



**UNIVERSIDAD ESTATAL PENÍNSULA DE SANTA ELENA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES
PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

**“VIDEO GAMES AS AN AUTHENTIC SPACE TO
STRENGTHEN SPEAKING SKILLS IN EFL UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS”**

RESEARCH PROJECT

As a prerequisite to obtain a:

**BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL
AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

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Advisor's Approval

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Sincerely,

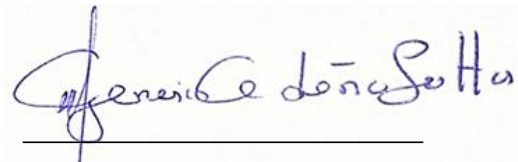
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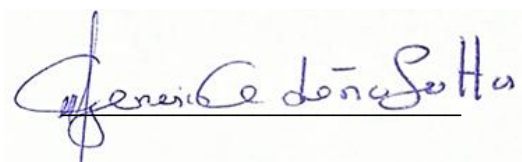
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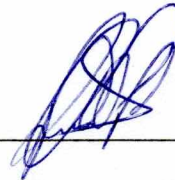
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I want to thank God for allowing me to reach this moment, for sustaining me with his strength even in the midst of pain, and for giving me the wisdom, patience, and hope necessary to complete this important stage of my life.

My deepest gratitude goes to my parents, Washington Antonio Cedeño Farías and Carmen Monserrate Saltos Intriago. This logo belongs to them as much as it does to me, because it has been built upon their effort, their love, and the countless sacrifices they have made to see me grow.

Dad, thank you for those worn hands, marked by so much work to give me a better future. Mom, thank you for being my refuge, my support, and my strength in the most difficult days. You have both been my greatest example of perseverance and the inspiration that has driven me to keep fighting for my dreams.

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- Cedeño Saltos Génesis Daniela

Dedication

With immense love, gratitude, and hope, I lovingly dedicated this thesis to my parents, Washington Cedeño and Carmen Saltos. Their unwavering examples of perseverance, courage, integrity, and faith in God's presence. Their support gave me strength to keep going, even in the moments when I felt I could not continue. This achievement is as much theirs as it is mine.

-With love, Cedeño Saltos Génesis Daniela

Abstract

This research focuses on analyzing the experiences of university students as they practice English through real-time online video games. To get information related to the research topic, a literature review was carried out, considering exclusion and inclusion criteria related to the validity of the sources, publication dates, and the connection to the environment being studied. This literature review allowed us to gather theoretical, pedagogical, and legal information that serves as support for the research. Innovative pedagogical models and the current legal regulations in Ecuador serve as a fundamental basis for this document. Additionally, a one-on-one interview was conducted with a sample of five university students, who were given a semi-structured interview with questions aimed at understanding their experience practicing English in settings such as video games. Through the interviews, it was possible to get a contextualized view of the research topic; the interviewees shared their opinions regarding the experience they have when interacting in English through the video game's interface. An important connection with the theoretical framework was evident, coinciding on elements such as safety, familiarity, a friendly atmosphere, the difference in pressure between the academic environment and the gaming environment, among other aspects. These elements obtained through the interviews allowed us to draw conclusions and make recommendations that address the research questions posed.

Keywords: video games, education, foreign language, teaching-learning

Resumen

La presente investigación centra su atención en el análisis de la experiencia que viven los estudiantes universitarios al poner en práctica el idioma inglés a través de los videojuegos online en tiempo real. Con la finalidad de obtener información relacionada con la temática de investigación se realizó una revisión bibliográfica, considerando criterios de exclusión e inclusión relacionados con la validez de las fuentes, las fechas de publicación y la relación con el entorno que se estaba investigando. Esta revisión bibliográfica permitió recopilar información teórica, pedagógica y legal que sirva como sustento a la investigación.

Modelos pedagógicos innovadores y la normativa legal vigente en el Ecuador sirven como base fundamental para el presente documento. De manera adicional se llevó a cabo una entrevista uno a uno con una muestra de cinco estudiantes universitarios, a quienes se les aplicó una entrevista semiestructurada con preguntas orientadas a conocer su experiencia de práctica del idioma inglés en entornos como los videojuegos. Por medio de las entrevistas se pudo tener una visión contextualizada de la temática de la investigación; los entrevistados emitieron su criterio con relación a la experiencia que viven al interactuar en idioma inglés a través de la interfaz del videojuego, se evidenció una relación importante con la fundamentación teórica, coincidiendo en elementos como: la seguridad, la familiaridad, el ambiente de amistad, la diferencia de presión entre el ambiente académico y el de los juegos, entre otros aspectos, estos elementos obtenidos por medio de las entrevistas permitieron establecer conclusiones y recomendaciones que respondan a las preguntas de investigación planteadas.

Palabras clave: videojuegos, educación, lengua extranjera, enseñanza-aprendizaje

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Introduction

Education is a social process heavily dependent on the context in which it unfolds. Changes in the educational process depend a lot on the society in which education takes place; in the same way, that society evolves according to the type of education it receives. This creates a two-way relationship between society and education, since the development of one influences the evolution of the other. In this context, it's clear that changes in social environments are what give rise to the emergence of different educational paradigms.

During the industrial boom, the main goal of education was to train people to become excellent workers in the medium and long term. Emphasis was placed on punctuality, following instructions immediately, and efficiently carrying out repetitive tasks and methodical procedures. These elements were prioritized because education was aimed at shaping a specific type of person.

Over time, society's needs changed; the demand shifted from repetitive manual labor to people with good judgment, capable of making innovative contributions to society. They were looking for proactive, forward-thinking individuals who not only carried out industrial tasks but also contributed to society in various ways. As a result, new educational models emerged that went beyond blindly following orders and mechanically completing instructions, focusing instead on encouraging critical thinking.

An additional key factor in the evolution of education is access to teaching resources. Decades ago, teachers' resources were limited to textbooks, blackboards, chalk, and visual aids like posters, photographs, or flashcards, as these were the only tools available in that social context. However, the early 21st century brought a massive technological leap; the advent of portable devices, the internet, and related digital technologies transformed society as a whole. Despite this evolution, education remained apart from technology, based on the idea that such elements—far from aiding the

educational process—served as distractions and diverted students' attention from what was truly important: memorizing and repeating.

Between 2020 and 2021, the shift in education necessitated by the pandemic forced classrooms to migrate to digital systems, thereby breaking the prevailing paradigm regarding technology in education. The entire educational system had to engage with digital frameworks, gamification processes, and the use of technological resources and games within the educational process. All of the above leads to a significant interaction between digital games and education, demonstrating that elements of these games contribute meaningfully to the teaching-learning process.

The paradigm separating digital games from education no longer exists; on the contrary, they are now frequently used as resources within the educational process. Video game sessions involve significant player interaction, incorporating elements that greatly benefit education. In the context of learning English, one can observe features such as interaction with native English speakers, real-time dialogue, the need to collaborate to achieve shared goals, a sense of camaraderie among players, and the absence of stress or tension associated with grading or assessment, among others.

This research aims to analyze the experiences of university students who interact with others through video games while practicing their English speaking skills, with the goal of identifying the key elements present in these experiences.

Chapter I

The Problem

1.1. Research Topic

Video Games for Learning English.

1.2. Title of Project

Video Games as an Authentic Space to Strengthen Speaking Skills in EFL
University Students.

1.3. Problem Statement

When analyzing the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL), it is important to consider that the development of speaking skills represents one of the greatest challenges for the educational community. Although innovative and communicative methodologies and access to various technological resources are currently being implemented, many students still face difficulties expressing themselves orally in a language other than their mother tongue. Among the factors that influence this problem is the limited exposure to real contexts of interaction and dialogue with other people in a foreign language.

Despite the growing interest shown in recent years by the academic field in digital technologies applied to education, a considerable distance remains between video games and their use. Even today, video games are still viewed primarily as sources of entertainment and distraction, with their true potential for enhancing language learning often overlooked. This perspective significantly limits the exploration and utilization of the pedagogical potential and opportunities these virtual spaces offer for developing oral communication skills.

Consequently, video games fail to be fully integrated into English teaching strategies, hindering their use as tools to enhance the teaching-learning process. This

neglects the advantages these environments can offer in fostering the development of linguistic competencies, especially oral expression.

Excluding video games from learning environments represents a significant loss of the opportunities these spaces offer for the educational process, overlooking the possibility of creating more motivating educational experiences for students, based on their context and reality, and responsive to their individual interests. It should be considered that current video games promote real-time interaction, cooperative activities, peer negotiation, and collaborative decision-making—elements that are highly relevant when it comes to teaching based on the principles of communicative language learning. Ignoring these environments means relying solely on traditional teaching contexts and strategies, which in most cases fail to generate sufficient levels of interest, excitement, and spontaneous participation from students.

This research is of great importance due to the current educational need to identify alternative and innovative spaces that complement traditional English teaching methods. Considering video games as a genuine space for strengthening oral expression skills will allow teachers to better understand the educational potential of these digital environments and provide concrete and validated information on their impact on English language learning. The results of this study will serve as the basis for selecting and designing more dynamic and inclusive pedagogical strategies, techniques, and tools, with the aim of fostering the development of communicative competencies and contributing to the holistic education of students, thus preparing them to interact effectively in social and professional contexts.

1.4. Problem Question

1.4.1. General Question

- How do EFL university students describe their experience of using online multiplayer video games as authentic spaces for practicing speaking skills in English?

1.4.2. *Specific Questions*

- How EFL university students perceive online video games serve as authentic spaces for oral practice in English, fostering spontaneous interaction among EFL students?
- What are EFL university students' perceptions about the role of video games in improving their speaking skills in English?
- How do EFL university students describe the differences in their experiences of practicing speaking English through online multiplayer video games inside and outside academic settings?

1.5. Objectives

1.5.1. *General Objective*

- To examine EFL university students' perceptions and experiences regarding the use of online multiplayer video games as authentic spaces for practicing speaking skills in English.

1.5.2. *Specific Objectives*

- To describe EFL university students' perceptions of how online multiplayer video games serve as authentic spaces that promote spontaneous oral communication.
- To analyze EFL university students' perceptions of the role of online multiplayer video games in the development of their fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and confidence when speaking English.

- To explore EFL university students' experiences of practicing spoken English through online multiplayer video games inside and outside academic settings.

1.6. Justification

This research is important because it allows us to analyze the need to identify innovative strategies that contribute to strengthening oral expression skills in students of English as a foreign language and aims to provide information that serves as a basis for improving pedagogical and didactic processes. In today's society where English language has a fundamental role in communication, in both, academic and professional development, it is relevant to explore scenarios that hearten its practice in contexts closely related to students' realities. From this perspective, online multiplayer video games provide an environment in which players interact and communicate in real time, allowing them to use the language spontaneously while participating in a shared activities in order to complete common goals. This serves as an initial learning space for oral expression, allowing them to participate in communicative situations that demand negotiation of criteria, exchange of opinions, and collaborative problem-solving. For these reasons, analyzing their educational potential allows us to respond to the new learning dynamics of the digital age.

Initially, students of English as a foreign language will benefit, as they will have access to more motivating and effective strategies based on their personal interests to strengthen their oral expression and communicative skills through real-world practice. Similarly, teachers will have access to information that will allow them to incorporate the use of video games as innovative resources in classroom activities, promoting active participation and meaningful learning in students. Likewise, educational institutions will benefit from formal research, as it becomes a reference document for generating and promoting pedagogical and didactic innovation in their curricula.

It also paves the way for leveraging the digital spaces that are part of students' daily lives to create more contextualized learning experiences. In this sense, the present research aims to understand the experiences and perception of university students regarding the use of these digital environments as spaces for practicing speaking. The findings can provide useful information for teachers and researchers interested in exploring new ways to integrate language learning into the digital contexts where students already participate. Thus, this study has educational, academic and social relevance by broadening our understanding of the use of video games in English language teaching

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Background

2.2 International Background

Internationally, several studies have analyzed how video games can function as authentic spaces that reduce speaking anxiety and promote oral interaction among EFL students. Unlu and Aydin (2023), for example, studied the relationship between online game use and oral anxiety in adolescent English learners. They observed that most students regularly played games in English and exhibited moderate levels of speaking anxiety.

However, those who preferred online games in English showed clear reductions in this anxiety. The authors recommended that EFL teachers encourage the use of these environments because they help identify and address problems associated with speaking anxiety.

Furthermore, the study highlighted that video games offer real opportunities to interact with English in a simple setting, which helps reduce anxiety and strengthen oral communication (Unlu & Aydin, 2023). Although background questionnaires and the FLCAS scale were administered, the authors note that more research is needed to examine the relationship between video games and oral anxiety in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts especially among young people and adults.

Along similar lines, Rubio Alcalá et al. (2023) analyzed English vocabulary learning through narrative and fantasy video games. The aim was to identify whether players were aware of the language acquisition that occurs during gameplay and whether this type of experience could be linked to long-term learning. The 458 participants completed an online questionnaire, and the results showed that these video games facilitate

the acquisition of new vocabulary and its long-term retention. Although the study focused on vocabulary, the findings suggest broader implications for other language skills, as participants perceived these games as motivating environments for learning. The authors describe these types of video games as spaces where players enter fictional worlds, navigate environments with different elements, communicate through different resources, and participate according to the game's objectives, which opens genuine opportunities for language practice and can reinforce motivation to communicate orally. However, they also point out the lack of qualitative studies that explore the long-term effects of these experiences in greater depth, and therefore recommend expanding the research and even considering more data to analyze how this learning transfers to real-life situations (Rubio Alcalá, Hadjistassou, & Ferrero-Rodríguez, 2023).

Fouzia (2022) investigated how EFL university students perceive the use of online video games as a strategy to improve their oral expression. Two hundred and ten English language students in Algeria were surveyed, and the results indicated that they recognize that online video games can increase vocabulary, improve pronunciation, reduce anxiety, and boost motivation. These effects, they reported, strengthened their oral skills almost unconsciously. As Fouzia (2022) states, “Students recognized the positive impact of video games on increasing vocabulary, improving pronunciation, reducing anxiety, and increasing motivation, which in turn positively and unconsciously affects their speaking ability” (p. 391). Although the study was quantitative, it highlights the need to examine how the current generation's natural strategies, especially those linked to digital entertainment, influence their oral development. The author also suggests that it is important to raise awareness among teachers and families about the educational role these games can play and to promote their integration into oral expression activities to enhance student motivation and engagement.

Another relevant contribution is that of Hofmeyr (2022), who conducted a qualitative study on the cooperative game “Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes” to explore second language acquisition outside the classroom. During four hours of recording, interactions between three students were analyzed, identifying moments of meaning negotiation, the use of communicative strategies, and evidence that this type of free interaction facilitates the acquisition of vocabulary and grammatical structures. As the author notes, “the analysis revealed occasional instances of these processes, as well as evidence that interaction based on unstructured games can facilitate the acquisition of L2 vocabulary and grammatical structures”. This study reinforces the idea that video games can become authentic spaces that allow for spontaneous, collaborative, and meaningful language practice.

2.3 National Background

In Latin America, studies on video games in English language learning are growing, although they are still scarce, especially in Ecuador. Díaz Correa et al. (2024) analyzed the elements present during digital interaction in multiplayer video games and described how the elements in these environments encourage the creation of virtual communities where users can learn, communicate, and interact through text and voice chats, in-game signals, gestures, and emojis. That research argues that there is an important relationship between the use of video games and the development of social interaction among players, which turns gaming spaces into learning environments. As they state, “The relationship between social interaction and multiplayer online video games promotes the generation of virtual communities”.

However, there is a persistent lack of qualitative studies in Ecuador focusing on universities, including the State University of the Santa Elena Peninsula. No research has been identified that analyzes students' experiences using video games as a genuine practice space for speaking English, creating a significant gap in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy.

In summary, while international literature offers valuable evidence on the role of video games in oral interaction and motivation for learning English, studies in Ecuador remain limited. This lack of local research justifies the contribution of the present study, which will offer a qualitative and phenomenological analysis of the perceptions of students at the Santa Elena Peninsula State University. It is hoped that this will contribute to the development of more contextualized pedagogical strategies that are aligned with the realities of language teaching in the country.

2.4 Pedagogical basis

The foundation of this research lies in a constructivist pedagogical perspective, incorporating sociocultural and communicative dimensions; from this standpoint, the student plays an active role in constructing knowledge through authentic learning experiences. Within this framework, the use of video games in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) creates a learning environment that fosters interaction, conflict resolution, peer collaboration, and the development of communicative skills in real-world contexts where students are immersed. Video games transcend mere entertainment, becoming spaces where learners practice the language for genuine communicative purposes, enabling them to make decisions in scenarios that require the use of English. Recent studies demonstrate that digital game-based learning environments boost participation, motivation, and opportunities for authentic communication—all essential elements for developing oral proficiency among EFL students.

Constructivism

Constructivism asserts that learning occurs when students actively construct new knowledge based on their own experiences and frequent interaction with their environment. From this perspective, video games provide immersive environments in which students learn through interaction, experimentation, and solving contextualized challenges. In this way,

learning shifts from a passive activity of receiving information to a participatory one in which students use English to achieve specific objectives within the game. This structure strengthens aspects such as autonomy, critical thinking, and self-regulated learning—fundamental competencies in education that are closely related to the principles of active learning (Gatrell, 2025).

Sociocultural theory of learning

Another criterion supporting this research is the sociocultural theory of learning. This theory maintains that cognitive development occurs through social interaction and the mediation of cultural tools. In multiplayer video games, students actively participate in communication processes that involve collaborative criteria, process negotiation, consensus-based problem-solving, and real-time decision-making. These interactions between players and their peers foster the development of communicative competence because participants use language not for pedagogical or pre-established learning purposes, but rather for a real and immediate purpose. (Taguchi et. al., 2022).

Communicative Language Teaching

This research also draws on the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. This approach considers the main objective of language learning to be developing the student's ability to communicate effectively in real, everyday situations. Under this approach, teaching should prioritize authentic tasks, real-world interaction, and functional language use, rather than theory and the memorization of grammatical rules. Digital video games offer precisely these scenarios where students must exchange information, formulate joint strategies, ask for help from their peers, negotiate conflict resolution agreements, and react immediately using spoken language as a communication tool. These conditions foster the development of fluency, pronunciation, contextualized vocabulary, and communicative confidence (Taguchi et. al., 2022).

Regarding the specific skill of speaking, various studies conclude that this is one of the most complex competencies for students of English as a foreign language, as factors such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, limited exposure to the language and therefore little practice, and limited opportunities for oral interaction in real life come into play. In this context, video games reduce the emotional element by creating less formal environments where communication arises spontaneously during gameplay. Recent research offers insight into the experiences students have when interacting in digital environments—specifically through video games—as a space for practicing the English language. (Gunawan, 2025).

2.5 Theoretical basis

Games

The concept of video games has evolved, moving beyond being considered merely entertainment tools to becoming learning environments capable of promoting the development of cognitive, social, and linguistic skills. Within the educational field, video games foster practical learning through experience, as they place students in interactive scenarios where they must solve problems, collaborate with other participants, and communicate to achieve common goals (Tran, 2023).

Authentic learning

The concept of an authentic learning space refers to environments in which students use their knowledge and skills in situations very similar to those they would encounter in real life. In language learning, an authentic learning space implies that oral expression is used to fulfill a real communicative function and not merely as an object of study. Online video games meet this characteristic because players must constantly interact through instructions, strategies, negotiations, and decision-making using English as the language of communication (Gatrell, 2025).

Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL) is one of the main theoretical foundations of this research. This approach encourages teachers to use video games as teaching tools in their academic activities by taking advantage of the motivation and interest they can generate in students, which leads to a significant improvement in academic performance. According to Gatrell (2025), video games allow players to develop language skills due to the need for interaction between players and constant feedback. These features let students use language to solve real-world problems within the virtual environment, promoting meaningful learning.

As mentioned earlier, one of the main difficulties in developing oral English skills is communication anxiety, nervousness, and fear of making mistakes. Many students experience fear of speaking for fear of making errors or being negatively evaluated. Video games help reduce this anxiety because the main focus is on solving the game's challenges rather than on linguistic correctness. Consequently, communication occurs more spontaneously and naturally, leaving obligation and formality aside, thus fostering the development of fluency and confidence. Recent research shows the videogames may help students feel more comfortable communicating in English (Gunawan, 2025).

2.6 Legal basis

Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador

The Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador constitutes the primary legal foundation of this research. Article 26 establishes that "education is a right of all persons throughout their lives and an unavoidable and inexcusable duty of the State, establishing it as a priority area of public policy and a guarantee for equality and social inclusion." The provisions of this article support the development of research aimed at improving the teaching and learning processes of the English language through innovative pedagogical strategies.

Furthermore, Article 350 establishes that "the purpose of the Higher Education System is academic and professional training with a scientific, humanistic, and technological vision, as well as the generation and dissemination of knowledge to contribute to national development." In accordance with this, Article 387 stipulates that "it is the responsibility of the State to promote scientific research, technological development, innovation, and the construction of a knowledge-based society." Both articles provide the constitutional basis for research that integrates digital technologies into university educational processes.

The Organic Law of Higher Education (LOES) constitutes the main regulatory framework governing higher education institutions in Ecuador. Article 3 of the LOES establishes that "higher education is a right of individuals and a public good, oriented towards the general interest." Likewise, Article 12 states that "the Higher Education System is governed by principles such as quality, relevance, equal opportunities, innovation, scientific production, and social responsibility." These principles also support research aimed at the continuous improvement of educational processes through the incorporation of innovative technological tools such as video games.

Similarly, Article 13 stipulates that "among the functions of the Higher Education System are the promotion of scientific research, technological development, innovation, and knowledge generation, in addition to guaranteeing quality academic training and strengthening teaching and scientific research." Consequently, this research aligns with the aims and functions established by the LOES by proposing evidence-based teaching strategies to strengthen oral English proficiency.

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

3.1 Methods

This research makes it possible to analyze the experience students have when using video games as a space to practice spoken English. This approach allows for the exploration of different experiences, perceptions, interactions, and meanings that participants construct while using video games as a resource for communicative language practice, prioritizing a detailed understanding of the phenomenon within its natural context.

The qualitative approach is characterized by studying phenomena from the perspective of the people directly affected by the research variables, considering reality as a social construct in which context and individual experiences have a marked influence. In this approach, the researcher becomes the primary instrument for collecting and interpreting information, fostering a close and realistic understanding of the context, which makes it possible to grasp the complexity of educational processes (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

In this study, a qualitative approach allows us to understand how university students utilize video games as authentic spaces for interaction in English, to identify the communicative strategies they employ during gameplay, and analyze the experience students have in these digital spaces.

3.2 Instruments

A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect the data. This guide was administered through one-on-one interviews with university students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This instrument was chosen due to the qualitative nature of the research, as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the perceptions, experiences, opinions, and meanings

that participants attribute to the use of video games as authentic spaces for practicing English.

The semi-structured interview is one of the most widely used instruments in qualitative research because it combines a pre-planned structure with the flexibility necessary for the interviewee to openly express their criteria and opinions on relevant aspects that emerge during the interaction between the researcher and the participant. This type of interview facilitates the collection of rich, detailed, and contextualized information, allowing for an understanding of the phenomenon from the perspective of those who experience it (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

The interview guide was designed based on the research objectives, the categories of analysis established in the theoretical framework, and a review of the scientific literature related to learning English through video games. The questions were open-ended, designed to encourage broad and reflective responses that would allow for a comprehensive description of students' experiences with video games, how they perceive these games provide opportunities for interaction in English.

The interview also included follow-up or in-depth questions that allowed the researcher to expand upon the information when participants' responses required further explanation or examples. This characteristic is typical of semi-structured interviews and facilitates the understanding of complex educational phenomena by enabling the exploration of aspects not initially anticipated but relevant to the study's objectives (Flick, 2022).

3.3 Data Collection Processing and Resources

The data collection process followed a systematic and organized approach, adhering to the methodological principles of qualitative research and respecting the established ethical criteria for research studies. Its purpose was to obtain in-depth and contextualized

information about the experiences, perceptions, and judgments of university students about how they view video games as a space for practicing English (EFL).

The initial contact was made with the participants to explain the purpose, scope, and relevance of the study. At this stage, it was explained that their participation was entirely voluntary, that they could leave the study at any time without any repercussions, and that the data provided would be treated confidentially and used solely for academic purposes.

Also, the interviewees read and signed an informed consent form before starting the interview, this way the confidentiality of the information and its proper use was ensured.

After confirming attendance, the date, time, and format of the one-on-one interview with each student were set. A calm, pleasant place without distractions was chosen to encourage open and free dialogue. The conversations were held separately (one-on-one), creating a safe and comfortable relationship between the researcher and the participants, which was necessary to obtain deep and relevant data.. According to Creswell and Poth (2023), this type of contact helps to explore private experiences and understand the meanings people attribute to the subject matter.

A semi-structured guide, previously created and validated by experts, was used in each interview. The researcher asked open-ended questions about the study categories, such as the students' experiences with video games, opportunities to speak English, the influence of these environments on the development of oral expression, their motivation to communicate, and the difficulties they encountered during the process. If necessary, follow-up questions were asked to expand upon or clarify the participants' responses, always maintaining the flexibility inherent in semi-structured interviews (Flick, 2022).

With the explicit permission of all participants, the conversations were recorded using microphones to ensure the accuracy of the data obtained and minimize the risk of missing

important details. As additional support, the study included written notes recording body language, postures, silences, facial expressions, and environmental circumstances that could enhance the final analysis of the findings.

Once the interviews were completed, the audio recordings were transcribed, trying to faithfully preserve the participants' arguments. The information obtained was analyzed and tabulated for a better understanding. To protect the participants' identities, each session was assigned an alphanumeric code (like E1, E2, E3), ensuring confidentiality while the collected data was analyzed and interpreted..

Finally, all the collected data were compiled into a textual corpus that served as the basis for the qualitative analysis. The recorded texts underwent a labeling and grouping phase, revealing patterns, recurring themes, coincidences, and contrasts within the narratives of the participants.

Table 1:

Data collection processing and resources

Question	Explanation
What?	Sample of five university student.
Where?	On Zoom
When?	PAO 2026 -1
How?	Interview one to one
What for?	To obtain information about students' experiences practicing English through interaction in video games.

Note: Created by Génesis Cedeño, 2026

3.4 Population and sample

For the purposes of this research, the study population consists of university students majoring in Educational Sciences with a specialization in Foreign Language Pedagogy. To ensure the collected information aligns with the research objective, a specific sample of students was selected for interviews.

A non-probability purposive sampling method is employed; this approach allows for the deliberate selection of a subgroup of students who meet a specific criterion—in this case, five students who frequently play via digital platforms and interact with other players in real time using English.

Chapter IV

Analysis of Findings

4.1 Brief explanation of the findings

For the purposes of this research, a series of one-on-one interviews were conducted with a sample of five university students who had experience with online video games. Due to logistical reasons, the interviews were conducted digitally. The interviewees showed a very positive attitude toward answering the questions and openly expressed their opinions regarding the impact of video games on foreign language learning. The main advantage of gathering information through direct interviews is the possibility of obtaining much more than a predetermined answer; interviews allow for broader information to be obtained that includes the interviewee's perspective and allows for a more comprehensive and specific understanding of the impact of the research variables.

4.2 Interpretation of interview results

1. How would you describe your experience using video games as spaces to communicate in English?

The responses received from the interviewees agree that the use of the foreign language in a less formal environment allows for a better flow of information, facilitating oral expression, since far from feeling the pressure of being evaluated or graded, they feel the confidence to dialogue with a peer who seeks to understand them; additionally they express that constant practice allows them to polish those details that could eventually represent some limitation in the development of the foreign language.

The participants' views support the research of Unlu and Aydin (2023), who argue that interaction spaces outside the school environment reduce student anxiety and foster better peer interaction. This implies that the experience of practicing English within the

context of digital video games depends on factors such as trust, friendship, and—to a certain extent—a departure from the formalities that often act as obstacles in the learning process. While educational paradigms have evolved significantly, moving away from traditionalist and behaviorist models, an atmosphere of formality and pressure inevitably persists in the classroom due to the presence of assessment and grading; the goal is not to abandon the seriousness of the classroom, but rather to leverage the familiarity found in the context of video games to enhance the teaching-learning process.

2. What characteristics of video games do you think promote communication in English?

Those interviewed believe that interaction and repetitive commands improve the learning of a foreign language. The constant use of certain terms means that, far from memorizing them without understanding them, they become part of their daily interaction and they can use them with a complete understanding of what they mean.

According to the interviewees, practicing English through video games resembles academic structures in many respects—yet without the pressure of grades or assessment. Constant practice, repetition, and the use of terms within a specific context make practicing English via video games a motivating and enriching experience. Rubio Alcalá et al. (2023) argue that this contextualized use—occurring within an environment that is familiar and relaxed for the student—is highly beneficial, making the experience of using digital media and video games for English learning more rewarding.

3. What situations within video games have required you to communicate in English with other people?

It is interesting to note that the primary moment for using the foreign language is when coordinating and planning actions; this suggests that, whereas traditional methods aim

for memorization and repetition—without allowing the learner to perceive a clear objective in the learning process—in video games, it is precisely the objective that motivates and facilitates oral interaction.

Rubio Alcalá et al., (2023) assert in their research that the learning process is more effective when analyzing real-life situations or scenarios involving everyday actions; this view aligns with the responses of survey participants, who state that interaction is easier when there is a clear objective to be achieved. Likewise, it is considered highly significant that this objective be shared by the individuals engaging in oral interaction. According to the aforementioned authors, these two factors make video game-based interaction an interesting—and, above all, enriching—experience for the process of interacting in English.

4. In what ways do video games allow communication in English to occur spontaneously or naturally?

It is evident that the objective is a key factor in oral fluency; when the goal is enjoyable and of shared interest, learning proceeds more smoothly. Furthermore, respondents state that working with peers facilitates interaction by eliminating the anxiety that can arise from the presence of a teacher and the prospect of being graded.

The students interviewed mentioned that the friendly and camaraderie-filled environment creates a better flow of oral communication. In this way, interacting with other players, rather than with teachers, changes the nature of the interaction. There's a feeling that there's always a hierarchical gap with teachers, which often gets in the way of smooth interaction because of grading and evaluation, while this gap disappears with other players, allowing for more spontaneous communication. Vygotsky supports this view, asserting that learning is a process heavily dependent on social context and that the environment either facilitates or hinders the learner's progress.

5. What does that communication mean to you in relation to your experience speaking this language?

The surveyed students agree that using English in informal conversations facilitates expression, as the goal is communication rather than a reliance on formalities or grammatical rules; this allows the language to flow more naturally and enables error correction through practice. They emphasize that they do not downplay the importance of formality, grammar, and language structure; however, the environment provided by video games allows them to interact using colloquial language. This makes the oral interaction experience much more pleasant and familiar, fostering more efficient communication and, in the long run, consolidating language skills through practice.

The respondents' views align with the perspective of Fouzia (2022), who notes that the video game environment creates an experience rich in contextualized vocabulary, thereby expanding students' lexicons. The author also points out that the interactive nature of video games reduces stress and the fear of speaking, facilitating interaction between the student and other players.

6. What elements of your English communication style do you think are present when you interact with other people in video games?

According to the interviewees, when speaking English within the spaces created by video games, individuals retain the distinctive traits of their oral expression; they are able to communicate and even convey their emotions and feelings, making the interaction far more authentic and sincere. Survey respondents indicated that the experience of oral interaction through video games allows students to maintain their own communication style—meaning they do not compromise their natural way of expressing themselves by forcing formal conventions.

Gatrell (2025) asserts that interaction in video game environments enables students to express themselves naturally; this aligns with the views of the surveyed students, who state that the absence of formalities or grading allows for more natural expression. This even influences how they link their spoken words to unfolding events, bypassing literal word-for-word translation—a process that greatly facilitates English learning, as the video game experience allows for contextualizing speech and understanding it beyond mere translation.

7. In what ways do you use video games to practice or use English in your daily life?

According to the respondents, using English-language environments and interfaces ensures that language practice is not confined to a specific time or class period, but rather allows for frequent use throughout the day. They state that, by stepping outside a fixed schedule, they no longer view using English as an obligation, but rather as a tool for their daily lives. Consequently, they believe that the experience within digital gaming environments offers significant advantages—specifically, that English usage is not restricted to a particular time of day (after which it would cease), but is instead employed at various times, at least once daily.

Taguchi et al. (2022) propose a theoretical framework that supports the respondents' views; the researchers argue that English usage becomes more efficient and practical outside of school settings, as the language flows more naturally and learners perceive it as a useful tool for interacting with their environment, rather than merely as part of the academic curriculum..

8. What strategies do you use to communicate in English during your interactions within video games?

According to the interviewees, the ability to link facts and events with specific

phrases is perhaps the most effective way to learn English; the goal is not merely to translate a phrase, but to relate it to its context. Furthermore, they note that repeating expressions after hearing them from another person greatly helps to gradually improve pronunciation.

Gunawan (2025) identifies pronunciation, spontaneity, and oral fluency as key aspects of learning English. From the perspective of the students surveyed, these criteria are met through the experience of playing video games, as there is open communication among all players and a clear link is established between expression and events; moreover, hearing a term frequently and pronouncing it repeatedly leads to a significant improvement in diction as a result of the experience.

4.1. Global interpretation of data from interview

Overall, the surveys were conducted without major issues, thanks to the willingness of the students who made up the sample. In most cases, the responses show an interesting correlation regarding the benefits that video game-based interaction offers for English language learning.

It is evident that the emotional aspect is generally considered a fundamental pillar in the development of oral skills; interviewees agree that eliminating fear and pressure makes the learning process more fluid, allowing for learning without the dread of being evaluated or graded. This fosters better interaction between dialogue partners, necessarily resulting in a much smoother and more efficient conversational structure.

Communication regarding the objective plays a crucial role in the dialogue among players; interviewees agree that when a common goal exists, communication ceases to be optional and becomes an imperative necessity, making the dialogue process essential. However, in educational sessions, the objective is purely academic, and in many cases, students have no awareness or understanding of the goal being pursued.

Those interviewed also agree that a language is not learned through mere translation; on the contrary, a connection between expression, action, and reality must be established so that the text can be linked to the concept without the need for translation. Interaction through video games enables the player to forge these connections between what is said and what occurs, thereby forming the concept in their mind rather than simply translating it into their native language.

The opportunity to interact with native English speakers is another advantage cited by respondents. Online video games enable real-time interaction not only with locals but also with people from different countries, creating the chance to engage with native English speakers—an opportunity to interact with someone who has mastered the language. Such chances do not often arise in daily life, given the lack of settings where one might encounter native English speakers.

Table 2

Student experiences practicing English through video games

Question	How would you describe your experience using video games as spaces to communicate in English?	What characteristics of video games do you think promote communication in English?	What situations within video games have required you to communicate in English with other people?
Answer	The use of the foreign language in a less formal environment allows for a better flow of information, facilitating oral expression, since far from feeling the pressure of being evaluated or graded	Become part of their daily interaction and they can use them with a complete understanding of what they mean	when coordinating and planning actions; this suggests that, whereas traditional methods aim for memorization and repetition
Author	Unlu and Aydin (2023) argue that interaction spaces outside the school environment reduce student anxiety and foster better peer interaction	Rubio Alcalá et al. (2023) argue that this contextualized use occurring within an environment that is familiar and relaxed for the student	Rubio Alcalá et al., (2023) assert in their research that the learning process is more effective when analyzing real-life situations or scenarios involving everyday actions

Note: Created by Génesis Cedeño, 2026

Table 3***Student experiences practicing English through video games***

Question	In what ways do video games allow communication in English to occur spontaneously or naturally?	What does that communication mean to you in relation to your experience speaking this language?	What elements of your English communication style do you think are present when you interact with other people in video games?
Answer	The objective is a key factor in oral fluency; when the goal is enjoyable and of shared interest, learning proceeds more smoothly	Using English in informal conversations facilitates expression, as the goal is communication rather than a reliance on formalities or grammatical rules; this allows the language to flow more naturally and enables error correction through practice	When speaking English within the spaces created by video games, individuals retain the distinctive traits of their oral expression; they are able to communicate and even convey their emotions and feelings
Author	Vygotsky supports this view, asserting that learning is a process heavily dependent on social context and that the environment either facilitates or hinders the learner's progress.	Fouzia (2022), notes that the video game environment creates an experience rich in contextualized vocabulary, thereby expanding students' lexicons	Gatrell (2025) asserts that interaction in video game environments enables students to express themselves naturally; this aligns with the views of the surveyed students, who state that the absence of

			formalities or grading allows for more natural expression.
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Note: Created by Génesis Cedeño, 2026

Chapter V

Conclusions and recommendation

Conclusions

Based on the literature review conducted and the responses from the various interviews, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Based on a literature review and surveys conducted with the selected student sample, it can be concluded that students view video games as genuine spaces for spontaneous oral communication among players (students). This is because, within the gaming environment, they can express themselves more freely-setting aside formalities, academic rigor, and the stress associated with assessment and grading-and learn through trial and error without fear of negative consequences.

Based on the information gathered, it can be concluded that video games are linked to fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and speaking confidence for several reasons, including: the constant repetition of commands and the mental association students make between a command and the action performed; the frequent exposure to English terms, which facilitates improved pronunciation; and interaction with peers in a spirit of camaraderie—free from evaluative or pedagogical scrutiny—which allows for more confident oral expression within a much more relaxed environment.

The students surveyed consider the video game environment to offer an experience that optimizes their English practice; as these games provide a space where they can interact with native English speakers, communicating in the language shifts from being merely an option to becoming an imperative necessity. Furthermore, certain English terms become part of their vocabulary or conversations outside the game itself, allowing them to strengthen their skills through frequent practice within these contexts.

Recommendation

Unfortunately, not all academic institutions possess adequate facilities for the frequent use of technological resources—specifically video games—making it difficult to recommend their regular use within the school setting. However, given that many students interact through video games outside the educational setting, teachers should organize activities and provide the necessary guidance to ensure that those with access to and frequent experience with video games can use them effectively to develop their foreign language skills. Teachers should create interactive games for the classroom—featuring instructions in English and requiring students to listen to prompts and respond in the target language—by applying video game mechanics to various classroom activities; this approach should extend beyond the digital realm to include physical movement games that involve giving instructions and require oral interaction.

English teachers should leverage the benefits of using video games in two distinct contexts: for students who frequently use this tool, teachers should provide guidance on the effective use of digital resources—formalizing the learning process somewhat without stripping away the element of fun inherent in video games. Conversely, for students who do not play video games, teachers should draw upon the frameworks and aspects of the digital experience and, whenever possible, emulate them within the classroom and during pedagogical activities

Given that recurring, necessary practice is a key element of using video games to practice English, teachers should focus on fostering this type of practice in the classroom. They should move away from traditional methods—such as rote vocabulary repetition or acting out scripted dialogues—and, instead, generate conversations in an atmosphere of camaraderie, contextualizing the language used so that English expressions relate to the

student's real-world environment.

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Annexes*Certified Anti-plagiarism System*

La Libertad, 20 de julio de 2026

Certificado Sistema Anti-Plagio

En calidad de tutor del Trabajo de Integración Curricular denominado “VIDEO GAMES AS AN AUTHENTIC SPACE TO STRENGTHEN SPEAKING SKILLS IN EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS” elaborado por la estudiante Cedeño Saltos Génesis Daniela, de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación e Idiomas, de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, me permito declarar que una vez analizado en el sistema anti plagio COMPILATIO, luego de haber cumplido los requerimientos exigidos de valoración, el presente trabajo de investigación, se encuentra con 7% de la valoración permitida, por consiguiente se procede a emitir el informe.

Atentamente,



Nieto Herrera Diego Josue, MSc.

TUTOR

**Certificado de análisis**

Compilatio Magister+ | UTB-ECU- Universidad Técnica de Babahoyo

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Interview result

Question N° 1: How would you describe your experience using video games as spaces to communicate in English?	
Student 1	My experience has been quite enriching, since in games the English arises from necessity and fun, not from obligation, because in this case the important thing is to coordinate to win the game, not to have perfect grammar, which helps you to communicate without any fear of making mistakes.
Student 2	Well, for me it's been an excellent way to practice my English, because that's what I'm currently studying in my degree in pedagogy of national and foreign languages. A few years ago, I was embarrassed to communicate with native English speakers, since at that time my English wasn't good enough to have a natural conversation. But since I started my degree, I've felt more confident, and around the end of 2025 I decided to try to communicate and make friends with these people from the game I used to play.
Student 3	My experience has actually been very good because you can basically practice or communicate with people who speak English, honestly. At first, it's a bit anxiety-inducing because sometimes you don't understand words or expressions, but as you talk with them, you can understand what they're saying.
Student 4	When you're playing a game, the priority is simply to play. You're not focused on precise pronunciation or grammar that adheres to the rules

	you've learned. This allows for a better flow of spoken expression, as the focus isn't on whether you speak well, but rather on whether your message is understood.
Student 5	When there's camaraderie among the speakers, some anxieties fade away. In this case, you're aware that your grammar and pronunciation aren't being graded, and this removes the barrier of fear. At the same time, practice leads to continuous improvement in your foreign language skills.

Question N° 2: What characteristics of video games do you think promote communication in English?

Student 1	One of the key characteristics, I think, is the mandatory teamwork. If you play any game, most modern games include a squad mode, making teamwork crucial for winning. Additionally, the vocabulary in these types of games tends to be very repetitive, which makes it easier to learn specific words. In this case, many of the words are like "loot," "kill," and "rush," which describe attacking the enemy. It's like a keyword that indicates we can attack the enemy without any problem, making them vulnerable.
Student 2	One of the biggest ways to improve communication in English is through cooperative or online games, where there is a wide variety of players and you can interact with different people from various countries, including, of course, English speakers.
Student 3	I believe that a very important characteristic is a visual context

	since by perhaps sharing the same screen or the virtual environment of that video game one can understand through the action that one does or through what one does or through an object or any type of thing that is going to be done in the game or in the game environment.
Student 4	I believe the main feature is the graphical environment; the interface offers recurring texts with which the player becomes familiar, to the point that they can name and use certain commands in English through practice alone, without needing a translation.
Student 5	The main feature of video games that helps in learning a foreign language is real-time interaction. This creates an imperative need to express your ideas to your teammate; there's no room for doubt, you must interact to achieve the desired result for the team.

Question N° 3: What situations within video games have required you to communicate in English with other people?	
Student 1	First of all, I think it's mostly about socializing—socializing in the lobby—which helps you, or rather, requires you to communicate with other people.
Student 2	I communicated with my team via text chat and sometimes through voice chat—where most people spoke English—and

	that's where we would plan, coordinate, and devise strategies to win these kinds of games. So, given the English proficiency I had at the time, I was able to hold natural conversations with them.
Student 3	Well, one example—often found in video games—involves strategies used under pressure. For instance, when someone is trying to do something quickly, rapid reactions are crucial; or perhaps problem-solving within the game, negotiating, trading, or making purchases—these are all situations that require communicating with another person in the moment.
Student 4	The need to devise a winning game strategy is the primary situation requiring oral communication with other players; while chat is an option, speaking allows for more efficient interaction and faster reactions.
Student 5	When coordinating actions with other players, fluid communication becomes a priority, as time acts as either an ally or an enemy—hesitation or delay can cost you the game.

Question N° 4: In what ways do video games allow communication in English to occur spontaneously or naturally?	
Student 1	I think that in this scenario, our brain focuses on survival and winning rather than on English as a communication tool; the language emerges spontaneously. Furthermore, there is the

	factor of repetition within a context—take specific slang terms, for instance: if you hear a phrase like "cover me" a hundred times, it sticks in your mind and you internalize it. On top of that, playing with friends creates emotional bonds; when you say a certain word accompanied by laughter or a similar reaction, your brain internalizes it, making it easier to memorize.
Student 2	Well, in my experience, this helps provide a starting point for a conversation. We often find it difficult to come up with a topic when talking to a complete stranger who speaks a different language, but sharing the same space and an interest in a video game gives us a foundation for communication. You can ask for tips or secrets about the game, or simply ask them to play a match with you—provided the game has a cooperative mode.
Student 3	Whenever there is an urgent need to play with someone who speaks English—whenever things flow naturally like that—grammatical rules or even fluency don't matter as much; what matters is that phrases simply come out automatically, enabling you to communicate with that person.
Student 4	In video games, there are no grades to cause anxiety; on the contrary, there is a fun objective. I believe it is this objective that allows the language to flow more naturally. There is no teacher-student dynamic; instead, there are two friends with a shared goal.
Student 5	Working with a peer eliminates the sense of fear or anxiety that

	might arise when you are with a teacher. Your friend can correct you indirectly—or simply repeat what you said but correctly—allowing you to learn through practice and without fear.
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Question N° 5: What does that communication mean to you in relation to your experience speaking this language?	
Student 1	In this case—in the game—you feel more at ease, that is, freer and without the fear of making a mistake. If we compare it to a classroom setting, I'd venture to say that it can feel a bit embarrassing, for instance, when you might make a mistake or something like that.
Student 2	Well, as I said before, it has been very important for me. It has really helped me improve the way I communicate in English. I used to have a lot of trouble—I didn't know how to strike up a conversation, and I made glaring errors in my writing.
Student 3	A key aspect is always building trust. Once you connect with that person and establish trust, everything flows—the entire conversation, the chat, or whatever is taking place within the game.
Student 4	Learning becomes less stressful and more enjoyable; the ability to interact with someone without being judged or graded is, without a doubt, a highly significant factor. Speaking with greater confidence—much like in Spanish—

	means that while certain words may not always be pronounced perfectly, they still successfully convey the message in a conversational way; this allows for learning without pressure.
Student 5	Speaking with greater confidence—much like in Spanish—means that while certain words may not always be pronounced perfectly, they still successfully convey the message in a conversational way; this allows for learning without pressure.

Question N° 6: What elements of your English communication style do you think are present when you interact with other people in video games?	
Student 1	I would say that telegraphic language—that is, short, direct phrases (which are commonly used—for example, "enemies here," "need healing," or simply "help me")—makes communication more precise.
Student 2	Well, I usually try to listen to or read carefully what is being said to me so I don't make any mistakes, since I might otherwise fail to fully grasp the message being conveyed.
Student 3	A very important element is active listening—listening to the person and paying attention to their accents and way of speaking.
Student 4	When you speak spontaneously, you retain your own unique way of expressing yourself; there are no canned phrases or scripts—it is simply you speaking as usual, just in another

	language.
Student 5	I believe all the basic elements of communication are preserved: familiarity, cordiality, and even the outward expression of feelings and emotions.

Question N° 7: In what ways do you use video games to practice or use English in your daily life?	
Student 1	I'd say one way to go about it is to watch streams by native speakers or players who speak English. That way, you can more effectively learn or internalize the slang, phrases, and common expressions used in the game. On top of that, if you're a language learner, it also helps to set the game—whether you're playing on a console or your mobile phone—to English.
Student 2	Well, I've always used video games to learn English since I was a kid. Believe it or not, video games can help you improve in three areas of English: reading, listening, and speaking. In games with a narrative, you end up doing a huge amount of reading—really, a massive amount.
Student 3	Well, as long as it's used to make time for leisure—time to share with that person—and also to practice; because when you play a video game with someone, you're practicing too, and you might be able to combine certain aspects or perhaps learn more from them.

Student 4	You can configure video games to use whatever language you deem most suitable, but you must realize that the most efficient way to learn a language is to practice it. That is why I use video games as a daily learning tool; I set my console and games to English, which forces me to use the language every day.
Student 5	Practice makes perfect; I try to practice my English while playing video games to improve my pronunciation and command of the language. In my day-to-day gaming, I make an effort to ensure my interactions with fellow players go beyond just the game itself—we often end up talking about our lives or interesting facts about everyday things.

Question N° 8: What strategies do you use to communicate in English during your interactions within video games?	
Student 1	One of the most important strategies is always to paraphrase. If I forget a technical or difficult word, I simply describe whatever I want to say in a straightforward way. Another strategy is keeping sentences short and direct to avoid misunderstandings. There is also "shadowing"—listening to expressions and repeating them exactly as native speakers do in order to learn from them.
Student 2	I try to use the words those people frequently use. I've noticed that they love using words like LOL, LMAO, and things like

	that. These are abbreviations used to express various emotions or convey a message using just a few words.
Student 3	I think a strategy that really helps—and it has certainly helped me in this case—is that since it’s a game where you don’t feel much fear or embarrassment about asking for help, you simply ask for it openly.
Student 4	Generally, I try to associate phrases with specific situations and repeat them in similar contexts; this way, rather than simply translating what is being said, the goal is to convey the idea of what I want to do or express.
Student 5	Listening and repeating allows me to improve my pronunciation; I repeat what I hear until I achieve the closest possible pronunciation, aiming to refine my diction.

Record meetings:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1OST2b9wYWzgKkL4oWRL-pUGEE2uqFK0z?usp=sharing>