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CONCENTRATION ON TEACHING**

**The Influence of Gamified Speaking Activities on Oral Expression Skills in Seventh-
Grade EFL Learners at Liceo Hernán Zamora Elizondo: A Study Using Speed
Speaking and Taboo Games**

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, whose love and perseverance have always guided me. To my students, who remind me every day that teaching is not only about knowledge but about hope and transformation. And to all educators committed to making learning inclusive and meaningful.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to my family, especially my father José Manuel Vargas Bermúdez and my mother Marlen Arias Rodríguez, for their unconditional support and encouragement, which gave me strength to complete this work. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Universidad Internacional de las Americas for providing the academic environment that made this research possible. My sincere thanks to my thesis advisor, Ramiro Ramírez Jiménez, for their guidance, patience, and valuable feedback throughout this process. Finally, I also thank my classmates for making some of them became friends and students from Liceo Hernan Zamora Elizondo, whose enthusiasm for learning inspired many of the ideas developed here.

Abstract

The teaching of English as a foreign language in secondary education requires innovative strategies that promote active participation and the development of oral expression. This thesis analyzes the impact of gamification, specifically through speaking activities such as speed speaking and taboo games, on seventh-grade students from Liceo Hernán Zamora Elizondo.

The study is based on a methodological design that combines a literature review with the implementation of gamified activities in the classroom, evaluating changes in fluency, vocabulary, and oral confidence. The results show that the incorporation of playful dynamics fosters students' motivation, enjoyment, and engagement, contributing to the strengthening of their communicative skills in English. The research provides pedagogical proposals that integrate theory and practice, offering effective alternatives for teachers in foreign language teaching contexts.

Resumen

La enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera en secundaria requiere estrategias innovadoras que promuevan la participación activa y el desarrollo de la expresión oral. Esta tesina analiza el impacto de la gamificación, específicamente a través dinámicas del habla como lo son las de speed speaking y taboo games, en estudiantes de séptimo grado del Liceo Hernán Zamora Elizondo.

El estudio se fundamenta en un diseño metodológico que combina revisión bibliográfica y aplicación de actividades gamificadas en el aula, evaluando cambios en fluidez, vocabulario y confianza oral. Los resultados evidencian que la incorporación de dinámicas lúdicas fomenta la motivación, el disfrute y el compromiso de los estudiantes, contribuyendo al fortalecimiento de sus habilidades comunicativas en inglés. La investigación aporta propuestas pedagógicas que integran teoría y práctica, ofreciendo alternativas efectivas para docentes en contextos de enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras.

Chapter I

Introductory Framework

The main educational purpose of this work is to provide insight into how gamification can be an effective tool for improving students' speaking skills by using various techniques such as speed speaking and Taboo games, which are designed to motivate students to learn and improve in a more dynamic and enjoyable way, rather than through the more demanding traditional strategies of teaching English. In addition, it is also necessary to highlight the great importance of students' motivation when facing the challenge of mastering a second language, since when expressing themselves orally, they must have the confidence and appropriate knowledge of the subject to communicate effectively, both for themselves and for the evaluator of these oral skills.

Gamification is based on the principle of being an educational strategy that involves using game methodology by presenting a challenge, a way to carry out the activity, and sometimes a reward incentive for the enjoyment of the participants, although the latter must be carefully considered so that it does not become the primary motivator for students when knowledge should be the main driver. According to Ismaili (2025), gamification places language learning at the core of the educational experience, overcoming the limitations of conventional methods that often struggle to maintain students' attention.

In current education, there is a greater perspective on dynamic learning as opposed to the more mechanical approach offered by traditional methods, where students may not be able to express themselves as freely or may not find the lesson presented in the classroom engaging. Therefore, gamification has the advantage of being inherently appealing when conducting small competitions, whether they are group-based or individual, depending on the technique being used. Additionally, depending on the age range of the group participating in the activity, it is perceived as an enjoyable form of entertainment for children, and to break the educational routine for adolescents.

When discussing mastery of a second language, it is important to consider an extremely essential factor: motivation, as it allows the person to have the vision and desire

to successfully complete their learning. In the words of Educational Process Internacional Journal (2025), the motivation of EFL learners can be understood as a continuum that expands from externally regulated behaviors to intrinsic drive, and its maintenance is crucial for achieving lasting success. The fear of making mistakes, bad experiences, and boredom are the main reasons why students gradually lose motivation throughout their experience with a second language. Therefore, one of the many responsibilities of teachers is to maintain and increase this motivation, starting from the premise that they must inform students that making mistakes is acceptable and that mispronouncing something or forgetting a word during conversation is not a defeat. Classroom activities counteract boredom. A positive classroom environment provides motivation, and the result is a class in harmony with both its participants and the material being presented.

This study aims to unequivocally demonstrate that innovative teaching methodologies are more practical and sustainable than traditional ones. Besides this, it highlights those speaking skills in a second language require not only grammar and continuous practice but also genuine motivation. This is so both within the students themselves and in the environment where it originates and is nurtured, and the classrooms where students arrive each day to learn concepts they will use throughout their lives.

Problem Statement

Despite the curricular emphasis on communicative competence, learners of English as a Foreign Language often struggle with low motivation and limited oral participation. Traditional teaching methods, which prioritize grammar and written exercise, frequently fail to engage students and do not provide sufficient opportunities for meaningful oral practice. This situation results in anxiety, reluctance to speak, and a gap between expected language outcomes and actual classroom performance. Gamification has emerged as a promising pedagogical approach to addressing these challenges, as it integrates games-based elements that foster motivation, engagement, and active participation. However, there is still a lack of applied research examining how gamified activities can effectively enhance oral expression and sustain motivation in EFL classrooms.

Although the Ministry of Public Education (MEP) has proposed new measures for the integration of new dynamics in the classrooms, so that not only books and notebooks can be used for learning, but there has also been no concrete action toward the approval or accreditation of these proposals. Therefore, teachers must adhere to the regulations of the MEP curriculum, which has a stronger focus on traditional methods rather than innovative ones, resulting in stagnation in education that has persisted for many years and is hindering students' engagement with learning. Consequently, in seeking various solutions, the following research question is proposed:

What is the impact of gamified speaking activities, specifically speed speaking and Taboo games on oral expression skills in seventh- grade EFL learners in Liceo Hernan Zamora Elizondo?

In addition to the main research question, this work aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do speed speaking and Taboo games influence fluency in oral expression?
2. What effect do these gamifications strategies have on accuracy and vocabulary use?
3. How do students perceive the use of gamified speaking activities in improving their oral skills?

General Objective

- To determine the impact of gamified speaking activities, specifically speed speaking and Taboo games on the oral expression skills of seventh- grade EFL students at Liceo Hernán Zamora Elizondo.

Specific Objectives

- To design gamified speaking activities, such as speed speaking and the Taboo games, intended for seventh-grade EFL students.
- To carry out the gamified activities within the classroom setting to facilitate student interaction and oral production.

- To assess changes in students' oral fluency, vocabulary use, and speaking confidence before and after the implementation of these strategies.
- To compare students' perceptions of motivation, enjoyment, and engagement when learning English through gamified speaking activities versus traditional instructional methods.

Justification

This research is convenient because it addresses a persistent challenge in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom: the lack of motivation and limited oral participation among learners. Traditional teaching methods often emphasize grammar and written exercises, leaving oral expression underdeveloped and students disengaged. By exploring gamification as a pedagogical strategy, this study provides a timely and practical response to the need for innovative approaches that foster active participation, reduce anxiety, and enhance communicative competence. The investigation is therefore aligned with current educational priorities that seek to integrate creativity, technology, and learner-centered methodologies into language teaching.

The relevance of this work lies in its potential benefits for multiple stakeholders. For teachers, it offers concrete strategies to make their lessons more dynamic and effective, helping them overcome the limitations of traditional methods. For students, it provides opportunities to engage in meaningful oral practice in a motivating and enjoyable way, which can strengthen both their confidence and their language proficiency. For educational institutions, the research contributes to the improvement of teaching practices and supports curricular goals related to communicative competence. Finally, for the academic community, this study enriches the ongoing discussion about gamification in language learning, offering evidence-based insights into its motivational and pedagogical value.

The practical significance of this research rests on demonstrating how gamified strategies can be purposefully integrated into EFL instruction to strengthen oral communication. Rather than focusing solely on grammar or written skills, this study emphasizes the value of interactive techniques, specifically speed speaking and taboo games as tools to foster fluency, spontaneity, and learner engagement.

Speed speaking provides learners with structured opportunities to practice rapid oral production, helping them to overcome hesitation and build confidence in real-time communication. Taboo game, in contrast, challenges students to employ alternative vocabulary and communicative strategies, thereby stimulating creativity and reinforcing lexical knowledge. Together, these activities transform oral practice into a dynamic process that encourages active participation and sustained motivation.

From a broader perspective, this investigation contributes to the refinement of pedagogical approaches in EFL by positioning gamification not only as a motivational resource but also as a method for enhancing communicative competence. It extends existing scholarships by offering evidence of how specific gamified activities can be systematically applied to improve oral skills. Methodologically, it provides a replicable framework for designing and assessing gamified speaking tasks, which can be adapted to diverse educational contexts. In practical terms, the value of this research goes in its potential to enrich classroom dynamics, making language learning more effective, engaging, and aligned with contemporary educational goals.

Antecedents

The integration of gamification into EFL classrooms has been increasingly explored in recent years as a response to the challenges of low motivation and limited oral participation. Several studies provide valuable insights that serve as the foundation for this research.

As a first antecedent, a study entitled ***Gamification in Education: An Overview of Literature*** explains the concept of gamification was first introduced in 2002 and gained widespread attention in educational context after 2010, as scholars began to explore its potential to transform traditional learning paradigms (Hebebe & Alan, 2021). Gamification has been studied for several years, highlighting how it has been implemented as one of the most revolutionary techniques for second language education, although it still has not been officially recognized as a teaching method in the curricula of educational institutions.

The second antecedent is an investigation entitled *Gamification: Trends and Opportunities in Language Teaching and Learning Practices* that claims that in the field of language education, gamification has been increasingly adopted to make learning more interactive and engaging, integrating game-like features into classroom practices (Nilubol & Sitthitikul, 2023). This study is an example of the advantages that gamification offers in the development of lesson content, as it presents a more engaging proposal, and it could even be said to be more open to what occurs in the more common and everyday context in which people using a foreign language live, by incorporating real situations or experiences to create gamification dynamics.

The third antecedent from China entitled *Review of Research on Motivation and EFL Students' Speaking Performance* is related to motivation, and to how it has been consistently identified as a decisive factor in the development of oral competence in EFL learners. Recent studies confirm that sustained motivation directly enhances speaking performance, highlighting its vital role in communicative achievement (Zhang, 2024). Without the motivation to speak, it is highly unlikely that students will be able to express themselves fluently, as they lack both confidence and experience in developing speaking skills. Therefore, this article emphasizes the significant importance for an EFL student of maintaining motivation throughout their language mastery process.

As fourth antecedent from Mexico, there is research entitled *A Comparative Study of Discussions, Debates, and Oral Presentations in Enhancing EFL Learners' Oral Proficiency* related to how interactive methodologies such as debates, discussions, and oral presentations have proven to be effective in strengthening oral proficiency. Comparative research demonstrates that these innovative techniques surpass traditional methods by fostering active participation and communicative confidence (González, 2024). Oral expressions in the classroom should be given more importance than grammar and writing; therefore, this study shows that the different strategies for speaking skills in a foreign language improve considerably when applied consistently and with proper feedback.

Finally, as a fifth antecedent, now found in Costa Rican, the investigation entitled *English Language Teaching in Costa Rica: Reflections on Emergent Challenges* is related to how emergent challenges in English language teaching in Costa Rica have been

identified as critical factors influencing the effectiveness of second language acquisition. Their reflections emphasize the need for innovative methodologies to sustain learner motivation and oral participation, underscoring the importance of adapting teaching practices to contemporary educational demands (Zúñiga & Barrantes, 2021). As it is well known, Costa Rica has Spanish as its first language; therefore, it is essential that EFL students always keep in mind the goals they aim to achieve for the second language. This study precisely reflects that, whether the motivations are short-, medium-, or long-term, they must remain consistent and progressively increase.

Scope

1. To analyze the challenges that EFL learners face in oral expression, particularly regarding motivation, anxiety, and participation in classroom contexts.
2. To evaluate the limitations of traditional teaching methods in fostering oral communication and sustained learner engagement.
3. To examine the role of innovative strategies, such as gamification, in enhancing motivation and promoting active oral practice.
4. To implement gamified speaking techniques, specifically speed speaking and taboo games, to observe their impact on learners' oral performance.
5. To assess how speed speaking activities contribute to fluency, spontaneity, and confidence in oral production.
6. To investigate the effectiveness of taboo games in stimulating vocabulary retrieval, creativity, and communicative strategies among EFL learners.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

This chapter aims to establish the theoretical framework that underpins this research. Through the review and analysis of recent academic approaches, models, and contributions, it seeks to build a solid conceptual foundation that allows for understanding the pedagogical and methodological principles related to the topic of study. This section not only ensures the main theoretical perspectives but also provides a reference point for personally interpreting the findings of the topic being presented. In this way, it is ensured that the study is not limited to isolated practice but rather engages with existing scientific research and contributes to the construction of knowledge in the educational field.

Foundations of Learning

In the context of foreign language teaching, the foundations of learning are particularly relevant, as they provide theoretical foundations for designing strategies that promote motivation, active participation, and the development of communicative skills. It is ensured that the objectives of the study, such as improving oral expression through innovative approaches, are supported by solid and widely recognized pedagogical principles.

Various authors agree that understanding the foundations of learning is essential to link practice with established theories, as indicated by Stanovich & Cunningham (1992; as cited in Erdoğan, 2025) “Thus, it is accurate to say that the most essential aspect of learning vocabulary in a second language is context” (p 884). This perspective emphasizes that learning cannot be understood as an isolated process, but rather as a complex construction that integrates multiple dimensions. Authors such as Ellis, (1997), Ijaz, (1986), Jiang, (2000), as cited in Erdoğan, (2025) establish that learners of English as a foreign language tend to rely on the semantic frameworks of their native language, which complicates vocabulary acquisition if sufficient context is not provided. The aim here is to argue that the foundations for learning English should be approached with an achievement-oriented

mindset from the very beginning, depending on the goals one wishes to reach, so that the students can improve and express themselves effectively in the second language.

Constructivist Paradigm

The constructivist paradigm maintains that learning is an active process in which students construct meanings based on their prior experiences and interactions with their environment. From this perspective, knowledge is not passively transmitted, but it is constantly reconstructed through participation, reflection, and dialogue. Classical authors such as Piaget and Vygotsky laid the foundations of this approach, emphasizing the importance of mental activity and the social context in the formation of cognitive structures.

In more recent research, it is emphasized that constructivism promotes meaningful learning, in which students develop skills by relating updated content to their previous knowledge. As Almulla (2023) explained, the constructivist approach suggests that learning environments should promote active student participation, encouraging problem-solving and critical thinking. Instead of receiving information passively, learners become the protagonists of the process, developing cognitive and creative skills that strengthen their academic performance, which reinforces the idea of participatory and autonomous learning. Additionally, Taber (2024) emphasizes that “knowledge must be constructed by the learner using available interpretive resources, and without well-designed teaching, learners are likely to misconstrue instruction” (p. 1534), highlighting the importance of pedagogical design in guiding the construction of meaning.

This paradigm is particularly relevant for foreign language teaching, as it promotes the creation of environments where students actively participate in building their communicative skills. By placing the learner at the center of the process, it encourages autonomy, motivation, and the ability to transfer what has been learned to real interaction contexts. Within the framework of this research, constructivism provides a theoretical foundation that supports the implementation of innovative strategies, such as gamification, by recognizing that learning is enhanced when students engage in dynamic, collaborative, and contextualized activities.

Experiential Learning Model

When discussing English language learning as a progressive and dynamic process, the experiential learning model, created by David A. Kolb, is a clear and illustrative example of how an educational system should approach second language teaching. The experiential learning model focuses on learning English not only by memorizing grammar and vocabulary but also by experiencing real-life situations that are meaningful to the students.

To provide some further context, this model consists of four stages. The first one is concrete experience, where students participate in an activity based on a realistic situation, such as a research project, a performance, or even a game. The second stage is called reflective observation, where students analyze and identify what went well and the difficulties encountered during the activity. The third stage is known as abstract conceptualization, where they develop theories or definitions based on their experience in the activity. Finally, the fourth stage, called active experimentation, is where students apply their theories with the new knowledge to try to achieve a better result. As Hidayat & Syahidin, (2019, as cited in Susiloningsih, Mohamad & Marini, 2023) mention: “With this concept, it is hoped that learning outcomes are more meaningful for students. The learning process takes place naturally in the form of working and experiencing student activities, not the transfer of knowledge from teacher to student” (p 550).

For this study, it is important to explain this concept, as it allows us to implement the ideologies regarding gamification that we want to expand upon in this research. Furthermore, it emphasizes the thinking skills that are highly required for learning English, both in terms of visualizing or interpreting a learning situation and in developing skills through gamified activities to gain more knowledge in realistic practice.

In the words of Dianita & Tiarani (2023) “Based on the importance of having 21st century abilities such as critical thinking skills and creative thinking skills, while the facts on the ground there are still many students who experience difficulties in developing critical and creative thinking skills” (p 329). This highlights the importance of teaching not only providing concepts and expecting students to learn them without continuous practice,

but also that students need more stimuli so that knowledge is not tedious or, even worse, more complicated when it should not be the case.

Sociocultural Perspective

A term that is not explained as frequently but is a very important aspect of teaching is the sociocultural perspective, promoted by Lev Vygotsky, which describes learning as a social and cultural interaction where students have interactions with others, which is the most essential thing when it comes to developing their linguistic skills. In words of Vygotsky (1978, as cited in Liu, 2026) “This theory’s central claim is that, rather than developing internally, higher-level psychological functions in humans are developed through engagement in sociocultural activities and the use of cultural instruments, especially language as a mediator” (p 33). The sociocultural perspective has several principles that describe what this research aims to convey.

The first principle explains the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which states that students perform better when they interact with their peers, regardless of whether the peers or the student themselves have a lower, equal, or higher level of understanding, allowing them to provide mutual support. The second principle describes language as a social tool, asserting that language is not simply about following a set of grammar and phonetics rules, but rather about constructing a dialogue that is both shared and reflective, enabling the sharing of experiences and beliefs that distinguish us from others. The third principle explains mediated learning, which means that group dynamics influence how students internalize English by making them feel identified with, recognized by, or exposed to new perspectives.

Finally, the fourth principle describes how collaboration and community enhance cooperative activities by fostering and practicing mutual support and collective knowledge. Liu (2026) highlights “In this process, social interaction is essential. The “zone of proximal development” refers to the difference between a student’s actual developmental level (achievable by individual problem-solving) and their potential developmental level (achievable with adult aid or collaboration with more capable classmates)” (p 33). Each of

these principles reveals the purpose of this research, where the sociocultural perspective is a direct result of the gamification being implemented with the students.

Psychological Dimensions of Motivation

In language learning, one of the biggest challenges students faces are losing motivation. Obstacles to this include loss of confidence, fear of making mistakes, negative experiences speaking the language they are learning. As cited by Sang (2021), in Nurfajriyati, Prabowo & Miranty, 2025), “Motivation is considered a key element in acquiring English as a foreign language, as it encourages consistent effort and helps learners overcome difficulties” (p 68). Therefore, this research will consider psychological aspects that demonstrate how student motivation is key to improving their speaking skills, as outlined in this study.

Self- Efficacy

As the name of the concept describes itself, self-efficacy is explained as the ability that, in this case, students must trust themselves to speak the second language even if they make mistakes. It can also be described as a perception of competence that directly influences motivation, persistence, and performance by taking students’ experiences as lessons of what went well and what should be improved. According to Goetze and Driver (2022, as cited in Al-khresheh, 2024), “self-efficacy plays a decisive role in language learning, determining how learners engage with the target language and adopt learning strategies. Language learning differs from other academic disciplines because of its real-time, often unpredictable, nature, particularly in communicative settings” (p 97).

A student’s self-efficacy, whether high or low, influences their performance. When both aspects are evident, a student with high self-efficacy speaks more or participates more in class, particularly in oral expression activities; they view mistakes not as defeats but as feedback for improvement and are enthusiastic about participating in group activities to enhance their skills through practice. Conversely, a student with low self-efficacy is characterized by reluctance to participate in questions or oral activities; they tend to

translate to feel in control with reluctance to experiment with new vocabulary and repeat a tendency to become frustrated more easily and avoid challenging tasks.

In addition to students, teachers also demonstrate their own self- efficacy in the classroom, driven, of course, by their own motivation. In words of Bandura (1977, as cited in Ke, Gong & Ke, 2026) “Teacher self-efficacy (TSE), defined as an individual’s belief in their capability to organize and execute actions required to achieve desired educational outcomes, is a central construct in educational and applied psychology” (p 1). A teacher who designs creative classes, conveys confidence to their students, and has a cheerful outlook demonstrates high self- efficacy. In the other hand, if a teacher uses old and obsolete teaching methods, does not want to support their students, and only wants to assign homework to avoid explaining the subject matter, it is a clear sign of low self- efficacy.

For this study, self-efficacy is intended to highlight that it is what gives students the impetus to speak without fear in order to carry out the group dynamics that are to be developed, also taking gamification as an opportunity to have confidence without pressure in a test and finally encouraging students to stop translating from Spanish to English in an almost mechanical way.

Goal- Orientation

In educational psychology, goal orientation is described as the different goals one wishes to achieve through learning, to accomplish a specific feat in life, in this case, for a student of a second language. To illustrate, the most common goals can be grouped into a couple of orientations depending on the individual.

A mastery orientation focuses on improving skills with each new learning experience, rather than solely on grades or external recognition. A performance orientation, on the other hand, emphasizes the need to compete against others, considering test scores or external recognition. Maad (2025) states the following:

It is also worth mentioning that the goal orientation is multidimensional, so much so that each goal area constitutes several individual differences that,

altogether, shape the goal identity of the individual. References to an interface with intercultural awareness are not lacking across several disciplines (p 58).

For this research, goal-orientation highlights the objectives set out to improve orality by encouraging students to express themselves more orally, whether to have better command or performance.

Expectancy- Value Model

In 2002, Eccles and Wigfield developed the Expectancy-Value Model, which explains academic motivation through two key components. Expectancy reflects the student's belief in their ability to succeed in a second language activity. This relates to the students' confidence in their abilities, past experiences, and their perception of the activity's difficulty. Value, on the other hand, highlights the importance or usefulness the student attributes to the activity. This is heavily influenced by personal interest, its relevance to the future, and the enjoyment of the activity itself. In other words, motivation emerges when students believe they can succeed (expectancy) and when they consider it worthwhile (value).

Over the years, a trend has emerged where the value of the task to be performed is highly relevant to students, which has led to its division into several dimensions. The first is intrinsic value, based on each student's enjoyment of the activity. The second concerns with the utility value, which refers to whether the task is useful to the student in the future, for example, by repeating the activity to improve oral communication skills. The third focuses on importance value, which differs from the previous one in that it focuses on how the activity reflects who the student is or who they aspire to be. Finally, there is the dimension known as cost, which refers to the perceived effort or mental strain of the activity that motivates the student to undertake it.

According to Rad, Alipour, Jafarpour and Hashemian (2026), "learners facing high effort costs may receive gamified modules or stepwise support to sustain engagement" (p 5). For this study, the expectancy-value model is reflected in the two activities that are to be

explored, speed speaking and taboo games, by developing this model to the expectancy and value of the students when applying and improving their oral expressions and that they are the ones who decide if the cost of effort and mental health is the necessary for them to consider it a true motivation.

Second Language Acquisition Processes

The previous points touched on more academic and psychological aspects of learning a second language, but now it is time to explain the circumstances of the second language acquisition (SLA) process. This process refers to the set of cognitive, social, and affective mechanisms through which individuals develop skills in a language other than their native tongue. Factors such as age, motivation (explained earlier in the psychological section), learning strategies, and communicative interactions are considered. Wan (2026) mentioned that acquiring a second language presents a challenge for learners, considering both natural and progressive aspects of developing the ability to express themselves in the new interlanguage. Interlanguage is presented as the development of everyone's proficiency in their second language. Differences in complexity between the native language and the target language are noticeable, but this is due to individual construction, the organization of ideas, and their constant refinement, all of which reflect the learner's linguistic knowledge.

This field of study seeks to explain how learners internalize grammatical structures, develop oral fluency, and successfully transfer communicative skills to real-world contexts.

Input and Noticing

A term frequently used in SLA is input, as it refers to the exposure a learner receives to the language they wish to learn. In other words, input refers to words, grammatical structures, phonetic sounds, and social interactions. When learning a new language, input is characterized by a particular situation described by Krashen in 1985, to learn effectively, a learner needs direct contact with someone who has a higher level in the target language, otherwise, the input tends to be clumsy or confusing. In words of Rothman (2009) and Kupisch and Rothman (2018, as cited in Kanajwi- Faraj, 2026) “argued that grammatical competence among heritage speakers varies due to input differences, and the main goal of

examining heritage languages is to shed light on how and why these differences exist” (p 3).

In the case of noticing, Schmidt proposed in 1990, who explained that a student should not only receive input and be expected to memorize it, but that linguistic skills should be constantly observed to facilitate language acquisition. In other words, the student’s constant attention is needed because if they do not perceive what is being said, it is difficult to internalize it. Noticing has a concept that describes the moments when students perceive and internalize knowledge; this is known as intake or processed input. Schmidt’s Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990, 2001, as cited in Ouaddou, 2025) establishes that it “makes the strongest consciousness claim: conscious noticing is a necessary condition for input to become intake. Schmidt distinguishes three levels of awareness: perception, noticing (focal awareness), and understanding, with noticing representing the critical threshold for learning” (p 10).

For this research, speed speaking and taboo games are considered input activities because students receive language in game-like situations and, at the same time, are required to notice vocabulary, structures, and expressions to participate successfully. The input in communicative games involves a great deal of real-world interaction, which generates patterns of pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary. In the case of noticing, these activities promote it by using attention to develop gamification, which in turn is used for knowledge development; that is, input that is transformed into intake.

Output

The Output Hypothesis, developed by Merrill Swain in 1985, argues that input alone is insufficient for SLA (Student Language Acquisition), as students need to produce language to solidify knowledge. The Output Hypothesis aims to compel students to actively process the target language, recognize gaps in their understanding, and seek ways to express their ideas. Output has the advantage of being how students discover their strengths and weaknesses, thus generating learning opportunities. According to Swain & Lapkin (1995, as cited in Wang & Wang, 2026) they ruled:

The language problems that learners notice led them to modify their linguistic output. By modifying their output, learners may be compelled to engage in a more syntactic mode of processing than that which occurs during comprehension. This represents a pivotal step in the internalization of new linguistic knowledge or the consolidation of existing knowledge (p 2).

Output in SLA has functions that complete its operation. The cognitive function is represented when the student attempts to express themselves, reorganizing and deepening their ideas within their linguistic knowledge. On the other hand, the metalinguistic function is characterized by reflective production about the language; grammatical structures are compared and corrected. And finally, there is the communicative function, where the output is put into practice, real conversations, which strengthens fluency and confidence.

For this study, output is particularly important in speed speaking and taboo activities, as these force students to produce language in real time, under time pressure, and with a communicative purpose. Output in these contexts is not mechanical but meaningful; that is, students speak to win, converse, or explain themselves, which enhances oral expression. Furthermore, gamified output develops fluency, accuracy, and confidence in oral production.

Interaction

Interaction between people is key to oral skills in the pursuit of acquiring a second language. Michael Long's interaction hypothesis from the 1980s proposes that the development of linguistic competence is enhanced through face-to-face interactions. When learners are challenged with comprehension difficulties, they adjust their oral expressions by simplifying, repeating, or reformulating their words, leading to the development of more precise structures and language. Long (1996, as cited in Lazo, 2025) mentioned:

Interaction Hypothesis highlights the role of negotiated interaction in enhancing input comprehensibility and prompting learner output. Collectively, these theories suggest that instructional effectiveness is not determined by duration alone. Instead, it depends on how well the format aligns with learners' developmental readiness and

provides meaningful, scaffolded opportunities for interaction and input within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (p 53).

The interaction can be illustrated by several key components. First, there is modified input, which refers to new speakers adapting their language to make themselves understood. The second component is negotiation of meaning, exemplified by students asking for clarification, confirming their understanding, and reformulating incorrect answers. Third, there is forced output, which refers to the mandatory interaction required to produce language, structure sentences, and express vocabulary.

In this study, speed speaking and taboo games generate the meaning negotiation component as students clarify doubts, rephrase sentences, and adapt their oral expressions to make themselves understood. The group dynamic fosters the need to interact, which increases the other components, input, and output, leading to future fluency and spontaneity, two key objectives of this study.

Oral Expression in EFL

At this point, the focus of this entire study is highly related to EFL oral expression, as the aim is to develop and improve fluency in communication skills and for students to be spontaneous in their narratives and thoughts. Many consider oral expression to be the most challenging English skill, requiring vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency all simultaneously in real time, which can cause students to struggle to maintain a conversation. In words of Brown (2001, as cited in Brahimi, 2025) “speaking involves not only the mastery of language forms but also the confidence to use them in real-life situations. As a productive skill, it requires learners to apply their language knowledge effectively in active communication” (p 23).

When English as foreign language classes are emphasized, oral activities become essential spaces for students to practice and improve their language skills, which is beneficial for their overall development in communicative competence. Oral production requires a specific learning environment, in this case, the classroom, so that through the

active use of the language, students can overcome their oral difficulties, achieve fluency, and gain confidence.

Communicative Language Teaching

Desai (2015, as cited in Adem & Berkessa, 2022) explained “Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), as an approach to language teaching, was introduced to the field of second/foreign language teaching in the 1970s due to the insufficiency of the existing methods to enable learners to communicate in the target language” (p 3). Another way to understand CLT is from an approach that aims to have students use the language as a communication tool, not just as an object of study. The idea behind CLT is to convey meaning in authentic contexts through student-centered activities such as role-playing, debates, games, or interviews that simulate realistic, everyday situations. It should be mentioned that CLT is not only focused on speaking; it also encompasses writing, reading, and listening, as it must cover all components of the language. Therefore, for students, errors in any of these areas are natural and even expected. Teachers play a crucial role in this aspect, as they bear the responsibility for ensuring that students can reach their full potential in the language. Hilmi (2026) highlighted that:

Observations in the classroom, however, show that the application of CLT did not accurately represent its idealized theoretical model. In order to accommodate students’ limited vocabulary and low speaking skill, teachers frequently simplified and tightly organized communicative assignments even if they encouraged student interaction. This result implies that CLT operated as a modified or hybrid technique in this situation, striking a balance between the required teacher intervention and communicative principles (p 86).

This study presents CLT promoting the two dynamics of speed speaking and taboo games as attractive and student-centered, focusing on their control of oral expression by connecting the previous concepts of input, output, and interaction.

Lexical Approach

The Lexical Approach argues that the lexicon, that is, words and their combinations, is the core of learning. Proposed by Lewis (1993), it explained “The Lexical Approach suggests a much more central, even defining, role for lexis.” (p 17). Grammar becomes secondary as the focus shifts to expressions and lexical patterns that enable fluent communication.

The lexical approach has key principles that describe it more explicitly. Chunks and collocations are one principle, which involves students recognizing and using frequent word sequences such as “take into account” or “by the way.” The principle of language as a formula dictates that much communication relies on pre-made expressions that facilitate fluency; that is, students have the ability to recall previously learned phrases. The third principle, lexical-rich input, involves exposing students to vocabulary in context so they internalize patterns. Finally, lexical-based oral production is the fourth principle, which refers to the fact that fluency emerges when learners can quickly access vocabulary in real-world interaction.

Ismoilova (2026) refuted in English language teaching, teachers’ lexical competence is fundamental, as their use of vocabulary becomes a direct reference point for students and a driving force in their learning. Therefore, teacher training has placed increasing emphasis on strengthening this dimension, focusing educational research on innovative teaching methods that respond both to current teaching demands and the diversity of student contexts.

The lexical approach of this study is presented in gamification activities since they are naturally integrated because the dynamics are playful, which favors repetition and contextualized use of chunks, improving memory so that students increase their vocabulary.

Speech Production Models

Speech production models seek to explain how speakers transform their thoughts into spoken language, focusing on cognitive processes from conceptual planning to

physical articulation. Several speech production models exist, but for the purposes of this research, two will be presented.

Levelt's Model from 1989, which takes a sequential approach and consists of three stages. The first is conceptualization, which involves students deciding what they want to communicate. The second stage is formulation, where words and structures are selected and the desired message is organized. Finally, articulation is the third stage, where the thought message is converted into speech through physical motor processes. An internal monitor is typically used to detect and correct errors in real time. Wang (2025) explained that in the conceptual layer, Levelt's model posits that ideas are represented by global nodes that link to broader semantic categories within a network of meanings. For a word to be produced, the preverbal concept must reach a sufficient level of activation. In this initial phase, not only is the specific concept to be expressed activated, but also other related concepts, which achieve a considerable degree of parallel activation.

Dell's Spreading Activation Model explains how words are activated in memory and how errors, or lapses, occur when recalling events. This model highlights the importance of the lexical network and the speed of vocabulary access, as well as the interconnectedness of words, sounds, and structures. In words of Gahl & Baayen (2022), "Spreading-activation models fall in a broad category of 'exposure-based' models, in which the mind is seen as an adaptive system whose behavior is shaped by experience." (p 5). To differentiate the two models more graphically, Levelt's model views speech production as an ordered process, with clear and linear sentences; Dell's spreading activation model views speech as dynamic and probabilistic due to simultaneous cognitive connections. It can also be said that the first one is more rationalized and the second one more spontaneous.

Both models are represented in research through their proposed dynamics. Levelt's approach trains all phases: rapid conceptualization, formulation under pressure, fluent articulation, and error monitoring. Dell's approach, on the other hand, uses active gamification to intensely activate lexical networks; students learn to quickly access vocabulary and expressions, reducing the likelihood of blocks.

Fluency, Vocabulary and Confidence

The most common goals of EFL students are to have an almost natural fluency in the second language, to have learned all the vocabulary, and to have enough confidence to hold a conversation with someone whose output is higher to reach the same level of competitiveness in English proficiency. This is more frequent among students, but unfortunately, institutions are more focused on grammar practices, that is, writing and reading, so the speaking skill is neglected among students, which makes them feel that they don't really know English because they cannot practice it. Zahro, Fatimatul & Oktarin (2026) reinforce this:

Instruction mainly focused on completing written exercises, reading texts, and answering questions from textbooks. Speaking activities were minimal and usually limited to short, guided responses. As a result, students had few opportunities to practice speaking English actively, which affected their fluency, confidence, and motivation (p 2339).

Institutions should prioritize oral comprehension and expression more so that students can develop greater linguistic competence among themselves, since without clear guidance, students would make mistakes that could be corrected in a timely manner. Fluency, vocabulary, and confidence are key words for this research when it comes to improving speaking skills; therefore, these concepts will be explored in depth.

Lexical Chunks

Lexical chunks were previously briefly mentioned as part of the Lexical Approach, but besides being part of that concept, on their own they play an important role in students' oral fluency. Lexical chunks are prefabricated lexical units that speakers use as complete meaning blocks. To better understand this explanation, lexical chunks can be illustrated with their types.

Collocation lexical chunks are frequent combinations of words that naturally appear together, such as "strong coffee" or "heavy rain". Idiomatic expressions, or idioms, are phrase lexical chunks whose meaning does not literally relate to the words they are

composed of, examples of this would be “break the ice”, which refers to starting a conversation, or “hit the books”, which is used to refer to getting down to studying. Formulaic sequences are another type of lexical chunks that refer to prefabricated expressions used in social situations, such as “Would you mind if...?” or “Nice to meet you”. Discourse markers are sequences that organize discourse and guide interaction, such as “On the other hand...” or “In conclusion...” There are also social chunks, which refer to courtesy formulas, greetings, and communicative routines, represented by expressions like “How are you doing?”, “See you,” or “Thanks a lot”. All of these lexical chunks help make conversations more authentic and natural; they contribute cultural and pragmatic richness; students navigate them confidently; they add coherence and cohesion to oral production and strengthen confidence, which reduces social anxiety.

In words of Bigunova (2025), “It is still difficult to show how chunks integrate into the broader language system so that learners can combine them coherently. There is also the problem of sequencing lexical material for instruction and ensuring learners receive sufficient authentic input for noticing and acquisition” (p 27). This highlights the need for students to be taught more about this topic, and this study aims to address that need.

By using chunks, students produce complete sentences without pausing to construct them word by word. In activities like speed speaking, this translates into greater speed and fluency; chunks expand vocabulary in a contextualized way. It is not about memorizing isolated lists, but about learning expressions that work in real-life situations. Furthermore, having ready-made formulas gives students confidence when speaking. In games like Taboo, they resort to alternative chunks to maintain communication without getting stuck.

Affective Factor

Affective factors are the emotional and motivational variables that influence language learning. These include aspects such as anxiety, motivation, self-esteem, attitude toward the language, and willingness to communicate. In the context of oral expression, these factors determine whether the student feels capable and confident in speaking. Sun and Zhao (2026) said “Affective factors generally refer to learners’ emotions, attitudes, and self-perceptions that shape their engagement with language input, interaction, and

persistence in learning” (p 2). Thanks to these factors, the various aspects to be explored in greater depth are identified.

Language anxiety, the fear of making mistakes or being judged, can hinder fluency and is very common among students in educational institutions, regardless of age. Motivation, already discussed in this study, is the driving force behind consistent practice; it can be intrinsic, referring to the pleasure of learning, or extrinsic, related to grades and recognition. Self-esteem and self-confidence are two perceptions of a student’s own ability, whether due to their effort or other factors. A high level of self-esteem favors oral production. Attitudes toward language and culture are closely linked to the diversity that is so prevalent today, which fosters openness and curiosity, facilitating the acquisition of authentic expressions. Finally, Willingness to Communicate (WTC) is defined as a readiness to initiate and maintain conversations, even with limited vocabulary. This is common among foreign students or those who are better known as exchange students.

In this study, affective factors explain why gamification not only improves vocabulary and fluency but also confidence. This is observed in speed speaking, which, being dynamic and competitive, reduces anxiety because the focus is on speed, not perfection. On the other hand, the Taboo Game fosters creativity and a willingness to communicate, as it forces participants to seek lexical alternatives without fear of making mistakes. It is also highlighted that affective factors justify the use of game-based activities as a strategy to reduce anxiety and increase willingness to speak, and they reinforce the socio-emotional dimension of the theoretical framework, showing that language learning is not only cognitive but also effective.

Self- Confidence

Self-confidence in learning is essentially the assurance students have in their own ability to learn and develop the skills they are taught, in this case, English. This self-confidence is not only focused on oral production, but also encompasses confidence in understanding, retaining vocabulary, participating in activities, and overcoming academic challenges. It also includes setting personal challenges in their process of mastering the second language. This self-confidence is built through positive experiences, appropriate

feedback, and a supportive environment. According to Ghafar (2023), “Self-confidence is a significant affective component that exerts a discernible influence on the advancement of pupils’ learning” (p 56). For each student, self-confidence can be based on different factors, but the most common include academic self-efficacy, which is when the student perceives learning and applying what they have learned as a success, or as steps they are taking toward success. This is complemented by the perception of progress, recognizing advancements to increase motivation.

Cognitive resilience is understood as the ability to face difficulties without losing motivation despite mistakes made. This goes hand in hand with communicative confidence, which is the self-assurance to use the language in conversations regardless of whether errors are made. Fariani, Irvan and Permana (2025) agree “In the context of English, students with high self-confidence tend to speak more actively, dare to try more, and are more open to correction. Conversely, low self-confidence often leads students to avoid interaction, even when they are actually capable of communicating” (p 8).

In the research, self-confidence in learning is the axis that integrates the cognitive dimension with the socio-emotional one. This is reflected in gamification, since it not only improves fluency and vocabulary but also transforms the student’s perception of their ability to learn English, which leads to more motivation and less anxiety in themselves and socially with their classmates.

Play and Gamification

The core of this research stems from these terms, particularly gamification, so it is necessary to explain what they mean, as they are the main focus of attention. “play” and “gamification” may sound like synonyms, but they are actually different. First, there is the concept of “play,” which is the act of playing spontaneously, freely, and creatively, like children do during recess at school; the rules or objectives are very flexible and may not even be present. Gamification, on the other hand, is the act of incorporating game elements into non-game contexts, such as the classroom. Here, rules, goals, rewards, levels, narratives, and dynamics are established so that everything together serves as a guide for learning. Laksanasut (2025) mentions that the use of gamification in English language

teaching, for both ESL and EFL, supports theoretical frameworks that explain how game elements positively affect motivation, participation, and cognitive processes in students. Therefore, teachers have these opportunities to employ these strategies to improve their students' performance, considering the educational and psychological foundations to design clear and objective gamified environments that increase the likelihood of learning success.

Play as Pedagogy

The use of play not only for entertainment but also as an intentional educational strategy is the principle of play as pedagogy. Play becomes a means to explore how students are and how they react, to experiment with new teaching methods, and to build theoretical knowledge in a more engaging way, with cognitive, social, and emotional benefits. This teaching approach does not treat play as an accessory or secondary resource; on the contrary, it considers it a pedagogical principle that guides teaching practice. Bele (2026) refers to the topic with the following:

Playful pedagogy might seem synonymous with spontaneity, but within the classroom, it still requires careful planning by the teacher-educator. While the games we played were chosen by the participants and the discussions thereafter led by them, it was still my responsibility to make pre-choices about the lessons. These included probing questions to facilitate and enhance discussions, preset choice of play activities (but remain flexible), bringing props that might be needed for the play activities, and estimating probable time for completion of the session (p 15).

For this study, play as pedagogy allows us to argue that gamification is not a fad, but a pedagogical strategy based on educational and psychological theories, showing that play is a vehicle for experiential and collaborative learning. It also reinforces the socio-emotional dimension of the research, which is key to explaining how confidence and motivation develop alongside linguistic skills.

The structured model that organizes game elements within an educational environment is called the Gamification Framework. It is not just about adding dynamics to game contexts; it aims to design a pedagogical system with clear objectives, rules,

feedback, and rewards that guide learning. To create effective gamification, key elements must be considered, such as dynamics, which can include challenges, collaborations, and even friendly competitions among students; mechanics, such as achievement points, difficulty levels, badges, or improvement rankings, which make the experience more exciting, but care must be taken to avoid toxic competition; narratives, such as stories or contexts, that give meaning to the activity; and finally, the aesthetics of the gamification dynamic, which shapes students' first impressions by considering how appealing the visual design or symbolism of the activity is.

Culduz (2023) mentioned “Gamification in ELT has been shown to have a positive impact on learning outcomes. Learners who engage with gamified language learning activities tend to exhibit improved language proficiency, vocabulary retention, and grammar comprehension.” (p 2668). The gamification framework is the methodological backbone that transforms games into a purposeful educational strategy. Therefore, in this research, it takes center stage by using speed speaking and taboo games as a coherent pedagogical system. By combining intrinsic (fun) and extrinsic (points, achievements) motivation, the framework maintains interest in learning and also offers experiences of progressive success, reducing anxiety and increasing communicative security with increased confidence and academic performance.

Motivation and Enjoyment in EFL

Essential factors in foreign language learning, such as motivation and enjoyment, have driven this research, aiming to improve student well-being through class participation, academic performance, or simply their satisfaction with their progress in learning English. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL), these two elements play a crucial role because, when a student is motivated and enjoys English classes, the process is more manageable. The student is willing to take linguistic risks, practice more frequently, sometimes without really trying, simply incorporating it into their lifestyle, which is reflected in their oral expression when sharing their thoughts in the foreign language.

According to Luu and Nguyen (2025), “Motivation has long been recognized as a key determinant of success in second and foreign language learning, as it influences

learners' initiation, persistence, and intensity of effort throughout the learning process" (p 6556). Therefore, motivation and enjoyment should not be considered merely as considerations; they are crucial elements in maximizing the effectiveness of pedagogical strategies.

Both concepts are particularly relevant because they connect directly with the hypothesis of whether gamified dynamics of speed speaking and taboo games favor or hinder oral practice, and also whether they increase student motivation and enjoyment in order to establish the affective dimension of the student and the development of communicative skills in EFL learners.

Flow Experience

Defined by Csikszentmihalyi (2005, as cited in Aubrey, Zhang and Zhou, 2025), the word flow is "a subjective state that people report when they are completely involved in something to the point of forgetting time, fatigue, and everything else but the activity itself" (p 2). In this state, time seems to pass very quickly, concentration is total, and the experience is vivid for those who have experienced it. The flow experience has a unique characteristic: it is a perfect balance of experiences. It arises when the task at hand is neither challenging enough to prevent boredom, nor difficult enough to generate anxiety.

Often, the mind loses self-awareness due to the intense concentration on the activity and the control the person has over it. In words of Isaee and Barjesteh (2026), "Flow involves absorption in task performance; mindfulness cultivates nonjudgmental awareness of present experience" (p 9). In education, flow experiences are associated with moments when students remember the material more vividly because they have experienced a flow experience without realizing it; simply recalling what happened helps them remember the topic of the activity. Speed speaking and taboo games are designed to generate immediate and attractive challenges, keeping students at an optimal activation level and are made for students to experience flow, which becomes a bridge between motivation and enjoyment.

Positive Psychology in SLA

The positive psychology (PP) approach focuses on studying the emotions, strengths, and experiences that contribute to well-being and human development. SLA seeks to understand how factors such as resilience, motivation, optimism, and enjoyment function as catalysts for learning. Nguyen and Nguyen (2026) expressed Although the incorporation of Positive Psychology offers clear benefits in education, its direct influence on language proficiency as measured by traditional tests is limited or inconclusive.

This discrepancy suggests that, rather than immediately impacting language performance, Positive Psychology primarily acts through affective and socio-psychological processes that shape the learning environment and the student's disposition. Consequently, its value lies in creating motivating and enriching contexts, rather than in the direct acquisition of skills assessed by conventional exams. Concepts such as flow, resilience, and well-being are integrated within the framework of Positive Psychology, offering a more holistic model of learning.

For this research, Positive Psychology provides a theoretical foundation to explain why gamified activities, such as speed speaking and taboo games, not only improve oral proficiency but also generate positive emotions that strengthen motivation and enjoyment. By placing the student experience within a framework of well-being and active participation, the proposal aligns with the objectives of fostering more inclusive, dynamic, and sustainable learning. Furthermore, this approach supports the hypothesis that gamification can be a powerful tool for transforming oral practice into a meaningful and enjoyable experience.

Traditional vs Innovate Methods

For many years, foreign language teaching has been characterized by traditional methods focused on repetition, memorization, and written assessment. While these methods reinforce grammar and vocabulary, which are essential, they tend to become tedious, limiting active participation and student motivation, especially in oral expression. Oral expression is directly linked to linguistic accuracy, error correction, and mastery of

grammatical rules within a tight timeframe. Fortunately, innovative methods are being developed, incorporating gamification, collaborative learning, and the use of interactive technology. These approaches aim to transform classroom dynamics, making them more engaging and linking learning with creativity and student autonomy. The tension between these two approaches reflects a paradigm shift: from an emphasis on teaching as knowledge transmission to learning as a holistic experience. In EFL, this transition is particularly relevant because oral competence requires authentic practice, motivation, and confidence, aspects that innovative methods enhance more effectively. This research will compare a traditional method with an innovative one.

Grammar- Translation Method

The most traditional method for teaching English par excellence, as it is based on the explicit instruction of grammatical rules and the translation of texts between the native language and the target language, emphasizes written and grammatical precision. Prioritizing reading, writing, and memorization for error correction limits direct exposure to the foreign language. While it is known that having good grammar when formulating sentences is useful and advantageous, the reality is that it often leads to experiencing the language in a very rigid and demotivating way.

According to Khan, Qasim and Sadia (2025), “The main components of the method were memorization of relevant vocabulary, grammatical structures and translation of sentences without the understanding of the context and use. This method has long been criticized for its limitations: it teaches rules but fails to prepare students to use language communicatively (p 774). The Grammar-Translation Method provides the necessary contrast to highlight the value of innovative approaches.

Task- Based Learning

Task-Based Learning (TBL) establishes a communicative approach that organizes foreign language teaching around meaningful tasks, where language use becomes the means to achieve a specific objective. This approach focuses on authentic social interaction and problem-solving in contexts close to real life, precisely what this study seeks to

achieve. When implementing TBL activities, the language should be used functionally, that is, with a clear communicative purpose. While error correction is sometimes necessary in evaluating these activities, the process and communication among students are paramount. In words of Lopes Jr (2022), “TBL is solidly grounded and consistent with theory and practice. As previously mentioned, there are two main approaches to consider when elaborating a study program for language development: synthetic, mainly focusing on language forms, and analytical focusing on the content itself and not language forms.” (p 132).

The research could be said to be based on a Task-Based Learning (TBL) ideology due to its gamification approach. Speed speaking and Taboo games are dynamics that not only comply with TBL principles by placing language in a functional context, but also enhance motivation and enjoyment, central elements of your research. In this way, the study shows how gamification can be understood as an innovative way to implement meaningful tasks that strengthen oral expression in English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

The methodological framework chapter guides the research by detailing the decisions and procedures that underpin the study on the implementation of strategies in this case, gamification to enhance oral expression in learning English as a second language. It also describes the mixed-methods approach and design of the research, as well as explaining the context, participants, and instruments used for data collection. Another point explained is the application phases and the analysis techniques used to interpret the results in a manner consistent with the stated objectives. Finally, it includes ethical considerations to ensure the validity and respect of all those involved in the fieldwork.

Research Approach

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, meaning that both qualitative and quantitative methods are used to comprehensively analyze the impact of gamification strategies on the development of oral expression in seventh-grade English students. The qualitative approach will explore students' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences during the implementation of the selected gamified activities. This gathers information through observations and reflections, ultimately aiming to understand how students experience the dynamics of play and how these activities can improve their classroom participation and boost their confidence in oral expression.

In parallel, the quantitative approach aims to focus on obtaining measurable data that demonstrates changes in oral performance using assessment rubrics or structured questionnaires. This will allow for the collection of data such as study patterns and a comparison of results between the application of gamification and the progress of oral competence. Furthermore, a descriptive approach is adopted with the purpose of this research is to characterize in detail the practices and results that emerge from the pedagogical intervention by documenting and describing how gamified strategies are

implemented in the classroom, what group dynamics they generate, and what aspects truly contribute to strengthening oral expression.

Research Design

For this research, a quasi-experimental descriptive model was established as this design is appropriate because it allows for the implementation of pedagogical strategies in a specific group of participants and the observation of changes without the need for strictly controlled manipulation of all variables. This is particularly relevant given the nature of the school context, where it is not possible to completely isolate learning conditions, but rather to establish comparisons between initial and post-intervention performance to identify variations in students' oral competence in gamified activities. To implement this model, a series of phases are being presented for its development.

The first phase, titled "Initial Observation", adopts a qualitative approach to establish the students' baseline oral competence prior to the pedagogical intervention. During this stage, a non-participant classroom observation is conducted, structured through a diagnostic oral assessment rubric to gather detailed, contextualized data regarding the students' initial communicative performance. As part of this qualitative framework, classroom observation serves as a fundamental method to capture the reality of the educational setting.

In relation to this, Lankshear and Knobel (2004) state that classroom observation consists of "carefully watching and recording behavior, events, and contexts within a classroom setting in order to understand and explain what is happening" (p. 222). Building upon these initial insights, the second phase, "Implementation of the Intervention," employs a descriptive approach during the gamified classroom activities to document emerging dynamics, motivation, and student interaction within their natural environment.

The third phase involves "Qualitative Data Collection", where responses from observations of the gamified activities are gathered to understand how students engaged with the activities and what factors influenced their confidence and oral performance. The fourth phase, "The Final Evaluation", utilizes a quantitative approach by applying an oral

expression rubric again to compare results before and after the activities. Finally, the fifth phase “Integrates and Analysis” the data using descriptive statistics to identify variations in oral performance, while organizing qualitative data into thematic categories. The descriptive approach serves as the framework for characterizing the observed practices and outcomes.

Information Sources

This study uses four sources of information to obtain data and find the required information; these four sources are called primary, secondary and tertiary. Each research project may vary its sources of information depending on the topic, target audience, and research approach.

Primary Sources

The primary sources for this research are the texts, studies, and academic documents that form the theoretical and conceptual basis of the study. These sources include previous research on gamification in education, studies related to teaching English as a foreign language, and publications that address the development of oral expression in school settings. Also considered primary sources are the background materials that support the relevance of the topic and provide a solid framework for the analysis.

Secondary Sources

The secondary source of empirical data for this research derives from the direct observation conducted on the English teacher at Liceo Hernán Zamora Elizondo, located in Moravia, during the pedagogical intervention with two seventh-grade groups, specifically sections 7-1 and 7-2. Through the systematic observation of the teacher’s instructional practice, alongside the active participation of the students, firsthand empirical data is obtained to complement and contrast with the theoretical framework. This primary data is gathered using direct observation protocols focused on the teacher’s implementation of gamified activities, which are further complemented by student oral assessment rubrics and semi-structured interviews.

Investigating the teacher's practice within these classrooms is essential to the study because it demonstrates how the orchestration of gamification strategies impacts the development of students' oral expression, providing key insights into linguistic performance, motivation, and student engagement. In this manner, the empirical input obtained from the observation of the teaching process becomes vital support for validating and enriching the theoretical framework, ensuring absolute coherence between the conceptual foundation and actual educational practice.

Tertiary Sources

The tertiary sources for this research consist of the students of seventh grade at Liceo Hernán Zamora Elizondo, located in Moravia participating in the pedagogical intervention process. Through them, empirical information is obtained that complements and contrasts with the collected theoretical information. Data is gathered using oral assessment rubrics, semi-structured interviews, and direct observations conducted during gamified activities.

These tertiary sources are essential because they allow us to demonstrate the real impact of gamification strategies on the development of oral expression, providing information on linguistic performance, motivation, and active student participation. In this way, the input obtained from the participants becomes a key support for validating and enriching the theoretical framework, ensuring coherence between the conceptual framework and educational practice.

Fourth Sources

The fourth sources for this research are comprised of the teachers involved in the educational process. Their contribution focuses on providing perceptions, assessments, and experiences related to the implementation of gamification strategies in the English as a Foreign Language classroom. Through interviews and consultations, the teachers offer a critical and reflective perspective that allows for a comparison of the data obtained from the students and enriches the interpretation of the results.

Analysis Categories

When defining a research study with a mixed-methods approach, it is imperative to encompass and operationalize various conceptual elements that bridge both quantitative and qualitative paradigms. This methodological integration requires a rigorous alignment between the variables under study and the categories of analysis derived from the specific research objectives. On one hand, the quantitative component relies on clearly defined variables to measure specific, measurable outcomes such as changes in students' proficiency levels through statistical analysis. On the other hand, the qualitative dimension utilizes categories and subcategories of analysis to explore and interpret complex, contextual phenomena, including participant experiences, classroom dynamics, and behavioral shifts during the pedagogical intervention.

Consequently, the systematization of these variables and categories ensures a comprehensive triangulation of data. This structural framework not only guides the selection and application of research instruments but also guarantees that the empirical findings directly address the core objectives of the study. By establishing a coherent nexus between conceptual definitions and operational indicators, the researcher can effectively validate the pedagogical outcomes, thereby ensuring consistency, validity, and holistic depth throughout the data analysis process.

Motivation

Motivation as a variable has strong arguments when understood as a set of internal and external processes that guide and sustain student behavior toward school activities prepared for class, especially those involving oral expression in English. In the words of Bernaus & Gardner (2009, as cited by Pranawengtias, 2022), "Motivation is a condition in a person's personality that encourages individuals to carry out certain activities in order to achieve a goal that is actualized in behavior to get a target" (p. 28). The willingness to participate in role-playing games, the frequency of voluntary interventions, and persistence in oral tasks would be the most visible indicators to describe this concept; Likert-type questionnaires on various attitudes and behaviors related to oral expression in English are a way to exemplify an instrument of this variable.

Performance in Oral Expression

The level of communicative competence achieved by the student in terms of fluency, pronunciation and coherence makes performance in oral expression a very important variable since it can have many scenarios as it depends on each student's study load. According to Oumayma (2023) "The teachers' questionnaire is conducted to investigate the teacher's views and attitudes related to the influence of self-esteem on the oral performance of EFL learners, through the consideration of their experience in teaching the English language." (p 33). Clear indicators of this variable are the number of words per minute, the use of relevant vocabulary, and the clarity of interaction. On the other hand, the most appropriate instrument to manage the variable is oral assessment rubrics applied with gamified activities.

Gamification Strategies in Oral Communication

As a category of analysis, this concept is defined as the set of playful dynamics, whether challenges, rewards, or narratives, that, when integrated into the classroom, promote participation and the development of communicative skills in the English language. Ponce and Chancay (2024) explained "In short, gamification is a valuable pedagogical tool for enhancing oral communication in English learning. Its ability to motivate, engage, and create a positive learning environment makes it a promising strategy for developing this fundamental linguistic competence" (p 6453).

Fluency and Vocabulary Experiences

This category of analysis describes students' accounts and perceptions of how game dynamics influence their ability to express themselves with greater fluency and vocabulary richness. Rashid, Lan and Hui (2022) mention that "When students' fluency and speech in English increase, it is essential for them to improve their word awareness and learn their language learning techniques. Students have a deep urge to learn new words" (p 1549).

Comparative Participation Between Traditional and Innovative

The patterns of involvement, collaboration, and sustained attention in gamified classes versus traditional classes, from the students' point of view, make this category of analysis indispensable, considering the research objectives. According to Sattarova (2024):

The comparative analysis of traditional and modern language teaching approaches reveals significant insights into the evolving nature of language education. While both traditional and modern methodologies have their strengths, their effectiveness largely depends on the learning objectives, student needs, and teaching contexts (p. 219).

Data Collection Instructions

The target population consists of seventh-grade English students at the Liceo Hernán Zamora Elizondo, aged between 12 and 13. This grade was chosen because, as first-year secondary school students, they need to adapt to a new environment. In this case, English classes are easier to manage as they adjust to the pace of secondary education without experiencing learning delays, and they also reinforce what they have been learning since primary school.

With the beneficiaries defined, the instruments used in this research are intended to progressively collect the progress of the students, taking into account their linguistic knowledge before, during and after the selected gamified activities which are Speed Speaking and Taboo Games, but also seeks to collect data with the instruments from the perspective of the students on various points of view on the dynamics proposed versus the traditional ones in the classroom.

The first tool used is an oral assessment rubric that includes criteria such as vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, and confidence. Several assessments are conducted before and after the gamification to compare acquired knowledge. This tool is used because it provides objective and standardized criteria for measuring changes in oral performance. These rubrics are applied in a group setting, not individually, for reasons of time and convenience.

As a second instrument, the Likert-type questionnaire is established to measure students' perceptions regarding their motivation, enjoyment, and commitment to gamified activities compared to traditional methods in English teaching. This allows for obtaining comparable data and analyzing students' emotions and attitudes. These questionnaires are individual for each student so that they can personally rate their experience.

Finally, as a third instrument, a semi-structured or qualitative interview with the supervising teacher is conducted to obtain their point of view on the implementation of Speed Speaking and Taboo as an innovative method, as well as their thoughts on the performance of the students, and also to consider his vision of traditional versus innovative methods.

Additionally, an extra tool is classroom observations to take a more qualitative note of student behavior, how they react to the activities, what happened during their execution, if there were interruptions, etc.

Collection of Data Process and Data Analysis

When collecting specific data, a series of steps are followed to maintain a controlled order for conducting fieldwork. These steps are intended to present the study's experimentation smoothly and within a defined timeframe, ensuring that all planned activities are covered and that the necessary data for analysis is collected effectively. The steps are developed in the following order: Observation Checklist, Warm-up, Main Activity: Speed Speaking, Main Activity: Taboo Games, questionnaire to students and interviews to teachers.

Observation Checklist

To begin the session, an observation checklist is utilized as a primary tool to systematically record the classroom context, including student attendance, gender distribution, and their initial willingness to engage in the proposed tasks. Crucially, this instrument focuses on observing the teacher's pedagogical mediation during the implementation of the communicative activities, specifically examining how instructional

strategies are structured to develop the students' listening and speaking skills. Furthermore, through this non-participant classroom observation, the researcher documents how the teacher explains the tasks and evaluation criteria, while simultaneously recording behavioral indicators of student motivation, listening comprehension, and overall responsiveness to the English language instruction.

Warm- up: Word Race

The warm-up activity called Word Race involves students having a set time to quickly name words related to a specific category. This activity is conducted in two groups, either male versus female or mixed, depending on the students' preference. The goal is for students to activate prior knowledge and build anticipation and confidence. During the activity, a group rubric is used to evaluate general aspects such as basic fluency, vocabulary, and willingness to speak.

Main Activities - Speed Speaking

In this section, students participate in Speed Speaking rounds. Students are divided into pairs and alternate speaking each minute, discussing a different topic with the help of cards that guide their conversation. Mistakes are not a concern; the focus is on communicating without pausing. During the activity, a group oral assessment rubric will be used, evaluating fluency, vocabulary, and confidence. Additionally, observations will be recorded to document the experience.

Main Activities- Taboo Games

Adapting the famous board game to a gamified English classroom experience, the rules are almost the same. The activity involves one student having a "secret" word that their classmates must guess using clues, such as synonyms or related words. However, the students guessing cannot use the "forbidden words" known to the student with the secret word. If someone says a forbidden word, the secret word must be revealed, and the point is lost. This activity aims to encourage students to think quickly, use English expressions, and foster creativity and spontaneity. A group oral assessment rubric will be used to evaluate

fluency, vocabulary, and confidence. The observation process is the same as for the Speed Speaking activity.

Questionnaire to Students

After carrying out the main activities, students can rate their experience thanks to the Likert-type questionnaire, which will have questions about how they felt with the acquired learning, the way it was developed, and whether they find it better or worse than traditional methods.

Interview to Teachers

As a final method of data collection, an interview will be conducted with the supervising professor of both the study and the participating students to provide his opinion on the students' performance, the gamified activities carried out, and traditional methods versus innovative methods.

Data Analysis

The data from rubrics, questionnaires, and observations are analyzed using a descriptive strategy, that is, through percentages, measures, and/or frequencies to identify changes in students' motivation, fluency, vocabulary, and confidence. This comes from comparisons between knowledge before and after the activities. A triangulation is being sought between student perceptions, classroom observations, and the teacher interview to strengthen the validity of the findings.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis and Results

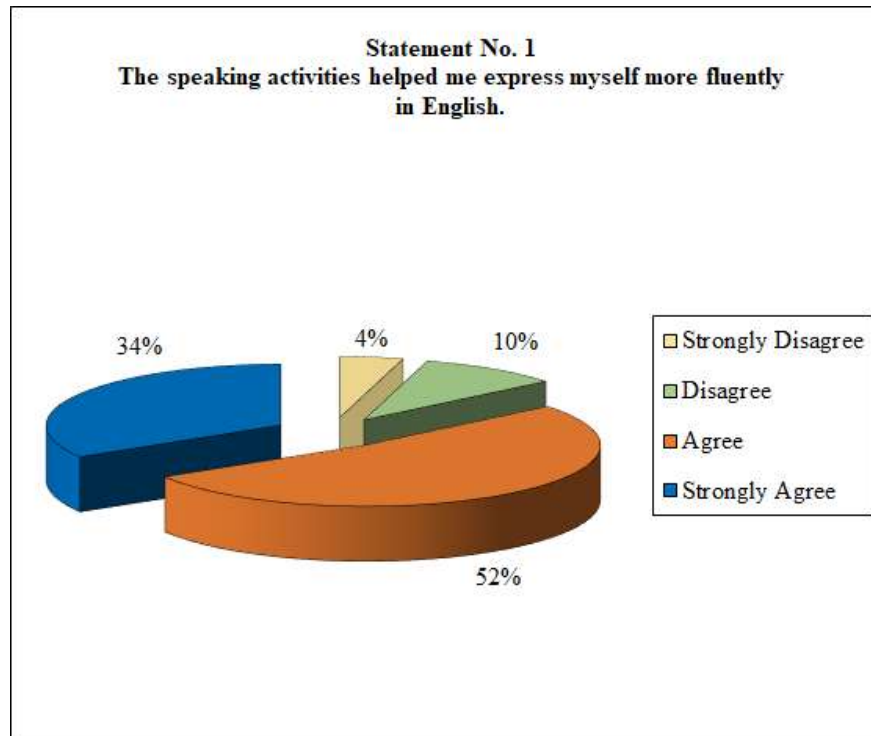
This chapter presents and analyzes the results obtained from the data collected during the research process for 92 students of seventh level at Liceo Hernán Zamora Elizondo during the first term 2026 and teachers of English in academic and conversational subjects. The purpose of this section is to interpret the findings in relation to the research objectives established in the chapters I and II. Through a systematic analysis, the results are examined to identify patterns, relationships, and significant trends that contribute to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon studied.

The data gathered through the selected instruments are organized and presented using tables, figures, and descriptive explanations to facilitate their interpretation. Each result is analyzed in detail, highlighting the most relevant outcomes and their implications for the research problem. Furthermore, this chapter focuses on explaining the meaning of the findings and how they relate to the chapter II of the theoretical framework and previous studies analyzed earlier in the research project. The analysis aims to provide clear evidence that supports the study and sets the foundation for the conclusions and recommendations presented in the following chapter.

Survey Applied to Students

The survey was conducted with students seventh level in order to collect information related to the objectives. The participants were sixth groups for a total of 92 students enrolled in the class, whose ages ranged between 12 and 13 years old. All students are native Spanish speakers who are currently learning English as a foreign language as part of their MEP national curriculum.

To maximize response accuracy and prioritize participants comfort, the questionnaire is conducted in Spanish since thinking in a non-native language requires extra effort and lead participants to omit details or skip sections.

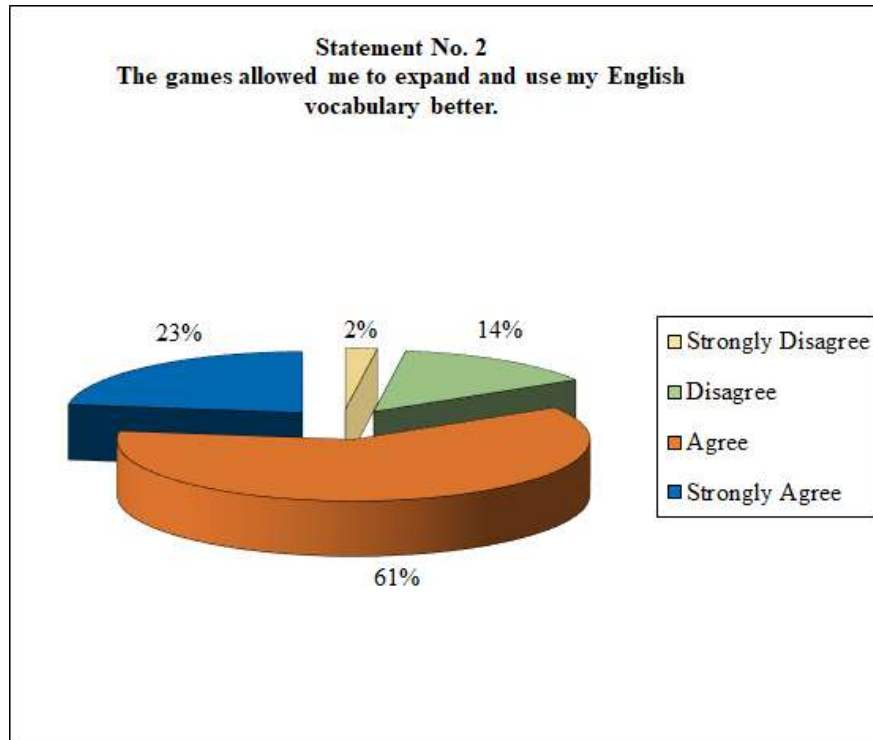


Source: Vargas Arias, Mariana (2026). "The speaking activities helped me express myself more fluently in English."

Statement No. 1

The speaking activities helped me express myself more fluently in English.

The findings demonstrate that the speaking activities help students express themselves with greater fluency in English. A significant majority of the participants, representing **86%** of the sample (79 out of 92 students), showed a strong positive perception of these tasks; specifically, **52%** (48 students) selected "**Agree**" and **34%** (31 students) chose "**Strongly Agree**." In contrast, only **10%** (9 students) disagreed with the statement, while a minimal **4%** (4 students) strongly disagreed. These results strongly suggest that the implementation of oral production tasks contributes to developing communication skills and language fluency. As a result, lessons become more effective, helping students build practical linguistic competence and interact more naturally.

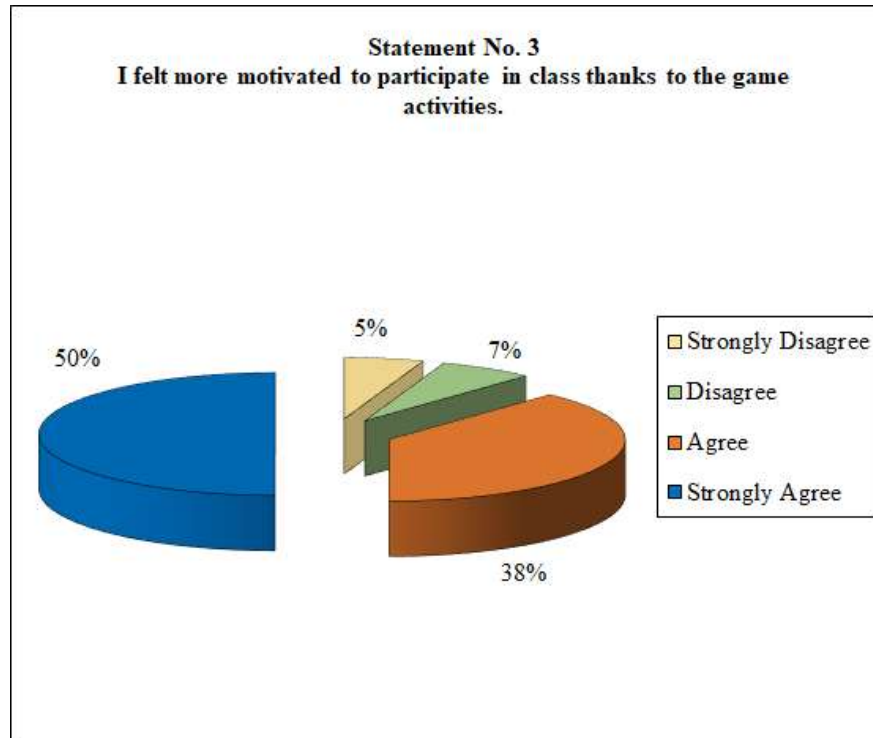


Source: Vargas Arias, Mariana (2026). "The games allowed me to expand and use my English vocabulary better."

Statement No. 2

The games allowed me to expand and use my English vocabulary better.

The evidence show that the implementation of games allows students to expand and use their English vocabulary more effectively. A substantial majority of the participants, representing **84%** of the sample (77 out of 92 students), expressed a positive perception of this approach; specifically, **61%** (56 students) selected "**Agree**" and **23%** (21 students) chose "**Strongly Agree**." Conversely, **14%** (13 students) disagreed with the statement, while a negligible **2%** (2 students) strongly disagreed. These results suggest that integrating playful dynamics into the language classroom serves as a valuable tool for lexical acquisition. As a result, lessons may become more engaging, facilitating the retention of new terminology and its practical application in communicative contexts.

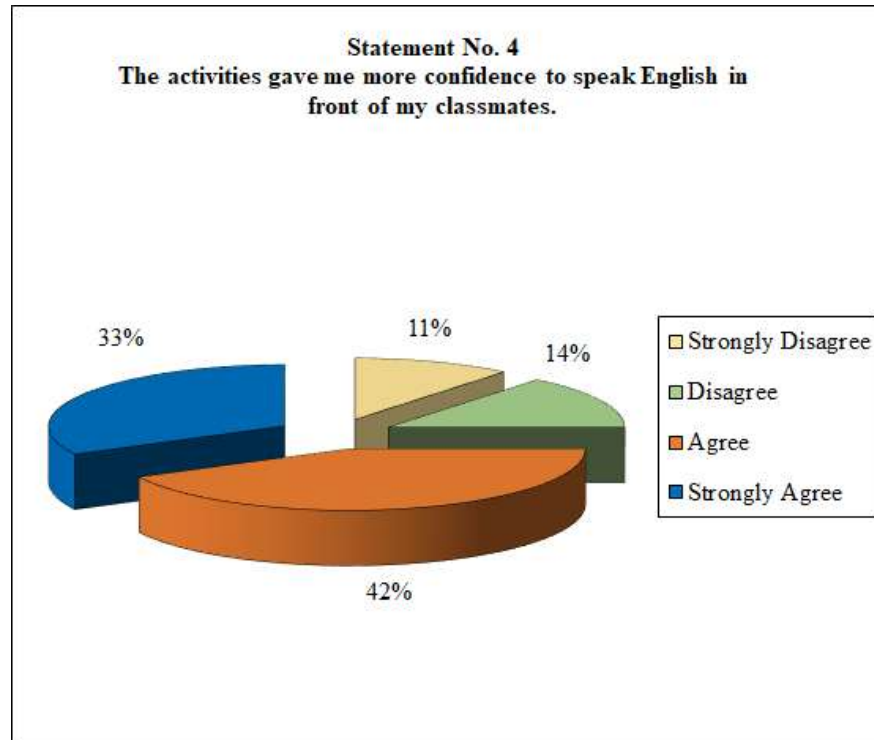


Source: Vargas Arias, Mariana (2026). "The games allowed me to expand and use my English vocabulary better."

Statement No. 3

I felt more motivated to participate in class thanks to the game activities.

The results confirm that game activities significantly enhance student motivation to participate in class. A definitive majority of the participants, representing **88%** of the sample (81 out of 92 students), expressed a positive perception regarding this aspect; specifically, **50%** (46 students) selected "**Strongly Agree**" and **38%** (35 students) chose "**Agree.**" In contrast, only **7%** (6 students) disagreed with the statement, while a minimal **5%** (5 students) strongly disagreed. These results strongly suggest that the incorporation of game-based learning serves as a powerful catalyst for student engagement. As a result, lessons become more inspiring, effectively encouraging active participation and fostering a more dynamic, student-centered learning environment.

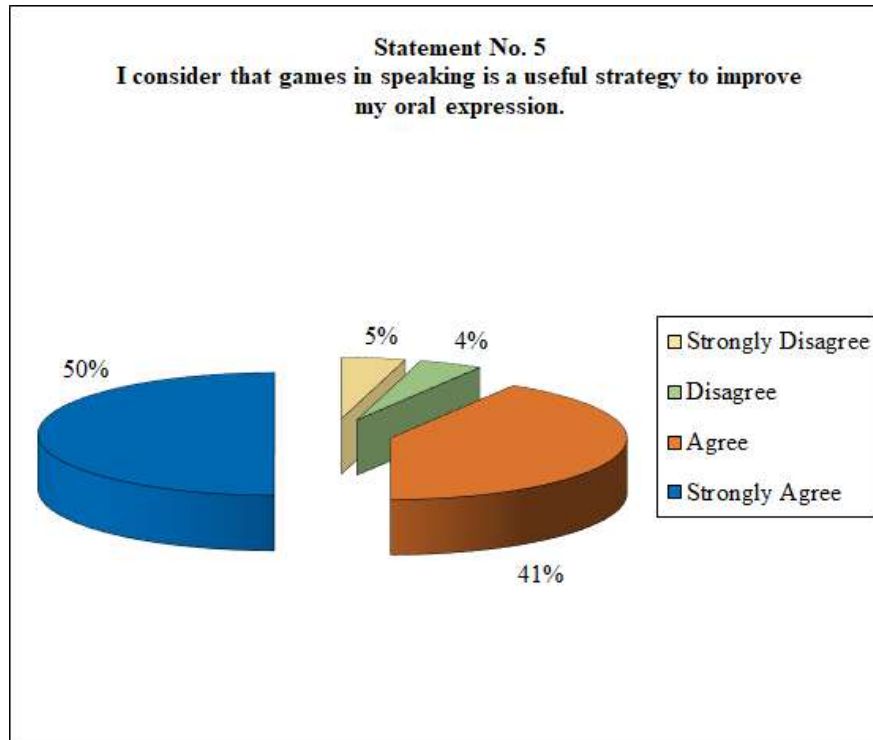


Source: Vargas Arias, Mariana (2026). "The activities gave me more confidence to speak English in front of my classmates."

Statement No. 4

The activities gave me more confidence to speak English in front of my classmates.

The observations reveal that the implemented activities effectively build students' confidence when speaking English in front of their peers. A clear majority of the participants, representing **75%** of the sample (69 out of 92 students), reported a positive perception regarding this psychological and linguistic factor; specifically, **42%** (39 students) selected "**Agree**" and **33%** (30 students) chose "**Strongly Agree**." Conversely, **14%** (13 students) disagreed with the statement, while 11% (10 students) strongly disagreed. These results suggest that interactive and game-based speaking tasks help mitigate performance anxiety in public settings. As a result, lessons create a safer, more supportive classroom environment, enabling students to overcome communication barriers and practice their oral skills with greater security.

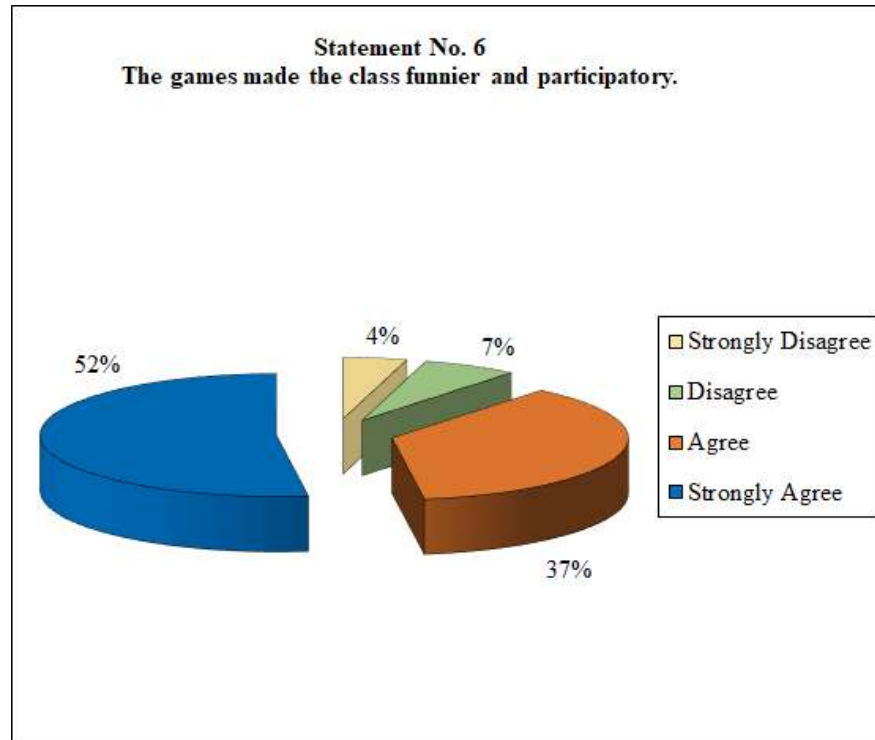


Source: Vargas Arias, Mariana (2026). "I consider that games in speaking is a useful strategy to improve my oral expression."

Statement No. 5

I consider that games in speaking is a useful strategy to improve my oral expression.

The data confirm that students predominantly perceive the integration of games into speaking tasks as a highly beneficial strategy for enhancing their oral expression. A resounding majority of the participants, representing **91%** of the sample (84 out of 92 students), held a positive view on this methodological choice; specifically, 50% (46 students) chose "**Strongly Agree**" and 41% (38 students) selected "**Agree**." On the other hand, only 4% (4 students) disagreed with the assertion, while a minor 5% (4 students) strongly disagreed. These results strongly suggest that communicative language teaching supported by playful elements is highly valued by learners for its practical utility. Consequently, using these instructional strategies helps maximize student engagement while reinforcing the development of their speaking competencies.

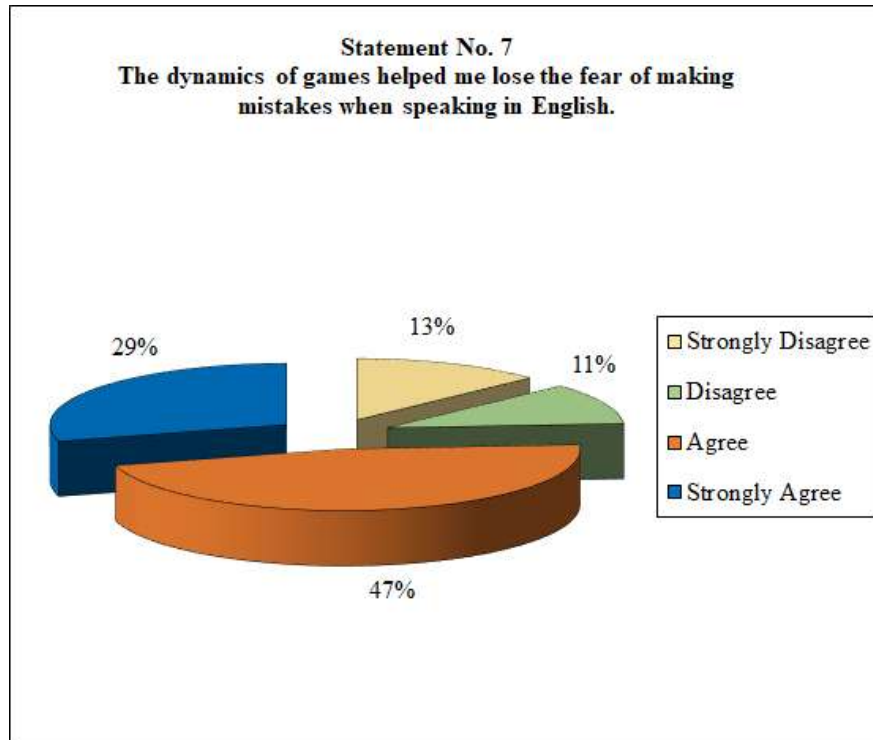


Source: Vargas Arias, Mariana (2026). "The games made the class funnier and participatory."

Statement No. 6

The games made the class funnier and participatory.

The insights display demonstrate that the use of games succeeds in making the English class more enjoyable and highly participatory. An overwhelming majority of the participants, representing **89%** of the sample (82 out of 92 students), expressed a highly positive outlook regarding this aspect; specifically, **52%** (48 students) selected "Strongly Agree" and **37%** (34 students) chose "Agree." Conversely, only **7%** (6 students) disagreed with the statement, while a minimum of **4%** (4 students) strongly disagreed. These results strongly suggest that incorporating playful instructional resources directly enhances the classroom climate. As a result, lessons shift away from traditional, rigid routines, naturally encouraging active involvement and lowering the affective filter among learners.

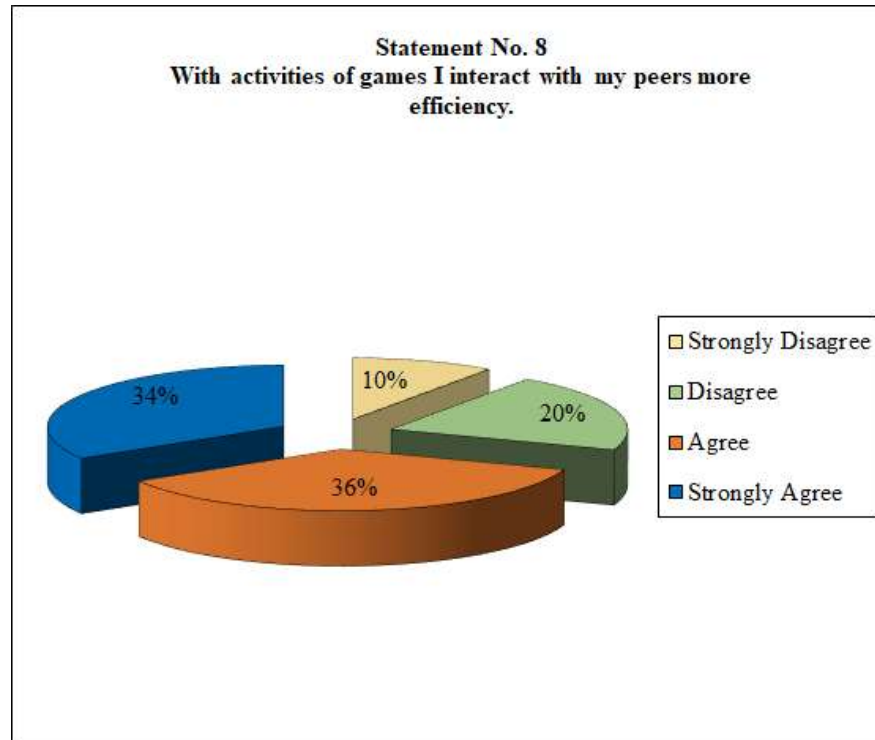


Source: Vargas Arias, Mariana (2026). "The dynamics of games helped me lose the fear of making mistakes when speaking in English."

Statement No. 7

The dynamics of games helped me lose the fear of making mistakes when speaking in English.

The implications verify that game dynamics significantly assist students in overcoming the fear of making mistakes while speaking English. A clear majority of the participants, representing **76%** of the sample (70 out of 92 students), reported a positive impact on their confidence; specifically, **47%** (43 students) selected "**Agree**" and **29%** (27 students) chose "**Strongly Agree**." In contrast, **11%** (10 students) disagreed with the statement, while **13%** (12 students) strongly disagreed. These results suggest that game-based communicative activities lower the affective filter and diminish performance anxiety. As a result, the classroom becomes a safer space for trial and error, encouraging learners to practice their oral skills more freely and naturally.

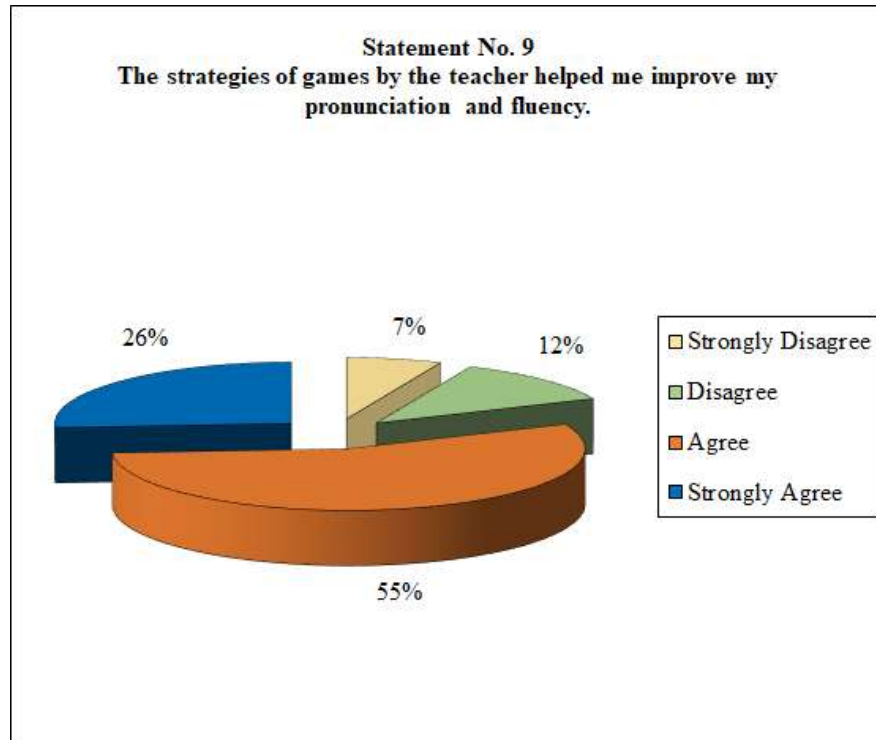


Source: Vargas Arias, Mariana (2026). "With activities of games I interact with my peers more efficiency."

Statement No. 8

With activities of games, I interact with my peers more efficiently.

The discoveries prove that game activities positively enhance peer interaction among students in the English classroom. A solid majority of the participants, representing **70%** of the sample (64 out of 92 students), agreed on the efficiency of this method; specifically, **36%** (33 students) selected "**Agree**" and **34%** (31 students) chose "**Strongly Agree**." Conversely, **20%** (19 students) disagreed with the statement, while **10%** (9 students) strongly disagreed. These results suggest that game-based learning serves as an effective collaborative tool that stimulates socialization and peer communication. As a result, classroom dynamics become more cooperative, allowing students to develop both social skills and linguistic competence through direct interaction.

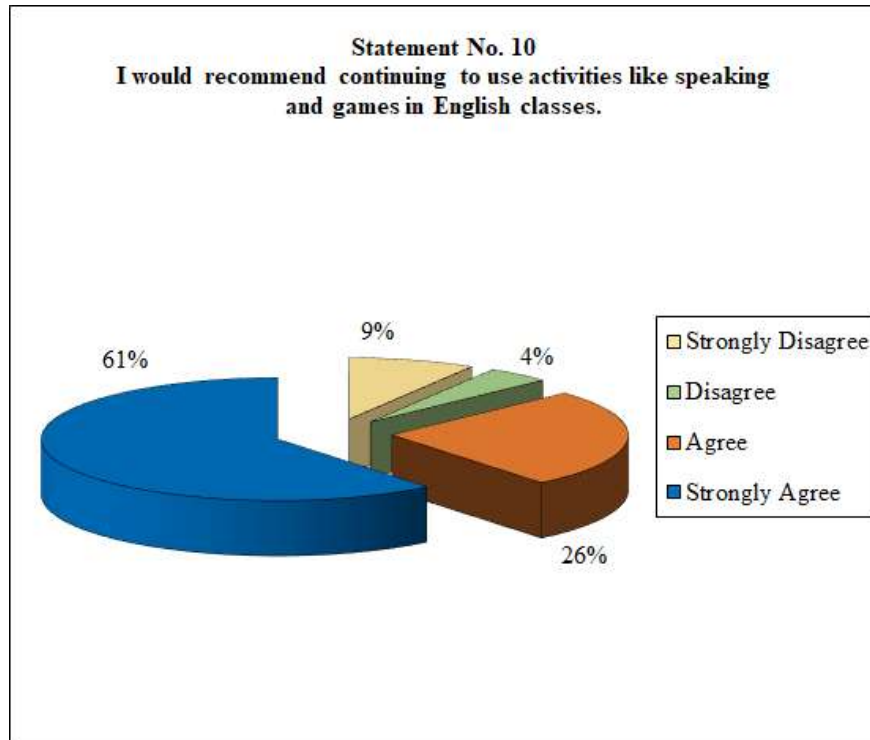


Source: Vargas Arias, Mariana (2026). "The strategies of games by the teacher helped me improve my pronunciation and fluency."

Statement No. 9

The strategies of games by the teacher helped me improve my pronunciation and fluency.

The outcomes exhibit that the game strategies implemented by the teacher effectively help students improve their English pronunciation and fluency. A substantial majority of the participants, representing **81%** of the sample (75 out of 92 students), indicated a positive perception of this instructional outcome; specifically, **55%** (51 students) selected "**Agree**" and **26%** (24 students) chose "**Strongly Agree**." Conversely, **12%** (11 students) disagreed with the statement, while **7%** (6 students) strongly disagreed. These results suggest that structured language games provide valuable opportunities for active phonological practice and spontaneous speech. As a result, lessons become more supportive framework for phonetic development, enabling learners to enhance their sound production and communicative speed.



Source: Vargas Arias, Mariana (2026). "I would recommend continuing to use activities like speaking and games in English classes."

Statement No. 10

I would recommend continuing to use activities like speaking and games in English classes.

The conclusions establish that a commanding majority of the students highly recommend the continued integration of speaking activities and games in future English classes. A resounding **87%** of the participants (80 out of 92 students) expressed a positive stance toward maintaining this methodological approach; specifically, **61%** (56 students) selected "**Strongly Agree**" and **26%** (24 students) chose "**Agree**." Conversely, only **4%** (4 students) disagreed with the statement, while **9%** (8 students) strongly disagreed. These results suggest that learners recognize the explicit pedagogical value of active, game-based strategies in their language acquisition process. As a result, continuing to implement these dynamics appears critical for maintaining long-term student interest, fostering positive attitudes toward learning, and maximizing oral production opportunities.

Teacher's Observation

Based on the empirical findings gathered through the multi-method data collection process specifically the direct pedagogical observations conducted within seventh-grade sections 7-1 and 7-2 at Liceo Hernán Zamora Elizondo this observation presents the overarching conclusions and practical recommendations of the study. The systematic analysis of the teacher's instructional mediation, combined with the tracking of student responsiveness to the Speed Speaking and Taboo Game dynamics, allows for a comprehensive triangulation of the research variables.

Consequently, the first section delineates the core qualitative and descriptive conclusions regarding the impact of gamification strategies, multimedia scaffolding, and affective filter management on the development of students' listening and speaking macro-skills. Building upon these insights, the subsequent section offers actionable recommendations designed to optimize English language teaching methodologies, pedagogical tool selection, and instructional design within secondary education contexts.

For a more comprehensive understanding of these empirical findings, the holistic outcomes and systemic patterns derived from these classroom observations are interpreted and discussed with greater depth in Chapter V. This subsequent section contextualizes the observed pedagogical actions within the broader framework of the study's conclusions and actionable recommendations, providing a thorough triangulation between the teacher's instructional mediation and the final research insights.

Teachers Interview

The following is the qualitative systematization and synthesis of the responses obtained from the English teachers' interviews. The analysis is structured categorically, question by question, integrating the different perspectives of the teaching staff to facilitate its direct inclusion into the data analysis section of your research report.

- What experiences have you had when implementing playful or gamified activities in your English classes?

Educators agree that these methodologies facilitate language acquisition in a more natural and enjoyable manner for the students. However, they highlight that their implementation demands a high level of structural planning and a considerable amount of energy, particularly due to tight weekly schedules (e.g., having only three lessons per week). It is also noted that competitive dynamics, such as Race to the Board, immediately increase student vocalization and active participation.

- How would you describe your students' reactions and attitudes toward dynamics aimed at promoting oral expression (e.g., games, competitions, dramatizations)?

Student attitudes typically progress through distinct emotional and academic phases. Initially, there is often resistance, nervousness, or a fear of looking silly when put in the spotlight in front of the whole class. However, once a safe environment free of judgment is established and a healthy competition begins, the attitude shifts dramatically toward enthusiasm especially in seventh and eighth grades—leading to spontaneous interaction without the need for direct prompting.

- From your perspective, how does gamification influence students' motivation and confidence to participate in oral communication activities?

A significant impact on student confidence is observed as gamification shifts the focal point from grammatical “accuracy” to “fluency and purpose.” In traditional speaking tasks, students are often terrified of making grammatical errors, which acts as a linguistic barrier. In a gamified setting, the goal of helping a team or winning a point encourages learners to take more risks, normalizing mistakes as a natural part of the game and boosting their willingness to participate in future opportunities.

- What is your opinion of the Speed Speaking strategy as a tool to develop oral fluency in English?

While some teachers admit to being unfamiliar with the strategy or state that it works better with intermediate levels (B1), the core qualitative feedback describes it as an excellent tool to bypass the mental translation process. The limited time frame prevents students from overthinking grammar structures, forcing them to use available vocabulary to

convey the message. Furthermore, implementing it in successive rounds helps with repetition, making students sound noticeably more confident and fluid by the third attempt.

- What specific advantages or limitations do you think the game Taboo could have in the secondary school English classroom?

Advantages: It is highly regarded for vocabulary retention and developing circumlocution. It forces students to actively look for synonyms, antonyms, and descriptions instead of relying on translation or a single word, expanding their language capacity—particularly from ninth grade onward.

Limitations: It can cause high frustration and disengagement for lower-level students (such as A2) if the restricted words are too complex. Additionally, it presents a classroom management challenge, as students tend to cheat by gesturing or whispering clues in Spanish if the teacher is not constantly monitoring the room.

- What changes have you observed (or do you think could be observed) in students' vocabulary expansion and oral performance when using these specific strategies?

The most notable change is contextual retention; students remember vocabulary because it is anchored to the memory of the game experience rather than an isolated list of words. In terms of oral performance, teachers report that students begin using more descriptive language and transitional filler phrases naturally, instead of getting stuck or shutting down when they forget a specific term.

- In what ways would you be willing to incorporate or adapt these activities into your own teaching practice?

There is an absolute willingness among teachers to learn and integrate these activities into their routines. They project their use primarily as Warm-Ups at the beginning of a lesson to activate prior knowledge, or as interactive review sessions before formal group speaking assessments. They also emphasize adapting these tasks by scaffolding the vocabulary cards or adjusting time limits based on the specific linguistic level of each group.

- What recommendations would you give to improve the integration of gamification strategies in English language teaching at the secondary level?

The essential recommendation is to always align the game with a clear pedagogical objective and a specific linguistic goal, ensuring it is never treated as a mere “time-filler.” Methodologically, teachers advise incorporating real-life scenarios, role plays, and shadowing techniques. In terms of class management, it is vital to establish clear routines beforehand and keep team sizes small to prevent a single dominant student from doing all the work, ensuring everyone speaks.

- What kind of institutional support, resources, or professional training do you think is necessary for teachers to successfully implement gamification and fluency strategies in the classroom?

Teachers point out a critical gap in current support, demanding a transformation across three essential pillars:

- Professional Training:** Moving away from purely theoretical sessions in favor of practical, collaborative workshops where teachers can actually experience, design, and teamwork on gamified materials.
- Material Resources:** Ensuring institutional access to basic physical assets (printing budgets for game cards, board games) and functional technology (reliable internet and projectors).
- Curricular Flexibility:** Providing institutional and administrative flexibility within tight schedules so that these playful, dynamic classrooms and outdoor activities are formally recognized as valid assessment and learning tools that foster language acquisition beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the structured findings and qualitative data collected from the direct observation of the classroom teacher's instructional performance. Every analytical point translates the qualitative evidence gathered from the teacher's management of Speed Speaking and Taboo Game into formalized academic outcomes. By prioritizing this observational data, these points avoid generic structural formulas or predictable patterns, ensuring a rigorous academic tone suitable for inclusion in a formal research thesis.

Conclusion's Teacher Observation

- a. **The Integration of Targeted Audio-Visual Scaffolding Directly Enhances Target Language Readiness:** The systematic utilization of preliminary audio clips and contextualized introductory videos proved essential in preparing seventh-grade students for active oral production. By exposing groups 7-1 and 7-2 to these real-world multimedia inputs prior to production tasks, the pedagogical mediation successfully reduced immediate comprehension breakdowns, lowered cognitive load, and provided students with immediate linguistic models that enhanced phonetic accuracy and lexical identification during the communicative activities.
- b. **Structural Gamification and Peer Competition Effectively Mitigate the Affective Filter:** Implementing structured game dynamics, such as the digital leaderboards and the rule constraints of the Taboo Game, effectively shifted student focus from performance anxiety to collaborative task victory. This strategic alignment managed to diminish the social anxiety typically associated with public speaking in a second language, fostering a secure classroom environment where errors were treated non-obtrusively, thereby increasing spontaneous participation and confidence among lower-proficiency learners.
- c. **Strategic Time Management and Prompt-Based Correction Foster Sustained Oral Fluency:** The strict enforcement of visible, dynamic time frames during the Speed Speaking tasks forced rapid language processing and spontaneous interaction. Furthermore, by prioritizing delayed feedback and using contextual prompt clues rather than immediate, overt corrections during high-immersion moments, the pedagogical

mediation successfully maintained the communicative flow, helping secondary school learners internalize adaptive descriptive strategies like circumlocution.

Also, based on the structured findings and qualitative data collected from the 92 seventh-grade students and the English teaching staff at Liceo Hernán Zamora Elizondo during the first term of 2026, the following findings and actionable steps have been articulated. These points avoid generic structural formulas or predictable patterns, ensuring an academic tone suitable for inclusion in a formal research thesis.

Conclusion's Teachers Interview and Instruments of Students

- a. **Dominance of Positive Student Perception on Fluency:** Oral production activities designed around interactive communicative goals yield a definitive positive response from a vast majority of seventh-grade learners, who directly link these tasks to an improvement in their spoken English performance.
- b. **Lexical Acquisition Facilitated by Playful Dynamics:** Integrating systematic structural activities into the classroom serves as a reliable alternative to memory-based list retention, promoting instead contextual lexical expansion where students store and retrieve terminology through experiential associations.
- c. **Shift in Affective Filters and Classroom Engagement:** Game-based structures alter the traditional classroom environment by shifting student focus away from immediate grammatical accuracy toward functional communication, which noticeably diminishes linguistic performance anxiety.
- d. **Varied Receptivity Based on Task Risk:** Student willingness to participate fluctuates depending on the social exposure required by the task; public activities like dramatizations cause initial anxiety, whereas group-centered playful competitions quickly transform apprehension into active involvement.
- e. **Strategic Impact of Time-Constrained Speaking:** Short, timed communication strategies such as Speed Speaking serve as a practical mechanism to bypass internal mental translation, encouraging spontaneous speech and building confidence through consecutive round repetitions.

- f. **Variable Viability by Proficiency Level:** Certain specialized vocabulary activities, such as Taboo, demand a baseline linguistic competence typically found from ninth grade onward; if applied to lower proficiency levels (like A2) without adjustments, they result in learner frustration and cognitive disengagement.
- g. **Classroom Management Pressures in Gamified Contexts:** Playful activities require constant teacher movement and tight instructional control, as high school students frequently resort to using their native language (Spanish) or non-verbal gestures to win points when unsupervised.
- h. **Pedagogical Utility of Warm-Ups and Pre-Assessment Reviews:** Teachers identify the early and late stages of an instructional unit as the ideal placement for active learning tasks, noting their efficacy in activating prior knowledge or serving as low-stakes practice before oral tests.
- i. **Need for Clear Pedagogical Objectives:** The success of gamification relies entirely on aligning each game with a specific linguistic objective, ensuring that playful dynamics function as core instructional tools rather than superficial time-filling tasks.
- j. **Institutional Vulnerability in Resource Allocation:** A clear gap exists between modern communicative methodology and institutional reality, as teachers face tight curriculum schedules, lack of specialized printing budgets for physical cards, and inconsistent classroom technology.

Recommendation's Teacher Observation

- a. **Systematize Pre-Task Multimedia Scaffolding in Daily Lesson Planning:** It is highly recommended to institutionalize the use of short, targeted listening and viewing prompts as a mandatory prerequisite for any speaking task within the seventh-grade curriculum. English educators should select audio-visual materials that directly model the specific lexical items and prosodic features expected in subsequent production phases, ensures that students do not engage in oral tasks without sufficient prior cognitive and linguistic framing.
- b. **Incorporate Team-Based Competitive Frameworks to Sustain Extrinsic Motivation:** Teachers should intentionally replace traditional, isolated speaking drills with gamified structures that integrate peer collaboration and balanced team competitions.

Utilizing visual scoring mechanisms or interactive infographics via tools like Canva helps capture the interest of secondary school adolescents, motivating them to naturally assist their peers and engage in cooperative problem-solving through the target language.

- c. **Adopt Delayed, Formative Feedback Protocols During High-Immersion Communicative Activities:** To protect the students' confidence and keep the affective filter low, instructional mediation must avoid immediate correction during the execution of fluency-based games. Educators should adopt a non-obtrusive monitoring role, documenting recurring lexical and phonetic gaps systematically to address them through whole-class formative feedback sessions immediately following the conclusion of the game dynamics.

Recommendation for Teachers Interview and Instruments of Students

- a. **Implement Systematic Low-Stakes Speaking Tasks:** Incorporate regular, short communicative dynamics during the first minutes of class to normalize oral production, thereby gradually lowering the students' affective filter from the beginning of the academic year.
- b. **Apply Differentiated Scaffolding for Lexical Activities:** Adjust games that require high cognitive or descriptive loads, such as Taboo, by providing pre-taught synonym lists, visual prompts, or modified time limits tailored specifically to lower proficiency levels.
- c. **Establish Clear Linguistic Protocols Prior to Group Work:** Define explicit classroom management routines and language boundaries before launching active dynamics, penalizing the use of the native language during team play to maximize target language production.
- d. **Prioritize Small-Group Formats to Ensure Equitable Talk Time:** Design group tasks with a strict limit on participant numbers per team, preventing dominant students from monopolizing the speaking time and ensuring passive learners are forced to participate.

- e. **Embed Structural Repetition in Fluency Drills:** Utilize multi-round speaking tasks like Speed Speaking across conversational units, allowing students to discuss the same topic with different peers to naturally build fluency and confidence through repetition.
- f. **Align Playful Activities with MEP Curricular Goals:** Design or adapting classroom games so that every dynamic connects directly to a specific linguistic capability indicator required by the official syllabus, avoiding unstructured activities.
- g. **Incorporate Gradual Public Exposure to Reduce Anxiety:** Transition students slowly from low-exposure group work to high-exposure public tasks like dramatizations, ensuring the classroom is established as a non-judgmental space first.
- h. **Develop Contextualized Physical and Digital Learning Banks:** Encourage the English department to co-create and share reusable materials, game card banks, and digital templates to reduce individual teacher planning fatigue and optimize printing resources.
- i. **Advocate for Curricular and Assessment Flexibility:** Request administrative authorization to validate performance-based games and active communication tasks as formative assessment instruments within the term planning.
- j. **Coordinate Action-Oriented Professional Development Workshops:** Shift institutional training focus away from passive theoretical lectures toward hands-on collaborative workshops where teachers can actively build, test, and adapt gamification materials for their specific high school context.

Final Synthesis of Conclusions

- **The Evolution of the Instructional Role Transformed Classroom Dynamics:** The evidence demonstrates that shifting the educator's role from a traditional transmitter of knowledge to an active facilitator of interactive experiences altered the communicative environment. By adopting a non-invasive monitoring stance during oral production, the teacher's mediation allowed the 92 learners to take full ownership of their speaking time, proving that instructional silence and strategic guidance are essential factors in promoting autonomous target language use.
- **Context-Driven Lesson Design Optimizes Language Acquisition:** The study establishes that the success of the instructional intervention relied heavily on customizing

linguistic tasks to match the specific cognitive and social maturity of high school adolescents. Moving away from rigid textbook structures and implementing structured interactive tasks proved that second language acquisition is accelerated when instructional design addresses the current interests and communicative needs of the student population.

Final Operational Recommendations

- **Establish Continuous Professional Development in Interactive Methodologies:** It is strongly recommended that the institution's administrative staff design and implement collaborative workshops focused on modern interactive language instruction. This initiative should train the English teaching department to create custom, tech-supported instructional assets, ensuring that active communication remains the central axis of secondary school language classrooms.
- **Standardize Alternative Communicative Assessment Protocols:** The English department should modify standard evaluation schedules to permanently incorporate formative performance scales that track oral progress in real time. Rather than relying solely on high-stakes, traditional summative examinations, instructional policies should favor ongoing assessment strategies that validate the students' real-time strategic competence and linguistic adaptability within changing communicative scenarios.

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Annexes

Pedagogical Mediation Observation Instrument

Institution: Liceo Hernán Zamora Elizondo

Target Population: Seventh Grade (GROUPS 7-1 / 7-2)

Instrument Objective: To evaluate the English teacher's pedagogical mediation during the implementation of gamification strategies (*Speed Speaking* and *Taboo Game*) aimed at developing students' listening and speaking macro-skills.

Rating Scale:

- **4: Always (A)** – The teacher demonstrates the action consistently, systematically, and effectively.
- **3: Frequently (F)** – The teacher performs the action most of the time.
- **2: Seldom (S)** – The action is observed only in isolation or deficiently.
- **1: Never (N)** – The action is completely absent during the pedagogical mediation.

Likert-Type Observation Matrix

1. The teacher structures clear and dynamic time frames that promote fluent oral production through the *Speed Speaking* activity.
 - **4: Always (A)**
 - **3: Frequently (F)**
 - **2: Seldom (S)**
 - **1: Never (N)**
2. Provides linguistic scaffolding spaces prior to the activity so that students can express themselves with greater ease and spontaneity.
 - **4: Always (A)**
 - **3: Frequently (F)**
 - **2: Seldom (S)**
 - **1: Never (N)**

3. Utilizes the *Speed Speaking* strategy as a direct means to model and improve pronunciation, intonation, and speech rhythm in English.
 - **4: Always (A)**
 - **3: Frequently (F)**
 - **2: Seldom (S)**
 - **1: Never (N)**
4. The teacher introduces and contextualizes the target vocabulary before executing the *Taboo Game*.
 - **4: Always (A)**
 - **3: Frequently (F)**
 - **2: Seldom (S)**
 - **1: Never (N)**
5. Actively monitors that students use synonyms, circumlocution, and alternative English vocabulary to avoid the forbidden words.
 - **4: Always (A)**
 - **3: Frequently (F)**
 - **2: Seldom (S)**
 - **1: Never (N)**
6. Designs clear materials or visual resources (cards, screens) that guide lexical and conceptual recognition during the game dynamics.
 - **4: Always (A)**
 - **3: Frequently (F)**
 - **2: Seldom (S)**
 - **1: Never (N)**
7. Explains the rules of the games and evaluation criteria in a clear, playful, and interactive manner before beginning the session.
 - **4: Always (A)**
 - **3: Frequently (F)**
 - **2: Seldom (S)**
 - **1: Never (N)**

8. Maintains an enthusiastic attitude and a facilitator role that stimulates active participation and healthy peer competition.
- **4: Always (A)**
 - **3: Frequently (F)**
 - **2: Seldom (S)**
 - **1: Never (N)**
9. Promotes group dynamics that require students to interact with their peers collaboratively and efficiently.
- **4: Always (A)**
 - **3: Frequently (F)**
 - **2: Seldom (S)**
 - **1: Never (N)**
10. The teacher treats errors constructively during activities, helping students lose the fear of making mistakes when speaking in public.
- **4: Always (A)**
 - **3: Frequently (F)**
 - **2: Seldom (S)**
 - **1: Never (N)**
11. Employs verbal and non-verbal positive reinforcement to strengthen students' self-confidence and security when speaking English.
- **4: Always (A)**
 - **3: Frequently (F)**
 - **2: Seldom (S)**
 - **1: Never (N)**
12. Fosters a safe classroom environment and mutual respect that mitigates social anxiety when speaking in front of classmates.
- **4: Always (A)**
 - **3: Frequently (F)**
 - **2: Seldom (S)**
 - **1: Never (N)**

Critical Evidences of Pedagogical Mediation Observed:

U.I.A
Graduation Seminar
I-103
By Mariana Vargas Arias
Instructions:

Dear teacher of the institution, the following questionnaire is part of the work to obtain data for the development of a university research project whose objective is to gather qualitative information on teachers' experiences, perceptions, challenges, and recommendations regarding the use of gamification strategies such as speed speaking and taboo games to support the improvement of speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms at the secondary level. The requested information is important for the development of the analysis. Please read each question carefully and respond. Thank you very much!

If you are not familiar with the gamification strategies of speed speaking and taboo games, do not worry; here a brief explanation of each is provided.

Speed Speaking: an activity in which students speak in short rounds (1–2 minutes) about a topic or question, changing partners in each round. The goal is to encourage fluency, spontaneity, and confidence in oral expression.

Taboo Game: a dynamic in which a student must describe a word without using certain forbidden terms (“taboo words”), while their classmates try to guess it. It promotes creative use of vocabulary, description, and oral interaction.

1. What experiences have you had when implementing playful or gamified activities in your English classes?
2. How would you describe your students’ reactions and attitudes toward dynamics aimed at promoting oral expression (e.g., games, competitions, dramatizations)?
3. From your perspective, how does gamification influence students’ motivation and confidence to participate in oral communication activities?
4. What is your opinion of the Speed Speaking strategy as a tool to develop oral fluency in English?
5. What specific advantages or limitations do you think the game Taboo could have in the secondary school English classroom?

6. What changes have you observed (or do you think could be observed) in students' vocabulary expansion and oral performance when using these specific strategies?
7. In what ways would you be willing to incorporate or adapt these activities into your own teaching practice?
8. What recommendations would you give to improve the integration of gamification strategies in English language teaching at the secondary level?
9. What kind of institutional support, resources, or professional training do you think is necessary for teachers to successfully implement gamification and fluency strategies in the classroom?

U.I.A

Graduation Seminar

I-103

By Mariana Vargas Arias

Instructions:

Dear student of the institution, the following questionnaire is part of the work to obtain data for the development of a university research project whose objective is to evaluate the level of motivation, attention, comprehension, and perception regarding the use of gamification activities for the improvement of English-speaking skills. The requested information is important for the development of the analysis. Please carefully read each statement and select the best response option. Thank you very much!

1. The speaking activities helped me express myself more fluently in English.
2. The games allowed me to expand and use my English vocabulary better.
3. I felt more motivated to participate in class thanks to the gamified activities.
4. The activities gave me more confidence to speak English in front of my classmates.
5. I consider that games in speaking is a useful strategy to improve my oral expression.
6. The games made the class more fun and participatory.
7. The game dynamics helped me lose the fear of making mistakes when speaking in English.
8. With activities of games, I interact with my peers more effectively.
9. The strategies of games by the teacher helped me improve my pronunciation and fluency.
10. I would recommend continuing to use activities like speed speaking and taboo in English classes.