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Game-based learning strategy to enhance speaking skills in students of third baccalaureate

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RESUMEN

Este estudio investiga la implementación de estrategias de aprendizaje basadas en juegos para mejorar las habilidades de habla en inglés como lengua extranjera en estudiantes de tercero de bachillerato de una institución rural en Santo Domingo, Ecuador. Su objetivo es implementar y observar los efectos de las estrategias de aprendizaje basadas en juegos para involucrar a los estudiantes en una clase de inglés divertida y agradable. Los participantes fueron estudiantes de 17 a 18 años. Además, se aplicaron varios juegos en línea y tradicionales en la clase. El nivel de inglés de los estudiantes es A1.2. Los datos se recopilaron con dos instrumentos, una encuesta previa y una encuesta posterior, y una prueba previa y una prueba posterior para evidenciar el cambio en su nivel de habla. En este proceso, se pidió a los estudiantes que respondieran algunas preguntas y en la segunda actividad, prepararon un juego de roles pidiendo comida en un restaurante. El resultado de este procedimiento fue que los participantes adquirieron más vocabulario y mejoraron su gramática, pronunciación y fluidez al hablar inglés. Además, se sintieron más motivados para participar en actividades de habla en clase.

Palabras clave: Estrategias de aprendizaje basadas en juegos, habilidades de habla, mejorar, juegos en línea, juegos tradicionales

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the implementation of game-based learning strategies to enhance speaking skills in EFL learners from a third baccalaureate from a rural institution in Santo Domingo, Ecuador. It aims to implement and observe the effects of game-based learning strategies to engage learners in a fun and enjoyable English class. The participants were students from 17-18 years old. Besides, various online and traditional games were applied in the class. The students' English level is A1.2. The data was collected with two instruments a pre-survey and post-survey, and a pre-test and post-test to evidence the change in their level. In this process, students were asked to answer some questions and in the second activity, they prepared a role play ordering food in a restaurant. The result of this procedure was that the participants acquired more vocabulary, and improved their grammar, pronunciation, and fluency when speaking English. Moreover, they felt more motivated to participate in speaking activities in class.

Keywords: Game-based learning strategies, speaking skills, enhance, online games, traditional games.

1. INTRODUCCIÓN (OBJETIVO DEL ARTÍCULO)

Game-based learning strategies have helped to improve second language learning in education. According to Asih & Halisiana (2022), the appearance of technology and digital social interaction has benefited the creation of digital games that are more fun for current language learners. Moreover, Game-based learning strategies were created to provide a fun and supportive environment that can enhance learners' learning process.

As cited in Marzuki & Kaliahana, (2021) some researchers such as Altun (2015), Avila (2015), and Dewi et al. (2017) have applied games in order to enhance speaking skills. Games are used to learn different skills and parts of a language which are fun and motivate students' learning process. These researchers were very interested in finding positive results by applying a variety of games to help learners to speak better in the target language.

Learning a language could be a challenge for some people because they have to manage to develop some skills. Speaking is considered the most difficult skill to develop when learning a second language. Besides, Marzuki & Kaliahana (2021) states that being a master in speaking a language is like a dream for most learners due to the opportunity to communicate orally with people from all over the world.

Besides, according to a study done by Kaur & Abdul (2020), there are some benefits of speaking a universal language such as English. Learners can gain knowledge from other cultures and other countries. Therefore, they can feel a better connection with the world and they can understand more about the social and political system. Speakers who can speak a second language are more creative and enhance memory and study skills in other subjects.

2. MARCO TEÓRICO

English level in Baccalaureate students

A second language has become important for some people to get a better job or a higher education in other countries or even in the same country. Therefore, the need to acquire a second language at an advanced level is crucial. However, Ecuador and other countries from South America are known as places with a low level of English where students cannot have a basic conversation in the target language. According to De Angelis (2022), Ecuador is one of the worst countries in English proficiency based on an EF Analysis, which is a famous institute for learning languages and a place that takes international exams from Cambridge. This situation turns even worse when Education First EF (2023) in its fifth edition, shows that Ecuador has the 18th of 20 places in the world with a low proficiency level of English. Besides this report presents the cities and their level of proficiency where Pichincha has a moderate level and the rest of the cities have a low and very low level.

When students finish high school in Ecuador, they require a B1 level of English proficiency. This is stated in the National English curriculum from the Ministry of Education (2013) in Ecuador. They considered the CEFR levels of English and the skills students required at the end of the level. Therefore, students from the third baccalaureate need to be independent users of the second language. Besides, they are capable of understanding the language, writing with accuracy, reading and comprehending, and talking about daily routine, personal experiences, travel vocabulary, leisure activities, and giving opinions.

Education in rural high schools

Education in rural areas faces some challenges, especially in terms of access to technology. Meanwhile, in urban areas, students have the opportunity to have easy access to any English learning sources outside the classroom. Iñiguez et al. (2021) mention that

“Education in rural areas in Ecuador is practically non-existent, as a consequence of the lack of economic resources and technological infrastructure that do not guarantee the availability of computers and devices connected to the Internet” (p. 27). Even though many educators face those problems, there must be well-designed strategies to implement and give solutions to local conditions and ensure that the resources implemented assist in a meaningful learning process for the students.

Additionally, it is supposed that schools in rural areas might have ICT (Information and Communication Technology) facilities because of the boom in technology. However, rural settings face insufficient, poorly maintained, or damaged labs. Therefore, it is considered a limitation to access and apply it inside classrooms. Shan & Abdul (2022) claim that English language teachers and students in rural schools rarely have the chance to enjoy the benefits of these ICT facilities, which slackens teacher's motivation to teach and students' motivation to learn. Teaching English through interesting online materials such as interactive live worksheets, videos, games, and pictures increases engagement in learning any topic. To fulfill students' necessity, educators should implement other materials that do not need technological resources, such as flashcards and traditional games.

Speaking Skills

Speaking, as a productive skill, seems to be the most difficult productive skill to acquire. Miranda & Wahyudin (2023) stated that speaking refers to a person's capacity to produce sounds and communicate ideas that human beings have in mind (p. 40). That is why, to acquire and develop speaking skills, learners need to be engaged in meaningful activities to produce the language themselves and feel motivated to be involved in the learning process.

Moreover, Arroba & Acosta (2021) stated that authentic tasks promote learners' speaking skills by applying real-life simulations, and meaningful speaking tasks beyond pure grammatical and formal instructions develop more sociocultural and pragmatic language usage. Consequently, if teachers employ authentic and significant tasks inside classrooms, students not only improve their communicative competence, but also be confident in their relationships, social interaction, and public speaking.

On the one hand, in terms of developing speaking skills, one meaningful way is to immerse in the language in a real-life context, and one way to achieve this is to make use of games inside the classroom that provide a different environment for students since they like to compete while learning. For example, when a student's motivation is higher, learners will participate, when the teacher looks for volunteers to do a particular activity, they will mechanically accept participation. It is one of the advantages of speaking class because teachers always have to ensure students' participation (Kaur & Aziz, 2020).

Components of speaking skills

Speaking skills involve several components that enhance one's ability to communicate well. Bear in mind the following key elements:

Vocabulary

Learning vocabulary is the first step in language acquisition. To have great English, appropriately communicate, and be fluent, students should be aware of learning as many words as possible, and also they ought to know how to use them appropriately. Wahyudin (2021) stated that vocabulary enables learners to use the language fluently because by learning a lot of English words, students will try to use, express their ideas, and communicate in a good

manner. That is why educators should pay close attention when teaching vocabulary by applying enjoyable techniques and methods according to each English level.

Besides, mastering a word in English takes time because words can have many meanings. For that reason, learners may have a method to learn to become proficient in the English language. Yudha & Mandasari (2021) recommend that teachers should make language learning interactive and interesting with the introduction of appropriate vocabulary exercises to avoid students' boredom. In particular, to be recursive sometimes is challenging for teachers, but educators must always create an adequate atmosphere that will encourage learners to fall for language.

Grammar

Grammar refers to how words create meaning in sentences. To build a high level of confidence when speaking, students should master grammar correctly. Obeida & Alomari (2020) consider that English grammar is not easy to learn for both native and non-native speakers. Because many obscure rules and exceptions make it difficult for the learners to understand this aspect of language (p. 208). Even though grammar is not an easy skill to develop for students, teachers must focus on approaches to make the class engaging and comprehensive. Besides, educators create scenery in which learners use grammar in real-life situations.

Fluency

Fluency in speaking is the ability to produce the language reasonably and accurately to have language proficiency. According to Rahmawati & Arimonnaria (2021), fluency is the ability of speakers to produce language with ease, using correct punctuation, verbs, articles,

and prepositions. This aspect also needs to be considered as good at speaking. It means that being fluent requires not only employing correct punctuation but also demonstrating confidence, practice, keeping and showing a clear connection in speaking, in other words keeping on an extended conversation for a long period in the target language.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation takes place in how a word or language is spoken. It demands a large amount of exposure to language for developing natural speech. Besides, learners should study phonemes, stress, intonation, rhythm, connected speech, and phonetic symbols to improve their ability to comprehend spoken language and have the chance to understand language better. Improving pronunciation involves practicing with native speakers and the master of phonetics and phonology in how words are articulated and produced into sound systems. It is necessary to make the message clear and to be understood by the listener (Kholis, 2021).

Method focused on developing speaking skills

The Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT) helps students handle the communication skills of the target language considered by (Dos Santos, 2020). The application of authentic materials such as newspapers, magazines, movies, and songs exposes students to real-life language use and cultural nuances. It improves their language skills while developing cultural awareness (Abdullayev, 2024). Teachers who apply the (CLT) approach in the classroom might emphasize student interaction and practice language in real-life situations, engaging students actively in the learning process.

Furthermore, teaching speaking skills with suitable techniques and methods meaningfully engages the learners to achieve personal and professional necessities. At this point, the task-based approach focuses on communicative skills rather than grammatical rules.

In other words, it emphasizes the practical application of language skills in real-life situations. In this method, students are given tasks relevant to their lives and interests, such as ordering in a restaurant or critiquing a movie (Baxodirovna, 2024, p.11).

The game-based learning strategy

Saputra et al. (2021) argue that game-based learning is a learning method that uses game applications designed to assist in the learning process. It can create an environment that motivates, fun, and enhances creativity. Besides, Ningsih (2023) concludes that it can have a great effect on students during the learning process, where the learning atmosphere makes students feel comfortable, learning becomes fun, students' interest in learning increases, makes it simpler for understudies to understand the material, and reduces student anxiety. The first thing educators should do is to select appropriate games that must be aligned with educational goals and standards for the curriculum. Learners will love teachers if they apply games inside the classroom because they are fond of competing.

Types of games for enhancing speaking skills

The Game-based learning strategy is important to apply in an English class because students can learn, have fun, and be motivated to compete at the same time (Ho, Pham Vu, et al, 2019). Nowadays, students are more into the use of technology, and for that reason, it is a great advantage to use it in the teaching process. However, in Ecuador, there are some institutions in rural areas where they do not have access to technology or an internet connection. According to Bendo (2019) practicing language skills in English through the use of games is a good tool to engage students in the lesson.

Online games

On the internet, there are a lot of websites to play games or to design games with different characteristics according to the topic of the lesson. The most common games are

Baamboozle, Educandy, Kahoot, Quizizz. and etc. Hieu (2021) mentions in his article that online games are useful for teaching and assessing the grammar and vocabulary of the target language. However, they can be adapted for teaching and practicing other language skills such as speaking. For example, in Baamboozle a number of cards are shown, in each card, there is a question about a past event that students need to answer giving a reason. With activity, they practice grammar about the past and speaking skills at the same time.

Apps to learn English

With the advance of technology currently, there are apps created for learning English as a game or to practice specific language learning skills. For instance, Duolingo, Memrise, Busuu, HelloTalk, Babbel, Grammarly, and others. These apps can be played online on a PC or on a mobile device which is an advantage. HelloTalk is a mobile app focused on practicing speaking skills because this is a social media app where students can have conversations with real people and they can set it or search speakers from beginner to an advanced level of proficiency. Moreover, this app offers other activities such as voice calls, practicing vocabulary, listening to voice clubs with real people, and chats. (Siregar & Ismahani, 2024)

Duolingo is another well-known app to learn and practice a foreign language. According to Hafifah, (2019), this app can be used on a PC or mobile and users can join at any time. They can use the app as a game and learn at the same time. Besides, it shows errors to correct and encourages to keep a streak of practicing every day, with that the users can achieve a higher level. In speaking skills, it can help to enhance the pronunciation of common phrases in the target language.

Traditional games

On the other hand, traditional games can be applied in an English class if there is not the necessary equipment or resources to use online games. Moreover, these kinds of games can

facilitate real interaction among learners in the class and they can be fun and engaging as online games. Hikmawan et al, (2023) state that traditional games enhance students' motivation to participate in groups and use the language with a learning purpose and it depends on the teacher's guidance of the game. For instance, some games to enhance speaking skills are role-playing games, answering questions with roulette, flashcards, guessing games, and others.

Benefits of using games in language learning

Using Games in an EFL environment has some benefits for students and teachers. Gafur (2021) agrees that speaking is the most difficult skill to foster in learners and they can get frustrated when learning to speak a second language or they feel demotivated by boring strategies. However, he is also in agreement with the Game-based learning application in the classroom. Therefore, Yudha et al. (2021) state some benefits or advantages of using games to learn English. First, game applications in the class can motivate learners to join in the activities, they are attracted to it because it is fun and they enjoy it while learning the language. Second, games can create a feeling of healthy competition among participants and win learning a language too. Third, passive learners get the opportunity to speak in the class. Finally, learners do not feel pressured to make mistakes while playing games, they feel relaxed and they receive the teacher's feedback on any problem.

Game design principles for speaking skills enhancement

Games can have different features and they can use different resources such as materials around us or the use of technological devices to application in the EFL class. However, they have something in common. They must be more than just fun, they have to be meaningful when it comes to learning a second language. Therefore, they should meet some criteria to achieve a learning purpose. Games should involve friendly competition and the involvement of all

participants. It should encourage the use of the target language, they need to have a clear objective for the class, and clear instructions are crucial (Bendo, 2019).

Besides, Laine et al. (2020) establish teachers should provide feedback after applying games to enhance speaking skills. In spite of learning, students should feel motivated to be part of the process. Another researcher mentioned that games should retain learners' interest in developing a task because the activity is fun, which helps learners stay positive even if they lose the game. In other words, games need to be fun, motivating, and useful for learning the language and in this case enhancing speaking skills (Adipat et al., 2021).

3. METODOLOGÍA

The purpose of this study is to analyze the application of game-based learning strategies to enhance speaking skills. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods have been applied to collect data and have a better analysis of the result of this study.

The qualitative method is chosen to analyze a survey applied to students. According to Dehalwar & Sharma (2024), this method is focused on understanding human behavior, experiences, and social interactions with non-numerical data. On the other hand, quantitative research is a systematic investigation that applies statistical or mathematical techniques to collect and analyze data with patterns and trends among the population which is used to describe a survey result of the participants.

Participants

This research aims to enhance speaking skills by application of a game-based learning strategy. For the application of the survey, there were 43 students; 23 males and 20 females participants that belonged to a high school in Santo Domingo, Ecuador. The age of students varied from sixteen to eighteen years old. They are in their third baccalaureate year, and they have Spanish as their mother tongue. However, in English, they have an A1.2 level, which was

acquired through regular school instruction and based on the national curriculum. In this research, teachers applied traditional games and games with the use of technology. Therefore, it is important to mention that most students have internet access or a technological device such as a smartphone or laptop. This sample was chosen because they are more connected with technology and the teacher has practiced with that before.

Instruments

The study used both qualitative and quantitative instruments. A pre-survey was conducted at the beginning of the study, followed by a post-survey to compare the results. The study lasted for three months, which corresponds to a school trimester. The teaching methodology focused on a student-centered approach, allowing students to manage their practice time while the teacher served as a guide. In addition to using a variety of games, participants were encouraged to use an English language app like Duolingo to practice speaking skills and improve pronunciation. The researcher also utilized traditional games in which all commands were given in English, providing participants with opportunities to practice the language during interactions.

Survey: The participants took a questionnaire about their personal lives, interests, and use of the internet and technological devices. *Pre-survey:* It was conducted at the beginning of the study in order to know about students' background and interests for the second language. *Post- survey;* During the post-interview, participants answered the same questionnaire, and the teacher assessed using the Likert Scale with the following criteria: 1. very poor, 2. poor, 3. acceptable, 4. good, and 5. very good. The purpose is to realize their improvement in their speaking skills and to know what they need to improve in their second language.

Rubric: This speaking rubric is an instrument to assess students' speaking proficiency and it is divided into four components: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. It

was applied in the pre-test and post-test. *Pre-test*; The participants were asked to record a video talking about their favorite food or a recipe they like to prepare. *Post test*; The participants were assigned to work in groups and practice to present a role-play in the class, which was about ordering food in a restaurant. In addition, they were asked to use the same vocabulary they used before to compare their improvement in their pronunciation.

Design, procedure, and data analysis

The study lasted three months. Participants of a public institution from a rural setting were taught English through games inside the classroom to enhance speaking skills. They enrolled in outdoor activities such as volleyball, soccer, and basketball as instructions the only language they had to use was English. Besides, Roleplays, Simon Says, Debate, dialogues, and Taboo were games applied in class. The student's parents signed a consent to protect their privacy in this study because the students were underage.

Participants had to do two activities. Firstly, facilitators applied a survey with ten questions to all participants related to their understanding of English, how often they use English in class, use apps to learn English, etc. Activity 2: The students had to record a video talking about their favorite food. The video must last from two to three minutes, and the participants had a rubric to follow for the assignment parameters when speaking: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. The activities gave an idea of how fluent the participants were. Finally, the facilitator found that learners were a little frightened and anxious when developing those activities. The teacher will apply games in the future class. Games are an effective teaching and learning strategy across various educational levels (Teixeira & Vasconcelos, 2024).

During the training sessions, in the beginning, the students' participation was poor because they were afraid of making mistakes. However, the teacher always encourages them

to participate. At the end of every section, the teacher took some minutes to give formative feedback and to gently correct some pronunciation mistakes without pointing them out. As days passed, it was evident that the students started to use more English in the classroom due to their confidence and motivation. Their motivation increases with sports and traditional games. Additionally, the students asked the professor how to pronounce a specific word to use it correctly.

After three months, a post-survey and a role-play were conducted to assess the students' improvement in speaking. The same pre-survey was applied, using a Likert scale from 1 to 5: 1. very poor, 2. poor, 3. acceptable, 4. good, and 5. very good. The second posttest was a role-play. In pairs, they had to perform a role-play regarding ordering food in a restaurant. To develop the role-play the teacher randomly selected some students to perform it in front of the class, and a rubric based on the following parameters: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency to measure their knowledge. It was done to evaluate the effectiveness of the research and determine if the students improved their speaking skills.

4. ANÁLISIS DE RESULTADOS

For this study, quantitative and qualitative instruments were applied for analyzing the data. Data was collected and analyzed using SPSS software to present statistical information such as mean and standard deviation. Also, the data analysis considered the effect size.

The pre and post-test data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to measure statistical differences. These statistical values are presented in the tables showing the main aspects of the game-based learning strategies to learn English as a second language, focusing on components of speaking skills such as grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary.

Table 1

Results of Pre- survey and Post-survey

Questions	Mean Pre-survey	Mean Post-survey
1. How much vocabulary do you know in English?	1.60	3.20
2. Do you use English in classes?	1.10	3.10
3. Can you recognize some vocabulary words in your classes?	1.50	3.90
4. Do you feel motivated to learn English?	2.60	4.50
5. Do you use games to learn English in class?	0.50	2.60
6. Do you prefer learning English with online games?	1.80	4.20
7. Would you like to learn English with traditional games?	1.20	3.80
8. Do you use Apps to learn English?	2.10	3.80
9. Do you practice English out of class?	0.40	1.20
10. Do you feel confident while speaking in English?	1.20	3.60

Source: Chacua & Torres, 2024

This table shows the pre-survey and post-survey applied to the participants. There is a positive engagement in learning English through games. It demonstrated that the students learned vocabulary by having (Mean=1.60) in the pre-survey and improving (Mean= 3.20) in the post-survey. The use of English in class was also manifested in the post-survey by (Mean= 3.10) and pre-survey by (Mean =1.10), which means that students need a friendly environment to feel confident when learning any topic.

Motivation is a dynamic and ongoing process to achieve the full potential when learning a second language. It evidenced that participants increased their motivation to learn English (Mean=2.60) pre-survey and (Mean = 4.50) post-survey. Using games in classes enhanced their motivation (Mean=0.50) pre-survey (Mean=2.60) post-survey. The preference

for learning English with online games considerably increases (Mean=1.80) pre-survey (Mean= 4.20) post-survey. Participants would prefer learning English with traditional games (Mean= 3.80). Besides, participants manifest that using apps to learn English is interesting (Mean=2.10) pre-survey (Mean = 3.80) post-survey, students end up practicing English outside of the classroom (Mean=0.40) and in the post-survey (Mean= 1.20), at the end of the process participants feel confident while speaking in English (Mean= 3.60) post-survey.

Table 2

Results of Pre- test and Post-test

	N	Mean Pre-test	Standard Deviation	Mean Post-test	Standard Deviation	Effect Size
Pronunciation	43	1.20	0.68	3.50	0.95	0.92
Fluency	43	1.50	0.73	3.25	0.92	0.88
Grammar	43	2.12	0.77	3.80	0.86	0.87
Vocabulary	43	2.50	0.79	4.10	0.94	0.96

Source: Chacua & Torres, 2024

Table 2 presents a rubric applied to find out whether there was a significant improvement in participants' speaking skills. This table had four speaking components such as pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary. It is noticeable that all components have fundamentally improved. Therefore, vocabulary was the one with the biggest improvement from the others with 0.96, and pronunciation with 0.92. It is also shown that after the

application of games, students have enhanced their fluency with 0.88 and their grammar with 0.87. This process was useful for most learners.

5. DISCUSIÓN

The results indicate that the game-based learning strategy positively influences the development of speaking skills, in particular. Vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency are the most influenced aspects by gaming due to interactions among them. One of the study's emphases on the potential of GBL in the student's motivation and engagement are perhaps the clearest and the most powerful reasons for integrating games in class. The games use images, sounds, and colors to foster responsiveness in players; further, they are structured to obtain maximum user attention (Adipat et al., 2021).

Research indicated the GBL strategy has favorable results in promoting fluency. At the beginning of the study, participants were not fluent when performing their speaking, but after that, learners showed improvements in their ability to speak smoothly and with fewer pauses. It suggests that the natural application of games encourages spontaneous communication, assisting in developing fluid speech. This is aligned with another work that found that GBL helps learners promote their speaking skills while they are unconscious of its use for learning. Therefore, raising learners' consciousness about the use of games would help them benefit more, and would be an implementation of edutainment (Bennacer, 2022).

The study found that the GBL strategy positively influences learners' fluency with roleplaying scenarios using target language to do task assignments. This is in line with previous studies that have highlighted that role play does improve speaking skills in terms of fluency, comprehension, context, and interactive communication among students (Togimin & Jaafar, 2020). Additionally, improving speaking fluency has been effective not just to motivate

students but to allow them considerably improve their speaking level (Pacurucu & Garzón, 2022). These studies showed the benefits of incorporating educational games in EFL classrooms, where students could communicate effectively with their peers to enhance fluency in real-time situations.

Moreover, it was appreciated that the improvements in pronunciation were due to the different activities made in class. For example, in discussions, they had to learn a specific task and present it to the next class which included students' repetition, teachers' instant feedback, and real exposure to language. This finding is the same case as what Hidayatullah & Haerazi (2022), the use of full English in the speaking class using board games has a strong effect on students to imitate how the target language is expressed in use. Students imitate and practice their speaking skills with each other in the form of pairs and discussions. Therefore, it allows the opportunity for practice and correction in real-time. In line with another research GBL strategies showed intensive practice supported by a significant number of activities and playing regularly, activated and motivated players in competition achieved significant pronunciation improvement results (Tejedor-Garcia et al., 2020).

The improvements observed in this research are due to students' motivation which they had after applying Game-based learning strategies in the class. A study made by Karsudianto (2020), showed that students can improve their intrinsic motivation with the implementation of games, and in his research, 80% of the students have improved in an outstanding motivation category. In addition, everything refers to the students' attitude they have toward learning a language especially when speaking. Besides, this is aligned with another research where games stimulate students to engage in speaking activities and motivate them to continue learning more (Dalimunthe et al., 2023).

This study presents a significant increase in students' grammar development after applying games which are also related to grammar activities. According to Ali et al. (2020) by integrating games into a grammar class learners can be more motivated to learn and foster grammar rules which are useful to use when speaking in the classroom. Besides, learning grammar with games is better than learning with a traditional and boring methodology. Moreover, in another study where the research used online games to enhance grammar, the result was that there was a meaningful change after applying these games (Castillo, 2020).

The results of this research present that with the implementation of different games, students improved a lot when they needed to speak in class. It suggests the application of games to enhance not only speaking but also vocabulary. A'yunin (2023) States that using games in class such as crosswords and puzzles help students to practice and learn more vocabulary. In addition, games such as bingo, role plays and others are very useful in increasing and fostering learners' vocabulary because they are a fun way to learn while playing (Azizah et al., 2023).

Final considerations

This study focuses on how game-based learning strategies can significantly enhance speaking skills. To begin this study, researchers considered EFL students' prior knowledge. From the beginning, learners were not confident when speaking. As time went on, learners' participation increased, achieving the primary goal of education. While teaching, it is crucial to keep focused on learning outcomes for not having students disinterested. At the end of the study, investigators found that participants were fond of learning a new language through games to improve their fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

Participants mentioned that they feel motivated and perceive less pressure when performing their speaking skills when teachers use games in class. They manifested that they

love working in groups because of the real-time interactions among them. They like it when the facilitator corrects them in a friendly manner. The reduction of hesitation decreases as they actively participate. Besides, a game called "Simon Says" assists in expanding their vocabulary and thinking fast in English. Another activity was the dialogue, which focused on accurate pronunciation.

The students' interaction increases because the instructor creates a dynamic, interactive, and friendly environment that significantly fosters students' speaking skills. In addition, the teacher acts as a facilitator who provides adequate training that integrates games into their teaching process to support students' learning, helping students recognize their strengths and areas of improvement and engaging in several activities. Finally, students developed a role play in the class ordering food in a restaurant. It was graded with a rubric to see the improvement through the learning process.

Limitations

While working on this mixed research, some limitations demand to be acknowledged. First, using games inside the classroom could lead to disconnection or loss of focus. It may be because students are unmotivated to learn a new language through games or lack the attitude and compromise to learn. In the end, participants are not setting up the required objectives. Besides, some participants thought games were for having fun, not for developing specific skills. On certain occasions, teachers scored the activities to push them to acquire the new language and become proficient in vocabulary and pronunciation. However, many students wanted to improve their knowledge of English because they were fond of learning it this way.

Another limitation was classroom management. Large groups may be challenging for teachers to manage the class because students become extremely energetic or distracted, making the environment annoying and arduous to control and keep focus. Moreover, the only

app used inside the classroom was Duolingo. Teachers could not use other apps because of the lack of access, devices, and internet connection in rural settings. Students had the chance to practice their skills, especially grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. It was fun for them to interact with it, considering that it offers instant feedback on answers, which assists participants in realizing their mistakes and correcting them immediately.

6. CONCLUSIÓN

Based on the data presented, the application of games to young learners effectively enhances their speaking skills. Games not only help teachers make the teaching suitable but also motivate students to learn a new language in an interactive environment, leading them to be participative when developing any activity in English. Besides, it encourages interactions among students using the language in real-time, promoting active learning and better retention of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency.

Integrating games as a learning strategy into the classroom, students feel motivated and enthusiastic to learn. Therefore, teachers need to focus on the educational goals and learners' necessities to foster a dynamic classroom that leads to remarkable relationships among peers. Finally, instant friendly feedback is vitally important when teachers use games inside the classroom. It helps learners understand what they are doing well and where they need to make adjustments or improvements. In this way, learners make improvements in developing oral communication, increasing the level of participation in real-world sceneries.

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Arthur C. Clarke

La Concordia, 05 de agosto de 2024



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