

SPEAK UP Improves Students' Speaking Confidence in English

Bryan B. Cariño¹, Romiro G. Bautista^{1,2,*}

¹Secondary Education Program, College of Teacher Education, Quirino State University, Philippines

²International Relations Officer, Quirino State University, Philippines

*Corresponding author: romiro.bautista@qsu.edu.ph

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Abstract Speaking is an interactive process of constructing or creating meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information. This research was conducted to determine the effectiveness of game-based activities in improving the level of confidence of students in speaking in English using colloquial words. The One-Group Pretest-Posttest-Only Design Quasi-Experimental through Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to analyze the pretest and post-test results. Data revealed that the student's level of confidence was improved after employing the game-based activities in learning the English language as indicated by the statistical test results. Knowing the effectiveness of game-based activities, teachers may use this in strengthening the speaking confidence of the students, while doing casual conversations, and engaging them in interactive learning. Thus, game-based activities are imperative in improving the speaking confidence of the students in using the English language. This is necessary in guiding and helping the teachers in addressing the growing concern about the English proficiency of the students particularly in speaking the language.

Keywords: *English language, colloquial conversations, game-based activities, speaking skills*

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1. Introduction

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing or creating meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information [1]. Also, speaking is crucial for many reasons, but one that stands out is that speaking is a tool for expressing thoughts, opinions, intentions, or a desire to accomplish something, for negotiating or resolving conflicts, and building and maintaining friendships and other social bonds. Furthermore, speaking is a basic skill and it is essential in basic communication. Foreign language teaching and learning see this, as a bridge of communication [2].

As Gate [3] explained, speaking is a skill which deserves attention in every bit as much as literary skills, in both first and second language. It is the skill students are frequently judged. It is also the vehicle par excellent of social solidarity, social ranking, professional advancement, and business [4]. Teachers do employ various modalities to help and encourage students in speaking English. As Harmer [5] stated, the communicative approach was used by the teacher to redirect the focus on grammar and vocabulary rather, than emphasizing the significance of the function of language. In other words, these activities will involve students in real communication, where the achievement of their communicative task is more

important than the accuracy of the language they are using.

English is the most commonly accepted language in the world. Due to its importance and use in communication, speaking is one of the fundamental skills that English language learners should master [6]. Fluency in the English language could give numerous benefits such as vocabulary skills, communicative competence, and exchange of ideas [7].

However, learners are often afraid to make mistakes in speaking and to be ridiculed in class. Moreover, they only respond in short phrases due to shyness and lack of confidence. Young English learners often giggle when they do not understand the lesson. The following findings were found in several Asian countries in which English is taught as a foreign language [8].

The issues experienced by English language learners include psychological, social, and linguistic issues, according to Scarcella [9]: (1) **the conflict between fluency and accuracy**: Though a student may gain confidence in using the new language by being left uncorrected, his language will continue to be inaccurate or incorrect; (2) **lack of confidence**: Apparently, some students feel uncomfortable in their first hesitant attempts at a speech in the second language; and (3) **pronunciation**: The most prominent problems are: phonetic confusion, interference from the written form, interference from the mother language, and failure to use the weak forms.

However, a social phenomenon occurs when the use of any language in communication shifts and gets modified over time. Language could be classified into two: standard English as used in formal style of speech, and informal as used in informal style of speeches using non-standard English. Colloquial is a single word or a group of words that uses an informal speech style [10]. Colloquial is included in informal English. The literal meaning of colloquial according to the Oxford dictionary is a word and language used in conversation in informal speech or writing [11].

Accordingly, colloquial is an informal word or expression which is more suitable to use in speech than in writing [12]. Colloquial speech refers to the total set of utterances in a familiar, informal context such as at home, at a place of relaxation, or in the workplace [13]. It means that informal English is called colloquialism since it is often used in daily communication, e.g., when people are talking to a person who has close relationships such as family or friends.

Colloquialism as a strategy in framing speaking confidence is already incorporated in educational games as used in the teaching-learning process. It is believed that students enhance their social skills, problem-solving, and comprehension in using game-based activities. Aply, game-based learning is often more effective than traditional teaching methods. This, however, calls for the students' motivation and direct participation. It was concluded that the concentration of learners improves drastically [14].

Several studies agreed that games have great potential in learning environments and educational tools that promote learning [15]. For Andrew Wright [16], language learning involves a hard work. Effort is required at every moment and it must be maintained over a long time. Games help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest [1]. By integrating learning and playing, students can meaningfully practice the learned linguistic knowledge. This could give a natural opportunity to work collaboratively and communicate fluently with one another [17]. Furthermore, the study conducted by Armadi [18], identified problems experienced by the students in speaking English, i.e., fear of judgment, lack of confidence, committing mistakes, boredom, and laziness.

This study attempted to analyze speaking skills as affected by game-based activities in the context of communication and how colloquial words or conversations help students to improve their speaking skills. The findings of the study are expected to be one of the references for teachers and students in improving the students' speaking skills in English.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

This study is designed to determine the efficacy of a classroom-based intervention program in improving the speaking confidence of students in English, the project *SPEAK UP*.

Specifically, it aimed to: (1) determine the pretest and posttest scores of the students in their confidence in speaking English; (2) evaluate the significant difference in the mean score of the students in their pretest and posttest in terms of their speaking confidence; (3) evaluate on the

effect size of the implemented *SPEAK UP* on the speaking confidence of the students in English.

1.2. Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study was anchored on Chomsky's Linguistic Theory (Figure 1) and Piaget's Language Learning (Figure 2). According to Chomsky, Linguistic Theory is primarily concerned with an ideal speaker and listener in a completely homogeneous speech community who speaks and understands the language perfectly and is unaffected by grammatically irrelevant conditions like memory constraints, distractions, shifts in attention, interest, and mistakes when using his knowledge of the language in actual performance [19]. Chomsky asserted that the human brain has some basic language. It assumed that language is the capacity for understanding and expressing ideas. Even when two people have the same information, there is still a discernible difference on how well they can communicate that knowledge.

In Piaget's Language Learning Theory, a learner has to understand a concept before he or she can acquire the particular language form which expresses that concept.

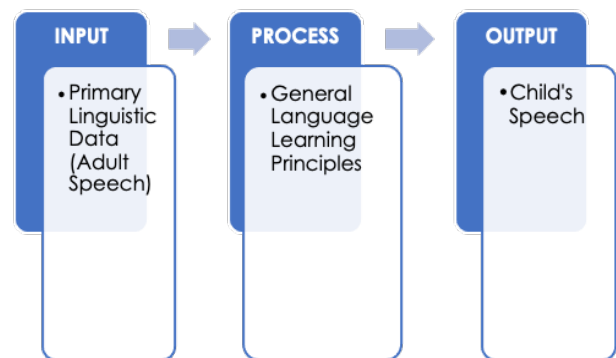


Figure 1. Chomsky's Linguistic Theory



Figure 2. Piaget Language Learning

There are three different categories of colloquialisms, according to Tabrizi [20], which include words, phrases, and aphorisms. When people use the dialect of their distinct regions when speaking, this is referred to as regional differences. When people use different varieties of English from different groups, this is referred to as contractions. When people use the word impolite or oath, this is referred to as profanity.

On the other hand, Partridge [21] identified five different categories of colloquialism. They are in the form of:

1. Single word. A single word is typically used as an informal word in daily discourse. Spear's NTC's Dictionary of American Slang and Colloquial Expressions [21] is used to determine whether a word is a colloquial expression. Examples are dude, nasty, and cool.
2. Clipped words. A clipped word has been created by shortening the original word. The original term is made shorter by dropping one or more syllables, like in the cases of phone, bike, and exam.
3. Short picturesque words for technical terms. It is a brief, lovely word that is used to refer to other technical terms such as visuals like bugs and flowers.
4. Contractions. Contraction is the process of shortening one or more words by leaving out internal letters. "We'll" or "can't" are a couple of examples.
5. Verb-Adverb. Combinations (compound word) this combination includes a verb and an adverb, like put out.

Furthermore, the study by Hasanahi [23] found that the use of colloquial words could improve students' speaking skills. The teacher believed that using colloquial words was able to improve students' vocabulary and also increase students' confidence in the speaking field based on their assessment. Additionally, Rivas' research revealed that using game-based tasks in the classroom helps students maintain or at least build a strong vocabulary foundation that will allow them to engage in speaking activities [24]. The student's interest in the suggested games served as the foundation for their desire to learn new words. The results of these studies are supported by the study of Dewi et al. [25]. The results of their study showed that there is a significant improvement with a mean score of 60.24 in the pretest and reached up to 78.77 in the posttest. This implies that communicative games improved student's confidence in speaking English. The researchers used the foregoing theories to shed light on improving the confidence of students in speaking English through colloquial conversation in game-based activities.

2. Methodology

The researchers employed the One-Group Pretest-Posttest-Only Design Quasi-Experimental in which the same dependent variable is examined in one group of individuals before (pretest) and after (post-test) treatment [26]. This enabled the researchers in the study to determine and understand the effects of game-based activities through colloquial conversations on the student's confidence in speaking English.

In this study, the focus was to determine the speaking confidence of the respondents before (pretest) and after (posttest) the administration of game-based activities through colloquial conversations. The game-based activities conducted by the researchers were storytelling and guessing games.

The study was conducted in Barangay Banuar, Cabarroguis, Quirino at the Brgy. Session Hall. The participants of the study were high school students. The participants were composed of male and female students who were selected according to their grade level. The

researchers obtained the grade 7 students who are currently enrolled in a select public high school in Cabarroguis, Quirino. Due to the limitations brought about by the pandemic, the researchers employed purposive sampling method.

In this study, the researcher utilized author-made questionnaires based on the study of Nunan's Needs Analysis Questionnaire [27], and Finch Confidence in Speaking English Language Questionnaire [28]. The researcher employed game-based activities used namely: story-telling and guessing games.

According to Meng [29], game-based technique is very important as it enables the continuation of dialogue and thereby supports the speaking activity. Each game-based activity requires every student to participate in the games.

The researchers gathered the data needed for the study through a face-to-face survey. The researchers floated the questionnaire (before the pretest) and after conducting the game-based activities (posttest). The researchers produced a hard copy of the questionnaires. Additionally, the researchers decided to administer the questionnaires to the select participants during their free and convenient time.

It is important to note that the participants voluntarily participated and were provided with informed consent. All participants were given the right to withdraw at anytime. Moreover, the researcher included instructions in the questionnaires.

Moreover, in conducting this study, the researcher followed The Kurt Model of Action Research of Kemmis and Mc Taggart [30]:

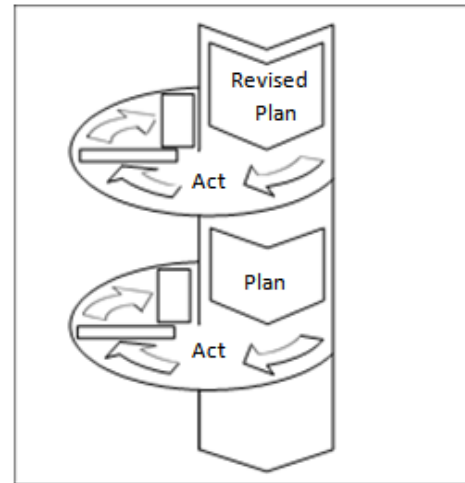


Figure 3. The Model of Action Research of Kemmis and Mc Taggart

The Intervention Program – SPEAK UP (Strengthening Speaking through Colloquial Conversations in Powerful and Engaging game-based Activities and Knowledge Upscaling Programs). The intervention's purpose is to increase students' confidence to speak the language and openly express their views. This motivates the students since the intervention exposes students to their surroundings through various games in each session. Furthermore, this is expected to help them acquire and speak the language. Hence, the intervention addresses the problems in fluency, accuracy, lack of confidence, and pronunciation. Therefore, the game-based activities are expected to bring positive results on the confidence level of grade 7 students.

Table 1. The Summary of Research Implementation (Intervention Plan)

Problem Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low students' speaking proficiency • Low speaking confidence • Unmotivating Classroom Environment
Proposed Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game-based activities • Guided practice
Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two cycles
Implementation CYCLES 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two meetings
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The administration of the pre-test (May 17, 2022) to the tutees determined their initial level of confidence in speaking the English language. • Informing the students about the result of the Pre-test (May 23, 2022). • Upon seeing the mean score (39.00- <i>Low Confidence</i>). A meeting was conducted to provide ways on how the students could cope with the problems found in the pre-test. The following are executed: watching tutorials, listening to any English-related audio-visuals, and games. • Conducting the research about the possible games to be used to cater individual needs of the learners in the teaching-learning process. • Asking students about their expectations in the subject. • Preparing all the materials, lesson plan, students' worksheets, and everything related to the topic/s. • Formulating strategies in the implementation of the intervention program. Highlighting the macro skills of Speaking and Listening.
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the researchers discussed the topic/s and focused more on describing, expressing, asking, and giving information. The researchers considered social interaction as a vital role in language acquisition. • One of the researchers used guessing games and storytelling as an approach in teaching the lesson/s. These games will be administered simultaneously throughout the lesson, mainly in the motivation and evaluation part of the lesson plan. • Aided technology was also used for a more immersing experience through Kahoot and a four-pic one-word game application. (Disclaimer) The following applications are used only for educational purposes, instructional material, and any other means outside of this scope are not included. • Scaffolding and reward systems were employed to motivate the students to actively participate in the activities provided. • It was done repeatedly until improvement was observed on the abilities of the students. • Any progress was discussed with the students and carefully explained what the next cycle will be.
Observation	<p>A journal was used to document the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The progress of the intervention program upon administration. 2. The improvements and needs to be developed for the students from Day 1 of administering the intervention program while facilitating the teaching-learning through scaffolding method and reward system; 3. The English usage of the students during class recitations, activities, presentations, and whenever they converse with one another inside the class. 4. One of the researchers required the students to keep track of their progress through journaling.
Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researchers used the journal, student's output, and recitation as bases before moving to another cycle, and conclude if they gain confidence in speaking the English language. • After the administration of the intervention program, the students' confidence in using the English language will be assessed through Post-test.

Table 2. The Games Administered in Each Cycle (Session)

Speaking Proficiency (Area)	No. of Sessions	No. of Lesson	Game Implementation/Mechanics
Fluency and Accuracy	4	4	<p>Factual Texts The students will guess the texts presented using clues. It would be done by group or pair. They will use colloquial terms. The teacher will let the students use the texts in a sentence as he picks the clues inside the box. The winner will be given a price (Kahoot application).</p> <p>Picture perfect The students will observe the pictures and guess what is it. Each student will take turns in guessing using colloquial words (Kahoot application).</p> <p>Guess What? The students will play a four-pics one-word game. They will be grouped into two. The group that scores the highest will win. The teacher will paste a word on the forehead of the guesser. The clues should be presented using the English language. If they unintentionally speak "Filipino term", their time will be deducted by 1 second.</p> <p>Figuring It Out Each group will guess and arrange the jumbled words inside an envelope and they will recite it in front of the class. They must exhibit accuracy and fluency in speaking.</p>
Lack of Confidence	10	10	Students will improve and gain confidence in speaking the English language through the different game-based activities.
Pronunciation	6	6	<p>Tell Me Something The students will construct three sentences pertaining to the picture presented. They should pronounce the words correctly through narratology. Each of the students will list down all the mispronounced words for deduction.</p> <p>Fact Check The students will fill out the information about a famous actress. Then, each of them will present it in front of the class. The teacher will observe if they pronounce the words properly.</p>

Speaking Proficiency (Area)	No. of Sessions	No. of Lesson	Game Implementation/Mechanics
			<p>Conversation Matters The students will create their own dialogue based on their chosen topic. Each dialogue should use a colloquial word.</p> <p>What To Say The students will react and reenact a scenario wherein they will interview a famous person. Each group will be graded according to their speaking skill, delivery, and clarity.</p> <p>Storytelling The teacher will let the students read two famous short stories. Afterwards, they will arrange the stories following the elements of a short story. One student will read the first line and he/she will choose the next reader. They will pick an emoji to what tone they will use while reading.</p> <p>The teacher will ask each student to pick a story strip in the mystery box. They will read the strip loud and clear. Then, they will tell what element of a short story it pertains.</p>

3. Results and Discussion

Table 3. Pretest and Posttest Results on the Speaking Confidence of the Students

Input	Mean Score	z-value	p-value
Pretest	9.83	-2.93	.003*
Posttest	19.68		

*Significant at .05 level of confidence.

Presented in Table 3 are the pretest and posttest results on the students' speaking confidence. As it is shown in the table, the speaking confidence of the students prior to the implementation of the intervention, *SPEAK UP*, is very low compared to their confidence index in the post-test. The mean difference, 9.85, suggests a great margin to be considered. Apparently, the z-value and the p-value present convincing data on the known improvement of the students along with their speaking confidence in using the English language. Thus, it can be said that *SPEAK UP*, in the context and parameters of this study, improved the speaking confidence of the students. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores on the speaking confidence of the respondents is hereby rejected.

The foregoing results construe with the studies of Basic [31] and Bagagnan [32]. It was concluded that practicing speaking is now an important aspect of English education that helps students increase their speaking confidence. Further, Heyde [33] concluded that a higher degree of self-confidence is favorably associated with speaking skills.

Table 4. Effect Size of SPEAK UP on the Speaking Confidence of the Students

	Cohen's D value	Interpretation
Pretest, Posttest results	.56	Medium Effect

Presented in Table 4 is the effect size of the project *SPEAK UP* on the speaking confidence of the respondents. It shows that there is a medium effect of the intervention. According to Cohen's criteria [34], the value of r shows that there is a medium effect of Project *SPEAK UP* on the mean scores of the students in their speaking confidence in English. This implies that the provisions of Project

SPEAK UP impacted significant effects on shaping the speaking confidence of the students. Thus, it can be inferred that the provisions of Project *SEPAK UP* are significantly effective in raising the speaking confidence of the students.

The foregoing results along the effect size of a game-based strategy construe with the study of Gapasin and Bautista [35]. In their study, they concluded that game-based strategy boosts students' communication skills effecting a great impact on using English as a medium of communication. Thus, they recommended gamification in education.

4. Conclusion

This study concentrated on the confidence of the students in speaking in English, which is regarded as very significant, especially during this current age. Based on the overall findings, it can be concluded that *SPEAK UP*, a game-based intervention program, improved the speaking confidence of the student respondents. Thus, it is further concluded that the intervention brings a medium effect on the respondents' speaking confidence.

5. Implications to Theory and Practice

The main aim of this research study was to address the lack of research evidence on the confidence in speaking in English of students in the locality. The growing concern about the English proficiency skills of the students and the current gaps in knowledge about the alternative medium to teach English such as game-based activities, and the confidence of students prompted the researcher to conduct the study. This intervention could eliminate or lessen the barriers experienced by the teacher, and students both internal and external factors thus, strengthening their speaking skills while engaging in a colloquial (casual) conversation. Supported by sufficient data from this study, the teachers should use a variety of game-based activities in the teaching-learning process such as guessing games, storytelling, puzzle, and rally games. Future researchers could use this to venture into other aspects of language learning in their future studies such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and lexical meaning.

Furthermore, an in-depth study on how game-based activities enhance the speaking confidence of the students should be done. Due to the limitations brought by the pandemic, the researcher proposed that the study should be conducted in a wider scope of the population. This intervention could also be beneficial in addressing other macro skills (Writing, reading, and listening) based on the researcher's observations.

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