



ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING GAPS AMONG 10th GRADE NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS: TEACHER'S VIEW

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Abstract:

This study investigates the comparative effectiveness of interactive multi-resource teaching versus traditional textbook-based instruction for 10th grade English language learners in Uzbekistan. Using a mixed-methods approach with 30 participants across two classroom settings, the research reveals significantly improved learning outcomes in interactive environments, with 46,7% of students showing positive engagement compared to 30% in conventional classrooms. Quantitative and qualitative data demonstrates that supplementary materials, group activities, and real-world applications enhance both motivation and knowledge retention. The findings advocate for pedagogical reforms incorporating student-centered approaches in Uzbek secondary education. Future research directions should examine practical implementation challenges and the long-term effects of interactive methodologies across different regional contexts. This study contributes to the broader discourse on optimizing second language acquisition in developing countries' educational system.

Keywords: Interactive learning, student engagement, motivation, methodologies, textbook-based approaches.

Introduction

English language learning remains a significant challenge for non-native speakers, particularly for those who want to continue their studies in an abroad. We conducted a research among 10th-grade students in Uzbekistan. Many students

struggle with grammar, vocabulary retention, and practical communication skills, leading to gaps in their learning. Teachers often observe that students' motivation decreases over time, making it difficult to follow lesson plans effectively. As Daar (2020) states "Nowadays English is an international language used by almost half of the world's populations" (p. i), yet "English learners find obstacles that inhibit their journey to learn English" (p. iv). This indicates that while English is seen as a crucial global skill, its acquisition can be hindered by various practical challenges.

Furthermore, classroom sizes, environment and educational resources play a crucial role in students' progress. A study conducted in non-native English-speaking regions revealed that "the number of students was over class size. One grade had seven classes, and each class had 50 students. It was a vast number, which was difficult for teachers to reach each of the students' progress" (Hasanah & Utami, 2019, p.115). This issue is particularly relevant in Uzbekistan where many schools face similar challenges. In addition, students often struggle with grammar-heavy instruction that lacks practical application. Such instruction leaves little room for communicative activities, making it harder for learners to apply new vocabulary or practice speaking in meaningful contexts. The role of motivation in language acquisition cannot be ignored. When students do not see the relevance in their daily lives, their enthusiasm for learning diminishes. As Hasanah and Utami (2019) note, "they had unstable motivation because they did not learn English by initiative, but their parents' initiation" (p.115). This highlights the importance of creating engaging and meaningful learning experiences that encourage students to take an active role in their education.

This article explores the learning gaps faced by 10th-grade Uzbek students in English language acquisition from the perspective of teachers. It will analyze the factors contributing to these gaps, including classroom environments, teaching methodologies, and student motivation. By understanding these challenges, educators can develop more effective strategies to improve students' learning outcomes and bridge the gaps in English proficiency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English language learning gaps between 10th-grade non-native speakers stem from factors like inconsistent prior instruction, language interference, cultural differences. Additionally, the effectiveness of different teaching methods-

particularly the reliance on textbooks versus incorporating additional materials- is a key concern in Uzbekistan. This review explores teachers' perspectives on these challenges and examines whether textbook-only instruction is sufficient for language acquisition.

Teacher's perspectives on learning gaps

Teachers' perspectives that many students struggle due to limited prior English instruction. Bensoussan (2015) notes, "These differences may be due to intrinsic an instrumental motivation, self-efficacy, as well as language proficiency and test-taking ability" (p. 17). Some educators emphasize that shared cultural backgrounds help teachers to internalize the experiences and struggles than an ELL would face. (Attia,2016, p. 40).

Textbook-only vs. Multi-resource introduction

Textbooks remain the main teaching resources in Uzbekistan, but some studies suggest that may not be enough. Daar (2020) highlights that "...students only get the opportunity to practice speaking English in the classroom. Outside the classroom they have very little opportunity to apply English they have learned in class" (p. 88) . Research suggests that knowing students' abilities is a supporting factor that helps teachers in determining the appropriate teaching methods and techniques.(Daar,2020, p. 87).

To examine this further, a comparative study will be conducted;

- Textbook-only class: Students will learn exclusively from the textbook without additional materials or interactive activities.
- Multi-resource class: Students will learn the same lesson with supplementary books, digital materials, and interactive activities.

Previous studies indicates that interactive teaching improves motivation and comprehension. "... even when the classroom teacher selects the book, knows every student in the class well and is using materials designed specifically for the context they are in, she will still have to adapt the materials either consciously or subconsciously" (Tomlinson, 2011, p. 86).

Challenges and strategies to address learning gaps

Dornyei (2005) argues that " the language but also in training learners to be more in touch with their learning style preference and language strategy choices on

specific tasks, and their motivational temperature” (p.178). It is relevant to the second language learning where different types of learners perform different approaches/ways of learning to achieve the same goal, acquiring a language effectively. Motivation also plays a crucial role, as “language can be acquired and skills developed by listening or reading at length and leisure texts which are relevant, motivating and engaging” (Tomlinson, 2001, p.439).

While textbooks are essential, relying solely on them may not be effective for Uzbek students. This study will compare textbook-only instruction with a multi-resource approach to determine which method better supports language learning. The findings will contribute to understanding how interactive teaching strategies impact student engagement and comprehension.

METHODOLOGY

This study examines the role of the teacher in shaping student engagement and learning outcomes in English lessons. The research was conducted at School No. 12 in Navoi region, involving two 10th-grade classes; 10-I, where the teacher played an active, interactive role, and 10-B, where the teacher followed a more traditional, textbook-based approach. Both qualitative and quantitative methods is used in this study making it a mixed-methods study. Here are some reasons why mixed-methods study is used in research;

Quantitative aspects are the survey responses provide a measurable data (e.g., whether students learned vocabulary, participated in discussions, or retained knowledge. Qualitative Aspects are open-minded responses (e.g., what grammar concepts they learned) offer descriptive insights into students' experiences. Observations of engagement levels and participation provide subjective, interpretive data.

Participants and Teaching Methods

A total of 30 students in the study, with 15 students in each class.

- In 10-I, the teacher used an interactive teaching approach, incorporating additional materials, real-life examples, interactive games, and an English-speaking classroom atmosphere. The teacher actively guided students, encouraged discussions, and facilitated hands-on experiments to reinforce the lesson.

•In 10-B the teacher adhered strictly to the textbook-based method, delivering the lesson in a traditional manner with minimal interaction. There were no additional activities, games, or experiments. The students followed the textbook and completed exercises without extended discussion or engagement. And mainly they did not move to language based classroom and stayed on their own. This difference in teaching roles was expected to impact students' engagement, comprehension, and retention of the material.

Data Collection

To assess the effectiveness of the teacher's role in both settings, students completed a survey designed to evaluate three key aspects;

1. Knowledge acquisition –Questions assessed whether students learned and retained key vocabulary and grammar concepts from the lesson.
2. Engagement and enjoyment-The survey examined students' level of interest, enjoyment, and active participation during the lesson.
3. Hands-on involvement-Questions aimed to determine whether students had direct experience themselves or were passive observers.

These aspects provided insights into how different teaching styles influenced student learning.

Data Analysis

The collected responses were analyzed to compare student engagement and learning outcomes in both teaching environments. The study aimed to determine whether students in interactive classroom (10-I) displayed higher engagement, better comprehension, and stronger knowledge retention compared to students in the textbook-based classroom (10-B).

It was expected that;

10-I students would demonstrate greater enthusiasm, active participation, and better recall of lesson content due to the interaction and immersive teaching approach.

10-B students, who experienced a more passive learning environment, might struggle with engagement and long-term retention of the material.

By comparing the responses, the study sought to highlight the impact of the teachers' role on student learning and provide insights into effective teaching strategies for English instruction.

RESULTS

This study examined the effectiveness of textbook-only versus multi-resource teaching approaches in addressing English language learning gaps among 10th-grade students in Uzbekistan. The findings reveal significant differences in student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes between the two instructional methods.

The findings are not just numbers on a page—they tell a story of how teaching methods can make or break a student's connection with a language. English learning is not just about the content of a textbook; it is about how that content is delivered.

Survey overview: Blending quantitative and qualitative methods

A total of 30 students participated in the survey, with 15 students each from class 10-I(interactive learning) and 10-B(textbook-only learning).The survey used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the students' learning experiences.

Key findings from the survey;

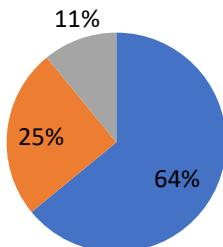
14 students (46.7%) answered “yes” to most of the questions, indicating a positive learning experience. The majority of these students (11 out of 14) were from 10-I, reinforcing the effectiveness of interactive methods.

9 students (30%) responded with “no”, showing disengagement or dissatisfaction with the learning process. A significant portion of these students (6 out of 9) were from 10-B, which followed a textbook-only approach.

7 students (23.3%) chose “partially agree”, meaning they found some aspects of the learning method useful but still had reservations. Most of these students were from 10-I, suggesting that while interactive methods were generally effective, some students still needed further support or adjustments

Students who participated in a survey (overall 30)

■ answered with a "yes"



Why this matters: Interpreting the numbers with context

These statistics provide a quantitative look at student engagement, but to truly understand the data, a qualitative approach is necessary. Looking beyond percentages, students from the interactive classroom (10-I) clearly demonstrated a more positive learning experience. Their responses suggest that having a dynamic learning environment made them feel more involved and motivated to participate.

One student from 10-I described their experience:

“When we work in groups and play games, I feel like I really understand the words. Just reading from the book is harder for me.”

This aligns with language learning research. According to Richards (2006), “Giving learners greater choice over their own learning, both in terms of the content of learning as well as process they might employ. The use of small groups is one example of this, as well as the use of self-assessment” (p. 44). The survey results confirm this theory-students exposed to diverse input were more engaged. On the other hand, the 10-B students, who relied solely on textbooks, showed higher dissatisfaction (67% of ‘no’ responses came from 10-B). A student from this group commented:

“I try to memorize the words, but after a few days, I forget them. It feel like I am studying just for the test.”

This reflects the idea that “...meaningful exposure to language in use both prior to and subsequent to activities inviting the learners to pay conscious attention to features of the language used”. (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 439). Without engaging

activities, retention and application of knowledge become weak, as seen in the higher dissatisfaction rate among 10-B students.

The balance between quantitative and qualitative data

By combining numbers (percentages from the survey) with student feedback (qualitative insights), this study provides a clearer picture of how teaching methods impact learning. Quantitative data alone would show that the interactive classroom was more effective, but qualitative feedback explains why-students were more engaged, lessons felt relevant, and retention improved.

These findings reinforce that a mix of structured learning and interactive activities creates the best learning experience. While textbooks provide a foundation, they should be supplemented with discussions, games, and hands-on activities to enhance the engagement and retention.

The results of this study suggest that Uzbek schools should consider integrating interactive methods into English teaching to improve student motivation and language retention. By doing so, classrooms can shift from being places of memorization to spaces where students truly experience and use the language.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study highlight critical gaps in English language learning among 10th grade Uzbek students, particularly concerning engagement, motivation and retention. The comparative analysis of textbook-only versus multi-resource teaching methods aligns with existing research on second language acquisition, emphasizing the need for interactive, context-rich pedagogy.

The superior performance of students in the interactive classroom (10-I) aligns with Richards (2006) assertion that “they create the need for communication, interaction, and negotiation of meaning through the use of activities such as problem solving, information sharing, and role play.”(p.23) leads to better outcomes. This was evident in student feedback such as, “When we work in groups and play games, I feel like I really understand the words,” which demonstrates the effectiveness of communicative language teaching methods.

Conversely, the textbook-only approach in class 10-B resulted in lower engagement, supporting Daar’s (2020) observation that “students only get the opportunity to practice speaking English in the classroom” (p.88) under traditional teaching methods. The reported dissatisfaction from these students,

exemplified by comments like “I try to memorize the words, but after a few days, I forget them,” reflects the limitations of rote memorization techniques criticized by Tomlinson (2012).

The study’s findings particularly support Dornyei’s (2005) argument about the importance of motivation in language learning. As he notes, “Motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process” (p.65). this was clearly demonstrated by the higher participation and retention rates in the interactive classroom.

These results have important implications for English language education in Uzbekistan. As Hasanah and Utami (2019) found in their research, “the number of students was over class size... which was difficult for teachers to reach each of the students’ progress” (p.115). This study suggests that incorporating interactive methods may help mitigate these challenges of large class sizes. The success of the multi-resource approach supports Attia’s (2016) recommendation for culturally responsive teaching methods. By creating “a motivational learning environment” Dornyei, 2005, p.143) that incorporates games, discussions, and real-world applications, teachers can better engage students and improve learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

After seeing how students thrived in interactive classrooms while struggling with textbook-only lessons, one thing is clear-learning English is not just about memorizing grammar rules. It is about bringing the language to life. Our study showed something simple yet powerful: when students work together, play games, and use English in real-world ways, they do not just learn better-they care more about learning. The difference was visible in their enthusiasm, their participation, and most importantly, in their ability to actually remember and use what they had learned. But here is a real challenge comes: changing how we teach changing how we think about teaching. It means:

Giving teachers the tools and training to move beyond textbooks

Creating classrooms where students are active participants, not just listeners

Measuring success not just by test scores, but by students’ ability to communicate

The good news? We saw it working. Students in the interactive classes were not just performing better-they were more confident, more engaged, and frankly,

having more fun while learning. This is not about throwing away textbooks. It is about recognizing they are just the starting point. If we want Uzbek students to truly master English, we need to give them chances to use it- to debate, to create, to solve problems together. That is when the language stops being a school subject and starts being a real skill for life. The path forward is clear. Now it is time to take those first steps.

This study shows that interactive teaching does not just make English lessons more engaging-it helps students truly internalize the language. To build on these findings, future research should track long-term learning outcomes and explore practical ways to scale these methods across Uzbekistan's diverse classrooms. The evidence is clear: when students actively use English rather than just study it, everyone wins.

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