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## **Gamified Task-Based Language Teaching through Online Game Platforms (Kahoot!, Quizizz, Baamboozle): A Framework for Enhancing Communicative Competence in ESL Classrooms.**

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**Abstract:** This study looks at how gamified online platforms such as Kahoot!, Quizizz, and Baamboozle can be integrated into Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). The goal is to improve ESL learners' communication skills, motivation, and collaboration. Recent studies show that connecting game-based activities with meaningful tasks increases engagement, offers immediate feedback, and encourages peer interaction. To implement this effectively, it's important to design activities with support, connect them to language goals, and have teacher guidance. The study suggests a five-phase instructional framework: Task Preparation, Game Engagement, Collaborative Production, Reflection & Revision, and Evaluation & Extension. This model provides a clear way to combine gamification with TBLT for real language learning situations.

**Keywords:** *Task-Based Language Teaching, gamification, Kahoot!, Quizizz, Baamboozle, communicative competence, digital learning materials, ESL pedagogy*

**Introduction.** Digital technologies have changed English language teaching by creating new platforms that enhance interactivity, immediate feedback, and learner engagement. Gamification, which applies game-design elements in non-game settings, has become a popular tool in language instruction to boost motivation and participation. For instance, Laksanasut's study found that using gamification in ESL/EFL education improves vocabulary retention, grammatical accuracy, and communicative fluency through interactive, reward-based experiences.

At the same time, the TBLT approach focuses on creating meaningful communicative tasks that require learners to use the target language to achieve specific results. This method promotes interaction, negotiation of meaning, and learner output. The combination of gamified platforms and TBLT has great potential: gamified tools can structure task phases, provide interactive learning, and give immediate feedback, while TBLT offers a solid framework that makes gamification meaningful rather than superficial.





Despite the potential, current research has mostly focused on motivational outcomes like enjoyment and engagement rather than detailed improvements in communicative competence or structured integration within TBLT. A review of gamification in English language teaching found that, while learner engagement increased, “little research addresses the long-term effects of gamification on language proficiency and skill retention.”

**Methods.** This study used a qualitative literature synthesis approach. Research published between 2018 and 2025 was gathered from databases like ERIC, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The search terms included “gamified online quiz ESL,” “Kahoot Quizizz English language teaching,” “gamification ESL TBLT,” and “task-based language teaching online game platform.” The inclusion criteria were: (a) studies focused on ESL/EFL contexts; (b) use of gamified online platforms (Kahoot!, Quizizz, Baamboozle, or similar); (c) focus on task-oriented teaching or discussions of task design; and (d) reported learner outcomes like motivation, engagement, or communicative skill. Data collected included the platform used, participant profile, task design, reported learner outcomes, benefits, and limitations. A thematic analysis was conducted to find common patterns in benefits, support practices, and challenges, which helped create a five-phase practical framework.

**Results.** Many studies show that gamified platforms significantly boost learner engagement and motivation. For instance, a study on Kahoot! for grammar learning reported increased motivation and better understanding of grammar concepts among university EFL students. Moreover, students noted that Kahoot!'s competitive and interactive features improve focus, peer collaboration, and vocabulary retention. Moreover, when gamification is part of task sequences instead of isolated, it enhances communication. One study of a Kahoot-based TBLT model showed statistically significant improvements in critical reading skills. Using gamified platforms within TBLT requires careful teaching design rather than a casual approach. Key methods from the literature include:

- Pre-task orientation: Introduce learners to the platform mechanics, clarify task goals, and pre-teach relevant language items to reduce cognitive load and allow learners to focus on meaning.
- Game engagement: In the game phase (quiz or challenge), learners actively participate with a focus on target language and real communicative context—moving beyond just recall.
- Collaborative production: After the game, learners work together to create meaningful output, such as altering quiz questions or role-playing based on game results.





- Reflection & revision: Learners analyze their performance, language errors, and peer feedback to improve their output or create a new version of the task, fostering metalinguistic awareness.
- Evaluation & extension: Teacher and peer assessment of final output, publication of student-created games or quizzes for the class, and extension into new situations to promote transfer and independence.

Despite the benefits, several challenges appear in the literature. Technical issues like device access and internet connectivity, along with different learner proficiency levels, can hinder the use of gamified platforms. Some studies warn that gamification can lead to shallow learning if the focus remains on speed, points, and competition instead of meaningful language use. For example, Mogavi et al. found that misuse of gamification can distract from learning goals. Furthermore, the literature shows a lack of long-term studies examining sustained proficiency gains and retention rather than only short-term motivation effects.

Combining these findings leads to a five-phase instructional model for gamified TBLT:

- Task Preparation: Define a meaningful communicative task (e.g., survey, debate, project), help learners get familiar with the game platform, and teach target language.
- Game Engagement: Learners participate in quizzes or challenges on Kahoot!, Quizizz, or Baamboozle that are specifically designed for the communicative task.
- Collaborative Production: Teams respond to quiz results, create new questions, engage in role-plays, or negotiate solutions based on game outcomes.
- Reflection & Revision: Learners check their language errors, analyze their performance, share feedback with peers, and revise their output or create a follow-up task.
- Evaluation & Extension: Final assessments by peers and teachers, publication of student-created games or quizzes for larger class use, and extension into new communication scenarios to ensure transfer.

**Discussion.** Integrating gamified online platforms within TBLT is a promising blend of motivational, interactive, and communicative teaching approaches. Gamification offers features like competition, immediacy, and feedback that align with motivation theories, while TBLT ensures that language tasks are meaningful and interaction-focused. The five-phase model addresses both opportunities and teaching needs: it encourages the motivational appeal of game platforms to lead to purposeful communication rather than simple gamified activities. However, educators need to be cautious: using gamified tools does not automatically improve communication skills. The design of





tasks, support for language, and teacher guidance in reflection and production are key. Without these, gamification risks becoming mere entertainment instead of effective language teaching. Additionally, institutional factors like access to technology, teacher skills, and time constraints must be considered for successful implementation.

Future research should focus on long-term studies that track lasting gains in communication skills, proficiency growth, and retention. Comparing different game platforms (Kahoot! vs. Quizizz vs. Baamboozle) and types of tasks (vocabulary quizzes vs. communicative debates) will provide deeper insights. Further studies on adaptive gamification, personalization, and equity in access are also important.

**Conclusion.** Gamified online platforms such as Kahoot!, Quizizz, and Baamboozle can effectively fit into a TBLT framework to boost learner engagement, peer interaction, and communicative competence in ESL classrooms. The five-phase instructional model offers a practical guide for educators using game-based tools while keeping a focus on language use and task-based interaction. Thoughtful design, structured tasks, teacher support, and reflective production are essential to turn the motivational benefits of gamification into meaningful English language learning outcomes.

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