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USING ACTION GAMES TO IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION IN THIRD GRADE STUDENTS

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Abstract. Many primary school students face difficulties in pronunciation, which often leads to low confidence and limited speaking participation in the classroom. This study investigates the effectiveness of action games in improving pronunciation among third grade students. The research was conducted with 15 students from class 3-E at School No 52 in Asaka district. The main problem identified in this study was that students struggled with pronouncing certain English sounds such as /th/, /r/, and /l/, and they often felt shy or afraid of making mistakes while speaking. To address this issue, a classroom-based action research approach was applied. Data were collected through classroom observation, audio recording, and pre-test and post-test assessments. The intervention included several action-based activities such as lip reading games, whisper chain exercises, and tongue twister practice. These activities were designed to increase student engagement, improve pronunciation accuracy, and encourage active participation. The results of the study showed that students made noticeable improvement in pronunciation after the intervention. They became more confident, more active in classroom activities, and less afraid of making mistakes. The findings suggest that action games are an effective and motivating teaching strategy for improving pronunciation in young learners, and they can be successfully integrated into primary school English lessons.

Key words: Young learners, third grade students, pronunciation, problem, classroom-based research, action games, speaking skills, language learning

Introduction. Learning a language is very important today, especially for young learners. However, many students have difficulties with pronunciation. They often feel shy and make mistakes when speaking. During my teaching practice, I observed that third grade students had problems with sounds such as /th/, /r/, and /l/. This became the main problem of my research. I also noticed that traditional teaching methods were not always effective, and students were not very active during lessons. Many researchers have discussed similar issues and suggested possible solutions. Lev Vygotsky (1978) explained that learning happens more effectively through social interaction. In my research, this idea was reflected when students worked together in games such as whisper chain, where they learned pronunciation from each other in a natural way. Joanne Kenworthy (1987) emphasized that repetition is very important in learning pronunciation, especially for mastering stress and difficult sounds. This idea was directly applied in my study through tongue twister activities, where students repeated words several times to improve accuracy.



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Jeremy Harmer (2007) suggested that using games in the classroom increases students' motivation and participation. This was clearly observed in my research, as students became more active and less afraid of making mistakes during action games. Scott Thornbury (2005) stated that speaking skills improve when learners are given more opportunities to practice language in meaningful contexts. In this study, whisper chain and lip reading activities provided such opportunities for real communication and pronunciation practice. Herbert Puchta (2014) also highlighted that young learners learn better through engaging and enjoyable activities. This idea strongly supports the use of action games in my classroom research, as students showed higher motivation and interest during lessons. Stephen Krashen (1982) emphasized that language learning becomes more effective when learners are exposed to meaningful input in a low-anxiety environment. He introduced the concept of the "affective filter," explaining that students learn better when they feel relaxed and motivated. This supports the use of action games, as they reduce stress and encourage natural language practice. Jean Piaget (1952) stated that children learn best through active involvement and hands-on activities. According to his theory, young learners understand and remember information better when they are physically engaged. This idea is reflected in action games, where students learn pronunciation through movement and interaction. James Asher (1977) developed the Total Physical Response (TPR) method, which connects language learning with physical movement. He believed that students learn faster when they respond to language with actions. This is closely related to action games, where students practice pronunciation through physical activities. Paul Nation (2001) highlighted the importance of repetition and practice in language learning. He explained that frequent exposure and repeated use of words help learners improve their pronunciation and fluency. This supports the use of tongue twisters and repeated speaking activities in this study.

However, in many classrooms, pronunciation is still taught in a traditional and repetitive way, without enough interactive activities. This creates a gap between theory and practice. Therefore, this study explores how action games can help improve pronunciation among third grade students.

The research questions of this study are:

How do action games affect the pronunciation of third grade students?

How effective are action games in improving students' pronunciation accuracy?

Do action games increase students' confidence in speaking English?

Which action game activities (lip reading, whisper chain, tongue twisters) are most effective for pronunciation improvement?

Method and Materials. This study used a classroom-based research method. It was conducted with 15 third grade students from class 3-A at School No 52. The research lasted for two weeks. At the beginning, I conducted a pre-test where students read words and sentences. This helped identify their pronunciation problems. I also observed their speaking during lessons. After that, I used action games as an intervention. The main activities were lip reading game, whisper chain game, and tongue twister practice. Lip



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Reading Game was a pronunciation activity in which students identified words by watching lip movements without hearing any sound. A student wore headphones and could not hear any sound. I silently pronounced a word. The student observed my lip movements and articulation and then guessed the word correctly. This game developed students' awareness of articulation and helped them improve correct pronunciation by focusing on mouth movements. Whisper Chain Game was a listening and pronunciation activity where a word was passed quietly from one student to another in a chain. Students stood in a line. I said a word to the first student. The first student whispered it to the next student, and the process continued until the last student. The last student said the word aloud, and it was compared with the original word. This game improved students' listening accuracy, concentration, and ability to maintain correct pronunciation while transferring spoken language. Tongue Twister Practice was a pronunciation activity based on repeating fast and difficult sentences. I gave tongue twisters to the students. They repeated them slowly first, then faster. Students also practiced in pairs and groups as a competition. For example: "She sells sea shells by the sea shore." "Three thin thinkers thought thoroughly." "Rita reads rapidly in the rainy room." By this activity, they improved pronunciation accuracy, fluency, and helped them practice difficult sounds such as /θ/, /r/, and /i/. The materials were simple and suitable for young learners. They included word lists for Whisper Chain game, headphones and short sentences for Lip Reading game, tongue twisters for practice and a mobile phone for recording,

Results. At the beginning, students had clear pronunciation problems. Many of them could not pronounce certain sounds correctly and felt shy when speaking. The pre-test results showed many mistakes. During the action stage, the use of games made the lessons more active and interesting. Students became more involved and were not afraid of making mistakes. Each activity helped in a different way. Lip reading improved their understanding of mouth movements. Whisper chain helped them focus on clear pronunciation. Tongue twisters improved their fluency and repetition. After two weeks, the post-test results showed improvement. Students made fewer mistakes and spoke more confidently. Their pronunciation became clearer, especially in difficult sounds.

Criteria	Pre-test	Post test
Pronunciation accuracy	Low	Improved
Confidence in speaking	Low	High
Participation in class	Passive	Active
Mistakes in sounds (/th/ , /r/ , /l/)	Frequent	Reduced

The table shows that students improved in all areas after using action games. Their pronunciation became clearer, and they participated more actively in lessons.



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Do you want to improve your pronunciation?
7 responses

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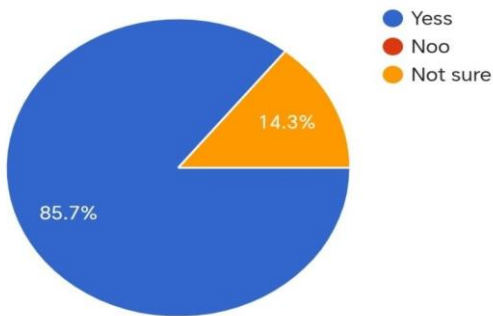


Figure 1

Students' pronunciation difficulties before the intervention. The results show that the most difficult sound for students was /th/ (42.9%), followed by /r/ (28.6%), while fewer students reported difficulty with /l/ (14.3%) and all sounds (14.3%).

Which sounds are difficult for you?
7 responses

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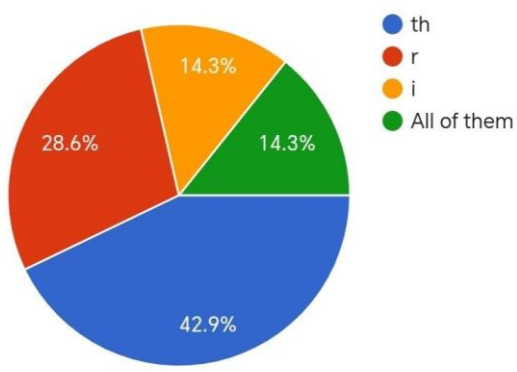


Figure 2

Students' pronunciation difficulties before the intervention. The results show that the most difficult sound for students was /th/ (42.9%), followed by /r/ (28.6%), while fewer students reported difficulty with /l/ (14.3%) and all sounds (14.3%).

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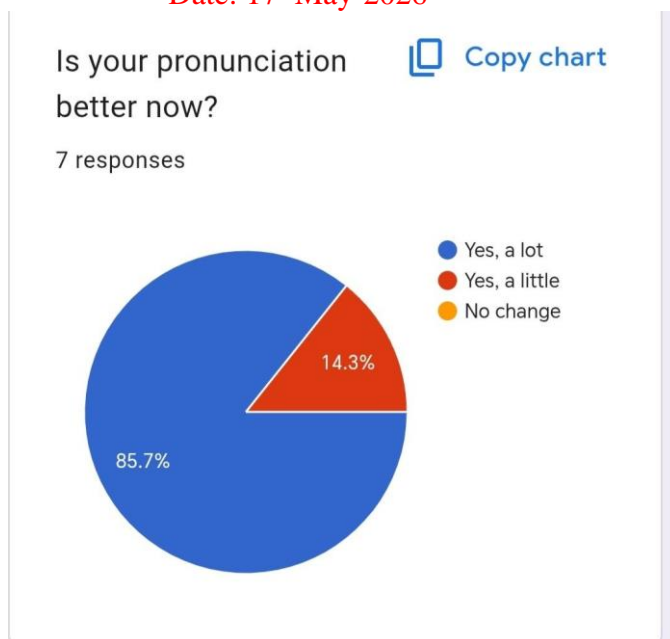


Figure 3

Students' pronunciation improvement after the intervention. The results indicate that most students (85.7%) reported significant improvement in their pronunciation, while a small number (14.3%) reported only slight improvement.

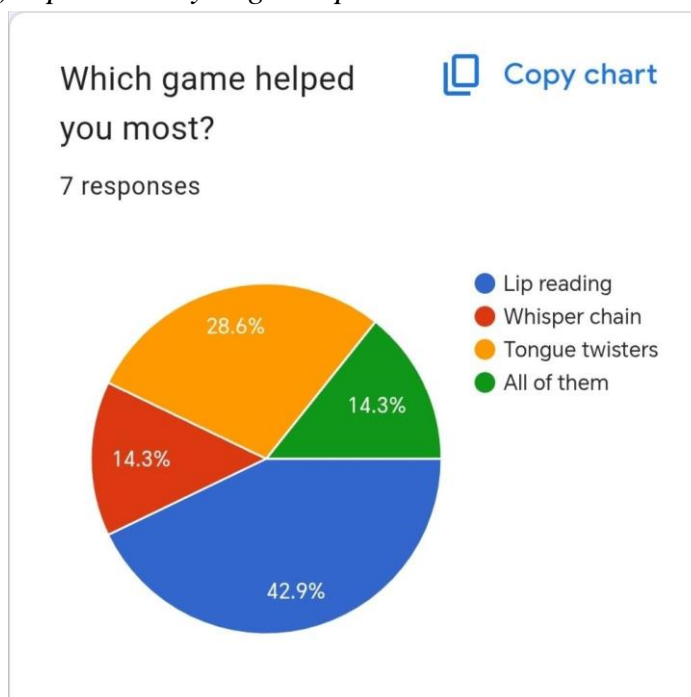


Figure 4

Students' preferred action game activities. The results show which action game activity students found most helpful and enjoyable for improving their pronunciation.

Discussion. The findings of this study show that action games had a positive effect on improving pronunciation among third grade students. Before the intervention, students had difficulties with English sounds such as /th/, /r/, and /l/. They were also shy and avoided speaking English in class. This was the main problem identified at the beginning of the research. After using action games such as lip reading, whisper chain, and tongue

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twisters, students showed clear improvement in pronunciation and confidence. The classroom became more active, and students were more willing to participate in speaking activities. One important reason for this improvement is that action games created a fun and stress-free learning environment, where students could practice without fear of making mistakes. These results are supported by previous researchers. Lev Vygotsky (1987) explained that learning happens better through social interaction, which was clearly seen in pair and group game activities. Jeremy Harmer (2007) stated that games increase motivation and engagement, which matches the increased participation in this study. Joanne Kenworthy (1987) emphasized the importance of repetition in pronunciation learning, which was applied through tongue twister practice. Scott Thornbury (2005) also highlighted that speaking practice in meaningful contexts is essential for fluency development.

The comparison table of pre-test and post-test results clearly demonstrates the improvement in students' pronunciation after the intervention. In the pre-test stage, students showed low pronunciation accuracy, low confidence, passive participation, and frequent mistakes. However, in the post-test results, all these aspects improved significantly. Students demonstrated higher pronunciation accuracy, increased confidence, more active participation, and fewer mistakes. This indicates that the improvement was consistent and not accidental, but a result of continuous practice through action games.

The figures support the results of this study. The pre-test shows that students had pronunciation difficulties, especially with some sounds, while the post-test shows clear improvement after using action games. This means that the activities were helpful for improving pronunciation. Students also showed positive attitudes towards the games, which helped increase their interest and participation in the lessons.

The research questions of this study can be answered as follows. Action games positively affected students' pronunciation by making lessons more interactive and engaging. Students' pronunciation accuracy improved, as shown in the post-test results, where they made fewer mistakes compared to the pre-test. Action games also increased students' confidence in speaking English, and they became less afraid of making errors. Among the activities used, tongue twisters were the most effective for improving fluency and repetition, whisper chain helped improve clarity and listening accuracy, and lip reading increased students' awareness of correct mouth movements and sound formation.

Conclusion. However, the study has some limitations. The number of participants was small, and the research period was short. Therefore, further research with a larger group and longer duration could give more detailed results. The study shows that action games are an effective and practical method for improving pronunciation in young learners and can be successfully used in primary school English lessons. The main problem of poor pronunciation and low confidence was solved through interactive and game-based activities. Students became more motivated, active, and willing to speak English during lessons.



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