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Using Games to Develop Speaking Skills for EFL Secondary School Students

Bui Thi Nga [1], Nguyen Thanh Nam[2]

[1]*Vice President, Tam Thanh Secondary School, Nam Dinh Province, Vietnam.*
[2] *English Lecturer, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Dong Nai Technology University, Dong Nai Province, Vietnam.*

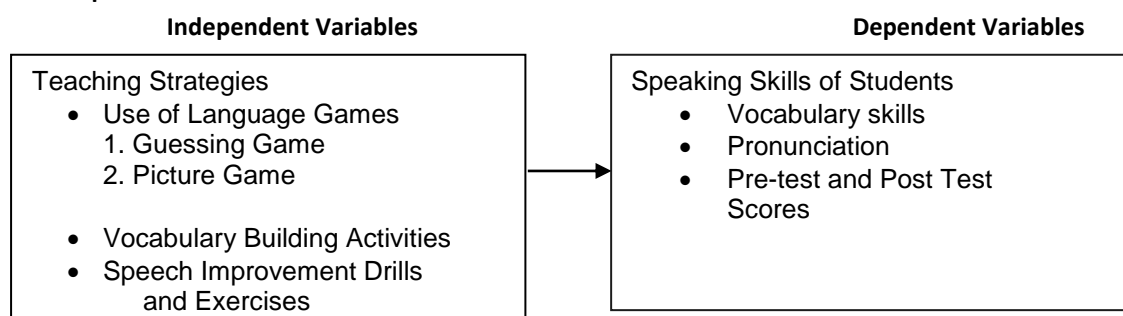
I.   INTRODUCTION

With the rapid pace of globalization, English, as a universal language, has opened the door to various fields such as commerce, communication, science and technology throughout the world. In fact, the global awareness theme talks of the need for students to be able to learn from and speak collaboratively with individuals from diverse culture, religion, ideologies, and lifestyle in an environment of openness and mutual respect. In the process of industrialization and modernization, learning English is becoming the utmost concern students in Vietnam. According to Nurisnaini (2000*) "the single important aspect to learn English successfully is by mastering the art of speaking "*although gaining communicative competence is the one of the main goal of teaching and learning English at secondary school in Vietnam, this aim is not always a achieved. That is a fact that when the secondary students required to talk in English, they seem to get stuck or find it difficult to express themselves.

II.   Theoretical Framework

The Vietnamese government also seems to prioritize the goal of developing the Proficiency English of the youth when it has signed numerous agreements with foreign partners and also spent its own budget to send English language teachers overseas for training. Many teachers have been back discussing together with new teaching methods and different research perspectives which all potentially contribute to the process of enhancing English language teaching and learning at tertiary level in Vietnam. Different language teaching theories, approaches, and methods have been introduced into the system. Communicative language teaching, computer assisted language learning, cooperative language learning, autonomous language learning, task-based language teaching are to name some of them. These theories and approaches all seem to support the ideas of making use of technology to increase the effectiveness of teaching, empowering students in their learning process.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables

Teaching Strategies
• Use of Language Games
  1. Guessing Game
  2. Picture Game
 	
• Vocabulary Building Activities
• Speech Improvement Drills and Exercises
	Speaking Skills of Students
	• Vocabulary skills
	• Pronunciation
	• Pre-test and Post Test Scores

The research paradigm of this study emphasizes the relationship of the teaching strategies as independent variables and the speaking skills of the students as the dependent variables. Frame one is consists of the teaching techniques using language games that include guessing game and picture game, vocabulary building and speech improvement activities for the experimental group; and without the use of language games but with vocabulary building and speech improvement for the control group. On the other hand, frame two shows the speaking skills of students through their vocabulary and pronunciation conducted between the experimental group and the control group.

Statement of the Problem

This research will investigate the teaching approaches of English teachers on the effectiveness of using role plays and dramatization in improving the speaking skills of Grade 7 Students in the Secondary School in Nam Dinh during the first semester of academic school year 2020-2021 .

Specifically, this study will find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the strategies used by the teachers of the Grade 7 students to improve their speaking skills?
2. What are the scores of the respondents in their pre-test and post-test with regards to their speaking skills?
3. Is there a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the respondents in terms of their speaking skills (vocabulary and pronunciation)?
4. Is there a significant effect of the use of teaching strategies to the speaking skills of students?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the students after utilizing language games as a strategy in teaching English language in the classroom.
2. There is no significant relationship between the teaching strategies applied by the teachers and the speaking skills of students during the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group.

III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Related Literature

Language games refer to the models of primitive language that invent to clarify the working of language in general. It is about games that children which enable them to learn the language. According to Uberman (1998), games can be a good way of practicing the target language that's been learned by the children, since they are able to provide a model of language on what the learners will use in the real life. She stated six advantages of using the language games in the classroom, which are:

1. Games are motivating and challenging.
2. Games are as a motivative break from the process of the foreign language classroom.
3. Games help the students to make and sustain the effort of learning.
4. Games provide language practice in the various and integrated language skills.
5. Games encourage students to interact and communicate to each other.
6. Games create a meaningful context for language that is being learned by thestudents.

Further, Wright et al. (2009) stated that by playing games, EFL students can learn language as the way the children learn and say their mother language without being aware theyare studying; thus without stress, they can study well to achieve the purpose of learning English. He said that games can help the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. The certain studetns to join in the activities by using games must master absolutely what others are talkingor or writing down. In order to do that the students have to practice speaking or writing in expressing their thinking or describe the information.

As stated by Mei, Yin Yong and Yujing (2000), games offer students a fun-filled and relaxing learning atmosphere. Students have the opportunity to use language in a non-stressful way after learning and practicing new vocabulary. During the time of playing games in learning language, it is trouble to get the

learners' attention as a message, not on the language. Moreover, EFL teachers have to pay concentrated attention to correct or support the language, most participants will do the same they can to achieve as a winner.

Likewise, Patil (2008) stated that games are also motivating. The, games play an element of supporting to language-building activities. This way is to provide valuable motivation to a purposeful using of language. In other words, these activities create a meaningful context for the language user. The competitive element also makes learners pay attention to concentrate on thinking intensively during the process of teaching and learning, which enhances unconscious acquisition of inputs. Most students who have experienced gamer-oriented activities hold positive attitudes towards them.

Related Studies

In order to consider as one of the four macro skills, speaking is essential for an effective communication in any language according to most researching, teaching, learning or communicating. Particularly, when speakers are not using their mother tongue, English is potentially used as a means of communication. Language spoken skills should be applied to develop along with the other skills as an integrated approach. Then, it will enhance language communicative competence. As a reason to to be considered due to the lack of personal confidence and anxiety about making errors stated by Trent (2009). Most EFL students are not confident in their language performance to learn how to speak; teachers must come over their reluctance in order to make difference of this situation.

As an investigation of findings in Urrutia & Vega (2006) paper, speaking is one of the majority of students considered the most complicated performance to work out; also, the researchers found that students sometimes spoke English, but the majority of practicing did not speak during the time of leaning English in class. Spoken participation in the study revealed the relevant components such as: vocabulary, timidity and fear of being embarrassed.

Zaremba (2006) and Zhang (2009) hypothesize that, of the four macro English skills, speaking seems to be the most important skill required for communication. In fact Zhang (2009) noted that students who study English as a foreign language usually have limited opportunities to speak English outside the classroom and also limited exposure to English speakers or members of the international community. This might be considered as a reason why for teachers to need more situations and activities applying for students to strengthen their speaking perfomance.

Patil (2008) strongly suggest that building up the learner's confidence to eliminate their fear of making errors was a priority that a teacher should consider in order to make learners feel comfortable with their language use. The mastering of using language in speaking could be clarified from suitable syllabus designs, methods of teaching, and unique tasks and materials for development.

Huyen, Nguyen Thi Thanh and Nga, Khuat Thi Thu (2003) conducted an action research study on the hypothesis of using language games to improve speech skills during English classes in a primary school called "Jurong" in Singapore. The participants in this study were 78 students. By using two different methods for dividing into two different groups; the researchers carried out experimental group in implementing a communicative method by using games to improve speaking performance. On the other hand, a control group was concentrated on a teacher-centered method by using real- life activities including the related vocabularies to implement a conversation. Pre-tests and post-tests were implemented in the part of data collection instruments. Researchers investigated the data collection by analyzing pre-tests and post-tests of speaking elements between experimental and control groups in order to observe the activities of implementing of games in class that supported learners to improve speaking competence.

Nurisnaini (2000) found out that using games and songs in teaching and learning langage is one of effective strategies in enhancing the students' participation and motivation in the classroom activities. Furthermore, Huyen and Nga (2003) pointed out that games have been used to have more benefits and effectiveness in teaching and learning vocabularies in various context. Firstly, the advanatge of using games in teaching English is to bring happiniess and fun for the EFL learners, thus support them for comprehensing new

vocabularies generally. Secondly, games usually play a friendly involved competition to motivate the students' interest in all activities of teaching and learning language. These approaches provide the motivation for learners of English to pay attention actively. Thirdly, lexical games get a great benefit in the real world context into the classroom and motivate EFL students in common practising English in their learning's style.

Because of this, the use of language games in teaching English pronunciation is part of this study. The researcher would like to support the learning of the students by providing alternative strategies such as the use of language games. This was confirmed in Mariyana's research (2000) whereby in using games, the students became more interested, actively involved and motivated in the learning activities. Games also helps the students in building a good relationship with their friends as well as increasing their achievement in learning English.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, the experimental method was used to determine teaching strategies and its effect to the speaking skills of students in Nam Dinh Secondary School, thereby identifying which strategy is suitable for the 7th grade Vietnamese students. Experimental design described as the type that can test the cause and effect relationship.

The study aimed to find out the effectiveness of using language games in teaching through the post and pre-test. The researcher made an effort to determine the level of speaking performance of students in using language games in the experimental group and the level of speaking performance of students in the traditional / control group; the significant difference on the performance of students in speaking ability on the use of language games; and the significant relationship on the performance of students in speaking skills between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group and control group.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were 7th Grade students of the Nam Dinh Secondary School during the Academic Year 2020-2021 with a total of 60 students.

Sampling Technique

This study utilized simple random sampling where two (2) classes of 7th Grade students were involved. This group of students was chosen because the researcher is one of the teachers in English of the said school.

Research instrument

The researcher prepared a performance evaluation system. The researcher utilized a questionnaire and specific lessons with language exercises in speaking as teaching strategy using language games as the main device for gathering the data.

The terms were in Vietnamese for better understanding on the part of the respondents. The respondents rated the answers to the questions based on a five- point rating scale as follows:

Rating	Range	Adjectival Description
5	4.20-5.00	Strongly Agree
4	3.40-4.19	Agree
3	2.60-3.39	Neutral
2	1.80-2.58	Disagree
1	1.00-1.79	Strongly Disagree

The average mark that the teachers gave to the students after using some speaking lessons was based on a five point rating scale as follows:

Mark	Adjectival Description
9-10	Excellent
7-8.9	Good
5-6.9	Fair
3-4.9	Poor
0-2.9	Very poor

In Vietnam, the mark is from 01-the worst mark, to 10- the best mark.

Data gathering procedure

This study was conducted in the second semester of Academic Year 2015-2016 at the Nam Dinh Secondary School, Nam Dinh Province. The researcher presented the proposal of the study covering the first three chapters. Then, the questionnaire and lessons in speaking using language games were prepared and presented to experts in the teaching of English language for content validation. Then after the approval of experts, the researcher sent a letter request to the Head Teacher, requesting for approval to conduct the study at the Nam Dinh Secondary School. When the letter was approved, the researcher selected 60 students and gave them briefing about the objectives and procedures of the study. Then, the researcher gave the reading materials to the students and guided them in answering the questions, and the researcher used the students' responses to categorize, tabulate and analyze the results.

Statistical treatment of data

The following statistical treatments and methods were used to interpret and establish the relationship among data collected.

Data	Treatment
1. Teaching Strategies Used	Rank, mean
1. Scores of Pre-test and Post-test	Rank
3. Performance scores in speaking	T-test
4.Relationship of teaching strategies and speaking skills	Pearson correlation

V.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Strategies Used by English Teachers as Preferred by the Students

Table 1 clearly indicates that the respondents prefer the use of language games particularly picture games (rank 1) with 5.11 mean.

Table 1. Respondents' Preference on Teaching Strategies used by English Teachers

Teaching Strategies	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	Weighted Mean	Rank
1. Use of Language Games								
a. Guessing Game	14	3	2	0	0	**19**	**4.63**	**2**
b. Picture Game	17	3	0	0	0	**20**	**5.11**	**1**
2. Vocabulary Building Activities	7	3	1	0	0	**11**	**2.63**	**3**
3. Speech Improvement, Drills & Exercises	7	3	0	0	0	**10**	**2.47**	**4**
TOTAL	45	12	3	0	0		3.71	

Legend: SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree; N – Neutral; D – Disagree; SD – Strongly Disagree

It was followed by guessing games (rank 2) with a mean of 4.63. A total of 20 respondents were chosen picture games and 19 respondents for guessing games. This means that 7th grade students are more interested in learning English language through language games. With regards to the other teaching strategies, vocabulary building activities (rank 3) with a mean of 2.63 and speech drills/exercises (rank 4) with a mean of 2.47 supplement the learning of the respondents though these strategies are considered traditional ones. All the teaching strategies were ranked to determine what they like the most and has a weighted mean of 3.71. This means that the strategies used by the teachers are helpful tools in enhancing the vocabulary skills and pronunciation of the respondents.

Pre-test and Post Test Scores of the Control and the Experimental Groups

Table 2 below indicates that the pre-test and post-test results of the controlled group did not vary that much. As a matter of fact the performance of the students is generally good with 21 students. There are a few (8 students) who scored fair and one student who incurred a poor remark. The result can be attributed to the fact the control group did not use language games and students listen to teachers through lecture with either vocabulary building activities or pronunciation. This means that there is a need to look into the speaking skills of the students and find out other strategies to improve the vocabulary skills and pronunciation of the respondents. By doing this, more students will be encouraged to participate in class and actively communicate using the English language. All of the result about the scores of the Pre-Test and Post Test of Control Group is also presented in the following table.

Table 2. Scores of the Pre-Test and Post Test of Control Group

Student No	Pretest Score	Post-test Score	Description
1	6	7	Good
2	5	6	Fair
3	8	7	Good
4	6	6	Fair
5	5	7	Good
6	7	7	Good
7	8	7	Good
8	5	5	Fair
9	7	7	Good
10	7	7	Good
11	8	7	Good
12	7	7	Good
13	8	8	Good
14	7	7	Good
15	5	8	Good
16	7	7	Good
17	8	7	Good
18	7	7	Good
19	8	8	Good
20	6	6	Fair
21	5	5	Fair
22	7	7	Good
23	7	7	Good
24	4	4	Poor
25	5	4	Poor
26	8	8	Good
27	7	6	Fair
28	3	4	Poor
29	8	8	Good
30	7	7	Good

Mean	6.5	6.6	
Standard Dev.	1.358	1.163	

Table 3. Scores of the Pre-Test and Post Test of the Experimental Group

Student No	Pretest Score	Post-test Score	Description
1	8	8	Good
2	7	8	Good
3	8	9	Excellent
4	6	7	Good
5	6	5	Fair
6	7	7	Good
7	8	7	Good
8	6	8	Good
9	8	10	Excellent
10	7	8	Good
11	7	9	Excellent
12	7	7	Good
13	8	8	Good
14	7	7	Good
15	8	8	Good
16	7	7	Good
17	8	9	Excellent
18	7	8	Good
19	8	9	Excellent
20	6	6	Fair
21	7	7	Good
22	7	7	Good
23	7	7	Good
24	4	5	Fair
25	5	6	Fair
26	8	10	Excellent
27	7	6	Fair
28	8	7	Good
29	8	10	Excellent
30	7	7	Good
Mean	7.1	7.6	
Standard Dev.	0.980	1.331	

There was an increase in the test results of the students in the experimental group. The use of picture game and guessing game fostser improvement in the performance of the students.

As shown in Table 4, the mean of the experimental group in the pre-test (7.1) and post test (7.6) is higher than that of the control group with a mean of 6.5 in the pre-test and 6.6 in the post test. The standard deviation for the pre-test is 0.980 and the post test is 1.331.

Table 4. Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Group of Students	Statistic	Pre-test	Post-test
Control Group	Mean	6.5	6.6
	Std. Deviation	1.353	1.163
Experimental Group	Mean	7.1	7.6
	Std.	0.980	1.331

The result means that the higher mean of experimental group indicates better performance. A lower standard deviation also indicates a better performance of experimental group. This is consistent with the scores of the students where some of them earned an excellent mark and majority has good performance while no one got a poor remark. It only proves that the use of language games in learning the pronunciation builds their vocabulary.

Difference on the Pre-test and Post-test Scores of the Experimental Group

It can be gleaned on Table 5 that upon using t-test, the outcome shows that there is a significant difference on the result of the pre-test and post test scores of the experimental group. In checking if there is significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group, the degrees of freedom (df) used is n-1.

Table 5. Significant Difference between Pre-test and Post-test Scores of the Experimental Group

t (computed)	t (tabulated)	Remarks
2.921	2.046	There is significant difference

Decision Rule: *Reject Ho if t(comp) > t (tab)*

Accept Ho if t(comp) < t (tab)

The t (computed) has a value of 2.921 and the t (tabulated) value is 2.046. Therefore, based on the decision rule, reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the students after utilizing language games as a strategy in teaching the English language inside the classroom. The result also indicates that the use of language games is highly dependent on the teachers' ability in failitating such kind of games. The most important thing is that, language games really helps develop the vocabulary skills of the students and enhance their pronunciation. Language games not only function as time filling activities, but also they can bring some educational values that enable the children to learn the language. With this result, the use of picture games and guessing games are very much encouraged because it has propven that there is a significant difference on the scores of the control group and the experimental group.

Relationship of Teaching Strategies and the Speaking Skills of Students

Table 6 manifests a moderate positive correlation between the teaching strategies and the speaking skills of the students after using Pearson correlation as a tool. It means that the use of picture games and guessing games to the 7th grade students have influence on their speaking skills. These games have been instrumental in developing their vocabulary skills and pronunciation through the aid of the assigned English teacher.

Table 6. Significant Relationship between the Teaching Strategies and Post-test Scores of the Experimental Group

Pearson r	Remarks	t (computed)	t (tabulated)	Remarks
0.547	Moderate Positive Correlation	3.454	2.048	There is significant relationship

r=-0.547   *Decision Rule: Reject Ho if t(comp) > t (tab)*

t(comp)=-3.454   Accept Ho if t(comp) < t (tab)
t(tab)=-2.048

In checking the significance of the computed Pearson r, the degrees of freedom (df) used is n-2. With these, the decision is reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the teaching strategies applied by the teachers and the speaking skills of students during the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group. It is very much evident that teachers should really be choosing the appropriate strategy to support the learning of the students so that their academic performance will also increase and the over-all personality of the students will also be developed. The generation today requires teachers to be explorative and experimental in using the advanced technologies in instruction. Once this is done, there would be improvement in the teaching-learning environment as well. Most of all, the goals of the educational institution will be met, contributing to the community as a whole.

VI.   SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings
1. Among the teaching strategies, the use of picture games was the top choice with a weighted mean of 5.11 for20 students out of 30 in enhancing their vocabulary skills and pronunciation. Guessing games came in next with a mean of 4.63 for 19 students. They felt comfortable learning while having fun at the same time since they love to act and interact with one another. They are also more interested in learning English language through language games. The other two strategies which are also used by the English teachers include vocabulary building activities and speech drills and exercises.
2. The pre-test and post test results of the control group showed that there was a little difference on the scores of the students compared to that of the experimental group where there was an increased student performance with a mark of excellent for seven students. Nobody got a poor remark in the experimental group. However, there were three students who got the lowest score with a poor remark and six got a fair remark. The mean of the experimental group in the pre-test (7.1) and post test (7.6) is higher than that of the control group with a standard deviation of 0.980 and 1.331, respectively. This shows that the experimental group has better performance than the controlled group.
3. There is a significant difference on the pre-test and post test scores of the experimental group. The t(computed) has a value of 2.921 and the t (tabulated) value is 2.046. The result implies that language games really helps develop the vocabulary skills of the students and enhance their pronunciation. Language games not only function as time filling activities, but also they can bring some educational values that enable the children to learn the language.
4. This study has proven that there is a significant relationship between the teaching strategies and the speaking skills of the students with a moderate positive correlation. The use of picture games and guessing games has an impact to the 7th grade students with regards to their speaking skills. These games have been instrumental in developing their vocabulary skills and pronunciation through the aid of the assigned English teacher.

Conclusions
1. Among the teaching strategies, the The use of language games, both the picture and guessing games, is highly preferred by the 7th grade students in order to enhance their vocabulary skills and pronunciation.
2. The pre-test and post test scores of the experimental group proved that students perform better with language games than the control group who did not experience playing the language games as a tool to improve their speaking skills.
3. Reject the null hypothesis stated in the study that there is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the students after utilizing language games as a strategy in teaching the English language inside the classroom.

4. This study has to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the teaching strategies applied by the teachers and the speaking skills of students during the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group.

Recommendations

1. The teachers are encouraged to use language games as a tool in enhancing the speaking skills of the 7th grade students. By doing this, the learning of the students would be fun and a conductive teaching-learning environment can be established. Expose the students to the different kinds of language games other than picture and guessing games because this is what kids enjoy doing while developing their vocabulary and pronunciation.

2. The school administrators may provide support to the teachers by training them on using language games and other teaching strategies that can be helpful to the students.

3. The school can provide school activities that would improve the speaking skills of the students such as speech contest and provide incentives to those who perform very well to inspire other students to use the English language frequently.

4. Future researchers can define the speaking skills of the students and extend its coverage to other variables such as grammar and diction.

5. Other colleges and universities in Vietnam can utilize this study to explore on other teaching strategies that can help students to improve their speaking skills. This can also provide areas of research in classroom management and delivery of instruction and other educational services.

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