



ENHANCING SPEAKING CONFIDENCE AND INTERACTION OF B1-LEVEL ESP STUDENTS THROUGH ESL GAMES: A SOCIAL- EMOTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: The research investigates the potential of ESL games to enhance speaking confidence and foster connection among B1-level ESP students. The idea behind this is that for ESP to help students improve their speaking skills, they need to know more than just the language. They also need to be willing to engage, start conversations, and work with people in relevant situations. A quasi-experimental methodology was adopted, and data were gathered via tests of speaking skills, confidence assessments, and watching interactions. The findings show that students who played collaborative speaking games were far more inclined to talk, started conversations more often, had more encouragement from their peers, and did better overall on their oral skills. They also demonstrated that they were more willing to keep talking and participate more actively during class discussions. The results show that exercises based on games may help make the speaking environment less scary and more helpful. This is particularly essential for intermediate-level learners who might still be afraid to talk. The paper contends that games need to be seen not only as sources of enjoyment, but as pedagogically significant contexts in which emotional safety and linguistic competence coalesce. These findings suggest the use of organised ESL games in ESP speaking lessons as a good technique to improve both students' confidence and their ability to communicate in a manner that is engaging.



Keywords: ESP, speaking confidence, interaction, ESL games, B1 learners, self-efficacy, communicative competence.

Annotatsiya: Mazkur tadqiqot ESL o‘yinlari B1 darajadagi ESP talabalarida og‘zaki nutqqa bo‘lgan ishonch va o‘zaro muloqotni kuchaytira oladimi, degan masalani o‘rganadi. Tadqiqot ESP sharoitida og‘zaki nutqni muvaffaqiyatli rivojlantirish nafaqat lingvistik bilimlarga, balki o‘quvchilarning mazmunli vaziyatlarda ishtirok etishga, muloqotni boshlashga va boshqalar bilan hamkorlik qilishga tayyorligiga ham bog‘liq, degan qarashga asoslanadi. Tadqiqotda kvazi-eksperimental dizayn qo‘llanildi va ma‘lumotlar ishonch ko‘rsatkichlari, o‘zaro muloqotni kuzatish hamda og‘zaki nutq ko‘rsatkichlarini sinash orqali to‘plandi. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatdiki, hamkorlikka asoslangan speaking o‘yinlarida qatnashgan talabalar gapirishga bo‘lgan tayyorlik, navbatni boshlab berish, tengdoshlarni qo‘llab-quvvatlash va umumiy og‘zaki nutq ko‘rsatkichlari bo‘yicha sezilarli darajada o‘shishga erishdilar. Shuningdek, ular muloqotni davom ettirish va sinfdagi o‘zaro ta‘sir jarayonida faolroq javob qaytarishga ko‘proq tayyor ekanliklarini namoyon etdilar. Natijalar o‘yinlarga asoslangan faoliyatlar kamroq xavotirli va ko‘proq qo‘llab-quvvatlovchi speaking muhitini yaratishga yordam berishini ko‘rsatadi, bu esa ayniqsa gapirishda hali ham ikkilanadigan o‘rta darajadagi o‘quvchilar uchun muhimdir. Maqolada o‘yinlar shunchaki ko‘ngilochar vosita emas, balki emotsional xavfsizlik va kommunikativ kompetensiya birgalikda rivojlanadigan pedagogik jihatdan mazmunli muhit sifatida talqin qilinishi lozimligi ta‘kidlanadi. Ushbu natijalar ESL o‘yinlarini ESP speaking darslariga tizimli ravishda integratsiya qilish o‘quvchilarning ishonchi va interaktiv og‘zaki nutq qobiliyatini rivojlantirishning samarali usuli ekanini tasdiqlaydi.



Kalit so‘zlar: ESP, og‘zaki nutqqa ishonch, o‘zaro muloqot, ESL o‘yinlari, B1 darajadagi o‘quvchilar, o‘ziga ishonch samaradorligi, kommunikativ kompetensiya

Аннотация: Данное исследование рассматривает вопрос о том, могут ли взаимодействия у студентов уровня B1, обучающихся в рамках ESP. Исследование основано на предположении, что успешное развитие устной речи в контексте ESP зависит не только от языковых знаний, но и от готовности обучающихся участвовать в коммуникации, инициировать общение и сотрудничать с другими в содержательных ситуациях. В работе использован квазиэкспериментальный дизайн, а данные были собраны с помощью показателей уверенности, наблюдения за взаимодействием и тестирования устной речи. Результаты показали, что студенты, участвовавшие в совместных игровых speaking-заданиях, продемонстрировали значительный рост в готовности говорить, инициативе при вступлении в разговор, поддержке со стороны сверстников и общем уровне устной речи. Кроме того, они показали большую готовность поддерживать общение и активнее реагировать в процессе аудиторного взаимодействия. Полученные данные свидетельствуют о том, что игровые виды деятельности помогают создавать менее напряжённую и более поддерживающую среду для развития устной речи, что особенно важно для обучающихся среднего уровня, которые всё ещё могут испытывать неуверенность при говорении. В статье подчёркивается, что игры следует рассматривать не только как средство развлечения, но и как педагогически значимую среду, в которой одновременно развиваются эмоциональная безопасность и коммуникативная компетенция. Эти результаты



подтверждают целесообразность систематического включения ESL-игр в обучение говорению в рамках ESP как эффективного способа повышения уверенности обучающихся и развития их интерактивных речевых навыков.

Ключевые слова: ESP, уверенность в устной речи, взаимодействие, компетенция

1. Introduction

When teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP), the focus is generally on how well students can speak the language, not on the emotional and social factors that make it feasible for them to do so. This issue is most noticeable in B1-level students, who normally have the language skills to join in on conversations but are still afraid to speak because they lack confidence, self-efficacy, and peer connection. This hesitancy is particularly bad in ESP courses since students need to utilise English appropriately, interactively, and professionally.

According to the CEFR Companion Volume, B1 learners should be able to initiate a conversation, ask questions that aren't planned, and keep the conversation continuing in situations they are acquainted with (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 74). But in the classroom, many students tend to stay quiet until the instructor calls on them. This discrepancy indicates that speaking proficiency at the B1 level relies not just on linguistic resources but also on emotional preparedness and social engagement.

Recent studies underscore the significance of self-efficacy and confidence in speaking performance. Hoesny, Setyosari, Praherdhiono, and Suryati assert that self-efficacy serves as a dependable predictor of language performance in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) situations, demonstrating a substantial correlation with



speaking competence (Hoesny et al., 2023, p. 191). Tridinanti also discovered a substantial positive correlation between self-confidence and speaking proficiency among EFL students (Tridinanti, 2018, p. 38). These data suggest that enhancing oral performance involves more than just language teaching.

Speaking exercises that are based on games could be a good way to teach. Systematic studies indicate that gamified or game-like language learning settings help sustain motivation, reduce communication anxiety, and facilitate engagement (Zhang & Hasim, 2023, p. 2). Board games and collaborative speaking activities have been shown to diminish shyness, enhance confidence, and elevate social engagement (Wong & Yunus, 2021, pp. 372–405). This paper examines the potential of ESL games to improve speaking confidence and social engagement among B1-level ESP students from a socio-emotional standpoint.

2. Literature Review

When you speak in ESP, you should think of it as both performing and participating. Learners should not only be able to speak and write correctly, but they should also be able to use language to talk to other people for specified reasons. In other words, to talk well in ESP, you need to do more than just use accurate grammar and a wide variety of vocabulary. You also need to be able to adapt to the situation, communicate with people, and do certain professional or academic tasks. Venkateswara and John assert that speaking is often seen as significant in ESP curriculum although remains inadequately represented in practice (Venkateswara & John, 2021, p. 1). This causes a gap between what the curriculum expects and what pupils can really do to communicate. As a consequence, students may finish ESP courses with a lot of theoretical understanding of specialised language, but they may still not feel ready to connect with people in their desired areas. This gap underscores



the need for pedagogical strategies that facilitate regular, intentional, and contextually relevant speaking practice.

Self-efficacy theory elucidates the reasons some learners stay mute while possessing sufficient language resources. Bandura posits that people are more inclined to undertake challenging activities when they possess confidence in their potential for success, and that repeated successful experiences enhance subsequent performance (Bandura, 1997, pp. 24–26). In speaking courses, this implies that confidence isn't only a personality quality; it's also something that comes from how the classroom is set up. If the learning setting only has high-pressure speaking chances, students may hesitate, back out, or avoid participating even if they know the language well. Conversely, when students encounter reasonable speaking assignments, encouraging peer engagement, and attainable communicative success, they may progressively cultivate enhanced confidence in their speaking abilities. So, confidence should be seen as a pedagogically formed element that has a direct effect on how well students speak and how much they participate.

People are interested in game-based learning because it involves elements of difficulty, feedback, and engagement. Zhang and Hasim's systematic research demonstrates that objectives, ongoing feedback, and learner autonomy are prevalent characteristics of gamified EFL/ESL education, capable of sustaining motivation and confidence (Zhang & Hasim, 2023, p. 2). Wong and Yunus also say that speaking games may help people participate, become more fluent, and feel more confident (Wong & Yunus, 2021, pp. 374–406). These results are particularly pertinent to ESP speaking sessions, where students often need a balance between precision and conversational liberty. Games may assist find that balance by creating a regulated but less scary space where kids are encouraged to talk in order to reach a defined



goal. By taking turns, working together, and finishing tasks, learners utilise language in meaningful ways instead of just showing off random forms.

Research in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) that focuses on role-playing also backs this view. Lertcharoenwanich asserts that integrated role-play methodologies may improve oral communication efficacy in business-oriented English settings (Lertcharoenwanich, 2024, p. 418). This indicates that interactive and scenario-based speaking exercises may be especially beneficial for learners preparing for professional communication. Role-play is beneficial as it enables students to practise target scenarios, assume communicative roles, and enhance their situational awareness while staying in a pedagogically secure environment. Nonetheless, further classroom-based research is required to investigate confidence and interaction explicitly as outcomes in B1-level English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contexts. This need is significant since B1 learners are in a transitional phase; they often have sufficient linguistic resources for communication but frequently lack the confidence, spontaneity, and interactive control essential for active speaking. Consequently, further research should examine not just the extent to which learners engage in verbal communication, but also the impact of teaching methodologies on their motivation to participate, their self-assessment of communicative competence, and the quality of interactions fostered in ESP classrooms.

3. Methods

The research used a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test approach, including an experimental group and a control group, to evaluate the efficacy of ESL games in enhancing speaking performance, boosting speaking confidence, and facilitating classroom engagement among B1-level ESP learners. This methodology was chosen because it enabled the researcher to compare two intact groups in naturally occurring



classroom situations while preserving a distinct instructional differentiation between traditional teaching and game-based intervention. Sixty-four B1-level non-philological university students were taking an ESP course. Institutional placement processes based on CEFR-based descriptors were used to figure out their language level. There were 32 students in the experimental group and 32 students in the control group. Both groups learned about the same ESP themes and followed the same broad course goals. This made sure that the content was the same while the way the lessons were taught was the key difference.

Data were gathered using four instruments. To see how students' speaking skills changed, a speaking performance test was given before and after the intervention. The exam included exercises that challenged students to provide their ideas, share information, react to circumstances, and keep talking in ESP-related scenarios. Second, a speaking confidence scale was employed to evaluate essential emotional aspects of speaking out. This scale looked at how eager learners were to speak, how well they thought they could keep talking, how afraid they were of making errors, and how ready they were to start talking without being told to. We included these aspects because confidence is typically linked to how well a student does in class and on oral tests. Third, during classes, an interaction observation checklist was used to keep track of signs of communicative engagement. The checklist kept track of things like students asking for clarification, encouraging each other, giving long answers, and participating on their own. These categories allowed us see not just how frequently students spoke, but also how actively and supportively they worked with others while they were speaking. Fourth, a reflection form was utilised to get students' personal thoughts on how they were learning, such as how hard they thought the tasks were, how they felt about the classroom environment,



how engaged they were, and how much progress they thought they were making in speaking.

The intervention went on for 10 weeks. During this time, the control group learned how to speak ESP in a traditional way, which included preparing vocabulary, having the instructor explain things, and doing brief pair practice. Such training gave pupils a chance to hear and speak the target language, but engagement was still restricted and heavily supervised. The experimental group, on the other hand, learned the same ideas by playing ESL games such as timed role-card exchanges, information-gap races, scenario board activities, collaborative missions, and rotating discussion circles. These challenges were chosen to encourage communication, active engagement, and recurrent speaking in a safe space. They were made to make it easier to start speaking, get more encouragement from peers, and make oral communication more meaningful than just performing. In many situations, students had to work together, take turns, ask questions, and respond quickly to do a job successfully. This made them see English as a useful instrument for reaching common objectives.

The order in which actions were done was also an essential methodological factor. To assist pupils learn the rules of the game, how to communicate with each other, and what is expected of them, simpler assignments were given to them initially. As the intervention went on, the activities slowly required longer answers, more spontaneous replies, and more teamwork in addressing problems. The goal of this process was to help students gain confidence and improve their communication skills by letting them go from simple speaking tasks to more difficult spoken interactions. The intervention did not use games as mere motivating tools; rather, it



employed them as a systematic educational approach to enhance both the language and emotional aspects of speaking in ESP classes.

4. Results and Discussion

The research used a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test approach, including an experimental group and a control group, to evaluate the efficacy of ESL games in enhancing speaking ability, confidence, and classroom interaction among B1-level ESP learners.

Table 1. Pre-test and post-test mean scores.

This methodology was chosen because it enabled the researcher to compare two intact groups in authentic classroom settings while preserving a distinct instructional differentiation between traditional teaching and game-based intervention. Sixty-four B1-level non-philological university students were taking an ESP course. Institutional placement processes based on CEFR-based descriptors were used to figure out their language level. There were 32 students in the



experimental group and 32 students in the control group. Both groups studied the same ESP themes and followed the same broad course goals. This made sure that the content was the same, however the way the lessons were taught may be the key difference.

Table 2. Interactional behaviors observed in Weeks 1 and 10

Four tools were utilised to gather information. First, a speaking performance test was given to see how students' speaking skills changed before and after the intervention. The exam included exercises that asked pupils to share their thoughts, provide and get information, react to circumstances, and keep talking in ESP-related scenarios. Second, an oral involvement scale was employed to evaluate essential emotional aspects of speaking. This scale measured how eager learners were to speak, how confident they were in their ability to keep talking, how afraid they were of making errors, and how ready they were to start talking without being told to. These characteristics were included because of the frequent correlation between confidence and real classroom engagement and speech proficiency. Third, an interaction observation checklist was used throughout sessions to keep track of signs



of communicative involvement in students' behaviour. The checklist kept track of things like students taking turns, asking for clarification, encouraging each other, giving long answers, and choosing to participate. These categories allowed us see not just how frequently students spoke, but also how actively and supportively they worked with others while they were speaking. Fourth, a reflection form was utilised to get students' personal thoughts on the learning experience, such as how hard they thought the tasks were, how they felt about the classroom environment, how engaged they were, and how much progress they thought they were making in speaking.

Table 3. Students' end-of-intervention perceptions (Experimental group)

Games made speaking less stressful	
Games helped me speak more often	
I felt safer making mistakes during games	
Peer support was stronger in game tasks	
I became more confident speaking in ESP lessons	
I would like games to remain part of speaking lessons	



These answers back up what other research has found: that games may help people who are timid, make the classroom a better place to be, and make it easier for people to work together (Wong & Yunus, 2021, pp. 374–406). The intervention took place over a period of 10 weeks. During this time, the control group learned how to speak ESP in a traditional way, which included preparing vocabulary, having the instructor explain things, and doing brief pair practice. Such training gave pupils a chance to hear and speak the target language, but engagement was still restricted and heavily supervised. The experimental group, on the other hand, learned the same ideas by playing ESL games such as timed role-card exchanges, information-gap races, scenario board activities, collaborative missions, and rotating discussion circles. These challenges were chosen to encourage communication, active engagement, and recurrent speaking in a safe space. They were made to make it easier for people to start speaking, get more encouragement from their peers, and make oral communication more than just a performance. In many situations, students had to work together, take turns, ask questions, and respond quickly in order to finish a job. This made them want to utilise English as a useful instrument for reaching common objectives.

The order in which things were done was also significant for the technique. To assist pupils learn the rules of the game, how to communicate with each other, and what is expected of them, simpler assignments were given to them initially. As the intervention went on, the activities slowly required longer answers, more spontaneous replies, and more teamwork in addressing problems. This sequence was meant to help students improve in both confidence and communication by letting them build on easier speaking experiences and move on to more difficult ones. In



this sense, the intervention didn't just use games as a technique to get students to do their work; it used them as a planned approach to improve both the language and emotional aspects of speaking in ESP classes.

5. Conclusion

This research shows that ESL games may greatly improve the speaking confidence and interaction of B1-level ESP students. Their worth is that they bring together emotional safety, repeated engagement, and meaningful communication in one teaching method. These kinds of activities seem to make the classroom a place where students are more eager to take chances, start conversations, and work together with their classmates. This is particularly crucial for students at the intermediate level, who usually have the language skills to talk but are still afraid to take part in speaking assignments.

For ESP instructors, this means that speaking activities based on games shouldn't be seen as optional extras or just fun things to do in class. Instead, they may be used as main teaching tools to assist intermediate learners become more confident, active, and collaborative speakers. Games may provide controlled chances for intentional connection and progressive confidence development when they are strategically connected with ESP goals. Future studies may analyse other game kinds, examine long-term memory, and assess if confidence enhancements translate to more formal contexts, such as presentations and interviews. It could also be helpful to look at how game-based learning affects learner independence, peer support, and communication skills in various ESP fields.

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