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Gamification as a Strategy to Improve Speaking Skill in English as a Foreign Language

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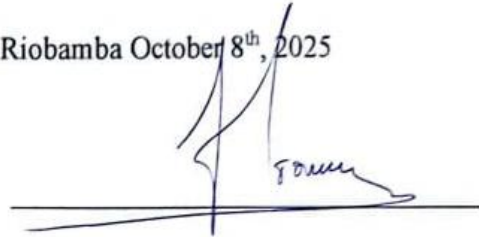
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DEDICATORY

To my God, my heavenly Father, who with His love helped me reach this moment. Without His help, strength, and wisdom, none of this beautiful dream would have been possible. All honor and glory be to Him.

To my parents, who always believed in me. Their advice and words of encouragement were what drove me to keep going day after day. To my siblings, for their unconditional support every step of the way.

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GENERAL INDEX

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP	
FAVORABLE OPINION OF THE TUTOR TEACHER	
COMMITTEE MEMBERS CERTIFICATE.....	
CERTIFICADO ANTIPLAGIO	
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	
GENERAL INDEX.....	
INDEX OF TABLES	
INDEX OF FIGURES	
RESUMEN	
ABSTRACT	
CHAPTER I	15
INTRODUCTION.....	15
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	16
1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION	17
1.4 JUSTIFICATION.....	17
OBJECTIVES	18
GENERAL OBJECTIVE.....	18
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES.....	19
CHAPTER II.....	20
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	20
2.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND	20

2.2	THEORETICAL FOUNDATION BASIS	26
2.2.1	GAMIFICATION	26
2.2.1.1	Characteristics of gamification.....	27
2.2.1.2.	Components of gamification	28
2.2.2.	Speaking skills	30
2.2.2.1.	Stages of speaking.....	31
2.2.2.2.	Speaking subskills.....	31
2.2.2.3	Teacher's and student's roles in speaking	32
CHAPTER III		33
3.	METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK.....	33
3.1	RESEARCH APPROACH	33
3.2.	Research modality.....	33
3.3.	Research type.....	33
3.4.	Study population.....	33
3.4.1	Ethical considerations	34
3.5.	Techniques and instruments for data collection	34
3.5.1.	Pre-test.....	35
3.5.2.	Post-test	35
3.5.3.	Statistical analysis	35
CHAPTER IV		36
4.	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	36
4.1.	Pre-test.....	36
4.3.	Post-test	38
4.3.	Discussion	44
CHAPTER V		47

5.1. CONCLUSIONS	47
5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	48
BIBLIOGRAPHY	50
ANNEXES.....	55

INDEX OF TABLES

Table 1 Population.....	34
Table 2 Pre-test control group.....	37
Table 3 Pre-test. Experimental group	38
Table 4 Post-test - Control group	39
Table 5 Means	40
Table 6 Means and standard deviations.....	41
Table 7 Normality test	41
Table 8 Holm-method test	42
Table 9 Homogeneity of variances.....	42
Table 10 Mann-Whitney U	43

INDEX OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Data distribution.....	44
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RESUMEN

El presente estudio tuvo como objetivo analizar la influencia de la gamificación en la mejora de la expresión oral en estudiantes de 9.º de educación básica “B” de la Unidad Educativa Simón Rodríguez, durante el año lectivo 2024-2025. Este proyecto de investigación cuasiexperimental comprendió una población de treinta y seis participantes, divididos en un grupo control y un grupo experimental. Los dos grupos fueron diagnosticados mediante la prueba oral del examen Flyers A2 de la página web de Cambridge Assessment. El pretest demostró un bajo nivel de expresión oral. Posteriormente, los estudiantes del grupo experimental participaron en clases de inglés centradas en la aplicación de actividades de gamificación. Tras esta intervención, se les aplicó el posttest, que demostró una mejora. Por lo tanto, se concluye que la aplicación de la gamificación influyó positivamente en la mejora de la expresión oral de los participantes. Por esta razón, se recomienda que los profesores de inglés apliquen la gamificación no solo con estudiantes de 9.º año, sino también con los demás niveles para contribuir al proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: gamificación – lenguaje – proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje – expresión oral – habilidad

ABSTRACT

The present research aimed to analyze the influence of gamification on the speaking skill improvement of students of 9th year of basic education “B” at Unidad Educativa Simon Rodriguez, high school during the academic year 2024-2025. This quasi-experimental research had a population formed by thirty-six participants who were distributed into the control group and the experimental group. Both groups were diagnosed through the Flyers A2 test speaking part from Cambridge Assessment webpage. The pre-test revealed a low level of speaking skill performance. Afterwards, students from the experimental group participated in English classes with a main focus on the application of gamification activities. After this intervention, students were given the post-test which revealed that they have improved. Therefore, it is concluded that the application of gamification positively influenced on the speaking skill improvement of participants. For this reason, it is highly recommended that English teachers apply gamification not only with ninth graders but also with the rest of the levels to contribute with the teaching-learning process.

Keywords: gamification – language- teaching- learning process – speaking – skill

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the past, the necessity for fresh and captivating teaching methods has become clear in English language classrooms. Conventional approaches to language education, like focusing on grammar rules and repetitive drills, often do not effectively engage students, particularly in enhancing their speaking abilities. With the increasing emphasis on proficient communication in English, educators must discover innovative ways to boost students' fluency, pronunciation, interactive skills, confidence, and vocabulary as noted by Morales Valenzuela in 2020. One effective method is gamification, which has been identified as a powerful means to teach speaking in an engaging and effective manner.

Gamification brings significant benefits to the learning environment (Ahmed, 2021). It promotes active and intentional language use because the learners practice speaking in familiar settings. Through this practice, learners may enhance their vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and develop fluency. Engaging in gamification in the classroom also helps to foster critical thinking. According to Harmer (2022), this approach increases students' knowledge of cultural nuances and important components of the educational process. Students' capacity to communicate successfully in the target language is also strengthened by this strategy.

Analyzing the effectiveness of gamification in improving English speaking abilities for the ninth-year EGB class "B" at "Simon Rodriguez" school during the 2024–2025 academic year is the main goal of this study. It is intended to consider the possibilities that gamification holds in educational settings by looking at the experiences of both the students and their teacher when using this technique in the classroom. To efficiently collect data and help comprehend

the benefits and challenges of its implementation, a variety of technologies will be employed.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Nowadays, the English language has become a global requirement. In the educational context, learning English is essential because it enables students to access greater opportunities in a globalized world (Crystal, 2003). However, learners need help to achieve adequate levels of oral proficiency due to different factors. To reach these levels, it is essential to apply active strategies and methodologies that involve the learner dynamically and meaningfully. These methodologies should focus on the learner as the protagonist of the educational process, encouraging active, collaborative, and positive learning, in which oral skills are actively developed in a stimulating and authentic environment.

Considering the importance of learning the English language with active strategies, gamification is an innovative strategy that allows students to learn while living in a game environment. This creates dynamic learning in which losses motivate students to achieve a certain result, thus acquiring active learning. In this way, gamification allows learners to become involved in the learning process to complete the challenges presented by language learning. As a result, learners show more interest, increase their motivation, collaborate in different areas, generate interaction in the classroom, and encourage participation (Hellín et al., 2023).

Although the benefits of gamification are significant, traditional methodological strategies and techniques are still used in classrooms at different educational institutions. In addition, following a standard curriculum where memorization and repetition predominate may result in less effective learning, disrupting the development of oral proficiency in foreign

language acquisition. Consequently, learners often have limited opportunities to practice speaking, as these methods focus more on theoretical and grammatical aspects, which can become monotonous and fail to arouse learners' interest.

To address this problem, the present research aims to analyze the effectiveness of gamification for improving English speaking skill at students of 9th year of EGB class “B” at “Simon Rodriguez” high school in Lican, Chimborazo Province during the academic term 2024-2025. To achieve this objective, the project has a quantitative approach that is in line with quasi-experimental and descriptive research, for which instruments such as pre-test, post-test, and statistical analysis will be applied.

1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION

How effective is gamification for improving English speaking skill at students “9th year of general basic Education (EGB)” class “B” at “Simon Rodriguez” high school in Lican, Chimborazo Province during the academic term 2024-2025?

1.4 JUSTIFICATION

Gamification is acknowledged globally as a contemporary instructional approach that successfully improves communication skills, especially in speaking (Ali AL-Garni & Almuhammadi, 2019). The importance of gamification is notable because it enables students to participate by sharing their personal stories in class, fostering profound and enduring learning. In our linked world, where skill in English is vital, gamification offers an enjoyable and motivating method to turn learning into an interactive and cooperative experience. One of the major challenges in Ecuador's educational system is the acquisition of the English language.

Numerous educational organizations throughout the country are actively exploring and implementing methods to significantly improve learning results in this area.

Thus, in this context, gamification appears as a strategy that can improve instruction in this field while simultaneously fostering students' creativity and critical thinking abilities. Moreover, Simon Rodriguez school was selected for this study as it corresponds with the need to adopt creative teaching strategies to improve English education for learners. Incorporating gamification into education fosters a more creative and captivating environment for students, motivating them to participate actively in their learning process.

For teachers, gamification acts as a flexible and powerful teaching approach to enhance English language learning. It allows educators to adapt their instructional methods according to student abilities and needs, while improving interactions and teamwork in the classroom. Moreover, it encourages teachers to create instructional methods that are creative and centered on the requirements of the students.

Finally, for the researcher, this study offers an opportunity to enhance the scientific comprehension of the impact of gamification on the advancement of speaking abilities. This study enhances existing teaching methods and lays the foundation for additional research exploring its potential as an educational tool, ultimately deepening the understanding of its effects in learning environments.

OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To analyze the influence of gamification on the speaking skill improvement of students of 9th year of basic education “B” at Unidad Educativa Simon Rodriguez high school

during the academic year 2024-2025.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To diagnose the level of students' speaking skill with pre-test.
- To apply gamification as a strategy to face the problems detected.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of gamification for improving speaking skill with post- test.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

To understand the research topic, previous works and articles on gamification as a strategy for improving speaking skills were reviewed.

Ndayishimiye et al. (2024) aimed to look at how gamification might help high school students perform better when speaking English. This study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative data to assess how learner performance has changed. As a result, the study showed that gamification improves learners' engagement and motivation, it also fosters a deeper understanding of the English Language. In addition, the authors emphasize that students increase confidence and proficiency, as by integrating interactive elements, students are inspired to practice speaking English in lively settings created by gamified learning environments (Ndayishimiye et al., 2024).

Besides, Ji-Yun et al. (2024) investigated the relationship between Taiwanese fifth grade students' English-speaking efficacy and their anxiety levels. An experimental group and a control group were formed from the participants in this study. The authors applied quasi-experimental research. The experimental group's results revealed a substantial negative association, whereas the control groups showed no significant link. The interview, children stated that they liked this method of instruction since it was simple, enjoyable, and let them learn via playing and connecting with their peers (Ji-Yun et al., 2024).

Aal-Asheakh and Saud (2024) conducted a research titled "The Impact of Gamification on Foreign Language Development within Elementary Students' Speaking Skills." This

research observed the efficacy of gamification in raising primary school students' interest and engagement levels as well as their proficiency in foreign languages using a mixed-method approach. The study subjects were thirty-two fifth-grade students at Al-Shabeen Elementary School, half of whom belonged to the experimental group and half of whom belonged to the control group. This study's findings of differences between the experimental and control groups, specifically in vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation, fluency, and accuracy, showed how effective gamification is in language acquisition. On the other hand, it has been suggested that gamification in language teaching improves learners' motivation, mastery, and retention of language content.

Yaghoobi and Kazemi (2023) determined how online gamification influenced Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' talking fluency and accuracy. Online gamification upgrades the rightness and familiarity of Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' discourse, concurring to the study's findings. The authors state that recreations are the foremost appropriate device for learning talking abilities such as flow and precision.

A study by Huseinović (2023) developed a quantitative investigation to find out how gamification affected students' academic performance and motivation in the particular setting the EFL classroom in Bosnia and Herzegovina's higher education institutions. Snowball sampling technique was applied to gather 202 students from Bosnia and Herzegovina's public and private colleges. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics. They stated that gamification significantly improved students' academic performance and motivation when learning English as a second language, and that adding games improved their speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities (Huseinović, 2023).

Another research by Ahmed (2021), titled Gamification works well for improving high

school students' speaking abilities, as evidenced by the study "A Gamification Program to Improve EFL Secondary Stage Students' Speaking Skills and Their Motivation to Learn These Skills." looked for improving English as a foreign language speaking skills and increased students' motivation to talk. This research was applied to a control group and an experimental group of first-year high school students, using a measure of motivation to acquire speaking abilities and an English as a Foreign Language Speaking Test. The experimental group fared better than the control group, according to the results. Results showed that training phase helped improve the student's encouragement and effectiveness in their speaking skills.

Regarding the effectiveness of gamification, a study by Nurutdinova et al. (2021) titled "Gamification Approach to Enhance Students' Speech Proficiency and Skills: Implementation Methodology," found that gamified learning is creative, adaptable, individualized, independent, and equitable in assessing motivation and accomplishments. It also fosters student communication, independence, and active behavior, all of which support students' personal growth. This study had a quantitative approach and was applied to second-year students of Kazan Federal University. The main objective was to create a strategy for applying the gamification approach to raise non-linguistic faculty members' vocabulary and grammar proficiency, the results show that gamification is a useful technique, as it allows to improve the didactic material, involving the students during the educational process and also contributes to the linguistic skills of the students.

Accordingly, Zhang and Hasim (2023) claimed that learners improve their English language skills and abilities through gamification. They also stated that it has the positive effects on learner's attitudes and their emotional responses. This helps create a genuine language-learning setting and foster students' overall proficiency. It was a systematic review whose main

goal was to outline the characteristics of updated research on gamified EFL/ESL instruction, the pros and cons of gamification in instruction, and its elements. The findings demonstrated that gamification is a very useful technique to enhance improve the teaching of English as a foreign language, especially in terms of increasing students' motivation and language skills.

Yet another research titled “Gamification and Speaking skill” (Erazo, 2023) aimed to determine how gamification influences the development of speaking skills in Universidad Técnica de Ambato first-semester "Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros" students. This study applied a test before and after a treatment, and the research was both quantitative and quasi- experimental. Data revealed that the students' speaking skills improved, since there was a difference in averages from the test before and after. The author claimed that gamification helped in students' speaking skills improvement (Erazo, 2023).

Likewise, Loza (2023) used gamification as a tool to contribute to oral English communication improvement. The approach of this research was qualitative, descriptive, and bibliographic documentary level. The results showed that the implementation of gamification promotes motivation, confidence, and interaction within the classroom, allowing oral communication development. Finally, the author stated that it was necessary to have an organized process before, during, and after the gamification process (Loza, 2023).

Following this, Vathanalaoha (2022) conducted a study to analyze the results of applying Gamification on English Language Learning. The research was conducted on the control group, which consisted of eight other high schools where the students typically took English classes in Thailand, and the experimental group, which consisted of ninth graders from eight Thai secondary schools. The results demonstrated that the gamified program, which

included leaderboards and a reward system, provided a great opportunity to practice using proper English. In addition, the findings indicate that English language learners, whose study habits have grown dominating, enjoyable, and independent, can benefit from gamification's intriguing qualities. It also mentions that understanding the benefits of gamification may offer some hope for English language instruction in Thailand (Vathanalaoha, 2022).

The work conducted by Vergara et al. (2021) sought to determine the effects of using gamified instructional materials to help early childhood education students improve their oral English skills. The research was of the descriptive quantitative kind, employing a preliminary and final exam on fifty youngsters from a Colombian school, ages four to six. The study's findings demonstrated a high degree of learning, with a Hake factor of 0.736. Data obtained determined that students' performance was much better than those obtained at the beginning of the study. focusing mostly on the following standards: vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, and grammar. In addition, the findings demonstrate that gamified instructional materials improve early childhood education students' oral English proficiency (Vergara et al., 2021).

In addition, Erazo (2023) determined how gamification influences the development of speaking skills at university level. A pre-test and a post-test of the Cambridge Assessment English were used in this study, which was both quantitative and quasi- experimental. Results indicated that there was a significant improvement after the post-test. Therefore, it was a better students' oral production performance (Erazo, 2023).

Similarly, Loza (2023) examined how students improved through the use of gamification as a tool to improve oral English communication. The approach of this research was qualitative, descriptive, and bibliographic documentary level. The results showed that the

implementation of gamification promotes motivation, confidence, and interaction within the classroom, allowing oral communication development. The author stated that it is necessary to have an organized process before, during, and after the gamification process (Loza, 2023).

To sum up, this state of the art, it is stated that gamification serves as an effective method to enhance speaking abilities in the English language because some studies reviewed revealed its capability to improve language learning results. There are current advancements such as main advantages detected as detailed below:

There is increased motivation. By applying gamification, learners feel more excited and motivated, leading to greater involvement and interaction with the content aimed at enhancing language skills (Erazo, 2023; Loza, 2023). Students show great motivation because there are some key features in this strategy namely students point and scoring in a friendly environment; rewards and badges to inspire reaching language goals; leaderboards to improve competitive spirit; and, engaging activities like quizzes, simulations, and role-playing games to solidify language knowledge and communication abilities (Aal-Asheakh and Saud, 2024; Huseinović, 2023; Nurutdinova et al., 2021).

There are better language skills and higher engagement. Research reveals that gamification contributes to notable advancements in English abilities, such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Vergara et al., 2021; Vathanalaoha, 2022). In addition, this approach fosters an engaging learning environment, promoting more student interaction and participation (Ahmed, 2021).

However, there are difficulties and constraints. Sometimes students face technical glitches that may disrupt the successful implementation of gamification strategies in language education (Ji-Yun et al., 2024). Students experiment adverse competition which means that

there is an excessive focus on competition which can create negative experiences and lower motivation (Yaghoobi and Kazemi, 2023).

In conclusion, gamification has the potential to enhance speaking proficiency in English as a foreign language. However, it is crucial to design and apply gamification techniques thoughtfully to optimize their benefits.

2.2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION BASIS

This research is focused on two main topics mainly gamification and speaking skills of English as a foreign language. Consequently, these two variables are reviewed in this section.

2.2.1 GAMIFICATION

Gamification has gained increasing importance in the educational world. Although the relationship between games and learning has always been close since the ancient Greeks, the term emerged with the rise of digital media and has gained particular importance in the 21st century (Abdeldaim & Kamal, 2021).

Various authors have been read to achieve the concept of gamification. One approach to the definition is provided by Raduan et al. (2018) which states that it is characterized by the use of techniques, elements, and dynamics typical of games in non-game environments. These techniques allow for the introduction of game-based structures into generally non-game contexts such as teaching or the business world, transforming seemingly boring activities into ones that motivate people to participate. Likewise, Gaitán's (2022) interpretation, gamification is understood as a new teaching strategy that aims to improve the workplace and educational environments through the implementation of games specifically designed to meet specific

objectives. These improvements are primarily the optimization of knowledge and the increase in positive outcomes following implementation. The achievement of rewards and achievements characterizes this type of methodology as a result of success in an activity or set of activities.

On the other hand, Morillas (2016) developed research to establish differences between gamification and the use of games in the classroom. This distinction lies in the fact that gamification uses elements typical of games (such as points, levels, and rankings, among others) and continues to use them outside of the game as part of the classroom dynamic.

Delving deeper into the components and underpinnings of gamification, it is based on three main theories. These are Human Behavior Theor, Self-Determination Theory, and Flow Theory. All three have in common that, through the analysis of participant behavior, they identify motivation as the key element that fuels students' interest in continuing with the games (Dewi et al., 2017).

All these definitions present fundamental aspects of gamification. However, the most widely used definition in articles and research on this topic is that of Werbach and Hunter (2014). These researchers conceptualize gamification as the application of the elements of games to design activities in a totally different context than the game itself.

2.2.1.1 Characteristics of gamification

Different characteristics of gamification has been reviewed by Nilakshi et al, (2024) as noted below:

- 1) Motivation is a fundamental element of the design of a gamified system. It influences participants to gain their willingness to accept and continue playing the game.
- 2) Students' improve their gamified system, including the language used, the game's narrative, and the activities performed.

3) Students are engaged because there is participants' full attention and engaging in the gamified system to continue until its completion.

4) A process that provides energy, direction, purpose, or meaning to the environment and actions. It must motivate participants to remain engaged and complete the activities.

5) Promoting learning: This offers an innovative way to engage students and motivate them to learn.

6) Problem-solving: The natural competitiveness of games helps people achieve their best and force themselves to set new goals to accomplish.

2.2.1.2. Components of gamification

This strategy has three fundamental elements: the mechanics, the dynamics, and the game components. These three pillars of gamification are closely related.

First, the mechanics are those elements, techniques, or rules that act as motivators for students within the game, thus helping them achieve the goals set for that activity. According to Arwandi et al. (2019), some of the most common are points, levels, prizes, rankings, missions, and narratives. Points are a tool that graphically shows both teachers and students their progress throughout the activity. Earning them is a motivating element for students, especially if the possibility of exchanging them for prizes, privileges, or advantages in the classroom is considered.

Levels also easily show student progress. However, in this case, the levels are linked to increasing difficulty throughout the learning process. Students must complete certain items in one level to access the next. Therefore, activities based on this element must have a permanent and unchangeable order (Gaitan, 2025).

Prizes are rewards that can be presented in various forms. They can be tangible (medals,

diplomas, gifts, etc.) or intangible (privileges or exceptions within the classroom). These elements serve to recognize the student's effort and/or success in the proposed activities. They are generally motivating aspects for students (Figueroa, 2015).

Rankings refer to public lists displayed at the end of the game. In them, the player sees their progress compared to that of their peers. It is a motivating element since students try to surpass themselves to improve their level. Added to this is the social perspective: students can judge their superiority or inferiority compared to other students based on their ranking. Great care must be taken when implementing this element, as it can lead to excessive competitiveness among students (Abdeldaim & Kamal, 2021).

Missions are techniques that allow to break down the learning objective or goal into smaller, short-term units. They create a series of short challenges, the completion of which frequently generates positive emotions, which increases long-term motivation (Morales Valenzuela, 2020).

On the other hand, narratives are the common threads that can unite different activities. In this way, students experience a fictional story and play roles or characters during the sessions. They foster student engagement and emotional association (Werbach & Hunter, 2014).

Secondly, gamification dynamics are understood as the contexts, activities, and challenges presented to students to encourage their participation. They are based on the student's experience and interaction with the activities to foster ongoing motivation. There are a wide variety of dynamics within gamification, almost as many as there are proposals. Morillas (2016) classified six different types: rewards, status, achievements, expression, competition, and altruism.

Rewards are based on the student receiving a benefit for success in their activity,

demonstrating effort, or simply for their correct participation. Their function is to reinforce behaviors so that they are repeated and sustained over time. Rewards can be of various types such as:

- Fixed rewards: These must be established and communicated to the player before starting the game. This way, they will have this as a goal from the beginning of the activity (Abdeldaim & Kamal, 2021).

- Random rewards: The player knows they will receive a reward at the end of the activity, but they do not know what type. This prevents the student from losing interest if the reward they receive is not to their liking (Abdeldaim & Kamal, 2021).

- Unexpected: The student not only doesn't know what reward they will receive, but they also don't know that they will receive a reward. Thus, it is the possibility of a reward that motivates learning. Caution must be exercised with this type of reward, as it can create a sense of unfairness if certain activities are rewarded and others are not (Arwandi et al., 2019).

- Social: These are given by classmates and the teacher as part of the game (Arwandi et al., 2019).

Finally, resources are gamification elements that constitute particular actions are established within the activity design. They can be classified as achievements, avatars, boss fights, collections, virtual goods, and combats (Kiruthiga & Arokiaraj, 2020). Likewise, achievements are, in essence, a player's gain obtained by successfully completing the objectives assigned to a given activity (Kiruthiga & Arokiaraj, 2020).

2.2.2. Speaking skills

According to Ali AL-Garni and Almuhammadi (2019), speaking is crucial to learning a

foreign language. It is a productive language skill that uses words and phrases to express ideas. Different situations, such as conversations, telephone calls, or conferences, allow speaking. It is a fundamental tool for communication, as it promotes language learning and fosters continuous dialogue (Harmer, 2015). Proficiency enables speakers to express themselves clearly, with or without the teacher's guidance. Through these interactions, speakers can express their ideas with confidence (Nayman & Bünyamin, 2022).

2.2.2.1. Stages of speaking

Harmer (2015) identified three key stages in the process of speaking: before speaking, during speaking and after speaking. The initial stage, pre-speaking, involves preparation, where the individual examines and develops the ideas to express. During this phase, the speaker arranges the content of their message and selects the right words and phrases to communicate effectively. The next vital part of the process of speaking is the actual speaking. This stage encompasses the pronunciation, fluency, and coherence of the message. It is essential for the speaker to ensure that their speech is understandable, clear, and logical. Lastly, the post-speaking phase allows the speaker to reflect on any mistakes, such as issues with pronunciation or clarity, and to identify areas for improvement in the future.

2.2.2.2. Speaking subskills

Qasim (2021) stated speaking is one of the key abilities in learning a foreign language. The essential sub-skills related to speaking consist of fluency, accuracy, grammar, and understanding. Over the past few decades, linguistics and psychology perspectives have emphasized that language instruction's main goal should be improving speaking skills. It has resulted in an approach where educators focus on building strong and practical communication skills in the students. For this reason, becoming a skilled speaker is not just about fully

understanding a specific language; it also requires practicing each of the sub-skills mentioned above in a structured and ongoing manner. These proficiencies demand a thorough and organized development of foreign language teaching methods, emphasizing regular practice and feedback to enhance communication effectiveness and accuracy.

2.2.2.3 Teacher's and student's roles in speaking

The teacher plays a crucial part in developing a student's speaking abilities, as this helps the student enhance those skills. The teacher acts as a leader, supporter, and example, helping students to practice the foreign language successfully. Conversely, the student's task is to engage in speaking activities and better their communication abilities to build confidence when speaking (Asefa and Enashe, 2024).

CHAPTER III

3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

The quantitative method involves gathering data and performing numerical analysis to achieve improved study outcomes (Apuke, 2017). This research seeks to evaluate how effective gamification is in improving English-speaking skills, the quantitative approach will enable the assessment of students' speaking skills during both the diagnostic and evaluation phases. By using specific data collection tools, the results obtained will aid in understanding the advancements made through gamification in enhancing speaking skills.

3.2. Research modality

Due to this study's specific characteristics, descriptive research modality was selected. According to Siedlecki (2020), descriptive research aims to describe aspects of a phenomenon, group, or study. This type of research focuses on recording events in the natural context to obtain clear and understandable information about the conditions of the research. Therefore, this modality was used to describe the impact of gamification on students.

3.3. Research type

Based on the research approach, quasi-experimental research was used. Quasi-experimental studies are non-randomized pre-post intervention studies that help to prove the link between an intervention and a result. In other words, quasi-experimental research allows comparison between experimental and control groups (Rogers & Revesz, 2019).

3.4. Study population

This research was conducted at "Simon Rodriguez" school in Lican, Chimborazo Province; the set of data is reflected in the population of 9th year of EGB" class "B". From this population, two

groups of students were selected; one was assigned as the experimental group, receiving the intervention, while the other was the control group, following a traditional approach. The reason for selecting them was that these students had not previously participated in similar research, ensuring the originality of the data collected. The sample selection was intentional as stated in Table 1.

Table 1

Population

Group	Male	Female	Total
Control group	10	8	18
Experimental group	11	7	18
Total	21	15	36

As detailed in Table 1, there were 36 students that participated in the control group and the experimental group. Most of them were male students.

3.4.1 Ethical considerations

According to Hasan et al. (2021), the main element of a study is ethics. Researchers must uphold ethics during the entire study. This element originates the need to obtain informed consent in the research “Gamification as a Strategy to Improve Speaking Skill in English as a Foreign Language”. Participants were asked to sign an informed consent form; as well as, parents and institutional authorization was requested. Likewise, detailed information about the study was provided such as the objectives, the procedure, the approximate duration, and the confidentiality of the data. Additionally, participation was ensured to be completely voluntary.

3.5. Techniques and instruments for data collection

To achieve the goals of this study, the researcher took a pre-test and a post-test which constituted the technique and its instrument was the questionnaire.

3.5.1. Pre-test

According to Berry (2008), the pre-test is a test implemented before the intervention of a study, the objective of which is to measure the initial level of knowledge of the participants. In this context, the Cambridge English A2 Flyers Speaking Test was used to diagnose the oral English proficiency of the study population. The validity of this test has been established by Cambridge Assessment English. Performance was graded using an official rubric to ensure accurate and consistent results.

3.5.2. Post-test

According to Alessandri et al. (2017), the post-test is implemented after applying a strategy, technique, or knowledge. Its objective is to identify the changes in the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of the participants after the implementation and provide the final result. For this study, the Cambridge English A1 Flyers Speaking Test was implemented as the post-test which is has the same structure as the pre-test.

3.5.3. Statistical analysis

This research used parametric or non-parametric tests and focus on related groups, meaning those in which the same people participated in different study situations, such as in a pretest- posttest study. This type of analysis is suitable for analyzing relevant changes in a group before and after the implementation of a given intervention, in this case, gamification to improve English speaking. It ensured reliable and relevant results.

CHAPTER IV

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Pre-test

Since it was planned, students from both the control and the experimental groups took the pre-test. It was the speaking part of the A2 Flyers from Cambridge Assessment. The students had 5 minutes to take the speaking exam which consisted in four questions that must be answered individually. The question number one consisted in greeting and asking for the student's name, last name, and age. In the question number two, the researcher showed him or her two pictures that have some similarities and differences. The students had to say one similarity and one difference. In the third question, the students described a story displayed by the teacher through a set of pictures. In the last question, the teacher did some personal information questions. To collect data, the researcher used the A2 Flyers for speaking part rubric which was made of three criteria namely vocabulary and grammar, pronunciation, and interaction. This rubric had four bands from zero, the lowest score, to five the highest; therefore, the total score was out of 15.

Table 2*Pre-test control group*

PRE-TEST CONTROL GROUP				
Student N.	Vocabulary and grammar	Pronunciation	Interaction	Total
S1	1	1	1	3
S2	1	0	0	1
S3	1	0	0	1
S4	1	0	0	1
S5	2	2	2	6
S6	2	1	1	4
S7	1	1	1	3
S8	1	0	0	1
S9	1	2	2	5
S10	2	1	1	4
S11	1	1	1	3
S12	2	2	2	6
S13	3	2	2	7
S14	1	3	3	7
S15	1	1	1	3
S16	2	1	1	4
S17	1	1	0	2
S18	1	0	0	1
MEAN	1.388889	1.0556	1	3.44

As detailed in the Table 2, students from the control group have achieved a general average of 3.44 out of 15. Its mode is 1 which means that students' means do not satisfy the Band 1 descriptor. These results provided the idea of a very low level of English speaking performance.

Table 3*Pre-test. Experimental group*

PRE-TEST EXPERIMENTAL GROUP				
Student N.	Vocabulary and grammar	Pronunciation	Interaction	Total
S1	0	0	0	0
S2	1	0	0	1
S3	1	0	0	1
S4	1	0	0	1
S5	2	2	2	6
S6	2	1	1	4
S7	1	1	1	3
S8	1	0	0	1
S9	1	1	1	3
S10	1	1	1	3
S11	1	1	1	3
S12	2	2	2	6
S13	1	1	0	2
S14	1	1	0	2
S15	1	1	1	3
S16	2	1	1	4
S17	1	0	0	1
S18	1	0	0	1
MEAN	1.17	0.72	0.61	2.5

The results showed in the Table 3 are similar to those obtained by the control group.

Students did not achieve the band 1 in the rubric. For this reason, it is crucial to have a plan to help them to improve their speaking skills. It is also important to highlight that students from the experimental group obtained a lower average in comparison with the control group.

4.3. Post-test

Once the researcher collected data and analyzed it, she continued with the second phase of this quasi-experiment. In this phase, she applied a short intervention with the experimental group during 8 weeks by focusing on applying the gamification as a strategy to improve students' speaking skills. Thereafter, the students took a post-test which included the same schemata as the former.

Table 4

Post-test - Control group

POST-TEST CONTROL GROUP				
Student N.	Vocabulary and grammar	Pronunciation	Interaction	Total
S1	1	1	1	3
S2	1	1	1	3
S3	1	1	1	3
S4	1	1	0	2
S5	2	3	2	7
S6	2	1	1	4
S7	0	1	1	2
S8	1	3	1	5
S9	2	2	2	6
S10	2	1	1	4
S11	1	1	1	3
S12	2	2	2	6
S13	3	2	2	7
S14	3	5	3	11
S15	1	1	1	3
S16	2	1	1	4
S17	1	1	1	3
S18	1	0	1	2
MEAN	1.5	1.56	1.28	4.33

The table 4 shows that the control group obtained an average of 4.33 in the post-test. This means that students achieved the first band for the criteria of the rubric. It means that learners used the vocabulary required to deal with some test tasks. They also attempted some simple structures however they made some basic mistakes which may obscure meaning. They

responded at word or phrase level. Besides, their pronunciation was mostly understandable, however some utterances were unclear. They did not have control of stress. It is necessary to remark that they had an English teacher and continued with their book-based way of learning.

Table 5

Post-test - Experimental group

Student N.	Vocabulary and grammar	Pronunciation	Interaction	Total
S1	3	3	1	7
S2	2	3	2	7
S3	3	2	2	7
S4	3	3	2	8
S5	3	4	2	9
S6	3	3	1	7
S7	3	4	3	10
S8	2	3	3	8
S9	2	4	3	9
S10	2	3	2	7
S11	2	3	3	8
S12	3	3	2	8
S13	2	4	2	8
S14	3	4	2	9
S15	2	3	3	8
S16	3	4	1	8
S17	3	3	2	8
S18	3	3	2	8
MEAN	2.611	3.2778	2.1111	8

After applying gamification as a strategy to improve student's speaking skills, learners took the post-test. They achieved level 3 in the rubric band. It means that they used the vocabulary required to accomplish some simple tasks. Their utterances were correct however they had some mistakes even though they were pretty clear. They also responded with longer utterances. They responded simple questions as well with little support required.

Table 6*Means and standard deviations***Means and standard deviations**

	mean	sd	IQR	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	Score:n
CG	4.333333	2.3263200	2.75	2	3.00	3.5	5.75	11	18
EG	8.000000	0.8401681	0.75	7	7.25	8.0	8.00	10	18

Table 6 compares the results obtained by the control and the experimental group. Students from the former group obtained 4.33; on the other hand, the experimental group got 8; which clearly represents a difference in means.

Table 7*Normality test*

Shapiro-Wilk normality test normality test		
	Data score W	p-value
Control group	0.83645	0.005216
Experimental group	0.84813	0.007913

After applying the Shapiro-Wilk normality test to the data that came from the Control group, the results showed that the p-value is 0.005216. It means that data do not have a normal distribution.

Similarly, students from the experimental group obtained a p-value of 0.007913. It shows that data are not normally distributed.

Table 8*Holm-method test*

p-values adjusted by the Holm method		
	Unadjusted	Adjusted
Control group	0.0052159	0.010432
Experimental group	0.0079130	0.010432

Table 8 presents the results obtained through the Holm method to adjust p-values in the hypothesis test, which helped control the error rate in false positives.

Table 9*Homogeneity of variances*

Homogeneity of Variances						
Group	F test to compare two variances					
F	p-value	num df	denom df	95 % confidence interval		sample estimates: ratio of variances
7.6667	0.0001182	17	17	2.867866	20.495303	7.666667
Alternative hypothesis		true ratio of variances is not equal to 1				

Table 9 displays information to determine whether the variances of different groups or

samples are equal or not. It is noticeable that equal variances are not assumed since p-value is 0.0001182.

Mann-Whitney U (Non-parametric)

Given the normality p-values and the variance p-value, a parametric method cannot be used to accept or reject H_a . Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U test was applied, since it is the non-parametric contrast to the T-student.

Table 10

Mann-Whitney U

U₁ (para-EG vs CG)	301
U₂ (para-CG vs EG)	324
Resta entre U₁ y U₂	$324 - 301 = 23$
U statistic that is taken (the smallest)	23
p-value (exact method, two tails)	$1,2586 \times 10^{-6}$ This is equivalent to 0,0000012586

Since 0.0000012586 is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis is accepted. That is, the scores of both the Control and the Experimental groups highly differ.

Figure 1

Data distribution

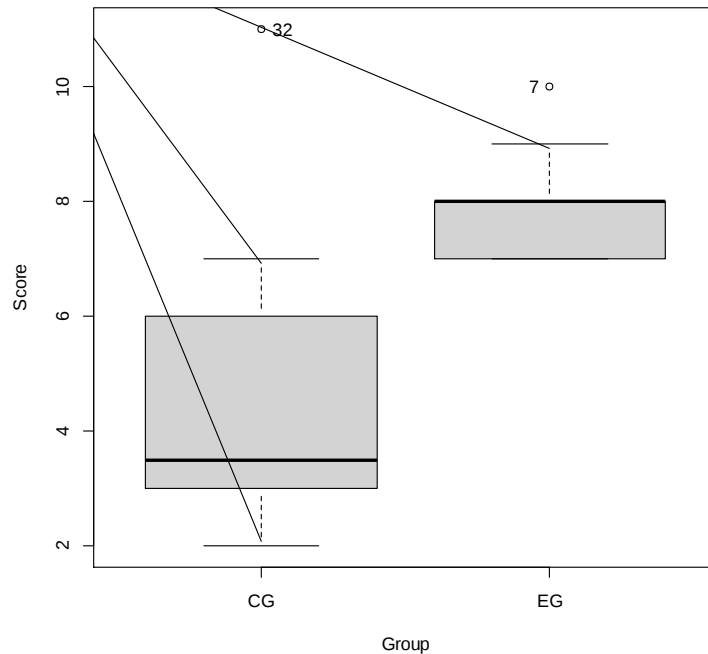


Figure 1 shows results from the post test. While students from the experimental group obtained a higher average, participants from the control group remained the same. In this case, student number 7 who took part in the experimental group obtained 10 out of 15, who was the highest score in this group. On the other hand, student number 32 who belonged to the control group got the lowest score in the post test. In consequence, the application of gamification was reasonable for the students' speaking skills improvement.

4.3. Discussion

This study concentrated on implementing Gamification as a strategy to enhance English speaking abilities in non-native learners. As a result, the researcher collected information through a quasi-experimental approach, employing pre-tests and post-tests to fulfill the objectives of the investigation. Consequently, the ensuing conversation underscores significant

findings from the gathered data and relates them to earlier research on speaking proficiency. This examination underscores three crucial research objectives, which include a) determining the students' English speaking proficiency; b) discovering appropriate gamification exercises that enable students to boost their speaking abilities; and c) evaluating the progression of speaking skills following the incorporation of gamified activities in the classroom.

According to the findings obtained from the exam taken before the intervention, learners demonstrated weak skills in English vocabulary and grammar, pronunciation, and interaction (Refer to Tables 2 and 3). They were the aspects assessed in the speaking skill. The group achieved an average score of 2 out of 15. It highlighted the necessity of implementing gamification for ninth-grade students, as they displayed insufficient proficiency in their speaking abilities. These results align with the conclusions drawn by Abdeldaim and Kamal (2021), Dewi et al. (2017), Kiruthiga and Arokiaraj (2020), Raduan et al. (2018), Qasim (2021), and Awandi et al. (2019), who noted that students often begin their studies with limited speaking skills.

Additionally, gamification was applied in lessons. This research implemented gamification as a technique where students felt comfortable and less anxious (Daar, 2020). They showed more involvement in class and the research activities namely pre-test and post-test. This outcome aligns with earlier findings by Ali AL-Garni and Almuhammadi (2019), Figueroa (2015), Asefa and Enashe (2024), Kiruthiga and Arokiaraj (2020). Various gamified tasks, such as crossword puzzles, spelling word searches, and flashcards, were utilized. In this period of time, students showed higher encouragement since they were not relying solely on memorization but were engaging in play and collaborating with peers, marking a significant improvement in the classroom atmosphere, as Arwandi et al. (2019), Gaitan (2025) and Rogers

and Revesz (2019) proposed.

The outcomes from the exam after the intervention displayed enhancement in the students' speaking abilities (Refer to Table 7). The analysis revealed a variation in the students' scores when comparing their performance prior to and following the instructional intervention. Participants from the experimental group exhibited progress in their speaking skills, whereas those in the control group remained at a lower proficiency level. These findings align with earlier studies conducted by Asefa and Enashe (2024), Abdeldaim and Kamal (2021), Kiruthiga and Arokiaraj (2020), Morales Valenzuela (2020), Raduan et al. (2018).

In contrast, certain constraints were faced throughout the study. Initially, the duration was quite brief, which restricted the researcher from creating additional game-based exercises. Another constraint highlights the necessity of using English according to the students' needs. It is essential for learners to apply the vocabulary they have acquired in real-life situations to guarantee its application over both short and long periods. Additionally, games might differ in various learning settings, such as incorporating digital games.

CHAPTER V

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

After finishing the whole process of the current study which was a quantitative, descriptive, quasi-experimental research, it is concluded that Gamification has positively influenced in the students' speaking skill improvement of 9th year of basic education "B" at Unidad Educativa Simon Rodriguez, high school during the academic year 2024-2025. It is displayed in the final results of the post-test since there was a significant difference between the means of the Control and the experimental group.

This process had three main stages to achieve research goals. At the beginning, students were diagnosed through the pre-test. The results reflected that both the control group and the experimental group had a low level of English-speaking performance. There were problems in some students due to their unintelligible pronunciation. They also produced isolated words and their grammar and vocabulary knowledge do not achieve the lowest band of the assessment rubric. Afterwards, there was a period of intervention with the experimental group only where gamification was applied as a strategy to improve students' speaking skill. It was a period of reflection and application of gamification with some activities that had gaming features such as spelling activities. At the end of the process, students took the post-test. It was a clear difference between the participants who learned through gamification activities and the students belonging the control group.

Gamification was reliable to improve the speaking skills. Students had a new experience of learning English and their classroom environment was positive. In addition,

the teacher's classroom management played a vital role due to a completely new way of learning was applied which primarily motivated students (Asefa & Enashe, 2024).

Furthermore, this research had some implications which refer to the potential consequences with its results. In a near future, students will be able to use the target language for real communication purposes. Findings assumed that gamification helped improve students' speaking skill. For that reason, teachers must include this strategy in the classroom context to motivate learners to continue growing.

Nonetheless, this research encountered limitations which highlight the constraints that affected the findings generalizations. One of them was the shortage of time because it is considered that results would be better if there would be a larger period of time in the intervention phase. Another limitation was the students' context. Those students do not have a good language learning background due to their teacher's change at any time. Their English teachers were removed twice in this school period; therefore, their teaching-learning process suffered modifications.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, it is necessary to provide some recommendations for further research.

It is highly recommended to apply gamification as a strategy to improve the students' speaking skill. Since gamification is notably motivating, students learn and have fun at the same time. For that reason, it would be good if teachers implement gamification from the former levels to the higher ones.

Furthermore, students must be engaged in a process that includes diagnosis in order to

know what they really need to improve in any specific field of speaking. Moreover, students need to be involved in gamification activities in the classroom because it was proved that gamification has a positive influence in learners. It is also recommended that students take a post-test to compare results with those achieved in the current study. In this way, gamification could be applied with other classrooms.

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ANNEXES

Pretest and Posttest



A2 FLYERS SPEAKING: Find the Differences – Candidate's copy

TEST ONE



A2 FLYERS SPEAKING: Find the Differences – Examiner's copy

TEST ONE



George's castle

Where / castle	mountain
Name	Black Castle
Who lives	queen
How old	500 years
Interesting	yes

A2 FLYERS SPEAKING: Information Exchange – Candidate's copy



Grace's castle

Where / castle	?
Name	?
Who lives	?
How old	?
Interesting	?

TEST ONE



George's castle

Where / castle	?
Name	?
Who lives	?
How old	?
Interesting	?

Grace's castle

Where / castle	forest
Name	Silver Castle
Who lives	artist
How old	1000 years
Interesting	no

A2 FLYERS SPEAKING. Information Exchange – Examiner's copy

TEST ONE

Grandma's busy day



Paul Grandma



A2 FLYERS SPEAKING. Picture Story

TEST ONE TEST ONE

Assessment rubric

A2 Flyers

	VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR	PRONUNCIATION	INTERACTION
	Range Control	Extent Cohesion	Individual sounds Stress Intonation
	Reception/Responding Support required Fluency/Promptness		
5	Uses a range of vocabulary to deal with all test tasks. Uses a range of simple structures and, although there are some mistakes, meaning is clear. Responds at word, phrase or longer utterance level. Can join ideas with a range of simple linkers (e.g. <i>and</i>, <i>but</i>, <i>when</i>, <i>then</i>, <i>because</i>).	Is mostly intelligible. Has some control of stress and intonation at both word and longer utterance levels.	Responds appropriately to all instructions, questions and visual prompts, and very little support is required. Is able to ask for support if required. Responds promptly with only natural hesitation and pausing.
4	Some features of 3.0 and some features of 5.0 in approximately equal measure.		
3	Uses the vocabulary required to deal with most test tasks. Uses some simple structures correctly but makes some mistakes, although meaning is generally clear. Responds at word, phrase or longer utterance level. Can join ideas with some simple linkers (e.g. <i>and</i>, <i>but</i>, <i>when</i>, <i>then</i>).	Is mostly intelligible. Has limited control of word stress and intonation.	Responds appropriately to almost all instructions, questions and visual prompts, and little support is required. Is able to ask for support if required. Almost always responds promptly, although there may be hesitation and some pausing mid-utterance.
2	Some features of 3.0 and some features of 1.0 in approximately equal measure.		
1	Uses the vocabulary required to deal with some test tasks. Attempts some simple structures but makes some basic mistakes which may obscure meaning. Generally responds at word or phrase level but may also produce longer utterances. Can join ideas with a few simple linkers (e.g. <i>and</i>).	Is mostly intelligible, although some sounds may be unclear. Has limited control of word stress.	Responds appropriately to some instructions, questions and visual prompts with some support. May attempt to ask for support if required. Often responds promptly, although there may be hesitation and pausing mid-utterance.
0	Performance does not satisfy the Band 1 descriptor.		