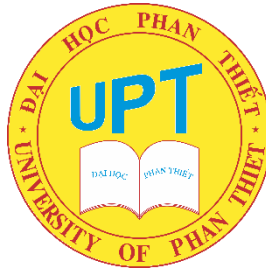


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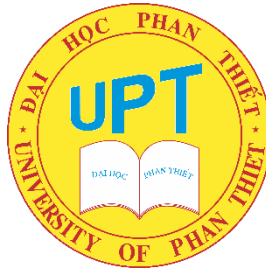
LE THI THU HIEN

**THE EFFECTS OF USING GAMES TO IMPROVE THE
ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL FOR JUNIOR STUDENTS:
A CASE STUDY AT LE LOI SECONDARY SCHOOL**

**MASTER'S GRADUATION PROJECT
MAJORED IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

LAM DONG PROVINCE, 2026

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GRADUATION PROJECT OUTLINE

INSTRUCTORS: 1: Assoc.Prof.Dr. LE DINH TUONG

2: LY THI MY HANH, Ph.D

LAM DONG PROVINCE, 2026

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Finally, I would like to express my deepest love and gratitude to my family and friends for their unconditional support, understanding, and encouragement. Their trust and motivation gave me the strength to overcome difficulties and complete this thesis successfully.

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that this Master's Graduation Project entitled **“The Effects of Using Games to Improve the English Speaking Skill for Junior Students: A Case Study at Le Loi Secondary School”** is the result of my own research and academic work, submitted for the Master's degree in English Language at Phan Thiet University.

Under the guidance of Ly Thi My Hanh, Ph.D., I affirm that this project is original and has not been submitted for any other degree. All ideas, data, references, and materials from external sources have been duly acknowledged according to the academic regulations of Phan Thiet University, ensuring there is no plagiarism or unethical conduct.

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ABSTRACT

Speaking English is one of the most important yet challenging skills for secondary school students in the Vietnamese EFL context. Although students have learned English for several years, many of them still face difficulties in speaking English. Therefore, this study investigates the effects of using games to improve students' English speaking skills. It aims to identify students' speaking difficulties and examine how games can support the development of their speaking skills. A mixed-method design was employed. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires, while qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with English teachers. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented through tables and figures, while the qualitative data were used to support and explain the questionnaire findings. The findings revealed that students experienced speaking difficulties related to language factors, psychological factors, and the learning environment. The results also showed that games had positive effects on students' speaking development by increasing motivation, encouraging active participation, supporting the memorization of vocabulary and sentence structures, and improving quick responses in communication. Overall, the study suggests that games can be an effective pedagogical tool for creating a more engaging, supportive, and communicative speaking environment for secondary school students.

Keywords: *Speaking Skills, Difficulties, Games, Positive Effects.*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	: English Foreign Language
ELT	: English Language Teaching
ESL	: English as a Second Language
L1	: First Language
L2	: Second Language
M	: Mean
MOET	: Ministry of Education and Training
SD	: Standard Deviation
SPSS	: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the author sets the stage for the research by defining the problem and objectives while highlighting the study's scope, key questions, and broader significance within the field.

1.1 Background of the study

In an increasingly interconnected world, English proficiency has changed from being merely a skill to becoming an essential tool for accessing knowledge, technology, and expanding career opportunities. English functions as an international language, facilitating communication among people from diverse cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds (Dewi, 2015). In Vietnam, English has been taught as a foreign language from elementary through senior high school and up to the university levels to help students with the competencies necessary for effective communication in both academic and international contexts. Recognizing English as a significant asset, many students, especially those in junior secondary levels, are motivated to learn English in order to achieve fruitful results in their respective fields.

Despite its importance, Vietnamese students often struggle with English proficiency, especially speaking. Siahaan and Siahaan (2021) note that speaking is widely considered one of the most challenging skills to develop, Hidayat and Clarita (2020) argue that many students continue to experience difficulties in using English effectively, particularly in their speaking abilities. At Le Loi Secondary School, students frequently encounter difficulties in confidently expressing themselves in English for a variety of reasons. The focus of primary and secondary EFL teaching and learning is grammar and vocabulary and reading, and do not currently concentrate on the development of communicative skills (Nguyen, 2008). The heavy emphasis on exam-oriented teaching has created a noticeable gap between their writing and speaking abilities, as communicative skills are often neglected. Furthermore, many students in Vietnam took many years to study English at schools, they cannot be able to practice English in real-life situations (Pham & Nguyen, 2014), because they have limited opportunities to exposure to English in the community, which severely

restricts their ability to use English in daily communication. Consequently, many learners have difficulty using English effectively in everyday communication (Nguyen, 2008; Nunan, 2003).

In response to these challenges, the National Foreign Language Project initiated by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) for the 2008–2020 period and later extended to 2025 reflects Vietnam's commitment to strengthening English proficiency at all educational levels, from primary, lower, and upper secondary schools. The Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has been implementing various initiatives to innovate foreign language education. In addition, the most recent national project, “Introducing English as a Second Language in Schools” for the 2025–2035 period, with a vision toward 2045, demonstrates the Vietnamese government’s ongoing determination to develop students’ English communicative competence as a key tool for preparing future global citizens.

The Ministry of Education and Training has emphasized the move toward a competence-oriented approach in English language education. This is reflected in official documents such as No. 5333/BGDDT-GDTrH dated September 29, 2014, which guides the implementation of competence-based assessment in secondary schools from the 2014–2015 academic year, and No. 5555/BGDDT-GDTrH dated October 8, 2014, which offers guidance on professional activities related to innovative teaching methods, assessment practices, and the organization and evaluation of professional activities in secondary schools and continuing education centers through online platforms.

At the provincial level, foreign language development plans in Binh Thuan, especially the English learning environment at Le Loi Secondary School, also emphasize the commitment to fully improving students' proficiency in foreign languages so that they can meet the standards stated in Document No. 2258/SGDDT-GDTrH of the Binh Thuan Department of Education and Training, dated October 9, 2017, concerning the requirements for academic year tasks and the organization of the seminar on English subject topics at the secondary level.

Based on those factors, this study aims to identify the specific difficulties faced by secondary school students, particularly ninth graders at Le Loi Secondary School, in learning English. Simultaneously, the research proposes appropriate solutions and teaching methods, with an emphasis on the use of games to strengthen motivation, promote active participation, and improve learning effectiveness, especially in English speaking skills. The use of games in speaking lessons is consistent with current educational trends and can be viewed as a practical way to increase students' motivation in language learning. Moreover, this study seeks to meet the requirements established by the Ministry of Education and Training's curriculum while contributing to the local economic development goals. The research findings are expected to provide a foundation for developing practical teaching plans and guidelines, as well as offering teachers innovative directions for English language instruction.

1.2 Statement of the problems

According to Srinivas (2019), in today's world, communication plays an important role in achieving success in many fields (p. 8). To do that, everyone needs to have good communication in this modern era. Speaking is a vital role in effective communication. This study highlights the effects of using games to improve the English speaking skill for Students at Le Loi Secondary School. In general, the study will provide a thorough and in-depth understanding of the ways in which this approach may enhance Vietnamese students' communication skills, particularly at the secondary school level.

According to Chaney (1998), speaking is the process of creating and exchanging meaning through verbal and non-verbal symbols in various contexts. Brown (1994) and Burns and Joyce (1997) view speaking as an interactive process in which speakers produce, receive, and process information to construct meaning. However, Vietnamese students, especially those attending Le Loi Secondary School, have numerous difficulties when it comes to speaking English. Despite English being a compulsory subject, students often exhibit low motivation and limited opportunities to practice speaking in authentic and engaging contexts. Traditional teaching

methods, with a strong focus on grammar and written exams, have contributed to a gap between students' receptive skills and their productive speaking skills.

Although numerous studies have explored the importance of English speaking skills and the challenges faced by Vietnamese students, a significant gap in the literature remains. Specifically, the effects of using games as a tool to promote speaking skills is still not well understood. Therefore, this research will focus on clarifying the practical application and acceptance of this method by both students and teachers.

At Le Loi Secondary School, a private institution equipped with modern facilities and interactive whiteboards, English instruction is designed to foster comprehensive language skills, with a particular emphasis on speaking. Teachers not only focus on grammar and vocabulary but also flexibly integrate technology, interactive games, and group activities to enhance student engagement and proactiveness. Students are encouraged to use English in daily communication and participate in practical activities such as image descriptions, group discussions, presentations, and English-based projects. The use of diverse materials, including textbooks, videos, newspaper articles, and short films, helps students engage with various communication styles. Furthermore, incorporating games such as role-playing, songs, and language puzzles on interactive whiteboards creates a positive, enjoyable, and effective learning environment, thereby improving students' real-world communication skills.

Despite the benefits of teaching and learning English at Le Loi Secondary School, several challenges continue to prevent students from improving their speaking abilities.

Linguistic Barriers: Many students struggle with vocabulary and grammar, leading to difficulties in responding promptly and maintaining fluency during speaking activities.

Psychological Barriers: A significant number of ninth graders exhibit a lack of confidence, often rooted in the fear of making mistakes or being judged by peers and teachers.

Environmental and Instructional Barriers: The heavy focus on exam-oriented grammar and limited exposure to English outside the classroom restrict authentic practice opportunities.

In addition to these individual barriers, there are other challenges affecting speaking skill development at Le Loi Secondary School. There might not be enough time or resources available in the classroom for thorough speaking preparation. Teachers often face pressures related to curriculum demands and educational expectations, making it difficult to prioritize speaking skill enhancement. Moreover, limited support from families and the community in encouraging English speaking outside the classroom further restricts students' opportunities to practice and improve.

Despite the growing understanding of the necessity for creative teaching approaches, there remains a notable gap in the academic literature regarding the specific effects of using games to improve English speaking skills, especially within the Vietnamese context. It has not been fully explored how games may be used practically or what kinds of games work best to create a more enjoyable learning environment. Additionally, there is a lack of research on how teachers and students feel about this approach.

Therefore, this study aims to bridge this research gap by investigating the impact of using games to improve speaking skill of junior students at Le Loi Secondary School. Specifically, this research will identify the specific challenges students encounter, evaluate the motivational impact of games on speaking practice, and explore effective strategies for integrating games into the English curriculum. The findings are expected to contribute valuable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to enhance communicative competence through a more dynamic and student-centered approach.

1.3 Research aims and objectives of the study

This research paper aims to investigate the effects of integrating English games into the teaching process to enhance speaking skills for secondary school students. The study aims to address the following objectives:

To identify the difficulties and challenges that 9th-grade students at Le Loi Secondary School encounter in developing their English speaking skills.

To explore and evaluate the effects of using English games as a pedagogical tool to boost students' motivation, confidence, and communicative abilities.

To understand the influential factors, both positive and negative, involved in implementing games within the English classroom.

To propose suitable solutions and teaching methodologies to optimize the use of games for improving students' English speaking skills effectively.

To enhance the teaching and learning process by providing customized approaches and guidance based on the study's findings.

1.4 Research questions

This study is conducted with the purpose of conducting an in-depth investigation into the effects of using games to improve English speaking skills for students at Le Loi Secondary School. The research aims to address specific challenges faced by students while exploring the practical benefits and limitations of integrating games into English language teaching. By doing so, it seeks to provide practical insights that can be directly applied to enhance teaching strategies and learning outcomes. Additionally, the study also aims to suggest guidelines and future approaches for successfully integrating games into the curriculum to increase students' motivation and speaking ability.

To evaluate the challenges and effects of using games as a teaching tool in developing students' English speaking skills, this research aims to seek for the responses whether using games is an effective way to help students improve their speaking ability:

1. What are the difficulties of students in speaking English skill?
2. What are the positive effects of using games to improve speaking skill?

1.5 Scope of the study

This study focuses on how games enhance Grade 9 English speaking skills at Le Loi Secondary School. Grade 9 students are at a crucial academic stage and need better communication abilities for their future academics. 95 Grade 9 students and 5

instructors from the school will participate in the study. Each grade 9 class may have enough learners to guarantee sample representativeness. Grade 9 student also need to improve their English communication abilities for high school. The research project is scheduled for six months, from September 2025 to April 2026.

Le Loi Secondary School is a private school in Phan Thiet City with a diverse student population. Due to academic pressure and inadequate English confidence, the initiative is limited to grade 9 students. A well-established English language education program emphasizes listening, speaking, reading, and writing, however the study concentrates on speaking. Speaking is the hardest part of English for learners to learn and is strongly connected to other language abilities. Teacher participation in this initiative is because they recognize the obstacles children face studying English, especially speaking skills. Assessing and enhancing student skills requires instructors' expertise. This research employed a questionnaire to acquire data.

This project should emphasize English proficiency and student scheduling. Establishing game activity durations is essential to keeping students engaged without exhausting them.

In secondary school English, lesson units can be separated into class times for hearing, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar. Each class blends these skills, giving students 20 minutes of weekly speaking practice. Therefore, every game's duration may be adapted to the school schedule and student learning needs. This method encourages student engagement and interaction, creating a flexible and effective learning environment.

1.6 The significance of the study

This study is expected to contribute meaningfully to English language education by offering useful insights into how games can be designed and applied to support the development of students' English speaking skills. As effective communication in English has become increasingly important in today's world, the use of games in speaking instruction may serve as a practical way to improve students' oral performance.

The significance of this study lies mainly in its practical value. It is intended to provide recommendations for improving the teaching and learning of speaking skills at Le Loi Secondary School. For teachers, the study may provide a clearer understanding of both the benefits and the possible challenges of using games in language teaching, thereby helping them choose more suitable classroom strategies. For students, the findings may highlight how games can increase motivation and support the development of speaking ability, encouraging them to participate more actively in their own learning. In addition, school administrators may use the results as a reference for adjusting curriculum plans or introducing further support for English education. For researchers, this study may add further evidence to the growing body of research on the use of games in language teaching, especially in the context of Vietnamese secondary schools.

More broadly, the study helps connect theoretical perspectives with actual teaching practice. By examining the role of games in speaking lessons, it may suggest appropriate ways to improve English language learning in the classroom. The findings are expected to support both teachers and students in recognizing the value of games in speaking instruction and in applying them more effectively during lessons. Furthermore, the study may contribute to the improvement of English teaching programs for secondary school students and may also offer implications for other schools in Phan Thiet City and Lam Dong Province.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter highlights the theoretical framework and previous investigation concerning English speaking proficiency and the application of games in language acquisition. It examines fundamental principles of speaking, prevalent challenges in acquiring speaking skills, and the function of games to encourage speaking growth. The chapter also examines significant previous research on implementing games to enhance speaking skills. The investigation illustrates the research gap and conceptual framework.

2.1 Theoretical framework

The implementation of educational games to improve speaking abilities in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms can be theoretically supported by various recognized second language learning frameworks. Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory asserts that language acquisition is inherently social and facilitated through interaction. Students collaborate or compete in classroom games to negotiate meaning, interact, and solve problems. These activities help students function in their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where peers, organized tasks, and contextual clues boost language achievement. Interaction-based learning settings are ideal for speaking teaching, as active engagement builds communicative skills.

Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis supports games' educational importance in speaking classrooms. According to this hypothesis, learners' emotions greatly affect language learning. Speaking may be hindered by anxiety, particularly among EFL students who lack confidence. Game play reduces nervousness and decreases the emotional restriction, helping learners to take chances and engage more in speaking activities. Classroom games also promote language learning through relevant input and authentic interaction between students.

Bruner's (1976) scaffolding theory supports employing games in speech education. Structured rules, turn-taking patterns, visual reminders, and work goals provide temporary help in games. These aids help students organize speech, engage,

and use language resources. Student confidence and competence allow scaffolding to be eliminated, resulting in more autonomous and fluent oral performance.

These theoretical perspectives illustrate how communicative games can create engaging, low-anxiety, organized environments for learning that improve fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and interaction. Educational games may enhance active involvement and communicative skills in secondary school speaking lessons, when students may have limited practical English communication opportunities.

2.2 Language acquisition

Language acquisition is complicated, influenced by cognitive, affective, and social elements and shaped by the learning environment, especially in EFL. The Affective Filter Hypothesis by Krashen emphasises that learners' emotions and motivation can help or hinder language acquisition. Learners may avoid speaking when anxious or unsure, reducing significant input and output (Krashen, 1982). This study expects classroom activities to foster a helpful and engaging learning environment that reduces anxiety and encourages communication, improving speaking development.

The sociocultural Zone of Proximal Development by Vygotsky suggests that language develops through contact and scaffolding. Meaningful contact with peers and teachers who encourage, model, and provide feedback helps students learn (Vygotsky, 1978). Games with speaking activities including guessing, information-gap, and question-answer tasks allow learners to negotiate meaning, take turns, and receive instant assistance, supporting interaction-driven acquisition.

Additionally, Skinner's Operant Conditioning Theory implies that promoting desired behaviours improves learning. Encouragement, rewards, task completion, and positive peer responses inspire speaking students to speak more and practise (Skinner, 1957). Games can enhance speaking by giving repeated oral performance opportunities with clear goals and immediate effects.

These theoretical viewpoints are applicable to Vietnamese secondary classrooms, because reading and writing are prioritised, reducing students' speaking skills (Hai, 2013). Limited instructional resources can also hinder communicative

practise (Nguyen, 2016). Classroom games are a practical and effective way to boost communication, interaction, and motivation. Therefore, studying how games improve students' English speaking skills is based on language learning principles and classroom limitations in the local environment.

2.3 Student's learning motivation

Motivation plays a central role in learners' engagement, effort, and persistence in language learning (Dörnyei, 2005). In EFL speaking classrooms, motivation is particularly important because speaking requires learners to take risks, participate actively, and tolerate making mistakes. When learners experience positive reinforcement and supportive classroom conditions, their motivation to communicate is likely to increase (Wang, 2010). Additionally, prior research has shown that taking into account games into higher education language instruction can enhance fluency, confidence, and motivation for engagement, meaning, and satisfaction with learning (Ho et al., 2020; Li & Chu, 2010), along with confidence as well as fluency (Dewi et al., 2017; Li, 2021). Games can make speaking practice more entertaining, focused, and less scary, which might encourage students to take part.

Motivation is also closely connected to learners' beliefs about their own ability. Students with stronger self-confidence and self-efficacy are generally more willing to speak and more persistent when facing difficulties (Bandura, 1977). Moreover, motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic: intrinsic motivation comes from enjoyment and personal satisfaction, while extrinsic motivation is influenced by rewards or external outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Intrinsic motivation tends to be stronger when learners' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are supported (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). Classroom games can foster these conditions by offering choice, clear goals, achievable challenges, and peer interaction. In addition, Social support from peers and teachers also plays a significant role in encouraging learner engagement (Furrer & Skinner, 2003). Furthermore, learners are more motivated when learning activities are meaningful, interesting, and relevant to their lives (Renninger et al., 2014).

Students' motivation plays a crucial role in how games can affect speaking development. This study proposes that games will boost learners' motivation and willingness to communicate, resulting in increased speaking turns and engagement. With more frequent speaking practice in a supportive setting, improvements are expected in fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation intelligibility.

2.4 Speaking skills

2.4.1 Definition of speaking

Speaking constitutes one of the four fundamental English language abilities and is crucial in communicating. It allows learners to express their ideas, emotions, and facts, making the language informative and dynamic. It is often regarded as a key indicator of language proficiency because it requires immediate language production and real-time processing (Hasibuan & Irzawati, 2020).

From a communicative perspective, Brown (2004) defined speaking as the oral expression of ideas, information, and feelings to achieve mutual understanding. Similarly, Abedini and Chalak (2017) considered speaking a social process through which individuals exchange thoughts and emotions. These definitions suggest that effective speaking involves not only grammatical accuracy but also meaningful interaction and clear message delivery.

Through speaking exercises, students can easily learn vocabulary, improve language structures, and build communicative competence. However, in EFL contexts, speaking is often considered one of the most challenging skills. For secondary school students, developing this skill is particularly important for building confidence in classroom interaction. Ultimately, speaking is an interactive skill that can be improved through meaningful practice, with games serving as an effective technique to support students' development.

2.4.2 Components of speaking skill

Speaking is productive because of accuracy and fluency. Speaking accuracy involves vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Gower et al., 1995). Syakur (1987:5) defines speaking as academic comprehension, grammar, vocabulary,

pronunciation, and linguistic fluency. These elements facilitate spoken communication. First, comprehension means understanding communication. Cohen (2005:51) states that understanding means people grasp the communication process, even when it is complex. Second, grammar examines sentence word order. It is a set of guidelines that helps speakers arrange their sentences (Purpura, 2004:6; Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002:1). Grammar is essential for correct speech and writing. Another important part of speaking is vocabulary. Students can clearly convey their thoughts and feelings in writing and speech with vocabulary. A large vocabulary improves communication and becomes more familiar for daily use (Turk, 2003:87). Speaking also requires proper pronunciation. Vowels, consonants, rhythm, stress, and intonation are included (Fraser, 2001:6). Pronouncing words correctly enhances oral communication. Fluency also means speaking naturally without hesitation. Fluency, according to Harris and Hodges (1995), means speaking naturally and quickly without fillers. Fluency and accuracy are often considered in speaking development. Accuracy involves using grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation to convey meaning. Speaking is a difficult skill that involves integrating these components to communicate successfully. If they are not employed properly, listeners may struggle to understand.

According to Harmer (2001), effective speaking involves language aspects and mental/social processing as well as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Grammar and lexis facilitate accurate and functional language use in interaction, while connected speech and expressive devices (e.g., stress, intonation, speed, and volume) affect pronunciation and intelligibility. Language processing and interaction management provide real-time fluency and responsiveness. These factors show that speaking proficiency depends on linguistic precision and interaction management. Therefore, students have to understand speaking components to build their speaking skills.

2.4.3 Types of speaking

According to Brown (2004), speaking is a productive skill that can be observed both directly and indirectly. However, an oral communication assessment's accuracy

and validity are inevitably influenced by the test-taker's listening ability. In contrast to reading and writing, which represent receptive and written language abilities, speaking possesses unique features; for instance, speakers typically utilize less precise vocabulary and do not always speak in complete sentences. Furthermore, classroom discourse—encompassing interactions between teachers and students or among peers—is heavily reliant upon the organization of classroom activities.

To systematically evaluate this skill, Brown (2004) classifies speaking performance into five fundamental categories, each possessing distinct features and objectives:

1. Imitative. Imitating words or phrases is a key form of speaking performance, as learning a new skill often involves copying others' speech or actions (Cervone & Pervin, 2019). This phonetic approach allows learners to focus on pragmatic, lexical, and grammatical features in context. Therefore, mimicking native speakers is a practical way to develop fluency in a new language.

2. Intensive. The purpose of producing short spoken language stretches is to prove proficiency in a specific number of syntax, lexical, or phonological relationships. According to Beebe and Beebe (2019), focusing on a single topic in detail through this targeted approach allows learners to explore various perspectives, thereby fostering a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

3. Responsive. This level evaluates engagement and comprehension with short discussions, greetings, small talk, and simple requests or comments. Responsive speaking involves answering teacher- or student-initiated questions and giving basic instructions. Foss (2019) states that interactive speaking occurs when a student hears and responds. From casual discussions to formal debates, this sort of communication aims to exchange ideas through productive discussion.

Expanding on this, Cervone & Pervin (2019) define interactive speaking is a collaborative effort to solve problems or accomplish tasks in group conversations or team projects. At the advanced level, Beebe & Beebe (2019) identify extended speaking as using a lot of language to explain complicated ideas. This type of

communication includes extended speeches, formal oral presentations, and sustained conversations.

4. Interactive. Responsive and interactive speaking are distinguished by the complexity and duration of the interaction, which may involve multiple participants and/or exchanges. Transactional language is employed to convey specific information, while interpersonal exchanges are employed to preserve social relationships.

5. Extensive (monologue). The opportunity for oral interaction from audiences is either severely restricted (possibly to nonverbal responses) or completely eliminated during extensive oral production tasks, such as speeches, oral representations, and storytelling.

In a variety of scenarios, our communication abilities can be enhanced by understanding the distinctions between these categories.

2.5 Challenges in learning speaking

The ability to speak English fluently is considered one of the most critical language skills; however, numerous learners continue to encounter challenges in this regard (Arung & Jumardin, 2016). Within the scope of this study and consistent with previous research, these challenges are categorized into three primary dimensions: language factors, psychological factors, and the learning environment. In EFL contexts, many secondary school students find speaking challenging because they have to express ideas clearly and respond immediately in English. These multifaceted difficulties not only hinder students' speaking proficiency but also significantly affect their willingness to engage in classroom communicative activities.

2.5.1 Language factors

a. Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the words or a group of words that convey the concept and the meaning from the speakers or listeners. Vocabulary was defined by Kamil and Hiebert (2005) as the comprehension of the meanings of words. As a result, vocabulary is considered one of the crucial foundational aspects of any

language. Cameraron (2001) also stated that vocabulary is crucial for language learners. Without a strong vocabulary, students struggle to express themselves. Oral vocabulary includes terms understood through speaking and hearing, while print vocabulary includes words understood through reading and writing. Many students lack the language to articulate their ideas clearly, using unsuitable terms in context. Kamil (2005) notes that many EFL students struggle to use words and expressions effectively when speaking. Speakers may misinterpret their companions' words due to time and vocabulary constraints. McCarthy (1984) again found that learning vocabulary is about utilizing words naturally and correctly when needed.

English also has homophones like "flower" and "flour." Students struggle with language most often due to poor vocabulary, according to Chastian (1998). Context is essential for understanding homophonic misunderstanding. Vocabulary mastery is crucial for language learning because a lack of it might inhibit success.

b. Grammar

Grammar refers to the way words are organized into meaningful sentences according to specific rules. James (2005) states that grammar explains how words are combined to form meaningful sentences and plays an important role in organizing ideas in communication. In speaking, grammatical competence helps learners express their ideas clearly, accurately, and coherently. Similarly, Richards (2008) emphasizes that grammar supports effective oral communication by enabling learners to produce correct sentence chunks and deliver messages with suitable intonation and pauses. However, English grammar is often challenging for learners because of its complex rules, especially when they have to speak in real time. Matthiessen (2013) also highlights that language competence involves the ability to use and organize language effectively in both speaking and writing.

In foreign language learning, grammatical errors often occur due to language transfer, where learners apply the structure of their first language (L1) to the target language (L2) (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). This issue is particularly evident in speaking, where learners must respond quickly and may rely on familiar L1 patterns. As a result, learners may form sentences based on L1 structure, leading to inaccurate

spoken English. In addition, as Doris and Jessica (2007) suggested, learners often prioritize fluency over accuracy in communication. This tendency may negatively affect their grammatical accuracy in oral performance in the long term.

c. Pronunciation

Pronunciation refers to the way English sounds are produced in spoken communication. Redmond and Vrchota state that pronunciation is the way a language is spoken, involving not only the accurate production of words but also the appropriate use of stress, intonation, and rhythm. These features are important because they affect how meaning is conveyed. For example, the same sentence may express different meanings depending on rising or falling intonation. According to Gilakjani (2012), learners with good pronunciation are more likely to be understood even when they make mistakes in other areas, whereas poor pronunciation may hinder communication despite grammatical accuracy. Therefore, pronunciation is an essential component of speaking skill because it directly influences intelligibility and listener comprehension.

However, pronunciation is often challenging for foreign language learners. Many students struggle with English sounds, syllable patterns, stress placement, and rhythm, partly because their pronunciation is strongly influenced by their mother tongue. For Vietnamese learners, differences between Vietnamese and English sound systems create particular difficulties. English relies heavily on word stress and sentence stress to distinguish meaning and emphasize key information, while Vietnamese syllables are generally pronounced more evenly. Incorrect stress placement may confuse listeners even when individual sounds are clear. As Hoge (2016) and Hismanoglu (2006) suggest, pronunciation plays a crucial role in effective oral communication.

2.5.2 Psychological factors

Besides language factors, psychological factors play a crucial role in students' difficulties in developing English speaking performance. According to Fitriati (2016), psychological factors are determined as the study of individuals' interactions with their surrounding issues and their thoughts and behaviours. Similarly, Arifin (2017)

described psychological problems as conditions that influence an individual's mental or physical well-being. In speaking classrooms, students often experience psychological barriers such as shyness, low self-confidence, and fear of making mistakes, which can lead to anxiety and hesitation when using English orally (Haidara, 2016). These psychological challenges can seriously hinder students' ability to speak English effectively.

a. Confidence

Self-confidence is vital psychological factor in language learning. Language learning requires self-confidence to trust in yourself and communicate. Elliot (1995) defined self-confidence as trusting one's judgment and competence. According to Brown and Skehan, as quoted by Al-Hebaish (2012), the affective aspect includes emotion, motivation, attitude, anxiety, personality, and self-confidence. General self-confidence is how you feel about yourself and your talents, per Brown (2002). Self-confidence helps students overcome fears and negative thoughts, allowing them to talk more confidently.

Lack of confidence is one of the psychological factors most students say they must work on. Leong Lai Mei (2012) claimed that psychological factors caused most oral presenting issues. Most students struggle with confidence. Most recognize that insecurity leads speaking failure. Even with a large vocabulary, good pronunciation, and good listening abilities, fear of speaking English destroys them. Nunan (1999) states that pupils with low self-esteem and English skills are prone to communication anxiety. Fear of making mistakes or not knowing how to start sometimes causes English communication insecurity. Students skip English class discussions, presentations, and activities due to this feeling. Therefore, they use basic or known language. This uneasiness can become a habit, forcing individuals to stay silent or avoid English speakers.

b. Motivation

Motivation significantly influences students' English speaking skill, as it encompasses learners' interest and willingness to engage in learning activities. Harmer (2001) highlights motivation as a key factor for success in language learning,

while Brown (2007) emphasizes its role in encouraging practice and interest in foreign language learning. In speaking classes, motivation is crucial because it drives students to express ideas and participate actively. However, low motivation often arises from difficulties and fears associated with speaking, leading to passive engagement. Therefore, fostering a supportive classroom environment is essential for enhancing students' interest and participation in speaking activities.

c. Peer pressure and fear of negative evaluation

Peer pressure and fear of negative evaluation are important psychological factors affecting students' speaking performance. In speaking classes, students may feel afraid of being judged, laughed at, or criticized when they make mistakes. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) identified fear of negative evaluation as one of the major components of foreign language anxiety. Similarly, Mak (2011) found that speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation were among the main causes of learners' anxiety in speaking classes. When students are overly concerned about others' opinions, they may hesitate to speak, avoid oral participation, or remain silent even when they know the answer. As a result, their speaking confidence and classroom engagement may be negatively affected. Therefore, fear of negative evaluation can be seen as a significant psychological barrier to students' speaking development.

2.5.3 Limited exposure and environmental constraints

Limited exposure to English and insufficient real-world communication are major factors that hinder students' speaking development. In many EFL contexts, English is mainly used inside the classroom and rarely practiced in daily life. As a result, students may understand grammar and vocabulary theoretically but still lack fluency, confidence, and the ability to use English naturally in communication (Duong, 2011). Limited access to meaningful interaction may also delay speaking fluency (Nation & Newton, 2009; Richards, 2008). Besides, classroom-related constraints such as large class sizes, limited lesson time, exam-oriented teaching, and teacher-fronted instruction can reduce students' opportunities to practice speaking. Teachers' ability and confidence in organizing communicative activities also

influence students' oral participation. These environmental and pedagogical limitations often make speaking lessons less interactive.

2.5.4 Common problems in speaking activities

Common classroom speaking problems might also indicate learners' speaking challenges, in addition to language, psychological, and environmental issues. According to Ur (1996), there are four main problems in speaking, namely inhibition, nothing to say, low participation, and mother-tongue use. These problems help explain why many students struggle with English.

Inhibition

Students often experience fear and inhibition in foreign language classes, which hinders their participation. Ur (2000) found that learners worry about making mistakes, attracting attention, or being judged, causing them to feel embarrassed and quiet. Latha (2012) identified inhibition as a major obstacle in language acquisition, exacerbated by students' concerns about peers laughing at their mistakes. This fear extends to correction and negative evaluations from teachers or classmates (Aftar, Mahmoud, 2016). As noted by Hieu (Mahmoud, 2016) and Baldwin (Dalem, 2017), such anxiety leads students to withdraw from communication and forget what to say, particularly in speaking situations.

Nothing to say

Even when not restricted, students may struggle to think of what to say or how to express their ideas during speaking tasks. Some students have trouble thinking of anything to say and have little motivation to talk beyond sense of shame.

Low Participation

If someone wants to be heard, only one person can say at a time. This means that everyone in a large group like this will only have just a little of time to talk. This problem is compounded by the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or even not at all.

Mother tongue use

In a class where all or few learners have the same native language, they might decide to use it because of its ease and the difficulty of communicating in another

language, such as English. When conversing in small groups, it can be extremely challenging to ensure that certain classes, particularly those that are less disciplined or motivated, continue to the use of the second language.

2.6 Games in language learning

2.6.1 Definition of games

The Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1995) describes games as organized activities that involve a task, rules, competition, and spoken or written communication (p. 89). They are not merely used for entertainment but also serve as useful teaching tools that promote collaboration, engagement, communication skills, and self-expression in the classroom (Nguyen & Pham, 2018).

Various scholars have provided different definitions of games. Byrne (1995) and Hadfield (1990) both emphasize that games are structured activities designed primarily for enjoyment. Kramer (2000) further states that a game is any activity undertaken for enjoyment, regardless of its intended purpose. Hadfield (1996) further explains that games may be competitive or cooperative, encouraging learners to communicate either to achieve an individual goal or to work toward a shared objective. In speaking lessons, techniques such as information gap, role play, and simulation can create realistic contexts for oral communication.

Based on these definitions, a game is an activity with specific rules and goals that actively engages participants, creating meaningful contexts for oral interaction and supporting the development of speaking skills.

2.6.2 The role of games

Games play an important role in English language learning because they create enjoyable and meaningful contexts for students to use the target language. In speaking lessons, games can encourage learners to participate more actively, reduce fear of making mistakes, and increase their motivation to communicate. Chen (2005) states that games help improve verbal competence, lower anxiety, motivate students, and promote collaboration. Similarly, Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (2006) argue that

games encourage learners to interact verbally, while Hubbard (1987) suggests that games can support less fluent speakers by giving them more opportunities to practice.

In communicative classrooms, games are useful because they provide clear goals, rules, and challenges that require students to listen, respond, negotiate meaning, and work with others. They can be organized individually, in pairs, or in groups, depending on the purpose of the lesson. Pair and group games are particularly helpful for speaking practice because they allow students to use English in interactive situations. In the Vietnamese EFL context, Pham and Do (2019) emphasize the importance of student-centered activities in which teachers create opportunities for meaningful language use. Therefore, games can be considered an effective teaching tool for promoting students' speaking participation, fluency, confidence, and communicative competence.

2.6.3 Characteristics of games

Games possess several characteristics that distinguish them from ordinary classroom activities. According to Caesar Kleur (1998), games possess essential features that make them suitable for classroom use; specifically, a game is fundamentally governed by rules which guide players' actions and transform an activity into a game, while also maintaining clear objectives such as gaining points or completing an activity. Furthermore, a game is a closed activity with a clear beginning and end, allowing teachers and players to recognize when the goal has been achieved. Similarly, Peter Hastie, drawing on Suits (1978), states that all games share fundamental characteristics, including goals, rules, restrictions, and the acceptance of rules by players. In this context, the goal refers to a specific outcome achieved through the use of skills, while rules and restrictions define what actions are permitted and create challenge and enjoyment; consequently, for a game to function effectively, players must accept and follow these rules.

Beyond these defining structural features, games provide significant pedagogical benefits in the context of language teaching. As Lee Su Kim (1995:35) observes, "Games are a refreshing change from the typical language class routine; they are both motivating and challenging, and they offer language practice in a variety

of skills, including speaking, writing, listening, and reading." By establishing a meaningful context for the language's use based on the concepts outlined above, games successfully foster fluency, encourage participation, and provide both instructional and entertaining value. Therefore, games are considered valuable classroom activities that support students' speaking development.

2.6.4 Types of games for developing speaking skills

Games in language learning can be classified in different ways according to their purposes and classroom organization. According to Caesar Klaueur (1998), there are four main types of games: cooperative games, competitive games, communication games, and code-control games. Cooperative games focus on achieving a common goal through collaboration among learners. This type of game is useful in speaking classes because it encourages students to participate actively, exchange information, and support one another in completing tasks. Competitive games, by contrast, involve competition between individuals, pairs, or groups. Such games can increase learners' motivation, attention, and classroom engagement, while also encouraging quicker responses in oral activities.

Communication games are particularly relevant to the teaching of speaking because their main objective is to help learners convey messages and respond appropriately to others. In this type of activity, students focus more on completing the communicative task than on language form alone. As a result, communication games create meaningful opportunities for learners to express ideas, ask for information, give instructions, and interact with peers. Code-control games, on the other hand, require learners to produce correct language, including structures, spelling, and pronunciation. Although these games place greater emphasis on accuracy, they can still support speaking development by helping learners improve the correctness of their oral production.

Similarly, Wright et al. (1997) identified several common classroom games:

1. Picture games

A picture game is a game in which the use of pictures plays a major part. In this games involve comparing and contrasting pictures, considering differences or similarities, considering possible relationship between pictures.

2. Word Games

The initial focus of intentions in this game is on the word, rather than the sentence. This includes the alphabet, linguistic words for sentence-making, words as inferred from contexts, and words as categorized according to grammatical usage. Nevertheless, learners are frequently compelled to expand their scope and engage in full-sentence communication, as well as to engage in lengthy arguments and pursue their ideas.

3. Memory Games

In essence, these games present a challenge to the player's memory. The inevitable discrepancies between the memories of the participants result in a discussion, during which opinions and information are exchanged.

4. Games that involve answering questions

This section contains a diverse selection of games that are intended to establish scenarios in which learners are motivated to ask questions in order to discover information, typically in relation to grammatical principles.

5. Games that involve guessing and speculating

In the estimating and speculating game, one individual possesses knowledge that the others are obligated to ascertain. It is beneficial for learners who are less sophisticated or have limited English proficiency. Nevertheless, learners who possess a more extensive repertoire of English vocabulary should be compelled to engage in a more comprehensive, interconnected thought process and communication.

The following are examples of communicative activities that Klippel (1984) suggested.

1. Selecting images

The photographs are arranged on a table. Each student selects two images: one of an object they appreciate and one of an object they dislike. Each student presents the two images to the class and elucidates the reasons for their liking or disliking.

2. What's in the box?

All students work in pairs. One student from each pair takes a box and peeks inside without telling his partner. Student 2 must guess the object. If you think the pupils don't know the object names, put a piece of paper with the name and pronunciation in the box. When the first student is convinced his companion guessed the thing, he tells him the name. The second student brought a box and let the other guess.

3. Puzzle with a partner

All students collaborate in pairs. The entire picture is given to one student in each pair, who is prohibited from revealing it to their companion. The other student receives the puzzle pieces. The first pupil instructs the second on how to arrange the pieces; however, neither can observe the other's actions.

4. Ordering

The activity involves students pairing up to share comic strips, where each partner has half the pictures and narrates the story based on their images without showing them to each other. The study focuses on a few effective game formats that enhance oral participation, specifically picture-based games, guessing games, question-and-answer games, and information-gap tasks. These formats are chosen for their simplicity, age-appropriateness, structured rules, and ability to foster peer interaction while promoting frequent English speaking opportunities in class.

2.7 Positive effects of using games in teaching speaking

Games are widely regarded as effective classroom tools for developing speaking because they create enjoyable, goal-oriented contexts in which learners are encouraged to use English actively. In the context of this study, four key positive effects of using games in teaching speaking are identified: increasing students' motivation, enhancing active speaking participation, improving quick response in communication, and strengthening memorization of language.

Firstly, games enhance confidence and motivation by creating a supportive, low-anxiety environment that encourages participation, especially among hesitant speakers. Unlike repetitive traditional drills, games necessitate active oral production

to achieve immediate objectives—such as earning points or completing missions—thereby improving both the frequency and quality of spoken output (Brewster et al., 2004; Wright et al., 2006). This immersive involvement fosters a sense of achievement, effectively diminishing the fear of making mistakes.

Furthermore, role-plays and simulated tasks bolster learners' willingness to communicate through meaningful peer interaction (Hsu & Tsai, 2017). As noted by Oxford and Crookall (1990), games engage learners emotionally, socially, and cognitively, leading to higher levels of investment in the learning process. By lowering the "affective filter"—a concept central to Stephen Krashen's theory—games create a relaxed atmosphere that facilitates more natural language acquisition. Consequently, students become more willing to communicate and participate actively in speaking tasks.

Secondly, games make use of repetition in engaging contexts to improve vocabulary retention and pronunciation accuracy (Huyen & Nga, 2003; Rankin et al., 2009). Specifically, games strengthen the memorization of vocabulary and language structures through meaningful repetition and contextualized use. Games allow learners to practice vocabulary, grammar, and language functions in communicative contexts, improving retention, according to Savignon and Berns (1987). According to Carrier (quoted in Susilowati, 1988), games provide "hidden practice," allowing learners to utilize language structures without thinking. Game-based exercises help students memorize and repeat transferable lexical pieces and expressions, which improves their speaking skills. With a low-anxiety atmosphere (Krashen, 1982), meaningful and engaging exposure boosts long-term memory and improves language retention and application in speaking contexts.

Games increase oral production and allow learners to recognize and change their speech, improving pronunciation and intelligibility in addition to memory. When speaking, learners must speak clearly, and modeling and feedback from teachers, peers, or the activity design help them improve pronunciation accuracy and comprehensibility (Brewster et al., 2004; Zhao et al., 2020).

Thirdly, games contribute to improving learners' quick response in speaking by requiring immediate interaction and real-time language processing. During gameplay, learners must respond quickly to prompts, questions, or peers' utterances, which helps develop spontaneous speaking ability. Oxford and Crookall (1990) highlight that games provide abundant opportunities for communication and active involvement, encouraging learners to process input and produce output rapidly. This repeated exposure to real-time interaction reduces learners' reliance on translating from their first language and enhances their ability to think and respond directly in English, leading to improved speaking fluency and responsiveness.

Finally, games enhance active speaking by increasing the amount of oral participation in the classroom. Unlike traditional teacher-centered instruction, games require all learners to engage in communication in order to complete tasks. Sandra J. Savignon and Margie S. Berns (1987) argue that games promote the use of language for real and immediate communicative purposes rather than mere form-focused practice. This communicative orientation ensures that students speak more frequently and interact with peers, thereby creating more opportunities for meaningful language use and improving overall speaking performance.

In summary, the use of games in teaching speaking offers significant pedagogical benefits by creating an engaging and communicative learning environment. As discussed, games enhance students' motivation by reducing anxiety and increasing their willingness to participate. They also promote active speaking, as learners are required to use language meaningfully to achieve specific goals during gameplay. Furthermore, games improve learners' quick response in communication by encouraging real-time interaction and spontaneous language production. In addition, games support memorization through meaningful repetition and contextualized language use, which strengthens learners' ability to retain and apply vocabulary and structures effectively.

Overall, these benefits demonstrate that games are not merely recreational activities but powerful instructional tools that foster communicative competence and improve speaking skills among secondary school learners.

2.8 Using games in teaching speaking

Using games in teaching speaking requires careful planning and appropriate teacher guidance to ensure effective learning outcomes. According to Paul (2003), teachers need to design games that match students' language proficiency and learning objectives; furthermore, games may need to be modified so that they help students practice the target language meaningfully. Along with this modification, teachers should also manage the pace of the activity, answer students' questions, and ensure that all learners have equal opportunities to participate, particularly shy students. In implementing these games, teachers are highly encouraged to minimize teacher talk and use demonstrations to promote learner autonomy (Moss & Ross-Feldman, 2003). Rather than interrupting students during activities, teachers should monitor performance and provide feedback after the games to help learners recognize their strengths and areas for improvement (Gower, 1995).

Consequently, games in speaking classes not only foster a sense of enjoyment and reduce anxiety, especially among teenagers who may feel self-conscious using English, but also offer authentic opportunities for students to practice fluency, experiment with language, and bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world communication (Gower, 1995; Grin). For instance, activities such as pair work, group work, and guessing games systematically encourage students to negotiate meaning, express ideas, and interact naturally. To maximize this overall effectiveness in improving speaking skills, teachers should carefully ensure that games simultaneously involve all students and maintain their interest, focus strictly on communication rather than isolated language forms, provide ample opportunities to practice and review relevant language content, and encourage both competitive and cooperative interaction. In conclusion, using games in teaching speaking not only increases student motivation and engagement but also promotes meaningful language practice, thereby helping learners develop their speaking skills in a natural and enjoyable way.

2.9 Related studies on using games to improve speaking skills

Globally and within the Vietnamese context, numerous studies have underscored the positive impacts of game-based learning on enhancing EFL learners' oral proficiency. Internationally, research indicates that communicative and language games significantly bolster speaking fluency, pronunciation, and active participation. For instance, Dewi et al. (2017) and Al-Azawei et al. (2016) demonstrated that games foster spontaneous and multi-dimensional improvements in speaking performance. Furthermore, games serve as a powerful affective tool; as noted by Leó and Cely (2010) and Rama et al. (2007), interactive game-based tasks markedly reduce speaking anxiety, thereby increasing students' self-confidence and willingness to communicate in a second language.

In the Vietnamese educational landscape, similar pedagogical benefits have been reported. Nguyen and Pham (2018) emphasized that games construct meaningful communicative contexts, allowing learners to speak more naturally while mitigating psychological barriers in the classroom. Corroborating these findings, Pham (2020) provided empirical evidence via an experimental design, revealing that students exposed to game-based activities achieved significantly higher speaking performance than those under traditional, teacher-centered instruction. Collectively, these peer-reviewed studies establish a robust foundation for utilizing games as an effective instructional strategy to improve junior high school students' speaking skills.

2.10 Research gap

While numerous international and Vietnamese studies have demonstrated the positive effects of using games to enhance students' speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, much of the existing research has been conducted in primary or tertiary education contexts, or in urban schools with relatively diverse educational resources. Empirical evidence focusing specifically on lower secondary public schools in local Vietnamese contexts remains limited.

In the context of Le Loi Secondary School, English speaking instruction is typically constrained by limited opportunities for authentic communication and the

predominance of traditional teaching approaches, which may not sufficiently encourage interactive speaking practice. Although games have been widely recognized as an effective pedagogical tool for promoting engagement and oral participation, their systematic implementation and measurable impact on students' speaking skills in this specific school context have not yet been fully examined.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the effects of using communicative games on the speaking skills of EFL students at Le Loi Secondary School. By providing context-specific evidence, the study aims to contribute practical insights into the applicability and effectiveness of game-based speaking instruction in Vietnamese lower secondary education.

2.11 Conceptual framework

Based on the discourse in the literature review, the researcher formulated the conceptual framework of the research, illustrated in Figure 2.11.1

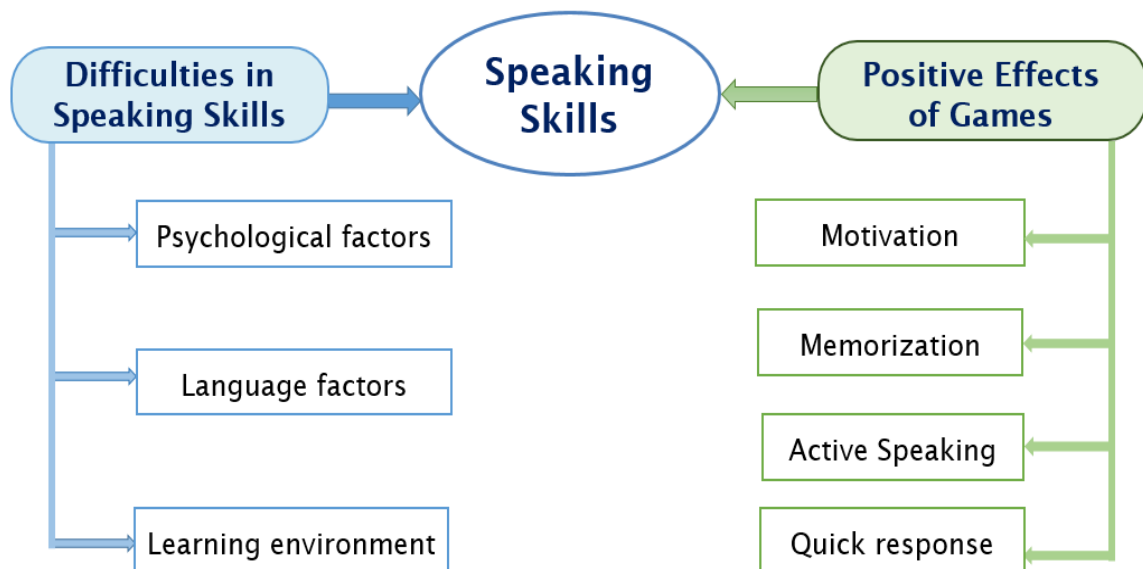


Figure 2.11.1 The conceptual framework of the research

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

In every research endeavor, the chosen research methodology plays a pivotal role in ensuring the reliability and validity of the research outcomes. This chapter describes the research methodologies employed to examine the effects of using games on improving students' speaking skills at Le Loi Secondary School.

3.1 Research design

This study employed a descriptive case study design with a mixed-methods approach to investigate the effects of using games on ninth-grade students' speaking skills at Le Loi Secondary School. According to Creswell (2012), mixed-methods research combines quantitative and qualitative approaches in collecting and analyzing data. This design was considered appropriate because it allowed the researcher to obtain both general and in-depth information about the research problem in a real classroom context.

The study involved 95 ninth-grade students. Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire to identify students' difficulties in learning speaking English as well as their perceptions of the effects of games on their speaking skills, motivation, confidence, and classroom participation. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with five students and five English teachers in order to gain deeper insights into the use of games in speaking lessons. In addition, an observation form was used for teachers to record students' classroom behaviors during game-based speaking activities, particularly in terms of participation, interaction, confidence, and speaking performance.

Interview and observation data were evaluated qualitatively by thematic coding and descriptive interpretation, while questionnaire data were analyzed using SPSS. The questionnaire was examined for reliability by employing Cronbach's Alpha. Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) say mixed-methods research better understands a study problem than single-method research. Therefore, this technique proved suited for examining exactly how games affect classroom speaking.

3.2 Research site

The study was conducted at Le Loi Secondary School. Founded in 2001, the school is recognized as the first private school in the province and has developed into a well-established educational institution. It has a committed teaching staff, with more than 100 teachers and staff members, about 15% of whom hold postgraduate degrees. The school emphasizes effective instruction, close student management, and continuous improvement in teaching methods.

In terms of facilities, the school provides a supportive learning environment with relatively modern classrooms and equipment that serve teaching and learning activities. It also pays attention to moral education, life skills, information technology, and foreign languages, especially English. In addition, the school promotes communicative and group-based learning through various educational activities and student clubs.

The site was considered appropriate for this study because English is taught as a compulsory subject, and Grade 9 students are at an important stage for developing speaking skill, confidence, and classroom participation through communicative activities such as games.

3.3 Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 95 ninth-grade students from classes 9A1, 9A2, and 9A3, as well as 5 English teachers at Le Loi Secondary School. Among the 95 student participants, there were 44 female students and 51 male students. These students were selected because they were directly involved in speaking lessons in which games were used as classroom activities. This number was considered appropriate because it was large enough to provide representative data while remaining feasible for data collection and analysis.

Grade 9 students were chosen because they had already learned English for several years and had a basic foundation for participating in speaking activities and responding to the research instruments. In addition, grade 9 is an important stage in lower secondary education, where students need to develop speaking skill, confidence, and classroom participation more actively.

All 95 students participated in the questionnaire survey. In addition, 5 students and 5 English teachers were selected for semi-structured interviews to provide more in-depth information about their experiences and perceptions of game-based speaking activities. Classroom observations were also conducted with the support of an observation form completed by teachers to record students' participation, interaction, confidence, and speaking performance during game-based lessons.

3.4 Research instruments

3.4.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used as the main quantitative instrument in this study to collect data on students' difficulties in learning English speaking and the perceived effects of using games on their speaking skills. It was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect data from a large number of participants in an efficient and practical way. According to Hannan and Anderson (2007), a questionnaire is a very effective way of collecting factual information and providing data that can be quantified. Similarly, Thomas (2003) stated that a large amount of data can be collected within a relatively short period of time, and the responses can be analyzed more easily.

The questionnaire was designed on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with scores from 1 to 5, and was suitable for analysis using SPSS version 26. As noted by Metruk (2021), questionnaires adapted from previous studies can provide a more reliable basis for measuring learners' perceptions.

3.4.2 Interview

Besides the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data in this study. According to Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003), interviews provide deeper insights into participants' experiences, while Dörnyei (2007) noted that semi-structured interviews allow researchers to use guiding questions and still give participants opportunities to elaborate on their

responses. Therefore, this instrument was appropriate for gaining a more in-depth understanding of the research problem.

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five English teachers. The interview questions were designed in line with the questionnaire to support data triangulation and clarify the teachers' responses. They focused on both the difficulties students faced in speaking English and the positive effects of using games in speaking lessons, particularly in relation to speaking skills, confidence, participation, and motivation.

The questions were open-ended to encourage detailed responses based on the teachers' experiences. This helped the researcher obtain a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of teachers' perceptions of using games in teaching English speaking skills.

3.5 Implementation of Games

During the intervention, several speaking games were employed to encourage students to communicate actively in English. The games included Role-play, Guessing Game, Information Gap, Bingo, and Chain Story. These games were selected because they promoted interaction, increased students' motivation, and provided opportunities for authentic speaking practice.

The games were integrated into speaking lessons over a period of eight weeks. Each game was implemented according to the lesson objectives and students' proficiency levels. Students worked individually, in pairs, or in groups depending on the requirements of each activity.

3.6 Data collection procedures

The data collection process was conducted from September 2025 to April 2026 at Le Loi Secondary School. The procedure was organized systematically to ensure that the data were collected consistently, accurately, and appropriately for the research objectives. Since this study employed a mixed-methods case study design, data were collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations.

First, in September 2025, the researcher administered the first questionnaire to students in classes 9A1, 9A2, and 9A3. The purpose of this stage was to identify the difficulties students faced in learning English speaking. The survey was conducted directly in the students' classrooms on Fridays during the fifth period under the supervision of the researcher and classroom teachers. Students were given clear instructions before answering the questionnaire. They completed the questionnaire within 15 minutes and were not allowed to take it home. This helped ensure that all students completed the questionnaire under the same conditions.

After the first questionnaire, games were integrated into speaking lessons for students in the three classes during the implementation period. During this time, classroom observations were carried out to record students' participation, interaction, confidence, and speaking performance in game-based speaking activities. The observation data provided additional evidence to support the findings from the questionnaire and interviews.

In April 2026, the second questionnaire was administered to the same three classes to investigate how students perceived the effects of using games on their speaking skills after the implementation period. Similar to the first stage, the questionnaire was completed in class under the supervision of the researcher and teachers to ensure consistency and seriousness in the data collection process.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five English teachers. The interviews aimed to collect more in-depth information about teachers' perceptions and experiences of using games in teaching English speaking skills. With the teachers' permission, the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure the accuracy of the collected data. The recordings were then transcribed and analyzed thematically.

Finally, all questionnaire responses were checked, coded, and entered into SPSS version 26 for statistical analysis. Cronbach's Alpha was used to examine the reliability of the questionnaire, while descriptive statistics, including mean scores and standard deviations, were used to analyze students' responses. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were analyzed to support and explain the quantitative findings.

Table 3.1 Timeline of the Data Collection Procedures

Time	Research Activities
September 2025	Preparing the research instruments, including the questionnaire, interview questions, and observation checklist.
September 2025	Administering the first questionnaire to students in classes 9A1, 9A2, and 9A3 to identify their difficulties in learning English speaking.
October 2025 – March 2026	Integrating games into English speaking lessons in classes 9A1, 9A2, and 9A3.
October 2025 – March 2026	Conducting classroom observations to record students' participation, interaction, confidence, and speaking performance during game-based speaking activities.
March 2026	Conducting semi-structured interviews with five English teachers and audio-recording the interviews with their permission.
April 2026	Administering the second questionnaire to the same three classes to examine the perceived effects of using games on students' speaking skills.
April 2026	Checking, coding, and entering questionnaire data into SPSS version 26 for analysis; transcribing and analyzing interview data thematically.

3.7 Data collection and analysis

After the data were collected from each stage, they were analyzed to address the research questions of the study. Both quantitative and qualitative data were employed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of using games on students' speaking skills.

The quantitative data were collected through the two-stage questionnaire and analyzed by using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics were used to identify

students' speaking difficulties and their perceptions of the positive effects of using games. The reliability of the questionnaire was also examined through Cronbach's Alpha. In addition, horizontal stacked bar charts generated from SPSS were used to present students' responses to Likert-scale items more clearly and effectively.

The qualitative data were obtained from semi-structured interviews and the observation form. The interview data were analyzed thematically to identify common views and experiences shared by students and teachers, while the observation data were interpreted descriptively to support and clarify the findings from the questionnaire and interviews.

Overall, the combination of these instruments helped enhance the credibility and completeness of the study and provided a clearer understanding of the effects of using games on students' speaking skills in the classroom context.

3.8 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are important criteria in determining the quality of a research study. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009), reliability refers to the consistency of an instrument in producing stable results, while validity refers to the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. Similarly, Creswell (2012) emphasized that both are essential for ensuring the trustworthiness of research findings.

3.8.1 Validity

To enhance validity, the research instruments were designed in line with the objectives and research questions of the study. The questionnaire focused on students' speaking difficulties and their perceptions of the positive effects of using games, while the interview questions and observation form were used to clarify and support the quantitative findings. Furthermore, triangulation was employed by combining data from the questionnaire, interviews, and observation form. This helped increase the credibility and completeness of the study and provided a clearer understanding of the effects of using games on students' speaking skills.

3.8.2 Reliability

In this study, the reliability of the questionnaire was examined by using Cronbach's Alpha in SPSS version 26. Cronbach's Alpha was employed to examine the internal consistency of the items within each construct. Cronbach's Alpha is commonly used to determine whether the items in a scale consistently measure the same underlying concept. According to Nunnally (1978), a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.70 or above is considered acceptable for social science research.

In this study, the questionnaire consisted of two main sections. The first section measured students' difficulties in speaking English, including language factors, psychological factors, and learning environment. The second section examined the positive effects of using games on students' speaking skills, including rising motivation, improving memorization, promoting active speaking, enhancing quick response, and improving overall speaking skills. The reliability results are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Cronbach's Alpha Reliability of the Questionnaire Constructs

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Psychological factors	.740	.739	5
Language factors	.703	.701	5
Learning environment	.720	.726	5
Rising motivation	.782	.780	5
Improving memorization	.728	.726	4
Promoting active speaking	.734	.735	4
Enhancing quick response	.715	.716	5
Improving overall speaking skills	.729	.734	3

As shown in Table 3.1, all constructs achieved Cronbach's Alpha values higher than 0.70, ranging from .703 to .782. This indicates that the questionnaire items had acceptable internal consistency. Therefore, the scales used in the questionnaire were considered reliable and suitable for further data analysis.

3.9 Ethical considerations

This study was conducted with careful attention to research ethics. All participants took part voluntarily and were informed of the purpose of the study before data collection. They had the right to refuse or withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable. During the interview process, the researcher avoided leading participants toward predetermined answers in order to ensure the objectivity of the data (Clark, 2011). In addition, the interview questions were designed to encourage natural and open responses, as Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggested that effective interviews should resemble natural conversations rather than forced interactions.

Furthermore, all collected data were used only for research purposes and with the participants' consent. The information provided by participants was kept confidential and protected from unauthorized access.

3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the research methodology of the study, including the research design, research site, participants, research instruments, data collection and analysis methods, and ethical considerations. It has also discussed the reliability and validity of the study in order to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings. These methodological foundations provide the basis for presenting and interpreting the findings in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the major findings of the study based on data collected from questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. It addresses the research questions stated in Chapter 1 by examining the speaking difficulties faced by 95 Grade 9 students at Le Loi Secondary School and the perceived positive effects of using games on their English speaking skills. For clarity and coherence, the chapter is organized into several parts. First, the quantitative findings on students' speaking difficulties are presented through descriptive statistics, including mean scores and standard deviations. Next, the positive effects of using games are illustrated mainly by charts in order to show students' response patterns more visually. This is followed by qualitative findings from teacher interviews and classroom observations, which help explain and support the quantitative results. The chapter ends with a general discussion of the findings.

4.1 Findings from demographic data

4.1.1 Years of studying English

The distribution of participants according to their years of studying English is illustrated in Figure 4.1.1 below.

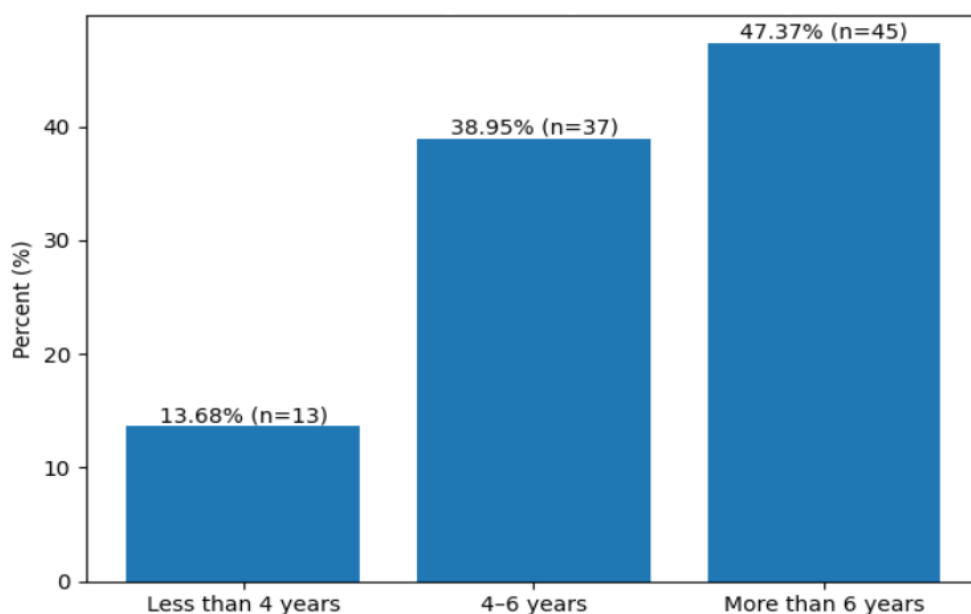


Figure 4.1.1 Distribution of participants by years of studying English

As demonstrated in Figure 4.1, most participants have learned English for a while. 47.37% of pupils have studied English for over six years, while 38.95% have studied it between four to six. Just 13.68% of participants have studied English for fewer than four years. Despite years of English exposure, many students still struggle to communicate. This suggests that learning English for a long time does not guarantee oral communication. The gap between students learning experience and speaking skill remains. However, with proper instruction, this long period of learning may help improve speaking skills.

4.1.2 Challenges faced by students in English speaking

The distribution of participants in terms of their reported difficulties in speaking English is presented in Figure 4.1.2 below.

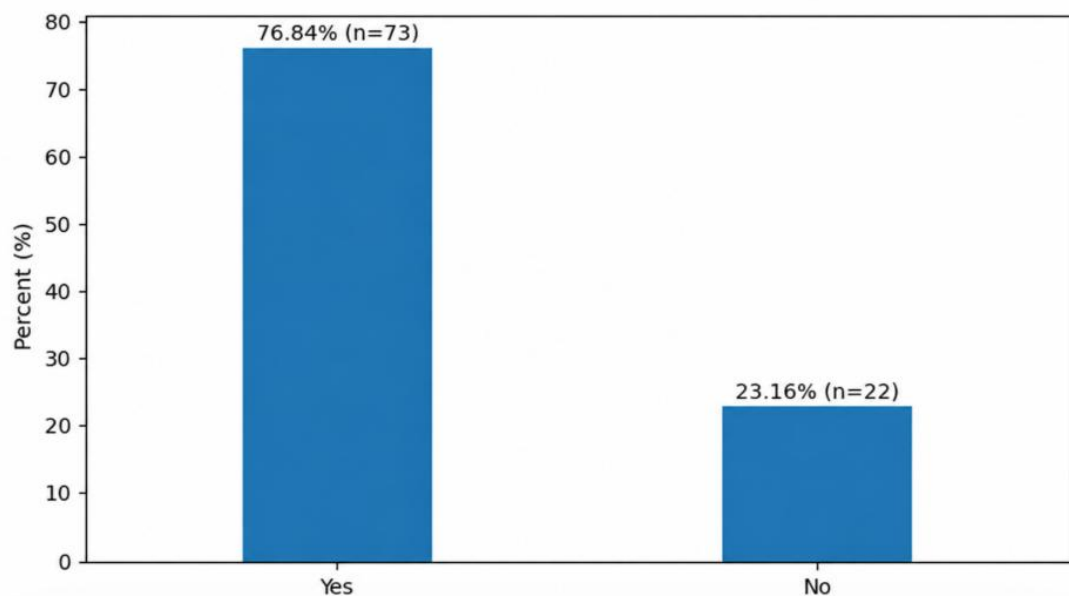


Figure 4.1.2 Challenges faced by students in English speaking

As illustrated in Figure 4.2, most students reported having difficulties in speaking English. In particular, 73 out of 95 respondents, equivalent to 76.84%, answered “Yes”, whereas only 22 students (23.16%) reported that they did not experience difficulties in speaking English. This result suggests that speaking is still a problematic area for the majority of students. Despite their previous experience in learning English, many students continue to face obstacles in oral communication.

Therefore, further analysis is needed to identify the main factors contributing to these difficulties.

4.2 Findings and discussions for the first research question

This section presents the findings and discussion related to the first research question: “**What are the difficulties of students in speaking English skills?**”. Drawing on the data obtained from the student questionnaire and teacher interview, this section analyzes students’ difficulties in speaking English skills through three main aspects: language factors, psychological factors, and learning environment factors. It aims to identify the key challenges that may affect students’ confidence and effectiveness in English speaking activities in the classroom.

4.2.1 Psychological factors

Finding

Descriptive statistics of psychology factors

Table 4.2.1 provides the mean and standard deviation for each item within the Psychology Factors construct.

Table 4.2.1 Mean and standard deviation of psychology factors

<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I feel nervous when I have to speak English in front of my classmates.	95	3.35	1.137
I am afraid that my classmates will laugh at me if I make mistakes in speaking.	95	3.08	1.294
I feel shy and lack of confidence to speak English in class.	95	3.45	1.183
I worry too much about my pronunciation when I speak English.	95	3.40	1.066
I feel stressed when the teacher suddenly asks me to answer in English	95	3.33	1.292
Valid N (listwise)	95		

As shown in Table 4.2.1, students experienced moderate psychological difficulties in speaking English, with mean scores ranging from 3.08 to 3.45. The most prominent problem was shyness and lack of confidence to speak in class ($M =$

3.45, SD = 1.183). Other notable difficulties were worry about pronunciation (M = 3.40, SD = 1.066) and nervousness when speaking in front of classmates (M = 3.35, SD = 1.137). Although fear of being laughed at by classmates had the lowest mean (M = 3.08, SD = 1.294), it still reflected a noticeable level of psychological pressure. Overall, the findings show that low confidence and speaking anxiety were the main psychological barriers affecting students' speaking performance.

Interview

The interview results further support the questionnaire findings regarding students' psychological difficulties in speaking English. Most teachers observed that students often feel anxious, shy, and lack confidence when participating in speaking activities. These emotional barriers significantly reduce their willingness to speak in class.

One teacher emphasized that *"many students are afraid of making mistakes, so they prefer to stay silent rather than try to express their ideas in English."* Another teacher also noted that *"students' lack of confidence and fear of negative reactions from classmates make them hesitate to speak, even when they know the answer."*

The interview data suggest that psychological issues, especially anxiety and low self-confidence, significantly restrict students' speaking skill.

Discussion

The findings indicate that students at Le Loi Secondary School experienced considerable nervousness about making mistakes and shyness when speaking English, which became major barriers to their speaking skills. Teacher interviews also confirmed that many students tended to avoid volunteering, speak softly, and hesitate to express their ideas in English.

This finding is consistent with Tsui, as cited in Nunan (1999), Yi Hua (2007), and Robby (2010), who stated that students are often afraid to speak English because they fear making mistakes. Similarly, Saurik (2011) argued that shyness and fear of negative evaluation can reduce learners' oral participation. This result is also closely related to the theories of inhibition and affective factors discussed in Chapter 2. Brown (2000) argued that inhibition may prevent learners from expressing

themselves because they fear exposing their weaknesses, while Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests that anxiety and low self-confidence can reduce learners' language performance.

These findings suggest that students' speaking difficulties were not only caused by limited language knowledge but also by psychological factors. Anxiety, tension, embarrassment, fear of being laughed at, and lack of confidence may prevent students from speaking English, even when they are able to produce basic oral responses. Therefore, creating a supportive and low-pressure classroom environment is essential. In this sense, games can help reduce students' fear, encourage participation, and provide more natural opportunities for them to practise speaking English.

4.2.2 Language factors

Finding

Descriptive statistics of language factors

Table 4.2 provides the mean and standard deviation for each item within the Language factors construct.

Table 4.2.2 Mean and standard deviation of language factors

<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I do not have enough English vocabulary to express my ideas.	95	3.66	1.145
My pronunciation problems make it difficult for others to understand me.	95	3.25	1.081
I speak very slowly because I have to think of grammar and vocabulary.	95	3.53	1.119
I cannot find the right English words quickly when I want to say something.	95	3.59	1.026
I often use Vietnamese words when I cannot remember English ones.	95	3.45	1.210
Valid N (listwise)	95		

As evidenced by Table 4.2.2, students faced moderate language difficulties in speaking, with mean scores between 3.25 and 3.66. The results underscore that

vocabulary limitations and slow language processing are the primary linguistic barriers. Specifically, the highest mean score was found in the item “I do not have enough English vocabulary to express my ideas” ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.145$), indicating that vocabulary shortage was the most prominent linguistic barrier. This was followed by difficulty in finding the right English words quickly ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.026$). Although pronunciation problems had the lowest mean ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.081$), they still affected students’ speaking skill to a considerable extent.

Interview

The interview findings also support the quantitative results, highlighting that language-related difficulties, especially vocabulary limitations and slow processing, significantly hinder students’ speaking performance. One teacher noted that *“students often know what they want to say, but they lack the vocabulary to express their ideas clearly in English.”* Another teacher added that *“the need to think about grammar and vocabulary at the same time makes students speak slowly and lose confidence during communication.”*

Discussion

The findings indicate that linguistic factors, especially vocabulary use, were a major challenge affecting students’ speaking performance at Le Loi Secondary School. Although students had learned many English words for tests, they still found it difficult to use vocabulary flexibly and automatically in real communication. As a result, they often hesitated, relied on Vietnamese, or became passive when they could not find suitable English expressions during speaking activities.

This problem may be explained by the fact that vocabulary was mainly learned through memorization rather than through meaningful communicative practice. Therefore, students had limited opportunities to use words in different contexts, understand their various meanings, and combine them with appropriate grammar structures. This finding is consistent with Thornbury (2005), who emphasized the importance of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in effective speaking, and Ur (1996), who noted that learners with limited linguistic resources often face difficulty expressing ideas clearly.

Teacher interview data also supported this result. The teachers reported that although students knew vocabulary, they could not use it fluently in real-time speaking situations, which affected both their confidence and speaking speed. Therefore, it can be concluded that linguistic factors play an important role in limiting students' speaking ability. To address this problem, teachers should use more interactive speaking games that require students to apply vocabulary in meaningful contexts, thereby improving automatic recall, flexible language use, and confidence in speaking.

4.2.3 Learning environment

Finding

Descriptive statistics of learning environment

Table 4.3 shows the mean and standard deviation for each item related to Learning Environment.

Table 4.2.3 Mean and standard deviation of learning environment

<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
In speaking activities, only a few students talk while others keep silent.	95	3.01	1.333
I do not have many chances to practice speaking.	95	3.14	1.326
The speaking topics in the textbook are not close to my real life, so I do not want to talk.	95	3.20	1.097
I have few opportunities to speak English outside the classroom.	95	3.22	1.187
The classroom is noisy or crowded, so it is hard for me to focus on speaking.	95	3.17	1.226
Valid N (listwise)	95		

As shown in Table 4.2.3 reveals a moderate level of environmental difficulty, with mean scores ranging from 3.01 to 3.22. The most prominent factor was students' limited opportunities to speak English outside the classroom ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.187$), highlighting the lack of authentic speaking exposure. Another notable issue was the low relevance of textbook topics to real life ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.097$), which may reduce students' willingness to participate. Overall, the findings suggest that limited

real-life speaking practice was the most outstanding environmental barrier affecting students' speaking performance.

Interview

The interview findings are consistent with the quantitative results, emphasizing that learning environment factors significantly limit students' opportunities to practice speaking English. Teachers pointed out that students rarely have chances to use English in real-life contexts and are often passive during classroom activities. One teacher shared that *"students only practice English in class, but outside the classroom, they almost never use it, so their speaking ability improves very slowly."* Another teacher also noted that *"many speaking topics in the textbook are not close to students' daily lives, which makes them less interested and less willing to participate."*

Discussion

The interview findings further revealed that limited opportunities to use English in real communicative situations created an important barrier to students' speaking development. Teachers reported that when students lacked chances to speak English regularly, they tended to become hesitant, shy, and less confident in classroom communication. Without a supportive language environment, students had few opportunities to practise vocabulary, grammar, and expressions in meaningful contexts; therefore, their language knowledge remained passive and difficult to apply in actual speaking situations.

This finding aligns with Nguyen (2011), indicating that English language learning effectiveness in Vietnam is tied to classroom conditions and the learning environment's organization. Recent research on Vietnamese EFL learners highlights factors such as limited English exposure, large class sizes, a lack of speaking opportunities, and insufficient feedback as obstacles to speaking development. This supports communicative language teaching theory, which advocates for learning through meaningful interaction rather than memorization.

From this, it can be inferred that the language environment plays a crucial role in improving students' English speaking skills. Speaking ability cannot develop

effectively if students only learn linguistic knowledge but do not have enough opportunities to use it in communication. Therefore, creating a language-rich classroom environment should be considered an essential responsibility of teachers.

To enhance English speaking skills, teachers should implement communicative activities such as language games, group discussions, role-plays, and real-life scenarios. These methods foster a supportive environment, reduce hesitation, and build confidence and communicative competence. Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (2006) note that language games provide meaningful contexts for language use, while Harmer (2007) highlights that interactive activities promote participation and fluency through practice. Therefore, creating more interactive speaking opportunities is essential for helping students move from passive vocabulary knowledge to active language use.

4.3 Findings and discussions for the second research question

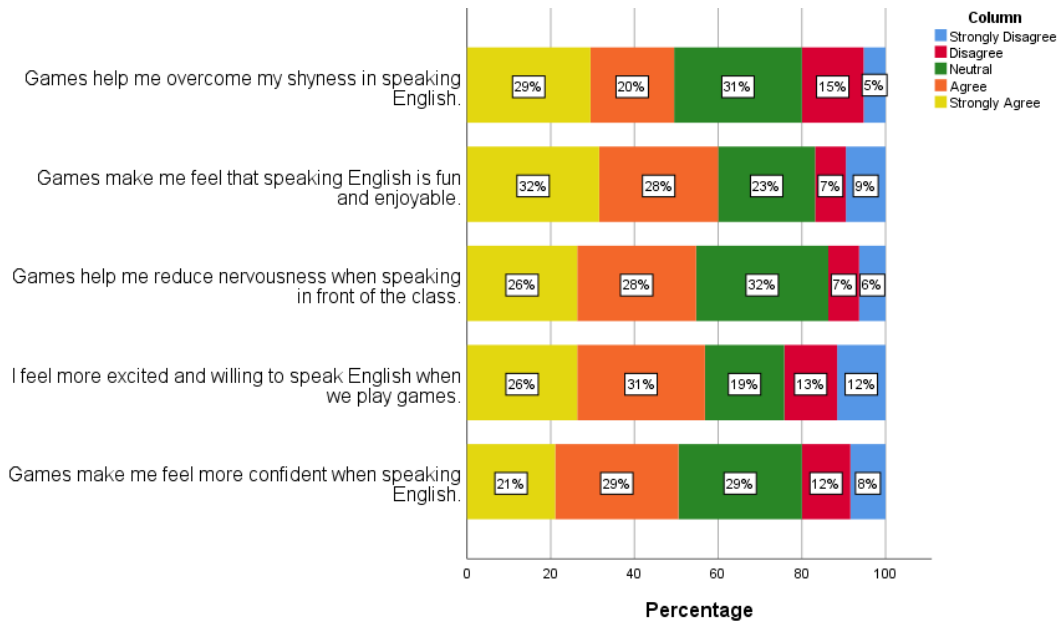
This section presents the findings and discussion related to the second research question: **“What are the positive effects of using games on students’ English speaking skills?”**. Drawing on the data obtained from the student questionnaire and teacher interview, this section analyzes how games influence students’ speaking skills. It aims to clarify how game-based activities may support students’ participation and effectiveness in English speaking lessons.

4.3.1 Raising motivation

Finding

To examine students’ effects of using games to raise motivation in speaking lessons, five items under the construct were analyzed. The results in Figure 4.3.1 show that students generally had positive attitudes toward the use of games in speaking classes.

Figure 4.3.1 Students' effects of using games to raise motivation in speaking lessons



<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Games make me feel more confident when speaking English.	95	1	5	3.43	1.191
I feel more excited and willing to speak English when we play games.	95	1	5	3.47	1.320
Games help me reduce nervousness when speaking in front of the class.	95	1	5	3.61	1.142
Games make me feel that speaking English is fun and enjoyable.	95	1	5	3.65	1.261
Games help me overcome my shyness in speaking English.	95	1	5	3.54	1.210
Valid N (listwise)	95				

According to Figure 4.3.1, around 50% to 60% of students responded positively (Agree or Strongly Agree) to five statements regarding the use of games in language learning. The statement “Games make me feel that speaking English is fun

and enjoyable” garnered the highest agreement, with 60% of students supporting it and achieving the highest mean score ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.261$). Following closely were “Games help me reduce nervousness when speaking in front of the class” ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.142$) and “Games help me overcome my shyness in speaking English” ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.210$). Additionally, students expressed that games increased their excitement to speak English ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.320$) and boosted their confidence ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.191$). However, a notable portion of students selected neutral responses, particularly on items concerning the reduction of nervousness and shyness, indicating varied motivational impacts among students.

Overall, the findings indicate that games positively influence students' motivation by making speaking activities more enjoyable, diminishing anxiety, and fostering active participation in speaking lessons.

Interview

Teachers observed that students became more interested and willing to participate when speaking activities were organized through games.

One teacher stated that *“students are usually more excited to speak English when the lesson includes games because they feel less pressure and more enjoyment.”* Another teacher added that *“games help shy students become more willing to join speaking activities, especially when they work with friends in pairs or groups.”*

Games foster a relaxed classroom environment, reducing students' nervousness about speaking in front of others. This transforms speaking from a stressful task into an enjoyable activity, motivating students to speak more actively and confidently. The interview data indicates that games enhance motivation by making speaking lessons enjoyable, interactive, and less intimidating.

Discussion

The findings indicate that games significantly enhance student motivation during English speaking lessons at Le Loi Secondary School. This positive effect is attributed to the inherent characteristics of games, which include clear rules, goals, interactive elements, and fun. These aspects transform speaking into a more enjoyable activity rather than a mere academic task. Engaging in games requires students to use

English to achieve various objectives, thereby reducing their focus on mistakes and alleviating anxiety. According to Chen (2005), games can reduce fear, increase motivation, foster collaboration, and encourage learners to use the target language. Similarly, Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (2006) argue that games encourage verbal interaction, while Nguyen and Pham (2018) state that games can help silent students become more active in classroom communication. Therefore, the pressure of speaking is reduced because students focus more on the game goal than on their own mistakes and games created a more comfortable and motivating environment for speaking practice.

Students reported feeling less pressured when speaking during games, as the focus shifted from their language accuracy to the enjoyment of the task. This is particularly beneficial for grade 9 students who often fear negative judgment from peers. The questionnaire results showed a general positive shift in enjoyment, confidence, and reduced nervousness attributed to the game-based approach, highlighting a decrease in psychological barriers such as anxiety and shyness. Although games do not fully eradicate these challenges, they offer supportive, enjoyable spaces for practice.

Interview data corroborated that games create a more relaxed classroom atmosphere, facilitating group participation and peer support rather than individual scrutiny.

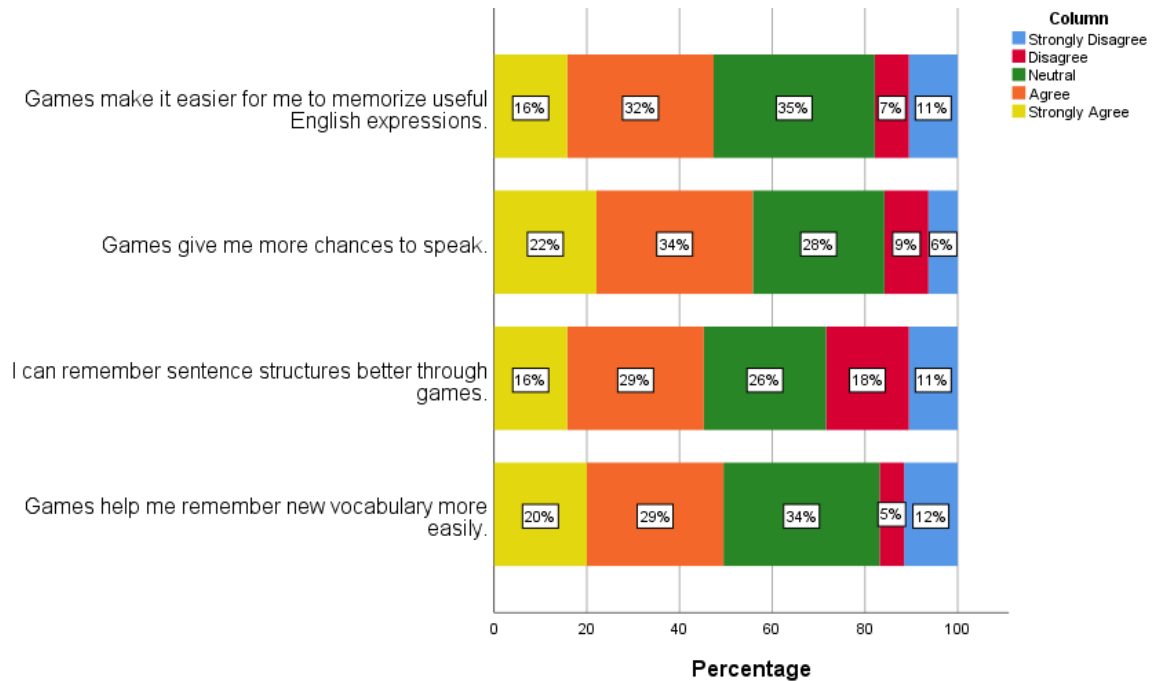
From a pedagogical perspective, games can raise students' motivation by creating small but meaningful experiences of success in speaking English. Through activities such as guessing words, answering questions, helping teammates, or completing communicative tasks, grade 9 students at Le Loi Secondary School may gradually feel that speaking English is more achievable and less threatening. These positive experiences can strengthen their confidence and willingness to participate. Therefore, games should not be viewed as a complete solution to all speaking problems, but as a useful teaching tool that helps reduce pressure, increase peer support, encourage repeated practice, and build students' confidence and willingness to communicate in English.

4.3.2 Improving memorization

Finding

The next construct concerned the effectiveness of games in supporting memorization for speaking skills, as shown in Figure 4.3.2 below.

Figure 4.3.2 Students' effects of using games in supporting memorization for speaking skills



<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Games help me remember new vocabulary more easily.	95	1	5	3.41	1.207
I can remember sentence structures better through games.	95	1	5	3.22	1.222
Games give me more chances to speak.	95	1	5	3.56	1.127
Games make it easier for me to memorize useful English expressions.	95	1	5	3.35	1.156
Valid N (listwise)	95				

Figure 4.3.2 shows that 56% of students agreed or strongly agreed that “Games give me more chances to speak” ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.127$). Games increased speaking possibilities, which may indirectly aid memorization through repetitive language use. The item “Games help me remember new vocabulary more easily” received a mean score of 3.41 ($SD = 1.207$) and 49% positive agreement. “Games make it easier for me to memorize useful English expressions” had a mean of 3.35 ($SD = 1.156$), with 48% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing. The lowest mean score was for “I can remember sentence structures better through games” ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.222$), but it was still above average. Games helped with language patterns, but not as much as vocabulary or useful terms. A large percentage of students chose the neutral choice, notably for vocabulary and helpful expressions, demonstrating that games' memorization effects were not equal for all learners.

The results indicate that students thought games helped them remember speech. Games were very good for improving vocabulary, usable expressions, and language memory, which improved students' speaking skills.

Interview

A recurring theme was the perceived efficacy of games in facilitating the retention of vocabulary and syntactic structures. Participants suggested that the repetitive yet contextualized nature of game-based practice helped move language from short-term to long-term memory.

Teacher commented:

“Games helped students retain vocabulary and structures because they were learning through practice rather than memorizing mechanically.” Another teacher noted the evidence of long-term retention: *“Students often reused the same expressions from the games in later speaking tasks, which showed better retention.”*

Discussion

This result can be explained by the fact that games provide students with opportunities to encounter, practise, and reuse vocabulary, sentence patterns, and expressions in meaningful contexts. Instead of memorizing words passively, students can remember vocabulary more effectively through game-based tasks such as

answering questions, guessing information, describing pictures, or communicating with peers. In this process, language is connected with actions, images, competition, interaction, and classroom purposes.

This interpretation is supported by Kuo and Chu (2016), who noted that games can expand learners' vocabulary and provide opportunities to practise words in context. Similarly, Carrier, cited in Susilowati (1988), suggested that games allow learners to practise language structures unconsciously while they are engaged in enjoyable activities. Therefore, games may support memorization not through mechanical repetition, but through repeated, meaningful, and contextualized language use.

The questionnaire results also support this explanation, as students showed positive responses to items related to remembering vocabulary, recalling expressions, and using language more easily in speaking activities. This suggests that games helped students connect language knowledge with actual use. For grade 9 students at Le Loi Secondary School, this is especially important because many students may know vocabulary or grammar in written form but struggle to retrieve it quickly when speaking.

The interview data further confirmed this finding. Teachers reported that students remembered new words better when they learned them through fun and repeated activities. They also observed that vocabulary and phrase patterns practised through games were easier for students to recall than those explained only through traditional instruction.

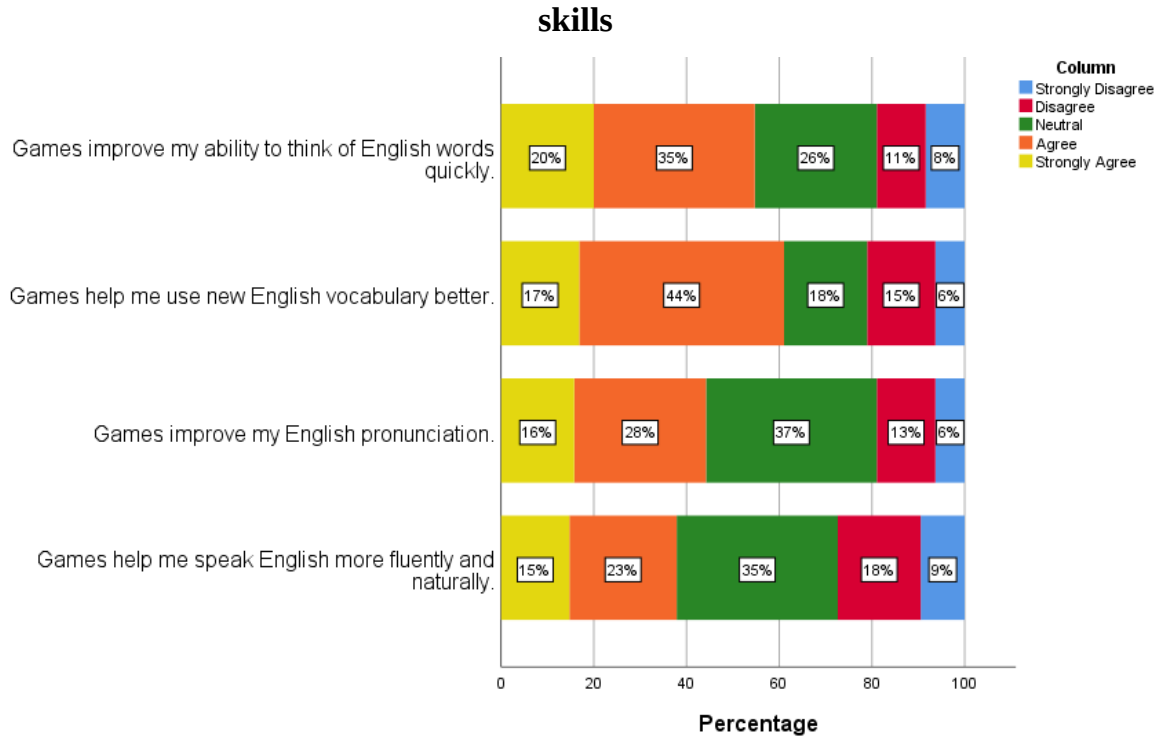
From this, it can be inferred that games play an important role in supporting students' memorization and speaking development. However, games should not replace systematic vocabulary and grammar instruction. Rather, they should be used as a supportive technique to help students internalize language through repeated exposure, active communication, and meaningful classroom practice.

4.3.3 Promoting active speaking skills

Finding

The following construct focused on students' perceptions of how games promote active speaking skills, as presented in Figure 4.3.3 below.

Figure 4.3.3 Students' effects of using games in promoting active speaking



<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Games help me speak English more fluently and naturally.	95	1	5	3.16	1.170
Games improve my English pronunciation.	95	1	5	3.35	1.089
Games help me use new English vocabulary better.	95	1	5	3.51	1.129
Games improve my ability to think of English words quickly.	95	1	5	3.47	1.175
Valid N (listwise)	95				

Figure 4.3.3 shows that 61% of students agreed or strongly agreed that “Games help me use new English vocabulary better” and that this question had the highest mean score ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.129$). Games may have helped students expand and

apply vocabulary in speaking tasks. The next highest result was “Games improve my ability to think of English words quickly”, with 55% positive replies and a mean score of 3.47 (SD = 1.175), demonstrating that games improved speaking language memory. Additionally, “Games improve my English pronunciation” had moderate agreement (mean 3.35, SD = 1.089). “Games help me speak English more fluently and naturally” received the lowest mean score (M = 3.16, SD = 1.170), indicating that games improved fluency less than vocabulary or quick word recall. However, many students chose neutral, especially for pronunciation and fluency questions. This shows that games affected these speaking skills differently for different students.

The findings showed that students usually liked playing games to improve active speaking. Games were found to improve vocabulary, English thinking speed, pronunciation, and fluency.

Interview

The data further indicated that games acted as a catalyst for active oral engagement. Students reported that games—particularly those involving peer collaboration and competitive elements—provided more authentic "talk time" compared to teacher-led drills.

Teachers corroborated these findings, noting that games transformed passive learners into active contributors. Teacher stated:

“Students tended to speak more actively during game-based lessons because the activities required immediate involvement from many learners.” Another teacher emphasized the inclusive nature of games: *“Games were useful in reducing passivity, especially among weaker or quieter students, because they created a more supportive context for speaking.”*

Discussion

The findings indicate that games had a positive effect on promoting active speaking among grade 9 students at Le Loi Secondary School. This result is understandable because speaking ability cannot develop if students remain passive or only listen to the teacher’s explanation. In order to improve speaking, students need

repeated opportunities to produce language, respond to others, and use English for real communicative purposes. Games created such opportunities by requiring students to ask questions, give answers, describe pictures, guess information, support teammates, and complete speaking tasks. As a result, students were encouraged to speak more frequently and participate more actively in the lesson.

From a pedagogical perspective, this result is reasonable because speaking develops through frequent language production and access to retained linguistic resources. When students take part in games, they are not simply practising isolated words or sentence patterns; they are using language to achieve a specific goal. This makes speaking more purposeful and less mechanical. Instead of waiting for the teacher to call on them, students have to interact with their peers, exchange ideas, and respond quickly during the activity. Therefore, games help shift the classroom from a teacher-centered model to a more learner-centered and communicative environment.

This interpretation is supported by Lia (2015), who found that games made students more active and confident in speaking classes. Similarly, Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (2006) argue that games encourage learners to use language in meaningful interaction. In the same direction, Chen (2005) emphasizes that games can foster collaboration and motivate students to use the target language. These views help explain why games were effective for students at Le Loi Secondary School, especially those who were usually quiet or hesitant to speak. Through game-based activities, speaking became a shared task rather than an individual performance, which reduced pressure and encouraged broader participation.

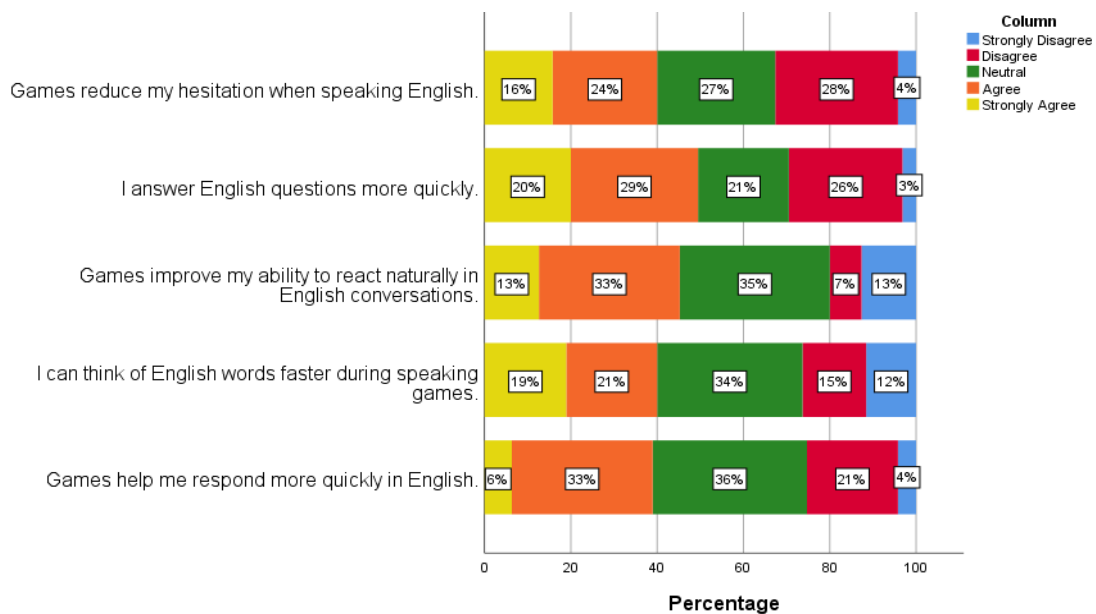
The questionnaire results also suggest that students perceived games as helpful in increasing their speaking participation. Students were more willing to speak English when they joined activities that were enjoyable, goal-oriented, and interactive. Interview responses further showed that some students felt more comfortable speaking in pairs or groups during games because they could receive support from classmates.

Overall, games can promote active speaking because they provide students with repeated, meaningful, and interactive opportunities to use English. However, this effect should be understood as supportive rather than absolute. Games cannot automatically improve speaking if they are not well designed or connected to lesson objectives. Therefore, it can be concluded that games are useful pedagogical tools for encouraging students to participate more actively, speak more frequently, and gradually build confidence in English communication.

4.3.4 Enhancing quick response

Finding

Figure 4.3.4 Effects of games on students' quick response



<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Games help me respond more quickly in English.	95	1	5	3.16	.971
I can think of English words faster during speaking games.	95	1	5	3.21	1.245
Games improve my ability to react	95	1	5	3.25	1.167

naturally in English conversations.					
I answer English questions more quickly.	95	1	5	3.37	1.167
Games reduce my hesitation when speaking English.	95	1	5	3.19	1.142
Valid N (listwise)	95				

Figure 4.3.4 shows a moderate positive perception of games in enhancing students' quick response in speaking lessons. The highest mean score was for "I answer English questions more quickly" ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.167$), with 46% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing. Similarly, 48% agreed that games helped them react naturally in English conversations ($M = 3.25$), while 34% gave neutral responses. For thinking of English words faster, 34% were neutral and 27% agreed or strongly agreed ($M = 3.21$). Games also reduced hesitation for 32% of students, though 27% remained neutral ($M = 3.19$). Overall, the findings indicate that games supported students' quick response ability moderately, especially in answering questions and reacting more naturally during speaking activities.

Interview

The interviews also explored how games influenced the spontaneity of students' speech. Teachers provided a more nuanced view, acknowledging that while games promote quick responses, the impact varies by proficiency level. Teacher observed:

"Students usually responded more quickly during game-based speaking tasks because they were encouraged by time limits and peer competition." Conversely, another teacher cautioned: *"Not all students improved their quick response at the same rate, since weaker learners still needed more time to think before answering."*

Discussion

Games improved grade 9 students' quick responses at Le Loi Secondary School. This is expected because speaking requires not only vocabulary and syntax but also language retention and real-time response. Lower-secondary students may

recognize vocabulary or sentence patterns, but they hesitate to answer immediately. Fear of mistakes translating from Vietnamese to English, or insecurity about spontaneous communication may cause this hesitancy.

Games helped reduce this problem by creating situations in which students had to listen, think, and respond quickly. In activities such as guessing games, question-and-answer games, picture-based games, or team competitions, students were required to give immediate answers, react to their peers, and use English under time pressure. However, this pressure was not as stressful as traditional speaking tests because it was embedded in an enjoyable and interactive activity. Therefore, games trained students' quick response ability in a more natural and less threatening way.

From a pedagogical perspective, this result is reasonable because quick response develops through repeated exposure to communicative situations. When students repeatedly hear prompts, process meaning, and produce answers during games, they gradually become more familiar with using English without overthinking. This supports the view of Oxford and Crookall (1990), who argue that games provide abundant opportunities for communication and active involvement. Through such repeated interaction, learners can process language more quickly and become more responsive in speaking activities.

The interview data also support this interpretation. Teachers observed that when games were used, students responded more quickly because they had to react immediately instead of translating from Vietnamese. This suggests that games can gradually help students think faster in English and improve their real-time response through repeated practice.

The questionnaire results further indicate that students perceived games as helpful in improving their ability to answer more quickly during speaking lessons. This may be because games gave them repeated chances to practise familiar vocabulary, sentence patterns, and expressions in communicative contexts. As students became more familiar with these language resources, they could retrieve and use them more efficiently.

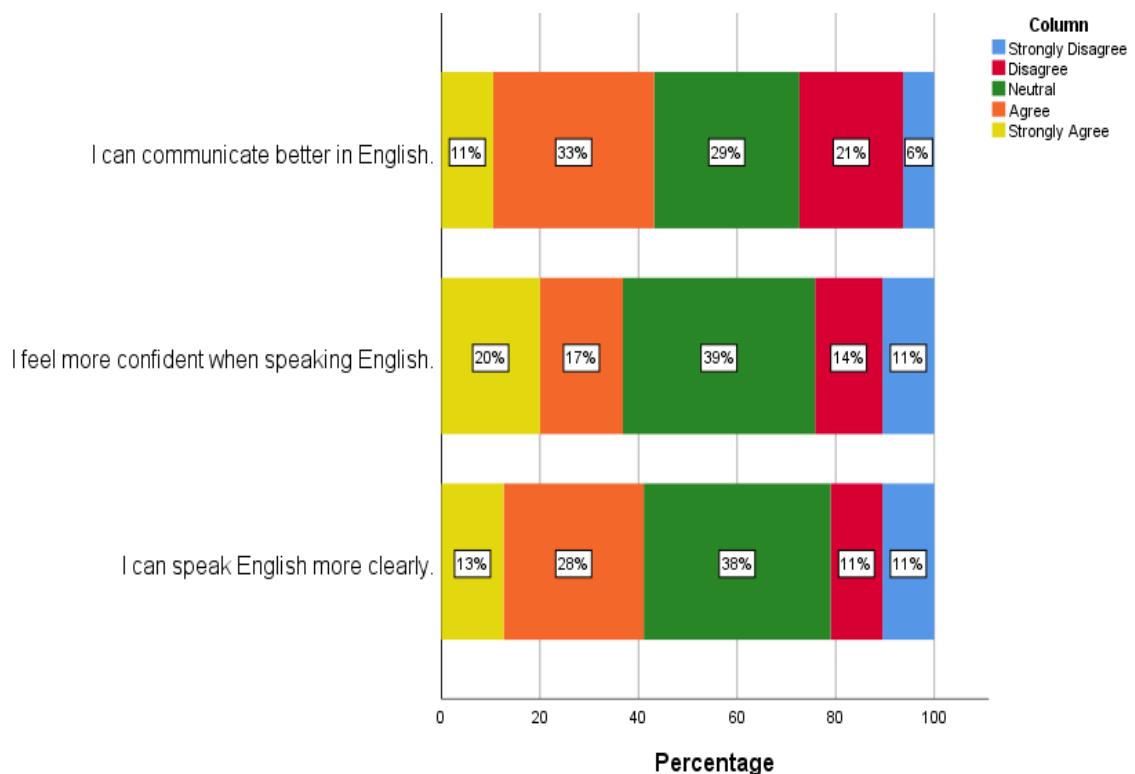
Overall, games can enhance quick response among students by creating repeated, interactive, and time-sensitive speaking opportunities. However, this effect should be understood as gradual and supportive rather than immediate or absolute. Games are not a complete solution to all speaking difficulties, but they are useful pedagogical tools that help students reduce hesitation, think faster in English, and respond more confidently in real-time communication.

4.3.5 Improving overall speaking skills

Finding

The final construct concerned students' perceptions of the positive effects of games on their speaking skills, as shown in Figure 4.6 below. The results indicate that students generally held positive effects of the contribution of games to their speaking skills.

Figure 4.3.5 The positive effects of games on their speaking skills



<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I can speak English more clearly.	95	1	5	3.34	1.048
I feel more confident when speaking English.	95	1	5	3.27	1.198
I can communicate better in English.	95	1	5	3.24	1.079
Valid N (listwise)	95				

Figure 4.3.5 demonstrates that 51% of students agreed or strongly agreed that “I can speak English more clearly” ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.048$). Games may have helped learners talk more clearly. With 59% positive replies, “I feel more confident when speaking English” had the second highest mean ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.198$). Games helped students gain oral communication confidence. “I can communicate better in English” got a mean score of 3.24 ($SD = 1.079$), with 40% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing. This item had the lowest mean of the three, but it remained above average, indicating a positive trend. However, some students chose neutral or disagreed, notably for the communication ability item. This implies that games improved speaking skills for certain students but not others.

Students generally thought games improved their speaking skills. Games improved English speaking, confidence, and communication. These findings, along with the four previous constructs, imply that games improved students' speaking skills.

Interview

Finally, both cohorts agreed that games contributed significantly to the development of broader speaking skills, specifically in terms of confidence and communicative clarity.

Teachers observed a gradual improvement in students' expressive abilities. Teacher noted: “*Games supported students' speaking skills by making them more confident and more willing to express themselves in English.*” Another concluded: “*Students gradually became better at speaking because games gave them repeated opportunities to practice in a natural and interactive way.*”

Discussion

The findings suggest that the use of games contributed to improving the overall speaking competence of grade 9 students at Le Loi Secondary School. This improvement resulted from several related factors, including increased motivation, more active participation, better memorization of language, and quicker responses. Rather than improving only one aspect of speaking, games supported different components of speaking competence, such as vocabulary use, fluency, confidence, and interaction.

From a practical perspective, games created a classroom environment in which students had more chances to use English meaningfully. Through game-based activities, students interacted with their peers, practised vocabulary and sentence patterns, and gradually became more fluent. Since speaking competence develops through repeated practice and interaction, the opportunities provided by games played an important role in students' improvement.

This interpretation is consistent with Brown (2004), who views speaking as an interactive process of producing, receiving, and processing information in real time. Similarly, Savignon and Berns (1987) argue that communicative activities provide learners with opportunities to use language for meaningful purposes, which is essential for developing communicative competence.

The interview data also supported this result. Teachers observed that students became more confident, more willing to speak, and more active in classroom interaction when games were used. Some students also reported that they felt more comfortable speaking English and were less afraid of making mistakes. This indicates that games helped improve both linguistic and psychological aspects of speaking competence.

However, the improvement was gradual rather than immediate. Games did not remove all speaking difficulties, but they created a supportive environment that encouraged students to practise more frequently and confidently. In conclusion, games can be considered an effective pedagogical tool because they support fluency,

confidence, interaction, and meaningful language use, thereby helping students develop speaking competence in a more natural and communicative way.

4.4 Overall mean of speaking skills

Table 4.8 presents the descriptive statistics of the composite variables, including the number of participants, minimum and maximum values, mean scores, and standard deviations. This table was used to provide an overview of students' perceptions of the effects of games on improving speaking skills and to compare the relative influence of the four related factors.

Table 4.4 Descriptive Statistics of the Composite Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Speaking Skills	95	1.00	5.00	3.21	0.94
Rising Motivation	95	1.60	5.00	3.54	0.90
Promoting Active Speaking	95	1.00	5.00	3.37	0.85
Improving Memorization	95	1.00	5.00	3.38	0.87
Enhancing Quick Response	95	1.80	5.00	3.32	0.71

Table 4.4 shows that students had a relatively positive view of games' benefits on speaking skills, with a mean score of 3.21 (SD = 0.94). The mean was low, but it was above neutral, showing that games helped students build speaking skills. Rising Motivation had the highest mean score (M = 3.54, SD = 0.90) of the four related qualities, showing that games were best at capturing students' attention, enthusiasm, and desire to talk. Then came Improving Memorization, Active Speaking, and Quick Response (M = 3.38, SD = 0.87, 3.37, 0.85, and 3.32, 0.71). Although the differences were slight, the results suggest that motivation was the highest perceived advantage of games, while the other three contributed moderately.

Overall, the data shows that students liked games for speaking enhancement. Games increased motivation more than they improved speaking skills like quick response, memorization, or active speaking

4.5 Summary of key findings

The results support employing games in English classes and show that games are more than fun. Nearly half of pupils have studied English for over six years, but 76% cannot speak it. Traditional, exam-focused speaking skills training methods are failing, indicating a need for change. The study found that games remove psychological, linguistic, and environmental student performance hurdles. This study found that games that emphasize fun competition lower student's anxiety and fear of making mistakes. Instead of being afraid, students can speak up to win. Games force students to utilize words quickly in real-time conversation instead of memorizing them, activating "passive" vocabulary. Finally, both the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews demonstrate that games motivate students to talk, effectively turning a quiet classroom into a vibrant one. Therefore, although students experienced considerable difficulties in learning speaking, games were considered a practical and effective strategy for supporting their English speaking skills at Le Loi Secondary School.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the conclusion, pedagogical implications, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies. It summarizes the main findings on the positive effects of using games on students' English speaking skills at Le Loi Secondary School and proposes ways to apply games more effectively in speaking classes.

5.1 Conclusion

This study investigated the effects of using games to improve English speaking skills among grade 9 students at Le Loi Secondary School. The study focused on two main research questions: the difficulties students face in speaking English and the positive effects of using games on students' speaking skills.

Regarding the first research question, the findings showed that students experienced several difficulties in speaking English. These difficulties were mainly related to language factors, psychological factors, and the learning environment. In terms of language factors, students had problems with vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and expressing ideas fluently. Psychologically, many students lacked confidence, felt nervous when speaking English, and were afraid of making mistakes in front of their classmates. In addition, limited exposure to English and insufficient opportunities for speaking practice also affected their speaking development. These findings indicate that students' speaking problems were not caused by a single factor but by a combination of linguistic, psychological, and classroom-related challenges.

Regarding the second research question, the findings revealed that games had positive effects on students' English speaking lessons. Games helped increase students' motivation, encouraged more active participation, supported vocabulary and structure memorization, and improved students' quick response in communication. Through game-based activities, students had more opportunities to speak English in a relaxed and interactive environment. As a result, they became more willing to participate in speaking tasks and were less afraid of making mistakes.

However, it should be noted that games should not be viewed as a method that can solve all problems in speaking learning. Instead, games can be considered a useful

pedagogical technique that contributes to creating a more comfortable and communicative learning environment. When games are used appropriately, they can help reduce students' psychological barriers, increase classroom interaction, and provide more meaningful opportunities for speaking practice.

Overall, the study suggests that games can support the improvement of students' English speaking skills, especially by helping students become more confident, active, and responsive in speaking activities. The effectiveness of games, however, depends greatly on how teachers select, prepare, organize, and manage game-based activities in the classroom.

5.2 Implications

Based on the findings, several implications can be drawn for educators, school administrators.

5.2.1 Recommendations for educators

Teachers play an important role in ensuring that games are used effectively in speaking lessons. The findings of this study suggest that games should be used with clear teaching purposes rather than merely as entertaining activities. Before using games, teachers should identify the speaking objectives of the lesson, such as practicing vocabulary, improving pronunciation, increasing fluency, encouraging quick responses, or promoting interaction among students.

First, teachers should select games that are suitable for students' age, language level, interests, and learning needs. For grade 9 students, games should be simple enough for students to understand but challenging enough to encourage them to use English actively. Suitable games may include guessing games, picture description games, role-play games, question-and-answer games, information-gap activities, and group competitions. These games can help students practice speaking in a more natural and meaningful way.

Second, teachers need to prepare games carefully before class. Preparation should include clear instructions, appropriate vocabulary or sentence patterns, time limits, grouping arrangements, and necessary materials. If students do not understand

the rules or the language required for the activity, the game may become confusing and ineffective. Therefore, teachers should model the activity first and provide useful expressions to help students participate more confidently.

Third, teachers should organize games in a way that gives all students opportunities to speak. In some classes, more confident students may dominate the activity, while shy students remain silent. To avoid this problem, teachers should use pair work, small-group work, or assigned roles so that every student has a chance to speak. Teachers should also encourage weaker or less confident students gently instead of putting too much pressure on them.

Fourth, teachers should manage classroom time effectively. Games should not take up the whole lesson without clear learning outcomes. Instead, they can be used as warm-up activities, practice tasks, revision activities, or communicative production tasks. The duration of each game should be appropriate to the lesson plan and students' attention span.

Finally, teachers should provide feedback after the game. During the activity, teachers should avoid interrupting students too often because this may increase anxiety and reduce fluency. Instead, teachers can observe students' performance and give feedback after the activity, focusing on common mistakes, useful expressions, pronunciation, and communication strategies. In this way, games can become both enjoyable and educational.

5.2.2 Recommendations for school administrators

School administrators should create favorable conditions for teachers to use games effectively in English speaking lessons. Since speaking skills require frequent practice, schools should consider increasing the amount of time allocated to English speaking activities. If possible, one additional English period per week could be arranged to provide students with more opportunities to practice speaking in a less pressured environment.

The purpose of increasing English learning time is not simply to add more lessons, but to create more space for communication-based activities. With more speaking practice, students may gradually reduce their anxiety, improve their

confidence, and develop better communicative competence. This is particularly important for students who have limited opportunities to use English outside the classroom.

In addition, schools should support teachers by providing teaching materials, classroom equipment, and professional development opportunities related to game-based learning and communicative language teaching. Teachers may also be encouraged to share effective speaking games and classroom experiences with colleagues. This can help improve the quality of English teaching and make speaking lessons more engaging and practical.

Furthermore, the use of games should not be limited only to Grade 9 students. Games may also be applied to other groups of learners, including primary students, high school students, and even older learners. This is because psychological barriers such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, low confidence, and hesitation in speaking a foreign language are not limited to one age group. Therefore, when adapted appropriately, games can be useful for different learners and learning contexts.

5.3 Limitations of the study

Although this study provides useful insights into the effects of using games to improve students' English speaking skills, it still has several limitations.

First, the study was conducted only at Le Loi Secondary School with grade 9 students. Therefore, the findings may not be fully generalizable to students from other schools, grade levels, or educational contexts.

Second, the study mainly focused on students' difficulties and perceptions of the positive effects of games. Although questionnaires, interviews were used to support the findings, the study did not include a pre-test and post-test to measure students' actual speaking improvement before and after using games.

Third, the effectiveness of games may depend on many factors, such as students' proficiency levels, classroom size, teachers' preparation, game design, time management, and students' willingness to participate. Therefore, games may not produce the same results in all classrooms.

Finally, as noted by Stojković and Jerotijević (2011), games themselves may also present practical difficulties in classroom teaching, such as excessive noise, off-task behavior, unequal involvement, or negative attitudes from some students if the activities are not clearly explained or appropriately selected. Therefore, the effectiveness of games may vary depending on teachers' classroom management skills and the suitability of the game design.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

Based on the limitations above, several suggestions can be made for future research.

First, future studies should be conducted with a larger number of participants from different schools and grade levels. This would help provide broader evidence about the effectiveness of games in English speaking instruction.

Second, future studies may compare different types of games, such as role-play games, guessing games, information-gap games, vocabulary games, or digital games, to identify which types are most effective for improving specific aspects of speaking skills.

Third, further research may investigate the use of games with learners at different ages, including primary school students, high school students, university students, or adult learners. Since psychological barriers in speaking English can appear across different age groups, it would be useful to explore how games can support different types of learners.

Finally, future research should examine how teachers prepare, organize, and evaluate game-based speaking activities. This would provide more practical guidance for using games effectively in English classrooms.

5.5 Chapter summary

The study's last chapter summarizes its findings and examines the pedagogical reality of teaching languages through games. The study shows that the ninth-grader's speaking difficulties stem from linguistic gaps, psychological issues, and contextual constraints. Games lower the affective filter and change passive, fearful students into engaged, responsive communicators, which is the study's most important discovery.

Games must move from simple enjoyment to deliberate pedagogy, including careful teacher organization, fair student participation, and useful post-activity evaluation, to reach their full potential. It also fosters institutional support by encouraging school administrators to allocate more curriculum time for communicative practice and encouraging future scholars to study digital and diversified game-based solutions across demographics. This chapter concludes by showing how games can unlock students' communicative competence and provide a more dynamic English learning environment with structured administration, linking theoretical frameworks and classroom reality.

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APPENDIX A: Questionnaire (English version)

Survey Paper 1

The purpose of this survey is to find out the challenges Le Loi Secondary School students face in English speaking. Your responses will provide useful information for suggesting suitable solutions to enhance students' speaking ability. Please spend a few minutes completing the questionnaire below.

I. Personal Information (Optional):

Name (optional): _____

Age: _____

Gender: Male / Female / Other (please specify) _____

II. Difficulties in Developing English Speaking Skills

Please mark (x) in the corresponding box if you agree with the answer:

1. Do you have any difficulties speaking English?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. How long have you learned English?

☐ Less than 4 years

☐ 4–7 years

☐ More than 5 years

III. Please read each statement and tick (✓) the option that best shows how true it is for you.

Scale:

1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree

Please select your level of agreement with the following factors:	1	2	3	4	5
Psychological factors					
I feel nervous when I have to speak English in front of my classmates.					

I am afraid that my classmates will laugh at me if I make mistakes in speaking.					
I feel shy and lack of confidence to speak English in class.					
I worry too much about my pronunciation when I speak English.					
I feel stressed when the teacher suddenly asks me to answer in English.					
Language factors					
I do not have enough English vocabulary to express my ideas.					
My pronunciation problems make it difficult for others to understand me.					
I speak very slowly because I have to think of grammar and vocabulary.					
I cannot find the right English words quickly when I want to say something.					
I often use Vietnamese words when I cannot remember English ones.					
Language environment factors					
I have few opportunities to speak English outside the classroom.					
I do not have many chances to practice speaking.					
In speaking activities, only a few students talk while others keep silent.					
The speaking topics in the textbook are not close to my real life, so I do not want to talk.					

The classroom is noisy or crowded, so it is hard for me to focus on speaking.					
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Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Your responses are greatly appreciated.

Survey paper 2

This survey aims to explore students' views on the positive effects of using games in English speaking classes at Le Loi Secondary School. Your responses will help improve the teaching and learning of speaking skills. Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire below.

Positive Effects of Using Games in English Speaking Classes

Please read each statement carefully and tick (✓) the level of agreement that best describes your opinion.

1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree

Please select your level of agreement with the following factors:	1	2	3	4	5
Raising Motivation					
Games make me feel more confident when speaking English.					
I feel more excited and willing to speak English when we play games.					
Games help me reduce nervousness when speaking in front of the class.					
Games make me feel that speaking English is fun and enjoyable.					
Games help me overcome my shyness in speaking English.					
Promoting Active Speaking					

Games help me speak English more fluently and naturally.					
Games improve my English pronunciation.					
Games help me use new English vocabulary better.					
Games improve my ability to think of English words quickly.					
Improving Memorization					
Games help me remember new vocabulary more easily.					
I can remember sentence structures better through games.					
Games give me more chances to speak.					
Games make it easier for me to memorize useful English expressions.					
Quick Response					
Games help me respond more quickly in English.					
I can think of English words faster during speaking games.					
Games improve my ability to react naturally in English conversations.					
I answer English questions more quickly.					
Games reduce my hesitation when speaking English.					
Speaking Skills					
I can speak English more clearly.					

I feel more confident when speaking English.					
I can communicate better in English.					
I would like teachers to use more games in future lessons.					

Thank you for your valuable participation!

APPENDIX B: Questionnaire (Vietnamese version)

PHIẾU KHẢO SÁT 1

Chúng tôi đang tiến hành một nghiên cứu nhằm hiểu rõ hơn về những khó khăn trong kỹ năng nói tiếng Anh của học sinh Trường THCS Lê Lợi. Thông tin bạn cung cấp sẽ giúp chúng tôi đề xuất các giải pháp phù hợp để cải thiện tình trạng này. Vui lòng dành ít phút để hoàn thành bảng khảo sát dưới đây.

I. Thông tin cá nhân (Không bắt buộc):

Họ và tên (không bắt buộc): _____

Tuổi: _____

Giới tính: Nam / Nữ / Khác (vui lòng ghi rõ) _____

II. Khó khăn trong việc phát triển kỹ năng nói tiếng Anh

Vui lòng đánh dấu (x) vào ô tương ứng với câu trả lời của bạn:

1. Bạn có gặp khó khăn khi nói tiếng Anh không?

☐ Có

☐ Không

2. Bạn đã học tiếng Anh trong bao lâu?

☐ Dưới 4 năm

☐ 4–7 năm

☐ Trên 5 năm

III. Vui lòng đọc mỗi phát biểu và tích (✓) vào mức độ phù hợp nhất với bạn

Thang đo:

**1 = Hoàn toàn không đồng ý 2 = Không đồng ý 3 = Trung lập 4 = Đồng ý
5 = Hoàn toàn đồng ý**

Mức độ đồng ý	1	2	3	4	5
Yếu tố tâm lý					
Tôi cảm thấy lo lắng khi phải nói tiếng Anh trước lớp.					
Tôi sợ các bạn trong lớp sẽ cười khi tôi mắc lỗi khi nói.					
Tôi cảm thấy ngại và thiếu tự tin khi nói tiếng Anh trong lớp.					
Tôi lo lắng quá nhiều về phát âm khi nói tiếng Anh.					
Tôi cảm thấy căng thẳng khi giáo viên bất ngờ yêu cầu tôi trả lời bằng tiếng Anh.					
Yếu tố ngôn ngữ					
Tôi không có đủ vốn từ vựng tiếng Anh để diễn đạt ý tưởng của mình.					
Vấn đề phát âm khiến người khác khó hiểu tôi.					
Tôi nói rất chậm vì phải suy nghĩ về ngữ pháp và từ vựng.					
Tôi không thể tìm từ tiếng Anh phù hợp một cách nhanh chóng khi muốn nói.					
Tôi thường sử dụng từ tiếng Việt khi không nhớ từ tiếng Anh.					
Yếu tố môi trường ngôn ngữ					
Tôi có ít cơ hội nói tiếng Anh ngoài lớp học.					
Tôi không có nhiều cơ hội để luyện nói.					
Trong các hoạt động nói, chỉ một số ít học sinh nói, còn lại thì im lặng.					
Chủ đề nói trong sách giáo khoa không gần gũi với thực tế nên tôi không muốn nói.					

Lớp học ồn ào hoặc đông đúc khiến tôi khó tập trung khi nói.					
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Xin chân thành cảm ơn bạn đã tham gia khảo sát.

PHIẾU KHẢO SÁT 2

Chúng tôi đang tiến hành nghiên cứu nhằm khám phá ý kiến của học sinh về những tác động tích cực của việc sử dụng trò chơi trong các tiết học nói tiếng Anh tại Trường THCS Lê Lợi. Những phản hồi của bạn sẽ cung cấp thông tin quan trọng để cải thiện việc dạy và học kỹ năng nói.

TÁC ĐỘNG TÍCH CỰC CỦA TRÒ CHƠI TRONG GIỜ HỌC NÓI TIẾNG ANH

**1 = Hoàn toàn không đồng ý 2 = Không đồng ý 3 = Trung lập 4 = Đồng ý
5 = Hoàn toàn đồng ý**

Mức độ đồng ý	1	2	3	4	5
Tăng động lực					
Trò chơi giúp tôi tự tin hơn khi nói tiếng Anh.					
Tôi cảm thấy hứng thú và sẵn sàng nói tiếng Anh hơn khi chơi trò chơi.					
Trò chơi giúp tôi giảm lo lắng khi nói trước lớp.					
Trò chơi khiến việc nói tiếng Anh trở nên thú vị hơn.					
Trò chơi giúp tôi vượt qua sự ngại ngùng.					
Thúc đẩy việc nói tích cực					
Trò chơi giúp tôi nói tiếng Anh trôi chảy hơn.					
Trò chơi cải thiện phát âm của tôi.					
Trò chơi giúp tôi sử dụng từ vựng tốt hơn.					
Trò chơi giúp tôi nghĩ ra từ nhanh hơn.					
Cải thiện khả năng ghi nhớ					
Trò chơi giúp tôi ghi nhớ từ vựng mới dễ dàng hơn.					

Tôi có thể nhớ cấu trúc câu tốt hơn thông qua trò chơi.					
Trò chơi mang lại cho tôi nhiều cơ hội nói hơn.					
Trò chơi giúp tôi ghi nhớ các cách diễn đạt tiếng Anh hữu ích dễ hơn.					
Phản xạ nhanh					
Trò chơi giúp tôi phản hồi bằng tiếng Anh nhanh hơn.					
Tôi có thể nghĩ ra từ tiếng Anh nhanh hơn khi tham gia trò chơi nói.					
Trò chơi cải thiện khả năng phản xạ tự nhiên trong giao tiếp tiếng Anh.					
Tôi trả lời câu hỏi bằng tiếng Anh nhanh hơn.					
Trò chơi giúp tôi giảm sự do dự khi nói tiếng Anh.					
Kỹ năng nói					
Tôi có thể phát âm tiếng Anh rõ ràng hơn.					
Tôi cảm thấy tự tin hơn khi nói tiếng Anh.					
Tôi có thể giao tiếp bằng tiếng Anh tốt hơn.					
Tôi mong muốn giáo viên sử dụng nhiều trò chơi hơn trong các tiết học sau.					

Xin chân thành cảm ơn bạn đã dành thời gian tham gia khảo sát.

APPENDIX C: Teacher interview questions

Part 1: Students' difficulties in learning speaking skills

1. What are the most common difficulties students face when learning speaking skills?
2. In your opinion, which language factor causes the greatest difficulty for students in speaking: vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation? Why?
3. How do psychological factors such as anxiety, shyness, or fear of making mistakes affect students' speaking performance?

4. How does the classroom environment influence students' willingness to participate in speaking activities?

5. Do students with different proficiency levels experience different speaking difficulties? Please explain with examples if possible.

Part 2: Positive effects of using games in speaking lessons

6. In your opinion, how do games influence students' motivation and interest in English speaking lessons?

7. How do games affect students' active participation in speaking activities, especially for shy or less confident students?

8. Do games help students remember vocabulary, sentence patterns, or expressions more effectively? Please explain with examples if possible.

9. How do games help students respond more quickly and naturally during speaking activities?

10. Overall, what positive effects do you observe when using games to improve students' English speaking skills?

APPENDIX D: Correlation and Regression between Positive-Effect Factors and Speaking Skills

Correlation analysis

Correlations Between Positive-Effect Factors and Speaking Skills

Variable	Pearson r with Speaking	Sig.
Rising Motivation	0.609	< .001
Promoting Active Speaking	0.593	< .001
Improving Memorization	0.618	< .001
Enhancing Quick Response	0.473	< .001

Regression analysis

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Speaking Skills

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	VIF
Rising Motivation	0.237	0.122	0.225	1.940	.056	2.38

Promoting Active Speaking	0.251	0.118	0.227	2.132	.036	1.99
Improving Memorization	0.258	0.126	0.239	2.037	.045	2.42
Enhancing Quick Response	0.198	0.120	0.148	1.652	.102	1.41

APPENDIX E: Classroom Observation

Observation Checklist for Game-Based Speaking Lessons

Aspect	Indicators	Overall Level
1. Motivation	- Students show enthusiasm. - Students pay attention to instructions. - Students volunteer to participate.	High
2. Active Speaking	- Students speak actively during the lesson. - Students interact with classmates. - Students volunteer answers rather than waiting to be called.	High
3. Memorization	- Students reuse target vocabulary. - Students recall sentence patterns. - Students apply learned items in new contexts.	Medium
4. Quick Response	- Students respond quickly to prompts. - Students show little hesitation. - Students respond under time pressure.	Medium
5. Speaking Performance	- Students speak with confidence. - Students produce fluent responses. - Students continue speaking despite errors.	High

Note: The overall level reflects the observer's general assessment of each aspect during the game-based speaking lessons.