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EDUCATIONAL GAMES: DEFINITIONS AND ADVANTAGES**Makhsudjonova S.M.**

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In the ever-changing world of education, encouraging student involvement, motivation, and proficiency requires incorporating contemporary technologies into the teaching and learning process. This is especially relevant when instructing primary school pupils on speaking techniques. In addition to grabbing young learners' attention, the integration of cutting-edge tools and resources offers a dynamic and engaging platform for improving speaking skills.

Merriam Webster's Dictionary is a word game that acts as a physical or mental competition, conducted according to rules with participants in direct opposition to each other, and primarily involves activities carried out for fun or entertainment. However, educational games are games used for the purpose of learning [Jackson, 2006:97].

Educational games allow students to integrate and review information in a flexible environment. [Ahsan and Sezgin,2020:685]

Thus, they are often preferred at the primary school level, where students play an active role and develop stimulating thinking in the educational process. It is important to note that well designed games are better for learning than poorly designed ones. [Steinkuehler,2012:4]

In this regard, Mubaslat believes that games should not be seen as a secondary activity that fills random moments when the teacher and the class have nothing else to do. Games should be at the center of learning at all stages of the lesson, provided they are appropriate and carefully chosen. In addition, games can be used to review material and help students recall content in a fun way. However, some teachers may argue that games are time-consuming just for fun and enjoyment. To counter the claims of teachers who do not believe in the usefulness of educational games, Mubaslat highlighted several features and benefits of using games in the classroom, such as their potential to: break the routine of language, motivate and challenge students, help students practice the four skills, encourage students to interaction and communication, create a



meaningful context for language use and help students continue to learn. [Mubaslat,2012:10]

Likewise, well-designed games can increase student engagement, provide motivation, capture student attention, reduce disciplinary problems, facilitate memorization, develop cognitive and affective skills, promote self-confidence, problem solving, critical thinking, and creativity. Amp and Wangenheim argued that educational games are used to deepen understanding or assess students' understanding of topics. When educational games are well chosen and well designed, they can help students learn a language easily while being fun. and entertainment. [Petrie,2016:992]

In the field of English language teaching, games play an important role in the classroom as they can provide students with ample opportunity to practice speaking, stimulate some competition among students, improve the cooperative atmosphere, reduce anxiety, increase students' self-confidence and add flexibility and fun to the educational process. [Ibrahim,2017:37]

Educational apps have revolutionized the way elementary level learners engage with learning materials. Specifically designed apps can create a fun and interactive environment for practicing speaking skills. Apps that incorporate speech recognition technology allow students to receive instant feedback on their pronunciation and fluency, helping them build confidence in their oral communication.

Digital storytelling offers a creative avenue for elementary students to develop their speaking skills. Platforms like Story Jumper and Book Creator allow students to create their own digital stories, providing opportunities for them to practice speaking while narrating their tales. This not only enhances their speaking abilities but also nurtures creativity and storytelling skills.

Virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) technologies can transport elementary students to immersive environments that stimulate real-world conversations. VR experiences can simulate scenarios like a marketplace, a park, or a school, enabling students to practice speaking in context. AR applications can overlay digital information on the physical world, creating interactive experiences that enhance language learning through speaking interactions.

In the era of global connectivity, video conferencing tools have become indispensable for language learning. Platforms like Zoom and Google Meet facilitate virtual face-to-face communication, allowing elementary students to engage in real-time conversations with peers from different cultures. This not



only enhances their speaking skills but also promotes cultural awareness and global perspectives.

Introducing podcasting to elementary students can be an exciting way to encourage speaking proficiency. Students can create their own podcasts, discussing topics of interest or sharing stories. This not only hones their speaking skills but also improves their ability to organize thoughts and communicate effectively.

Gamification has proven to be an effective strategy for engaging young learners. Gamified language learning platforms, such as Duolingo or Kahoot! can be used to make speaking practice enjoyable. Through interactive games and quizzes, students can reinforce vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence construction while having fun.

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learners to adjust the speech rate of listening materials to assist their comprehension, and present spectrum of speech waves and visual depictions of mouth and tongue movement to ease the learning and refine pronunciation.

Incorporating modern technologies into the teaching of speaking skills for elementary level students is not just about keeping up with the times; it's about providing an enriching and effective learning experience. By leveraging interactive apps, digital storytelling, VR and AR, video conferencing, podcasting, and gamified platforms, educators can create a dynamic and immersive language learning environment that prepares young learners for effective communication in the 21st century. As we embrace these technological advancements, we open doors to a world where elementary students can confidently express themselves and navigate the global landscape with proficiency and ease

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