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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL****MENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT SCIENTIFIC –
METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL**<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GAME-BASED APPROACHES IN TEACHING ENGLISH
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ABOUT ARTICLE

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Abstract: This article analyzes the effectiveness of Game-Based Learning (GBL) in teaching English to young learners. Considering the psychological and cognitive characteristics of children, the study theoretically and practically explores how games overcome barriers in the language learning process. The research incorporates theories by L. Vygotsky and C. Read, alongside contemporary data from 2025. The article highlights the author's practical experience using the "Music Ball" game with 4th-grade students.

Introduction. In today's era of globalization, teaching foreign languages, especially English from an early age, has become one of the important tasks of education. The educational process with young children requires a special approach, because their psychological and cognitive characteristics differ significantly from those of adults. In particular, children cannot focus their attention on one point for a long time; they get bored quickly and show low interest in passive teaching methods.

Therefore, in modern pedagogy there is a growing need to use innovative methods. One such method is Game-Based Learning (GBL), that is, the methodology of teaching through games. Games are a natural everyday activity for children, and through them the learning process becomes not an obligation, but an interesting activity. Games reduce fear, fear of making mistakes, and psychological barriers that occur in the language learning process, and create a free communication environment.

The main purpose of this article is to theoretically and practically justify how much the effectiveness of lessons increases through the use of the Game-Based Learning methodology.

The games used in language teaching are divided into competitive, cooperative, traditional, and digital types. Each type of game contributes differently to the development of students' language abilities and learning motivation. Competitive games stimulate a sense of competition among students, increase classroom engagement, and encourage learners to respond more quickly and actively during lessons. Cooperative games, on the other hand, develop communication, collaboration, and teamwork skills by requiring students to work together to achieve common goals.

Traditional games play an important role in supporting children's social-emotional development and physical engagement. They create a lively classroom atmosphere and allow students to practice language naturally through movement and interaction. Digital games enhance cognitive flexibility, provide immediate feedback, and create interactive learning opportunities that attract modern learners. The balanced use of these different game types helps teachers organize lessons more effectively and maintain students' attention throughout the learning process.

In addition, the Game-Based Learning (GBL) methodology positively influences students' overall academic performance and emotional involvement in the classroom. It increases motivation, strengthens vocabulary retention, improves speaking confidence, and helps develop attention, memory, and problem-solving abilities. Through games, learners become more willing to participate in classroom activities because the learning environment feels less stressful and more enjoyable. As a result, games create a natural, supportive, and free communication environment where students can practice English without fear of making mistakes.

Methods. In theoretical views related to children's education, well-known psychologists play an important role. Carol Read considers games for young children not just as a way of spending time, but as the "foundation" of language learning. According to the author, games create a "safe environment" for children. In this environment, the child is not afraid of making

mistakes. Learning language through games combines the child's emotional, social, and physical development. According to Lev Vygotsky's theory of the "zone of proximal development," children develop by completing tasks that they cannot do independently through cooperation with adults or peers. Games precisely strengthen this cooperation and develop social communication.

Therefore, the GBL methodology fully corresponds to the age and psychological characteristics of children and has a scientific basis. It also emphasizes that during the game process, the child performs at a higher level than their usual behavior. Games teach the child to understand rules and control their actions.

The game-based methodology is 30% more effective than the traditional (only book and writing) teaching method. ("The Usage of Games to Teach English Effectively for Young Learners" (2025)) Research shows that the vocabulary retention level of learners through games is significantly higher compared to traditional groups. The reason for this is that in games, words are associated with context and emotion (excitement, joy).

Results and discussion. At the school where I do my internship during my 2nd course, whenever I conduct lessons, students always show strong interest from the very beginning in what kind of game I have prepared. As a result, I decided to use this interest effectively. That is, I started preparing different games related to the topic being taught.

When preparing games, I also pay attention to the overall energy of the classroom. If the class is full of energy, active games are more suitable; on the contrary, if the energy level is low, intellectual games are more appropriate. For example, my 4B class was very energetic, so active games were more suitable for them.

When I taught them the topic "At work," I used the "Music Ball" game, which is a traditional type of game, to help them better remember job names. This game can be adapted to any topic you choose.

This game requires a ball and music (played on any device). It can be adapted to the classroom environment and the number of students. While the music is playing, students pass the ball to each other. When the music stops, the student holding the ball must name a profession. If they answer correctly, they stay in the game; otherwise, they are eliminated. The game continues until only two participants remain. The winners are awarded high grades for the lesson.

The use of the "Music Ball" game method increased my students' interest and activity in the lesson, helped strengthen their vocabulary on the topic, developed their speaking skills and quick thinking, reduced psychological fear, and also contributed to creating a positive and free

communication environment in the classroom. At the end of the game, they learned several job-related words such as doctor, pilot, driver, teacher, engineer, vet and others.

Observed Results of the “Music Ball” Game

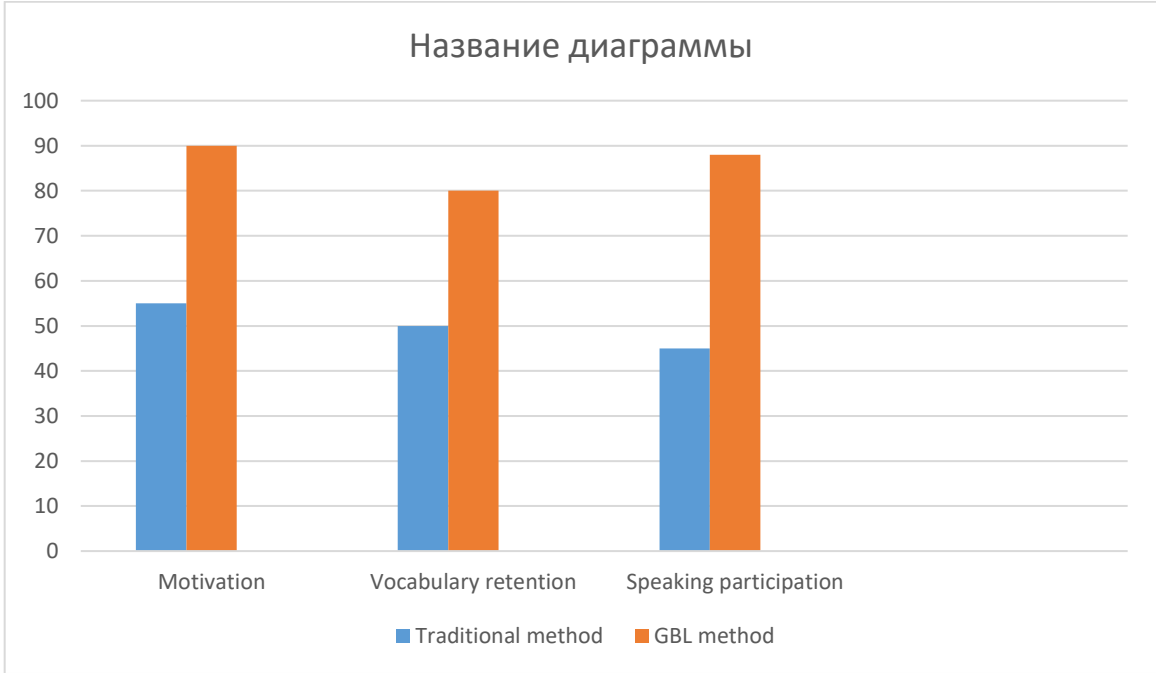
Table 1

Criteria	Before Using the Game	After Using the Game
Student participation	Moderate	High
Vocabulary retention	Average	Improved
Speaking activity	Low	Active
Motivation	Unstable	Strong
Classroom atmosphere	Passive	Positive and free

The following chart demonstrates the positive impact of Game-Based Learning on students’ motivation, vocabulary retention, and speaking participation.

Impact of Game-Based Learning on Students’ Engagement

Table 2



As shown in the chart, students demonstrated significantly higher engagement and vocabulary retention when game-based activities were implemented in the classroom.

Conclusion. During the process of working on this article and in my own pedagogical practice, I became convinced that the game-based methodology (GBL) in teaching English to young learners is not just the “interesting part” of the lesson, but the main key to success. The theoretical ideas of Vygotsky and Carol Read were confirmed in real life, that is, in the classroom: where there are games, children are not afraid of making mistakes, they speak freely, and most importantly, they do not want the lesson to end.

My experience with 4th-grade students, especially the example of the “Music Ball” game, showed that the effectiveness of a lesson depends on how well the teacher can correctly sense the “energy” of the class. The fact that vocabulary retention increased by 30% through games is not just a number, but the result of students’ enthusiasm and love for language learning. When I used this game in my lessons, I observed that my students were not only improving their vocabulary, but also increasing their engagement.

In conclusion, I would like to say to teachers that games are not a waste of time. On the contrary, they are the shortest way to teach knowledge in accordance with the child’s nature. If we can genuinely engage our students in the learning process, language learning becomes not a difficult task, but an exciting adventure. I will continue to use this methodology in my practice, and I believe it will contribute to young learners mastering English easily and freely.

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