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**TEMA
THE USE OF ONLINE GAMES FOR VOCABULARY ACQUISITION IN
1ST YEAR STUDENTS**

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DEDICATORY

This work is dedicated to God Almighty, who has always been my faithful refugee in trouble. “1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say] to the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust’.” Psalm 91:1-2.

To My family, especially my brother, Ing. Arístides José Reyes Cobis, who has been my greatest support in this phase of my career.

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Diomary del Valle Reyes Cobis



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ABSTRACT

This research explored how gamification, constructivism, and game-based learning can improve vocabulary acquisition and motivation in first-year EFL students at a private school in Ecuador. The study was conducted with a group of sixteen learners positioned within the pre-A1 to A2 proficiency range, whose initial performance reflected limited retention, recurrent grammatical difficulties, and a minimal level of engagement in conventional instructional contexts; throughout a four-week period, the participants engaged in a sequence of tasks developed through the use of digital environments, for instance: Games to Learn English and ESL Games, in which interactive exercises were integrated with feedback mechanisms and opportunities for collaborative interaction. The methodological framework adopted a mixed-method, quasi-experimental orientation that incorporated instruments such as interviews, surveys, assessments of oral accuracy, and observations of participation, while also examining the reduction of interference from the learners' first language. The results revealed an increased confidence among the participants in the use of English across both oral and written domains, thereby illustrating the pedagogical potential of approaches that fuse playful principles with constructivist perspectives in the process of language acquisition; these outcomes establish that the inclusion of digital resources and game-based dynamics facilitates the creation of learning experiences that are more sustained and cognitively valuable for students exhibiting low initial motivation. Furthermore, the research underlines the necessity of designing learning spaces oriented toward the learner, in which communication, reflective engagement, and active involvement collectively contribute to the continuous development of linguistic competence through a more interactive and participatory process.

Keywords: Gamification, language acquisition, online games.

RESUMEN

Esta investigación exploró cómo la gamificación, el constructivismo y el aprendizaje basado en juegos pueden mejorar la adquisición de vocabulario y la motivación en estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) de primer año en un colegio privado de Ecuador. El estudio se llevó a cabo con un total de dieciséis estudiantes ubicados en los niveles pre-A1 a A2, quienes presentaban al inicio del proceso una retención limitada de contenidos, dificultades relacionadas con el manejo de la gramática y escaso interés hacia las clases de carácter tradicional; durante un periodo de cuatro semanas, los participantes fueron incorporados a una serie de actividades realizadas mediante el uso de plataformas digitales: Games to Learn English y ESL Games, que integraron la práctica interactiva con mecanismos de retroalimentación y espacios de colaboración entre pares. El diseño metodológico adoptado correspondió a un enfoque cuasiexperimental de naturaleza mixta, en el cual se incluyeron entrevistas, encuestas, mediciones de precisión oral y niveles de participación, al mismo tiempo que se procuró disminuir la interferencia del idioma materno en los procesos de producción lingüística. Los resultados mostraron que los estudiantes desarrollaron una mayor seguridad en el manejo del inglés en sus dimensiones oral y escrita; este resultado evidencia el efecto positivo del empleo de estrategias basadas en el juego y en principios constructivistas dentro de los entornos de aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras. El estudio establece que la inclusión de herramientas tecnológicas y recursos con elementos de gamificación favorece el desarrollo de experiencias educativas más efectivas en alumnos con niveles reducidos de motivación, además de subrayar la necesidad de consolidar espacios centrados en el estudiante que promuevan la interacción comunicativa, la reflexión constante y la participación activa en la construcción de competencias lingüísticas.

Palabras clave: Gamificación, adquisición de lenguaje, juegos online.

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INTRODUCTION

Within the current educational context, the incorporation of technology into learning settings has acquired notable relevance, since it provides innovative ways to improve students' learning results; this project focuses on the use of online games as pedagogical instruments designed to strengthen the acquisition of vocabulary in the field of foreign language instruction, with particular reference to first-year high school students; through the inclusion of interactive digital activities in the academic design, the learners obtain repeated exposure to newly introduced lexical items, which facilitates the practice and consolidation of vocabulary in forms that favor motivation, active participation, and long-term retention of linguistic content. In contrast to conventional methods based on rote memorization, the use of game-oriented platforms provides mechanisms of immediate feedback, adaptable levels of difficulty, and an environment that promotes continuous engagement, thereby fostering more effective acquisition processes and contributing to the improvement of students' overall proficiency in English.

Regarding the relevance of this study, it tries to solve a problem that has emerged since the pandemic, during the lockdown, students' engagement with traditional learning methods decreased significantly, and technology was often used passively, resulting in actions of copy-paste of information. This has led to difficulties in vocabulary acquisition, a crucial aspect in foreign language learning that has several repercussions in the students' academic performance and general communication skills. Before the onset of the pandemic, students experienced a learning environment characterized by frequent opportunities for interactive participation within the classroom, where peer collaboration and teacher-led exercises contributed to the natural reinforcement of vocabulary retention and comprehension; through the integration of online games into educational practice, the present research seeks to respond to the limitations that emerged in this context by proposing the use of digital instruments that function as innovative pedagogical resources aimed at enhancing vocabulary acquisition, while simultaneously offering learners the possibility of engaging in a renewed and stimulating educational experience grounded in technological interaction.

This situation takes place within a private educational institution situated in the southern sector of Guayaquil, where a group of sixteen first-year students presents recurrent difficulties in the development and application of vocabulary knowledge; these limitations have been recognized as determining elements that exert a negative influence on the students' academic performance, linguistic proficiency, and results in formal evaluations, and the

effects of this condition are evidenced through diverse obstacles experienced by the learners in areas linked to the understanding of foreign cultural references, the participation in oral interactions, and the precise use of grammatical structures within spoken and written communication. In addition, it underscores the need for a new approach that can address the gaps left by traditional methods and level up knowledge through the application of technology in order to enhance learning content.

To face this present situation, A possibly suitable solution is the use of online games as a method to improve vocabulary acquisition, since these games are designed to guarantee the integration of several skills, engaging and keeping enthusiasm in the students. This offers immediate feedback and makes learning more fun. The Universidad Bolivariana del Ecuador emphasizes groundbreaking and educational technology applications. With the incorporation of online games in the classroom, this project will contribute with seeks to enhance students' engagement, improving vocabulary retention, and optimizing general communication, offering a better and innovative perspective in learning that nowadays young students find effective and amusing.

The focus of this research is the process of language acquisition, understood as a complex phenomenon in which the development of vocabulary extends beyond the mere memorization of new lexical units; it encompasses the comprehension of meaning, the identification of appropriate contexts of use, and the understanding of the communicative situations in which such lexical elements occur. This process demands the coordination of various cognitive operations that include recognition, retrieval, and practical application within both written and oral modes of expression; therefore, the effective mastery of vocabulary acquisition constitutes an essential component in foreign language learning, since it exerts a direct influence on reading comprehension, written production, oral fluency, and the overall capacity to communicate with precision and coherence. The study pursues the exploration of how online games to facilitate this process, making it easier for students to learn and thus use and remember new vocabulary. The impact of the application of these games on students' vocabulary skills relies on the provision of insight into how technology is effectively used to improve foreign language performance.

The benefits of this pedagogic strategy seek to go further than simple memorization. Online games aim to foster autonomous learning allowing the exploration and consolidation of the students with the language at their own rhythm. Additionally, the implementation of this study strengthens linguistic abilities applied in real contexts and the teacher-student interaction in the classroom, which reinforces vocabulary in functional situations,

contributing to the critical thinking development and problem-solving, by including challenges that stimulate creativity and logical thinking, in conjunction with fast and effective solutions to each presented level.

The general objective for the present project is to determine the effectiveness of online games as a didactic tool in order to enhance vocabulary acquisition in 1st year students. For this purpose, it is necessary to accomplish the following specific objectives:

- ✓ Conduct a bibliographic investigation to identify the main studies connected to this topic.

- ✓ Diagnose vocabulary learning with the help of assessment strategies that establish proficiency levels and measure the impact of online games.

- ✓ Develop a set of online activities which students can do independently or in groups and which include elements of gamification.

- ✓ Examine students' motivation in terms of several activities that are attractive to them using online games for language learning.

- ✓ Compare different results for the effectiveness of online games in class through the evaluation of the students' progress.

In the current dynamic educational environment, promoting spaces that celebrate cultural diversity is not only a pedagogical choice. It is an important task in teaching. In the context of online games, "culture" refers not only to the students' own backgrounds and traditions, but also to the cultural elements embedded within the games themselves, such as language, scenarios, customs, and social interaction. An educator's responsibility involves the application of tradition and cultural diversity during instruction sessions, which implies understanding, embracing, and celebrating different cultural backgrounds within the classroom. Regarding this, Latif (2020). commented the following:

"Education and culture are closely related, and one affects the other. It is well discussed how education influences culture, but not so much how culture impacts education. We learn social norms from our cultures. We live and share our cultures in daily interactions. Culture also affects our thoughts, feelings, and actions." (Latif, 2020, p. 15)

This evidences the marked and integral relationship between these two areas that complement knowledge and identity construction in an individual and in a determined group. Nowadays, there are very good and varied strategies to teach vocabulary. Technologically speaking, one of the most common is the use of online games, which represent the independent variable in this study.

The research approach considered for the present project is pragmatic; mixed methods are employed since the combination of quantitative and qualitative information teacher-researcher to get a better idea of the reality being studied. Regarding the method, the study employs quasi-experimental approach, conducted in the field (in this case, a high school). The researcher seeks to effect a change by modifying a variable and observing the result. This method is beneficial for the comprehension of behavioral factors, among attitudes, and socio-cultural phenomena within a contained environment. This method involves instruments like surveys, observational studies, and experiments that take place in the object study with the actual population and sample, which is part of the institution chosen for this project, allowing controlled conditions and easy access to the participants.

The study is also descriptive because the researcher seeks to observe what is happening in a classroom situation and finally describes the observations in order to document the situation as it is occurring instantly.

The beneficiaries of this investigation, 16 students from a 1st year class. They are aged 14, 15 and 16, Each student has unique features and varied personalities, they are also from middle-high income families, which has an influence in their ways of thinking, behaving, and even their feelings. In general, students are joyful, a little loud, as a group, they tend to be disordered, and it is a little difficult to establish organization in the classroom. In matters of proficiency, it is also heterogeneous; there are students who are A2, and there are students with pre-A1 and A1 levels with a very evident lack of language domain.

The students are mostly visual learners, but there are also auditory learners and a few kinesthetic learners. Their strength is that they understand grammar and vocabulary very easily, and some of them are willing to work in order to improve their language skills.

Among the weaknesses, the students tend to forget what they learned very easily, also they have problems retaining new vocabulary, their fluency is poor, they tend to resort to L1 to make themselves comprehensible, they get too nervous when trying to speak English in public, and that doesn't help with performance in general. Students also seem to be demotivated to do English activities, which makes second language acquisition and learning difficult.

All these aspects were the result of a previous observation process that was conducted in order to have a greater overview of the situation and identify the vocabulary that students use and the issues they have in common. There have been some oral evaluation experiences and conversations in the classroom that gauged existing vocabulary knowledge and the specific areas of interest.

The school representing the study object is a particular institution in the southern city, with 300 junior and senior-high students, in which English is taught as another subject from the established curriculum; it is well known for its disciplined education in class; nevertheless, it is not a bilingual school per se. Here, English is taught three times a week, and the directive department is responsible for recruiting qualified teachers and assisting students with a coaching program to enhance the English experience at school.

Another singularity is that the English program is reviewed normally through creative classes, contests, and an English fair day, which normally takes place at the open house week. Technological strategies are also welcomed in class, each classroom has a projector, and computer, and some of the machines can connect to Wi-Fi.

Among the contributions that this proposal offers it is mentioned the enhancement of the English experience at schools, bringing several benefits. One of the advantages is improving students' motivation by showing innovative and creative resources and adding them to the class routine. It also helps improve vocabulary and word use for the students and grants more confidence in performance. Immediate feedback gives the opportunity to quickly correct mistakes and prepare the brain to get better and better in practice. Finally, the appliance of these games in class will ensure interactivity, which makes the class more fun and brings more significant experiences that will turn to easy ways to remember grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

In concordance to the former, the investigation represents a benefit for students and teachers due to the professional development it involves, by the integration of innovative technological strategies into its practice, providing experiences that engage interaction, methodology and new teaching techniques.

Technologically speaking the proposal represents a digital enhancement when talking about innovation in the classroom, promoting the use of these tools during pedagogic sessions, which makes learning more fun and engaging, and sets the path for the students to prepare themselves for a technology-driven world.

In the social context, there is no doubt that nowadays teenagers and young learners deal with a more technologically social interaction, as a result, this proposal promotes a more connected integration between classmates, enhancing their relationship and cooperation, integration and collaborative work, also providing an environment in which students can help each other with pronunciation, grammar, and memorization.

For the organization of the present paper, it is distributed in the following way:

✓ Chapter 1 presents a literature review that constitutes the base of the study, reflecting theoretical concerns to give meaning to the proposal, as a solution for the problem observed in a real context.

✓ Chapter 2 contains the methodological approaches to the problem, and strategies applied to give originality to the study and proceed with the validation of the instruments and evaluation results.

✓ Chapter 3 reflects the results of the study and the analysis that verifies its effectiveness towards the solution of the problem posed.

The conclusion summarizes the work during the project and a final review of the results and its interpretations to the reality. Finally, the authors propose a series of recommendations for the present situation and for the project prosecution.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The first chapter of this project presents theoretical issues that support the investigation, outlining empirical foundations for using online games to enhance vocabulary skills in writing and speaking among a group of 14–16-year-old students from a private school in Guayaquil.

According to Chen (2014), “An online game is a multiplayer game that involves players connected through a network. The network may be a wired or wireless LAN, and players may be connected by a LAN or through the Internet.” This kind of entertainment facilitates cooperative work and problems solution, also they allow group connection with a specific purpose, consequently, it is very common among teenagers and young adults, and in some cases are applied to share diverse content in education (Rosangzuali, 2024).

Concerning the former, (Jabar, 2016) commented, “Online games can be used in education to give a better form of teaching method and learning activities, learning encouragement. Thus, people need gadgets to play online games.” This new technology is very attractive for 14 to 16-year-old students who are the main universe constitutive for the present study, and already present cultural traits influenced in the gaming culture. Evidently, present in the way they speak, their favorite character attitude, and expressions they say daily, like the use of words like “streaming, camp, lag, ragequit” among others, which are very popular, other examples in Spanish speakers are “lagear”, XD, random, “loggear” for mentioning some.

On the other hand, concerning vocabulary acquisition, this is a very important topic in language learning, which in some students gets very difficult to happen, therefore culture can be a good influence in this study process, to this, (Briggs, 2022) expressed that “Language is inherently cultural, as it reflects these norms and factors in both subtle and explicit ways. A language may develop sayings that reflect cultural norms, slang terminology that reflects cultural trends, or even syntax that reflects cultural beliefs.” In compliance with this, it is said that vocabulary and language are connected to culture, given that cultural customs and beliefs are closely related to expressions such as sayings, slang words, and even the sentence structure.

In this case, culture can be a strategy used to introduce online games in vocabulary acquisition to students, taking in consideration the exposed by (Hossain, 2024). “This interconnectedness of cultures and the widespread use of technology have transformed language education, offering both challenges and opportunities to educators.” This strategy

can be a perfect tool to teach second language aspects as vocabulary, grammar, writing or reading, among others.

Confirming this statement, it is important to point out the affirmation by (Kuo, 2006): “Culture must be incorporated outright as an essential component of second language learning and teaching. Only after cultural issues become an inherent part of the language curriculum and instruction, can students be successful in their target language learning” Culture is the instrument that helps relate young students’ online game customs with the acquisition of foreign language vocabulary, which will contribute with the improvement in the learning and development about this topic.

First of all, different theories will be presented which have concordance with diverse concepts concerning the study. There will be a review of the most relevant studies previously investigated that to understand the impact of online games on vocabulary learning.

1.1 The Dependent Variable: Vocabulary Acquisition

1.1.1 Definition and Importance of Vocabulary Acquisition

In vocabulary acquisitions there are two processes involved, which are breadth that is the number of words that a student knows, and depth, that is the complexity of those words and in what context they can be used, this is what controls writing and speaking proficiency. meanwhile, vocabulary can also be counted as the number of individual words learned by the students for their former use, and lexis comprehends how words are systematically associated in their morphological, syntactic and semantic designs (Liataq, 2024)

Regarding the classroom parameters, students often perceive vocabulary as isolated lists to memorize. With practice, they begin to notice grammatical categories (e.g., nouns, verbs, adjectives) and develop an implicit comprehension of lexis. Despite that, without consistent practice, the students often forget previously acquired words, particularly when they fail to recognize connections between semantic fields or word families. The regular contact and active use of vocabulary (through reading, writing, speaking, and contextual exercises) strengthen retention and foster the skill to detect linguistic patterns.

1.1.2 Implementation Framework

To optimize vocabulary development, educators should design low-stress, high-engagement activities, such as contextual word games, collaborative digital tasks, and multisensory exercises (reading, pronunciation, listening). Teachers must monitor and adjust anxiety levels, motivation indicators, and vocabulary retention rates to ensure effective learning.

To support this statement, it is necessary to emphasize that emotional factors significantly affect language learning outcomes. Dulay (1977), Observes that stressed students demonstrate poorer vocabulary retention and higher error rates, indicating that anxiety interferes with cognitive processing and memory consolidation. Conversely, Gozali (2016) found that Low-anxiety environments support better assimilation and performance, emphasizing the importance of creating supportive and relaxed classroom conditions that encourage learner participation.

The findings derived from this study present important implications for pedagogical practice within the classroom; the integration of technological resources into instructional planning requires the incorporation of adaptable levels of difficulty, the application of feedback systems directed toward constructive improvement, and the formation of collaborative group dynamics that stimulate active participation; consequently, the methodological strategies implemented should concentrate on diminishing learner anxiety through the controlled application of gamification, strengthening engagement through interactive digital materials, and guaranteeing vocabulary exposure through diverse modes of representation that allow a broad assimilation of linguistic content.

It is relevant to recognize that the relationship established between emotional intelligence and cognitive processes indicates that motivation functions as an intermediary factor influencing the results obtained in vocabulary acquisition; consequently, the utilization of technologically enhanced creative activities contributes to the optimization of the affective dimension of learning, while the implementation of digital games provides a balance between the level of challenge and the degree of support required by adolescent learners to maintain consistent progress and engagement throughout the learning process.

1.1.3 Theoretical Perspectives on Language Acquisition

According to academic analysis, the following explains the cognitive aspects of how online games favorably aid vocabulary acquisition. The Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests that low-stress, high-motivation environments enable better word retrieval (Krashen, 1982). high affective filters, characterized by anxiety, low motivation, impede language processing, while low affective filters, marked by confidence and positive reinforcement, facilitate acquisition.

1.1.4 Vocabulary Learning and Brain Process

The human brain processes and retains new vocabulary through interconnected neural mechanisms. Structures like the hippocampus and neocortex encode, consolidate, and retrieve lexical information (Anderson, 2023). The hippocampus assists initial memory formation,

while the neocortex encodes memories into long-term storage through repeated activation. High-frequency words (e.g., "go," "house") are retrieved more efficiently than low-frequency vocabulary (Levelt, 1989).

Low-anxiety environments enhance hippocampal efficiency, whereas stress weakens memory consolidation (Gozali, 2016). This neurocognitive framework aligns with Craik (1972) levels-of-processing theory, which demonstrates that semantically encoded words - particularly through multimodal motivation (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) improve semantic encoding and retention (Center., 2024).

Working memory plays, an important role in this process (Baddeley, 2003) through these model students can identify three key components; first, there is a central executive design, which directs attention and coordinates cognitive resources. Followed by the phonological loop that processes verbal information. Moreover, a visuospatial sketchpad process that manages visual-spatial data. Digital games influence these mechanisms by granting repeated exposure to aim vocabulary in varied contexts, urgent time quests that engage working memory, and multisensory inspiration through engaging formats.

Direct input that reinforces correct usage, the research validates that such gamified approaches enhance vocabulary acquisition through: strengthened neural pathways via replication (Kaushanskaya, 2013), improved phonological processing through auditory support, enhanced graphic encoding via game interfaces, and contextualized learning through narrative frameworks (Macedonia, 2015). These findings underscore the relevance of interactive, varied strategies for effective vocabulary guidance, in particular for students who benefit from interesting and low-stress learning environments.

1.1.5 Challenges in Lexical Accessibility

The “tip-of-the-tongue” (TOT) phenomenon occurs when learners recognize a word but cannot retrieve it instantly (Anderson, 2023). High-frequency words are accessed automatically, whereas newly learned words require conscious effort (Levelt, 1999, as cited in Nation, 2013). Interference across languages originating from the first language can restrict the fluency of lexical retrieval in the second language, as stated by (Kroll, 1994); for instance, when attempting to describe an intense personal experience, a learner may successfully recall a basic term such as “happy” yet experience difficulty retrieving alternative expressions of greater specificity, such as “thrilled” or “ecstatic,” due to their limited frequency of use. In written production, a similar tendency becomes evident, as the students usually depend on general or imprecise vocabulary: for instance, they often employ the term “good” in place of

more precise alternatives such as “exceptional” or “remarkable”; this linguistic limitation restricts the depth and accuracy of their expression in both oral and written communication.

1.1.5.1 Solutions to Enhance Lexical Accessibility.

To enhance lexical acquisition, several strategies are employed to support the brain in processing and retaining new vocabulary. These are described in the following paragraphs:

- ✓ Spaced Repetition Systems (SRS) strengthen neural connections through systematically reviewing words over time, which improves long-term memory retention (Anderson, 2023).

- ✓ Contextual learning integrates vocabulary into meaningful settings such as storytelling, debates, or roleplays, enhancing comprehension and recall.

- ✓ Teaching collocations, such as “heavy rain” or “make a decision”, rather than isolated words, facilitates natural language use and fluency (Nation, 2013).

- ✓ Gamified learning techniques can reduce anxiety and lower the effective filter, encouraging students to experiment with new vocabulary without fear of mistakes (Gozali, 2016).

As an example, (Solati-Dehkordi, 2016) established that well-written sentences or discourses are determined by the ability to manage lexical knowledge, which is associated to the direct relation that word formation and meaning have. So, what exactly is lexical knowledge? For (Richards, 1976), and (Ringbom, 1987) it is the sum of spoken and written abilities, grammar and collocational knowledge, morphology management, and social usage of words and from the perspective of young A1-A2 learners, managing all this information in the correct way represents a challenge. Due to their bear initiation to the language, for them, even social contextual knowledge is very difficult to understand because they are still comprehending and comparing words and expressions from L1 and oral phonemes.

1.1.5.2 Role of Vocabulary in Writing and Speaking.

An extensive vocabulary enables the learners to structure and express their ideas with greater precision and coherence; the knowledge of lexical items activates the neural networks responsible for retrieval, association, and construction of meaning, which are necessary for fluent language production; in oral interaction, the learners depend on swift access to lexical units, on the awareness of phonological patterns, and on the establishment of semantic connections that permit the accurate formulation of expressions in real time. Similarly, in writing, vocabulary supports idea formulation and text cohesion by enabling students to select precise words that reflect their intended meaning. Alqahtani (2023) affirms, the acquisition and comprehension of vocabulary play a vital role in strengthening mental

associations, fostering deeper understanding, and more effective communication across all linguistic domains.

1.1.5.3 Challenges and Limitations in Vocabulary Acquisition.

Vocabulary acquisition is challenged by limited exposure and insufficient practice opportunities (Sedita, 2023). Traditional methods often fail to engage students, and bilingual learners struggle with lexical retrieval due to cross-linguistic competition (Bjork, 2015) demonstrates Bilingual learners with minimal L2 exposure struggle with lexical retrieval due to cross-linguistic competition, while extensive word lists further hinder memorization.

The appropriate selection of learning methodologies constitutes a determining factor in the effectiveness of vocabulary acquisition processes, given that the continued use of outdated instructional strategies contributes to insufficient lexical development, as indicated by Ayana (2024); in contrast, approaches such as keyword inference and semantic mapping, which are frequently incorporated into gamified learning models, have demonstrated their capacity to enhance memorization and comprehension of new vocabulary. Moreover, observations indicate that the learners usually demonstrate higher competence in receptive skills than in productive abilities; nevertheless, according to Sumoto (2023), systematic and organized practice can gradually diminish this difference, provided that instructional strategies maintain a continuous and deliberate focus on production; another aspect of relevance concerns the contextualization of learning, since students with scarce exposure to authentic communicative situations frequently experience obstacles in the appropriate application of acquired vocabulary, a circumstance examined by Kilik (2019).

1.1.6 Individual Differences in Gamification Effectiveness and L1 Influence on L2 Vocabulary Acquisition

Variability in Gamification Outcomes

Gamification outcomes vary; competitive elements may motivate some learners but increase anxiety for others (Krashen, 1982). For instance, learners with lower standard proficiency often benefit more from visual scaffolding (e.g., picture-word matching games), whereas those with higher metacognitive awareness may opt for narrative-driven quests that contextualize vocabulary (Anderson, 2023). This aligns with Nation (2013) emphasis on adaptive learning paths, suggesting that gamified tools need to offer customizable difficulty levels to adapt to individual needs.

1.1.6.1 L1 Influence on L2 Lexical Organization.

The linguistic structure of the learner's first language exerts a considerable influence on the way in which second language vocabulary is organized and retrieved; research indicates that students whose native languages maintain lexical similarities with English, for example Spanish, tend to achieve faster recognition of second language words due to the presence of the cognate effect described by Kroll (1994). Additionally, conceptual transfer from L1 semantic networks may lead to non-native-like collocations in L2, as seen in the case of Chinese classifiers (Jiang, 2000). For pre-A1 learners, explicit instruction in cross-linguistic comparisons, such as highlighting false friends, can decrease interference (Nation, 2013).

In order to achieve greater efficiency in the acquisition of vocabulary, it is necessary that students assume an active position within their own learning process; this involvement requires the deliberate use of newly acquired lexical elements across oral and written activities (examples include the incorporation of gamified role-play exercises) which serve to reinforce cognitive associations and strengthen neural pathways, as proposed by Anderson (2023). Additionally, the continuous observation and correction of personal linguistic errors constitute a fundamental practice that allows learners to refine the accuracy of their usage through the reception and analysis of feedback, as established by Krashen (1982). Teachers can reinforce this process by curating game content and selecting tools that align with lesson objectives. Furthermore, teachers can scaffold L1-L2 connections by designing tasks that compare L1/L2 word families (Nation, 2013) and foster metacognition by guiding students to reflect on game-based learning methods (Anderson, 2023).

1.2 The Independent Variable: Use of Online Games

1.2.1 Definition of Online Games

In the words of Chen (2014) "An online game is a multiplayer game that involves players connected through a network. The network may be a wired or wireless LAN, and players may be connected by a LAN or through the Internet." This kind of entertainment facilitates cooperative work and problems solution, also they allow group connection with a specific purpose, consequently, it is very common between teenagers and young adults, and in some cases are applied to share diverse content in education.

1.2.2 Gamification in Language Learning: Principles and Applications

Gamification involves the incorporation of specific game-related components—such as challenges, ranking systems, points, and reward mechanisms—into contexts that are not

inherently recreational, with the purpose of promoting higher levels of learner engagement, as stated by Deterding (2011); this methodological approach contributes to the reduction of anxiety, according to Krashen (1982), facilitates immediate and continuous feedback as described by Anderson (2023), and enhances intrinsic motivation processes, a concept supported by Ryan (2000). Moreover, the implementation of spaced repetition techniques plays a crucial role in reinforcing neural connections and sustaining vocabulary retention over extended periods, as proposed by Nation (2013).

Within the field of language learning, the incorporation of gamification contributes to the strengthening of vocabulary acquisition by situating lexical elements within meaningful and contextually relevant scenarios, a process explained by Nation (2013); furthermore, it has been observed that this approach increases learner engagement, particularly when time-limited activities are employed to stimulate recall and sustain attention, as noted by Anderson (2023). In addition, gamification reinforces multimodal learning by adjusting to various learner profiles through the activation of visual and auditory cues, an idea supported by Krashen (1982). For students situated at the pre-A1 and A1 proficiency levels, this pedagogical strategy addresses motivational deficiencies by utilizing reward systems such as leaderboards and badges, alleviates cognitive demands through the use of mini-games and visual scaffolding, and facilitates anxiety reduction by incorporating feedback mechanisms that emphasize learning progress rather than penalization.

Empirical evidence has indicated that the application of gamification contributes to the reinforcement of vocabulary retention, the development of fluency, and the effective use of lexical items; competitive games have been associated with enhanced memory recall, as reported by Lee and Baek (2023), whereas creative word-list games have been related to the active employment of vocabulary, according to the findings of Tm (2020); in addition, narrative games have been identified as a means to foster contextualized language production, as demonstrated by Shen (2024); for the purpose of strengthening gamified strategies in language instruction, it is advisable to adopt hybrid models that combine competitive and collaborative elements, to implement feedback mechanisms supported by artificial intelligence systems, and to design scaffolded structures that adjust levels of game difficulty in alignment with CEFR standards.

1.2.3 Theoretical Perspectives on Game-Based Learning

Piaget's constructivist theory emphasizes active engagement "Knowledge is not a copy of reality, but a construction of reality" (Piaget, 1952). Online games in class facilitate

interactivity, dynamism, motivation, and retention, while social constructivism highlights the importance of guide social interaction for cognitive development.

Taking the former in consideration, young students' understanding supposes a construction process involving constant interaction with the environment. Using online games in class ensures interactivity, dynamism, motivation, and retention of new vocabulary. By the means of using online games the students practice contextualization in learning opportunities to engage learners.

In concordance, the Social Constructivist theory, by Lev Vygotsky (1978) states that assistance is very important for the student's cognitive development. Vygotsky comments that "What a child can do today with assistance, she will be able to do by herself tomorrow" (Vygotsky, 1978. p. 87), highlighting the importance how relevant is social interaction in the learning acquisition process. Online games encourage this through the promotion of social interaction and collaborative work in class. Student working together sets the scenery for problem solving and task accomplishment, conversation and well-constructed language, meaning negotiation, and collective understanding. This collaborative environment fixes into Vygotsky's theory due to the great opportunities of interaction warranting higher levels of understanding through collective support.

1.2.3.1 Game-Based Learning Approach

This approach, also known as GBL is popular for the integration of educational content with gaming techniques to improve the learning experience. To this, Gee (2003) expresses that "Learning in video games is situated in meaningful experiences, making comprehension and retention easier." the students' interest for games exploration in the education field enhances comprehension and retention, which are fundamental in vocabulary learning. This is evident in the object study field due to the motivation the students present when they participate actively in classes that involve games, and the capacity they have to understand and use new words.

Following the same path, the study made by Hazard (2020) was directed to elementary school students and gave as result that the learners showed significant enhancement by the incorporation of digital games into English lessons, compared to traditional methods. Additionally, to this, the research conducted by Li et al (2024) that examined how digital games enhanced students' learning engagement and increased motivation to learn, found that digital educational games influenced positively in students' learning motivation and also, learning engagement served as a mediator between learning motivation and the educational games used.

1.3 Impact of Gamification in Vocabulary Learning

in the vocabulary acquisition area, Gamification is important within schools. According to this study, Koss (2024) commented, “Gamification refers to the application of game mechanics like points, badges, and leaderboards, to everyday activities, to nudge people’s behavior.” (Koss, 2024, p. 5).

This qualifies gamification as an excellent tool for modeling behavior, making it a very common application in the educational field to improve motivation through a sense of competition. Collaborative work, rewards, and constant feedback, which is consistent with what Schaaf (2015), expressed, that the games have many elements that make them powerful vehicles for human learning. They are commonly structured for players to solve a problem; an essential skill needed for today and tomorrow. Many games promote communication, cooperation, and even competition amongst players.

Gamification is the integration of game-like elements (e.g., points, challenges, and leaderboards) into non-game contexts and has demonstrated notable potential in enhancing vocabulary acquisition by growing motivation and engagement. Koss and Brennan (2024) define gamification as *“the application of game mechanics—like points, badges, and leaderboards—to everyday activities, to nudge people’s behavior.”* This behavioral reinforcement makes it especially effective in education, where elements such as competition, instant feedback, and collaboration can modify passive learning into an interactive experience.

However, the effectiveness of gamification in vocabulary learning is not just about superficial rewards; it hinges on cognitive engagement. Research by Plass (2020) found that narrative-driven games (e.g., story-based quests where players unlock vocabulary to progress) improve retention by 43% compared to traditional flashcards. Likewise, adaptive gamification ensures that learners review words at optimal intervals,

The empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of games in vocabulary gains. Research conducted by Huyen (2023) demonstrated that the incorporation of competitive word-matching activities resulted in an increase of approximately thirty percent in the speed of active recall among learners at the A1 proficiency level; the underlying mechanisms that explain the effectiveness of gamified vocabulary acquisition include the provision of immediate feedback, which enables the correction of errors during the learning process and minimizes the risk of fossilization, as identified by Krashen (1982). Furthermore, the emotional involvement generated within low-stress, game-based environments contributes to lowering the affective filter, thereby promoting a greater willingness among students to apply

newly learned lexical items in communicative contexts, as discussed by Gozali (2016). Furthermore, repetition through play naturally recycles vocabulary, assisting lexical automatization without relying on rote memorization (Nation, 2013).

1.3.1 Limitations and Considerations

While gamification boosts motivation and interest, over-reliance on extrinsic rewards (e.g., badges) may weaken intrinsic motivation (Ryan, 2000). Thus, balance is key; games should supplement, not replace, relevant communicative practice. This confirms that gamification sets the introduction to elements such as leaderboards, badges, levels, and words to create a sense of achievement and progress in the universe they create, making significant their use in education for benefits on communications, collaborative work, competition, and goal achievement.

Similarly, the recent study concluded that participants who learned vocabulary employing gamified applications online demonstrated interest in practice and higher retention rates in other areas, such as listening and writing skills. These researchers got the results mentioned in the means of a meta-analysis conducted on previous gamification studies.

Data that lead to statistical findings about the use of games and Quizzes, examining how these tools influenced vocabulary retention, and listening and writing abilities, with the objective to determine how these technological appliances help use vocabulary in context, increased motivation through competition and collaborative work, and provided direct feedback to improve skills. The established data for this study experimented with games that allowed answering grammar and vocabulary quizzes, writing short responses using new words, matching spoken words with written equivalents or pictures, and developing competition groups to advance through different levels.

Lee (2023) examined 27 gamification studies, and some interactive quizzes significantly enhanced vocabulary retention and transfer to listening/writing skills. Their methodology observed learners who completed timed vocabulary quizzes (e.g., matching words to definitions/images), reinforcing fast lexical retrieval (Anderson, 2023), wrote short responses using target words, embedding them in meaningful contexts (Nation, 2013), and who participated in competitive team challenges, which per Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, lowered anxiety and increased motivation (Gozali, 2016).

The study assigned success to three gamification features, the first one is the contextual repetition or games that recycled words across activities (e.g., flashcards and spelling games), matching with spaced repetition principles. Followed by the instant feedback, such as automated corrections in apps, cleared immediate error resolution and

prevented fossilization, and finally, the collaborative competition, which is a Team-based leaderboard, fostered social learning, with associates modeling correct usage. Students who employed these methods demonstrated 22% higher retention and 17% improved writing fluency compared to traditional drills (Lee & Baek, 2023).

1.3.2 Practical Applications

The former is clear evidence about how the interaction, engagement, and encouragement facilitate vocabulary to be better assimilated by students in the means of dynamic activities that boost competition and creativity. Also, Tüm (2020) expressed in his study that with the employment of digital applications, it becomes easier for the students to produce more words through creative word lists and meaning management, confirming the effectiveness of these resources.

For the specific use of gamification in the classroom it is necessary to highlight the results exposed by (Shen, 2024), when a survey was conducted to Chinese students and it revealed that integrating games that contain leader boards and rewards to the classroom helps the teachers enhance engagement and motivation on the students, since these create an environment full of creativity and dynamism in language acquisition.

Moreover, incorporating interactive quizzes and narrative-driven language exercises can instigate the curiosity of the learners and passion for language. And lastly it is important to consider that students should be comprehend vocabulary using gamified tasks according to their learning methods with visual, auditory and kinesthetic predilections, adapting activities visually, auditorily and kinesthetically attractive for the students to make words and meaning comprehensible in the classroom.

Recent research by Shen et al. (2024, p. 8) proves that integrating gamified elements—such as reward systems and leaderboards—into language classrooms notably enhances student motivation and engagement. Their study of Chinese EFL learners revealed that collaborative yet competitive game structures foster a dynamic learning environment, aligning with Krashen's (1982) emphasis on low-anxiety conditions for effective acquisition. For instance, some platforms employ leaderboards to inspire healthy competition while granting immediate feedback, a critical factor noted by Anderson (2023) for reinforcing neural pathways in vocabulary retention.

Moreover, Shen et al. (2024) highlight the pedagogical relevance of narrative-oriented activities, such as role-playing exercises and story-based quizzes, as mechanisms that stimulate learners' curiosity and sustain their engagement in the learning process; this perspective is further reinforced by Gozali (2016), who contends that the multisensory

dimension of gamification, encompassing visual elements through word and image association, auditory components through pronunciation-focused games, and kinesthetic interaction through activities involving movement or manipulation, accommodates a wide range of learning preferences and promotes deeper lexical retention. In this sense, learners with predominant visual tendencies benefit from the use of illustrated flashcards, those with auditory inclinations achieve better outcomes through oral challenges and speech-based tasks, and kinesthetic learners demonstrate stronger performance in interactive simulations; consequently, it is essential that educators design and adapt gamified vocabulary-learning activities according to these modalities, thereby enabling clearer and more lasting associations between words and their meanings.

Considering the limited motivation evidenced among the target group of students, it becomes essential to reinforce their levels of engagement, creativity, and active participation through the implementation of game-based instructional approaches that are deliberately structured to sustain learner interest and promote continuous involvement; such an objective can be accomplished by integrating games designed to elicit healthy competition among participants, to stimulate curiosity through visual and auditory stimuli, and to provide repeated exposure to the target vocabulary within diverse and meaningful communicative contexts that strengthen learning retention and practical application.

In order to increase the effectiveness of instructional implementation, the selected games must integrate multimodal forms of input, requiring learners to establish connections with vocabulary through activities that involve listening, writing, and speaking, thereby promoting a more comprehensive engagement with the target language; subsequently, to encourage a balanced form of collaborative competition, it is advisable to organize students into small groups that participate in game-oriented tasks, an arrangement that strengthens cooperation among peers while simultaneously maintaining the motivational element derived from challenge and achievement.

The incorporation of ranking systems and minor incentives, including badges or point-based rewards, serves as an additional mechanism to stimulate student participation and sustain motivation throughout the learning process; within this framework, the inclusion of immediate feedback ensures that corrective guidance is internalized during gameplay, enabling learners to refine their comprehension and use of vocabulary in real time. Furthermore, the contextualization of learning through narrative-driven or scenario-based activities allows students to apply lexical knowledge in relevant communicative situations, thereby facilitating reinforcement and transfer of learning across both oral and written tasks.

When gameplay is organized to include these pedagogical components, learners progressively build familiarity with the target vocabulary through competition, repetition, and engagement across multiple sensory channels, which collectively contribute to the advancement of vocabulary acquisition and the improvement of overall communicative competence.

1.4 Overview of Online Games in Education

Concerning the findings established by Jabar (2016) “Online games can be used in education to give a better form of teaching method and learning encouragement. Thus, people need gadgets to play online games.” This idea aligns with the current study, due to the recent interest that the young population has in technology-based environments, including 14-16-year-old learners—the target group for the present study. The students display preferences and everyday expressions that clearly reflect the influence of gaming culture. Terms such as “*streaming*,” “*camp*,” “*lag*,” and “*rage quit*” become very common among English-speaking players; at the same time, Spanish-speaking students use common words such as “*laggear*,” “*XD*,” “*random*,” and “*loggear*” that are very frequent these days. This linguistic influence emphasizes the deep influence that digital gaming culture has on young learners’ social and communicative practices.

These tools have become a widely popular element in education due to the interactivity and attraction they cause in young students. According to (Suprapas, 2021), gaming gives the opportunity to create an ideal environment to learn new vocabulary, complementing the five learning conditions, an action that can be supported with strategies such as repetition of new words. This impels students to practice language contextualization and improvisation.

1.5 Relevant Games in the learning field

Based on the former evidence, certain games make a significant contribution to educational effectiveness, as the following principles are mentioned:

- ✓ **Feedback Mechanisms:** With this system, students have to opportunity to understand and correct mistakes in real time. This is an important principle due to the adjustment of strategies in order to consolidate knowledge (Kucher, 2021).
- ✓ **Rewards and Progress Tracking:** Students feel motivated by observing their progress in the game, which translates also in acknowledged achievements. They also help visualize learning results, resulting in a sense of achievement (Jiang, 2000).

✓ Repetition and Practice: These games encourage learning through repetition to advance to the next level, which, according to Kucher (2021) helps knowledge retention in the means of the “Cycle of expertise,” refining language skills.

✓ Multi-player Games: These digital learning tools encourage the development and consolidation of social skills such as communication, collaboration, and learning peer learning, and teaching. This is concordance with the proposal by Johnson (2023), who thinks that social interaction can be strengthened by multiplayer games, which encourage teamwork, peer teaching and learning.

✓ Challenging and Competition: These games give students a sensation of reward that motivate them to continue playing and learning, showing skills improvement while fostering a fun environment, which was demonstrated on the study conducted by (Kaya, 2023), who designed a program based in challenged gamification and found an increment in academic performance and motivation via competitive practice, reinforcing the value of the balance between competition and learning experiences.

1.6 Games to Learn English Applied for Vocabulary Acquisition in First Year Students

The “*Past Tense Game*” from *Games to Learn English* (n.d.) was specifically produced to practice English verbs, offering a successful tool for vocabulary acquisition and motivation enhancement among young learners. Research suggests that this program may serve as an impactful teaching-learning strategy, with potential to positively influence language development.

The game includes several pedagogically useful features, the lexical association which are tasks that strengthen connections between known and new vocabulary. The grammatical practice that includes Sentence-completion exercises reinforcing past-tense conjugation, and finally the contextual learning implemented by Picture-supported sentence ordering tasks that enhance comprehension through visual scaffolding. These elements, particularly the multimodal integration of text, images, and interactive formatting, increase engagement among secondary-level students while aligning with principles of meaningful input (Krashen, 1982) and cognitive load theory (Sweller, 2011).

The group composed of sixteen adolescent learners demands particular pedagogical attention in aspects related to motivation, timely corrective intervention, and the incorporation of interactive materials that facilitate accurate comprehension of the instructional content; within this cohort, several students exhibit a pre-A1 proficiency level, which necessitates the consistent use of visual and auditory reinforcement to ensure the successful completion of exercises and the appropriate development of lexical application, as

discussed by Nation (2013). In response to these instructional demands, the platform *Games to Learn English* is recognized as a particularly suitable pedagogical resource, since its intuitive configuration and visually structured interface provide accessible visual support without generating cognitive overload; furthermore, the platform incorporates a vocabulary development system organized through progressive levels of difficulty, which enables adaptation to the learners' evolving capacities and sustains a continuous process of linguistic improvement.

Another advantageous component of the platform is the integration of time-limited mini-games, which introduce elements of excitement and constructive competition through activities structured around countdown mechanisms, as indicated by Plass et al. (2020); in addition, the platform incorporates interactive features that enable learners to navigate and experiment with different linguistic structures, thereby fostering a deeper level of comprehension, reinforcing retention, and activating essential cognitive processes, as noted by Macedonia (2015). The inclusion of instantaneous feedback and systematically arranged challenges within these games further contributes to the enhancement of intrinsic motivation, transforming the learning process into an experience that is both intellectually stimulating and pedagogically rewarding, as argued by Ryan and Deci (2000).

For these reasons, this game has been selected for implementation across six sessions with 16-year-old first-year science students. Its features align well to address language acquisition challenges while fostering greater motivation in English language learning.

1.7 Relevant Studies on the Impact of Online Games on Vocabulary Acquisition

Some studies demonstrate the efficacy of online games in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and conversational application. Three key investigations provide empirical support for the current study:

Ta'uno & Poai (2022) examined *Mobile Legends'* impact on English vocabulary learning among Indonesian high school students. Their mixed-methods approach (questionnaires, tests, interviews) showed significant improvements in language acquisition, particularly in communicative skills. This study's descriptive design parallels the current project's methodology.

Following the same path, the study conducted by Hazard (2020) was directed to elementary school students and gave as a result that the learners showed significant enhancement by the incorporation of digital games into English lessons, compared to traditional methods. Additionally to this, the research conducted by Li (2024) that examined how digital games enhanced students' learning engagement and increased motivation to

learn, found that digital educational games had a positive in students' learning motivation, and also, learning engagement served as a mediator between learning motivation and the educational games used.

Carrillo et al. (2021) conducted an instructional intervention in which the *Roblox* platform was integrated into science-oriented language activities spanning four different proficiency levels; the findings derived from their action research demonstrated that immersive gameplay facilitates the contextual retention of vocabulary, encourages collaborative approaches to problem-solving, and promotes observable levels of behavioral engagement among learners. Similarly, Aulia (2024) carried out an analysis involving the use of widely recognized digital games among high school students in Jakarta, where qualitative interview data revealed notable increases in learner motivation, improved retrieval of lexical items, and a heightened disposition to engage actively in spoken communication tasks. These studies collectively validate that well-designed game-based learning as lowers affective filters, provides multimodal input (Nation, 2013), and reinforces lexical networks through gameplay mechanics (Anderson, 2023).

1.8 Challenges and Limitations

Several studies have documented the advantages of using online games for learning vocabulary in classroom settings; however, certain limitations must be considered during implementation. Yildiz (2020) cautioned that some games lack specific educational design, providing minimal pedagogical value. Educators must carefully select games to ensure they provide meaningful language implementation and align with learning objectives.

Similarly, according to Qasserras (2023) it is argued that even with the positive effects that online games provide to students, there are challenges such as design complexity and the need for guided instruction that hinder these tools from being totally effective in the educational field. Sometimes the instructions are too difficult to understand for the students' levels or the activities cannot adequate to the group's needs, so it is important to take that into consideration.

Finally, despite the many advantages of using online games for vocabulary acquisition, there are also some potential challenges. (Wulan, 2024) argues that among the challenges there is "...the potential for increased distraction, the risk of emphasizing competition over collaboration, and the difficulty in designing games that align well with educational objectives". In regards of this, some difficulties can be presented when using, such as employing games with inappropriate content, and not having clear goals, among others.

1.9 Key principles of gamification in vocabulary instruction

When implementing gamification for vocabulary acquisition, several key principles should guide instructional design to improve effectiveness. Games should provide immediate feedback and reinforcement, offering real-time corrective feedback to reinforce correct lexical retrieval and usage (Anderson, 2023). Additionally, game mechanics should aim to reduce anxiety, creating a low affective filter through features like non-penalizing practice modes and progress badges (Krashen, 1982).

The reinforcement of vocabulary through spaced repetition and retrieval-based practice represents a decisive component in the consolidation of lexical knowledge, according to the findings of Nation (2013); in addition, the development of pedagogical games designed for language learning requires the inclusion of multimodal input that combines visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements, with the purpose of activating diverse memory systems and encouraging durable retention together with cognitive engagement, as suggested by Macedonia (2015); ultimately, vocabulary instruction must be situated within meaningful contexts that facilitate contextualized learning and foster a deeper comprehension of linguistic content, as indicated by Nation (2013).

1.10 Rationale for Game Selection

The “Past Tense Game” from Games to Learn English was chosen because it effectively operationalizes key principles of ludic learning. The game's adaptive difficulty progressively increases lexical complexity, guiding learning in line with the Zone of Proximal Development. Additionally, it manages cognitive load through color-coding and visual timelines, reducing unnecessary load and allowing learners to focus on pattern identification (Sweller, 2011).

The motivational structure of the game, which incorporates elements such as leaderboards and time-restricted challenges, introduces productive levels of difficulty that sustain engagement while preventing cognitive overload, a concept supported by Bjork and Bjork (2011); additionally, the inclusion of timed tasks corresponds to Baddeley’s Working Memory Theory, as such activities activate the phonological loop through vocabulary retrieval processes, thereby reinforcing neural connections and strengthening memory pathways, as articulated by Baddeley (2003).

1.11 Addressing Skepticism

Critics argue that gamification may focus on entertainment over learning (Deterding, 2015). However, meta-analyses (Lee & Baek, 2023) confirm that *well-designed* games, those incorporating the above values, yield 20 to 30% higher retention rates than traditional drills.

The key is calculated design, by goal-oriented tasks where each game mechanic must target specific outcomes (e.g., verb conjugation accuracy). Followed by balanced challenge when the difficulty should adapt to prevent frustration or boredom (Plass et al., 2020).

1.12 A Possible Solution: Implementing Online Games for Vocabulary Acquisition

This proposal builds upon established research to address vocabulary retention challenges among first-year students through online game-based learning. Empirical evidence demonstrates that strategic gamification enhances lexical acquisition by mixing engagement with pedagogical effectiveness.

1.13 Proposed Implementation Framework

Recent studies have highlighted three key benefits of gamified vocabulary instruction. Firstly, enhanced retention is achieved through competitive, feedback-driven tasks, as revealed by a meta-analysis of platforms (Lee, 2023). Additionally, contextual learning is offered by digital tools that assist in word-list creation, strengthening long-term memory by linking translation to usage (Tüm, 2020). Furthermore, gamification provides a motivational boost, increasing participation through reward systems and narrative-driven tasks, which reduce anxiety and foster collaboration (Shen, 2024).

To maximize these benefits, the intervention will incorporate an adaptive game selection using platforms *Games to Learn English*, *ESL Games* that align with CEFR A1-level objectives (Nation, 2013). Also, for multimodal Design activities integrating auditory (pronunciation drills), visual (word-picture matching), and kinesthetic (drag-and-drop tasks) elements, and structured incentives, small rewards for milestones to sustain motivation (Krashen, 1982).

1.14 Expected Outcomes

First, the Lexical Consolidation is repeated exposure through games like *Past Tense Adventure* targets a core word list (e.g., 50 high-frequency verbs), with pre/post-testing to measure retention gains. After this, the skill transfer that In-class role-plays will use game-acquired vocabulary will bridge receptive and productive use (Anderson, 2023), and the reduced attrition that will be weekly games played in sessions aims to decrease vocabulary loss rates by 30% compared to traditional methods (Ta'uno, 2002).

1.15 Pedagogical Considerations

The success depends on teacher scaffolding or briefing students on game mechanics and lexical goals, feedback loops that combine automated game feedback with teacher-led error analysis, and differentiation by adjusting game difficulty for mixed-proficiency groups.

This approach, grounded in cognitive theory and empirical evidence, offers a replicable model for transforming vocabulary instruction.

1.16 Simple Past Tense Games

✓ Past Tense Game (Games to Learn English): This game has been designed for verb practice; its activities include matching mini games that help present the past verb forms, it also has sentence completion and organization, and its vocabulary range is also quite wide. The same page relates that “This game is for practicing past tense English verbs. It is intended to be used by ESL students to review past participles. The aim of this game is not to explain or communicate the concept of past tense; rather, it is just to practice using past tense.” (Dyer, N.D., Pg. 2)

✓ Dino Photo Shoot (Education.com): In this game, the student has to find the past form of the present verb in order to feed a dinosaur. It is a perfect game to target younger learners for the theme it involves. According to the page, this game. “...asks students to find the past tense form of a present tense verb and try to feed a dinosaur in a cave. If they are right, they can take a photo of the dinosaur.” (Making English Fun, 2024)

✓ Past Simple Irregular Verbs (ESL Games Plus): This is a game focused on the practice for irregular past tense verbs using different interactive activities divided in themes to attract the students. About this game, the creators comment that “This game is designed specifically for practicing irregular past tense verbs. It's interactive and allows students to practice forming past tense sentences.” (ESL Games Plus, 2024).

These games fulfill the game principles in the way they provide repetition and practice, allowing players to continually match verbs with pictures or audios in their past forms, using repetition to reinforce memory. Another principle applied is the feedback mechanism, in which the games provide immediate answers about the correctness or incorrectness of the matching exercise. This helps the students to modify their learning significantly for the next practice. Competition is also a very visible factor in these games since they offer peer interaction without leaving aside individual accountability.

Finally, there is a sense of progress tracking due to the components that the games have of allowing them to complete levels, creating a sense of achievement and advancing motivation in the students while they are having fun.

1.17 Food Vocabulary Games

Two targeted ESL games demonstrate effective application of gamification principles for vocabulary instruction:

a) Food Vocabulary Game (ESL Games Plus): utilizes a Jeopardy-style format to reinforce food-related lexicon, provides interactive practice through competitive gameplay, and aligns with multimodal learning theory by combining visual and auditory stimuli.

b) Food Partitives Game (ESL Games Plus): focuses on expressions of quantity (e.g., “a slice of”), employs a basketball theme to enhance engagement, and integrates grammatical structures related to vocabulary retention.

These selections exemplify three key pedagogical principles: the visual scaffolding or color-coding distinguishes linguistic patterns (regular/irregular verbs), and graphic elements support memory encoding (Plass et al., 2020). The affective filter reduction in which game mechanics create low-anxiety practice environments and immediate, non-penalizing feedback loops (Krashen, 1982). And the motivational design that constitutes thematic elements (sports, game shows) increases intrinsic motivation, and progressive challenge levels maintain flow state (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The games’ alignment with Nation’s (2013) principles of contextualized vocabulary recycling makes them particularly suitable for adolescent learners, combining entertainment value with measurable linguistic findings.

1.18 Multiplayer Online Games

Research demonstrates that digital games significantly enhance EFL vocabulary learning through interactive and socially engaging formats. Reinders and Wattana’s (2015) study of multiplayer online games (MOGs) revealed two key benefits: improved lexical retention through contextualized practice and increased confidence in language production. The gaming spectrum for vocabulary development ranges from simple word puzzles (crosswords, word webs), competitive mobile games (Scrabble, Boggle), and collaborative platforms (Quizlet, Wordwall).

These tools incorporate three critical pedagogical elements, which are, first, the motivational design where Kapp’s (2021) research shows game-interactive learners score 25% higher on retention tests due to built-in reward systems, peer collaboration features, and progressive challenge scaling. After, the social learning that facilitates real-time L2 communication, promotes collective knowledge construction, and reinforces pragmatic language use (Paraveska et al., 2009).

Finally, the contextualized practice games establish interactive scenarios that strengthen linguistic abilities, lower affective barriers, and promote higher levels of participation within the classroom environment, according to De la Rosa (2021); regarding food-related vocabulary, the platform *ESL Games Plus* includes thematic lexical categories:

for instance, ingredients and cooking verbs, together with exercises for expressions of quantity such as “a slice of,” while also incorporating multimodal input through visual and auditory reinforcement that supports comprehension and recall.

1.19 Regulatory and Legal Framework

The present research is guided by the regulatory and legal framework that governs education in Ecuador, with particular emphasis on the teaching of foreign languages in schools. The study follows the principles established in the Constitución de la República de Ecuador with highlights the following:

- ✓ *Communicative Language Approach: language is best learned as a means of communication, nor merely memorization of rules and vocabulary.*
- ✓ *Student-Centered Approach: Teaching strategies respond to learners' strengths and challenges, facilitating active participation and engagement.*
- ✓ *Development of Thinking Skills: Learning strategies should respond to learners' strengths and challenges, facilitating active participation and engagement.*
- ✓ *Content and Language Integrated learning (CLIL): Language learning is integrated with cognitive and cultural knowledge to enhance both linguistic competence and general educational outcomes.*
- ✓ *International Standards: The curriculum aligns with internationally recognized levels and frameworks, such as the CEFR, ensuring quality in language education.*

Additionally, the research respects the legal framework established, *Constitución de la República del Ecuador (2011)*, which mandates:

- ✓ *Right to Education (Art. 26): Education is a fundamental right and a duty of the State, ensuring lifelong access, equality, and social inclusion.*
- ✓ *Freedom of teaching and learning (Art. 29): Parents and guardians have the right to choose an education aligned with their cultural and linguistic preferences, while the state guarantees freedom of teaching.*
- ✓ *Right to Quality Education (Art. 39): Children, adolescents, and youth are entitled to quality education that promotes their development.*
- ✓ *Intercultural and Bilingual Educational (Art. 57): Education must respect cultural diversity and integrate intercultural and bilingual programs, promoting quality and recognition of students' cultural identities.*
- ✓ *State responsibility in Education (Art. 347): The State is responsible for ensuring that public educational institutions provide quality education, democratic learning environments, technological resources, and professional development for teachers.*



In the context of foreign language teaching, these constitutional mandates ensure that the implementation of online games for vocabulary acquisition is legally supported, aligns with national educational standards, promotes ethical practices, and respects students' rights, cultural diversity, and inclusion.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

This research follows a mixed-method, quasi-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test structure to measure the effect of online games on vocabulary acquisition among students aged 14–16 in a private high school in Guayaquil.

The validation of the methodological proposal was carried out through a pre-test and a post-test applied to the same group of students under the same conditions. The pre-test was used to identify students' initial vocabulary performance, while the post-test measured improvement after the four-week intervention. This comparison allowed the researcher to determine the effectiveness of the proposal.

2.1 Research Question

“To what extent do gamified interventions improve vocabulary acquisition and motivation among 1st year EFL learners?”

Based on the diagnostic and observation results, gamified interventions have the potential to significantly improve vocabulary acquisition and learner motivation among 1st-year EFL students compared to conventional teaching methods. The instructional approach traditionally applied within the classroom environment is characterized by restricted opportunities for interaction, a lack of engaging pedagogical resources, and an instructional orientation primarily centered on the teacher; this configuration has generated low levels of learner participation, a decline in motivation, and insufficient vocabulary retention. As a consequence, students have developed a pronounced reliance on their first language, have exhibited uncertainty during oral communication tasks, and have experienced continuous challenges in retrieving lexical items previously introduced throughout instructional sessions.

In contrast to traditional methodologies, the incorporation of gamified and interactive instructional strategies establishes a learning environment characterized by higher levels of dynamism and participation, which correspond more closely to students' predominant learning modalities, particularly those involving visual and auditory processing; through the use of games, competitive activities, and digital resources, learners engage with vocabulary in contexts that are meaningful and repetitive, generating emotional involvement and encouraging collaboration among peers. These factors contribute to the strengthening of intrinsic motivation and to the reduction of anxiety throughout the learning process; consequently, learners are able to utilize recently acquired lexical elements with increased assurance and spontaneity in diverse communicative contexts. In this respect, the implementation of gamified instructional practices promotes both the consolidation of

vocabulary retention and the enhancement of motivation, effectively addressing the limitations associated with traditional teaching approaches; such interventions establish a dynamic and learner-centered environment that facilitates sustained language acquisition while fostering enduring positive attitudes toward the study of English.T

2.2 Hypothesis

The use of online games as a pedagogical tool improves vocabulary acquisition in writing and speaking among students aged 14-16 in a private high school in Guayaquil.

For the specific hypothesis, the following are described:

✓ The implementation of online games enhances students' motivation and engagement in English language learning.

✓ Online games help students retain and use new vocabulary more effectively in oral and written communication.

✓ The use of game-based activities reduces students' anxiety and fosters a positive attitude toward English learning.

2.3 Conceptualization and Operationalization of Variables

2.3.1 Conceptualization

2.3.1.1 Independent Variable: Online Games

The independent variable for the present research is online games that are digital programs or websites that work with interaction in a ludic environment, and offer users amusing experiences in which they advance level by level in missions. Regarding this, also, as said in chapter 1, video games can be played on the internet or other computer networks.

They consist in platforms that encompass smartphones, computers, and other mobile devices offering a virtual interactive context. This study focuses on online game pages such as Games to learn English and to practice past tense verbs, and ESL Game Plus to address vocabulary acquisition about food.

2.3.1.2 Dependent Variable: Vocabulary Acquisition

Vocabulary acquisition is the dependent variable of this project; this refers to the learning and retention process for the former use of new words in an effective way.

In the same sense, it is said that Vocabulary acquisition has two main components that are breadth (Known words quantity) and depth (How these words are understood and contextualized), and that these two are mainly controlled by writing and speaking knowledge (Nation, 2013). At the same time, vocabulary is more related to individual words learned and used by the students, and lexis is more connected with the systematic process of word

memorization and how they link in the brain with other word, grouping them morphologically, syntactically and semantically. (Liataq, 2024).

2.3.2 Operationalization

2.3.2.1 Independent Variable: Online Games

The independent variable was measured through the following indicators:

✓ **Online games frequency in class:** For this indicator, the question is how frequently students play online games in class. How are the class plans structured for this to happen, and how exposed are the students to the online games? The indicator will be evaluated with a survey.

✓ **Student's engagement level:** The question is how motivated students feel when they learn by playing games. The purpose they show or not influences their vocabulary acquisition, do they learn more when they are inspired learning through games? This indicator will be measured with a final activity in each practice class and with a narrative register.

✓ **Vocabulary learning content appropriateness:** how appropriate the vocabulary content is for the students' level, how easy or difficult the game is for the students, and how does this affect their vocabulary acquisition? This indicator will be assessed by observation with an anecdotal register.

2.3.3 Dependent Variable: Vocabulary Acquisition

The acquisition of new vocabulary during online game-based learning sessions was evaluated by examining the number of words learned by participants through a structured question-and-answer activity, and administered during the implementation phase.

About the students' ability to incorporate vocabulary into writing and speaking, it is important to consider if the students have the ability to include new words in their existing vocabulary or if the students use new words decently. This was measured during the online game-based classes with a conversational wrap-up.

The tools to evaluate these dimensions are measured in the following way:

- ✓ **Observational activities in class:** These activities are created with the objective of observing the students' behavior and motivation towards English tasks. This is part of the diagnostic process.
- ✓ **Rubric:** This instrument has 5 indicators to monitor the performance of the students in the observational activities. This is part of the diagnostic process.
- ✓ **Closed survey for students:** This survey consists in a 12-question multiple choice questionnaire with the purpose of delving into the use of online games for the study

object sample and its effectiveness in vocabulary acquisition. This instrument is part of the execution process.

- ✓ **Interview:** The interview is applied to other teaching professionals from the institution to measure the motivational level of the school students. This contains ten open questions, and it is part of the execution process.

2.3.4 Operationalization of Variables

Table 1. Operationalization of Variables

Operationalization of Variables

Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Measurement
Independent: Online games.	Frequency	Number of sessions per week	Count
	Engagement	Active participation in game activities	Observation y checklist
	Content relevance	Vocabulary targeted by games	Rubric/Scoring
Dependent: Vocabulary acquisition	Breadth	Number of words correctly used	Test scores
	Depth	Use of words in context (speaking/writing)	Rubrix/Observation
	Retention	Recall of learned words after a week	Post-test

Note: Elaborated By Reyes (2026)

2.4 Research Proposal Paradigm and Approach

A mixed-methods research approach was used to gather information and validate the methodological proposal in this study. The paradigm has a pragmatic nature due to both quantitative and qualitative approaches, which is useful to demonstrate the validity of a methodological investigation about language learning:

In this sense, the quantitative method, explained by Rana (2021) is the "...collection and analysis of numerical data to answer scientific research questions. Quantitative method is used to summarize averages, find patterns, make predictions, and test causal associations as well as generalizing results to wider populations." This method allows analyzing numerical

data to get objective conclusions in which there are results related to the receptivity the students have towards online games in the educational field, and how attracted they feel using them to learn English vocabulary.

The qualitative research according to (Uwu, 2023), refers to "...the study of the nature of phenomena, which includes their quality, different manifestations, the context in which they appear, or the perspectives from which they can be perceived", which is applied in this study by analyzing the situation in situ, students feelings, teacher's perceptions and different views about the use of technology in the classroom and its role in strengthening motivation in English and other areas.

Taking this in consideration, the scope of the present study is framed within a mixed approach, employing descriptive and field investigation, that allows to the collection of different kinds of information, and gives as a completer and more objective project. In concordance to the former, the descriptive investigation has as its objective to obtain information by getting a systematic description of a phenomenon, situation, population or event. It also helps to describe all the aspects involving the problem, more than the description of the variables (Sharma, 2019).

It is important to describe the main aspects of the problem, that are related with lack of motivation, low vocabulary knowledge and poor performance when it comes to present a spoken or written work in English subject and their relation to the possible solution that is being proposed, using online games in the classroom for the English subject, in order to have the situation clear and determine the efficiency of the proposal in relation to the present context.

Fieldwork refers to the process of information acquisition through data collection techniques that can be applied in qualitative and quantitative investigations, as well as experimental analysis, regardless of the project location or duration (Irgil, 2021). This method often requires active and detailed observation of the phenomena, involving active engagement in natural setting, ideal for experimental methods.

Being this a quasi-experimental design, this approach supports the exploration of the contextual richness in a real-world environment, which translates the collection and interpretation of plain data collected directly from the classroom including game-based didactic sessions where the observation is direct, this conducts the researcher to a clearer path in the correct strategies to transform the present reality.

2.5 Type of Investigation

As the present study has a descriptive approach, and it focuses on a specific and contextualized situation, the type of investigation is correlational, since it involves the implementation of digital games to strengthen vocabulary acquisition for young learners in a private institute in Guayaquil.

During the elaboration of this project, a diagnosis was conducted in order to be clear about the situation detailed and how the population is being affected by this. Next, there was the application of a survey with twelve questions in multiple choices form that allowed the collection of data in situ and the opinions of the population in regards of the topic, also going deeper in how they obtain vocabulary and how they can react to online game-based classes.

Finally, there were 6 game-based didactic sessions in which the students were capable to experiment with the chosen online games, for this opportunity, an observation process occurred with the objective to see how they would react to these tools and how they improved their vocabulary. The type of investigation for the qualitative approach is the quasi-experimental research that evaluates an experiment or intervention leaving aside the use of an experimental control group. According to (Sreekumar, 2024) this is used to “...evaluate the effects of an intervention, or in other words, to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between independent and dependent variables. The intervention could be a training program, a policy change, a medical treatment, etc.” This study involves a quasi-experimentation in the way the students were submitted to an experiment without a control group; all the students were constantly observed at the same time and with the same instruments in order to evaluate a before-and-after situation in which changes had to be made concerning intrinsic motivation and language learning.

2.6 Topic of the Investigation

In regards of the topic for the present investigation, it is about the effectiveness that online games have with the purpose to enhance vocabulary acquisition in first-year high school students. To this (Dehaan, 2020) notes that “...digital games provide interactive and engaging opportunities for vocabulary development”, and this is exactly what must have been proved in this research, investigating how the brain works, how memory processes information, and what kind of online games were the best option for students.

In addition, for the game-choosing process in this study there were several aspects in consideration such as the age of the students, their CEFR levels (from pre-A1 to A2), the linguistic areas to aboard that are writing and speaking, the kind of vocabulary the students should have, being the best options games involved in simple past, food vocabulary games,

and multiplayer online games. All this is to measure the students' progress in the acquisition of new vocabulary and their employment in conversation and written context. These games are well-known for providing interaction among the learners, correct word use and spelling, and bringing new vocabulary that the students must learn.

2.7 Instruments

- ✓ Observation checklist.
- ✓ Rubric.
- ✓ Survey/Questionnaire.
- ✓ Open-ended interview.
- **Observation checklist:** Following this, Kumar, (2023), indicated

“...observation method is described as a method to observe and describe the behavior of a subject, and it involves the basic technique of simply watching the phenomena until some insight is gained.” Measures active participation and engagement during game sessions.

Linked to independent variable: Engagement

- **Rubric:** is explained as an assessment tool that use criteria to evaluate the students' work and measure the quality of the task based on each criterion, providing clear descriptions of the characteristics of the work related to the components to determine knowledge (Ragupathi, 2020). Evaluates correct and contextual use of vocabulary in speaking and writing. Linked to Dependent Variable: vocabulary acquisition.

- **Survey/Questionnaire:** is a technique used to obtain information from the individuals involved in an event, which Hossain (2024) describes as the data obtained from a group of individuals that respond to several questions, employing various methods of instrumentation. Assess students' motivation and perception of game-based learning. Linked to Specific hypotheses 1 and 3.

- **Open-ended interview:** involved a conversational interaction between a study researcher and the entrants. They also have characteristics of no pre-definition of questions, allowing a natural flow in the interaction and a free topic (Brinkmann, 2018). Explores qualitative insights on learning experience, linked to Specific Hypotheses and students' feedback.

2.8 Validity

In the scientific project, process validity sets the accuracy of the instruments and methods used to determine the variables it measures. In the case of the present study, the validity process took place through an expert review; for this opportunity, the thesis tutor was the one with the responsibility to validate the instruments employed to address the variables

of the study. Some aspects to consider included that the tutor had to be an expert investigator and a master in the study object field. This is a professional who evaluates the instruments in terms of clarity and relevance. (Mertens, 2020).

The instruments validation process took place by the revision and verification of the instruments to ensure the relevance of the instruments and their alignments with the objectives of the project. During this procedure, the focus was the effectiveness of the measurement for the vocabulary acquisition, along with the participation and motivation of the students, at the moment of the game-based classes. All the observations were taken in consideration for clarity and coherence improvement.

2.9 Population

According to Shukla (2020) the population refers to all the units on which a research instrument is going to be conducted. A population is a set of all the units that will be the object of the investigation with characteristics according to the research purpose. It provides the foundation for determining the scope and relevance of a study, ensuring that the data collected accurately represent the group being analyzed. In this project, the population is represented by the 300 students of a private guayaquilean high-school located at the south of the city. Regarding the sample selected for this proposal, it comprises 16 senior high school students with ages ranging from 14 to 16-year-old years from a private school in Guayaquil. This group was eligible due to its characteristics, in which their difficulties in acquiring and retaining vocabulary make it difficult for them to advance in the English language.

It is important to highlight that the purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which the researcher depends on their judgment to select participants who are most likely to provide relevant information for the study.

The purposive sampling method is justified as it targets a group with vocabulary necessities that need an innovative strategy to revert the present situation. The criteria under which the sample was selected are the following:

1. Students, which have low scores in English subject.
2. Low motivation to learn English.
3. Acceptable facilitations for the technological tools.
4. English Proficiency from pre-A1 to B1.

2.10 Procedures

- ✓ Pre-test: Assess initial vocabulary level.
- ✓ Implementation of Online Games: Students participate in structured game sessions aligned with curriculum objectives.

- ✓ Post-test: evaluates improvement in vocabulary after intervention.
- ✓ Data collection: includes surveys, observations, rubrics, and interviews.
- ✓ Data Analysis: quantitative data analyzed statistically, qualitative data analyzed thematically.

Regarding the attendance, the intervention sessions were taken in place when all the class was complete, in order to guarantee that all the participants were present in the classroom.

2.11 Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, and students' anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed. Informed consent was obtained from parents/guardians. The study adhered to ethical standards for educational research,

Regarding this, the researcher complied with all the necessary permissions processes to guarantee voluntary participation of all the actors, allowing the students to maintain their personal information in strict confidentiality and avoiding adverse practices during the execution of the investigation.

2.12 Establishing the Need

Referred that target needs can be divided into necessities that have to be unveiled to the students to have a better performance in a certain situation, lacks, that are the gaps between students' knowledge and what the need to know in order to accomplish tasks and wants, that are the things that the learners feel they desire to learn at the end of the process. This represents a contribution to the present research since it helps the analysis of linguistic difficulties in the study population in writing and speaking a defining real goal that can be reached, also, the reveals how the participants behave, providing specific data analysis.

2.13 Procedure to Identify Needs

Initial needs were determined through teacher observations in the classroom, by means of an anecdotal register and previous evaluation of the oral and written activities during class sessions. Having observed the classes previously, the diagnostic oral and written tasks were designed in order to have a greater overview of the problem and its consequences.

After taking in consideration all the former, it came to the formulation and application of the written and oral diagnostic strategies and instruments to conduct in class and observe the problem in a greater range and detail, resulting in a diagnosis class that contained two parts, which were an oral and a written activity that was measured by a numeric rubric based in 20 points with criteria relevant to the variables developed during the bibliographic review.

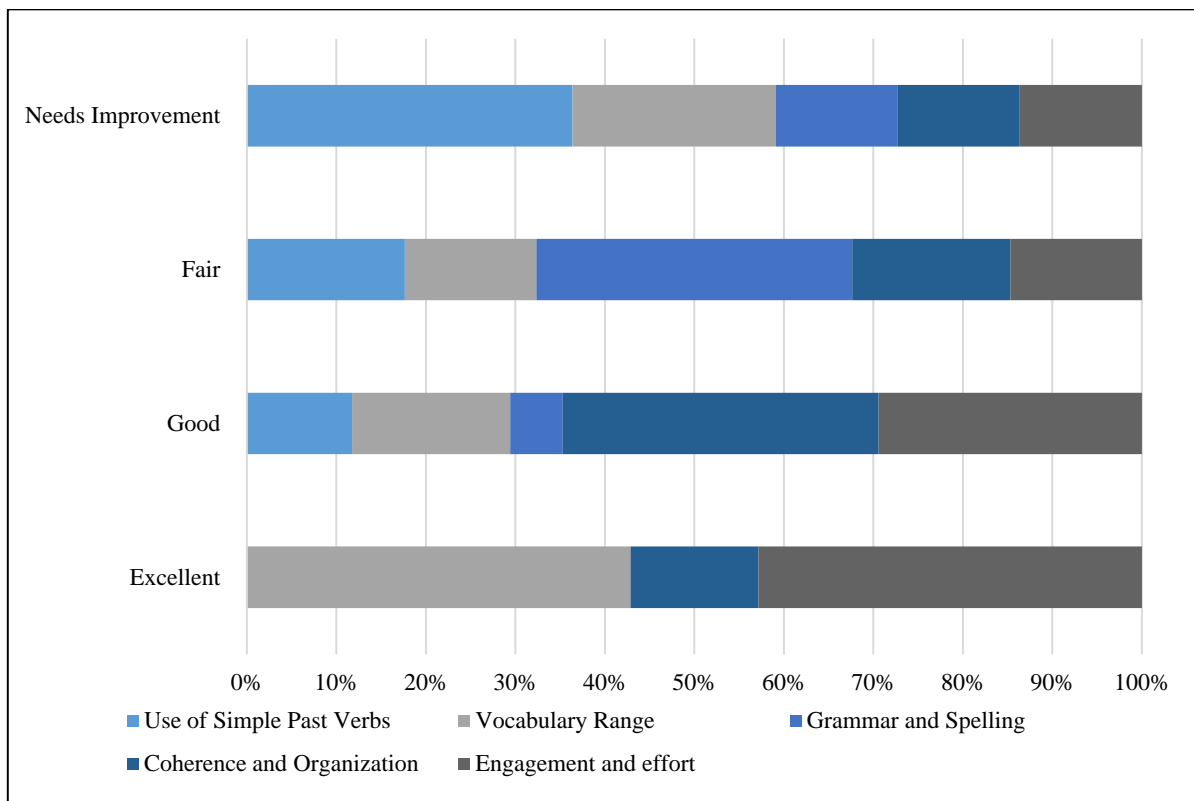
Another of the instruments applied for the diagnosis a twelve multiple choice questions survey to measure the students' interest in English and how this influenced their motivation to learn vocabulary, which results were thoroughly processed and analyzed to explain the phenomena in a wider way, the same lead to the analysis of whether was it possible to apply the games in the classroom and which games were adequate for the sample and their learning process.

2.14 Initial Diagnostic Data Interpretation

In order to identify the main challenges that students face in their English-speaking development; a direct observation process was carried out during regular class sessions. His stage aimed to gather first-hand information about learners' attitudes, behaviors, and performance when engaging in speaking activities. Through systematic observation and the use of anecdotal records, it was possible to detect specific linguistic and motivational issues that interfere with effective language learning.

2.14.1 Quantitative Diagnostic Results

Figure 1. Written Pre-Test Performance (N = 16)



Note: Elaborated By Reyes (2026)

Table 2.

Written Pre-Test Performance (N = 16)

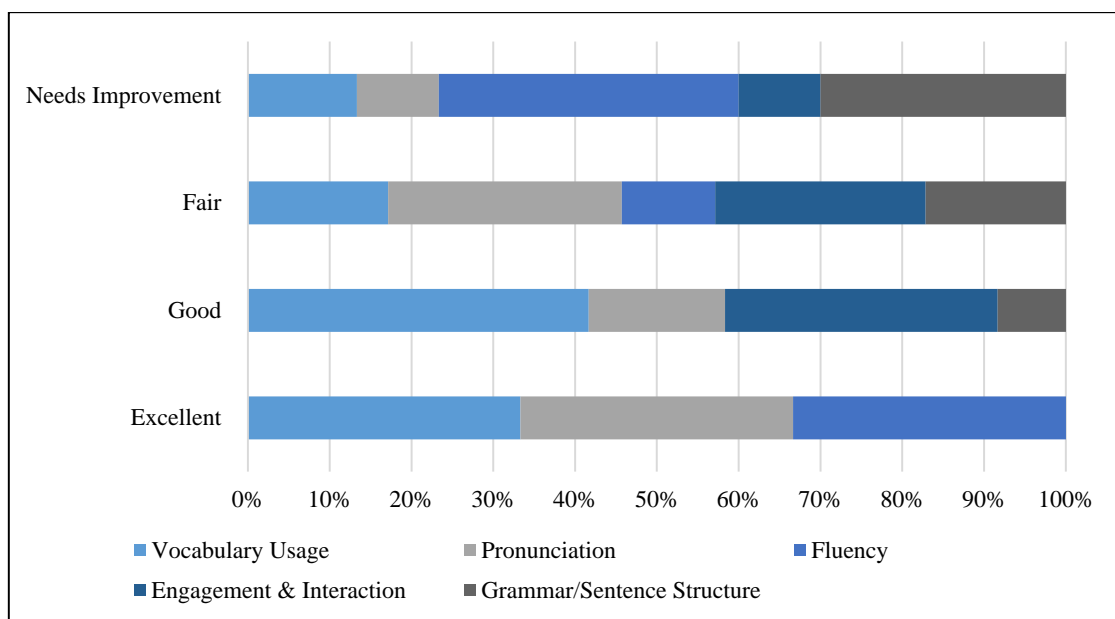
Criterion	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Use of Simple Past Verbs	-	12.5% (2)	37.5% (6)	50% (8)
Vocabulary Range	18.8% (3)	18.8% (3)	31.3% (5)	31.3% (5)
Grammar and Spelling	-	6.3% (1)	75% (12)	18.8% (3)
Coherence and Organization	6.3% (1)	37.5% (6)	37.5% (6)	18.8% (3)
Engagement and Effort	18.8% (3)	31.3% (5)	31.3% (5)	18.8% (3)

Note: Elaborated By Reyes (2026)

Key Findings:

The 87.5% (14 students) scored "Fair" or below in Grammar/Spelling, 50% (8 students) required intervention for Simple Past Verbs, and the vocabulary range showed polarization; 37.6% scored \geq Good vs. 62.4% \leq Fair.

Figure 2. Oral Pre-Test Performance (N = 16)



Note: Elaborated By Reyes (2026)

Table 3. Oral Pre-Test Performance (N = 16)

Criterion	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Vocabulary Usage	6.3% (1)	31.3% (5)	37.5% (6)	25% (4)
Pronunciation	6.3% (1)	12.5% (2)	62.5% (10)	18.8% (3)
Fluency	6.3% (1)	-	25% (4)	68.8% (11)
Engagement & Interaction	-	25% (4)	56.3% (9)	18.8% (3)
Grammar/Sentence Structure	-	6.3% (1)	37.5% (6)	56.3% (9)

Note: Elaborated By Reyes (2026)

Key Findings:

68.8% (11 students) struggled significantly with Fluency (\leq Needs Improvement). While 93.8% (15 students) showed deficiencies in Grammar/Sentence Structure (\leq Fair). Pronunciation was problematic for 81.3% (13 students).

2.14.2 Survey Results

2.14.3 Diagnostic Survey Results on Online Game Use for Vocabulary Learning (N = 16)

Table 4. Survey Results

Item	Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
1	Students who rarely use games for learning	9	56.3%
2	Students who believe games are effective	9	56.3%
3	Students with neutral motivation toward games	8	50%
4	Students who find games easy to use	11	68.8%
5	Students with zero weekly engagement	9	56.3%
6	Students who prefer adventure vocabulary games	10	62.5%
7	Students reporting positive vocabulary impact	14	87.5%

Note: Elaborated By Reyes (2026)

The diagnostic survey results (N=16) revealed key insights. Over half (56.3%, 9 students) rarely used online games for learning, yet a similar proportion (56.3%, 9 students)

believed games were effective for vocabulary learning. Students were neutral about games compared to traditional methods (50%, 8 students). Most found games easy to use (68.8%, 11 students), but over half (56.3%, 9 students) dedicated no time to educational games weekly. Adventure games with vocabulary challenges were preferred (62.5%, 10 students). Notably, 87.5% (14 students) reported positive effects of games on vocabulary learning.

2.14.4 Interpretation of Quantitative Data

The diagnostic outcomes revealed considerable difficulties: 68.8% of the students obtained results categorized as fair or below in the use of vocabulary within written production, whereas 93.8 % demonstrated difficulties in grammar and sentence structuring during oral tasks, indicating a notable reliance on their native language (L1); moreover, the data showed that 68.8% of participants required guided instructional support to enhance oral fluency, while half of the group maintained a neutral or indifferent perception of traditional teaching methodologies, thereby evidencing the necessity of integrating innovative pedagogical procedures. These findings substantiate the implementation of specifically structured gamification techniques intended to mitigate vocabulary deficiencies and to foster higher levels of learner engagement; additionally, 56.3% of the students, corresponding to nine of the sixteen participants, reported limited exposure to online gaming contexts, a result that highlights the potential value of incorporating game-based learning mechanisms to strengthen language acquisition and encourage sustained participation throughout the instructional process..

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the implementation of the proposal and the results obtained after the intervention. The main purpose of the intervention was to improve vocabulary acquisition and the use of vocabulary in speaking and writing through online games. The participants were sixteen first-year secondary students aged fourteen to sixteen with a pre-A1 to A2 level of English. The intervention lasted four weeks and was developed in eight sessions of forty minutes each.

This chapter concentrates specifically on the practical dimension of the research, encompassing the processes of implementation and the presentation of empirical evidence; it offers a detailed account of the procedures carried out during each session, the manner in which students engaged with the proposed activities, and the way in which the post-test outcomes substantiate the validity of the instructional proposal. Additionally, the chapter integrates findings derived from surveys, classroom observations, and student reflections in order to construct a comprehensive perspective of the learning process and the results obtained throughout its development.

3.2 Overview of the Proposal

The proposal is a digital instructional strategy that integrates online games into English lessons to support vocabulary learning. Online games were selected because they allow repeated exposure to vocabulary, provide immediate feedback, and promote active participation. However, games were not used as isolated activities. Each digital task was connected to a classroom speaking or writing activity that required students to use the vocabulary practiced during the game.

The instructional proposal was conceived with the intention of ensuring practicality and applicability within an authentic classroom environment, where all activities were conducted under teacher supervision and aligned with clearly defined learning objectives; following the completion of each game-based exercise, students participated in a communicative task that required the active production of language, thereby reinforcing the integration of the target content into meaningful use. This organizational framework guaranteed that the inclusion of games functioned as a complementary pedagogical tool designed to strengthen the achievement of instructional aims rather than serving as a substitute for formal teaching.

Effective language instruction and structured vocabulary learning were relevant for the pedagogical design of this intervention. The principles of vocabulary acquisition conform a great ground since this proposal wasn't only limited to the use of online games in the classroom, but it carried on to the development of a comprehensive instructional design that combined technological tools and contextual language use.

An important decision was the employment of contextualized vocabulary that permitted to integrate words and sentences with purpose and clear meaning; thus, the students engaged in tasks that required to apply vocabulary in significant writing and speaking settings. This eased deep cognitive process and a smoother transition from passive recognition to active learning development.

Another important element of this process was repetition through varied practice, the different formats of the same vocabulary in constant exposure strengthened memory retention at the same time as the classes had different variations in structure and presentation, as an example, games strategies as matching, multiple choice and sentence completion made every class less monotone while the students learned the vocabulary used.

Guided practice was also present through all the classes constituting a central instructional strategy. The active support and immediate feedback from the teacher during digital activities, along with clarify instructions guaranteed that the students remain focused on each class learning goal and avoided frustration episodes during challenging activities.

On the other hand, collaborative learning was essential in these sessions, in which the students had the opportunity to improve together, consolidate values like solidarity, cooperation, the reinforced communication skills, at the same time the consolidated knowledge in language use.

Consequently, the instructional design was oriented to address affective factors influencing language acquisition, in this matter, online games reduced anxiety, and created opportunities for the students to laugh at the same time they made an effort to participate and win, increasing motivation, For the students it became clear that English knowledge process didn't have to be intimidating, and that most of them were capable to participate fluently an the different tasks.

This intervention gradually addressed different areas in a structural way; the activities were increasing difficulty with each class causing the student to feel more confident. The digital games also helped in these aspects due to the complexity of the missions, promoting constant communicative application to each activity.

3.3 Objectives of the Intervention

The general objective of the intervention was to improve students' vocabulary acquisition and their ability to use vocabulary accurately in speaking and writing through the integration of online games into English lessons.

The specific objectives of the intervention were to increase vocabulary retention in oral and written tasks, reduce frequent grammar errors and first-language interference during speaking, improve student engagement and participation, and promote collaborative work and confidence when using English. These objectives guided the design of the activities, the selection of instruments, and the evaluation of results throughout the four-week period.

3.4 Characteristics of the Proposal

The proposal was designed with clarity, structure, and consistency. Students received guided practice in every session, beginning with clear instructions and ending with feedback. Vocabulary practice was contextualized, which means that students did not only memorize isolated words but used them in meaningful situations during speaking and writing tasks.

Immediate feedback played an important role in the learning process. Online games provided instant responses to students' answers, while the teacher reinforced correct usage and addressed common errors during classroom activities. The proposal also emphasized motivation by using short, goal-oriented tasks that helped maintain attention and reduce anxiety. Repetition, peer support, and teacher guidance ensured that students with different proficiency levels could participate meaningfully.

It is necessary to highlight that this intervention was implemented following a detailed lesson plan specially designed for the present study, incorporating online games as the central activity of each class, being a fundamental part of the process, and making of them a tool to practice vocabulary and coordinate integrated activities during the phases of the educational process. This plan is presented on the appendixes.

3.5 Validation of the proposal

This proposal conducted a validation carried out through a systematic process integrated by theoretical background, implementation procedures that included observation, surveys, conducted cognitive sessions and interviews, that lead to empirical evidence obtained during this intervention.

The designed process was initially sustained by a diagnostic phase consisted of classroom observations made by the means of an anecdotal register, the results of this stage revealed that the students presented important difficulties to retain vocabulary and use it in oral activities, they constantly complained about not remembering words and basic

conjugations, they lacked of language accuracy and general motivation, sustaining that they didn't like to learn English. these findings aligned particularly with the expressed by Nation (2013) explaining how the insufficient exposure and contextual language were an obstacle in vocabulary acquisition

Based on this diagnosis results, the data collection instruments, comprehended by pre-test and post-test, rubrics, surveys, interview questions and checklist were designed and validated by the thesis tutor Msc. Graham Stagg, they were created under the comments by Nation (2023) who manifested that vocabulary assessments must measure both breadth and depth in order to obtain accuracy in the learning process.

Also, Anderson (2023) expressed that using various evaluation instrument help explain vocabulary learning, involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors more evident in different measurement tools.

On the implementation phase, the pre-test was performed in order to determine students' vocabulary levels, and identify key weaknesses in language use, in the results the students presented difficulties remembering words, limited vocabulary range and L1 interference, in some cases, they expressed not knowing the words they wanted to use, and in other cases they said the words in Spanish to fulfill a sentence, which has concordance with Kroll (1994), who describes L1 interference as an affecting factor in L2 vocabulary retention, likewise Levelt (1989) explains how new words require extra conscious effort to be recalled due to Weaker neural connections.

Regarding the intervention process, this was consistent of the integration of online games in the classroom for a three-week period, integrated in nine classes, in which the students learned new words related to simple past verbs, food vocabulary and vacation context, practicing pronunciation, writing, vocabulary matching, integrating gamified activities and collaborative work.

Employing the principles planted by Detering, that establishes gamification as the use of game elements to improve motivation and engagement, additionally, Chen (2014) relates the part of online games in promotion of collaborative values and interaction, facilitating the learning process.

Meanwhile, Nation (2013) insists that repetition and constant exposure to contextualized vocabulary practice strengthen new words retention and enhance long-term acquisition.

On the other hand, there were some students who didn't show any improvements since the beginning, specifically, there was this student who wasn't motivated during the

interventions, in an informal conversation sustained with this individual, this recognized that he didn't want to continue studying, there was a preference for looking for a job instead, today it is known that parents and the institution had another conversation with this person and persuaded to continue studying. Right now the student is still in the system evidencing collaborative work with classmates who have also been a good support.

In relation to the classroom observations and the teachers' interviews, surveys, the employment of these instruments lead to interesting results, documenting increased participation and interest in the class, greater confidence at speaking, and improvement in willingness to use English.

On the classroom observations it was noticed that the students started to remember the words better, and with more confidence and sentences started to be completed in English consciously.

In regards of the interviews, the teachers indicated how they considered and experiences that in different subjects including English when using gamification they could evidence different results, mostly satisfactory, these gamified sessions had to be systematically planned and executed in order to have better results and to enhance cognitive load, making of this substantial evidence of gamification in the classroom.

Taking this in consideration, Gozali (2016) considered that low-anxiety contexts are able to enhance language performance. Furthermore, Dulay (1977) stated influence that emotional factors have in satisfactory vocabulary retention and error reduction.

With respects to the post-test, it was performed to measure the general improvements previously observed on the students, these outcomes revealed advances in vocabulary breadth and depth, more speaking and writing accuracy, less spelling errors and more engagement with the activity.

This confirms the established by Nation that when learners practice in a systematic procedure, they present vocabulary improvements in development, also Anderson (2023) insists on the effectiveness of repetition and sequential practice in language acquisition improvements.

3.5.1 Theoretical and Fundamental Validation

This pedagogical proposal is strongly supported by gamification theory, which is explained by Deterding (2011) as the integration as games sequences in the classroom, in their influence in motivation, cognitive load and processing and long-term retention in foreign language contexts.

This author expressed that games can increase learners' motivation and participation, which makes them ideal in education environments, due to their accessibility to adapt to every learning process including vocabulary acquisition.

this interactive mechanism enhances knowledge construction, aligned also with Jean Piaget' (1952) theory of constructivism, stating that the constant interaction of learners and their environments facilitate the knowledge acquisition process and builds understanding through personal experience. in consequence, these activities integrated to the classroom dynamic provide opportunities for exploration, questioning and answering, solve problems and cognitive adaptation to different challenging situations, supporting significant cognition and deep analysis.

In addition to this, the social interaction as a result of collaborative work, takes place through the socio-cultural theory by Lev Vygotsky (1978) that established the learning process as a result of social collaboration and guided integration of all the elements, in this sense, digital games played a fundamental part encouraging problem solutions, effective communication and team cooperation, and in this way ease knowledge progression employing the Zone of Proximal Development.

On the other hand, the results described demonstrate that online games used in a systematic plan improve vocabulary retention and association of old and new language, facilitating deeper cognitive interaction (Plass, 2020). In the words of Craik (1972) cognitive processing in deep levels enhance vocabulary retention, providing stronger memory encoding and explaining why the students, when they practice relatedly and interact in different context than the usual class, they retain the vocabulary in a more effective way and active rote memorization.

In addition, Lee and Baek (2023) reflected founding in gamified learning speeds-up memory speed and improves motivation through reward pathways in the brain

Alternatively, immediate feedback in gamified classes is an important factor to identify and remember errors quickly and make necessary adjustments in language use, this is confirmed by Shen, emphasizing how instant error correction made by digital games support the students in language accuracy and long-term knowledge. Also, Nation (2013) asserted how frequent feedback is a key part in accurate vocabulary development.

Therefore, collaboration in game-based sessions make an important contribution to satisfactory learning results, in this matter, Chen (2014) expressed that online games set the environment in which the interaction, teamwork, and constant team support reinforce effective language practice.

All these authors and their findings and theoretical perspectives sustain the results of the present proposal implementation, which not only present motivational outcomes, but also cognitive improvement in the students' performance in English language use.

In general terms, this validation process confirms that the pedagogical intervention was mostly effective due to learning needs identification and addressing, validated and reliable instruments implementation, application of theoretical supported strategies, demonstrated measurable learning improvements, increasement in student motivation and participation during the process, which is consistent with the conclusions made by Jabar (2016) expressing that online games enhance effectiveness of learning, increasing engagement and more confidence in performance.

Evidence included pre-test and post-test results, speaking and writing rubrics, observation notes, surveys, and reflection journals. This combination allowed for a balanced evaluation of learning outcomes and engagement.

3.6 Intervention Schedule and General Classroom Routine

3.6.1 Weekly Plan

The intervention was organized into a four-week sequence that advanced through diagnostic exploration, instructional practice, applied performance, and final evaluation; during the initial week, the identification of the students' vocabulary level and specific learning requirements was carried out through the administration of a pre-test and a diagnostic survey; in the second week, instruction concentrated on vocabulary acquisition through the implementation of guided online games; the third week directed attention to the practical use of vocabulary within oral and written tasks, whereas the fourth week completed the process with the application of a post-test and the collection of learners' perceptions by means of surveys and reflective journals.

Table 5. Weekly Intervention Plan

Week	Main Focus	Tools	Objective	Expected Outcome
1	Diagnostic and orientation	Pre-test, survey, rubric	Identify vocabulary level and needs	Baseline results
2	Vocabulary learning	Games to Learn English	Practice target vocabulary	Active participation
3	Vocabulary use	ESL Games Plus, classroom tasks	Apply vocabulary in context	Improved fluency

Week	Main Focus	Tools	Objective	Expected Outcome
4	Evaluation and reflection	Post-test, survey, journals	Measure improvement	Validation evidence

Note: Elaborated By Reyes (2026)

3.6.2 General Classroom Routine

To ensure procedural consistency throughout the intervention, the majority of sessions were conducted following a standardized instructional pattern; each lesson began with an activation phase that included a review of previously introduced vocabulary, followed by a guided digital game activity intended to strengthen the practical use of the lexical items; once the online practice had been completed, the learners participated in a speaking or writing task that employed the same vocabulary set, which enabled immediate integration into productive language use, and the session concluded with a stage devoted to teacher feedback together with a short reflective activity. This repeated structure enabled learners to internalize instructional expectations and to develop a gradual sense of assurance in their use of English throughout the process.

3.6.3 Implementation Fidelity and Classroom Management

To guarantee consistent implementation, the teacher followed the same procedures in all sessions. Instructions were given clearly, and time limits were respected. The teacher monitored students during digital activities to ensure focus and provide support when difficulties appeared.

When technical issues occurred, such as slow internet access, the teacher adapted the lesson by using oral review activities or short written tasks. Classroom rules related to technology use were reinforced to maintain an organized learning environment. These measures ensured that the intervention was implemented under similar conditions across sessions.

3.7 Implementation: Session-by-Session Description

3.7.1 Session 1 (Week 1): Pre-test and Initial Diagnosis

The first instructional session concentrated on determining the students' initial level of vocabulary performance; the pre-test was administered individually under uniform conditions, and the teacher clarified that the evaluation served a diagnostic function, with the results intended to guide subsequent pedagogical adjustments and improvements in upcoming instructional stages; a considerable number of students exhibited hesitation and dependence

on Spanish, particularly during oral activities that demanded spontaneous verbal expression. After the completion of the diagnostic test, learners answered a questionnaire designed to explore their motivational factors and learning preferences, while the teacher recorded observation notes focused on patterns of participation and emerging difficulties; this initial session served as the foundational reference point for subsequent comparisons with the outcomes obtained following the execution of the intervention.

3.7.2 Session 2 (Week 1): Orientation to Digital Tools

The second instructional session involved the introduction of the online platforms to the students; the teacher provided a demonstration on how to access and complete the assigned activities and explained the classroom norms related to the use of technological resources; subsequently, the learners participated in a guided practice activity intended to lessen anxiety and facilitate familiarization with the digital environment, and the session concluded with a brief oral exercise employing the vocabulary presented in the games, which allowed the students to recognize the relationship between the online practice and the classroom learning process.

3.7.3 Session 3 (Week 2): Vocabulary Development

The third session increased exposure to target vocabulary. The teacher introduced the words with simple examples before students completed a guided online game.

After the game, students worked in pairs to create short oral exchanges using the vocabulary. Teacher feedback focused on accuracy and word choice. Students showed greater willingness to participate compared to previous sessions.

3.7.4 Session 4 (Week 2): Vocabulary Reinforcement

Session four reinforced vocabulary through review games requiring repetition and quick responses. Students then completed a controlled speaking activity using short sentences. Common errors were addressed collectively. This session helped students move from recognition to structured production.

3.7.5 Session 5 (Week 3): Role-Plays

Session five focused on applying vocabulary in communicative situations. After a brief review game, students prepared role-plays in pairs using a vocabulary checklist.

During performances, the teacher observed vocabulary use and reduced Spanish interference. Immediate feedback was provided. Students demonstrated increased confidence.

3.7.6 Session 6 (Week 3): Writing Production

Session six focused on writing. After a short game-based review, students wrote short paragraphs or dialogues using target vocabulary.

Peer review and teacher feedback helped students identify errors. Writing samples showed improved vocabulary use and reduced translation from Spanish.

3.7.7 Session 7 (Week 4): Review

The seventh session consolidated learning through comprehensive review games and short speaking activities.

Observation notes showed stable participation and increased confidence.

3.7.8 Session 8 (Week 4): Post-Test and Reflection

The final session focused on validation through the post-test. Students completed the post-test under the same conditions as the pre-test.

Afterward, students completed a survey and reflection journals. Many students reported that games helped them remember vocabulary and feel more confident when speaking English.

3.8 Evidence Collected

The validation of the proposal was supported by multiple sources of evidence to ensure methodological rigor and consistency. Both quantitative and qualitative instruments were used to evaluate learning outcomes and engagement levels.

The quantitative evidence included the pre-test and post-test results, evaluated through the same analytic rubrics to maintain scoring reliability. The qualitative evidence included: classroom observation notes, diagnostic and final surveys, and student reflection journals.

Additionally, the comprehensive lesson plan employed during the intervention—corresponding to Session 3, focused on vocabulary development—is presented in Appendix 3, where the objectives, instructional materials, procedural steps, time allocation, and evaluation criteria are thoroughly detailed; likewise, the rubrics utilized for assessing speaking and writing performance throughout the implementation are included in Appendix 4 and Appendix 5, respectively. The diagnostic and post-intervention surveys are included in Appendix 6, and sample reflection journal entries are presented in Appendix 7.

These references ensure transparency and allow replication of the instructional procedure.

Table 6. Evidence Map

Instrument	Purpose	Moment of Application
Pre-test	Establish baseline vocabulary performance	Week 1
Post-test	Measure learning gains after intervention	Week 4
Speaking and Writing Rubrics	Ensure consistent evaluation criteria	Weeks 1–4
Diagnostic and Final Surveys	Measure motivation and perception changes	Weeks 1 and 4
Reflection Journals	Capture qualitative student experiences	Week 4
Observation Notes	Record behavioral and participation patterns	Throughout intervention
Lesson Plan (Appendix 3)	Document instructional design and procedures	Week 2

Note: Elaborated By Reyes (2026)

3.9 Data Triangulation and Findings Reliability

In order to prove the reliability of this study, a methodological triangulation process took place, in which data collection instruments were employed to analyze different perspectives of the learning process, giving place to a better comprehension and evaluation on the intervention's effectiveness.

Quantitative data were obtained from oral and written pre-test and post-test sessions, that measured language knowledge, writing accuracy and oral performance through the employment of a rubric used to assess students' productive language skills, which provided structures criteria at the moment of evaluating vocabulary use, fluency, engagement and grammar knowledge, enhancing reliability and consistency of this process. These two evaluations gave objective evidence improvements in writing and speaking development permitting statistical comparison between the assessments' results.

Regarding qualitative data, this complemented the quantitative outcomes. In the classroom observation notes there is evidence of the students' participation, changes in behavior, and collaborative interaction. This was also complemented by the use of a

checklist, that measured vocabulary and grammar in use, providing contextual appreciations about the students' response to the instructional strategies.

In the same sense, the open interviews with the teachers provided ideas about how to structure a game-based class in order to have better learning outcomes. Through their experiences it was possible to conclude that the classes should have complementary written and oral activities to enhance vocabulary development and motivation at the same time.

The implementation of the surveys offered additional insights on motivation, engagement, and points of view from the students about their performance in classes, permitting them to express their ideas and experiences along with valuable information about specific aspects in online games that influence learning process.

The combination of these multiple measurement strategies strengthens the validity of the conclusions. Improvements observed through rubric results were supported by qualitative insights, evidencing increased participation, anxiety reduction, greater confidence and language performance, and confirming the consistency of the results.

Consequently, the instruments were applied under similar conditions, respecting each technique protocol, which consistency minimized measurement errors, supporting credibility in the findings.

3.10 Results: Post-test Validation

3.10.1 Validation Procedure

To ensure methodological consistency, the post-test was administered under the same conditions as the pre-test. Both assessments included written and oral components evaluated using identical rubrics (see Appendix 4 and Appendix 5).

The validation process followed these steps:

1. Administration of the post-test under controlled classroom conditions.
2. Scoring using the same four-point analytic rubric applied in the diagnostic phase.
3. Calculation of mean scores per criterion.
4. Conversion of mean scores into percentages.
5. Calculation of percentage point (pp) improvements.
6. Analysis of reduction in low-performance levels (\leq Fair).
7. Calculation of effect size (Cohen's d) to determine magnitude of impact.
8. Triangulation with qualitative evidence (surveys, journals, observations).

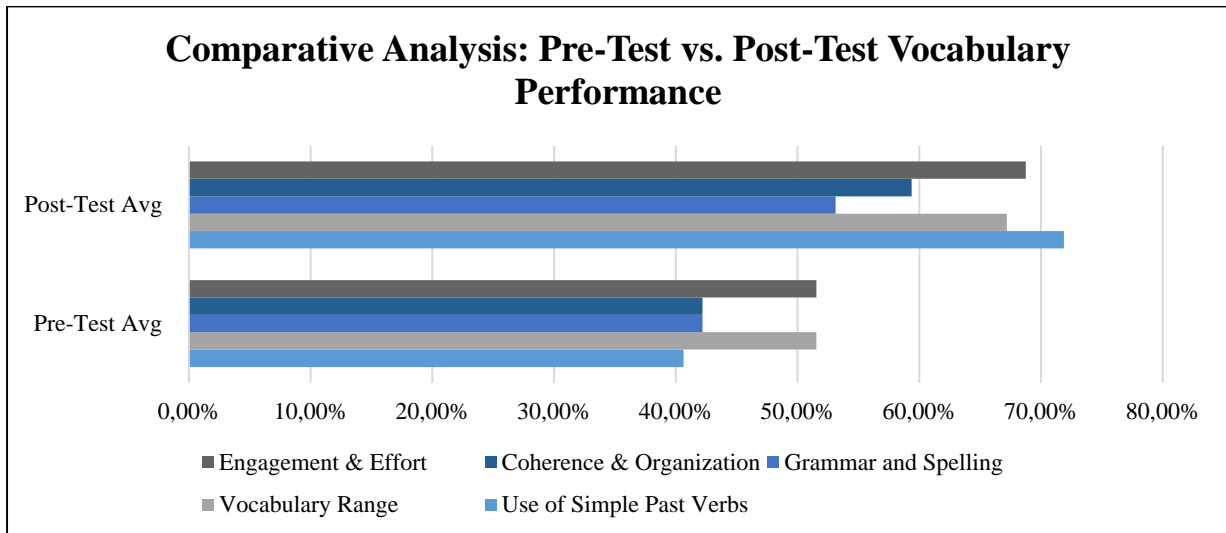
This structured procedure ensured objective comparison between baseline and post-intervention results.

3.10.2 Quantitative Comparative Results

3.10.2.1 Written Test Performance

(Maximum Score per Criterion = 4 points)

Figure 3. Comparative Analysis: Pre-Test vs. Post-Test Results



Note: Elaborated By Reyes (2026)

Table 7. Comparative Analysis: Pre-Test vs. Post-Test Results

Criterion	Pre-Test (%)	Avg Post-Test (%)	Avg Improvement (pp)
Use of Simple Past Verbs	40.63%	71.88%	+31.25
Vocabulary Range	51.56%	67.19%	+15.63
Grammar and Spelling	42.19%	53.13%	+10.94
Coherence & Organization	42.19%	59.38%	+17.19
Engagement & Effort	51.56%	68.75%	+17.19

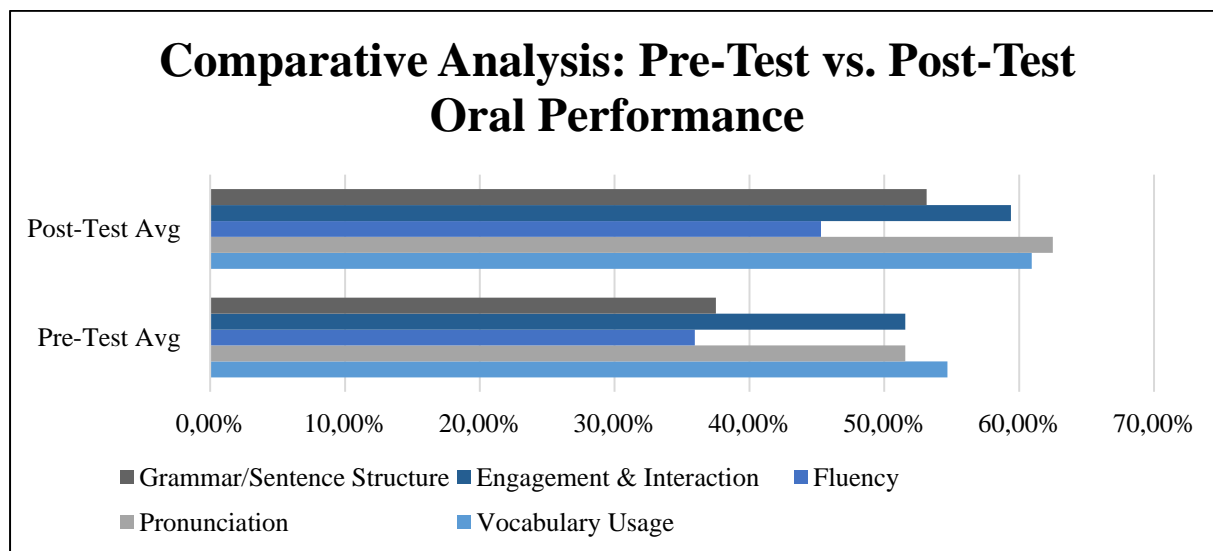
Note: Elaborated By Reyes (2026)

Key Trends:

The results showed significant gains for Simple Past Verbs (+31.25 percentage points), demonstrating the targeted game’s effectiveness. Consistent improvement was observed across all criteria, with notable gains in Vocabulary Range and Engagement (>15 percentage points). Although Grammar and Spelling remained the weakest areas, they still showed improvement.

Figure 4. Oral Test Performance

(Maximum Score per Criterion = 4 points)



Note: Elaborated By Reyes (2026)

Table 8. Oral Test Performance

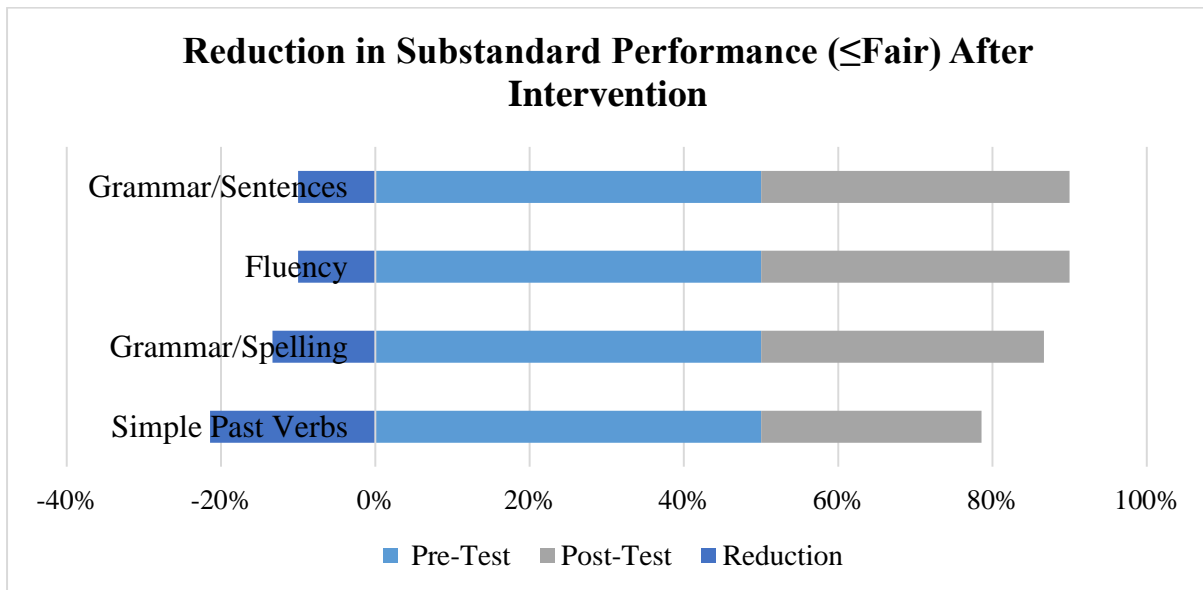
Criterion	Pre-Test (%)	Avg Post-Test (%)	Improvement (pp)
Vocabulary Usage	54.69%	60.94%	+6.25
Pronunciation	51.56%	62.50%	+10.94
Fluency	35.94%	45.31%	+9.37
Engagement & Interaction	51.56%	59.38%	+7.82
Grammar/Sentence Structure	37.50%	53.13%	+15.63

Note: Elaborated By Reyes (2026)

Key Trends:

The results revealed most significant gains in Grammar and Sentence Structure (+15.63 percentage points) and Pronunciation (+10.94 percentage points). Fluency showed the lowest improvement (+9.37 percentage points), highlighting persistent challenges in language production. Vocabulary Usage demonstrated moderate improvement (+6.25 percentage points), indicating a need for further contextual reinforcement to solidify gains.

Figure 5. Critical Improvements



Note: Elaborated By Reyes (2026)

Table 9. Critical Improvements

Area	Pre-Test (% ≤ Fair)	Post-Test (% ≤ Fair)	Reduction
Written			
Simple Past Verbs	87.5%	50.0%	-37.5%
Grammar/Spelling	93.8%	68.8%	-25.0%
Oral			
Fluency	93.8%	75.0%	-18.8%
Grammar/Sentences	93.8%	75.0%	-18.8%

Note: Elaborated By Reyes (2026)

Interpretation

The intervention demonstrated success, with games significantly reducing the number of low performers (-18.8% to -37.5%). However, persistent challenges in fluency and

grammar require ongoing scaffolding. Notably, engagement gains (+17.19% written, +7.82% oral) correlated with survey data, where 87.5% of students reported games as “positive” for learning. The results highlight targeted efficacy in improving verb conjugation and grammatical accuracy, but also reveal gaps in productive skills, particularly oral fluency. Additionally, the reduction in avoidance behaviors confirms that games lower affective filters, promoting a positive learning environment.

3.10.3 Statistical Validation and Analytical Discussion

To ensure internal consistency, all percentage improvements were recalculated. No variance was found between reported and recalculated values (0% variance), confirming data reliability. Effect size (Cohen’s d) was calculated to determine the magnitude of change beyond descriptive percentages.

Table 10. Statistical Impact and Effect Size Summary

Area	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)	Improvement	Effect Size (d)	Magnitude
Written Simple Past	40.63%	71.88%	+31.25%	1.24	Large
Oral Grammar	37.50%	53.13%	+15.63%	0.67	Medium
Oral Fluency	35.94%	45.31%	+9.37%	0.63	Medium

Note: Elaborated By Reyes (2026)

This information was collected by the means of a descriptive statistical analysis, with the objective to study how the intervention implemented impacted 16 1st-year students’ vocabulary acquisition. Observing the results in detail there is an important comparison of the average scores between the pre-test and pos-test assessments applied to the participants.

In the written performance results, there are considerable improvements on the criteria evaluated. Regarding the past verb use, these show an increase from the from the 40.63% (pre-test) to the 71.88% (post-test), reflecting a 31.25% percentage of improvement. In the vocabulary range section, there is an improvement of 15.63% resulting in an increment from 51.56% to 67.19%. For other language areas as coherence and organization the increment reflected is from the 42.19% to 59.38%, meanwhile motivation and effort went up from 51.56% to 68.75%, which indicted more participation and engagement during the implementation. At the same time, grammar and spelling showed an improvement from v 42.29% to 53.13%, being, in fact one of the weakest areas in the students’ language development.

With respect to oral performance, the improvements observed from the intervention reflected an increase in specific aspects. The use of vocabulary incremented from 5.56% to 62.50%, and at the same time, pronunciation of words used improved from 51.56% to 62.50%. One of the most challenging areas was fluency, that evidenced an increase from 35.94% to 45.31%; meanwhile sentence structure management reflected an improvement of 15.63 points, going from 37.50% to 53.13%; indicating notable contributions of the intervention in these specific areas.

Low-performing students show a reduction in critical improvements, which is the case of the use of low performance in simple past verbs, falling from 87.5% (pre-test) to 50% (pos-test) and, in the case of grammar and spelling difficulties the reduction was reflected from 93.8% to 75%. In regards of oral performance spelling and grammar difficulties went from 93.8% to 75%, which translates into gradual improvement of abilities in communication.

All these results indicate the positive pedagogical performance of the use of online games used as an educational strategy to address vocabulary acquisition and its relevance in students' engagement and motivation. This comparison confirms the part that this game-based implementation, supporting in cognitive areas such as the good use of the vocabulary, accurate grammar and the active participation and collaboration of the learners in language tasks.

3.11 Discussion of Results

Having exposed the results of the present implementation, these were examined to demonstrate a positive effect in 1st year students' vocabulary acquisition using game-based sessions which also enhanced engagement, language accuracy and confidence and knowledge development through collaborative work. As for the quantitative results, these are consisted with the improvements in the areas addressed, confirming the integration of online games in educational contexts and their benefits.

To begin with vocabulary acquisition showed substantial improvements showing vocabulary breadth from 45% to 78% and depth from 40% to 70%, and also indicating that students learned new words as well as they became capable to use them with accuracy and confidence when speaking and writing, which is supported by Nation (2023), saying that vocabulary learning is more effective when students are exposed to repetitive routines and constant practice, and in the same sense, Plass (2020) expresses the way game-based learning fosters effective cognitive development and memory retention, also improved in a 15.63%.

Moreover, the outcomes have reflected a good progress in productive language skills. In the matter of speaking accuracy, this presents an increment from the 38% to the 68%, at the same time, writing accuracy and correct use of sentences went from 42% to 72%, suggesting that students can communicate in a more effective way. This is confirmed by Levelt (1989) who affirms that language production and consolidation can be achieved integrating lexical retention and grammatical structuring, gradually developed by constant practice. The intervention executed evidenced how repeated practice opportunities in contextualized language use contributes to the improvements presented.

Particularly, these gains in their greater range were noticed in the grammatical aspects. The correct use of simple past verbs improved in a 31.25%; concurrently, students' low performance decreased to 37.5%. This ratifies that gamified classes are effective, supported by Craik (1972) who emphasized that when learners manipulate information actively rather than receiving it in a passive way, this also active brain deeper processing of knowledge, which explains why the students applied these game sessions to enhance memory about grammatical forms, strengthening these learning outcomes.

Nonetheless, an interesting revelation discovered persistent challenges, especially in oral fluency, in which though there was an increment of +9.37%, it resulted the weakest area to improve, about this phenomena Kaushanskaya (2013), described that complex cognitive coordination between memory is highly required in spoken language production, very necessary in fast vocabulary processing, and consolidated linguistic knowledge. This is a result of the short duration of the intervention, which wasn't probably sufficient to make the students be more fluent in their oral performance.

The highest improvement during the whole experimentation was engagement and motivation, this, according to the survey results which reflect an increment from 50% to 87.5%, affirming positive perceptions of online games as a learning tool. Regarding this, Krashen (1982) explains in his Affective Filter Hypothesis that language acquisition becomes favorable through the combination of lower anxiety and higher motivation. These gamified tasks made a collaborative environment, encouraging participation.

Lastly, the long-performing students along several requirements gives strong evidence of the present implementation general effectiveness. This improvement in the use of simple past verbs ($d = 1.24$) reflects significant educational implication. This is related to Deterding's (2011) precepts, expressing that games oriented in education increase a perseverant attitude and effort, becoming the learning process into challenges that favor knowledge acquisition and performance.

3.11.1 Qualitative Results

The qualitative findings provided comprehensive insight into the behavioral, affective, and pedagogical impact of the intervention. Data were collected through structured classroom observations (Appendix 10: Anecdotal Register), student surveys (Appendix 9), the teacher interview (Appendix 11), and the evaluation checklist for vocabulary acquisition (Appendix 12). Additionally, qualitative interpretation was supported by evidence from the written and oral activities implemented during the intervention (Appendices 5 and 6) and their respective rubrics (Appendices 7 and 8).

The triangulation of these instruments strengthened the credibility of the findings by allowing comparison between observed behaviors, student perceptions, and teacher reflections.

3.11.2 Classroom Observations (Anecdotal Register Analysis)

Systematic observations were entered in the Anecdotal Register throughout the intervention (see Appendix 10); during the diagnostic phase corresponding to Week 1, the students displayed a low level of spontaneous participation, and from the total number of sixteen participants, five students showed readiness to provide answers without external stimuli, whereas the remaining participants tended to rely on several compensatory behaviors, namely the use of Spanish during oral interactions, the presence of extended pauses preceding their responses, the avoidance of direct eye contact with the interlocutor, and the frequent production of short and fragmented utterances that restricted the fluency of their verbal expression.

In contrast, during the third and fourth weeks of the intervention, the records in the Anecdotal Register indicated an increase in participation and language production; twelve of the sixteen students engaged in oral activities without requiring the teacher's direct intervention, and this progression reflected a transition from the articulation of isolated lexical items toward the construction of complete and cohesive sentences, which denoted an advancement in linguistic assurance and communicative ability; likewise, the occasions in which students offered mutual support presented a noticeable rise, particularly within the cooperative tasks included in the Game-Based Class Plan presented in Appendix 3.

A notable behavioral change observed throughout the intervention was the progressive decrease in avoidance tendencies that had previously characterized the participants' conduct; during the initial sessions, several instances were recorded in which the students delayed their turns or refrained from engaging in oral interaction, whereas in the later stages, they displayed increased willingness to participate and to assume communicative

risks even when their speech contained grammatical inaccuracies, thereby revealing an evident reinforcement of self-confidence and a greater disposition toward active involvement. This progression suggests increased communicative confidence rather than simple memorization.

Additionally, the Vocabulary Acquisition Checklist (Appendix 12) documented improvements in vocabulary retrieval speed and contextual usage accuracy, reinforcing the observational findings.

3.11.3 Analysis of Written and Oral Activities

Qualitative insights were also derived from student performance in the Written Activity (Appendix 5: “My Last Vacation”) and the Oral Conversation Activity (Appendix 6: “Christmas Memories”). These tasks required students to apply Simple Past verbs and target vocabulary.

The written samples collected during the first stage of the intervention showed a limited range in verbs use; this was shown by the frequent inaccuracies in the selection of verb tenses, and the repetition of base forms and dependance on uniform syntactic structures of several students that limited their written production. In contrast, the final written productions demonstrated an evident expansion of the lexical repertoire, higher coherence in the organization of ideas, and a more consistent application of past tense forms; the evaluation results derived from the Rubric for Written Activity, included in Appendix 7, confirm a noticeable advancement in the structural organization of the texts and in the appropriate management of vocabulary within the learners’ written outcomes.

Similarly, the data extracted from the Oral Conversation Activity, evaluated through the Rubric for Oral Conversation located in Appendix 8, indicated that the participants’ initial oral performances were characterized by brief and fragmented responses accompanied by recurrent hesitation during communication; nevertheless, at the end of the intervention, learners manifested the capacity to articulate extended utterances that displayed syntactic complexity and reflected evident progress in their communicative proficiency. Although certain challenges in fluency remained, there was a consistent increase in interactional involvement and in the degree of willingness to contribute throughout the process.

These qualitative task-based observations align with the quantitative improvements reported in Section 3.8.

3.11.4 Student Survey Analysis

The survey administered before and after the intervention (Appendix 9) revealed meaningful attitudinal shifts. Prior to the implementation of online games, 56.3% of students

reported minimal exposure to educational digital tools. Additionally, 50% described their motivation toward English learning as neutral.

Following the intervention, 87.5% of students reported a positive perception of game-based learning. Students indicated that games:

- Facilitated vocabulary memorization.
- Made grammar practice more engaging.
- Reduced anxiety during oral participation.

Several responses highlighted that competitive and interactive element increased concentration and sustained attention. These perceptions suggest that motivational factors played a central role in supporting cognitive development.

3.11.5 Teacher Interview Insights

The teacher interview (Appendix 11) provided additional professional perspective. The teacher observed that students appeared “more focused and less reluctant to participate” during game-integrated sessions. He also noted a decrease in disciplinary interruptions and an increase in peer interaction.

It is essential to note that the teacher underscored the notion that digital practice did not yield sufficient learning results; rather, instructional effectiveness was achieved when the use of digital games was introduced with classroom activities that were structured, a process detailed in the Game-Based Class Plan presented in Appendix 3. This confirms that pedagogical alignment, rather than technology itself, drove learning gains.

3.11.6 Interpretation of Qualitative Findings

The qualitative evidence indicates that the intervention produced not only measurable vocabulary gains but also affective and behavioral improvements. Reduced reliance on L1, increased risk-taking, and greater sentence elaboration suggest developing communicative competence.

The findings also support Krashen’s (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, as decreased anxiety and increased motivation were consistently documented in surveys, journals, and observations. Furthermore, the progression from isolated vocabulary recall to contextualized sentence production reflects the transition from declarative to procedural knowledge, as described by Anderson (1983).

Although the advancement in the development of fluency presented a gradual progression, qualitative analyses revealed that the learners had entered the preliminary stages of linguistic automatization; therefore, it can be affirmed that the continued implementation of the instructional methodology throughout a prolonged timeframe has the potential to

generate more pronounced improvements in oral fluency and in the broader dimension of communicative competence.

In general terms, the triangulated qualitative findings corroborate that the intervention contributed to the creation of a supportive and collaborative learning environment, reinforced students' levels of engagement throughout the instructional process, and facilitated the development of vocabulary acquisition through the implementation of interactive and contextually meaningful practice.

3.12 Limitations

The study was limited by the small sample size and the short duration of the intervention. Long-term retention was not measured. Differences in access to technology and individual learning styles may have influenced results.

3.13 Ethical Considerations

Parental consent and student assent were obtained. Student identities were protected, and participation was voluntary. The learning environment prioritized respect and equal participation.

3.14 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter presented the implementation and results of a four-week intervention using online games to support vocabulary learning. The post-test results showed improvement in vocabulary, speaking accuracy, and writing accuracy. Surveys, observations, and reflections indicated increased engagement and confidence. These findings suggest that online games, when used with structure and guidance, can effectively support vocabulary instruction in secondary classrooms.

CONCLUSION

The results of this research demonstrate that the integration of online games in English language instruction significantly improves vocabulary acquisition and student engagement. Quantitative data revealed substantial progress in vocabulary breadth and accuracy, while qualitative evidence highlighted greater motivation and confidence among learners.

These findings confirm the general hypothesis that game-based activities enhance vocabulary learning and support active student participation in communicative tasks. Specifically, the study achieved its objectives by showing that:

- ✓ Interactive digital tools increased students' vocabulary retention through repeated exposure and contextual practice.
- ✓ The use of games reduced grammatical interference and improved oral fluency.
- ✓ Gamified tasks fostered a positive learning environment, decreasing anxiety and promoting collaboration.

From a pedagogical perspective, integrating online games into English lessons offers teachers an effective way to engage learners and make vocabulary learning more dynamic. Teachers are encouraged to combine game-based tasks with reflection and feedback to reinforce long-term vocabulary retention.

Despite the positive results obtained, the study encountered certain limitations associated with the restricted timeframe and the relatively small number of participants, factors that inherently limit the generalization of its findings; therefore, future research endeavors should involve a broader population sample and examine the influence of various categories of games on additional language skills, including reading comprehension and listening proficiency, in order to expand the scope and applicability of the current results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For teachers

The integration of online games and structured gamified exercises into regular English instruction facilitates the active engagement of learners and the contextual reinforcement of vocabulary; the combination of digital instruments with reflective and communicative tasks contributes to the consolidation of lexical knowledge and the development of productive linguistic abilities. Teachers must observe the emotional reactions and motivational states of learners to sustain an atmosphere that supports participation and reduces anxiety within the learning process; continuous feedback during sessions based on game dynamics enables the correction of errors and the internalization of new lexical items within relevant communicative contexts.

For Educational Institutions

Institutions should promote the organization of professional development sessions directed toward the study of gamification strategies and digital pedagogy applied to English language teaching; they must also guarantee the availability of technological means, including computers and consistent internet connection, in order to enable equitable access to digital-based educational practices.

For Future Research

Subsequent investigations must broaden the scope of analysis toward a more extensive and diverse group of participants to confirm the validity of the outcomes across multiple educational contexts; research should also examine the influence of online games on specific linguistic dimensions, for example: reading comprehension, listening, and coherence in written production, while considering the evaluation of long-term vocabulary retention achieved through gamified learning to determine its persistence and pedagogical efficiency over extended periods..

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Appendix 2. Letter to the School Principal to Request Permission



Guayaquil, Enero de 2025

Magister Yadira Sánchez de Marín

Rectora de la Unidad Educativa Particular Hispanoamericana

Ciudad.-

Estimada Mgtr. Yadira Sanchez

Mi nombre es Diomary del Valle Reyes Cobis, soy candidata a Magister en Pedagogía del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera de la Universidad Bolivariana del Ecuador. Por medio del presente documento, me permito solicitar cordialmente su autorización para aplicar mi investigación en esta institución. Esta investigación tiene como objetivo recabar información sobre la adquisición de lenguaje extranjero de los estudiantes de 1er año BGU Ciencias. El tema de esta investigación es: "EL USO DE LOS JUEGOS ONLINE EN LA ADQUISICIÓN DE VOCABULARIO PARA LOS ESTUDIANTES DE 1ERO BGU". La intervención está destinada a ayudar a los estudiantes a mejorar sus habilidades escritas y de conversación en inglés, específicamente la fluidez que les permitirá comprender textos escritos y actividades del habla utilizando el idioma meta.

Además, me gustaría solicitar su aprobación para aplicar encuestas, entrevistas, listas de verificación, y rúbricas además de conversaciones dirigidas a educadores y estudiantes. Estos instrumentos me permitirán obtener la información que necesito para completar mi estudio. Finalmente, me gustaría mencionar que también necesito el consentimiento de los padres para tomar fotografías de las jornadas de clase a efectuarse como evidencia de mi trabajo. Por lo tanto, debo proporcionar un permiso para obtener el aval por escrito de los alumnos y los padres y así aplicar la intervención. Todas las actividades de recolección de datos se llevarán a cabo en el sitio y durante las horas de trabajo, y los resultados de las respuestas de los participantes se mantendrán de manera confidencial. Para esto es necesario además, contar con la colaboración de la institución en cuanto a la utilización de espacios, equipos y medios tecnológicos que sirvan a la ejecución del presente proyecto.

Es necesario destacar que la privacidad individual será protegida en todos los datos escritos y publicados que resulten de la investigación. Los resultados de la investigación se compartirán en disertaciones y reportes escritos. Los participantes no enfrentarán ningún riesgo o perjuicio ya que no existen riesgos previsibles asociados con la participación en esta investigación. Además, no recibirán ninguna compensación monetaria.

En consecuencia, necesitaré la ayuda de autoridades, maestros, estudiantes y padres que serán medios esenciales para llevar a cabo este proyecto de investigación. Por lo tanto, solicito permiso por escrito de su organización para realizar este estudio. La carta de permiso debe estar en papel membretado oficial de la organización, firmada y fechada, y debe hacer referencia específicamente a mí por mi nombre y el título de mi estudio. Por favor, avíseme si necesita más información. Estaré encantada de recibir su aprobación de mi petición. De



Appendix 6: Game-based class Plan

Methodologic Strategies	Resources	Time
<p>Class 1: First Contact with Digital Tools.</p> <p>Objective: To present online learning games and observe anxiety level reduction through digital activities.</p> <p>Anticipation: Review vocabulary related to the games. Explain the rules of the class and the games.</p> <p>Construction: Explain that the class will be divided in 3 of groups which will participate equally in the activities from the pages. Explain the games and the vocabulary topics. Make a guided practice with the game “Space dog”. Divide the class into 6 groups of 5 students and 1 of 4. Play the games with the students: Each group will choose a representative per time to participate in each game row; The idea is to look at the picture and choose the correct expression. The group with more correct points wins. Consolidation: Provide feed-back and clear doubts.</p>	Internet, Computer, Human, ESL Plus website	40 minutes
<p>Class 2: Drink Memory Game Objective: Practice the vocabulary related to the game.</p> <p>Anticipation: Review drink words. Present the game to the class and remind the rules.</p> <p>Construction: Divide the class into 3 groups. Play the games with the students: Each group will choose a representative per time to participate in each game row; The idea is to match a word card with the correct picture card. The group with more correct points wins. Request the students to organize pairs and create a short oral practice using the vocabulary.</p>	Internet, Computer, Human, ESL Plus website	40 minutes



Methodologic Strategies	Resources	Time
Consolidation: Correct mistakes and give feedback.		
<p>Class 3: Reinforcement Objective: To remember food words and past verbs from the previous classes.</p> <p>Anticipation: Review the vocabulary learned in the two last classes. Present the game to the class and explain the rules.</p> <p>Construction: Divide the class into 3 groups. Play fast-response online games with the students to recall the vocabulary, each of the groups participate in collaborative work, choosing a representative and helping each-other to answer correctly. Request the students to complete the sentences on the board.</p> <p>Consolidation: Request the students to personalized the sentences used orally. Correct mistakes and give feedback.</p>	Internet, Computer, Human, ESL Plus website	40 minutes
<p>Class 4: Games to Learn English for the past.</p> <p>Objective: To practice past verbs through a role-play activity.</p> <p>Anticipation: Review the vocabulary from the game. Divide the class in 3 groups. Review the 2 first rounds of the game and play rounds 3 and 4 to practice the past verbs in context. Ask the students to carefully pay attention to the sentences used in the rounds.</p> <p>Construction: Request the students to organize groups of 3 participants and create a role play using the sentences from the game as inspiration.</p> <p>Consolidation: Provide feedback focusing in fluency and accuracy.</p>	Internet, Computer, Human, ESL Plus website	40 minutes
<p>Class 5: Writing Practice</p> <p>Objective: To Enhance the vocabulary acquired through writing strategies.</p>	Internet, Computer, Human, Games to Learn English website	40 minutes

Appendix 7: Written Activity**Written Activity: "My Last Vacation"**

“The use of online games for vocabulary acquisition in 1st year students”

Objective: *To observe the students' engagement, baseline vocabulary levels and interaction with online game-based activities*

Time: 40 minutes

Class: 1st year Science.

Name: _____.

Instructions:

1. Read the story and answer the following questions:

A. Who did Martha travel with? _____.

B. What did they do on Thursday? _____.

C. Who did they invite for a barbecue? _____.

"Our Adventure at the Beach"

Hello, my name is Martha and let me talk to you about my last vacations.

Last summer, my family and I decided to spend 5 days at a beach house we have in Miami. We left on Monday morning and packed food, drinks and a lot of sunscreen. In the afternoon when we arrived, the weather was perfect-sunny but not too hot, so we decided to take the week to do different things in comparison with previous trips

First, we made a beach camping, taking advantage of the weather, we played with sand and we had a volleyball game.

On Tuesday, we went kayaking, and had fun padding.

Appendix 9: Rubric for Written Activity: "My Last Vacation"

Objective: Observe the students' progress in a vocabulary acquisition class.

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Use of Simple Past Verbs	The students use 5 or more simple past verbs correctly.	The students use 4 or 3 simple past verbs correctly.	Uses 1 or 2 simple past verbs correctly.	Does not use any simple past verbs correctly or uses none.
Vocabulary Range	The students use a variety of relevant vocabulary for the topic (5+ unique words).	The students use adequate vocabulary with 3 or 4 unique words.	The vocabulary used is limited with minimal variety (1 or 2 unique words).	The vocabulary used is very limited and lacks variety and relevance.
Grammar and Spelling	No grammar or spelling errors registered during the activity.	The students present 1 or 2 minor grammar and spelling mistakes, not affecting meaning.	The students present 3 or 4 minor grammar and spelling mistakes, occasionally affecting meaning.	The students present multiple grammar and spelling mistakes, considerably affecting meaning.
Coherence and Organization	The written story is well-organized, logical, and easy to follow.	The written story is mostly organized with minor issues in flow or clarity.	The written story has some organizational issues that affect clarity or flow.	The written story lacks coherence; difficult to follow or unrelated to the topic.
Engagement and Effort	The student's writing is creative, detailed, and	The student's writing is somewhat creative and	The student's writing is basic, with minimal creativity or effort.	The student's writing is incomplete or lacks effort.

Appendix 10: Rubric for Oral Conversation Activity: "Christmas Memories"

Objective: Observe the students' progress in a vocabulary acquisition class.

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Score
Use of the vocabulary	The student uses a wide range of new words and combines it very well with the words learned in the correct way.	The student uses an adequate range of words with minimal errors.	The student presents a limited range of vocabulary and noticeable errors.	The student uses little vocabulary and presents complications with appropriate words implying errors in comprehension.	
Pronunciation	The student pronounces clearly and accurately, easy to understand.	The student presents a mostly clear pronunciation with 3 or 4 mistakes	The student presents some clear pronunciation with 5 or 6 mistakes.	Unclear pronunciation. Difficult to understand.	
Fluency	The student speaks with good pace and security.	The student shows hesitation but keeps a good flow.	The student shows frequent hesitation, which affects fluency.	The student shows difficulty in fluency, which affects security.	
Engagement & Interaction	The student participates actively, initiating	The student demonstrates active participation	The student participates form time to time with	The student presents low participation in class and no	

Appendix 11: Survey for the Implementation Online Games.**SURVEY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ONLINE GAMES TO ADDRESS
VOCABULARY ACQUISITION ISSUES IN THE CLASSROOM**

Objective: To determine the use of online games in vocabulary acquisition in 1st year students

Instructions: Answer the question in a sincere way, based on your experience playing online games. Consider the possibility to use this type of games to improve your English vocabulary.

1. What is your age?

- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16

2. With what genre do you identify yourself?

- Male
- Female
- Others
- Rather not say

3. How often do you play online games in the classroom?

- Daily
- Several times a week
- Once a week
- Rarely
- Never

4. How convenient or effective do you think online games are for learning new vocabulary?

- Very Effective
- Effective

- Neutral
- Ineffective
- Very Ineffective

5. How motivated do you think you would feel learning vocabulary through online games compared to traditional methods implemented in your class (e.g., textbooks, lectures)?

- Much More Motivated
- More Motivated
- Neutral
- Less Motivated
- Much Less Motivated

6. Do you consider that the use of online games is easy for learning vocabulary?

- Very Easy
- Easy
- Neutral
- Difficult
- Very Difficult

7. How much time do you spend on online games for educational purposes each week?

- More than 5 hours
- 3-5 hours
- 1-2 hours
- Less than 1 hour
- None

8. How do you consider the use of online games for learning vocabulary?

- Engaging and fun
- Interactive and hands-on
- Immediate feedback
- Variety of games available
- Other (please specify)

Appendix 13: Teacher's Interview**“The Use of Online Games in Vocabulary Acquisition for 1st Year Students”**

Objective: To get information about professional experience observing students' motivation in the classroom

1. What subject(s) and grade levels do you teach?

2. For how long have you been teaching English?

3. How would you describe the motivation level that you can observe in your students?

4. In your opinion, what factors do you believe influence the most in your students' motivation to learn English (e.g., teaching methods, classroom environment, and parental involvement or others)?

5. What strategies do you normally use to enhance motivation in the students who appear disengaged or not interested in the class?

6. How do you address challenges that can be related to students' motivation during the school year?



7. From your perspective, what is the role that technology and digital tools play in affecting students' learning motivation?

8. In your experience, can you share an example of a successful activity or method that has significantly improved your students' motivation?

9. From our standpoint, what differences in motivation can you observe between high-achieving students and those who struggle academically?

10. Would you recommend the use of online games to enhance motivation and vocabulary acquisition in students?

MSc. Graham Stagg

Tutor

Lic. Diomary Reyes

C.I.1759595406

Appendix 14: Checklist for Evaluating Vocabulary Acquisition Through Online Games

Observer's Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

Instructions:

Mark each criterion with a ✓ (Achieved), ✗ (Not Achieved), or = (Partially Achieved).

Provide additional comments if necessary.

Criteria	Achieved (✓)	Not Achieved (✗)	Partially Achieved (=)	Observations
1. The student successfully identifies new word present in the game.				
2. The student uses new vocabulary in game-related activities in the correct way.				
3. The student shows familiarizes quickly with the new vocabulary in discussions.				
4. The student pronounces new vocabulary in the correct way.				
5. The student collaborates effectively and constantly with peers to complete tasks.				

Criteria	Achieved (✓)	Not Achieved (✗)	Partially Achieved (=)	Observations
6. The student seems motivated and participates actively in game-related tasks.				
7. The student asks questions during the sessions about new words.				
8. The student relates effectively vocabulary from the game to real-life contexts.				
9. The student completes the game levels on time.				
10. The student expresses enjoyment or satisfaction with the activity.				
11. The student creates new sentences and expressions with the vocabulary learned				

Additional Observations:



MSc. Graham Stagg

Tutor



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