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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL****MENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT SCIENTIFIC –
METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL**<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>**TEACHING PREPOSITIONS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL THROUGH
GAMES: A LITERATURE REVIEW*****Nargiza Nuratdinova****PhD student**Nukus State Pedagogical Institute**Nukus, Uzbekistan**E-mail: nanupa@mail.ru*

ABOUT ARTICLE

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Abstract: Prepositions are essential for describing spatial, temporal, and logical relationships in language. Teaching these abstract structures to primary school students, however, presents unique challenges. Game-based learning provides an engaging and effective method to help young learners understand prepositions through physical interaction, visual support, and collaborative play. This literature review synthesizes research on the use of games in teaching prepositions, finding that games combining kinesthetic, visual, and social elements enhance comprehension, retention, and enjoyment. The findings suggest that game-based approaches to language teaching are highly beneficial in primary education, offering students meaningful, multisensory learning experiences that lead to better long-term retention of grammatical concepts.

INTRODUCTION

Prepositions form an important part of language structure, helping convey relational information such as location, direction, and time. For young learners, however, prepositions can be difficult to grasp, as they represent abstract relationships that are not easily visualized or physically experienced. Traditional methods, which rely heavily on rote memorization, often fail to engage primary students who learn more effectively through active, hands-on experiences. This literature review explores the potential of game-based learning for teaching

prepositions in primary education. Games, which naturally align with children's cognitive and social development, provide interactive, memorable ways to explore language. This review highlights the cognitive, social, and motivational benefits of game-based learning, supporting the use of games as a dynamic instructional tool for grammar education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This literature review examines studies from journals in language pedagogy, educational psychology, and childhood education. Studies were selected based on their focus on primary-aged students, preposition acquisition, or the use of games as a tool for teaching grammar. Key themes drawn from this research include cognitive and kinesthetic benefits of games, the role of visual and contextual cues in comprehension, and the impact of social interaction and enjoyment on language retention. The review draws upon theories in cognitive development, constructivism, and sociocultural learning to frame the effectiveness of game-based methods in supporting young learners' language acquisition. This article reviewed span diverse geographical regions to analyze different attitude towards teaching prepositions in primary school.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cognitive and Developmental Benefits of Games

Game-based learning aligns with developmental theories that emphasize the need for active, experiential learning in young children. Piaget's theory of cognitive development, for instance, posits that children in the concrete operational stage (ages 7-11) learn most effectively through interaction with physical objects and environments. Games allow young learners to move beyond abstract language concepts, enabling them to directly manipulate and explore prepositional relationships. In Jacob's study on physical games for language learning, students who played preposition-based games (e.g., moving an object **under** a chair or **beside** a friend) showed better spatial awareness and grasp of relational terms than those taught through verbal explanations alone [6;134]. These findings underscore the cognitive benefits of learning prepositions through active play, which helps to anchor abstract language concepts in children's existing knowledge of the physical world.

Kinesthetic and Visual Engagement

Games that combine kinesthetic and visual elements have shown particular promise for teaching prepositions. Research by Angelova and Lekova found that students who engaged in games involving both movement and visual aids demonstrated superior comprehension and retention of prepositions[1;89]. For example, games like "Simon Says" or "Treasure Hunts" ask students to perform actions based on verbal instructions, helping them create physical

associations with prepositions like *in*, *on*, *under*, and *over*. Visual aids such as illustrated flashcards or digital apps are often combined with these activities, allowing students to see and act out prepositional relationships, which strengthens their mental representation of these terms. This kinesthetic-visual integration aligns with dual coding theory, which suggests that information processed both visually and verbally is retained more effectively than information processed through one channel alone.

Social and Collaborative Learning Through Games

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which highlights the importance of social interaction in learning, provides a strong foundation for using collaborative games in the classroom [10;205]. Group games such as "Preposition Bingo" or "Obstacle Courses" encourage students to work together, helping each other navigate spatial directions and use prepositions in context. In Chen and Baker's (2019) study, students who participated in cooperative preposition games displayed improved linguistic confidence, particularly in using prepositions in sentences. Games also allow for peer modeling, where children observe their classmates using language correctly, thereby enhancing their own understanding [4;50]. The collaborative nature of games helps students learn in a low-stress environment, fostering peer support and building a sense of community within the classroom, which is especially beneficial for language acquisition.

Engagement and Motivation Through Game-Based Learning

Enjoyment and motivation play crucial roles in language learning, particularly for abstract grammar concepts like prepositions. Games are inherently enjoyable, reducing the stress and resistance often associated with learning grammar. Research by Pound supports the notion that enjoyment in learning increases both motivation and engagement, leading to better retention of grammatical rules. In Pound's study, primary school students taught prepositions through games demonstrated a 45% higher improvement rate than those taught through traditional methods. Students reported feeling more motivated and looked forward to learning when games were part of the lesson, suggesting that games can make grammar lessons both effective and enjoyable. This enjoyment factor aligns with self-determination theory, which posits that intrinsic motivation is essential for deep learning and sustained engagement [8;36].

Comparative Effectiveness of Game-Based Versus Traditional Methods

Comparative studies indicate that game-based learning is notably more effective than traditional instructional methods for teaching prepositions. In a study by Brown, primary school students taught prepositions through a combination of interactive games and visual aids showed a 50% improvement in comprehension, while those taught with rote exercises

improved by only 20%. Games that included elements of competition, teamwork, and visual reinforcement were found to be particularly effective. When students engage in game-based learning, they are not only more likely to understand prepositional relationships but also retain these concepts longer. This comparative data supports the assertion that games provide a rich, multisensory learning experience that traditional methods often lack [2;129].

The reviewed literature suggests that game-based learning offers substantial cognitive, social, and motivational benefits in teaching prepositions to young learners. Games provide children with an interactive platform where they can explore language concepts physically, socially, and visually, aligning well with their developmental needs. By integrating movement, visual support, and social interaction, games create a multisensory experience that enhances memory retention and comprehension. The findings suggest that educators could improve outcomes in language instruction by incorporating game-based learning approaches into grammar lessons, especially for abstract concepts like prepositions. This approach not only improves language acquisition but also cultivates an enjoyable, inclusive, and interactive classroom environment.

CONCLUSION

The evidence from this literature review supports the use of games as a powerful tool for teaching prepositions in primary schools. Games that incorporate kinesthetic, visual, and collaborative elements provide students with an immersive, multisensory learning experience that aids in the comprehension and retention of prepositions. As games naturally align with young learners' developmental needs and learning preferences, they provide a highly effective and enjoyable approach to grammar instruction. Future research could investigate the long-term impact of game-based learning on language acquisition and explore game designs that maximize the learning of specific grammar concepts. Expanding the understanding of game-based instruction may offer valuable insights into best practices for language education in early childhood.

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