TEACHING SPEAKING AND WRITING THROUGH GAMIFICATION FOR TEENAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract. This article examines the pedagogical potential of gamification for developing speaking and writing skills among teenage learners of English. The study adopts a structured narrative review and instructional-design approach rather than reporting an unverified classroom experiment. It synthesizes established research on game elements, adolescent motivation, communicative language teaching, feedback and second-language writing. A practical teaching model is proposed that combines achievable missions, meaningful choices, team challenges, progress indicators and formative feedback with explicit linguistic learning outcomes. Speaking activities emphasize interaction, negotiation of meaning, fluency and intelligibility, while writing activities follow planning, drafting, peer response and revision. Two classroom-ready assessment rubrics and a sequence of integrated tasks demonstrate how teachers can distinguish learning progress from mere participation. The analysis suggests that gamification can increase opportunities for purposeful practice when rewards are informational rather than controlling and when tasks are accessible to learners with different confidence levels. However, points, leaderboards and digital tools alone do not guarantee language development; their effectiveness depends on task quality, classroom climate, feedback and fair assessment. The paper concludes with recommendations for low-resource secondary-school classrooms and an evaluation plan for future empirical research.
Keywords: gamification, teenage learners, English language teaching, speaking skills, writing skills, formative assessment, task-based learning, motivation.

Annotatsiya. Maqolada o‘smir yoshdagi ingliz tili o‘rganuvchilarining og‘zaki va yozma nutqini rivojlantirishda geymifikatsiya imkoniyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Ishda tekshirilmagan tajriba natijalari o‘rniga ilmiy adabiyotlar sharhi va amaliy dars loyihalash yondashuvi qo‘llanildi. Missiyalar, jamoaviy topshiriqlar, tanlov imkoniyati, rivojlanish ko‘rsatkichlari hamda shakllantiruvchi baholashning o‘quv motivatsiyasi va til amaliyotiga ta’siri yoritildi. Og‘zaki nutqda muloqot, ravonlik va tushunarlilik, yozma nutqda esa rejalashtirish, dastlabki matn, fikr-mulohaza va qayta tahrirlash bosqichlariga urg‘u berildi. Dars uchun namunaviy topshiriqlar, baholash mezonlari va monitoring sxemasi ishlab chiqildi. Ball va reytinglardan foydalanishning o‘zi o‘quv natijasini kafolatlamasligi, o‘qituvchining metodik maqsadi va adolatli fikr-mulohazasi muhimligi asoslandi.
Kalit so‘zlar: geymifikatsiya, o‘smirlar, ingliz tili, og‘zaki nutq, yozma nutq, shakllantiruvchi baholash, motivatsiya.

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается применение геймификации для развития устной и письменной речи подростков, изучающих английский язык. Работа основана на аналитическом обзоре научной литературы и проектировании учебных заданий; неподтвержденные результаты эксперимента не приводятся. Предлагается модель урока, объединяющая игровые миссии, командные задания, выбор стратегии, визуализацию прогресса и формирующую обратную связь. Для говорения акцент сделан на

взаимодействии, беглости и понятности высказывания, для письма — на планировании, создании черновика, взаимной оценке и редактировании. Представлены примерные задания, критерии оценивания и схема мониторинга. Показано, что эффективность игровых элементов зависит от качества речевой практики, доступности заданий и педагогической поддержки, а не только от баллов и рейтингов.

Ключевые слова: геймификация, подростки, английский язык, говорение, письмо, формирующее оценивание, мотивация.

Introduction

For teenage learners, speaking and writing are among the most visible yet demanding outcomes of English language education. Both skills require learners to transform linguistic knowledge into purposeful communication, select vocabulary and grammar in context, and respond to an audience. Speaking adds time pressure, pronunciation and turn-taking; writing requires organization, accuracy, revision and sustained attention. In a mixed-ability classroom, the difficulty of these demands may discourage participation, particularly when errors are treated as public failures (1, 2).

Adolescence is also a period in which peer relationships, competence beliefs and autonomy strongly shape classroom engagement. Teachers therefore need learning environments that offer repeated practice without making weaker students feel exposed. Gamification—the deliberate use of selected game-design elements in non-game learning contexts—offers one possible instructional strategy. It is not synonymous with playing games throughout the lesson: a gamified sequence may use missions, narrative roles, immediate feedback, progress maps or team goals while retaining rigorous language objectives (3, 4).

International research describes both the promise and the limitations of gamification. Meta-analytic findings suggest positive average effects on learning outcomes, but the magnitude and persistence of benefits depend on implementation, comparison conditions and design quality (5). Other work cautions that superficial reward systems can undermine engagement when they emphasize competition, surveillance or external control (6). Accordingly, the central question is not whether adolescents enjoy games, but how specific game elements can create additional opportunities for meaningful spoken and written language use.

In Uzbek secondary-school contexts, this question has practical relevance because teachers may work with large groups, uneven access to devices and learners whose exposure to English outside school differs substantially. A feasible model should therefore function with paper cards, a board and simple peer feedback, while permitting optional digital tools. The present article proposes an evidence-informed instructional framework suitable for adaptation at School No. 149 and comparable settings; it does not claim that a clinical-style experiment or student survey was conducted.

The aim is to clarify the theoretical basis of gamified speaking and writing instruction, construct a sequence of classroom tasks, define transparent assessment criteria, and identify what data would be needed to test effectiveness. The objectives are to connect game mechanics with communicative outcomes, describe differentiation and safeguarding measures, and distinguish motivational indicators from measurable language achievement (1, 5, 7).

Table 1. Aligning classroom challenges with game elements and assessable outcomes

Learning challenge	Gamified response	Language evidence
Reluctance to speak	Low-stakes pair missions and rotating roles	Number and quality of meaningful turns
Short, poorly organized texts	Quest stages: plan → draft → revise	Coherence, task completion, revision quality
Unequal participation	Cooperative team goals and personal progress	Individual rubric scores and peer contributions

Fear of mistakes	Private feedback and retry opportunities	Self-correction and improvement across drafts

Literature Review

Concept and motivational mechanisms

Deterding et al. distinguish game-design elements from complete games and from general playful activity (3). This distinction matters because a lesson becomes educationally gamified only when the mechanic supports a defined learning action. Self-determination theory highlights autonomy, competence and relatedness as conditions associated with high-quality motivation (8). A choice of writing prompt can support autonomy; a visible revision pathway can support competence; cooperative speaking challenges can support relatedness. Conversely, public ranking may create pressure and disengagement for some learners (6, 8).

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Speaking development

Communicative approaches place meaningful interaction at the centre of language learning. Learners need chances to initiate ideas, clarify misunderstandings, negotiate meaning and receive feedback (1, 9). A timed information-gap quest can motivate repeated speaking, but speed should not become the sole measure of success. Tasks should reward comprehensibility, interactional strategies and improvement rather than accent imitation or uninterrupted performance. Pair rehearsal before a public challenge can protect hesitant speakers and improve participation (2, 9).

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Writing development

Writing is recursive rather than a one-pass product. Effective instruction makes planning, drafting, response and revision visible (10, 11). A writing quest can break a longer assignment into achievable stages: collect evidence, build an outline, write a draft, exchange feedback and submit a revised version. Progress tokens should reflect demonstrated revisions or successful use of a target feature, not merely the number of words produced. Feedback should remain selective, understandable and actionable (10, 12).

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Evidence and critical limitations

Sailer and Homner report positive effects of gamification on cognitive, motivational and behavioural outcomes across studies, while emphasizing variation in design (5). Hamari et al. similarly found that reported benefits were context dependent (4). These findings do not justify

predicting a fixed percentage increase in adolescent speaking or writing achievement. Short-term excitement, attendance and points earned are not equivalent to gains in language proficiency. Comparisons require common rubrics, baseline measures and attention to teacher effects (5, 6).

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Materials and Methods

Research design. This paper uses a structured narrative synthesis of foundational and peer-reviewed scholarship alongside an instructional-design demonstration. Sources were selected for relevance to gamification, adolescent motivation, oral interaction, second-language writing and formative assessment. It is a conceptual-methodological article, not an intervention study; therefore no sample size, randomization, p values or measured gains are reported (3–12).

Instructional context. The proposed sequence targets teenage English learners in grades approximately 7–9, with adaptation to A2–B1 proficiency. A four-week module contains two integrated lessons per week. Each lesson includes a language objective, a speaking mission, a writing mission, feedback and reflection. The model assumes 40–45-minute lessons and can be implemented without individual smartphones.

Learning outcomes. Speaking outcomes are comprehensibility, interaction, lexical range and task completion. Writing outcomes are content relevance, organization, vocabulary, grammar and revision quality. Teachers can collect audio recordings when consent and school policy permit, or use observation sheets instead. Written drafts should be dated and anonymized for moderation. Scores should be assigned using the same rubric before and after instruction (7, 10).

Table 2. Four-week integrated speaking–writing gamification plan

Week	Speaking mission	Writing mission	Feedback evidence
1	Find someone who…; information gap	Create a short profile	Baseline rubric + reflection
2	Solve a community problem in teams	Write a persuasive message	Peer feedback checklist
3	Role-play school radio interviews	Draft a news report	Teacher conference + revision
4	Present a solution and answer questions	Publish a revised article	Final rubric + portfolio comparison

Game system. Students receive “mission completed” indicators for meeting language criteria; optional badges recognize helpful peer feedback, effective revision and successful communication. A team may unlock a new scenario after every member completes an essential task. Individual learning scores are kept separate from game points. Learners may choose a topic, a role or an output format, but the language objective remains common (6, 8).

Assessment and ethics. Students should be informed that participation does not require disclosure of personal information or public sharing of recordings. Teachers should avoid compulsory public leaderboards and ensure that learners with limited device access can earn

identical recognition. The suggested design should be evaluated using school permission, informed participation and age-appropriate data protection practices (7, 8).

Results: Outputs of the Instructional Design

The result of this methodological work is an implementable teaching framework, two assessment instruments and a monitoring pathway. These are proposed instructional outputs, not observed student performance. Table 3 demonstrates how to operationalize learning evidence without conflating entertainment with attainment.

Table 3. Parallel analytic rubrics for speaking and writing (illustrative descriptors)

Criterion	Speaking (0–4)	Writing (0–4)
Task fulfilment	Responds to prompt and audience	Addresses prompt with relevant ideas
Organization	Logical sequencing of turns	Paragraph structure and coherence
Language use	Vocabulary and grammatical control	Vocabulary, grammar and mechanics
Communication	Intelligibility and response to partner	Clarity and reader awareness
Improvement	Uses feedback in subsequent interaction	Revises content and language

Each criterion can be rated from 0 (not demonstrated) to 4 (consistently demonstrated), giving a maximum of 20 points per skill. Teachers should develop fuller anchor descriptors and score sample performances together before formal use. Reporting criterion-level changes is more informative than reporting a single game score (7, 10, 12).

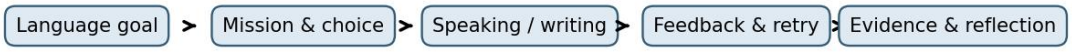

Figure 1. Conceptual cycle of a gamified communicative lesson (author-designed model).

In this model, feedback is not a final reward but a bridge between attempts. A learner who produces an incomplete answer receives a specific prompt and a chance to retry. In writing, the retry is a revision; in speaking, it may be a second interaction with a new partner. This makes improvement observable without pretending that game participation itself is proof of proficiency (9–12).

Discussion

The proposed framework integrates three pedagogical commitments: meaningful language use, manageable challenge and formative assessment. A mission structure can increase the frequency of short speaking turns, especially when learners first rehearse in pairs and then complete a group challenge. Nevertheless, the quality of talk depends on task design. A classroom that awards points for shouting answers may be active but communicatively weak; a classroom that rewards clarification questions and reasoned responses can support interactional competence (1, 2, 9).

Writing gamification should similarly make revision central. In conventional assignments, students may treat teacher corrections as a terminal judgment. A sequence of draft, feedback and retry reframes writing as improvement over time. Students can earn recognition for integrating

evidence, improving cohesion or correcting recurring errors, provided that the rubric and expectations are transparent (10–12).

Motivation should be interpreted cautiously. A badge may signal competence when it follows meaningful achievement; it may be experienced as controlling when used to pressure students into public competition. Choice, peer support and constructive feedback are therefore not decorative additions but design constraints. Cooperative missions and private progress tracking may be more inclusive than a single class leaderboard (6, 8).

Teachers also need practical safeguards. Group missions can hide unequal contributions, so each learner should submit an individual speaking observation or written draft. Students with low English proficiency need sentence frames and vocabulary banks, while more proficient learners can receive extension challenges. Device-free alternatives reduce inequity. Rubric moderation across teachers helps prevent attractive game behaviour from inflating academic marks (7, 12).

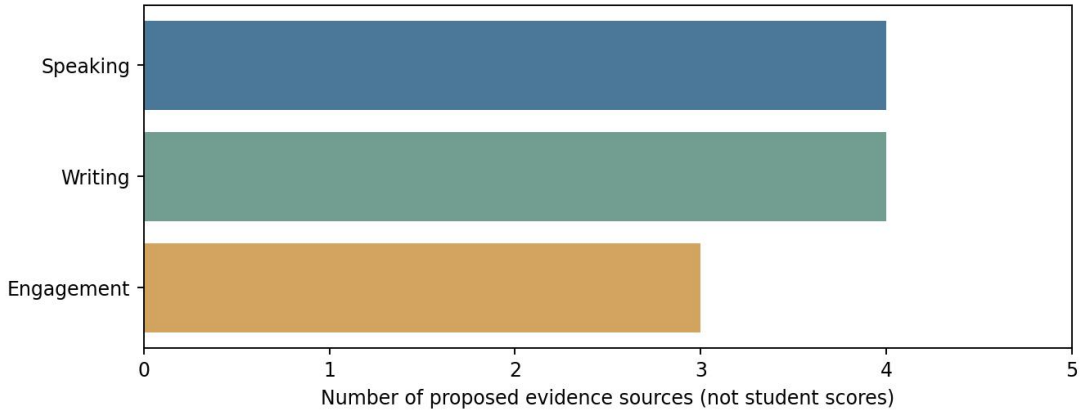

Figure 2. Proposed monitoring coverage: four sources for each language skill and three engagement indicators; schematic counts, not experimental findings.

The four speaking evidence sources may include baseline interaction, mid-module observation, recorded or observed presentation and final interaction. The four writing sources may include initial draft, teacher response, revised draft and final task. Engagement can be tracked through task completion, voluntary contribution and short learner reflection. These measures should be analysed separately; improvements in attendance or enjoyment should not be represented as improved grammar or fluency (4, 5, 7).

A future empirical evaluation could compare parallel classes using the same learning objectives and rubrics, with baseline proficiency considered in the analysis. It should report the number of participants, attrition, intervention fidelity, inter-rater agreement, descriptive statistics, uncertainty intervals and limitations. Only after collecting such data would statistical claims about effectiveness be justified. This distinction is especially important for scholarly integrity in educational research.

Conclusion

Gamification is best understood as a design strategy for organizing purposeful practice, not a substitute for language teaching. For teenage learners, missions, collaborative roles, choice and feedback can provide a supportive structure for repeated speaking and writing. The most defensible implementation connects each game element to a measurable linguistic objective and makes improvement visible through common rubrics and successive drafts (3, 5, 8).

The proposed four-week module offers an adaptable model for secondary-school English classes, including low-resource settings. Its main contribution is an integrated sequence of speaking and writing tasks with transparent assessment. Its limitation is equally clear: no

classroom effectiveness data were collected for this article. Future studies should test the model against conventional instruction and report both language outcomes and learner experience.

Practical Recommendations

• State a specific communicative objective before choosing points, badges or narratives.

• Give every student a meaningful role and allow private progress tracking instead of mandatory public rankings.

• Use speaking and writing rubrics that assess language quality independently of game participation.

• Include at least one feedback-and-retry opportunity in every major mission.

• Preserve paper-based options and provide differentiated support for mixed-proficiency groups.

• Collect baseline and follow-up work samples before claiming that the method improves achievement.

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