



Exploring Students' Learning Motivation and Speaking Confidence through Edutainment A Case Study on Clash of Champions at Uin Palangka Raya

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative single-case study explores how Ruangguru's Clash of Champions (COC), an edutainment-based academic competition program, relates to English Education students' learning motivation and speaking confidence at UIN Palangka Raya. Six undergraduate students were recruited through snowball sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participatory observations, and a focus group discussion (FGD). Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis approach. The findings revealed four main themes: (1) Authentic exposure to English use through hosts and contestants; (2) Vicarious modelling that enhanced learners' self-efficacy; (3) Enjoyment and engagement driven by competition and humor; and (4) Reduced anxiety and increased willingness to communicate. These results highlight the potential of digital edutainment media to foster affective and motivational aspects of English learning outside the classroom. The study offers pedagogical implications for integrating media-based edutainment into EFL contexts to enhance engagement and speaking confidence.

Keywords: Edutainment; Learning Motivation; Speaking Confidence

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, technology integration in education has opened opportunities for more interactive and engaging learning experiences (Naviantara et al., 2024). One emerging approach is edutainment, which combines education and entertainment to make learning enjoyable without reducing academic value. In English language education, edutainment has been used to decrease anxiety, foster engagement, and support participation (Anggrainy et al., 2024). This approach has become increasingly relevant in the post-pandemic era when learners expect dynamic, media-rich learning experiences.

Among Indonesia's popular edutainment programs, Ruangguru's Clash of Champions (COC) stands out for its game-based, competitive format and interactive visuals. Broadcast on YouTube and the Ruangguru app, COC features university students competing across disciplines in English and Indonesian. Its humor, fast pace, and real-time interaction attract Gen Z audiences, fostering both cognitive and affective engagement (Ichwanudin, 2025).

Confidence and motivation are essential affective components in language learning. Students confident in speaking English are more willing to take communicative risks and express themselves fluently (Gordani et al., 2021). However, language anxiety often hinders oral performance, particularly in traditional classrooms that may not support learners

emotionally. Meanwhile, intrinsic motivation encourages persistence and deeper learning (Priyadi et al., 2021). Programs like COC include competition, rewards, and peer interaction, aligning with the ARCS model (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction).

Most previous studies on edutainment explored active classroom participation. However, little is known about its influence on students who engage as passive viewers outside formal settings. Therefore, this study aims to explore how passive exposure to COC relates to students' learning motivation and speaking confidence at UIN Palangka Raya. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

RQ1: How does passive exposure to COC influence students' learning motivation?

RQ2: How does COC contribute to students' speaking confidence?

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative single bounded case study design to explore six English Education students' experiences with COC as passive viewers. Participants were selected through snowball sampling based on their familiarity and regular engagement with the program. Recruitment ceased once thematic saturation was reached.

Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews (10–15 minutes each), non-participatory observations of selected COC episodes, and one focus group discussion (20 minutes). Sample interview questions included: “How does watching COC motivate you to learn English?” and “How do you feel about your speaking confidence after watching the program?” All sessions were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim.

Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps: familiarization, coding, theme generation, theme review, definition, and reporting. Data were managed and coded manually. Triangulation of methods (interview, observation, FGD) and member checking ensured credibility. Ethical clearance was granted by the English Education Department of UIN Palangka Raya, and all participants provided informed consent. Identities were anonymized (S1–S6).

The mini memory-recall game used during FGD served as an elicitation activity to stimulate discussion, not as an experimental intervention.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Introduction to Research Findings

The subsequent sections reveal how exposure to an academic game show fosters both motivational and affective development among students. The data are systematically described, accompanied by direct excerpts from participant statements and observation notes, allowing for a comprehensive interpretation of the study's core phenomena.

Learning Motivation & Speaking Confidence: Indicators and Qualitative Data

Table 1. Observation Sheet for Learning Motivation and Speaking Confidence

Episode / Clip	Observed Edutainment Feature	Indicators of Motivation	Indicators of Speaking Confidence
Season 1 Ep.3	International host speaking English	Admiration for fluent speakers; desire to improve	Exposure reduces fear of mistakes
Season 1 Ep.4	Memory-based challenge (100 paintings)	Fun competition sustains engagement	Encourages spontaneous vocabulary recall
Season 2 Ep.1	Cross-cultural contestants	Motivation through global exposure	Confidence via bilingual exchanges
Season 2 Ep.14	Problem-solving with English host	Curiosity and persistence during tasks	Confidence to use English collaboratively

Note: Observation data summarize how COC integrates educational and entertaining features promoting students' affective engagement.

Based on the media observation of several *Clash of Champions* episodes, it was found that the program consistently integrates educational content with entertaining presentation. In *Season 1 Episode 3 (Persamaan Berantai Bikin Otak Ngebul)*, the presence of an international host speaking full English and the participation of students studying abroad created a motivating environment that inspired viewers to enhance their English proficiency. Similarly, *Episode 4 (Hapalkan 100 Lukisan)* presented a memory-based challenge that encouraged focus, persistence, and spontaneous English use through vocabulary recall.

In Season 2 Episode 1 (Baru Mulai Udah Chaos), the introduction of international contestants fostered cross-cultural interaction, showing how bilingual communication naturally occurs in learning contexts. Lastly, Episode 14 (Ada Virus, Siapa yang Terbantai?) demonstrated an integration of math and English tasks led by a host from UK, reflecting how cognitive challenge and language exposure can coexist in a fun, low-pressure setting.

Overall, the observation highlights that *Clash of Champions* successfully applies the principles of edutainment by combining competition, creativity, and authentic language use. These features collectively contribute to the enhancement of students' learning motivation and speaking confidence, particularly among passive viewers who experience indirect yet meaningful language exposure.

Summary of Interview session of students' Learning Motivation and Speaking Confidence through Clash of Champions

Based on the interview results summarized, many students shared that *Clash of Champions* plays a good role on both their learning motivation and speaking confidence. In terms of motivation, students explained that the program's competitive format, visual presentation, and educational content encouraged them to engage more actively in learning

English. The entertaining nature of the show made the learning process enjoyable rather than obligatory, which strengthened their intrinsic motivation.

Furthermore, students described that watching the participants and hosts speak English fluently inspired them to improve their own speaking skills. Although some admitted feeling nervous when speaking in real contexts, most of them mentioned that observing the program supported their willingness to try. These insights suggest that *Clash of Champions* provided positive language models and helped reduce the anxiety often associated with speaking English.

Overall, the interview findings reveal that edutainment programs like *Clash of Champions* can create a meaningful learning experience by combining enjoyment, competition, and authentic language use, thereby enhancing both motivation and confidence among learners.

Table 2. *Interview of Students' Learning Motivation and Speaking Confidence*

Theme	Example Quotes
Authentic Exposure	"Hearing the host speak English motivates me to sound natural." (S2)
Vicarious Modeling	"Watching confident contestants makes me believe I can improve too." (S4)
Enjoyment & Engagement	"The quiz and humor make learning enjoyable and not stressful." (S3)
Reduced Anxiety & WTC	"The more I watch, the more I feel confident to speak in class." (S5)

Note: Themes were identified through thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke's six steps

Four major themes emerged from the analysis: (1) Authentic English Exposure, (2) Vicarious Modeling and Self-Efficacy, (3) Enjoyment and Engagement, and (4) Reduced Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate.

Theme 1: Authentic English Exposure

Students reported that exposure to authentic English use by COC hosts and contestants increased their awareness of pronunciation, tone, and vocabulary. For instance, S2 stated, "Hearing the host and international contestants makes me want to speak more naturally."

Theme 2: Vicarious Modeling and Self-Efficacy

Observing fluent speakers inspired students to believe they could also achieve similar competence. S4 mentioned, "Seeing them confident on screen motivates me to try speaking English even if I make mistakes."

Theme 3: Enjoyment and Engagement

Participants emphasized that the competition and humor maintained their interest. The show's entertainment aspect made learning feel relaxed yet educational, increasing intrinsic motivation.

Theme 4: Reduced Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate

Students reported feeling less nervous about speaking English after regularly watching COC. S5 explained, “The more I watch them, the more I feel confident to speak during class.”

Findings from Group Discussion

During the Group Discussion, participants described *Clash of Champions* as engaging, enjoyable, and inspiring. They appreciated the competitive elements, clear visuals, and interactive exchanges among contestants.

They reported that watching the program:

- 1). Supported their motivation to learn English,
- 2). inspired them to practice speaking, and
- 3). gave them a sense of achievement and connection to a wider learning community.

In addition to the discussion, the researcher introduced a small activity called a memory and recall game, which was designed to examine whether one of the game techniques used in *Clash of Champions* could be adapted for English language learning particularly to support the aspect of speaking confidence. In this activity, students were shown a set of simple English words for a short period and were then asked to recall both the words and their positions.

The results of this mini-game showed that students were highly enthusiastic and actively engaged. They were able to memorize and recall nine simple English words and their correct placement within one minute. This performance demonstrated not only their concentration and motivation but also their growing confidence in using English vocabulary orally during the reflection stage of the activity.

Based on these observations, the researcher concluded that the memory and recall game as featured in *Clash of Champions* can be effectively adapted and utilized in English language teaching, especially to enhance students’ speaking confidence and vocabulary retention in a fun and interactive way.

Table 3. *Group Discussion of Learning Motivation and Speaking Confidence*

Discussion Topic	Summary of Insights	Implications for Practice
Overall Experience	Participants found COC engaging and motivating	Use competitive media to maintain engagement
Attention Focus	Students were drawn to visuals and interactive exchanges	Highlight similar features in class activities
Motivation & Confidence	COC inspired intrinsic motivation and modeled fluency	Include reflection tasks after viewing media
Application	Participants suggested adapting COC games for English learning	Incorporate short clips or games in lessons

Note: FGD data highlight how COC’s edutainment features inform EFL teaching practice

Discussion

Based on the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), the findings indicate that *Clash of Champions* fostered three key elements of intrinsic motivation autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Students demonstrated autonomy by freely expressing opinions, selecting favorite scenes, and initiating discussion about the program. Their sense of

competence appeared through their ability to understand and connect the content to personal learning experiences. Relatedness was shown through laughter, collaboration, and peer encouragement during group activities. These social interactions strengthened their sense of belonging and motivation, consistent with Dörnyei's (2001) view that collaborative enjoyment enhances engagement.

This study demonstrates that COC, as a digital edutainment platform, supports learners' affective engagement through authentic input, motivation, and modelling. The findings align with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), where autonomy, competence, and relatedness contribute to intrinsic motivation. The program's competitive yet collaborative environment fostered autonomy and relatedness among students.

Observing confident speakers promoted self-efficacy consistent with Bandura's (1997) Social Learning Theory. Exposure to English in a non-threatening, enjoyable context reduced anxiety, echoing Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis emphasizing comprehensible input and a low affective filter. These experiences enhanced willingness to communicate (Leeming et al., 2024).

The memory-recall activity during the FGD reinforced this relationship between engagement and language retention, showing that game-like elements from non-language programs can be adapted into EFL pedagogy (Susanto, 2020; Putri, 2022).

Limitations include a small sample size from a single institution, reliance on self-reported data, and the passive nature of media exposure. Future studies could use mixed methods, standardized measures of speaking self-efficacy or willingness to communicate, and comparisons between passive and active engagement.

Pedagogical implications include:

- (1) integrating selected COC clips as media in English classes,
- (2) assigning reflective speaking tasks based on COC episodes, and
- (3) designing prompts for classroom discussions inspired by digital edutainment content.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that passive exposure to Ruangguru's *Clash of Champions* enhanced students' learning motivation and speaking confidence through authentic input, relatable modelling, and enjoyable presentation. The findings indicate that edutainment media can positively shape affective and communicative aspects of EFL learning even beyond the classroom. By connecting theories of self-determination, self-efficacy, and affective filter, this research contributes to the growing literature on digital edutainment as an informal learning avenue for English learners. Future research could expand this work through mixed-methods designs, standardized measurements of willingness to communicate and self-efficacy, and comparative studies exploring differences between passive and active exposure to edutainment-based learning.

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