# The Impact of Using Games on Speaking Skills Development in English Language Classes at Ho Chi Minh City University of Food Industry, Vietnam

Nguyen Thi Kim Anh

Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ho Chi Minh University of Food Industry, Vietnam

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The assignment focuses on speaking skills, one of the most important skills that the learners expect to achieve. This work used qualitative methodology together with methods such as questionnaires, observation, and semi-structured interviews to discover the influence of games in speaking classes. The data collected was analyzed in a descriptive way. The results from this innovation prove that using games in speaking English is one of the effective methods to help students be more confident and remember vocabulary. The university the researcher carried out her research is located in Tan Phu District called Ho Chi Minh City University of Food Industry (HUFI). It is a moderate campus where the researcher has spent nearly six years teaching English.

Keywords: Game; Speaking; Aspiration

#### 1 Introduction

Speaking is the main topic of the assignment because it is one of the most crucial abilities that students want to develop. This study used a qualitative approach with tools including questionnaires, observations, and semi-structured interviews to look into the effects of games in speaking classes. The gathered information underwent descriptive analysis. The results of this experiment show that utilizing games to practice speaking English is one of the best ways to give pupils confidence and help them remember terminologies.

Prior to the 1990s, there was a significant push in Vietnam for the study of Russia, and numerous university students participated in this movement. English was not given much attention at the time by learners. In order to suit the demands of the entire population, English study quickly spread throughout Vietnam in the wake of the political events in the Soviet Union. However, for a very long time in Vietnam, students were more concerned with grammar and structure than they were with conversational fluency. The focus on pupils' English communication skills has increased in recent years. Speaking has become one of the most crucial abilities in English studies as a

This research was conducted at the University of Ho Chi Minh City, 140 Tan Phu District, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh City University of Food Industry is its name (HUFI). It is a moderate campus where the researcher has taught English for over six years. It is one of Ho Chi Minh City's first universities, training students in a variety of majors. In the late 1990s, the university was regarded as a success in terms of both scale and quality in training for the aforementioned jobs. Students at this school, in particular, and throughout the country in general, need to learn English in order to get jobs.

Students at the school can enrol in morning, afternoon, or evening courses, which are scheduled to provide a suitable and comfortable learning environment. Tables, chairs, a TV, a cassette player, a microphone, a computer, a projector, air conditioning, and Internet access are all available in classrooms. English is a compulsory subject at the school, with three levels. Each level is worth three credits.

The researcher found that games are very helpful in speaking throughout the educational process, and she used a variety of motivational techniques to inspire her pupils, including group work, pair work, discussion,



visual aids, and games. They benefit pupils in the speaking class since they are more self-assured and have a wider vocabulary. She used the four games: "Lucky Number," "Start with the tags," "Who are you?" and "What's your job?" in the research.

#### 2 Literature review

Games are "the fun factor," according to a number of researchers, including (Warschauer & Healey, 1998), (Watkins, 2011), (Pauschenwein *et al.*, 2013), and (Johnson, 2007). They also claim that they are practical and enjoyable tools for students to improve their grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and discourse development.

In their study on the fear of learning a foreign language among EFL elementary school children in Taiwan, Chan and Wu (2004) involved 601 students throughout a vast zone of 18 classrooms spread across nine educational districts. Nine English teachers were also questioned about the idea. Students' anxiety and language learning in English classes were investigated and proven through questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and document collecting. The authors advise teachers, students, and parents to lessen their concern about learning a foreign language in light of the study's findings. In order to ascertain and improve the validity of the provided matters, the triangulation strategy was applied in this study. The goals of the study focused on elements that affect students' performance, including anxiousness.

According to (Riahipour & Saba, 2012), vocabulary knowledge affects students' capacity to fully participate in both social and academic routines. Learning a foreign language is related to vocabulary knowledge. The use of games to include students in educational activities in an English for Special Purposes (ESP) lesson was examined by two authors. From 60 nursing majors at Shahrecord Azard University, they randomly chose 42 to participate in the form of a questionnaire. Two groups of participants were formed. While the second group employed conventional techniques, the first group played games.

The efficiency of game learning in the first group in comparison to the conventional group was shown by the authors using covariant analysis. In a typical class, the teacher is the only one who speaks; the students simply listen and take notes as she explains the subject, gives out exercises, and assigns assignments. Through games, the other group received instruction. Students were asked to guess the new words using three games: Relay Word Building, Crossing Puzzles, and Guessing Game. Despite starting from the same places, the study discovered that students who participated in games in ESL classes fared better than the conventional group in terms of vocabulary growth. They took pleasure in the motivation, competition, and laid-back nature of the games and learned the information rapidly in a stress-free setting.

For those who desire to expand their knowledge, learning a foreign language is crucial. Languages like French, English, and others are in the same boat. COŞKUN, (2013) provided an overview of the development of educational games as well as their influence on the success of German instruction in Turkey's elementary and secondary schools. "Marble games" were employed by the author to teach language to the students. Wooden blocks, word lists, student handout sheets, and referee sheets were among the supplies used in this study. A total of 80 students who selected German as their second language participated in the data collection process.

Selective absentees from classes were disqualified. After the preliminary test, the final test, the observation, and the photography, the T-test structure was employed for analysis. The study adopted a qualitative methodology. The author of this paper gave a thorough explanation of the "Marble game's" development, history, and operational parameters. The research also explained how to create Marble games and the experience of this kind of activity in a very straightforward way. The results showed that the educational marble game was successful in helping students acquire languages, not just English but also other languages.

COŞKUN, (2013) and (Riahipour & Saba, 2012) investigated the efficacy of games in language acquisition, particularly vocabulary knowledge, using both conventional approaches and game-based learning. The aforementioned researchers' investigations had the same objectives, despite the fact that they did not employ the same techniques for data collection and analysis. Preschoolers, elementary school kids, and secondary school students can all greatly benefit from playing educational games.

As a result, whether learning English, French, or German, the researcher understood how crucial games are. She put in an application to instruct college students in English. Games in the foreign language classroom, according to Watkins, (2011), are very helpful tools that lower student anxiety in class, promote interaction, and give students an authentic setting in which to use the language.

In this paper, the researcher initially discussed issues with students before using games to assist them become more effective communicators. She completed research on the effects of the games she used in her lessons on the speaking students' vocabulary and confidence (Johnson, 2007).

#### 2.1 Research Questions

The survey sought to answer the following research questions in order to fulfil the study's purpose:

- 1. What challenges do non-major students face in a speaking class?
- 2. How can games be used to help students overcome their weaknesses in a speaking class?

# 3 Materials and Methods/ Methodology

## 3.1 Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The researcher chose English 1-2226 and English 2422, two of the classes she has been teaching this semester, to focus her research on. Tourism is the primary focus of the first class, while marketing is the second. They will be employed as tour guides, hotel managers, salespeople, or marketers. Despite not being a major topic, English is crucial. Each class has 50 pupils, with 27 females and 23 men who are between the ages of 18 and 20. They are practically single and far away from their family. During their High School and Secondary School years, they took English classes. For the elementary and pre-intermediate levels, teachers at HUFI were tasked with developing a curriculum based on the LIFEs released by National Geographic.

## 3.2 Data gathering and analysis.

It is hard to determine whether to utilize qualitative or quantitative techniques since both have strengths and drawbacks that can help researchers address the given problems (Dahlberg & McCaig, 2010).

Qualitative research enables researchers to take a close look at the world, discover the covered reality, and comprehend the social realities (Flick, 2009). Unlike quantitative methodologies, qualitative methodologies assist researchers in discovering multiple realities that change while they are being observed. Furthermore, perceptions of something change as a result of human history, cultures, interests, beliefs, and so on (Hinchey, 2008).

Because of the advantages of using a qualitative technique, the researcher applied this technique to do her research to determine whether games are useful for teaching English. The usefulness of games in English speaking, specifically how participants are impacted by the games organized in their speaking class, was described in general and detail using this method by Dahlberg and McCaig (2010). She can look closely at her surroundings using a qualitative approach, and it also helps her think of solutions to issues (Hinchey, 2008). Additionally, during the research time, she was able to investigate broad and in-depth responses from students thanks to the qualitative methodology and relevant techniques.

In order to determine the answers to the research questions, it is important to carefully analyse the objectives before selecting a certain approach (Smith & Bowers-Brown, 2010). Three separate data

collection techniques were used in her study: a questionnaire, observations, and semi-structured interviews. Due to the three diverse approaches she used to study her research issue and her confidence in her conclusions, these data sources were reliable and legitimate (Hinchey, 2008).

The questionnaire survey is one of the best research tools. Despite the subjectivity of student comments and opinions, this approach can give academics insightful information about a pertinent problem (Trong Tuan, 2011). Additionally, students will find it simpler to answer truthfully a rationally constructed questionnaire (Madsa, 2012), and the researcher will gather fruitful data for the study. She developed a questionnaire to find out what issues students were having in class and what improvements they made to their vocabulary and confidence by playing games in class.

The researcher randomly selected 15 pupils from each class to take part in her questionnaire survey. The poll started with personal data. There are eight questions about general English information, including speaking proficiency, time spent studying the language, and learner opinions about the language. English-language statements describe the challenges students are having, such as their vocabulary gaps, learning styles, and other personal issues.

Four weeks after the games' application, the survey was given again. Personal data was first asked. Four questions asked students their opinions on games in general. One inquiry was on the kinds of games played in class. Regarding the expansion of students' vocabulary, three questions were posed. Three inquiries regarding the responses of players to games. After the games were over in two classes, this questionnaire was given out. The questions posed at the beginning of the research were addressed using both the questionnaire survey and the observation approach.

This is a frequent research methodology that may require the researcher to participate directly in activities, especially in school settings (Smith & Bowers-Brown, 2010). From week two to week five, the instructor attentively watched and recorded all of the game-related actions in two classes. At this point, the researcher utilized the checklist to record all the data. There were several items on the checklist that she wanted to collect information about. It contained the time and date of the observation, the class that was picked, how many students took part, and the game that was played. She kept dividing the list into five columns.

It listed the topic that had been noticed in the first column, the level of reflection from the pupils (much, slightly, or not at all), and any notes or comments made by the teacher. Every time the researcher used a game, she closely watched student development to determine if their attitudes and communication skills were developing. Using observational approaches, she found student comments on games as well as other data sources about students' development through games. The semi-structured interview, which consists of a list of questions created by the researcher, is a popular technique (Smith & Bowers-Brown, 2010).

Although the research predetermines the issue's inquiries, it also allows respondents the chance and time to explain their opinions on connected issues as open-ended answers (Hinchey, 2008). With the topic guide and suggestions, she investigated the effect of games on student vocabulary and confidence growth using a semi-structured interview method (Patton & Cochran, 2002). In contrast to the questionnaire, the interview format let her gain a deeper understanding of how each kid was progressing through open-ended questions. For instance, the interview's fifth question helped her better comprehend what students had to say about the success of the word game "Lucky Number." She spoke with seven students who regularly took part in questionnaire surveys in addition to the data from the questionnaire. Students consequently had chances to communicate their various perspectives on the issue.

#### 4 Results and Discussion

Through three sources- a questionnaire, classroom observation, and an open-ended interview-the researcher learned some important discoveries regarding her problems. After only a brief period of game-based learning, they were student difficulties and progress.

## 4.1 Student problems in speaking classes before using games

All respondents to the questionnaire said they love communicating in English, had studied the language for a long time, and think it is essential to do so now. The majority of pupils said they spoke English poorly when asked about their speaking ability. They acknowledged that speaking English left them feeling insecure. Because they believed they had a limited vocabulary and could not recall the language utilizing the teacher's methods, 60% of students claimed they were hesitant to speak to partners. A small percentage of them said their lack of confidence was a result of both internal and external factors. While some students indicated worry about their pronunciation, several students reported uncertainty about grammatical structures, and the vast majority of their students did not

# 4.2 Student improvement

More than 80% of the students who responded to a questionnaire said they had fun playing the games in speaking class. They acknowledged their pleasure in games and the value of playing them in the speaking session. Participants said that they were able to remember words they had studied for a long period when they took part in games. They did not discuss other people's perspectives, like those of their instructors or friends. Some pupils claimed to be aware of the advantages of games for enhancing vocabulary. However, they lacked the confidence or readiness to participate. It was simpler for them to talk when they were trained to do so in front of the class than it had been in the past. Games helped them communicate more openly as a result.

The observation indicated that students were playing games and waiting impatiently for their turns. Most pupils showed their excitement for the events. They had fun while playing games. With the teacher's support, they had more opportunities to regularly engage in these activities where English was used. The method of observation also showed considerable growth in the use of English. 13 per cent of the students in the game class were still uneasy, though, even after four weeks of playing games.

In an open-ended interview, students admitted that one of the reasons they lost their vocabulary was due to a lack of practice chances and some classes that were not engaging enough for them to participate in. The majority of students said they felt confident and found it simple to speak English after the use of games. The researcher interviewed some passive learners in-depth in order to learn more about them; they admitted that they had changed, but not much. They said that four weeks of games wasn't enough and that one game session a day wasn't enough to practice English. They still had a fear of receiving praise from their teacher and fellow students. These students argued that kids get more eager to learn the more games the teacher used. Most of the students who participated in the interview said they had fun playing the games and discovered they could speak English without thinking about it. Additionally, there were some remarks made by participants regarding various game kinds. They believed that more words would have been retained if games had been made in a colourful and enticing way.

#### 4.3 Discussion

The researcher looked into the obstacles that students faced and thought about the approach that would work best in her actual setting to help them with their speaking abilities. For her, playing games was the best course of action. The games that she employed in her research were developed to be suitable for both the lesson's subject matter and its educational goals. To improve vocabulary and confidence, teachers must

make sure that pupils may take part in games. Different games, including "Lucky Number," "Start with the tags," "Who are you?" and "What's your job?" were played in two classes.

The "Lucky Number" game was scheduled to be played first. With the intention of encouraging all students in two courses to participate in game activities, the games were utilized more progressively to help students remember the terminology and to speak more confidently. They were more engaged in the games the more they played. They wanted to communicate in English more as their interest in games increased. Students have the chance to take part in a fun, engaging, and competitive learning environment where they can recollect the words they have studied and feel free to respond to questions (Maribel *et al.*, 2007).

The researcher learned from checklists and interviews with students in two courses that students did not pay attention to class activities when there were no games present. During the game, players were engrossed in various activities. Participants did not pay much attention to the games during the first game, but they showed more interest in the second game when she provided vivid, visual images that were related to the game. Through the game's latter levels, these adjustments kept pupils interested. As a result, she came to the realization that in order to accomplish the goals of this game, the visual graphics must be increased.

In the game "Start with the Tags," players must concentrate carefully in order to find the solution fast during their turns. The teacher in this game should be an experienced mentor who has complete control over all events. He or she had to exhort students to locate the following solutions as quickly as feasible. In reaction to hints from their opponents, players had to respond fast to avoid losing their chance. Though the passive students did nothing and believed their only purpose was to fill the required number of participants, the good students were the major characters in the games.

The researcher altered the game's rules after taking into account the checklist from the first game. She asked that a leader be designated for each team to oversee all team activities. A person would be kicked out of the group if they didn't talk about the game or voice their opinions on it. Therefore, each team needs a leader in order to boost participation. The "What's the job?" game is made to help students review the terminology they learned about various jobs in the previous lesson. This game did a great job of helping students retain material, especially how to identify comparable occupations. All participants said that this game was the most fascinating as long as they could meet the aims of reusing vocabulary and feeling at ease in activities when questioned in Question 3 of the questionnaire, "Which form of the used game do you like best?" They did not need to give their application of the knowledge much attention. But after watching two courses, the researcher found that the incentives in this game—such as honours, gorgeous presents, or prizes—increased players' desire.

Because they had to elicit the information using 5 Yes/No questions, students were able to speak significantly more in the game "Who are you?" than they had in the prior games. They were investigators searching for the individual holding the stolen goods. The players aided the information pertaining to the keepers by speculating and seeking the aid of their colleagues. The investigator learned that if he could recover the lost item after 5 questions, he would win, and if he couldn't, he would lose.

The researcher carefully considered the playing steps of the students using the teacher checklist before adjusting the number of students in each team so that many players could play roles and other players could support their friends. She came to the conclusion that it was essential to divide the class into small groups with the right number of participants.

She conducted games in accordance with the predetermined teaching tactics while using games (Lucky Number, start with the Tags, What's the Job, and Who are you) one at a time to increase student vocabulary and confidence. However, the actual context happened, thus things need to be carefully taken into account. Through observation, she found that the order of the games needs to be switched up every four weeks if the teacher wants the children to retain and recall the terminology they have just acquired. As an illustration,

the game "What's the Job?" should be played first since it directly relates to the career terms that students had just finished studying the prior time. Students loved this game because it allowed them to consolidate their vocabulary while paying attention, according to the survey's results. The second song would be "Start with the Tags," which would aid students in remembering the words. The following phrase would be "Lucky number," and "Who are you?" would follow it.

The data collection procedures were quite reasonable and appropriate in terms of student evaluation strategies. When the researcher used games, she diligently noted every detail in the checklists, keeping track of every participant's activity as well as the setting. At the conclusion of every game, she used questionnaires and then interviews to fully comprehend all relevant facts. The information from the questionnaires revealed several points or difficulties that needed clarification, so she used an open-ended interview to do so. The video games she used for her research were arranged. She used to explore a variety of games, including online and computer games, but they were not allowed in her institution. All of the tasks in her games were completed by the teacher and participants themselves, beginning to end. This indicates that after participants grasped the game's rules through the teacher's presentation, they were able to exert control over all circumstances and feel secure in all actions. Data from surveys, observations, and interviews showed that games helped children build confidence and recall terminology.

To respond to the inquiry, "How did games utilized by IES teachers affect students' confidence in speaking classes?" she used three data-gathering techniques, such as the triangulation model, where the outcomes from the three sources of data were quite similar. The information she gathered showed that playing these kinds of activities helped students in speaking class feel more confident and retain terminology. The majority of pupils, according to the survey's findings, increased their vocabulary, felt more secure playing games, and were more comfortable utilizing it in class. They did not care what people thought of them. Based on data analysis, the researcher was able to confirm that employing games in her speaking sessions greatly enhanced students' use of English as well as their confidence levels.

Additionally, most of the students who participated in the interview gave reasons for why they did not feel comfortable speaking in class. One of their causes was a lack of vocabulary due to insufficient practice chances and occasionally dull class activities. As a result of the games' motivation and excitement, they were able to solidify their vocabulary and gain more self-assurance in speaking class. They were also worried about courses without games in the future. They complained that there was not enough time for games and that the speaking lesson needed to be extended to include additional activities.

## 5 Conclusions

The researcher knew going into the study that some things would get in the way, like time, student mood, and games. She made every effort to maintain the finest health possible so that she could finish her coursework. However, a few problems came up and ruined her intentions. Participants in her study of reluctant attitudes came from two classes. For instance, during game time, students engaged in activities they found enjoyable rather than concentrating on the games she employed. She had to halt the game several times to get their attention during the game. She frequently exercised her rights as a teacher to demand that her pupils pay attention, or she used gaming outcomes as one of the recognized grades to attract additional participants. In the event that she employs games in her speaking lessons more frequently in the future, she will use the game scores as the subject's official results.

The second problem the researcher ran into while conducting her investigation was the obtained data. The interviewees were picked at random, as was already mentioned. As a result, several of the acquired data could not be used in her research because three of the questionnaires were not fully filled out. A small subset of pupils with poor attitudes toward active learning provided these data. Since the games were

Series: AIJR Proceedings ISSN: 2582-3922 primarily for her research, they were played for six weeks, including two weeks for data collecting. Only four weeks were allotted for the games. Students argued that they required additional time to play games. As a result, the researcher will promote this topic to her school and create a strategy using games as an official part of the curriculum.

The researcher used four different games for two distinct classes during game time. She found that even if she modified the substance of each game to be appropriate for the lesson, her students would get bored after a prolonged repeat of one form based on data from observations, surveys, and interviews. She is going to get together with her co-workers to come up with more ideas for gaming sources. As a result, if games help students achieve their learning goals, she will use them to motivate her students to speak. Additionally, if the researcher keeps using games to innovate her teaching strategies, she will use oral exams to assess whether or not her students are developing their speaking abilities.

Because it was crucial to show respect for participants and maintain secrecy in order to protect subjects and participants, the researcher focused on the ethical issue in her research (de Wet, 2010). Using the questionnaire and interview she did as a basis, she presented clear and comprehensive information. She consequently had full support from her school as well as her students. She deliberately requested the consent form from her interview subjects before starting the gathering. Additionally, references were appropriately quoted in line with the study's goals.

Vietnamese students are increasingly striving to study English in order to meet their personal goals as the social pressure to do so grows. Fluency is one of the first critical abilities in learning English and is extensively emphasized in the communicative approach. All Vietnamese language instructors used cutting-edge strategies to assist pupils in honing their English skills in order to accomplish that goal. Involved in that movement was me. It can be challenging at times to teach her students English in a practical context. With a moderate campus, the researcher chose and implemented the most appropriate teaching methods. For a long time at this university, she found it extremely important for her students to play games to increase their confidence in speaking as well as vocabulary because the games used had all of the factors that a speaking class required.

#### 6 Declarations

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