands align with communicative and interaction-based theories of language learning, which emphasise the role of social interaction in language development.

Unlike traditional speaking instruction, game-based learning shifts the focus from accuracy-dominated performance to meaningful communication. This shift reduces learner anxiety and encourages risk-taking, both of which are essential for fluency development. Compared to previous studies focusing primarily on motivation, the present research demonstrates measurable gains in speaking fluency and interactional behaviour. The study contributes to applied linguistics by highlighting the pedagogical value of games as structured communicative tools rather than mere motivational devices. It demonstrates that game-based learning can be systematically integrated into speaking instruction to support both fluency and interactional competence.

Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that game-based learning is an effective pedagogical approach for developing speaking fluency and enhancing classroom interaction in EFL contexts. The scientific novelty of the research lies in its integrated analysis of fluency indicators and interactional behaviour within a formal academic setting. Although the study is limited by its sample size and duration, the findings provide valuable implications for EFL pedagogy and applied linguistics. Future



research should explore the long-term effects of game-based learning and investigate its applicability across different proficiency levels and educational contexts.

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