



**BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF GAMIFICATION IN STIMULATING
MOTIVATION OF AND DEVELOPING LEARNERS' ORAL COMMUNICATION
SKILLS: BASES FOR SPEECH IMPROVEMENT TRAINING PROGRAM**

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined how senior high school English teachers in the Division of Iloilo City use gamification to stimulate learners' motivation and develop their oral communication skills, providing a basis for a proposed training program. Teachers used gamification to stimulate motivation through lesson engagements, competitions and rewards, and culturally relevant games. In developing oral communication skills, gamification was applied to reduce anxiety, encourage peer interaction, and enhance fluency and confidence. Benefits of stimulating motivation included excitement, participation, focus, persistence, and positive classroom climate; in oral skills development, boosted confidence, improved pronunciation and diction, and enhanced critical and creative thinking. Drawbacks in motivation involved overreliance on rewards, time-consuming preparation and implementation, and limited engagement; in oral skills development, prioritizing fluency over accuracy, technological problems, and excessive competition. A Speech Improvement Training Program was recommended to maximize benefits while addressing drawbacks.

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Training Program

INTRODUCTION

Oral communication is a vital skill for academic achievement, professional success, and personal growth. However, many senior high school learners experience significant anxiety when speaking before an audience, leading to hesitation, disengagement, and underdeveloped communication skills. While traditional instructional methods—such as memorized speeches and repetitive drills—focus on technical delivery, they often fail to address the underlying fear and lack of confidence that inhibit student participation.

In response, gamification has emerged as a promising approach to enhance engagement and reduce speaking anxiety by incorporating elements such as challenges, rewards, leaderboards, and collaborative tasks. For instance, research suggests that gamification fosters a more interactive learning environment, reframing mistakes as part of skill progression rather than failure (Simbaña-Simbaña et al., 2023).

Building on this, studies by Malahito and Quimbo (2020), Samortin (2022), and Moldez et al. (2023) have shown that gamification can improve both confidence and communication performance, particularly in higher education settings.

Despite these promising findings, a research gap remains regarding its application in senior high school oral communication classes in Philippine public schools, where performance anxiety often intersects with limited access to digital tools. Ultimately, this context-specific

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gap raises questions about the adaptability, practicality, and effectiveness of gamification under resource constraints.

Drawing from these teaching experiences, the researcher has observed that gamified learning activities—whether digital or low-tech—can transform classroom dynamics and encourage even the most reluctant speakers to participate.

This study sought to address the identified gap by examining how gamification can be tailored to reduce anxiety, stimulate motivation, and develop oral communication skills among senior high school students in the Philippine setting.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants in the study, data-gathering procedures, research instruments, and data analyses.

Research Method

This study employed a descriptive-qualitative research approach to explore the lived experiences of senior high school English teachers in using gamification to enhance learners' oral communication skills and motivation in public schools under the Schools Division of Iloilo City.

A qualitative approach is appropriate as it allowed for an in-depth understanding of the participants' perceptions, emotions, and reflections on the use of gamified strategies in their teaching practices (Creswell, 2023).

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By capturing the essence of their experiences, this study provided valuable insights into the impact of gamification in real-world classroom settings. The study focused on how teachers interpreted and internalized their encounters with gamification, aiming to uncover both the perceived benefits and challenges they faced.

Research Design

This study employed a phenomenological qualitative research design to explore the lived experiences of Senior High School English teachers who integrated gamification strategies in oral communication instruction.

Phenomenology, as defined by Creswell (2013), sought to understand the common experiences of individuals regarding a specific phenomenon. In this study, the phenomenon being examined was the use of gamification in developing learners' oral communication skills and stimulating their motivation.

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study consisted of twelve (12) senior high school English teachers from public schools under the Schools Division of Iloilo City. These teachers were purposively selected based on their experience and engagement in incorporating gamification into their instructional practices. Since phenomenology aimed to study individuals who had directly encountered a particular phenomenon, selecting teachers with firsthand experience in gamification ensured that the findings were rich and authentic. Their reflections provided a comprehensive understanding of how gamification influenced teaching strategies, student learning, and classroom dynamics.

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Research Instrument

The primary data collection tool for this study was a researcher-made interview guide. This interview guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed narratives from participants about their experiences with gamification in oral communication instruction.

The questions focused on their perceptions of gamification’s effectiveness, challenges they encountered, and the broader implications of game-based learning on student motivation and skill development. The interview guide format provided flexibility, allowing participants to elaborate on their responses while ensuring the discussion remained aligned with the research objectives.

Validity of the Research Instrument

To ensure the validity of the researcher-made interview guide, it underwent expert validation by a panel of English language specialists and educational researchers. The panel assessed the clarity, relevance, and coherence of the questions, ensuring that they effectively captured the intended themes. Any necessary revisions were made based on expert feedback to enhance the reliability and validity of the instrument (Creswell, 2023).

Data-gathering Procedure

The data collection process followed a structured yet flexible approach to ensure the authenticity and depth of participants’ responses. Formal permission was obtained from the Schools Division of Iloilo City and participating schools, and participants were briefed about the study. Informed consent was secured to uphold ethical research practices. The interview guide underwent expert validation before finalization, ensuring clarity and relevance.

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Participants received an overview of the research objectives and confidentiality measures. One-on-one interviews were conducted either in person or through online platforms, depending on participants' availability. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was recorded, with participants' consent, for transcription and analysis. Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim to accurately represent participants' responses and were systematically organized for thematic analysis. To enhance credibility, selected participants reviewed summaries of their responses to verify accuracy and ensure their perspectives were correctly captured.

Data Analyses

The data were analyzed through thematic analysis within a phenomenological framework (Creswell, 2023; Braun & Clarke, 2021). Drawing on Braun and Clarke's (2021) familiar six-phase process, this started with familiarization—researchers read through transcripts multiple times, picking out key statements and patterns tied to gamification's role in building oral communication skills. From there, they coded important phrases and ideas, grouping similar ones into broader categories.

The next step involved sifting through the data for patterns that shaped clear, overarching themes based on what participants shared. Those themes got tied back to the study's goals and prior research, forming a solid discussion of how gamification really affects teaching and learning. Credibility came from triangulation, cross-checking data across participants and relevant studies (Creswell, 2023).

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Guided by Braun and Clarke (2021), the descriptive-qualitative phenomenological design with thematic analysis brought out the real depth in teachers' experiences with gamification. It offered fresh insights into its impact on oral communication classes, with practical takeaways for educators and policymakers. In the end, the study delivered evidence-based ideas for strengthening gamified approaches in speech training.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study aimed to identify how Senior High School English teachers in the Division of Iloilo City use gamification as an instructional strategy to stimulate learners' motivation, develop their oral communication skills, and find out the associated benefits and drawbacks of its implementation.

A total of twelve (12) teachers were carefully chosen through purposive sampling, ensuring that participants had relevant experience with gamification. They took part in in-depth interviews guided by a researcher-made instrument, which was validated by research experts.

Thematic analysis was employed to examine the data, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns, insights, and authentic perspectives regarding gamification in classroom instruction.

The following were the findings of the study:

Senior High School English teachers in the Division of Iloilo City utilized gamification through (1) lesson engagements, (2) competitions and rewards, and

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(3) culturally relevant games to stimulate learners' motivation. These strategies brought (1) excitement and active participation, (2) sustained focus and persistence, and (3) a positive classroom climate that encouraged learner engagement and enjoyment in the learning process.

In developing oral communication skills, teachers integrated gamification to several classroom communicative tasks to (1) reduced anxiety, (2) developed fluency and diction, and (3) encouraged collaboration and peer interaction. The gamified tasks contributed to learners' (1) boosted confidence and (2) oral proficiency, enhancing fluency and diction, while (3) cultivating creativity, critical thinking.

However, drawbacks in stimulating motivation emerged, such as (1) overreliance on external rewards, (2) unequal participation and limited engagement, as well as the (3) time-consuming nature of preparation and implementation. These challenges underscored the importance of balancing engagement strategies with intrinsic motivation and equitable classroom practices.

In terms of developing oral communication skills, issues such as (1) prioritizing fluency over grammatical accuracy, (2) technological and accessibility limitations, and (3) excessive competition occasionally discouraged less confident students.

Based on these findings, a Speech Improvement Training Program was recommended to maximize the benefits of gamification while addressing its drawbacks. The program emphasizes regular gamified workshops, teacher capacity-building, and holistic learner

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development to enhance oral communication competence, sustain motivation, and promote an inclusive and sustainable gamified learning environment.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and insights, the following recommendations were proposed:

To begin with, schools should organize recurring, structured gamified oral communication activities to provide consistent opportunities for learners to practice speaking. These activities may include debates, storytelling, role-playing, and impromptu speech exercises, allowing learners to improve fluency, pronunciation, diction, and confidence in enjoyable, low-pressure contexts. Moreover, professional development programs should equip teachers with skills in designing and implementing gamified lessons effectively. Training should focus on balancing engagement with equity, integrating culturally relevant content, and ensuring sustainability and practical feasibility.

In addition, gamified activities should motivate learners without overemphasizing external rewards or fostering unhealthy competition. Teachers are encouraged to provide constructive feedback, scaffold tasks for less confident learners, and promote intrinsic motivation alongside recognition-based incentives.

Likewise, while gamification enhances oral fluency, teachers should also emphasize grammatical accuracy through corrective feedback and targeted exercises to ensure comprehensive language development. Likewise, schools should ensure equitable access to

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ICT resources and offer alternative offline or low-tech gamified activities to minimize exclusion and maximize participation.

Beyond these, gamification should also aim to develop broader competencies, including collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and self-confidence, thereby preparing learners for real-world communication and 21st-century skills. Moreover, the effectiveness of gamified strategies should be regularly assessed using pre- and post-training evaluations, observation checklists, and feedback mechanisms. Continuous monitoring will help maintain the instructional approach as inclusive, practical, and impactful.

Finally, the proposed Speech Improvement Training Program may be implemented not only in the Schools Division of Iloilo City but also extended to other Schools Divisions, including junior high and elementary schools, to further enhance learners' communication competence across different grade levels.

Furthermore, future researchers may conduct similar or related studies using other variables and contexts, focusing on the effectiveness and impact of gamification in various subject areas. Such studies would help validate and expand the understanding of how game-based strategies can be optimized to improve both motivation and skill development in diverse educational settings.

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