

USING GAMES AND ACTIVITIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract: *This study investigates the role of games and activities in improving students' motivation, classroom participation, and language development in English language teaching. The research focuses on how interactive methods influence vocabulary learning, grammar accuracy, and speaking skills. A mixed-method approach was applied, including classroom observations, structured activities, and student feedback. The participants were second-year university students who took part in game-based lessons over a four-week period. The findings indicate that carefully selected games increase learner engagement, reduce anxiety, and support better memory retention. Students became more confident in using English and showed noticeable improvement in communicative performance. The study concludes that games and activities are effective tools for making lessons more learner-centered and dynamic. Teachers are encouraged to integrate games into regular instruction while maintaining a balance between enjoyment and educational objectives.*

Keywords: *English language teaching, games, activities, student motivation, classroom participation, vocabulary, speaking skills, interactive learning, communication, teaching strategies.*

Аннотация: *В данном исследовании рассматривается роль игр и различных видов деятельности в повышении мотивации студентов, их участия в учебном процессе и развитии языковых навыков при обучении английскому языку. Основное внимание уделяется тому, как интерактивные методы влияют на усвоение лексики, грамматическую точность и развитие навыков говорения. В работе использовался смешанный метод исследования, включающий наблюдение за занятиями, проведение структурированных игровых заданий и анализ отзывов студентов. Участниками исследования стали студенты второго курса университета, которые принимали участие в занятиях с использованием игровых методов в течение четырёх недель. Результаты показали, что правильно подобранные игры повышают вовлечённость обучающихся, снижают уровень тревожности и способствуют лучшему запоминанию учебного материала. Студенты стали увереннее использовать английский язык и продемонстрировали заметное улучшение коммуникативных навыков. В заключение делается вывод о том, что игры и учебные активности являются эффективным средством для повышения ориентированности обучения на обучающегося и придания занятиям большей динамичности. Преподавателям рекомендуется интегрировать игровые методы в регулярный учебный процесс, сохраняя баланс между развлекательными и образовательными целями.*

Ключевые слова: *Обучение английскому языку, игры, учебная деятельность, мотивация студентов, участие в занятиях, лексика, навыки говорения, интерактивное обучение, коммуникация, стратегии преподавания.*

Learning English as a foreign language can be challenging for many students, especially when traditional teaching methods are used. In many classrooms, lessons are still based mainly on textbooks, grammar rules, and written exercises. Although these methods can help students understand language structures, they often fail to develop communicative skills such as speaking and listening. As a result, learners may become passive, lose motivation, and feel anxious about using English in real communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Modern language teaching emphasizes the importance of learner-centered and interactive approaches that actively involve students in the learning process.

Games and activities have been widely recognized as effective tools in language education. According to Harmer (2015), activities that include elements of fun and competition can increase students' interest and create a positive classroom atmosphere. Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (2006) state that games provide meaningful practice and allow learners to use language in a natural context. Similarly, Thornbury (2005) explains that speaking activities such as role-plays and discussions help students improve fluency and confidence. These studies show that games are not only entertaining but also pedagogically valuable when linked to lesson objectives.

However, many previous studies mainly focus on vocabulary learning through games, while less attention is given to their impact on overall language development, especially speaking and listening skills (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). This creates a research gap in understanding how different types of activities contribute to multiple aspects of language learning. Therefore, the present study aims to explore how games and activities influence motivation, participation, and language skills in English classes. The objectives of the study are to examine improvements in vocabulary and grammar, to analyze changes in students' speaking performance, and to provide practical recommendations for teachers.

The research was conducted with 25 second-year students at Uzbekistan State University of World Languages. A mixed-method approach was used in order to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data. Over a four-week period, students attended two 40-minute lessons per week that included game-based and activity-centered instruction. The lessons consisted of warm-up games, vocabulary and grammar activities, role-plays, pair work, and group discussions. Competitive and cooperative tasks were designed to encourage interaction and teamwork. Data were collected through classroom observations, short tests before and after the activities, and written feedback from students. Their participation level, accuracy, and fluency were carefully recorded and analyzed.

The results of the study demonstrate significant positive effects of using games and activities. Vocabulary test scores increased by an average of 18%, showing that students remembered new words more effectively. Grammar errors decreased by approximately 15%, indicating better understanding and application of language rules. In addition, students showed noticeable improvement in speaking confidence and willingness to participate in classroom discussions. Observations revealed that learners were more active, asked more questions, and interacted more frequently with their peers. Many students reported that they felt less nervous when speaking English during game-based activities, as the atmosphere was friendly and supportive.

Student feedback further confirmed the benefits of interactive learning. Most participants stated that they enjoyed the lessons more than traditional classes and felt more motivated to study English. They believed that games helped them practice language in a realistic and meaningful way. Cooperative activities encouraged peer learning, while competitive tasks increased attention and focus. These findings suggest that emotional factors such as enjoyment and reduced anxiety play an important role in successful language learning.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of integrating games and activities into English language teaching. Such methods support vocabulary acquisition, grammar practice, and speaking development at the same time. Teachers should carefully select activities that correspond to lesson goals and students' proficiency levels. It is also important to maintain a balance between fun and learning so that games serve educational purposes rather than becoming distractions. Despite its positive outcomes, the study has some limitations, including a small sample size and a short duration. Future research could involve larger groups of learners and examine the long-term impact of game-based instruction on language proficiency.

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