EDUTAINMENT IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM: GAMIFIED TASK-BASED LEARNING TO BOOST SPEAKING SKILLS IN UZBEKISTAN

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ABSTRACT :

This study explores the effectiveness of edutainment and gamified task-based learning in improving speaking skills among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Uzbekistan. Traditional teaching methods often limit students' communicative competence due to lack of engagement and real-life practice. This research integrates Task-Based Learning (TBL) with gamification techniques to create an interactive and student-centered classroom environment. The study was conducted among middle and high school students, focusing on practical speaking activities such as role plays, group discussions, and game-based tasks. The findings indicate that students showed significant improvement in fluency, confidence, and participation. Gamified activities increased motivation and reduced anxiety, encouraging even shy learners to actively engage in communication. The study concludes that edutainment-based TBL is an effective and practical approach for enhancing speaking skills in EFL classrooms.
Keywords: Edutainment, gamification, task-based learning, speaking skills, EFL, motivation, Uzbekistan, communicative competence
Main Text:

Introduction

Developing speaking skills in English remains a major challenge in EFL classrooms, particularly in Uzbekistan where students have limited exposure to real-life communication. Many learners experience fear, hesitation, and lack of confidence due

to traditional teacher-centered approaches. Therefore, there is a need for innovative and interactive teaching methods that encourage active participation. This study focuses on the integration of edutainment and Task-Based Learning (TBL) to improve students' speaking abilities and overall engagement in the classroom.

Theoretical Background

Task-Based Learning emphasizes meaningful communication through real-life tasks rather than focusing only on grammar rules. According to Ellis (2003), TBL promotes active language use and helps learners develop communicative competence. Gamification, as defined by Kapp (2012), involves the use of game elements such as points, rewards, and competition to enhance motivation. When combined with edutainment, it creates a stress-free and enjoyable learning environment. Motivation plays a crucial role in language learning. Dörnyei (2001) highlights that increased motivation leads to better participation and improved language performance.

Methodology

The study was conducted in a public school in Termiz, Uzbekistan, involving students from grades 5 to 11. A combination of task-based learning and gamified activities was implemented during English lessons.Data was collected through classroom observation, student feedback, informal surveys, and performance-based assessment. The focus was on evaluating students' speaking improvement and engagement levels.

Classroom Implementation

Various speaking activities were introduced to enhance communication skills. Group discussions allowed students to share ideas on familiar topics, improving fluency. Role plays helped simulate real-life situations such as conversations at restaurants or airports, increasing confidence. Debate and turncoat activities encouraged students to think critically and express opinions from different perspectives. Story-making tasks developed creativity and vocabulary, while JAM (Just A Minute) sessions improved spontaneous speaking ability.

Gamified activities such as word games, spelling competitions, and team challenges increased motivation and participation. Students actively engaged in tasks and showed enthusiasm for learning.

Findings and Discussion The results indicate a noticeable improvement in students' speaking skills. Learners became more confident and willing to communicate in English. Hesitation and fear of making mistakes were reduced significantly. Motivation levels increased as students found the lessons enjoyable and interactive. Even shy students participated actively due to the supportive and engaging environment.

Additionally, students developed soft skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking, which are essential for overall development.

Challenges

Despite the positive outcomes, some challenges were observed. These included mixed-level classrooms, time management issues, and initial hesitation among shy students. Teachers also need creativity and preparation to implement such methods effectively.

Conclusion

The integration of edutainment and gamified task-based learning proves to be an effective approach in improving speaking skills in EFL classrooms. It transforms traditional learning into an interactive and student-centered process. This method not only enhances language proficiency but also builds confidence and motivation among learners. Therefore, it is recommended for wider implementation in English language teaching in Uzbekistan.

List of Used Literature:

1. Ellis, R. (2003). Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching. Oxford University Press.
2. Kapp, K. M. (2012). The Gamification of Learning and Instruction. Wiley.
3. Dörnyei, Z. (2001). Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom. Cambridge University Press.