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FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS Y DE LA EDUCACIÓN

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PRONUNCIATION GAMES AND SPEAKING SKILLS

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DEDICATION

With all sincerity and deep affection, I dedicate this research to God, who has granted me life, wisdom, and the strength to persevere throughout my university journey, allowing me to reach this meaningful milestone. I also extend this dedication to my parents, Paulina Torres and Mauricio Parco, whose love, support, and care have guided me every step of the way. This work is not just another assignment; it is the result of their actions, efforts, prayers, and unwavering faith in me. Furthermore, I dedicate this research to my sweetheart and classmate throughout these university years, Camila Lozada. Her immense love has given me the motivation to continue moving forward, and her presence, patience, and constant support have been invaluable in helping me arrive at this moment. Last but not least, I dedicate this work to all my professors, especially Professor Ruth Infante, to my classmates, and to the Universidad Técnica de Ambato. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to study and be part of this community, for every experience inside and outside the classroom, for everything I learned and shared, for all the laughter and anxieties, and for every moment we lived together. This story was meant to happen.

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Topic: Pronunciation Games and Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

The following research aimed to measure the influence of pronunciation games on the oral skills of students learning English as a foreign language. Using a pre-experimental design, 34 ninth-grade students from the “Gral. Eloy Alfaro Delgado” school participated during the 2025–2026 academic year. Pre- and post-tests were used as data collection instruments, and the assessment was based on the Cambridge A1 Movers standardized exam. The assessment rubric included criteria for grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation, and interaction. The interventions were carried out in eight sessions, during which different pronunciation games were used, adapted to cover a specific number of vowels each day according to the students' level. Paired t-tests demonstrated a significant improvement in the students' oral skills, confirming the validity of the alternative hypothesis. The results demonstrated that pronunciation games were effective in improving oral performance, especially in the articulation of vowels and words in English. Furthermore, through card matching, collecting, guessing, and board games, students reinforced their pronunciation through guided practice, meaningful repetition, and immediate teacher feedback. Similarly, these activities allowed students to actively participate in an interactive and motivating environment that enabled them to overcome shyness, lose their fear of making mistakes, and strengthen both their confidence and oral fluency as they practiced and corrected their pronunciation. In conclusion, pronunciation games proved to be an effective tool for strengthening oral communication, increasing students' confidence, and fostering dynamic and participatory learning.

Keywords: pronunciation games, speaking skills, English as a foreign language, pronunciation

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RESUMEN

El siguiente trabajo de investigación tuvo por objetivo medir la influencia de los juegos de pronunciación en las habilidades orales de estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera. A través de un diseño preexperimental, se trabajó con 34 estudiantes de noveno grado de la Unidad Educativa “Gral. Eloy Alfaro Delgado” durante el período académico 2025–2026. Se aplicaron pruebas previas y posteriores como instrumentos de recolección de datos, cuya evaluación se basó en el examen estandarizado Cambridge A1 Movers. La rúbrica de la evaluación incluyó los criterios de gramática y vocabulario, pronunciación e interacción. Las intervenciones se llevaron a cabo en ocho sesiones, durante las cuales se aplicaron distintos juegos de pronunciación adaptados para abarcar un específico número de vocales cada día de acuerdo con el nivel de los estudiantes. A través de pruebas t pareadas, se evidenció un avance significativo en las habilidades orales de los estudiantes, lo que confirmó la validez de la hipótesis alternativa. Los resultados demostraron que los juegos de pronunciación fueron efectivos para mejorar el desempeño oral, especialmente en la articulación de vocales y palabras en inglés. Además, a través de juegos de emparejar cartas, de coleccionismo, de adivinanzas y de mesa, los estudiantes reforzaron su pronunciación mediante la práctica guiada, la repetición significativa y la retroalimentación inmediata del docente. De la misma manera, estas actividades permitieron a los estudiantes participar de manera activa en un ambiente interactivo y motivador que les permitió superar la timidez, perder el miedo a equivocarse y fortalecer tanto su confianza como su fluidez oral mientras practicaban y corregían su pronunciación. En conclusión, los juegos de pronunciación demostraron ser una herramienta eficaz para fortalecer la comunicación oral, aumentar la confianza de los estudiantes y fomentar un aprendizaje dinámico y participativo.

Palabras clave: juegos de pronunciación, pronunciación, inglés como lengua extranjera, habilidades del habla, pronunciación

CHAPTER I. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Research Background

A wide search of information sources was conducted to support this research on “Pronunciation Games and Speaking Skills”. A compilation of all the studies that support the effectiveness of pronunciation games as a tool for improving oral proficiency in English as a foreign language is presented below.

Timothy et al. (2020) demonstrated that the design of a board game improves pronunciation in English language learners. In this study, the participants were elementary school students in Indonesia who had challenges learning pronunciation, articulation, stress, and intonation. An experimental design with a single group integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches was adopted. Data was obtained through observation, interview, and pre- and post-tests in the form of audio recordings that were analyzed through qualitative methods to detect changes in pronunciation. The intervention involved the use of the board game “Word Detector” for four weeks, with sessions conducted once a week for 90 minutes. The use of board game intervention resulted in improvement to the level of accuracy by the students, which motivated them and engaged them to learn. The students were able to retain the skills they had learnt for several days following the intervention. The current study demonstrated that board games can serve to enhance some of the underlying skills in spoken language, especially pronunciation and fluency.

Research conducted by Wong and Yunus (2021) analyzed the effectiveness of board games in improving pupils’ speaking skills in ESL classrooms in Malaysia. A total of thirty-five articles were reviewed in this study, which were published between 2017 and 2021 and retrieved from Google Scholar, ERIC, and SAGE Journals. Following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, the researchers examined both qualitative studies, which collected pupils’ perceptions, and quantitative studies, which evaluated the usefulness of board games in improving speaking. The findings demonstrated that board games had a favorable influence on speaking, helping pupils improve oral competence, motivation, and interpersonal interaction. The authors suggested that future studies should also investigate teachers’ perspectives regarding the use of games in teaching speaking.

In the same way, Hidayatullah and Haerazi (2022) also examined the impact of board games on the enhancement of learners' oral language skills, and, in particular, the focus was on phonological awareness. The learners had problems with fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and grammatical ability, which posed difficulties for oral communication activities. The research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology and was aimed at finding the core challenges of the students' oral language use. The data that the study collected included interviews, observational checklists, and oral exams. These data provided a basis for both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The study concluded that the use of board games in conjunction with other materials resulted in improving students' confidence and critical thinking, as well as their fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. Moreover, the games that were utilized led to improved vocabulary use and more opportunities for learners to speak, especially in informal situations, both inside and outside the classroom.

Harsin et al. (2022) investigated the use of homophone word puzzles to improve the English pronunciation of the 11th-grade students in the Agriculture Technology program (ATPH 1) at SMKN 1 Sojol, a vocational high school in Indonesia. The research had a pre-experimental design and used a purposive sampling of 21 students. The data to measure pronunciation was collected via diagnostic pronunciation tests before and after the intervention at intervals of approximately 7 weeks. The results of the data analysis with the use of a t-test showed that there were significant differences in students' overall class pronunciation. This was evidenced with the mean score increasing from 34.44 in the pre-test to 76.19 in the post-test. The calculated t-value (4.30) exceeded the critical value (1.725) at a significance level of 0.05. This study illustrates that homophone word games can greatly improve the students' pronunciation of the English language. Therefore, there is a need to introduce interactive games in English language classes to improve pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy of students' speech.

In a related context, Tuscano and Singh (2025) directed a study to examine the impact of educational games on students' oral communication skills, highlighting the limitations of traditional teaching methods in engaging students and improving their oral communication abilities. This research employed a mixed-methods approach, collecting qualitative data through interviews and classroom observations, as well as quantitative data from oral tests administered before and after the intervention. The results demonstrated a significant improvement in students' oral skills as 75 % of participants showed greater fluency and confidence after the intervention. This study creates that integrating games into language

classrooms creates a more interactive and motivating learning environment, thus enhancing student participation and engagement. These findings suggest that educational games are an effective strategy for strengthening oral communication skills. Furthermore, it justifies the adoption of innovative, student-centered teaching methods in various educational settings, particularly in areas where effective communication is essential, such as healthcare training.

Madya and Meningsih (2021) studied the effect of riddle games on the oral language development of primary school students enrolled in an Islamic school in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The authors adopted a quantitative experimental approach and worked with a single sample comprising all 68 sixth-grade students at the school. Data were collected through observation checklists, and oral tests were administered before and after the intervention. The five aspects of oral language under study were pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency and comprehension; the data were analysed by means of the Wilcoxon test. The findings of the study revealed an improvement in the students' pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency, while their grammar and comprehension had a minor improvement. The study concluded that riddle games incorporated in a communicative approach to language teaching were effective in improving students' oral language proficiency through an interactive and motivating teaching-learning experience. The researchers, however, noted that the enhancement of the students' oral expression, oral language proficiency, or some of its components, might require other means.

Finally, Khasanah and Sabiq (2020) investigated the educational game "spelling bee" towards the students' pronunciation skills and academic achievement in Mambaul Hikmah Tegalwangi MTs NU School, Indonesia. The research was experimental in nature, with the samples being 7th-grade students (females) who were divided through cluster random sampling into the experimental group with 32 students and the control group with 31 students. Instruments for the study were scrambled letters activities and oral expression exercises where pre- and post-tests were utilised. It was found that there were no equal levels in the experimental and control groups, with the experimental group level post-test mean being 71.80. The control group had a far lower mean of 23.30. The t-test also indicated that there was a huge difference between the two groups, with $t = 27.125$, which exceeded the critical t of 1.688, resulting in the spelling bee technique being effective, and thus the students' pronunciation skills have improved. The study emphasised that the game did not only improve students' pronunciation but also helped them in spelling, and thus it can be recommended as a good educational technique to be used in teaching English and oral expressions.

1.2 Theoretical Foundation of the Variables

1.2.1 Independent Variable

1.2.1.1 Linguistics

The study of language, along with its form, function, meaning, and variation in use, is called linguistics. Linguistics can be divided into microlinguistics and macrolinguistics. According to Mahmood (2016), microlinguistics focuses on the core components of language, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, whereas macrolinguistics encompasses interdisciplinary fields such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, historical linguistics, stylistics, computational linguistics, and neurolinguistics.

Research in the area of linguistics can be dated as far back as the 5th century B.C. in ancient Greece, where philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle inquired into the realm of language and discourse (Hawkins, 1984). However, it was in the 19th century that linguistics began to be fully recognized as a separate branch of science concerned with the study of the history, development, and functions of language (Hawkins, 1984). During the 20th century, the field gained more prominence as new theories and approaches transformed the understanding of language.

As suggested by Crowley and Bower (2010), modern linguistics is generally considered to have begun in 1913 with the publication of *Course in General Linguistics*, a book based on lecture notes compiled from the courses given by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. In this work, Saussure introduced the distinction between the synchronic and diachronic study of language, consequently laying the foundation of structuralism (de Saussure & Reidlinger, 1959).

By the end of the 20th century, linguistics underwent a significant change in its approach to studying language. This transformation was largely influenced by the work of Avram Noam Chomsky, considered the father of modern linguistics (Crowley & Bower, 2010). The American linguist revolutionized the field with his more than one hundred publications dedicated to understanding language. He proposed that language is an innate part of every human being, which he termed “Universal Grammar” (Barman, 2013). Since then, linguistics has significantly evolved from early philosophical reflections of ancient thinkers to

a modern and specific study of language and all its forms. Throughout the years, remarkable linguists helped develop new theories, and their works still influence how people study and understand language today.

1.2.1.2 Phonology

Within the field of linguistics, there are several branches that focus on studying and analysing its individual components. Phonology is one of these branches, and it focuses on understanding the sounds of a language as structural units and their role in communication (Islomov, 2021).

Gussenhoven and Jacobs (2017) claim that, in order to comprehend how these sounds function within language, it is first necessary to consider their physical properties, which are examined through phonetics. While phonetics studies speech sounds from the perspective of their physical production and perception, phonology analyses how these sounds operate and are organized within the system of a language (Alduais, 2015). For instance, since phonetics describes how the sounds /b/ and /p/ are articulated, phonology explains how the contrast between the words “bat” and “pat” results in a difference in meaning. This distinction is very useful in language teaching, as it helps educators to provide better guidance to learners when they practice phonemes and improve their English pronunciation.

Hawkins (1984) points out that phonology can be divided into two main subfields: segmental phonology and suprasegmental phonology. Segmental phonology focuses on the individual sounds of speech, such as vowels and consonants, analysing their articulation, distinctive features, and how they combine to form syllables and words (Veenendaal et al., 2017). This area of study is crucial, as mastering the accurate production of each sound ensures students to be understood clearly and prevents misunderstandings in their communication.

On the other hand, suprasegmental phonology encompasses features that extend beyond individual sounds, including aspects of fluent speech such as stress, rhythm, intonation, and prosody (Veenendaal et al., 2017). These suprasegmental features are essential for conveying meaning, indicating sentence structure, emphasizing important information, and expressing attitudes or emotions. A clear understanding of these aspects allows learners to produce more natural and fluent speech, thereby enhancing comprehension and communicative effectiveness in real-life interactions.

In this way, phonology provides the theoretical foundation for understanding how sounds function within a language system. Through this knowledge, teachers can identify common phonological challenges experienced by learners when speaking English and design engaging, practical classroom activities that foster clearer and more accurate, and effective oral communication (Gussenhoven & Jacobs, 2017).

1.2.1.3 Pronunciation learning activities

Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) states that there is a difference between the terms “phonology” and “pronunciation”: phonology deals with the organization of the sounds of a language and other linguistic functions; whereas pronunciation deals with the actual use of the sounds of a language in verbal communication. In other words, phonology comprises theories, abstractions, and rules, while pronunciation is the application and the act of expressing the sounds. This difference is fundamental in language pedagogy, since teachers must not only understand the phonological system but also help their students master clear and intelligible pronunciation (Hawkins, 1984). Therefore, in language use, activities that help students with pronunciation are essential, as they support both phonology and linguistic application.

There are various activities that contribute to the improvement of pronunciation skills. Qizi and Dilshodbekovna (2024) mention that there are several types, such as role-playing activities that allow students to practice pronunciation in context; musical activities, including rhymes, chants, and songs that reinforce sound recognition and replication; visual aids activities that use diagrams to indicate the correct position of the tongue and mouth; and pronunciation games that promote oral practice in a relaxed, fun, and engaging environment. Each of these activities reinforces the development of pronunciation skills in an interactive and educational way, fostering both phonological accuracy and fluency, as well as students' confidence when expressing themselves orally in class.

Speech and pronunciation development is often one of the most challenging aspects of English language teaching. For this reason, implementing engaging activities can significantly promote language learning. Boymuratovna and Azim (2025) suggests that using such activities generates several benefits, including reduced anxiety and increased confidence, motivation, and interest in students, all while allowing them to practice pronunciation in a natural and contextualized way.

1.2.1.4 Pronunciation Games

In English language teaching, various techniques, strategies, and activities have been employed to strengthen students' linguistics abilities. These range from traditional approaches focused on repetition to more dynamic methods that promote active participation and motivation. Among these methods, games have emerged as an effective pedagogical alternative. Wright et al. (2006) defines games as “an activity that is entertaining and engaging, often challenging, and an activity in which learners play and usually interact with others” (p.1). Games used for pedagogical purposes combine learning with playful and dynamic interaction, creating a favorable environment for the practice of different skills and competencies. In addition, games increase students' use of language by providing opportunities to communicate in more natural and meaningful situations (Deesri, 2002).

In this sense, language skills such as pronunciation also benefit from the use of games in the classroom. Pronunciation games are a teaching method that integrates playful and recreational elements with the practice of language sounds, thus becoming a key and effective activity for improving oral expression (Qizi & Dilshodbekovna, 2024). Hancock (1995) remarks that pronunciation in English teaching is a skill that requires constant and detailed instruction from teachers, subsequently the use of pronunciation games would allow students to develop and practice this skill independently and with guidance, in more communicative and interactive environments.

1.2.1.4.1 Benefits of pronunciation games

In the English classroom, pronunciation games offer numerous advantages, essential for the development and advancement of specific language skills and for a positive learning environment. Qizi and Dilshodbekovna (2024) suggest that these activities encourage student participation and motivation, thus creating an active and stimulating classroom atmosphere. Additionally, they offer opportunities to practice pronunciation in an engaging way, and through these activities, students can consolidate pronunciation and phoneme memory. Qizi and Dilshodbekovna (2024) state that these games are beneficial for positive and enriching learning, as they reduce anxiety levels and encourage students to collaborate.

Beyond these benefits, pronunciation games provide additional contributions to the teaching and learning process. For instance, such activities help students in strengthening their auditory memory and sound discrimination abilities, which facilitates the retention of

phonemes and intonation patterns (Harsin et al., 2022). Moreover, the playful nature of these games increases students' engagement, making pronunciation learning more enjoyable and less monotonous. These characteristics underscore the importance of incorporating pronunciation games into teaching practices to enhance learner's speaking skills in English.

1.2.1.4.2 Types of Games

Hadfield (1999), in his extensive works on educational games applied to teaching communication skills, presents a clear and systematic classification of these activities:

- **Guessing Games:** These involve one player concealing specific information while the other players try to guess this information via a series of questions or educated theories about the information being hidden.
- **Search Games:** Each student has a piece of information. The goal is to gather it to complete a task or solve a problem.
- **Matching Games (cards or pictures):** Players must find identical pairs, either by circulating around the class or working in pairs or small groups.
- **Matching-up Games (opinions or preferences):** Participants discuss identifying an option shared by the entire group and reach a common agreement.
- **Exchanging Games:** Players negotiate the exchange of cards, objects, or ideas, seeking mutual benefit.
- **Collecting Games:** Students gather cards or items to form a set, either by circulating freely or in card games.
- **Arranging or ordering Games:** In these games, players must logically order objects, images, or events in a specific order based on the information they have gathered.
- **Board and card games:** Players in these games use cards as communicative stimuli as they advance on an assigned board to be the first player to complete a goal, lose, or collect cards.

It should be emphasized that, while each of these types of games promotes communicative language skills, adapting and prioritizing them toward linguistic skills would enhance pronunciation and contribute to clarity, fluency, and comprehension in language use.

1.2.1.4.3 Phonological awareness

Buana and Irawan (2021) explain that phonological awareness is the ability to identify and understand the function of sounds in the structure of speech. This competence involves perceiving, recognizing, and manipulating sound units. In the context of English teaching, its development is essential for promoting both language comprehension and production. According to Qizi and Dilshodbekovna (2024), teachers can enhance this skill by incorporating tools and activities that train students' hearing and provide opportunities for active sound production. In this sense, pronunciation games emerge as an effective resource for achieving this goal, as they combine playful practice accompanied by the development of phonological awareness.

To foster this awareness, promoting both segmental and suprasegmental elements of phonology is vital, as both contribute to the correct identification and production of the target language's sounds. A systematic approach to the language's segmental phonology, which includes vowels and consonants, helps students differentiate and produce the basic sounds of English (Veenendaal et al., 2017). In this regard, Tejedor-García et al. (2020) state that incorporating pronunciation games into the classroom can have a positive impact on sound perception and production. These exercises offer multiple advantages for practising specific sounds, as they aid in the repetition of target sounds, the contrast of target sounds with other similar phonemes, and the improvement of the listener's memory.

On the other hand, suprasegmental aspects such as rhythm, intonation, and stress, must also be considered, as they contribute to the naturalness and fluency of speech while strengthening students' ability to communicate correctly (Veenendaal et al., 2017). The integration of both phonological levels within playful activities enables a more comprehensive development of phonological awareness, combining the processes of perception, production and automatization of sounds.

1.2.1.4.4 Techniques and resources

The successful execution of pronunciation games requires employing multiple strategies and resources that assist learners develop phonemic awareness and obtain the correct pronunciation of English sounds. These strategies are intended not only to foster the development of an approachable learning environment but also ensure learners are able to hear and produce the phonetic contrasts that are necessary for proper tuning and language understanding (Hancock, 1995).

The use of minimal pairs is explained by Brown (1995) as one of the most frequently used techniques. These are pairs of words that differ by one phoneme only. The use of these pairs enables learners to hear phonetic contrasts and produce the contrasts. This is intended to alleviate word pronunciation problems and increase overall intelligibility of spoken English (Tejedor-García et al., 2020).

Another widely implemented strategy involves drill exercises, which aim to reinforce and model correct pronunciation either before or during pronunciation games. As observed by Thahira et al. (2023), drilling entails the systematic repetition of sounds to support students' understanding and production of verbal structures. This technique may include repetition, substitution drills, or question-and-answer drills, all of which contribute to improving both articulation and auditory memory of sounds (Ardima, 2020).

Moreover, having flashcards, picture cards, phoneme charts, and audio recordings at hand has been shown to actively engage learners and provide instant feedback. These materials are more than just supplementary to pronunciation games; they also enhance the learners' motivation and retention, thus making the entire process more effective and interactive (Hancock, 1995).

1.2.1.4.5 Implementing Pronunciation Games

Since their effectiveness depends on numerous factors that require careful consideration by the teacher, introducing pronunciation games into classroom practice requires meticulous preparation (Bendo & Erbas, 2019). The individual characteristics of the students, the careful selection of the games, and the appropriate timing for their use are three key factors of paramount importance.

The first of these factors is the individual characteristics of the students when considering the implementation of pronunciation games. Bendo and Erbas (2019) describe some of these characteristics, such as age, proficiency level, attitude, and motivation of the students. Similarly, Richter (2019) contributes to this perspective by highlighting other key elements that influence pronunciation teaching, such as gender, students' auditory training, and the level of interaction with the target language.

For example, games such as *Counting Syllables*, proposed by Hancock (1995), are commonly used with learners who require structured and guided pronunciation practice, as they

encourage students to actively identify and pronounce syllables while working collaboratively. In a similar way, activities such as *Simple Sound Maze* are appropriate for learners who benefit from focused auditory discrimination, as they require students to recognize and consistently produce a target vowel sound in order to successfully complete the task (Hancock, 1995).

Another essential factor to consider is the appropriate selection of games, as not all activities align equally with class objectives or learners needs. Bendo and Erbas (2019) mention that teachers must consider specific parameters when selecting activities, including as the level of difficulty, which directly impacts students' engagement, and the rules of the game, which must be explained and addressed by the teacher. All these elements should be adapted to the learners' needs and learning context.

In this regard, commonly used pronunciation games include competitive activities such as pronunciation races, in which students work in teams to classify or produce words according to specific pronunciation rules, promoting repeated oral practice and motivation. Likewise, *Pronunciation Bingo game*, as described by Hancock (1995), represents a controlled listening-based activity that requires learners to identify and pronounce target words, reinforcing sound recognition while maintaining a high level of engagement.

The final aspect concerns the timing of implementation, as the context in which pronunciation games are used can either expand or limit their pedagogical potential. Regarding instruction, Bendo and Erbas (2019) claim that games can be effectively integrated in a variety situation of instruction, depending on the lesson's objective. For instance, argue that games can be seamlessly incorporated into a variety of well-defined classroom settings, depending on the lesson objectives. For example, when the focus is on grammar, combining traditional methods with game-based approaches that encourage practice through memorization and repetition can be advantageous. While pronunciation games are often recognized as warm-up activities, their true function and potential are much greater, as they can significantly contribute to improved language learning outcomes when carefully integrated with students' specific goals (Qizi & Dilshodbekovna, 2024).

Accordingly, pronunciation games such as *Pronunciation Journey*, which requires learners to identify and distinguish between similar vowel sounds through listening, are particularly effective when used during the practice stage of a lesson (Hancock, 1995). Additionally, interactive activities like the *Telephone game* can be incorporated to promote

attentive listening and accurate oral transmission of sounds, as students must rely on precise pronunciation to successfully convey messages within a group (Bendo & Erbas, 2019).

1.2.1.4.6 Teachers' role

The teacher's role in the use of pronunciation games can be examined through two crucial stages: before and during their implementation. Before the use of them, the teacher acts primarily as a planner, being responsible for analysing the characteristics of the group in order to select activities that promote both linguistic development and interaction, while also aligning with the established learning objectives (Bendo & Erbas, 2019).

During the implementation stage, the teacher assumes the role begins of an instructor, guiding learners by clearly explaining the rules of the game and connecting them to the learning objectives (Hanghøj & Brund, 2010). Once the activity begins, the teacher becomes a supervisor, as students become the main participants who manage the game with the teachers' support and monitoring (Magnussen, 2007). In this sense, the teacher also acts as a controller, ensuring that the activity develops appropriately and remains on its pedagogical purpose.

Finally, as described by Hanghøj and Brund (2010), the teacher also plays the role of explore, observing and assessing students' performance and reflecting on the general effectiveness of the game. Therefore, teachers who decide to incorporate games into their lessons must be prepared to adopt multiple roles and flexibly adapt to the different situations that may emerge in the classroom.

1.2.2 Dependent Variable

1.2.2.1 English Language Learning

Language is one of the most powerful and complex tools that humanity possesses. Through it, human beings not only communicate with each other, but also construct their reality, forge cultural and social identities and shape the dynamics of their communities. Given the fundamental role that language plays in shaping human interactions, acquiring other languages, such as English, is becoming increasingly important (Salkmann et al., 2012).

Learning English as a second or foreign language is a broad and complex field that involves the ability to understand and express information in that language. As stated by Hossain (2024), today, the learning of this lingua franca is influenced by various factors,

including cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as technological advancements. This emphasizes the complexity of learning English in the modern era, as students must become familiar not only with the language itself, but also with diverse cultural contexts and digital tools, which requires innovative teaching strategies that address the needs of the globalized world.

Numerous authors assert that students need to learn English as a second language (ESL) due to its many benefits, including improved communication that enhances opportunities, academic performance, and intercultural collaboration (Chapelle, 2014). These findings underscore the importance of English language learning in fostering students' communicative competence and preparing them for diverse interactions.

Furthermore, mastery of the English language and its system provide learning and mental health benefits. Jasim (2021) supports this claim by stating that acquiring any new language system enhances mental stimulation, facilitates problem-solving through practice, helps improve cognitive ability, and prevents brain disorders. This indicates that acquiring English goes beyond communication and equips students with mental skills that improve cognitive ability and mental health.

Ultimately, learning English as a foreign language facilitates communication in global contexts while simultaneously fostering cognitive, cultural, and academic development. This process as note by Nunan (2003), requires an integrative understanding of linguistic, cultural, and technological dimensions, reaffirming the importance of a comprehensive and dynamic approach to English language teaching.

1.2.2.2 English Language Skills

English language skills refer to the abilities that allow a student to receive, process, and generate information in the target language. These skills are interrelated and cumulative, forming the core of language learning. Learning English can be summarized into four essential skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Masduqi, 2016). From this perspective, Spratt et al. (2011) defines that listening involves the ability to understand spoken messages; speaking is the ability to orally communicate personal thoughts to another person; reading entails understanding the meaning of written texts; and writing as the ability to organize and communicate content through written symbols. The interplay between listening, speaking,

reading, and writing ensures comprehensive learning, where each skill complements the others, enhancing authentic communication.

The four English language skills are commonly divided into two main categories. On one hand are the receptive skills, listening and reading, which enable learners to receive, understand, and interpret oral and written messages. On the other hand, are the productive skills, speaking and writing, which involve the production of language, either orally or in written form, to express ideas clearly and coherently (Masduqi, 2016).

Harmer (2007) argues that English language skills should not be taught in isolation since they function in close connection with one another. Harmer (2007) notes that any meaningful communicative process necessarily involves the integration of several skills. For instance, in a dialogue someone will listen and in turn respond, and when reading, they will often take notes or verbally respond. From this perspective, Harmer (2007) highlights that in order for students to be able to use a number of different communicative skills, it is necessary for all of the skills to be developed in a balanced way. For this reason, English language skills occupy a prominent place in the pedagogy of English as a second or foreign language. To be fully prepared for different social and educational situations, it is necessary to improve all language skills in order to achieve comprehensive linguistic competence.

1.2.2.3 Productive Skills

The development of English skills is widely recognized as a fundamental component of language learning. English skills are generally divided into two main categories: productive skills and receptive skills, each serving a distinct purpose, communication or comprehension. As observed by Masduqi (2016), productive skills, which include both oral and written expression, are responsible for creating linguistic structures that facilitate interaction and the transmission of messages through language.

Sharma (2015) believes that in English teaching, productive skills should be taught as the practical extension of receptive skills. From this perception, the development of productive English skills represents the means through which learners can apply their understanding and transform it into effective communication.

Both speaking and writing are technical skills that require the use of language in real-life contexts. Although speaking focuses on oral production and writing on written production,

both share the common goal of communication. Harmer (2007) proposes that both competencies should be taught in accordance with the social context of language learning, and their instruction should adapt to genres that are most relevant to students' academic and personal lives.

Sharma (2015) remarks that productive English skills should be the primary focus of English language teaching. This is because these skills are the ones that most engage students. This also allows for the stimulation of student creativity in the classroom and improves their confidence and motivation. In addition, Akki and Larouz (2021) imply that speaking and writing should be considered interrelated skills and developed together in an interactive context. This fosters deeper learning and encourages participation in real-world communication.

1.2.2.4 Speaking Skills

Speaking is the linguistic ability that allows individuals to express ideas, emotions, and needs across diverse social contexts. As a productive skill, it is responsible for communicative processes in a world where interaction is an indispensable aspect of being human. According to Akhter (2021), speaking plays a crucial role in enabling communication and social connection among individuals. In recent years, English has assumed an increasingly significant global role, becoming a lingua franca, a medium through which different cultures and regions can connect. Consequently, a growing number of people are motivated to learn this language.

In the field of English language teaching, speaking skills are essential, as the primary purpose of language is to communicate. Rao (2019) emphasises that oral communication facilitates meaningful interaction and provides professional advantages by fostering confidence, persuasive ability, and participation in oral situations such as debates, presentations, and speeches. However, many teachers face difficulties in teaching this important skill in the classroom. Therefore, the need for creating strategies that give students the opportunity to communicate explicitly and participate in classroom activities is essential.

1.2.2.4.1 Types of Speaking

Speech can take different forms depending on the purpose and use of language. In this regard, Brown (2021) identifies five types of speaking, classified according to their degree of complexity, the level of interaction involved, and the communicative purpose they serve:

- **Imitative:** Focuses on the mechanical repetition of words, phrases, or utterances to practice phonetic accuracy. This includes segmental features, such as the correct articulation of vowels and consonants, as well as suprasegmental characteristics of speech, such as intonation, rhythm, and accent. This type of speaking does not seek real communication or deep understanding of language but rather seeks to encourage the development of pronunciation habits.
- **Intensive:** This involves producing short oral segments of language to demonstrate mastery of a grammatical rule, vocabulary, or phonology. These skills can be illustrated, for example, through activities such as reading a text aloud, filling in the blanks, and answering short questions. There is virtually no communication during this type of speaking.
- **Responsive:** This involves producing short responses in the context of very basic exchanges, such as greeting, initiating an informal conversation, making a request, or making a comment. While this may demonstrate some basic understanding, conversations are very limited.
- **Interactive:** Encompasses longer and more complex conversations than responsive speaking, with multiple exchanges of messages or participants. This type of speaking can be transactional, aimed at exchanging specific information, or interpersonal, focused on maintaining social relationships.
- **Extensive:** This refers to the possession and demonstration of spontaneous oral skills that can materialize in presentations or speeches and the production of oral narratives, using language more freely and autonomously. These instances are usually prepared in advance and can be formal or informal in nature.

1.2.2.4.2 Micro and Macro Components of Speaking Skills

1.2.2.4.2.1 Microskills

In the development of oral skills, micro-skills focus on the finest and most precise and specific elements of language that contribute to producing clear, comprehensible, and effective speech. These include the correct articulation of phonemes, the structuring of fragments of different lengths, the application of suprasegmental components to speech (stress, rhythm, and intonation), the appropriate selection of vocabulary, the ability to monitor and correct one's own oral expression, the correct use of word classes, word order, and grammatical rules, and the use of cohesion mechanisms that give coherence to discourse (Brown & Abeywickrama,

2010). These micro-skills are the foundation that gives speech its solidity, as they allow students to express themselves clearly and move confidently toward more complete forms of communication.

1.2.2.4.2.2 Macroskills

Macro skills, on the other hand, focus on broader, more global aspects of communicative interaction, linked to the social and pragmatic use of language. These include the ability to perform communicative functions according to the context, participants, and purposes; the selection of register; conversation norms; the ability to establish connections between ideas and events; the integration of nonverbal elements such as gestures and facial expressions; and the application of discursive strategies that allow, for example, the emphasis of information, the reformulation of ideas, the request for help, and the verification of the interlocutor's understanding (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). In synthesis, these macro-skills consolidate the communicative and pragmatic dimension of speech, as they allow the speaker not only to produce correct sentences, but also to interact in a meaningful and contextualized way.

1.2.2.4.3 Speaking sub-skills

During speech, the speaker uses different competencies that help the message be transmitted in a coherent and understandable manner. These sub-skills enable the speaker not only to produce grammatically correct sentences but also to organize ideas, use appropriate vocabulary, and adapt their language based on the context and the listener. Spratt et al. (2011) categorizes these subskills as follows:

- **Accuracy:** Refers to the correct use of grammar in oral expression. This also includes the correct choice of vocabulary. This serves to keep the message clear and understandable.
- **Appropriacy:** Refers to the register that determines the level of formality or informality in speech. This helps the listener not feel uncomfortable due to the incorrect use of functions.
- **Fluency:** Involves maintaining continuous and natural language with few pauses and blockages. Connected speech is an important component that helps the speaker express themselves coherently and includes aspects such as intonation, accentuation, linking, and contractions.

- **Interactive strategies:** These allow the speaker to use different resources to convince or communicate a message. This includes the use of body language such as gestures, facial expressions, and movements that contribute to giving meaning to the content. The use of functions as a strategy also often occurs depending on the purpose of communication, whether it is asking for opinions, asking for permission, clarifying, among others. Paraphrasing can be also used as a strategy to express ideas in simpler or more conventional words.
- **Pronunciation:** refers to the degree of phonetic accuracy demonstrated when speaking. This involves the proper management of elements of speech, including but not limited to, the appropriate use of vowels, consonants, patterns of speech, changes in voice pitch, and stress.
- **Text types:** Involves the use of different types of texts in oral expression, such as conversations, speeches, presentations, narratives, among others, depending on the speaker's communicative purpose.
- **Discourse organization:** It includes the speaker's level of organization during oral expression. It reflects the coherence and cohesion of ideas as well as the logic of the discourse, which facilitates the listener's understanding.

These different dimensions of speaking help educators design speaking practice activities that are meaningful and effective for specific student communicative and proficiency levels.

1.2.2.4.4 Teachers' role

As students learn a new language, differences between their native language and the new language can have a negative impact on their oral communication skills. Since oral expression is a fundamental component of language learning, it is crucial that the teacher plays an active and strategic role in the learning process, assuming various roles and responsibilities that go beyond simply imparting knowledge, and providing the necessary planning, guidance, and support to students for developing speaking skills (Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020).

Harmer (2007) addresses this issue and identifies three main roles during the teaching of oral skills in the classroom: as a prompter to guide and direct students toward the correct use of language; as a participant, encouraging students to express themselves naturally; and as a feedback provider, analyzing students' progress and correcting any misunderstandings that the

foreign language may bring. These roles allow the teacher to create a dynamic and safe learning environment where students receive guidance, incentive, and constant feedback to effectively develop their oral skills.

In addition to the roles mentioned by Harmer (2007), Koran (2015) identifies additional functions that teachers can assume to optimize speaking instruction and better address students' needs. Koran (2015) claims that to ensure active student participation, develop their confidence in using the language, and provide a more comprehensive learning experience, teachers should offer frequent opportunities for students to communicate in English and employ diverse strategies and techniques, such as role-playing, group work, and projects, that encourage oral interaction. In this way, students can communicate more naturally and gradually strengthen their oral proficiency.

Furthermore, Koran (2015) specifies that it is the teacher's responsibility to create a learning environment where students can be in constant contact with the target language, using it naturally and fluently. For this purpose, the teacher must adapt to the students' needs by assuming different roles: as an advisor and guide, an activity organizer, a facilitator of interaction, a motivator who encourages participation, a monitor who supervises progress, an assessor of performance, and a language model to follow (Koran, 2015). This perspective allows students not only to acquire language skills, but also to develop autonomy and confidence in expressing themselves in English, thus strengthening their fluency and willingness to participate actively in class.

1.2.2.4.5 Speaking challenges

Teaching oral skills in English as a foreign language presents challenges teachers have to manage with. One of the most important ones is the discrepancy in the sounds of students' mother tongue and English, which results in problems with pronunciation and intelligibility (Bouzar, 2019). Another challenge is the complexity of talking while listening and understating at the same time, which is a task that requires a great deal of mental coordination from the students (Bouzar, 2019).

Other issues include anxiety and fear of speaking that discourages students from participating and imposes a lack of confidence with speaking, as well as the problems with fair evaluation of the criteria like fluency and interaction (Bouzar, 2019). In addition, the students' lack of interaction with the real spoken English outside the lessons is a barrier to putting the

knowledge and skills to use in practice. All the mentioned problems justify the necessity of the use of the most appropriate methods of teaching that would make students communicate orally with more confidence and fluency.

Moreover, other writers have identified additional issues that also stall oral production within the English classroom. For example, Yilmaz et al. (2016) note that the most common challenges concern the absence of suitable lexical items, the cultural imposition that hinders effective communication, and the stress of being required to organize thoughts coherently during real-time communication. These factors not only impair fluency but also negatively affect accurate communication and students' readiness to function in genuine communication situations.

1.2.2.4.6 Speaking strategies

In teaching speaking skills in English as a foreign language context, students employ a variety of strategies to address communicative challenges. Barnwell et al. (1991) classify these strategies into three categories: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and affective or social strategies. These categories help us understand how students approach speaking skills learning from different perspectives, combining techniques for processing language, organizing their own learning, and managing their emotions, which contributes to more effective and authentic speaking performance.

Istiqomah et al. (2020) report that the use of metacognitive strategies allows students to plan what to say, track their performance, and self-assess what they had said after they finish speaking. Such strategies assist learners in diagnosing their challenges, modifying their strategies depending on the situation, and achieving better self-regulation on their learning.

Conversely, there are cognitive strategies, which include sustained practice, analytical thinking, and reasoning that are beneficial in the consolidation of the language structures and even in the attainment of fluency (Samad & Kafryawan, 2021). Besides, these strategies help students to correct errors more efficiently and use the knowledge they have more readily in practical applications.

Finally, Guo (2022) emphasizes that the importance of affective strategies in speaking, which focus on managing anxiety and motivation, along with social strategies, which facilitate cooperation with other speakers and encourage authentic interaction. In this way, students can

develop greater interest, perform with more confidence, and actively participate in communication.

Thus, the combined use of cognitive, metacognitive, and affective/social strategies provides students with practical and flexible tools to speak English more confidently and effectively (Istiqomah et al., 2020). Therefore, it is essential that teachers recognize and promote these strategies, integrating them into their teaching practices to support the effective development of students' oral communication skills.

1.2.2.4.7 Assessing Speaking

Evaluating verbal communication is complex and requires a thorough and nuanced process, taking into account a range of criteria such as accuracy, fluency, vocabulary range, pronunciation, and use of interactive strategies (Spratt et al., 2011). However, from a validity and reliability perspective, these evaluation criteria pose challenges due to their reliance on the evaluator's discretion.

According to Brown and Abeywickrama (2010), oral expression ability is closely related to listening comprehension, meaning that the assessor's perception and sensitivity to the nuances of language are crucial for accurate assessment. This relationship highlights the importance of designing oral communication activities and exercises that encompass all dimensions of verbal communication. Furthermore, by considering the objective, type, and context of each activity, teachers can ensure a comprehensive and fair assessment that reflects both students' technical accuracy and their overall communicative competence.

1.2. Objectives:

General Objective:

To measure the influence of pronunciation games on the improvement of speaking skills.

Specific Objectives:

- To identify the initial level of student's speaking skills before implementing pronunciation games.
- To implement pronunciation games for improving speaking skills in English students.

- To estimate the effectiveness of pronunciation games in the development of students' speaking skills after its implementation.

1.1.1. Fulfilment of objectives

The main objective was to measure the influence of pronunciation games on improving oral expression. This encompassed three specific objectives. The first was to identify the students' initial level of oral expression before implementing the pronunciation games. For this purpose, the Cambridge A1 Movers standardized test was used, whose assessment rubric considered vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and interaction. This test allowed for a precise measurement of the students' level of oral expression, offering a comprehensive and reliable evaluation of their oral performance.

The second objective was to implement pronunciation games to improve oral expression in English language students. To this end, eight pedagogical interventions were designed that included different pronunciation games. Each activity was modified to target the practice of specific vowels for each session, considering the student's pace and needs. Besides, in each game, the controlled practice of pronunciation was emphasised, and suggestions were made to create an interactive, fun, and engaging atmosphere for the students while providing immediate feedback.

Finally, the last objective was to estimate the effectiveness of the pronunciation games in developing students' oral expression after their implementation. This was achieved by applying the same test used at the beginning of the interventions, and comparing the results allowed us to distinguish the students' progress and improvement, and the areas that benefited most from the study.

CHAPTER II. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Materials

This research project utilized human resources, including the collaboration of the teacher in charge of the experimental class, and a group of 32 ninth-grade students from section *B* of the “Gral. Eloy Alfaro Delgado” school during the 2025-2026 school year. On the other hand, monetary resources were also used to finance the teaching materials for the independent variable, which were pronunciation games. For the dependent variable, it included images and rubrics that helped evaluate the students’ speaking before and after the interventions. Finally, the material resources included classroom supplies such as a whiteboard, markers, paper, and pencils, which were essential for conducting the research.

2.2. Methods

2.2.1 Research approach

This study employed a quantitative research methodology, as it relies on numerical data to determine the influence of pronunciation games on English speaking skills. Quantitative research aims to obtain estimates of certain characteristics of a population or statistical data that can support decisions and conclusions about a project (Congalton & Mead, 2009). For this purpose, a quantitative data collection method proved effective for evaluating the effectiveness of pronunciation games, focusing solely on measurable aspects, and using data collection tools such as speaking tests that were administered as both a pre-test and a post-test.

2.2.2 Modality

The research adopted bibliographical research as the primary strategy for developing the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. This approach allowed for the analysis and systematization of information from books, scholarly articles, and academic repositories, both in print and digital formats. These materials provided relevant background information on the use of pronunciation games in English language teaching and their impact on the development of speaking skills. As Ocaña-Fernández and Fuster-Guillén (2021) point out, literature review is an essential tool for providing the theoretical foundation for a research project, as it facilitates the identification of key concepts, methodological approaches, and knowledge gaps that guide the research process. In this sense, the literature review ensured the necessary theoretical rigor to establish the link between pronunciation games and the practice of oral communication in school settings.

This study also included a field study component that consisted of collecting observations from inside the eighth-grade classroom. Van de Ven and Poole (2017) argue that field research allows collecting relevant and meaningful data as research takes place in an actual setting where relevant educational phenomena occur. This enabled the researcher to observe the extent to which pronunciation games affect teaching and learning, and the extent to which these activities help students improve their intelligibility, fluency, and confidence in English.

2.2.3 Type of research

This research used a pre-experimental design, with a one-group pre-post-test design, because it includes a single group and measures changes before and after the intervention. Thyer (2019) specifies that this research design is useful for exploring the effects of new teaching strategies in real classrooms where control groups are not possible. Participants played several pronunciation games aimed at improving their phonemic awareness, articulation, and fluency. A pre-test was administered to assess their initial speaking performance, followed by a post-test after the intervention. Comparison of the results revealed the effectiveness of the pronunciation games in improving students' speaking skills.

2.2.4 Techniques and tools

Data collection tools allow researchers to obtain information about the study variables in an objective and systematic manner. These tools include surveys, questionnaires, tests, interviews, and observational records, among others. In this study, the instruments used for data collection were a pre-test and a post-test administered to ninth-grade students. The assessment was based on the speaking section of the Cambridge A1 Movers exam and consisted of four stages, from answering basic questions like name or age, to describing objects in short sentences. The criteria for evaluating the students' speaking skills included listening comprehension, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

2.2.5 Population

The target population of this study consisted of ninth-grade EGB students from “Gral. Eloy Alfaro Delgado” school. The sample included 34 participants: 17 females and 15 males, aged between 11 and 12 years. Their English proficiency level was identified as A1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Table 1. Population

Participants	Sample population	Percentage
Female	17	53%
Male	15	47%
Total	34	100%

2.2.6 Hypothesis

Null hypothesis: Pronunciation Games do not influence the improvement of speaking skills.

Alternative hypothesis: Pronunciation Games do influence the improvement of speaking skills.

2.2.7 Procedure

Data collection involved a series of eight 45-minute sessions. Except for the first and last sessions, where tests were administered to assess students' initial level and ongoing progress, each session focused on various pronunciation games tailored to the class's phonological needs. Each session employed the PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production) pedagogical model, introducing students to English vowels and their correct pronunciation, and providing them with guided and controlled practice in a playful environment.

Session 1. The first session covered the administration of the pre-test to assess the students' initial level of speaking skills. The class began with the researcher introducing themselves to the class and outlining the objectives of their study. The researcher then detailed the test procedure, which consisted of four phases, each of which the student would complete individually. Furthermore, the researcher explained the evaluation parameters, including the criteria by which the students would be assessed and the types of questions they would answer.

Session 2. The class began with the researcher asking the students to name English words. Then, the researcher demonstrated how to recognize English syllables through vowel sounds. During the practice phase, the students were divided into pairs, and each pair received a board with different English words and a die and explained the rules of the game. The objective of the game was to roll the die and, based on the number rolled, pronounce and point to words

with a certain number of syllables, until they had marked three consecutive words on the board. At the end of the class, the researcher reinforced the knowledge learned through questions and by monitoring the students' pronunciation.

Session 3. The session began with the researcher modeling the difference between the sounds /ɪ/ and /i:/ and the rules for identifying when to articulate them. Following this, in the practice phase, the researcher paired the students and gave each pair a board with various English words containing the vowel sounds already presented and explained the rules of the game. The students had to find their way out by following the path of words with the /i:/ sound, using pronunciation and recognizing the rules. In the final phase, the researcher checked that the students had chosen the correct path and assessed their pronunciation of both sounds.

Session 4. The session began with the researcher modeling the differences in articulation between the sounds /eɪ/, /æ/, and /e/, using examples from words. During the first phase, the researcher explained the rules for producing each sound. Following this, the researcher divided the students into two groups, lined up in a row, with each student in each group competing against the other in turn. The researcher gave the first student in each group a card with a word containing one of the three previously presented sounds. The students had to identify the sound according to the rules and pronounce the word correctly to earn a point for their group. At the end, the researcher awarded a prize to the group with the most points and corrected the most common pronunciation errors among the students.

Session 5. The researcher began the class by modeling the difference between the sounds /ʊ/ and /u:/, and the rules for identifying which words contain them. During the practice phase, the researcher gave each student a board and explained the rules of the game. The students had to listen to words pronounced by the teacher and choose between path a /ʊ/ or path b /u:/ until they reached the correct spot. At the end, the teacher listened to each student's pronunciation, corrected any errors, and monitored their articulation.

Session 6. The researcher gave a description and exercise on all the vowels learned in the past lessons before starting the lesson, making sure all the students pronounced and articulated the vowels correctly. Following this, the researcher gave each student a bingo card and explained the rules of the game. The students had to listen to the teacher pronounce different English words and mark them if they had them on their card. If they marked a vertical line, a horizontal

line, or the entire board, they were rewarded by the researcher. At the end, the researcher checked the student's correct articulation of each word.

Session 7. Using previously studied vocabulary, the participants began the lesson with the recurrence of all vowel sounds. Subsequently, the researcher made 5 equal parts which were set in a row and explained the game rules. The first player in each row listened to a phrase spoken by the researcher and had to relay it in such a manner that it was not distorted to the next student in a row. At the end, the researcher awarded a prize to the row that was the fastest in getting the phrase and that made the fewest mistakes in both the pronunciation and fluency in sentences.

Session 8. At the beginning, the researcher thanked the students for their collaboration in the development of the study. Then, he proceeded with the final evaluation to measure the pupils' progress in their speaking skills. To do this, he reminded the students of the parameters for taking the final evaluation, which was the same exam as the initial evaluation.

CHAPTER III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Analysis and discussion of the results

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the statistical data obtained from the pre- and post-tests administered to the study population. The Cambridge A1 Movers test was used as a reference for both assessments. The rubric assessed students at a maximum of 15 points, considering three criteria: vocabulary and grammar, pronunciation, and oral interaction. Each criterion was evaluated individually, comparing the pre- and post-test results to analyze student progress and the contribution of each aspect to the development of their oral expression skills. The pre- and post-test results are presented in tables to illustrate student progress after the implementation of the pronunciation games.

To find out whether differences between pre-test and post-test means were significant, paired-samples t-test was applied. Wilkerson (2008) points out that paired t-test considers the means of two dependent measurements and the differences between the pairs of data, which are assumed to be normally distributed, and the differences are statistically significant. Numerous factors are considered to arrive at a t statistic: the sample size, average score, and within-group variance.

This research study relied on IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to carry out required statistical analyses. A normality test (Shapiro-Wilk) was conducted first to check that the data was distributed normally before a t-test was conducted to determine which sample means are statistically different. The pre post data results allowed a conclusion to be drawn about acceptance or rejection of the null versus the alternative hypothesis.

3.1.1 Descriptive analysis of the pre-test and post-test

Table 2. Pre-test results

		Pre-test		
		Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Score	3	1	2.9	2.9
	4	3	8.8	11.8
	5	2	5.9	17.6
	6	4	11.8	29.4
	7	5	14.7	44.1
	8	7	20.6	64.7
	9	6	17.6	82.4
	11	3	8.8	91.2
	12	2	5.9	97.1
	14	1	2.9	100.0
Total		34	100.0	

Note: Pre-test scores are out of 15 points

Analysis and interpretation

Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of scores obtained by students on the pre-test administered to 34 students, whose scores ranged from 3 to 14 out of 15. The most frequent score was 8, obtained by 20.6% of the participants, equivalent to 7 students. Following this, 17.6% of students obtained a score of 9 out of 15, comprising 6 students. In contrast, the highest score, 14 out of 15, was obtained by only one student, representing 2.9%, while the lowest score, 3 out of 15, was also achieved by a single student, equivalent to 2.9%.

Overall, it can be said that the majority of the students were at the intermediate level and thus there was partial mastery of the speaking skills. The large range of the scores indicates an unevenness of the students' oral performance and signals the need to carry out for more targeted work to be done in order to improve the students' accuracy and consistency of speaking before a teaching strategy is implemented.

Table 3. Post-test results

Post-test				
		Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Score	5	1	2.9	2.9
	6	1	2.9	5.9
	7	3	8.8	14.7
	8	1	2.9	17.6
	9	4	11.8	29.4
	10	5	14.7	44.1
	11	9	26.5	70.6
	12	5	14.7	85.3
	13	2	5.9	91.2
	14	2	5.9	97.1
	15	1	2.9	100.0
Total		34	100.0	

Note: Post-test scores are out of 15 points

Analysis and interpretation

Table 3 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of scores obtained by 34 students on the post-test, with scores ranging from 5 to 15 out of 15. The largest proportion of students, 26.5% (equivalent to 9 participants), scored 11 out of 15. This was followed by the groups that achieved 10 and 12 out of 15, each comprised of 5 students, representing 14.7% in both cases. The highest score was recorded by one student, reaching 15 out of 15, corresponding to 2.9% of the population. Conversely, the lowest score was 5, also achieved by one student, representing 2.9% of the population.

The scores of this test were compared to the pre-test to measure and determine the improvement in students' oral performance. It was noted in the pre-test that the scores were primarily in range of 7 to 9. However, there was an improvement noted in the post-test which showed the scores were in the range of 10 to 12. This indicates greater fluency in classroom speech and a notable reduction in the most common errors made during oral production after the pedagogical interventions.

Table 4. Pre- and post-tests averages

		Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
N	Valid	34	34	
	Missing	0	0	
Average		7.79	10.41	2.62

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 4 summarizes the average scores obtained by the students in both the initial and final tests. A total of 34 participants completed both assessments, with no missing data. The results show an average score of 7.79 in the initial test and 10.41 in the final test, reflecting an improvement of 2.62 points. This increase demonstrates that the students' oral performance improved significantly after the intervention. The rise in average scores suggests that the students developed greater pronunciation accuracy, a broader vocabulary, and greater fluency in expressing ideas in English. These findings support the effectiveness of using pronunciation games to improve oral communication in English classes.

Table 5. Comparison of vocabulary and grammar criteria

		Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
N	Valid	34	34	
	Missing	0	0	
Average		3.29	3.65	0.36
Percentage		65.8%	73%	7.2%

Note. Learners' scores are out of 15 points

Analysis and interpretation

Table 5 shows the comparison between vocabulary and grammar scores before and after the intervention. The results show a slight improvement between the initial and final tests. The average score increased from 3.29 to 3.65 out of a maximum of 5 points, indicating some progress in the students' ability to use basic vocabulary and form simple grammatical structures. In percentage terms, performance improved from 65.8% to 73%, reflecting a positive difference of 7.2%.

The increase in average scores in vocabulary and grammar suggests that students acquired new words and structures in addition to their prior knowledge, either through or as a result of the intervention. The improved language skills demonstrated that the implemented strategies substantially enhanced students' ability to use English in diverse situations.

Table 6. Comparison of pronunciation criteria

		Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
N	Valid	34	34	
	Missing	0	0	
Average		2.35	3.65	1.3
Percentage		47%	73%	26%

Note. Learners' scores are out of 15 points

Analysis and interpretation

Table 6 presents a comparison of the results obtained in the second oral expression criterion, which assesses pronunciation. The results show a notable improvement between the initial and final tests. The average score increased from 2.35 to 3.65 out of a maximum of 5 points, corresponding to an increase from 47% to 73%, a difference of 1.3 points, representing a 26% increase.

The findings indicate that the interventions had a significant impact on students' pronunciation. The observed progress not only demonstrates an improvement in the clarity and precision of word articulation but also shows a further improvement indicating increased confidence in the students' ability to speak and their competence in accurately reproducing English sounds. This suggests that the methods used in the study had a positive impact on students' phonetic skills and their overall level of oral proficiency.

Table 7. Comparison of the interaction criterion scores

		Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
N	Valid	34	34	
	Missing	0	0	
Average		2.12	3.12	1
Percentage		42.4%	62.4%	20%

Note. Learners score over 5

Analysis and interpretation

Table 7 shows a comparison of the results for the final oral expression criterion focused on interaction. The average score increased from 2.12 to 3.12 out of a maximum of 5 points, corresponding to an increase from 42.4% to 62.4%, a difference of 1 point. This suggests that students made significant progress in their ability to communicate more fluently and actively during oral activities. The improvement in interaction demonstrates greater proficiency in

initiating and maintaining conversations, responding more confidently to questions, and collaborating more actively with their peers. These advances reflect an impact on students' confidence and communicative spontaneity in real-life oral exchange situations.

Table 8. Test of normality

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test	.140	34	.087	.969	34	.437
Post-test	.160	34	.028	.964	34	.321
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

Analysis and interpretation

The normality of the pre-test and post-test scores was evaluated using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which is appropriate for small sample sizes ($n < 50$). The results showed a p-value of 0.437 for the pre-test and 0.321 for the post-test, both exceeding the 0.05 significance level. These results indicate that the distribution of scores does not significantly deviate from normality, and the data can be considered normally distributed. Therefore, the assumption of normality is satisfied, allowing for the use of parametric tests for hypothesis verification.

3.1.2 Paired-samples t-test results

Table 9. T-test paired sample statistics

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test	7.79	34	2.532	.434
	Post-test	10.41	34	2.298	.394

Analysis and interpretation

The results from the paired sample statistics show a notable improvement in students' speaking performance after the didactic interventions. The mean score increased from 7.79 in the pre-test to 10.41 in the post-test, evidencing clear progress in learners' oral abilities. Although the standard deviation slightly decreased from 2.532 to 2.298, this indicates a more consistent performance among students in the post-test, with less variability in their results. Similarly, the standard error of the mean decreased from 0.434 to 0.394, suggesting a higher

reliability of the post-test mean and greater stability in the results obtained after the intervention.

These findings suggest that the implementation of pronunciation games not only contributed to an overall increase in speaking performance but also helped reduce the performance gap between higher and lower achievers. In general, the statistical results demonstrate that the participants made advancements as a result of the instructional intervention, attaining oral skills that were more homogeneously produced and at a higher level.

Table 10. Paired sample t-test

Paired Samples Test								
	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-test	-	1.231	.211	-3.047	-2.188	-12.396	34	.000
Post-test	2.618							

Analysis and Interpretation

The paired sample t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results, as indicated by the two-tailed p-value of 0.000, which is well below the established significance level of 0.05. This confirms that the difference in scores did not occur by chance. The mean difference of -2.618 shows that students achieved higher scores in the post-test, reflecting an overall improvement in their speaking performance after the implementation of pronunciation games.

Furthermore, the 95% confidence interval for the difference in means ranges from -3.047 to -2.188, and since this interval does not include zero, it reinforces the conclusion that the observed improvement is statistically meaningful. The high t-value of -12.396 also supports the strength of this difference.

In summary, the results of the t-test confirm that the didactic intervention had a significant and positive impact on learners' speaking abilities, particularly in pronunciation and interactive communication. The findings validate the effectiveness of using pronunciation games as a methodological tool to foster oral skill development in the English classroom.

3.2 Verification of hypothesis

Hypothesis test summary

Based on the results obtained from the statistical analysis, the Shapiro–Wilk test confirmed that the data followed a normal distribution, allowing the use of the paired samples t-test to verify the research hypothesis. The paired t-test results revealed a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores ($t(34) = -12.396, p < .001$). The mean difference was -2.618 , indicating that students obtained higher scores on the post-test after the implementation of pronunciation games. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranged from -3.047 to -2.188 , which does not include zero, confirming that the observed improvement was statistically significant.

Based on these results, the null hypothesis (H_0), which stated that pronunciation games do not influence the improvement of speaking skills, is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. The data indicates that the use of pronunciation games positively and significantly affected students' speaking skills, particularly pronunciation accuracy and oral interaction.

3.3 Discussion

Based on a detailed examination and interpretation of the collected data, significant results were identified regarding the role of pronunciation games in improving the speaking skills of students of English as a foreign language. The main results are analyzed below in relation to the study's objectives.

First, the pre-test results indicated that the students had a moderate level of oral expression that included pronunciation issues, low variety of vocabulary, and problems with conversational turn-taking. These findings suggest that students probably did not have enough opportunities to engage in oral communication within a dynamic and supportive environment. According to Bouzar (2019), speaking a foreign language is one of the most difficult skills due to the effects of the first language, lack of vocabulary and the fear of errors. Therefore, the use of activities that generate and sustain language use is very important. In this way, Bendo and Erbas, 2019 highlight that the use of pronunciation games creates a dynamic classroom environment that fosters active participation and student motivation.

Secondly, the results showed that, during the implementation of pronunciation games, students became more engaged, participated more frequently in oral tasks, and experimented with the language in an interactive and authentic environment. According to Qizi and Dilshodbekovna (2024), pronunciation games encourage active participation and enhance learning through enjoyable and meaningful practice. Furthermore, the communicative nature of these activities improves both phonological accuracy and fluency, as well as boosts students' confidence in oral production (Zebiniso, 2025). In this way, this playful approach allowed students to internalize the sounds of the language naturally and in a motivating manner, fostering spontaneous communication and reducing anxiety when speaking a foreign language.

Lastly, post-test results showed a significant improvement in students' speaking skills scores. Through card matching, collecting, guessing, and board games adapted to improve pronunciation, students significantly enhanced their articulation of vowels and words, their identification of syllables and individual sounds, and, consequently, their oral clarity. Gussenhoven and Jacobs (2017) state that more comprehensive and accurate communication requires conscious control of speech sounds and the phonological structure of the language, which allows for the effective and complete transmission of messages. Similarly, the educational games helped students develop confidence, reduce their shyness, and correct persistent errors in an interactive, communicative, and motivating environment. According to Hancock (1995), pronunciation games integrate playful components with the practical and progressive strengthening of communicative skills, which fosters more meaningful learning and facilitates the acquisition of impactful pronunciation.

In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that pronunciation games have, indeed, significantly impacted the development of students' oral skills. Although the effect on vocabulary and interaction has to improve, the findings demonstrate that pronunciation games have positive value as a teaching tool in the context of English as a Foreign Language.

CHAPTER IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

The main objective of this study was to measure the influence of pronunciation games on improving the speaking skills of English language learners. Based on the results obtained in this research, the following conclusions were drawn:

- The analysis of the pre-test results revealed a moderate level of speaking proficiency among the ninth-grade students. Phonological difficulties stemming from Spanish interference were identified, affecting articulation and clarity of spoken discourse. Semantic confusions were also evident, compromising the accuracy of English word and expression usage. At an attitudinal level, some students displayed shyness, low motivation, and limited interest in communicating in the foreign language, which hindered their active participation during dialogue. These findings reflect the need to strengthen pedagogical strategies that promote a more consistent, meaningful, and contextualized practice of the language.
- The incorporation of pronunciation games into the classes significantly improved the oral skills of English students. Card matching, sequencing, and board games were modified to improve students' phonological awareness in the identification and differentiation of like sounds, as well as the detection of syllables and, their proper pronunciation. These activities encouraged consistent practice of precise word articulation, contributing to the development of clearer and more effective communication in English. The games also facilitated active learning such that the students' motivation and participation in the oral activities increased along with their overall attitude toward English. This indicates that pronunciation games went further than the reinforcement of particular phonological features and the development of the willingness to use the English language more confidently.
- Pronunciation games proved effective in developing students' speaking skills, significantly improving the articulation of individual sounds, especially English vowels. Through collecting, guessing, board, and card matching games, students learned to hear, identify, and differentiate sounds, thus enhancing and automatizing their articulation with clearer production of words. In addition, these games provided

an engaging, communicative classroom atmosphere that incited participation of all students, including those who may have previously been reluctant to participate for fear of making mistakes. The use of the playful games resulted in more fluent and confident speaking, as learners were able to freely practice and correct their pronunciation.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the previous study, aimed at determining the influence of pronunciation games on improving speaking skills, the following recommendations are formulated:

- It is suggested that teachers implement ongoing observation strategies to accurately identify the English sounds that pose the greatest difficulty for students, as well as interference from their native language. This monitoring should allow them to recognize recurring error patterns and difficulties with fluency and clarity of speech. It is also advisable to encourage oral participation activities that increase confidence and reduce shyness, allowing students to practice pronunciation naturally and contextually in meaningful and real-life communicative situations.
- It is recommended to integrate pronunciation-focused games and activities into English classes. These activities should promote consistent practice of the phonological aspect of the language while motivating and maintaining active student participation. Incorporating these strategies facilitates the internalization of characteristic English sounds and strengthens confidence in oral expression, contributing to a more interactive and dynamic learning experience. Furthermore, it is important that these interactive exercises be adapted to the students' vocabulary and grammar level to ensure accurate, coherent, and functional language use. It is also recommended to combine immediate feedback with self-assessment and peer assessment so that students can recognize their progress and consciously adjust their pronunciation.
- It is highly recommended that pronunciation games should be integrated regularly and progressively into different phonological aspects of the language, avoiding limitations solely on practicing isolated sounds or words. Their application should be expanded and complemented with activities that strengthen intonation, rhythm, and fluency of speech, promoting more natural, clear, and expressive communication in English.

Similarly, it is suggested that different types of pronunciation practice games and activities complement each other, so that students achieve a more comprehensive mastery of phonological elements and develop more complete and confident oral competence.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: Institution approval letter

ANEXO 3 FORMATO DE LA CARTA DE COMPROMISO.

CARTA DE COMPROMISO

Ambato, 05 de septiembre de 2025

Magister
Ximena Calero
Presidenta de la Unidad de Titulación
Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros
Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y de la Educación
Presente

Yo, Mg. Yadira Marilú Molina Campoverde, en mi calidad **Rectora de la Unidad Educativa "Gral. Eloy Alfaro Delgado"**, me permito poner en su conocimiento la aceptación y respaldo para el desarrollo del Trabajo de Titulación bajo el Tema: "Pronunciation Games and Speaking Skills" propuesto por el estudiante Parco Torres Christian Fabián, portador de la Cédula de Ciudadanía, 1850878024 estudiante de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y de la Educación de la Universidad Técnica de Ambato.

A nombre de la Institución a la cual represento, me comprometo a apoyar en el desarrollo del proyecto.

Particular que comunico a usted para los fines pertinentes.

Atentamente.



Mg. Yadira Marilú Molina Campoverde
Rectora (e)
1803069366
0992519384



Annex 2: Lesson plans and test formats repository

The relevant appendices for this research were stored in an online repository. The lesson plans for the interventions carried out for this pre-experimental work, as well as the format of the test used for the pre- and post-assessments, can be accessed via the link shown below.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18_KC7gck9kbvuWri7pSN3yZyOmPzb4Nl?usp=sharing

Annex 3: Compilatio Report

