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The Impact of Gamification on Vocabulary Acquisition in English as a Foreign Language (EFL)  
Students with Learning Gaps

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### DEDICATORY

*This work is dedicated to my mother, whose unwavering love and belief in me have been my greatest source of strength. Her guidance has shaped me, and her support has carried me through every challenge, even when I felt defeated.*

*I also dedicate this to my future self — a reminder that setbacks are not the end. Though this journey hasn't always gone as planned, I will keep moving forward, learning from each step, and striving to be the best version of myself, no matter the obstacles.*

ALEXANDRA MARISOL CEVALLOS FUENTES



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*Their combined effort was invaluable in helping me move forward with confidence and purpose.*

ALEXANDRA MARISOL CEVALLOS FUENTES



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## RESUMEN

El presente trabajo de titulación aborda la problemática de los estudiantes que inician el año escolar con vacíos de aprendizaje acumulados en el área de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL), especialmente en el desarrollo del vocabulario. Estas brechas académicas afectan su desempeño, participación y motivación, generando una percepción negativa hacia el idioma y limitando su progreso en el aula. Esta situación es frecuente en instituciones particulares mixtas de la ciudad de Guayaquil, donde, a pesar de contar con recursos y mayor carga horaria, persisten diferencias significativas en los niveles de dominio del inglés entre los estudiantes. El propósito de esta investigación es analizar si el uso de una herramienta digital gamificada, específicamente la plataforma Quizizz, puede contribuir al fortalecimiento del reconocimiento y uso del vocabulario en estudiantes con bajos niveles de competencia lingüística debido a vacíos de aprendizaje. El estudio se desarrolla en un contexto educativo urbano y se plantea como una propuesta de carácter hipotético y proyectivo. La metodología propuesta corresponde a un enfoque cuantitativo, con un diseño experimental de tipo pre y post, que contempla el uso de pruebas diagnósticas, listas de observación y el análisis de datos proporcionados por la plataforma Quizizz. Se plantea una intervención basada en actividades gamificadas de práctica de vocabulario con dificultad progresiva y seguimiento continuo del desempeño y la participación estudiantil. Como resultados esperados, se prevé una mejora en el reconocimiento, retención y uso del vocabulario en inglés, así como un aumento en la motivación, confianza y disposición para participar en clase. La propuesta destaca el uso de Quizizz como una estrategia didáctica innovadora que favorece un aprendizaje más inclusivo, motivador y significativo. Finalmente, se concluye que la gamificación puede constituir una alternativa pedagógica efectiva para apoyar a estudiantes con vacíos de aprendizaje en contextos EFL.

**Palabras clave:** gamificación, vocabulario, EFL, herramientas digitales, motivación.





**ABSTRACT**

This graduation project addresses the problem of students who begin the school year with accumulated learning gaps in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), particularly in vocabulary development. These academic gaps negatively affect students' performance, participation, and motivation, reinforcing a negative perception of English and limiting their progress in the classroom. This situation is common in mixed-gender private schools in the city of Guayaquil, where, despite adequate resources and increased instructional hours, significant differences in English proficiency levels persist. The main purpose of this study is to analyze whether the use of a gamified digital tool, specifically the Quizizz platform, can contribute to improving vocabulary recognition and usage among students with low English proficiency due to learning gaps. The research is conducted in an urban educational context and is presented as a hypothetical and projective proposal. The proposed methodology follows a quantitative approach with a pre- and post-experimental design. It includes the use of diagnostic vocabulary tests, observation checklists, and the analysis of data generated by the Quizizz platform. The proposal suggests a systematic intervention based on gamified vocabulary practice activities with progressive difficulty, along with continuous monitoring of student performance and engagement. Expected results include improvement in vocabulary recognition, retention, and use, as well as increased motivation, confidence, and willingness to participate in class. The proposal highlights Quizizz as an innovative teaching strategy that promotes a more inclusive, motivating, and meaningful learning experience. In conclusion, gamification is presented as an effective pedagogical alternative to support EFL students with learning gaps.

**Keywords:** gamification, vocabulary, EFL, digital tools, motivation.





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## INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has acquired increasing importance in the Ecuadorian educational system due to its relevance for academic development, professional opportunities, and participation in a globalized society. Educational reforms implemented over recent decades have emphasized the early introduction of English and the expansion of instructional hours throughout basic and secondary education. Despite these efforts, learning outcomes have not met the expected standards, and a considerable number of students complete their schooling with limited communicative competence in English (Harmer, 2015).

One of the most persistent challenges in EFL education is the uneven development of language skills among students within the same classroom. This issue is particularly evident in private mixed-gender schools in urban areas such as Guayaquil, where institutions often provide favorable learning conditions, including access to technology, trained teachers, and extended exposure to English. However, even in these contexts, many students begin the school year with accumulated learning gaps that hinder their ability to meet curricular expectations.

Vocabulary acquisition constitutes a core component of language learning and plays a decisive role in learners' ability to comprehend input and produce meaningful output (Nation, 2013). Students with limited vocabulary knowledge experience difficulties understanding instructions, engaging in classroom tasks, and expressing ideas effectively. As these difficulties accumulate, learners often develop low confidence and negative attitudes toward English, which further restrict their participation and motivation (Schmitt, 2008).





Recent research in language education highlights the potential of digital tools and gamification to create more engaging and supportive learning environments (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Gamified platforms such as Quizizz integrate elements of competition, immediate feedback, and repetition, which may reduce anxiety and promote active participation. Within this framework, the present study proposes the use of Quizizz as a pedagogical strategy to support vocabulary development in EFL students with learning gaps.

The relevance of this study lies in its pedagogical, social, and academic implications. From a pedagogical perspective, students with learning gaps often remain invisible within traditional instructional models, which tend to prioritize curriculum coverage over individualized support. When learners are unable to follow the pace of instruction, they disengage from the learning process, leading to long-term academic difficulties (Ur, 2012).

From a social standpoint, English proficiency is closely linked to educational equity and access to future opportunities. Students who fail to acquire basic language skills during compulsory education face limitations that extend beyond school, affecting their access to higher education and employment (Crystal, 2003). Addressing learning gaps is therefore a matter of social responsibility within educational systems.

Academically, although gamification has been widely discussed as a motivational strategy, there is limited research focused specifically on its use to support learners with accumulated vocabulary gaps in EFL contexts, particularly in Ecuador. This study contributes to the field by proposing a structured, theoretically grounded approach to vocabulary reinforcement through gamified digital tools.





A significant number of EFL students begin the academic year with vocabulary learning gaps that prevent them from achieving the expected language level for their grade. These gaps limit comprehension, reduce participation, and negatively affect students' confidence and motivation. As a result, learners struggle to engage meaningfully in classroom activities and gradually fall behind their peers.

Despite access to technological resources and increased instructional hours, traditional teaching practices often fail to address the specific needs of students with low proficiency levels. Consequently, there is a need to explore alternative instructional strategies that can effectively reinforce vocabulary learning while fostering engagement and confidence.

This research focuses on the use of Quizizz as a gamified digital tool to reinforce vocabulary acquisition in EFL students with learning gaps. The study is situated within the research lines of foreign language pedagogy, educational technology, and innovative teaching strategies. Vocabulary development is addressed as a specific linguistic component in order to maintain a clear and delimited scope.

### **Object of the Research**

The object of this research is the process of vocabulary acquisition in EFL students with accumulated learning gaps.

### **General Objective**





To investigate whether the use of a gamified digital tool (Quizizz) contributes to improving vocabulary recognition and usage in EFL students with learning gaps.

### Research Questions

- *How does the use of Quizizz as a gamified tool influence vocabulary acquisition in EFL students with learning gaps?*

### Specific Objectives

- To measure vocabulary performance before and after the use of Quizizz.
- To observe students' engagement during gamified practice sessions.
- To analyze Quizizz platform data related to vocabulary learning.

The population consists of approximately 100 students aged 11 to 13 from a private urban school in Guayaquil. The sample includes approximately 50 students selected through convenience sampling based on low vocabulary performance.

The study provides a practical pedagogical proposal for addressing vocabulary learning gaps through gamification. It offers teachers a structured strategy to integrate digital tools meaningfully into EFL instruction.

This research responds to an urgent educational need by promoting inclusive and motivating learning environments. Its novelty lies in its focus on students with accumulated learning gaps and its contextualized application in Ecuadorian private schools. Scientifically, it contributes to applied research on gamification in EFL education.





This thesis is organized into three chapters. Chapter One presents the literature review.

Chapter Two describes the methodology. Chapter Three presents the results and analysis, followed by conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual foundations that support the present research. It analyzes the main bibliographic sources related to the research problem, focusing on the use of gamified digital tools in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education and their influence on vocabulary acquisition among students with learning gaps. The chapter is organized around the two core variables of the study: the independent variable, the use of Quizizz as a gamified digital tool, and the dependent variable, vocabulary performance in EFL learners. Each variable is examined in depth, including its theoretical background, dimensions, and indicators, supported by relevant academic literature.

Independent Variable: Use of Quizizz as a Gamified Digital Tool

### **Gamification in Education: Conceptual Foundations**

Gamification is defined as the integration of game design elements into non-game contexts to enhance user engagement and motivation (Deterding et al., 2011). In educational settings, gamification has been increasingly adopted as a strategy to promote active learning, persistence, and enjoyment. Unlike game-based learning, gamification does not involve full games but rather the



strategic use of elements such as points, feedback, challenges, and competition (Kapp, 2012).

From a pedagogical perspective, gamification aligns with constructivist learning theories, which emphasize learner interaction, feedback, and autonomy (Vygotsky, 1978). In EFL contexts, gamification offers a learning environment where students can practice language skills repeatedly without the anxiety often associated with traditional assessment methods (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

### **Digital Gamified Tools in EFL Learning**

Digital gamified tools have transformed language learning by enabling personalized, interactive, and learner-centered experiences. Godwin-Jones (2018) argues that technology-enhanced language learning allows students to engage with content at their own pace, which is particularly beneficial in mixed-ability classrooms. Gamified platforms provide immediate feedback, track progress, and encourage self-regulation, all of which are essential for learners with learning gaps.

In EFL education, gamified tools are especially valuable for vocabulary practice, as they support repetition, contextual exposure, and learner motivation. Studies indicate that students using gamified platforms demonstrate higher engagement and more positive attitudes toward language learning compared to traditional instruction alone (Wang & Tahir, 2020).

### **Quizizz as a Gamified Learning Platform**

Quizizz is an online platform designed to support formative assessment and practice through gamified quizzes. Its main features include points, leaderboards, time constraints, instant feedback, and humorous visual elements. According to Zhao (2019), Quizizz increases learner motivation by combining competition with autonomy, allowing students to progress at their own



pace.

Unlike teacher-centered assessment tools, Quizizz places learners at the center of the learning process. Students receive immediate feedback on their responses, which supports metacognitive awareness and self-correction. For students with learning gaps, this feature is particularly valuable, as it allows them to identify mistakes without public exposure or embarrassment.

### **Number of Quizzes Completed**

The frequency with which students interact with a gamified tool plays a significant role in learning outcomes. Nation (2013) emphasizes that vocabulary acquisition requires repeated exposure over time. Quizizz facilitates frequent practice by allowing teachers to assign quizzes both in class and as independent work.

Regular use of Quizizz increases opportunities for reinforcement and retrieval practice, which strengthens memory retention (Nation & Webb, 2011). The number of quizzes completed per week serves as a measurable indicator of student engagement and practice intensity.

### **Student Motivation Driven by Game Elements**

Gamified features such as points, rankings, and challenges are designed to increase motivation and engagement. Dörnyei (2001) highlights that motivation is a key factor in sustained language learning. Quizizz uses these features to transform repetitive vocabulary practice into a more dynamic experience.





However, motivation generated by gamification should be balanced with pedagogical objectives. Hanus and Fox (2015) caution that excessive emphasis on competition may reduce intrinsic motivation if not properly guided. Therefore, the use of Quizizz must be intentionally aligned with learning goals.

### **Willingness to Participate and Observable Enjoyment**

Student engagement is a multidimensional construct that encompasses behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement in learning activities (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). In the context of EFL learning, engagement is a crucial factor influencing language acquisition, particularly for students who present learning gaps and low levels of confidence. Behavioral engagement refers to observable actions such as participation, persistence, and task completion; emotional engagement includes learners' interest, enjoyment, or anxiety; and cognitive engagement relates to the degree of mental effort and strategic thinking applied during learning tasks.

In traditional EFL classrooms, students with limited vocabulary knowledge often display low engagement. They may avoid participating in activities, remain silent during discussions, or rely heavily on peers to complete tasks. This disengagement is not necessarily a result of lack of interest, but rather a protective response to repeated experiences of failure and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz, 2010). Over time, these behaviors contribute to a cycle in which low participation limits practice opportunities, reinforcing existing learning gaps.

Gamified digital tools such as Quizizz have the potential to positively influence student engagement by transforming practice activities into interactive and low-risk learning experiences. According to Kapp (2012), gamification increases engagement by incorporating elements that



promote challenge, curiosity, and immediate feedback. In Quizizz, students respond individually on their devices, which reduces the pressure of public performance and allows them to focus on the task rather than peer comparison.

Observable enjoyment—such as smiling, laughter, voluntary participation, and positive verbal feedback—serves as an important indicator of emotional engagement. Research suggests that enjoyment in language learning is associated with increased willingness to communicate and greater persistence in learning tasks (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). When students experience success in gamified activities, even at a basic level, they are more likely to re-engage with the content and view themselves as capable language learners.

Furthermore, the self-paced nature of Quizizz allows students to progress according to their individual needs. Learners with learning gaps can take more time to process vocabulary items without feeling rushed or judged. This autonomy supports cognitive engagement by encouraging learners to focus on understanding rather than simply completing tasks. As a result, engagement becomes sustained rather than superficial, supporting deeper learning and vocabulary consolidation.

### **Independent Completion of Activities**

Learner autonomy is defined as the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning process, including decision-making, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation (Little, 1991). In EFL contexts, autonomy is particularly important for students who require additional practice beyond classroom instruction. However, traditional teacher-centered models often limit opportunities for autonomous learning, especially for students with low proficiency.

Quizizz promotes autonomy by allowing learners to complete activities independently,





both in class and at home. Students can engage with vocabulary quizzes multiple times, review feedback, and monitor their own progress. This independent interaction with content fosters self-regulation and encourages learners to take ownership of their learning process (Zimmerman, 2002).

For students with learning gaps, autonomy can be transformative. When learners are given control over pacing and repetition, they are more likely to persist in practice and less likely to experience frustration. Research indicates that autonomy-supportive learning environments enhance intrinsic motivation and improve learning outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The independent completion of activities also serves as an observable indicator of learner autonomy. Students who voluntarily repeat quizzes, complete assigned tasks without external pressure, or engage with optional practice activities demonstrate increased responsibility and engagement. These behaviors suggest a shift from passive participation to active learning, which is essential for closing vocabulary gaps.

### **Immediate Response to Errors**

Feedback is a critical component of effective language learning. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback helps learners understand their current level of performance and identify steps for improvement. In EFL learning, timely and clear feedback is particularly important for vocabulary acquisition, as it supports accurate form-meaning associations.

Quizizz provides immediate feedback after each response, allowing learners to recognize errors and correct misunderstandings in real time. This immediate response reduces the likelihood of fossilization and supports metacognitive awareness. For students with learning gaps, instant



feedback is especially beneficial because it prevents the accumulation of errors and reinforces correct usage.

Unlike traditional assessments, where feedback may be delayed or limited to grades, gamified feedback is continuous and non-threatening. Visual cues, correct-answer displays, and progress indicators help learners reflect on their performance without experiencing embarrassment. This aligns with formative assessment principles, which emphasize assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning (Black & Wiliam, 2009).

Immediate feedback also encourages persistence. When students see that mistakes are part of the learning process and can be corrected instantly, they are more willing to continue practicing. This contributes to a positive learning cycle in which feedback, practice, and improvement reinforce one another.

### **Sustained Participation Across Sessions**

Motivation is a key determinant of success in language learning. Dörnyei (2001) distinguishes between intrinsic motivation, driven by interest and enjoyment, and extrinsic motivation, influenced by external rewards. Gamified platforms such as Quizizz primarily leverage extrinsic motivational elements, including points, rankings, and rewards, to stimulate engagement.

Competition, when used appropriately, can enhance motivation by creating a sense of challenge and achievement. Quizizz leaderboards and point systems encourage students to remain focused and complete tasks. However, it is essential that competition remains friendly and supportive, particularly for learners with learning gaps who may feel discouraged by constant comparison (Hanus & Fox, 2015).



Sustained participation across multiple sessions serves as a key indicator of motivational impact. When students consistently engage with gamified activities over time, it suggests that motivation extends beyond novelty. Research indicates that sustained motivation is more likely when learners experience a balance between challenge and success (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

In this study, motivation is understood not merely as excitement, but as continued willingness to engage in vocabulary practice. Gamification, when aligned with pedagogical objectives, can support both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation by making learning enjoyable while reinforcing meaningful outcomes.

### **Reduced Anxiety and Increased Willingness to Take Risks**

Emotional safety is a critical factor in language learning, particularly for students who have experienced repeated failure. Horwitz (2010) emphasizes that language anxiety negatively affects performance and willingness to communicate. Students with learning gaps are especially vulnerable to anxiety, as they often fear making mistakes in front of peers.

Gamified digital environments contribute to inclusivity by reducing public exposure and allowing learners to engage privately with content. In Quizizz, responses are submitted individually, and errors are not highlighted publicly. This reduces anxiety and encourages learners to take risks, which is essential for language development.

Reduced anxiety can be observed through increased participation, quicker response times, and willingness to attempt challenging questions. As students experience success in a supportive environment, their confidence grows, leading to greater engagement in classroom activities beyond



the digital platform.

Inclusivity also involves providing equal opportunities for participation regardless of proficiency level. Quizizz allows all students to engage with the same content while accommodating individual pacing, making it a valuable tool for mixed-ability classrooms.

### **Dependent Variable: Vocabulary Performance in EFL Students**

Vocabulary performance represents a central outcome in the process of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It encompasses not only the quantity of words a learner knows, but also the depth of understanding, the ability to recognize words in context, to use them meaningfully, and to retain them over time. For students with accumulated learning gaps, vocabulary performance is closely linked to their academic experience, emotional responses, and self-perception as language learners. This section examines vocabulary performance from cognitive, pedagogical, and affective perspectives, emphasizing its relevance to learners with low English proficiency.

### **Vocabulary as a Foundation of Language Learning**

Vocabulary has long been recognized as the foundation of language competence. Wilkins (1972) famously stated that “without grammar very little can be conveyed, but without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (p. 111). This assertion underscores the essential role vocabulary plays in enabling communication. In EFL contexts, vocabulary knowledge is often the primary factor determining whether learners can understand classroom input and participate in activities. Nation (2013) defines vocabulary knowledge as a multidimensional construct that includes form, meaning, and use. Learners must recognize words in spoken and written forms, understand their



meanings, and apply them appropriately in different contexts. For students with learning gaps, weaknesses often exist across all these dimensions, resulting in fragmented and unstable lexical knowledge.

From An internal perspective, limited vocabulary affects more than academic performance. Students who do not understand key words may feel lost during lessons, excluded from peer interactions, and disconnected from the learning process. Over time, this experience shapes their identity as language learners, often leading to negative self-labeling and reduced confidence (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

### **Ability to Identify Vocabulary in Context**

Vocabulary recognition refers to the ability to identify and understand words when they appear in listening or reading contexts. This receptive knowledge is the first stage of vocabulary acquisition and a prerequisite for productive use (Schmitt, 2008). Learners with strong recognition skills can follow instructions, understand texts, and make sense of classroom discourse, even if they are not yet able to actively use the vocabulary.

Students with learning gaps often demonstrate limited recognition, particularly when vocabulary appears outside of memorized lists or familiar exercises. Nation and Webb (2011) explain that recognition requires repeated exposure to words in varied contexts. Without such exposure, learners may recognize words in isolation but fail to understand them in authentic situations.

From a pedagogical standpoint, recognition can be supported through contextualized practice and multimodal input. Gamified quizzes that include images, sentences, and immediate



feedback help learners strengthen form-meaning connections. Recognition is measured in this study through quiz performance and diagnostic assessments, which provide insight into learners' receptive vocabulary growth.

This dimension requires acknowledging that recognition is often a moment of relief for learners. When students realize they understand a word they previously found confusing, their confidence increases. These small moments of success can significantly impact motivation and willingness to continue learning.

### **Use of Vocabulary in Classroom Activities**

Vocabulary usage refers to the ability to actively employ words in spoken or written communication. This productive dimension reflects deeper lexical knowledge and greater cognitive processing (Nation, 2013). Usage requires learners to retrieve words from memory, adapt them to context, and apply them appropriately, which can be challenging for students with learning gaps. Research indicates that productive vocabulary knowledge develops more slowly than receptive knowledge and requires intentional practice (Schmitt, 2008). In EFL classrooms, opportunities for meaningful use are often limited, particularly for students who lack confidence or fear making mistakes. These learners may avoid speaking or writing tasks, further restricting their chances to develop productive vocabulary.

Observation of classroom participation serves as a key indicator of vocabulary usage in this study. When students begin to incorporate newly practiced words into discussions or written tasks, it signals progress not only in lexical knowledge but also in confidence. Dörnyei (2001) highlights that willingness to communicate is closely linked to perceived competence.





This dimension involves recognizing the emotional risk associated with using new vocabulary. For many learners, speaking up in English represents vulnerability. Supportive environments that normalize mistakes and encourage effort play a crucial role in helping students move from recognition to active use.

### **Improvement in Pre- and Post-Test Scores**

Vocabulary retention refers to the ability to remember and recall words over time. Retention is essential for long-term language development, as vocabulary that is quickly forgotten does not contribute to communicative competence (Nation & Webb, 2011). Students with learning gaps often struggle with retention due to limited repetition and weak initial encoding.

Cognitive theories of learning emphasize the importance of spaced repetition and retrieval practice for long-term memory (Ebbinghaus, 1885; Nation, 2013). When learners repeatedly encounter and retrieve vocabulary, neural connections are strengthened, making recall more automatic. Gamified practice supports these processes by encouraging repeated engagement in an enjoyable format.

In this study, retention is measured through improvements in pre- and post-test scores, as well as through ongoing quiz performance. These measures provide quantitative evidence of vocabulary growth. However, retention also has an emotional dimension. When learners notice that they remember words they previously struggled with, their sense of progress increases, reinforcing motivation.

Retention is not merely about memorization; it reflects meaningful learning. Students who retain vocabulary are better equipped to connect new language input with prior knowledge,



facilitating further acquisition.

### **Increased Participation and Initiative to Speak**

Confidence is a critical affective factor in language learning and is closely linked to vocabulary performance. Learners with limited vocabulary often lack confidence, as they fear making mistakes or being judged by peers (Horwitz, 2010). This fear leads to silence, avoidance, and disengagement, which in turn limits learning opportunities.

As vocabulary knowledge increases, confidence tends to grow. Learners who recognize and remember more words feel better prepared to participate in class and take risks in communication (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Increased participation and initiative to speak are observable indicators of this growing confidence.

In this study, confidence is examined through classroom observation, focusing on behaviors such as volunteering answers, asking questions, and participating in discussions. These behaviors reflect a shift in learners' self-perception—from passive recipients of information to active language users.

This dimension involves acknowledging that confidence is deeply personal and context-dependent. For students with learning gaps, rebuilding confidence requires patience, positive reinforcement, and consistent opportunities for success. Vocabulary learning, when supported through gamified practice, can serve as a pathway to restoring learners' belief in their ability to learn English.

### **Vocabulary Performance and Learner Identity**





Beyond measurable outcomes, vocabulary performance influences learners' identities.

Norton (2013) argues that language learning is closely tied to how learners see themselves and their place in the classroom community. Students with weak vocabulary may feel marginalized or excluded, while those who develop stronger lexical knowledge are more likely to see themselves as legitimate participants in the learning process.

Improved vocabulary performance can therefore have transformative effects. As learners gain the ability to understand and use English, they begin to participate more fully, interact with peers, and engage with content. This shift contributes to a more positive learner identity and a stronger sense of belonging.

### **Synthesis of the Dependent Variable**

Vocabulary performance, as conceptualized in this study, is a multidimensional construct that integrates cognitive, behavioral, and affective elements. Recognition, usage, retention, and confidence interact dynamically, shaping learners' experiences and outcomes in EFL classrooms. From the researcher's perspective, improving vocabulary performance is not solely about increasing test scores. It is about enabling learners to feel capable, included, and motivated. For students with learning gaps, vocabulary development represents a critical step toward re-engagement and long-term success in language learning.



## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

This chapter presents a detailed explanation of the methodological framework that guides the present research. Methodology plays a crucial role in ensuring that the research process is systematic, coherent, and aligned with the objectives and theoretical foundations established in Chapter One. In educational research, especially in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), methodological rigor is essential to ensure that findings are meaningful, reliable, and applicable to real classroom contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The methodological decisions adopted in this study respond directly to the nature of the research problem: the presence of vocabulary learning gaps among EFL students and the need for pedagogical strategies that address both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning. For this reason, the chapter details the research approach, scope, type, methods, instruments, population, sample, and research stages, providing a transparent account of how the study is structured.

Additionally, this chapter presents the results of the initial diagnostic stage, which constitutes a key element in understanding the learning context and justifying the proposed intervention. By clearly outlining each methodological component, this chapter establishes the foundation for the proposal and the interpretation of results presented in subsequent sections of the study.

### Conceptualization and Operationalization of the Variables

Operationalization is a fundamental process in quantitative research because it allows abstract theoretical constructs to be transformed into observable and measurable elements





(Hernández, Fernández, & Baptista, 2014). In this study, the variables are carefully conceptualized based on the theoretical framework and then operationalized through dimensions, indicators, instruments, and measurement scales.

The independent variable, use of Quizizz as a gamified digital tool, is conceptualized as the structured and intentional integration of the Quizizz platform into EFL instruction for vocabulary reinforcement. This variable is operationalized through dimensions such as frequency of use, gamified features, engagement, autonomy, feedback, and emotional safety. These dimensions reflect both pedagogical and motivational aspects of gamified learning environments.

The dependent variable, vocabulary performance, is defined as the learners' ability to recognize, use, retain, and confidently apply English vocabulary. This variable is operationalized through dimensions related to recognition, usage, retention, and confidence, which together provide a holistic view of vocabulary development. The operationalization matrices presented earlier ensure coherence between objectives, instruments, and data analysis, strengthening the internal validity of the study.

**Table 1**

Operationalization Matrix

VARIABLE	DEFINITION	DIMENSION	INDICATOR	SCALE
<b>USE OF QUIZIZZ AS A GAMIFIED DIGITAL TOOL</b>	The systematic use of the Quizizz platform to reinforce vocabulary through gamified activities	Frequency of use	Number of quizzes completed per week	Numerical frequency





		Gamified features	Student motivation driven by game elements	Frequency scale
		Practice and repetition	Improvement in quiz performance over time	Percentage (%)
		Engagement	Willingness to participate and enjoyment	Likert scale (1-5)
		Autonomy	Independent completion of activities	Frequency scale
		Feedback	Immediate response to errors	Descriptive

VARIABLE	DEFINITION	DIMENSION	INDICATOR	INSTRUMENT	SCALE
	N	N	R	T	
<b>VOCABULARY PERFORMANCE</b>	The ability to recognize, use, retain, and	Recognition	Ability to identify vocabulary in context	Vocabulary test	Percentage (%)





confidently				
apply English				
vocabulary				
	Usage	Use of vocabulary in classroom activities	Observation checklist	Frequency scale
	Retention	Improvement in pre- and post-test scores	Pre/post-test	Percentage (%)
	Confidence	Increased participation and initiative	Observation checklist	Likert scale (1– 5)

### Research Approach

This study adopts a quantitative research approach, which focuses on the collection and analysis of numerical data to identify patterns, relationships, and changes in variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The quantitative route is appropriate for this research because the objective is to measure vocabulary performance before and after the use of a gamified digital tool and to analyze changes based on observable and measurable indicators.

The quantitative approach allows for objectivity and replicability, as it relies on





standardized instruments and statistical procedures. In the context of EFL research, quantitative methods are commonly used to evaluate instructional interventions and assess learning outcomes (Dörnyei, 2007). This study follows a structured route that begins with diagnosis, continues with proposal modeling, and concludes with theoretical validation.

### **Scope of the Research**

The scope of this research is descriptive and applied. It is descriptive because it seeks to characterize the vocabulary performance of students with learning gaps and their engagement with a gamified digital tool. Descriptive studies aim to detail phenomena as they occur without manipulating variables extensively (Hernández et al., 2014).

At the same time, the research is applied because it proposes a practical solution to an identified educational problem. Applied research focuses on generating knowledge that can be used to improve real-world practices (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). In this case, the study aims to provide a pedagogical proposal that supports vocabulary learning in EFL classrooms through gamification.

### **Type of Research**

The research is classified as documentary, field-based, and cross-sectional. Documentary research is used during the theoretical stage to analyze academic sources related to EFL learning, vocabulary acquisition, motivation, and gamification. This stage supports the conceptual foundation of the study.





Field research is included at the diagnostic level, as data are collected directly from students in their natural educational context. The study is cross-sectional in nature because data are collected during a specific period of the academic year rather than over multiple years (Hernández et al., 2014). This design is appropriate given the hypothetical–projective character of the proposal.

### Methods Employed

Multiple research methods are employed to ensure methodological triangulation and strengthen validity.

- **Theoretical methods:** analysis, synthesis, induction, and deduction are used to interpret the literature and construct the conceptual framework (Creswell, 2014).
- **Empirical methods:** diagnostic vocabulary tests, observation, and platform analytics are used to gather data from participants.
- **Statistical methods:** descriptive statistics, including percentages, averages, and score comparisons, are used to analyze quantitative data (Field, 2018).

Each method serves a specific purpose within the research process and contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

### Description of the Research Instruments

#### Vocabulary Test

The vocabulary test is designed as a standardized instrument to measure students' vocabulary recognition and retention in English as a Foreign Language. Its primary purpose is to identify learners with vocabulary learning gaps and to assess changes in vocabulary performance





before and after the implementation of the gamified proposal. The test focuses on high-frequency vocabulary aligned with the school curriculum and the textbook used in class, ensuring content validity and relevance to the students' academic context.

The instrument consists of multiple-choice items, as this format allows for objective scoring and reduces subjectivity in evaluation (Hughes, 2003). Each item presents a target word embedded in a short sentence or accompanied by visual support, requiring students to identify the correct meaning or usage. This structure assesses receptive vocabulary knowledge and contextual understanding, which are essential components of early lexical development (Nation, 2013).

The vocabulary test is administered twice: as a diagnostic pre-test at the beginning of the study and as a post-test at the end of the proposed intervention. Scores are recorded as percentages, allowing for comparison and analysis of improvement over time. The results provide quantitative data that serve as a key indicator of vocabulary growth and the effectiveness of the gamified practice.

### **Observation Checklist**

The observation checklist is a qualitative instrument designed to systematically record students' behavioral and affective responses during vocabulary practice sessions. Its purpose is to capture aspects of learning that are not fully reflected in test scores, such as engagement, participation, confidence, and motivation. Observation is particularly relevant in EFL research because language learning involves social interaction and emotional factors that influence performance (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

The checklist includes clearly defined indicators related to student participation, willingness to answer questions, observable enjoyment, use of English during activities, and





autonomy in task completion. Each indicator is rated using a frequency or Likert-type scale, which allows for consistent data collection across sessions. This structured format increases reliability and minimizes observer bias.

Observations are conducted by the teacher-researcher during regular class activities and gamified practice sessions. The data collected through this instrument complement quantitative findings by providing contextualized evidence of changes in learner behavior and attitudes. The checklist plays a crucial role in understanding how vocabulary development is linked to confidence and engagement, particularly for students with learning gaps.

### **Quizizz Platform Analytics**

Quizizz platform analytics constitute a digital instrument that provides objective and automatically generated data related to student interaction with the gamified tool. These analytics include information such as the number of quizzes completed, accuracy rates, response times, and overall performance trends. The purpose of this instrument is to track students' engagement and vocabulary practice over time in a precise and systematic manner.

Digital analytics are particularly valuable in educational research because they reduce human error and offer real-time insights into learning processes (Godwin-Jones, 2018). In this study, Quizizz data are used to monitor frequency of use, practice repetition, and improvement in quiz scores, which are directly linked to the dimensions of the independent variable.

The data obtained from Quizizz are exported and organized using spreadsheet software for analysis. These records provide quantitative evidence that supports findings from the vocabulary test and observation checklist. By triangulating platform analytics with other instruments, the study strengthens the validity of its conclusions and offers a comprehensive view of students' vocabulary





learning and engagement.

## Research Instruments

Three main instruments are used in this study. The first is a standardized vocabulary test, designed to measure students' recognition and retention of target vocabulary. This test is administered as both a pre-test and post-test to identify changes in performance.

The second instrument is an observation checklist, which records behavioral and affective indicators such as participation, engagement, and confidence. Observation is particularly valuable for capturing aspects of learning that are not fully reflected in test scores (Cohen et al., 2018).

The third instrument consists of Quizizz platform analytics, which provide data on quiz completion, accuracy, and frequency of use. These analytics offer objective evidence of student interaction with the gamified tool.

## Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of approximately 100 students aged 11 to 13 enrolled in a private urban school in Guayaquil. These students belong to middle school levels where English is part of the regular curriculum.

The sample includes approximately 50 students identified through non-probabilistic convenience sampling. This sampling method is justified because the study focuses on students with low vocabulary performance identified through a diagnostic test. Convenience sampling is appropriate in educational research when access to participants is limited and when the research seeks to address a specific subgroup (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).





The unit of analysis is the individual student, and all participants share similar curricular and institutional conditions.

### **Methodological Strategy and Research Stages**

The research follows a structured methodological strategy composed of four main stages.

#### **Theoretical Study Stage**

This stage corresponds to Chapter One and involves the review and analysis of theoretical and empirical literature related to the research variables. Its purpose is to establish conceptual clarity and justify the proposed intervention.

#### **Initial Diagnostic Stage**

During this stage, a vocabulary diagnostic test is administered, and classroom observations are conducted. The objective is to identify students with learning gaps and establish a baseline of vocabulary performance and engagement.

#### **Proposal Modeling Stage**

Based on the diagnostic results and theoretical framework, a pedagogical proposal is designed. This proposal consists of systematic vocabulary practice using Quizizz, with progressive difficulty and continuous monitoring.

#### **Final Diagnosis or Validation Stage**

This stage involves theoretical validation through comparison with existing literature and analysis of expected outcomes. Although the proposal is hypothetical, its feasibility and coherence are evaluated based on methodological and pedagogical criteria.





## **Presentation and Discussion of Initial Diagnostic Results**

The diagnostic results reveal that a significant number of students demonstrate limited vocabulary recognition and low participation. Test scores indicate performance below the expected level for the grade, while observation data show low confidence and reliance on peers.

These findings confirm the existence of vocabulary learning gaps and support the need for an alternative instructional approach. The results also highlight affective factors such as anxiety and low motivation, which reinforce the relevance of a gamified proposal.

## **Conclusions of the Diagnostic Stage**

The initial diagnosis confirms that vocabulary gaps significantly affect students' performance and engagement in EFL classrooms. These gaps justify the design of a gamified pedagogical proposal aimed at reinforcing vocabulary learning and rebuilding learner confidence. The methodological decisions adopted in this study provide a solid foundation for addressing the research problem and achieving the proposed objectives.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations are a fundamental component of educational research, particularly when studies involve human participants and are conducted in formal school settings. This research adheres to established ethical principles aimed at protecting the rights, well-being, and dignity of all participants throughout the research process. The study is designed to minimize risk, ensure transparency, and promote responsible use of data, in accordance with ethical guidelines for research in education (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).





Informed consent is a central ethical requirement in this study. Prior to data collection, authorization is obtained from the school administration, and, when required by institutional policy, informed consent is requested from students' parents or legal guardians. Participants are clearly informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Students are assured that their decision to participate or withdraw will not affect their academic evaluation or relationship with the institution.

Confidentiality and anonymity are strictly maintained throughout the research process. Participants' personal information is not disclosed, and all data are coded to prevent identification of individual students. Test results, observation records, and platform analytics are analyzed and reported in aggregate form only. Digital data are securely stored and accessed exclusively by the researcher, ensuring compliance with data protection principles (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

The study presents minimal risk to participants, as all activities are integrated into regular classroom practices and align with the existing curriculum. The use of Quizizz does not expose students to harm, discomfort, or excessive academic pressure. On the contrary, the gamified activities are designed to reduce anxiety and support a positive learning environment, particularly for students with learning gaps. Care is taken to avoid competitive dynamics that could negatively affect students' self-esteem or motivation.

The researcher also acknowledges the ethical responsibility associated with the dual role of teacher and researcher. To address potential power imbalances, the researcher adopts a reflective and impartial stance, ensuring that observations and assessments are conducted objectively. Students are treated equitably, and instructional decisions are made in the best interest of their learning and well-being.





Finally, the study commits to the ethical dissemination of findings. Results are reported honestly and accurately, without manipulation or misrepresentation of data. The conclusions drawn aim to contribute to the improvement of EFL teaching practices and to the broader field of educational research. By adhering to these ethical principles, the study ensures respect for participants and reinforces the credibility and integrity of the research process.

### CHAPTER 3: PROPOSAL RESULTS

Chapter Three presents the results derived from the diagnostic stage and develops the scientific modeling of the proposed pedagogical solution. This chapter represents the practical and applied core of the research, as it integrates empirical evidence, theoretical foundations, and methodological coherence into a structured proposal aimed at addressing vocabulary learning gaps in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students.

The chapter responds to the need for educational solutions that are not only theoretically sound but also feasible and contextually relevant. Based on the findings of the diagnostic stage, the proposal is modeled as a pedagogical–didactic and technological intervention that integrates gamification through the Quizizz platform. Special emphasis is placed on inclusivity, learner engagement, emotional safety, and vocabulary reinforcement.

This chapter is organized into three major components: (1) analysis and presentation of diagnostic results, (2) modeling and detailed description of the proposal, and (3) validation of the proposal through theoretical criteria. Each section is developed in depth to ensure clarity, rigor, and alignment with fourth-level academic standards in education.





### Results of the Initial Diagnostic Stage

The initial diagnostic stage played a fundamental role in identifying the nature and extent of vocabulary learning gaps among the participating students. This stage combined quantitative data from a vocabulary test with qualitative data obtained through classroom observation. The purpose of this diagnosis was not only to measure academic performance but also to understand students' engagement, confidence, and attitudes toward English learning.

### Diagnostic Vocabulary Test Results

The diagnostic vocabulary test revealed that a significant proportion of students demonstrated limited vocabulary recognition and retention. Many students were unable to identify basic vocabulary items in context, even when visual or contextual clues were provided. These results indicate that learning gaps were not isolated incidents but rather accumulated deficiencies affecting core language foundations.

**Table 3**

Results of the Diagnostic Vocabulary Test (Pre-Test)

PERFORMANCE LEVEL	SCORE RANGE	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE
HIGH	80–100%	8	16%
MEDIUM	60–79%	14	28%
LOW	Below 60%	28	56%
TOTAL	—	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>





The data show that more than half of the students performed below the expected level for their grade. This confirms the presence of significant vocabulary learning gaps that require targeted pedagogical intervention.

### **Observation Results**

Classroom observations revealed low levels of participation and confidence among students identified with vocabulary gaps. Many learners avoided answering questions, relied on peers, or used their first language to compensate for limited vocabulary knowledge. Emotional indicators such as anxiety and frustration were frequently observed.

These findings reinforce the idea that vocabulary gaps are not merely cognitive but also affective in nature. Students' negative self-perceptions as language learners further limit their willingness to engage in English activities.

### **Nature, Type, and Scope of the Proposal**

The proposed solution is modeled as a pedagogical–didactic, technological, and ludic proposal, designed to function as a supportive mechanism within the EFL classroom. Its essential nature is educational and methodological, as it provides structured guidance for teachers on how to integrate gamified digital tools into vocabulary instruction.

The scope of the proposal is applied and inclusive. Rather than replacing existing curricular structures, the proposal complements regular instruction by offering additional, low-risk practice opportunities. Its applied nature allows for immediate implementation in similar educational contexts, particularly in private urban schools with access to digital resources.





The proposal is also scalable and adaptable, meaning it can be adjusted to different grade levels, proficiency levels, and institutional conditions. This flexibility increases its relevance and potential impact across diverse EFL learning environments.

## **Presentation and Originality of the Proposal**

### **Title of the Proposal**

Gamified Vocabulary Reinforcement Program Using Quizizz for EFL Students with Learning Gaps

### **Presentation**

This proposal is conceived as a structured response to the challenge of accumulated vocabulary learning gaps. Its originality lies in the intentional focus on learners who have historically been marginalized by traditional instructional practices due to low proficiency levels. Unlike competitive or summative uses of gamification, this proposal emphasizes formative practice, emotional safety, and confidence building.

The proposal integrates digital technology not as an end in itself, but as a means to support meaningful learning. Quizizz is selected for its accessibility, ease of use, and capacity to provide immediate feedback and self-paced practice. The proposal's design reflects a balance between pedagogical rigor and practical feasibility.

## **Objectives of the Proposal**

### **General Objective**

To reinforce vocabulary recognition, retention, and usage in EFL students with learning gaps through systematic gamified practice using Quizizz.





### **Specific Objectives**

- To provide frequent and structured vocabulary practice opportunities.
- To improve students' vocabulary retention through repetition and feedback.
- To increase student engagement and motivation toward English learning.

These objectives align with both the research objectives and the identified needs from the diagnostic stage.

### **Theoretical and Pedagogical Foundation**

The proposal is grounded in theories of vocabulary acquisition, motivation, and gamified learning. Vocabulary learning is understood as a cumulative process requiring repeated exposure and contextualized use (Nation, 2013). From a motivational perspective, the proposal draws on self-determination theory, emphasizing autonomy and competence as key factors in learner engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Gamification is employed as a pedagogical strategy that transforms repetitive practice into an engaging experience without increasing anxiety (Kapp, 2012). The proposal also aligns with formative assessment principles, as learners receive continuous feedback and opportunities for self-improvement (Black & Wiliam, 2009).

### **Structure and Dynamics of the Proposal**

The structure and dynamics of the proposed Gamified Vocabulary Reinforcement Program are designed to ensure coherence, systematic implementation, and pedagogical effectiveness. The proposal is modeled as a programmatic system, understood as an organized set of interrelated





components that function together to achieve clearly defined educational objectives (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). This system integrates strategies, actions, and activities that operate in a dynamic and cyclical manner, allowing for continuous monitoring and pedagogical adjustment.

At the strategic level, the proposal is grounded in gamified vocabulary practice, progressive difficulty sequencing, and formative feedback. Gamified practice serves as the core strategy, transforming repetitive vocabulary reinforcement into an engaging and motivating learning experience. Progressive difficulty ensures that vocabulary items move from recognition-based tasks to more contextualized and challenging applications, supporting cognitive development and avoiding learner overload (Nation, 2013). Formative feedback operates across all stages of the program, allowing students to identify errors, reflect on performance, and improve through repetition (Black & Wiliam, 2009).

At the operational level, actions include the systematic design of Quizizz activities aligned with curricular content, the scheduling of regular practice sessions, and the analysis of performance data. These actions are carried out by the teacher-researcher, who assumes the role of facilitator and guide rather than sole evaluator. Activities are implemented through weekly Quizizz sessions, both in class and as independent practice, ensuring continuity and reinforcement over time. The dynamic interaction between strategies, actions, and activities allows the program to function as a flexible and responsive instructional system rather than a rigid intervention.

#### Table 4

Structure of the Gamified Vocabulary Reinforcement Program

**COMPONENT DESCRIPTION**





<b>STRATEGIES</b>	Gamified practice, progressive difficulty, formative feedback
<b>ACTIONS</b>	Quiz design, scheduling, monitoring, adaptation
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	Weekly Quizizz sessions, review quizzes, reflection
<b>DURATION</b>	Two sessions per week over one term

### Methodologies, Methods, and Procedures

The methodological foundation of the proposal is learner-centered and constructivist, emphasizing active engagement, autonomy, and meaningful practice. Constructivist theories posit that learners build knowledge through interaction, reflection, and experience rather than passive reception of information (Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of vocabulary learning, this approach highlights the importance of repeated exposure, contextual use, and feedback.

The primary method employed in the proposal is guided gamified practice, which combines teacher guidance with student autonomy. Teachers design vocabulary quizzes that align with curricular objectives and progressively increase in complexity. Students engage individually with the quizzes, allowing them to work at their own pace and focus on personal areas of difficulty. This method is particularly effective for students with learning gaps, as it reduces anxiety and supports self-regulation (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

Procedurally, the proposal follows a clear sequence: initial diagnostic assessment, implementation of gamified practice, continuous monitoring, and reflective evaluation. After identifying vocabulary gaps, teachers introduce Quizizz activities as a regular component of instruction. Performance data and observations are reviewed periodically to inform instructional adjustments. This cyclical procedure reflects formative assessment principles, ensuring that teaching





responds to learners' evolving needs rather than adhering to fixed plans (Black & Wiliam, 2009).

### **Resources, Materials, and Supports**

The successful implementation of the proposal depends on the availability and effective use of specific resources, materials, and supports. At the technological level, essential resources include digital devices such as tablets, laptops, or smartphones, as well as stable internet connectivity. The Quizizz platform serves as the primary digital resource, providing access to gamified quizzes, analytics, and feedback mechanisms. The selection of Quizizz is justified by its accessibility, user-friendly interface, and adaptability to different educational contexts (Wang & Tahir, 2020).

Instructional materials include teacher-designed quizzes aligned with curricular vocabulary, visual supports such as images or short contextual sentences, and supplementary vocabulary lists. These materials ensure that learning activities are coherent with classroom instruction and support diverse learning styles. Visual and contextual supports are particularly important for learners with limited vocabulary, as they facilitate form-meaning connections (Nation & Webb, 2011).

Human resources also play a crucial role in the proposal. Teachers act as designers, facilitators, and observers, guiding the learning process and providing pedagogical support. Institutional support, such as access to computer labs or flexible scheduling, further enhances feasibility. Together, these resources create a supportive learning environment that enables sustained vocabulary practice and learner engagement.

### **Adaptations, Variants, and Inclusivity**

Inclusivity is a central principle of the proposed program, which recognizes that learners





differ in proficiency, learning pace, and affective needs. To address this diversity, the proposal incorporates multiple adaptations and variants that allow teachers to adjust activities according to student profiles. Differentiated instruction is essential in mixed-ability EFL classrooms, as uniform approaches often fail to meet individual needs (Tomlinson, 2017).

One key adaptation involves modifying the difficulty level of quizzes. For students with significant learning gaps, quizzes can focus on high-frequency vocabulary, include additional visual support, and reduce time pressure. Conversely, more advanced students can engage with extended contexts or higher-level vocabulary, ensuring that all learners remain challenged. Quizizz also allows for flexible modes of participation, such as self-paced or collaborative activities, which can be selected based on group dynamics and learning objectives.

From an affective perspective, adaptations aim to reduce anxiety and promote emotional safety. Allowing students to repeat quizzes without penalty, disabling leaderboards when necessary, or emphasizing progress over competition helps create a supportive learning environment (Horwitz, 2010). These inclusive practices ensure that the proposal does not reinforce existing learning gaps but instead functions as a tool for equity and learner empowerment.

### **Evaluation and Expected Results**

The evaluation of the proposed Gamified Vocabulary Reinforcement Program is a crucial component of this study. It serves both as a tool for measuring the effectiveness of the intervention and as a means of refining teaching practices through continuous feedback. This section outlines the evaluation process, the expected results, and the relationship between diagnostic data and the anticipated improvements in students' vocabulary performance.





Table 5

Expected Improvement in Vocabulary Performance

INDICATOR	PRE-TEST AVERAGE	POST-TEST EXPECTED
VOCABULARY RECOGNITION	52%	75%
VOCABULARY RETENTION	48%	72%
CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION	Low	Moderate–High

### Evaluation Tools

Three primary instruments are used for evaluation: the pre- and post-test, observation checklist, and Quizizz platform analytics. These instruments provide complementary data, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of both cognitive and affective aspects of vocabulary learning.

1. **Pre- and Post-Test:** The pre-test serves as a baseline measure of students' vocabulary recognition and retention, while the post-test assesses the improvement after the implementation of the gamified intervention. The test results are compared to measure changes in students' vocabulary knowledge.
2. **Observation Checklist:** This instrument allows for qualitative data collection regarding students' engagement, participation, and emotional responses during vocabulary practice sessions. It is particularly important for capturing affective changes, such as increased confidence and motivation, which may not be fully reflected in test scores.
3. **Quizizz Analytics:** The Quizizz platform provides real-time data on student performance, including quiz completion rates, accuracy, response times, and overall improvement. These analytics offer quantitative insights into the effectiveness of the gamified activities.

### Expected Results





The expected results of the intervention are based on the assumption that students will demonstrate measurable improvements in vocabulary recognition, retention, and use as a result of repeated exposure to gamified practice. In addition, it is anticipated that students will show increased engagement and confidence, which will be reflected in their participation and willingness to engage in classroom activities.

These projected results are consistent with findings from existing research on gamified language learning, which shows that repeated exposure to digital tools and immediate feedback can significantly enhance vocabulary retention (Wang & Tahir, 2020). Furthermore, the anticipated increase in confidence and participation is in line with the principles of **self-determination theory** (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which emphasizes the role of autonomy and competence in motivation.

### **Implications of Expected Results**

The expected improvement in vocabulary performance and student engagement would suggest that the proposal is an effective pedagogical tool for addressing vocabulary gaps in EFL learners. Moreover, the positive affective changes, such as increased confidence and willingness to participate, are critical for fostering a positive learning environment. These findings would validate the use of gamification as a powerful strategy for enhancing both cognitive and emotional aspects of language learning.

### **Beneficiaries of the Proposal**

The primary beneficiaries of the proposed Gamified Vocabulary Reinforcement Program are





EFL students who face learning gaps in vocabulary acquisition. This intervention is specifically designed to support learners who have difficulty mastering basic vocabulary and who may feel disengaged or demotivated in the traditional language classroom. By providing frequent and structured practice through gamified activities, the program aims to empower these students to regain confidence and improve their vocabulary knowledge in a low-anxiety, enjoyable environment.

In addition to the students, teachers are secondary beneficiaries of the proposal. Teachers will benefit from the program's flexibility, as it can be easily integrated into existing lesson plans and adapted to different student needs. The proposal also provides real-time analytics through Quizizz, allowing teachers to monitor student progress, adjust activities, and provide targeted feedback. This continuous feedback loop enhances teacher effectiveness and supports data-driven instructional decisions.

Lastly, educational institutions benefit from the proposal by providing an innovative, inclusive approach to teaching that caters to the diverse needs of learners. By integrating digital tools into vocabulary instruction, institutions align themselves with modern educational trends that emphasize technology use and student-centered learning. The proposal's focus on learner engagement and inclusion may lead to improved learning outcomes, making it a valuable addition to institutional teaching practices.

This chapter presented a comprehensive analysis of the modeling, evaluation, and validation of the Gamified Vocabulary Reinforcement Program. The proposal's structure and dynamics were discussed, emphasizing its educational, methodological, and technological components. Through a





combination of diagnostic results, theoretical foundations, and pedagogical strategies, the proposal offers an innovative solution to the issue of vocabulary learning gaps in EFL students.

The validation of the proposal was grounded in both theoretical principles and empirical evidence, showing that gamified learning tools such as Quizizz can significantly improve vocabulary acquisition, student engagement, and emotional safety. The expected results, including increased vocabulary recognition, retention, and use, support the hypothesis that gamification is an effective strategy for vocabulary reinforcement in EFL classrooms.

Ultimately, this proposal provides a practical and adaptable solution to a common challenge faced by EFL educators. By addressing both cognitive and affective aspects of learning, the program has the potential to enhance students' overall language development and contribute to a more inclusive, engaging, and supportive educational environment.

## CONCLUSIONS

The research demonstrates that accumulated vocabulary gaps hinder students' ability to comprehend classroom input, participate meaningfully in activities, and perceive themselves as capable language learners. These gaps are not the result of a single instructional failure but rather the consequence of fragmented learning processes, insufficient reinforcement, and limited opportunities for individualized practice over time. From a scientific perspective, this finding supports the theoretical view that language learning difficulties must be understood as cumulative and systemic, integrating both cognitive and affective dimensions. Addressing vocabulary gaps, therefore, requires pedagogical responses that go beyond traditional instruction and intentionally target learner confidence, motivation, and engagement.





The literature review supports the premise that vocabulary knowledge underpins all language skills and that limited lexical knowledge constrains comprehension, production, and interaction. The synthesis of theories related to vocabulary acquisition, motivation, and gamification reveals that effective vocabulary learning depends on repeated exposure, contextualized practice, and emotionally safe environments. This theoretical convergence validates the focus of the research and demonstrates coherence between the research problem, the selected variables, and the proposed pedagogical solution. Consequently, the study fulfills its theoretical objective by establishing a solid conceptual framework that supports the integration of gamified digital tools in vocabulary instruction.

The results obtained from the diagnostic vocabulary test and classroom observations provide objective evidence of low vocabulary recognition, limited retention, and reduced participation among a substantial number of students. These findings demonstrate the alignment between the theoretical assumptions and the empirical reality of the educational context under study. The diagnosis also reveals affective indicators such as anxiety, low confidence, and avoidance behaviors, which reinforce the notion that vocabulary learning gaps negatively influence students' engagement and willingness to communicate. This empirical evidence justifies the formulation of a structured proposal aimed at reinforcing vocabulary learning through alternative instructional strategies.

The proposal integrates theoretical principles, methodological rigor, and practical applicability, fulfilling the general and specific objectives of the research. Its structure—based on strategies, actions, activities, resources, and evaluation mechanisms—reflects internal coherence and adaptability to real classroom contexts. The proposal's originality lies in its focus on students with





learning gaps and its emphasis on formative practice rather than summative evaluation. From a scientific standpoint, the modeling process confirms that educational proposals can function as valid solutions when they are grounded in theory, informed by diagnostic evidence, and designed with clear pedagogical intentions.

The projected improvements in vocabulary recognition, retention, and participation are consistent with findings reported in prior research on gamification and language learning. More importantly, the proposal highlights the affective benefits of gamified environments, such as reduced anxiety, increased willingness to participate, and greater learner autonomy. These outcomes support the hypothesis that gamified digital tools, when used strategically, can contribute to more inclusive and motivating learning environments. This conclusion reinforces the idea that educational effectiveness should be evaluated not only through academic outcomes but also through learners' emotional and behavioral responses to instruction.

The study demonstrates that addressing vocabulary learning gaps requires integrated solutions that combine theoretical insight, empirical evidence, and practical design. The proposed gamified approach represents a meaningful contribution to applied research in EFL education, particularly in contexts where students experience uneven language development despite adequate institutional resources. By emphasizing inclusivity, learner-centered practices, and digital integration, the research provides a framework that can inform future studies and pedagogical innovations. Ultimately, the study confirms that thoughtfully designed technological interventions can play a significant role in improving language learning outcomes and promoting educational equity.





## RECOMMENDATIONS

EFL teachers systematically identify and address vocabulary learning gaps as early as possible through diagnostic assessment and continuous monitoring. Given that vocabulary gaps are cumulative and affect both academic performance and learner identity, educational institutions should prioritize early diagnostic practices at the beginning of each academic year. Teachers are encouraged to use formative assessments to detect gaps and design differentiated instructional strategies that prevent long-term disengagement and negative self-perceptions among learners.

Vocabulary instruction be treated as a central component of EFL curricula rather than as a secondary or supplementary element. Curriculum designers and teachers should allocate sufficient instructional time and resources to vocabulary development, ensuring that lexical learning is integrated across all language skills. Vocabulary instruction should emphasize contextualized use, repetition, and meaningful practice, supported by evidence-based approaches drawn from current research in second language acquisition.

Educational institutions incorporate diagnostic and affective data into instructional planning for EFL learners. Beyond measuring academic performance, teachers should consider students' confidence, motivation, and participation when planning instruction. Observation tools and reflective practices can provide valuable insights into learners' emotional needs, allowing educators to design learning environments that reduce anxiety and encourage active engagement.

Teachers integrate gamified digital tools, such as Quizizz, as complementary resources to reinforce vocabulary learning. Gamified platforms should be used intentionally as formative tools that support practice and feedback rather than as purely competitive or evaluative instruments.





Teachers should align digital activities with curricular objectives and adapt them to students' proficiency levels to ensure pedagogical coherence and inclusivity.

Gamified learning environments prioritize emotional safety and learner autonomy to enhance motivation and participation. Educators are encouraged to minimize excessive competition, allow self-paced learning, and emphasize progress over scores. These practices can help students with learning gaps rebuild confidence, take risks in language use, and develop a more positive relationship with English learning.

Future research expand and empirically validate the proposed model in diverse educational contexts. Researchers should consider implementing the proposal longitudinally and across different institutional settings to examine its long-term impact on vocabulary acquisition and learner engagement. Further studies may also explore the integration of other digital tools or mixed-method approaches to deepen understanding of gamification's role in EFL education.

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## ANNEXES

### ANNEX A

#### Vocabulary Test (Pre-Test / Post-Test)

Purpose:

The purpose of this vocabulary test is to assess students' ability to recognize and understand target English vocabulary in context. The test is used as a diagnostic instrument (pre-test) and as an





evaluation instrument (post-test) to measure improvement after the implementation of the gamified vocabulary reinforcement proposal.

Instructions:

Read each question carefully and choose the correct answer. Select only one option for each question.

Student Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section A: Vocabulary Recognition

1. Choose the correct meaning of the word “borrow”.
  - a) To give something to someone
  - b) To take something with the intention of returning it
  - c) To lose something
  - d) To buy something
2. What does the word “quiet” mean?
  - a) Very loud
  - b) Full of people
  - c) Making little or no noise
  - d) Angry
3. Select the sentence where “hungry” is used correctly.
  - a) I am hungry because I already ate.





- b) I feel hungry when I need food.
- c) I hungry go to school.
- d) Hungry is my favorite food.
4. The word “behind” means:
- a) In front of
- b) Next to
- c) At the back of
- d) Above
5. Choose the correct meaning of “help”.
- a) To ignore someone
- b) To make something difficult
- c) To assist someone
- d) To forget something

#### Scoring System

- Each correct answer = 1 point
- Total score: 5 points
- Results reported as percentages (%)

#### ANNEX B

#### Observation Checklist





Purpose:

This observation checklist is designed to record students' engagement, participation, confidence, and motivation during vocabulary practice sessions using Quizizz. The instrument complements quantitative data obtained from tests and platform analytics.

Observer: Teacher-researcher

Observation Context: Regular EFL class / Quizizz session

Student Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Observation Indicators

Dimension	Indicator	Rating Scale
Engagement	Actively participates in Quizizz activities	1 2 3 4 5
Engagement	Shows enjoyment (smiles, positive reactions)	1 2 3 4 5
Confidence	Willingness to answer questions in English	1 2 3 4 5
Confidence	Initiative to participate without being prompted	1 2 3 4 5
Autonomy	Completes activities independently	1 2 3 4 5
Motivation	Remains focused throughout the activity	1 2 3 4 5
Language Use	Attempts to use English vocabulary during class	1 2 3 4 5





**Scale Description:**

1 = Very Low | 2 = Low | 3 = Moderate | 4 = High | 5 = Very High

**Additional Comments:**

**ANNEX C**

**Quizizz Analytics Data Collection Sheet**

Purpose:

This instrument is used to organize and analyze data automatically generated by the Quizizz platform. It allows the researcher to monitor frequency of use, accuracy, and improvement in vocabulary performance over time.

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Term: \_\_\_\_\_

**Quizizz Performance Record**

Student	Quizzes	Average	Best Score	Lowest Score	Voluntary Repetition
Code	Completed	Accuracy (%)	(%)	(%)	(Yes/No)
S01					
S02					
S03					





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## TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

Student	Quizzes	Average	Best Score	Lowest Score	Voluntary Repetition
Code	Completed	Accuracy (%)	(%)	(%)	(Yes/No)
S04					
S05					

### Interpretation Guidelines

- Quizzes Completed: Indicates frequency of practice
- Average Accuracy: Measures vocabulary recognition and retention
- Voluntary Repetition: Indicator of motivation and autonomy
- Score Progression: Evidence of improvement over time

### TRIBUNAL PROYECTO DE TITULACIÓN

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Nombre y Apellidos  
Presidente

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Nombre y Apellidos  
Secretario (a)



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