

USING THE BAMBOOZLE PLATFORM TO DEVELOP SPEAKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH LESSONS

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Abstract: This article explores the effectiveness of the Baamboozle platform in enhancing the speaking skills of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. It focuses on the role of gamification in reducing speaking anxiety, increasing student motivation, and fostering spontaneous oral communication. By analyzing the interactive features of Baamboozle, the study demonstrates how team-based competitive games facilitate vocabulary recall and fluency. The findings suggest that integrating digital game-based tools into the curriculum creates a dynamic learning environment that bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical speech.

Keywords: Baamboozle, speaking skills, gamification, ESL, interactive learning, student engagement, fluency, digital tools.

Introduction. In the modern educational landscape, the integration of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) tools has become essential for fostering communicative competence. Among the various skills, speaking (oral proficiency) is often perceived as the most challenging due to high levels of anxiety and a lack of authentic practice environments. The Baamboozle platform, a game-based learning tool, offers a solution by incorporating gamification into the classroom. This article analyzes how Baamboozle serves as a pedagogical instrument to stimulate speaking skills, focusing on its ability to create interactive, low-stress, and highly engaging learning experiences [Deterding S. 2011].

Main part. 1. Gamification as a Catalyst for Oral Engagement. The primary strength of Baamboozle lies in its competitive nature. Unlike traditional drills, Baamboozle's team-based format encourages students to collaborate and communicate under time pressure. This gamified approach transforms the classroom into a lively arena where the "need to win" outweighs the "fear of making mistakes." As a result, students who are typically hesitant to speak become active participants, using the target language to discuss answers with teammates and respond to game prompts [Kapp K. 2012].

2. Reducing the Affective Filter and Speaking Anxiety. According to Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, high anxiety can block language acquisition. Baamboozle helps lower this filter by shifting the focus from formal assessment to play. The unpredictable nature of the game—including "power-ups" and "point-stealing" features—creates an atmosphere of fun. In this relaxed state, students are more likely to take risks in their speech, leading to improved fluency and a more natural use of English [Reinders H. 2012].

3. Promoting Spontaneous Speech and Vocabulary Retrieval. Speaking skills require the ability to quickly retrieve vocabulary and construct sentences. Baamboozle's flashcard-style questions require immediate oral responses. This helps students move from passive recognition of words to active production. Furthermore, because teachers can customize the "games," they can

tailor the content to specific topics—ranging from grammar points to cultural discussions—ensuring that the speaking practice is relevant to the curriculum goals [Hockly N. 2016].

4. Social Interaction and Collaborative Communication. Speaking is inherently social. Baamboozle facilitates "peer-to-peer" interaction as students must negotiate meanings and justify their choices within their teams. This collaborative dialogue is a crucial component of communicative language teaching (CLT). By working together to solve the challenges presented on the platform, students practice essential speech acts such as suggesting, agreeing, disagreeing, and clarifying [Lightbown P. 2013].

Conclusion. The use of Baamboozle in the English language classroom represents a significant shift toward student-centered, interactive learning. By leveraging the principles of gamification, the platform effectively enhances speaking skills, reduces learner anxiety, and promotes the active use of vocabulary. While it is not a replacement for traditional instruction, it serves as a powerful supplementary tool that bridges the gap between language theory and real-world communication. As digital tools continue to evolve, platforms like Baamboozle will remain vital in creating an engaging and effective environment for developing oral proficiency.

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