



UTMACH

FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES

**CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y
EXTRANJEROS**

**USE OF GAMIFICATION FOR THE TEACHING OF RECEPTIVE
VOCABULARY IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**CELI SARITAMA GILMAR ANTONIO
LICENCIADO EN PEDAGOGIA DEL IDIOMA INGLES**

**RIVERA SALCEDO DAMIAN ESTEBAN
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INTERVENCIÓN**

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LOZANO ZUMBA CRISTHEL ESPERANZA

COTUTOR: DURAN OLIVARES XIOMARA MARINA

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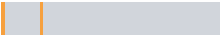
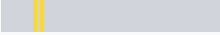
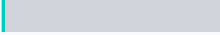
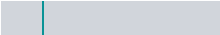
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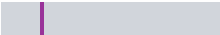
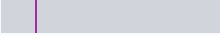
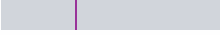
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work, with all my heart, to those who have been a source of light and strength along this journey. To God, for being my constant guide, giving me wisdom and strength even in the most difficult moments. To my family, especially my mother and father, for their unconditional love, words of encouragement, and example of perseverance. To my teachers, for sharing their knowledge with patience and dedication. This thesis is the reflection of a dream that, with effort and love, became a reality.

Damián Rivera Salcedo

First of all, I would like to dedicate this work to God, who has given me the strength and wisdom needed to face every stage of this academic process. I also want to thank my parents, Adriana Saritama and Jorge Celi, for their unconditional love, for encouraging me during difficult times, and for never leaving me alone. They are the best, and if I have been able to achieve this goal, it is thanks to their constant support, their example, and their trust in me. To my sister, who, without realizing it, has been a great source of motivation, since I always wanted to be a good example for her. And of course, to all the friends who, in one way or another, have supported me and been there for me throughout this journey.

To all of them, my deepest gratitude.

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the use of gamification as a pedagogical strategy to enhance the acquisition of receptive vocabulary in English among seventh-grade students at a public school in the city of Machala during the 2025–2026 academic year. The main objective was to design and implement a system of gamified activities that could improve vocabulary retention and foster greater student motivation in English language instruction. The study followed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental design, applying both a pretest and a post-test to a single group of 22 students. The pedagogical intervention was carried out through three face-to-face sessions, which incorporated playful strategies such as “Simon Says,” “Charades,” and “Bingo,” in addition to the use of illustrated flashcards, visual aids, and collaborative group dynamics. Data collection instruments included vocabulary assessment tests and observation guides to evaluate lexical progress, accuracy, participation, and levels of student engagement. The results demonstrated statistically significant improvements in the three evaluated dimensions of vocabulary: linguistic, productive, and stylistic. The paired-samples Student’s t-test confirmed the effectiveness of the intervention, with a p-value lower than 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the validation of the alternative hypothesis. In conclusion, the implementation of gamified strategies not only enhanced students’ performance in receptive vocabulary but also promoted an engaging, participatory, and student-centered learning environment. These findings support the incorporation of gamification as a viable, innovative, and effective teaching approach in the English language classroom, offering a motivating alternative to traditional methods and contributing to the long-term development of vocabulary and communication skills.

Keywords: Gamification, Receptive vocabulary, Teaching strategies, English language teaching, Vocabulary, Playful strategies.

RESUMEN

La presente investigación analiza el uso de la gamificación como estrategia pedagógica para fortalecer la adquisición del vocabulario receptivo en inglés en estudiantes de séptimo año de Educación General Básica, en una institución pública de la ciudad de Machala durante el año lectivo 2025–2026. El objetivo principal fue diseñar e implementar un sistema de actividades gamificadas que permitiera mejorar la retención del vocabulario e incrementar la motivación de los estudiantes en el proceso de enseñanza del idioma inglés. El estudio se enmarcó en un enfoque cuantitativo con un diseño preexperimental, en el que se aplicó un pretest y un post-test a un grupo único conformado por 22 estudiantes. La propuesta pedagógica se ejecutó a través de tres sesiones presenciales que integraron dinámicas lúdicas como “Simón dice”, “Charadas” y “Bingo”, además del uso de tarjetas ilustradas, recursos visuales y estrategias grupales colaborativas. Para la recolección de datos se emplearon pruebas de evaluación del vocabulario y guías de observación que permitieron medir el progreso léxico, la precisión, la participación y el nivel de compromiso estudiantil. Los resultados evidenciaron mejoras estadísticamente significativas en las tres dimensiones evaluadas: lingüística, productiva y estilística. La prueba t de Student para muestras pareadas confirmó la efectividad de la intervención, al obtenerse un valor p menor a 0.05, lo que permitió rechazar la hipótesis nula y aceptar la hipótesis alternativa. En conclusión, la implementación de estrategias gamificadas no solo mejoró el desempeño en vocabulario receptivo, sino que también promovió un ambiente activo, participativo y centrado en el estudiante, validando su aplicación como una alternativa pedagógica innovadora y eficaz.

Palabras claves: Gamificación, Vocabulario Receptivo, Estrategias didácticas,
Enseñanza del inglés, Vocabulario, Estrategias Lúdicas.

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INTRODUCTION

In an interconnected world, where borders are blurred, and communication between people from different cultures is essential, learning a second language has become a fundamental necessity. As mentioned by (Krashen 2007) highlighted in Gutiérrez, D. P., & Quintero, A. M. (2022), mastering a second language such as English opens the doors to endless possibilities: better educational opportunities, greater job prospects, and the possibility of traveling and getting to know new cultures.

However, in the dynamic and complex task of teaching a second language, such as English, teachers face various challenges that hinder the effective transmission of knowledge, especially in the area of vocabulary learning. The application of traditional methods, which focus on memorization and mechanical repetition, is often dull and unappealing to students, leading to disinterest, demotivation, and difficulties in language acquisition. Ramiro, V. (2025) mentions that the learning approach focused on the automatic repetition of content tends to cause tension and poor comprehension and is currently considered ineffective, as it contributes minimally to the development of critical thinking and the consolidation of long-term knowledge.

Therefore, gamification is presented as a viable solution to this challenge. This novel educational technique leverages the dynamics of games by incorporating elements such as points, levels, badges, and challenges into classroom activities. In doing so, it transforms the learning experience, moving away from conventional methods to a more interactive and engaging approach for students. One of the additional benefits of gamification is its ability to foster vocabulary acquisition in a natural and contextualized way. By interacting with games and participating in activities related to curricular content, students are exposed to various terms and concepts. This process of active language

immersion facilitates vocabulary comprehension and retention, as students can apply these terms in practical and meaningful situations.

Likewise, vocabulary plays a crucial role in the process of teaching and learning a second language, as it is essential for effective and fluent communication. It also facilitates the understanding of both spoken and written discourse, allowing thoughts, desires, ideas, and emotions to be expressed clearly and accurately. Tusa, H. (2025) mentions in his research that the brain processes information, determines how it stores and encodes knowledge in memory, and the mechanisms for activating and retrieving it when necessary.

However, in the context of students doing their pre-professional practices in the 7th year EGB room “B” students of an educational institution the following limitations have been evidenced:

- Students do not show interest in learning the English language.
- Lack of participation on the part of the students.
- Students cannot transmit their ideas spoken or written in English due to a lack of vocabulary.
- There is low retention of the vocabulary learned in English.
- Limited variety of didactic resources used to teach English vocabulary.
- This leads to the following scientific problem:

How to enhance the acquisition of English vocabulary in the students of the 7th year EGB room “B” of an educational institution during the school year 2025-2026?

Taking into account the object of study: English teaching-learning process in basic general education

Among the possible causes of the problem are:

- The teacher uses traditional teaching methods that do not involve the students.
- The activities planned by the teacher do not motivate the students.
- There is an excessive focus on memorization without practical application.
- Assessments do not reinforce the vocabulary learned.
- There are limitations in the diversity of teaching materials.

The **general objective** of the research is: To enhance the acquisition of receptive vocabulary in English through the implementation of a system of activities using gamification as a resource in the students of the 7th year EGB room “B” of an educational institution during the school year 2025-2026.

This objective is delimited in the **field of action**, gamification methodology. The present research work poses **specific Objectives**:

- Theoretically substantiate the effectiveness of Gamification in the Acquisition of Vocabulary in English of the students of the 7th year EGB room “B” of an educational institution during the school year 2025-2026.
- Diagnose the current level of vocabulary in the English language in students of the 7th year EGB room “B” of an educational institution during the school year 2025-2026.
- To implement a system of didactic activities with the use of gamification to enhance the acquisition of vocabulary in students of the 7th year EGB room “B” of an educational institution during the school year 2025-2026.

- To corroborate the effectiveness of the system of didactic activities with the use of gamification to enhance the acquisition of vocabulary in students of the 7th year EGB room “B” of an educational institution during the school year 2025-2026.

It is developed based on the following **scientific hypothesis**: if a system of activities is implemented with the use of gamification as a resource, then, it will enhance the acquisition of vocabulary in English in the students of the 7th year EGB room “B” of an educational institution during the school year 2025-2026.

The research studies the relationship between two variables.

The **independent variable** is defined as the System of activities with the use of gamification, the system of activities using gamification is a set of strategies that implements game mechanics and dynamics in non-playful contexts to encourage participation, motivation, and achievement of objectives.

The **dependent variable** is defined as receptive vocabulary, understood as the set of words that a person can understand when reading or listening, but does not necessarily use when speaking or writing. That is, they are words that you recognize and understand the meaning of, but do not necessarily use actively in your own communication.

This research adopts a **quantitative methodological approach**, under an experimental research scheme. The sample consists of 33 students of 7th year EGB room “B” of an educational institution during the school year 2025-2026.

To achieve the stated objectives, a variety of theoretical and empirical methods are used. Among the **theoretical methods** are the analytical-synthetic, the historical-logical, the hypothetical-deductive, and the systemic. On the other hand, **empirical methods** such as surveys,

observations, and experiments are used, which will be detailed in greater depth in the methodological framework.

The **importance** of the research focuses on the use of gamification as a methodological resource to develop English vocabulary, through the implementation of a system of activities, where the aim is to increase the mastery of the target language.

The **practical contribution** provided by this research lies in the presentation of a system of activities based on gamification as a methodological strategy. In this way, students become actively involved in the process of teaching and learning a second language, thus expanding their mastery of English vocabulary.

The present study is divided into 4 chapters consisting of:

Chapter I theoretical description of the object and field of the research supported by bibliographical information. **Chapter II** establishes the type, methods, and techniques to be used. **Chapter III** presents the intervention proposal. **Chapter IV** contains the discussion of results, closing with conclusions and recommendations, bibliography, and annexes.

CHAPTER I. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE USE OF GAMIFICATION IN THE LANGUAGE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS.

This chapter is based on the theoretical background of the English teaching-learning process, covering the historical characterization of the origins and the development of vocabulary acquisition in the English language.

1.1 Historical Background of the use of gamification as a teaching-learning method in relation to English vocabulary acquisition.

Early Applications of Gamification Techniques (Pre-1970)

Throughout human history, games have been a source of entertainment and learning. Since ancient times, humans have enjoyed various games, including board games. The term *ludo*, meaning "to play", has its origins in ancient Rome and gave rise to the concept of "ludic" (Medrano, 2005). In this sense, Huizinga (1949) defines play as "a free activity, carried out within defined temporal and spatial limits, and governed by compulsory rules accepted voluntarily". This definition encompasses a wide variety of behaviors, from the playful activities of animals to the recreational and educational practices of children and adults.

Before the emergence of the term "gamification", techniques based on game elements were already used in educational and psychological contexts. These practices included the use of strategies such as positive reinforcement, rewards, and competitions, aimed at motivating students and improving their performance. During the 1950s and 1960s, behaviorist approaches, particularly those developed by B. F. Skinner, significantly influenced the design of educational activities through the implementation of reward systems and immediate feedback.

Origin of Gamification (1970-1990)

In childhood, games play a fundamental role in cognitive and motor development. In the early stages of life, games enable children to develop their motor skills; later, they stimulate imagination and abstract thinking, and ultimately, they facilitate the acceptance of shared rules. Over time, the play has evolved beyond its purely recreational purpose to become an essential tool in education and learning, adapting to formal and organizational contexts with the goal of promoting comprehensive development.

The 1970s marked a turning point with the impact of video games in multiple fields. Iconic titles such as Pong and Pac-Man popularized mechanics such as point accumulation, progressive levels, and reward systems, which inspired their incorporation into education and corporate training. According to Werbach and Hunter (2012), these mechanics began to influence the design of educational programs aimed at improving student motivation and engagement. In 2002, the gamification concept was consolidated in the academic and professional environment.

Gamification, however, is not limited to commercial entertainment, whose main purpose is not always educational. There are games designed specifically to teach, known as serious games, a term coined in the 1970s to describe activities aimed at educational purposes. In 2010, gamification emerged as an innovative strategy that incorporates elements of game design in non-game contexts, consolidating itself as a tool of great impact in the educational and organizational fields.

The evolution of the game, from its recreational nature to its educational and professional application, demonstrates its ability to adapt and meet diverse learning and development needs. In particular, gamification has significantly expanded teaching possibilities by integrating motivation, active participation, and clear objectives, profoundly transforming the way we learn and work today.

Expansion and Popularization (2003-2018)

Since 2003, the term "gamification" began to be adopted in various fields, gaining notoriety in 2010 and 2011 when prominent video game designers widely disseminated it at conferences and conventions. These professionals highlighted the "importance of the playful experience," emphasizing the ability to transfer the player's concentration, fun, and emotions to the real world. Yanza, M. (2022) defines gamification as "the use of playful thinking and game mechanics to encourage user participation and address problems." On the other hand, Deterding et al. (2011) define it from an academic perspective as "the application of game design elements in non-playful environments."

In the last decade, gamification expanded rapidly thanks to the rise of digital technologies. Platforms such as Duolingo and Kahoot emerged as prominent examples in language teaching and other disciplines, using point systems, badges, and achievements to motivate learners. This period marked a transition to the personalization of learning through adaptive technological tools (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011).

Advanced and Personalized Gamification (2019-2024).

The 2019 pandemic marked a before and after in teaching methods, accelerating the adoption of digital technologies and transforming the traditional educational paradigm.

During confinement, physical classrooms gave way to virtual platforms, promoting a deeper use of technological tools, such as interactive applications, video conferencing platforms, and online resources. This change not only ensured continuity of learning but also highlighted the need to implement innovative strategies to maintain student motivation

and participation in virtual environments. Thus, technology emerged as a key solution, demonstrating its ability to turn educational challenges into meaningful and dynamic learning opportunities.

Currently, gamification in education has reached a stage of maturity, reflected in a considerable increase in scientific and academic publications. This growth is focused on the integration of gamification with cutting-edge technologies, including mobile platforms, expanding its scope and effectiveness in problem-solving, while encouraging active participation in diverse contexts.

The incorporation of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR), has significantly enhanced the impact of gamification in English language teaching. These tools have facilitated overcoming challenges such as lack of motivation and difficulty in retaining vocabulary. Platforms such as Memrise and Mondly have integrated adaptive algorithms that personalize content according to the student's progress, offering a more effective and engaging learning experience.

In addition, these technologies allow the creation of immersive scenarios where students can practice English in real-life contexts, such as shopping or having everyday conversations. They also promote the development of essential skills, such as problem- solving, critical thinking, and collaboration. According to Deterding et al. (2011), combining playful elements with

meaningful activities has significantly increased student engagement and motivation, demonstrating that this approach effectively enhances language learning.

1.2 The Role of Gamification in Enhancing English Vocabulary Acquisition in the Teaching-Learning Process

Gamification plays a crucial role in the teaching-learning process, particularly in the acquisition of English vocabulary. By incorporating game elements, learning activities become more engaging, encouraging active student participation and ultimately leading to improved vocabulary retention.

1.2.1 Characteristics of the English Teaching-Learning Process in Basic Education

The teaching-learning process has been extensively studied, with authors like Navarro and Gómez (2012) emphasizing its role in fostering holistic student development, encompassing both educational and instructional objectives. Traditionally, undergraduate education has been teacher-centric, with the professor primarily imparting knowledge. However, there has been a shift towards student-centered approaches, where students play a more active role in their learning journey, while educators facilitate and guide the process.

Navarro and Gómez (2012) further highlight that the teaching-learning process should prioritize not just knowledge acquisition but also the development of skills and strategies that enable students to effectively navigate diverse learning situations. This process involves close interaction between two key actors: the teacher, equipped with knowledge and pedagogical expertise, and the student, possessing the potential and willingness to learn.

A central consideration in the teaching-learning process is individual differences among learners. Ruiz (2018) emphasizes that students within a group have diverse interests, motivations, aspirations, characteristics, and circumstances. Personal, family, and work

situations can significantly impact their learning outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial to acknowledge that students achieve results differently and at varying paces. Effective pedagogy necessitates balancing individual needs with collective goals. Teachers must foster teamwork while addressing individual learning differences, providing support to those facing challenges and encouraging those who excel. This personalized approach is known as differentiated instruction.

Teaching English as a second language (L2) presents unique challenges. Educators often struggle to maintain student motivation and highlight the importance of second language acquisition. Additionally, institutions may lack the resources required for effective L2 instruction.

In response to these challenges, new methodologies have been developed and implemented in the teaching and learning process to capture students' attention and facilitate the transmission of knowledge. In Terán et al. (2024), it was observed that the implementation of gamification as a pedagogical resource has established itself as an innovative option in the teaching of English at the high school level, consistently incorporating playful and technological tools that promote motivation, active involvement, and progress in student learning. However, its success depends mainly on the teacher's adequate preparation to apply it effectively.

Modern English language education emphasizes communicative skills, enabling students to thrive in an interconnected world. Relevant methodologies in this context include project-based learning (PBL), constructivism, flipped classroom, blended learning, and gamification.

López et al. (2022) posit that these methodologies are crucial for addressing the challenges of a dynamic society, as they promote active learning and position the student as the primary agent in their education.

1.2.2 Pedagogical Rationale for Gamification in the Teaching-Learning Process

In the contemporary landscape of basic education, English language teachers face the challenge of motivating and engaging students within an increasingly dynamic and digital environment. Recognizing the diverse interests and abilities of students necessitates flexible pedagogical approaches that encourage active participation and the development of communicative competencies.

Gamification, as a pedagogical approach, addresses the need to motivate students in this environment. By integrating game elements and mechanics into the learning process, gamification fosters intrinsic motivation and social interaction. Moreno et al. (2024) suggest that its implementation can significantly enhance the educational experience, making it more engaging, interactive, and student-centered.

The effectiveness of gamification in education is grounded in several pedagogical theories:

Constructivism: Constructivism posits that learning is an active process of knowledge construction through interaction with the environment and collaboration with others. Vygotsky, L. (1978) mentioned that the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) highlights the gap between what a learner can achieve independently and with guidance. Gamification supports this process by providing hands-on activities and collaborative challenges that enable students to build meaningful knowledge in a dynamic and motivating environment.

Self-Determination Theory (Intrinsic Motivation): This theory emphasizes three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Gamification addresses these needs by offering activities that empower students to make decisions, face appropriate challenges, and collaborate with peers. While points, badges, and rewards initially provide extrinsic motivation, effective game design fosters intrinsic motivation by making learning relevant and satisfying.

Flow Theory: Proposed in 1990, this theory describes the state of deep engagement that occurs when an activity provides an optimal balance of challenge and skill. Gamified learning environments can facilitate flow experiences by offering tasks that progressively match students' abilities, keeping them engaged and motivated. Educational games with increasing levels of difficulty exemplify this approach.

Active Learning: Active learning is a direct student involvement in the educational process through participatory activities that promote understanding and knowledge retention. Gamification aligns with this approach by incorporating simulations, problem-solving exercises, and interactive activities that require students to apply their learning

Gamification has emerged as a vital methodology for navigating the evolving educational landscape. Its capacity to integrate playful elements into the teaching-learning process not only enhances motivation and engagement but also empowers students to take ownership of their learning. Moreno (2024) argues that gamified strategies promote dynamic and meaningful learning by encouraging active participation and the development of essential competencies for an interconnected world. This makes gamification a crucial pedagogical tool in the pursuit of more effective educational experiences tailored to the demands of the 21st century

1.2.3 Characteristics of Vocabulary Development in English Language Learning

Vocabulary development is fundamental to English language acquisition, providing the foundation for other language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Nation, P., & Coxhead, A. (2013), categorizes vocabulary as receptive (understanding words when heard or read) and productive (using words in speaking or writing). Vocabulary development encompasses not just memorization but also understanding word meanings, contextual usage, and relationships between words.

The process of vocabulary development progresses through several key stages:

Initial Recognition: Identifying new words through repeated exposure in activities like reading or listening.

Consolidation: Employing strategies like contextualized practice to solidify word meanings and usage in long-term memory.

Active Production: Incorporating words into spoken and written language, demonstrating effective mastery (Schmitt, 2020)

Several factors influence vocabulary development and should be considered for effective learning:

Frequency of Exposure: Students need to encounter a word 7-12 times in various contexts for adequate internalization.

Learner Age and Level: Children acquire vocabulary rapidly through playful interaction, while adults often rely on more conscious learning strategies.

Learning Context: Immersive environments rich in linguistic input promote faster and more effective learning. Classrooms incorporating authentic materials like news articles, songs, and games stimulate meaningful learning.

Student Motivation and Attitude: Motivated students demonstrate a greater willingness to expand their vocabulary, utilizing tools like mobile applications and digital games

Various techniques and methodological approaches further enhance vocabulary development:

Learning in Context: Presenting words within sentences or specific situations, rather than isolated word lists, promotes retention and practical usage (Thornbury, 2017).

Gamification and Technology: Gamified activities, language learning applications, and interactive platforms like Quizlet and Duolingo provide engaging and effective avenues for vocabulary practice.

Semantic Maps: Visual tools such as diagrams and word maps help students establish connections between new and familiar vocabulary, supporting retention and learning (Schmitt, N. 2008).

1.3 Contextual characterization of vocabulary acquisition in the teaching-learning process in General Basic Education.

Within this section we find the contextual characteristics of the use of gamification in the teaching-learning process of English in General Basic Education in Ecuador, focusing on the students of 7th year EGB room “B” of an educational institution, during the academic period 2024 - 2025. The use of gamification techniques to increase motivation, active participation, and vocabulary retention by students at this educational level is highlighted.

1.3.1 Contextual characteristics of the implementation of gamification for vocabulary acquisition in the teaching-learning process of English in General Basic Education in Ecuador.

In Ecuador, English language teaching has faced numerous challenges, including a lack of adequate teaching resources and traditional teaching methods that fail to capture students' interest, among other challenges, such as a shortage of adequate teaching resources and the need for methods that maintain students' interest. According to Veloz et al. (2025), the use of gamification in English language teaching has established itself as a novel pedagogical strategy aimed at strengthening student motivation and improving academic performance, particularly in contexts where teaching resources are limited and conventional methods are ineffective.

In this context, gamification emerges as an innovative solution to revitalize the educational process. Gonzales, A. (2025) mentions that gamification, by incorporating game elements such as points, levels, badges, and rewards, transforms learning into a more dynamic and engaging experience. This is particularly relevant in an educational environment where student motivation and engagement are crucial to academic success.

The use of gamification in English classes in Ecuador not only increases student motivation but also fosters greater participation and collaboration among students (Gutiérrez and Quintero, 2022). Students feel more incentivized to actively participate in learning activities, which in turn improves their retention of vocabulary and their ability to use it in real contexts. In addition, the immediate feedback and rewards provided by gamification reinforce learning, making learners feel more confident and, if not more competent, in their use of English

Within the immediate educational environment, no studies have been identified that utilize gamification. However, several studies have been conducted that demonstrate the importance of its use, concluding that gamification is an effective pedagogical strategy for teaching English, significantly improving vocabulary retention and student motivation. This research highlights the importance of access to technology for the successful implementation of these strategies, underscoring the need for technological equity in modern education.

Similarly, research by Anzules et al. (2022) concludes that incorporating gamification into learning makes the process less conscious for students. This means they do not perceive that they are making a deliberate effort to learn; instead, they experience the sensation of playing a game. This perception can make learning more effective and productive, as learners feel more engaged and enjoy the activity. Gamification, by integrating play and game elements into the educational process, facilitates a deeper understanding of the subject matter, allowing students to participate more naturally and enthusiastically.

Gamification could help improve student motivation and learning. Despite this, students are highly engaged with mobile technology and computers, especially after the pandemic, indicating that there is an opportunity to leverage these digital tools more effectively.

On the other hand, it was visualized in the research of Quichimbo, A. (2021) that although teachers frequently use video applications available on the web, they do not habitually resort to games as a teaching tool. This means that they are not taking full advantage of gamification dynamics, which involve the use of scoring systems, rewards, and objectives. Teachers generally prefer to use video applications that already exist on the web. This suggests that, although digital resources are used, the concept of gamification is not adequately applied. The misuse of

gamification could not only harm teachers but also negatively affect teaching and student learning.

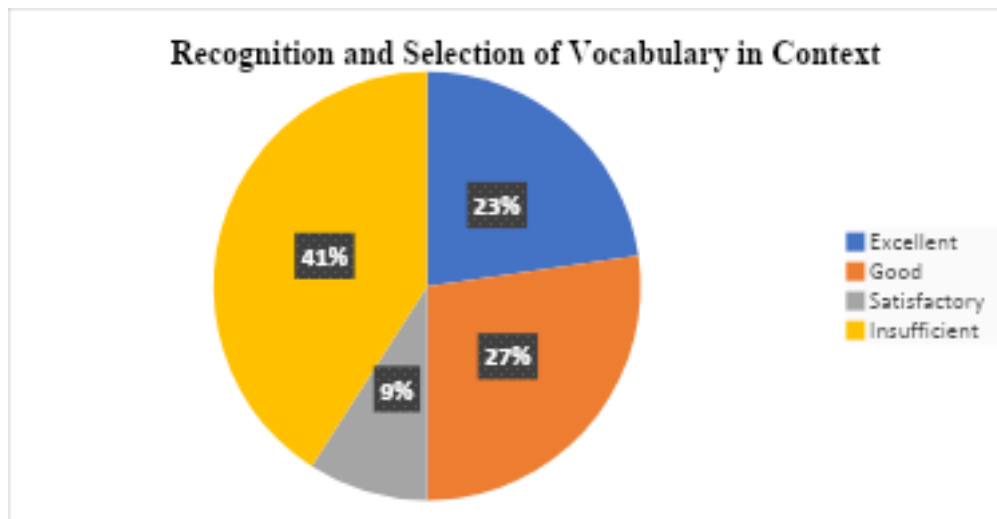
1.3.2 Characterization of the Vocabulary Development Level

This section presents the findings obtained from a diagnostic test designed to assess students' proficiency and use of English vocabulary in the seventh grade of Basic Education.

To determine the level of performance in this skill, a test was developed and administered, containing items aimed at evaluating three key dimensions: linguistic, productive, and stylistic. The results were evaluated using a structured rubric, which classified students into performance levels ranging from Insufficient to Excellent.

Below are the results for each evaluated dimension, followed by their respective graphical and interpretive analyses:

Indicator 1: Recognition and Selection of Vocabulary in Context

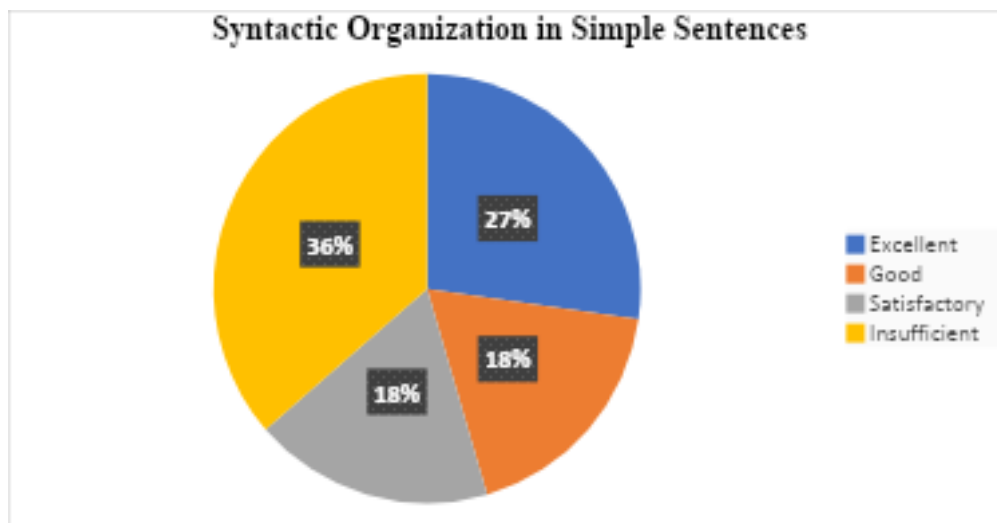


The linguistic dimension, evaluated in questions 1 and 2, assessed students' ability to recognize and select vocabulary within contextual situations. The findings indicate that merely 5

students (23%) achieved an Excellent performance level, demonstrating a solid command of the vocabulary presented. The majority, consisting of 9 students (41%), were rated as Insufficient, reflecting significant difficulty in identifying or applying basic English vocabulary.

This performance gap could stem from limited prior exposure to the language or the absence of instructional strategies that reinforce vocabulary learning. Research underscores that vocabulary mastery is essential for language development, enabling interaction within school, community, and family settings. It also enhances reading comprehension and supports the articulation of thoughts and emotions.

Indicator 2: Syntactic Organization in Simple Sentences

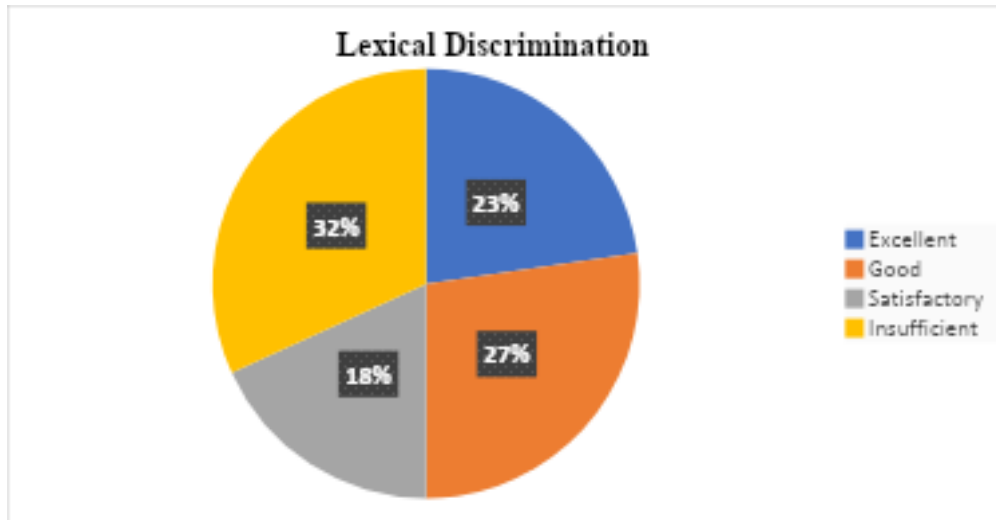


This indicator evaluated students' capacity to form syntactically correct simple sentences in English. Results showed that 6 students (27%) achieved an Excellent level, while 8 students (36%) demonstrated Insufficient performance.

These findings suggest that over one-third of the group struggles to structure sentences correctly in English. This may stem from insufficient mastery of foundational grammar or a lack of writing practice. A study from the Universidad Técnica de Manabí (UTM) highlights that

many students lack the skills necessary to approach writing as a competency-based process, indicating the need to strengthen written expression instruction.

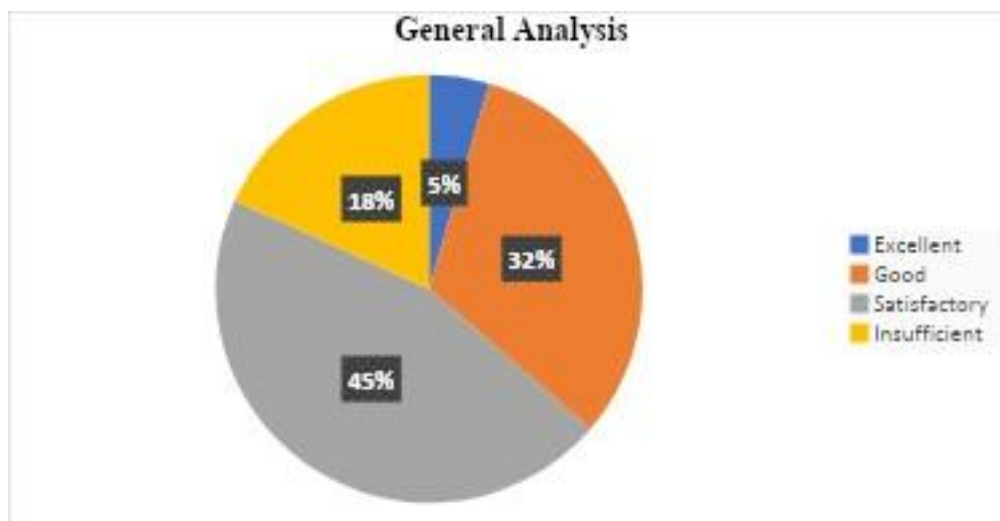
Indicator 3: Lexical Discrimination



This indicator measured students' ability to identify vocabulary items that fall outside the semantic field shared by other words a reflection of lexical and stylistic precision. Only 5 students (23%) attained the Excellent level, while 7 students (32%) were classified as Insufficient.

These outcomes point to challenges in establishing semantic relationships among words, suggesting a superficial level of vocabulary knowledge. Lexical competence understood as both the knowledge of a language's vocabulary and the ability to use it effectively is a crucial aspect of linguistic competence and is key to developing communicative skills. This aligns with the ultimate goal of language learning: effective communication.

General Analysis



When combining the results across the three assessed dimensions, only 1 student (5%) reached an Excellent level of performance. The majority, 10 students (45%) were classified as Acceptable, followed by 7 students (32%) at the Good level and 4 students (18%) at the Insufficient level.

These results suggest that, while there is a foundational basis to build upon, the group has yet to fully attain the essential competencies required for effective use of English vocabulary—particularly in areas such as grammar, accuracy, and semantic precision. The development of linguistic skills must be reinforced through varied instructional strategies that teachers can incorporate into their classes to meaningfully enhance students' communicative abilities.

CHAPTER II. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the methodological aspects that guided the present study are presented in detail, from its initial planning through to its final execution.

2.1 Paradigm and Type of Research

This study falls within the quantitative research paradigm, as this approach allows for the objective measurement of the effects of an intervention through the analysis of numerical data. In this sense, Gutiérrez, L. (2017) argues that the quantitative paradigm is based on the collection of quantifiable data to predict specific phenomena, using a structured methodological design that requires the deliberate intervention of the researcher and the manipulation of one or more variables.

The research adopts a pre-experimental design, specifically utilizing a single group to which a pretest and a posttest are administered before and after the intervention. This design enables the observation of potential changes in participants following the intervention. Its selection is based on both the characteristics of the educational context where the study takes place and the feasibility of its implementation.

2.2 Population

According to Shukla, S. (2020), a population refers to the complete set of units to which the results of a study can be applied. In other words, the population includes all units that possess the variable characteristics studied and for which the findings can be generalized. Based on the approach of this study, an accessible and relevant population was selected, consisting of 22 seventh-grade students in General Basic Education, parallel “B,” from a public institution in the city of Machala. The students' ages range from 11 to 14 years old.

2.3 Research Methods

For the development of the present research, it was necessary to select methods that would allow for a comprehensive and coherent approach to the problem in line with the stated objectives. These methods facilitated the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data, as well as the logical organization of the investigative process. The selection of each method corresponds to the type of study conducted, the nature of the data, and the pedagogical approach adopted. The methods applied throughout the different phases of the research are detailed below.

2.3.1 Theoretical-Level Methods

Theoretical methods enable the analysis of essential relationships within the object of study that are not directly observable. These methods support the construction of conceptual models and the formulation of hypotheses. According to López Falcón and Ramos Serpa (2021), they facilitate the organization, systematization, and evaluation of information, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

To meet the objectives of this research, the following theoretical methods were employed:

Historical-Logical Method

The historical-logical method was used to reconstruct the background of the research topic. It allowed for the analysis of the development and historical progression of the main concepts, theories, and studies related to the object of study, identifying changes and trends over time. This method enabled a better understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the study and helped establish a logical connection between past developments and the current state of the problem. As a result, it provided appropriate context for the phenomenon under investigation.

Analytical-Synthetic Method

This method served to break down the object of study into its fundamental components, analyze their specific characteristics, and then integrate them into a comprehensive whole. Through analysis, the essential aspects of the phenomenon were identified, while synthesis allowed for their logical integration into a coherent conceptual framework. The application of this method facilitated the organization of the collected information, the recognition of relevant patterns, and the construction of a logically integrated conceptual model that supports the research findings.

Hypothetical-Deductive Method

The hypothetical-deductive method was applied to establish and test the hypotheses formulated within the theoretical framework. This approach enabled the formulation of specific predictions regarding the expected outcomes of the intervention, grounded in the relationships established via the historical-logical and analytical-synthetic methods. These hypotheses were empirically tested using a pre-experimental design, ensuring that the conclusions drawn were closely aligned with the research objectives and supported by the evidence collected during the intervention.

Systemic Method

The systemic method was employed to address vocabulary teaching in English as part of an integrated educational system, where gamification interacts dynamically with students, teachers, instructional resources, and the institutional context of an Educational Institution

This approach examined how game-based dynamics (e.g., points, badges, levels) enhance vocabulary retention and influence student engagement, teacher motivation, and curricular

adaptation to classroom needs. By understanding these interconnections, a gamified proposal was developed that balances pedagogical objectives with the practical realities of the educational environment, ensuring that every element of the system fosters meaningful and enduring learning.

In addition to these theoretical approaches, empirical methods were implemented to directly observe, measure, and assess the effects of the intervention within the classroom context. These methods are described in the following section.

2.3.2 Empirical-Level Methods

According to Hernández, Fernández, and Baptista (2014), empirical methods are grounded in direct observation and experimentation of the phenomenon under study. They offer a more accurate approximation of reality by employing techniques such as observation, interviews, surveys, and tests. Similarly, Hernández et al. (2021) note that empirical methods are a fundamental strategy in scientific research, as they enable a direct link to be established with reality through systematic observation, experimentation, and logical-statistical analysis. These tools are particularly relevant in social and natural science studies, as they facilitate an objective understanding of the phenomena under study.

Building upon the theoretical foundation, empirical methods were employed to obtain knowledge derived from observable reality. These methods rely on experience, systematic observation, and, in some cases, controlled experimentation, allowing for the collection of precise and verifiable data. While primarily associated with quantitative research, they are also applicable to qualitative studies through the appropriate techniques.

The specific empirical methods used in this research are detailed below:

Observation

Observation is a methodological technique that involves the systematic examination of a phenomenon within its natural context, without altering its development. Its main objective is to gather information about behaviors, events, or relevant circumstances.

According to Gómez, M., and Mosquera, L. (2024), observation enables researchers to directly capture subject behavior based on predefined indicators. The data collected are recorded immediately, directly, and in situ, often without requiring the active involvement of the individuals being observed.

Aligned with these principles, this study implemented indirect observation in two phases. The first involved a preliminary observation aimed at identifying the underlying causes of the problem. The second was a post-observation, structured according to predefined categories and student performance indicators, applied after the intervention. was carried out using an observation guide (Annex 1)

Measurement

Measurement refers to the process of assigning either numerical or qualitative values to a given phenomenon or characteristic for the purpose of describing, analyzing, and comparing it. In essence, it is a systematic procedure that facilitates the collection of data regarding a specific variable or attribute, using appropriate scales and instruments.

Pedagogical Test

As stated by Gómez, M., and Mosquera, L. (2024), pedagogical tests are designed to assess learners' knowledge, skills, and habits. However, one key limitation is their focus on evaluating learning outcomes without considering the underlying processes of acquisition,

development, and formation. Furthermore, such tests typically fail to assess the axiological or value-based dimension of learners.

In this study, both pre-tests and post-tests were administered (Annex 2), and student performance levels were classified using a Likert scale-based rubric (Annex 6).

Scientific problem	General objective	Scientific hypothesis	Variables	Dimensions	Indicators	Instruments
How to enhance the acquisition of English vocabulary in the students of the 7th year EGB room “B” of an educational institution during the school year 2025-2026?	To enhance the acquisition of receptive vocabulary in English through the implementation of a system of activities using gamification as a resource in the students of the 7th year EGB room “B” of an educational institution during the school year 2025-2026.	If a system of activities is implemented with the use of gamification as a resource, then, it will enhance the acquisition of vocabulary in English in the students of the 7th year EGB room “B” of an educational institution during the school year 2025-2026.	Gamified Activity System as a Structured Pedagogical Approach The dependent variable is receptive vocabulary, understood as the set of words that a person can understand when reading or listening, but does not necessarily use when speaking or writing. That is, they are words that you recognize and understand the meaning of, but do not necessarily use actively in your own communication.	Linguistic Dimension Productive Dimension Stylistic Dimension	Recognition and selection of vocabulary in context Syntactic organization in simple sentences Lexical discrimination	Observation Measurement Pedagogical Test

CHAPTER III. THE USE OF GAMIFICATION TO ENHANCE ENGLISH VOCABULARY ACQUISITION

This chapter presents the theoretical basis of the instructional framework grounded in gamification as a strategy to enhance vocabulary acquisition in English. It draws on contributions from pedagogy, instructional design, and educational psychology. The chapter also outlines the intervention proposal, detailing its objectives and the structured development plan that supports it.

3.1 Theoretical Foundation of the Instructional Framework Based on Gamification

Vocabulary learning is central to second language acquisition, as it not only facilitates effective communication but also promotes comprehension and interpretation of various types of texts and discursive contexts. As González, M. & Pérez, L. (2021) state, lexical mastery is essential for success in school, as it facilitates both text comprehension and oral expression, which are fundamental aspects for optimal academic performance. However, due to a lack of constant exposure to new words, decontextualized teaching, and low motivation, students struggle to acquire a meaningful vocabulary.

To address these challenges, this study proposes an instructional framework rooted in gamification, aimed at enhancing English vocabulary acquisition while fostering an engaging and interactive learning experience. This approach empowers students to express themselves more dynamically and autonomously.

Moreira, D. & Vega, J. (2023) suggest that a system is understood as a structure composed of components that maintain mutual relationships and interactions, forming an organized whole. This whole system interacts dynamically with its environment, is subject to

transformations, and is composed of interdependent elements that act together to achieve a specific purpose. The same is mentioned as being like an organized, coherent, and sequential set of actions and operations that students perform based on specific educational objectives under the guidance and mediation of the teacher in order to achieve meaningful learning of school content.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the instructional framework transcends a linear sequence of tasks and operates as a coherent system that promotes holistic student development across cognitive, emotional, and social domains. This perspective aligns with the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, who emphasized the active construction of knowledge through social interaction and meaningful learning experiences.

In particular, Vygotsky (1978) introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development, which is especially pertinent in gamified learning environments where students engage in collaborative tasks supported by scaffolding that facilitates their cognitive growth.

From an instructional perspective, the framework emphasizes the structured progression of teaching and learning in a meaningful and contextually relevant manner, enabling students to actively build knowledge and develop competencies. This involves selecting effective methodologies, designing engaging activities, and utilizing appropriate resources to support the acquisition of English vocabulary.

In this regard, Fernández, F. (2020) argues that instructional planning should revolve around a set of interrelated activities geared toward specific educational goals. Both teacher intervention and active student engagement are essential to fostering continuous and meaningful learning.

Psychologically, the framework functions as a methodological approach that bridges development and learning, highlighting the active role of the learner, the mediation of the teacher, and the gradual structuring of knowledge. It not only supports knowledge acquisition but also fosters the formation of complex cognitive structures, promoting self-regulation, critical thinking, and learner autonomy. As Vygotsky (1978) noted, teaching not only transmits information but also transforms cognitive structures through social mediation. Hence, learning becomes both a process and a catalyst for psychological development.

In summary, the proposed instructional framework is anchored in three core dimensions: pedagogical, as it supports flexible, student-centered learning grounded in educational theory; instructional, as it organizes strategies and resources around clearly defined goals; and psychological, as it nurtures learners' cognitive development, motivation, and sustained attention.

3.2 Characterization of the Use of Gamification to Improve English Vocabulary in Seventh-Grade EGB Students

Vocabulary encompasses the set of lexical items a speaker uses to express ideas clearly and accurately in both oral and written contexts. To foster effective vocabulary learning in English, it is crucial to implement evidence-based strategies and methodologies that play a central role in the teaching-learning process. Within this context, gamification emerges as a powerful strategy for boosting learners' intrinsic motivation, engagement, and active participation.

Gamification, understood as the application of game-design elements and dynamics in educational contexts, has proven to be an innovative and effective method for strengthening vocabulary acquisition in a foreign language. Its incorporation into classroom settings encourages

a participatory and stimulating environment that promotes critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration.

Based on these principles, an instructional framework integrating gamification was implemented for seventh-grade students in Basic General Education. The framework consisted of three 60-minute sessions featuring carefully selected activities designed to promote active and student-centered learning. The selection of these activities was guided by the principle that learning is most effective when learners are intrinsically motivated and cognitively engaged.

Moreover, the sessions were structured to ensure the continuity and reinforcement of newly acquired vocabulary, encouraging consistent practice and retention. The goal was not merely to memorize vocabulary, but to apply it contextually in communicative situations, thereby fostering deeper and more durable learning.

3.3 Description of the System of Activities Using Gamification to Improve English Vocabulary in 7th Grade EGB Students

This section describes the system of gamified activities that was designed and implemented to strengthen vocabulary learning in seventh-grade students of Basic General Education. The proposal was carried out through three in-person classes that integrated playful dynamics, physical teaching materials, and participatory strategies aimed at motivating students and facilitating the understanding of English words.

General Objective

To develop English vocabulary in seventh-grade EGB students through gamified activities that promote meaningful and participatory learning.

Specific Objectives

- To encourage student participation through structured playful activities.
- To foster vocabulary comprehension in English through activities involving images, flashcards, and group games.
- To evaluate the recognition and correct use of the vocabulary covered in each session.

CLASS 1: Adjectives

Specific Objective:

To identify and name at least eight adjectives in English through playful activities.

Duration: 60 minutes

Resources:

- Illustrated flashcards (images and words showing different adjectives like *happy, tall, short, angry, big, small, etc.*)
- Adhesive tape or Velcro
- Markers

Class Development:

Warm-up (10 minutes): Guided discussion using real-life or flashcard images to activate prior knowledge. Questions may include:

- What is this?
- Is it big or small?
- How does the person look?

Encourage students to describe the images using basic adjectives.

Game 1 – “Simon Says” (15 minutes): Play “Simon Says” using adjectives with miming. Example commands:

- Simon says touch something soft.
- Simon says show me something big.
- Simon says act happy.

Game 2 – “Match and Place” (20 minutes): Students take turns choosing an adjective flashcard and placing it on a matching part of a scene or object (e.g., placing *tall* on a giraffe, *angry* on a cartoon face). Encourage teamwork and speaking in simple sentences, such as:

- *This is tall.*
- *She is angry.*

Reinforcement (10 minutes): Choral repetition of the adjectives learned. Include quick group correction and pronunciation practice.

Closure (5 minutes):

Conduct a rapid-fire review: show an image and ask “Is it big or small?” “Happy or sad?”

Provide positive reinforcement for participation.

Assessment:

Type: Participation checklist

- Individual visual mini-quiz (worksheet with pictures of characters or objects where students label or match the correct adjective)

Criteria:

- Correctly identifies and uses at least **6 adjectives** (2 points)
- Actively participates in the games and activities (1 point)
- Uses adjectives in simple phrases (e.g., *It is short*, *He is sad*) (2 points)

Total: 5 points

CLASS 2: Colors, animals and food!

Specific Objective:

To recognize and classify at least four words in English related to animals, colors, and food, through interactive activities.

Duration: 60 minutes

Resources:

- Flashcards with images and words (animals, foods, and colors)
- Posters for classification categories (Animals: pets, wild animals, farm animals; Food: fruits, vegetables, snacks; Colors)
- Word mats or color wheels for reference

Class Development:

Warm-up (10 minutes): Start by asking students to describe what they see in the flashcards.

Game 1 – “Adjective Charades” (15 minutes): Quick review of adjectives from Class 1 (e.g., *happy, tall, small, angry, sad, short, big*). Students take turns acting out an adjective without speaking, while the rest of the class guesses which one it is.

Game 2 – “Classify It” (15 minutes): In teams, students classify food, animals and colors flashcards based on adjectives learnt in the last class

Game 3 – “Bingo Time!” (15 minutes): Each student receives a Bingo card featuring images or words related to animals, food, and colors. The teacher calls out the vocabulary learnt and students must identify and mark the corresponding square. The first student to complete a line (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal) says “Bingo!” and gets a prize.

Closure (5 minutes): A brief oral review where the teacher shows flashcards randomly and students say the color + item (e.g., It’s a brown bear, It’s a red tomato). Offer positive feedback.

Assessment:

Type: Game-based evaluation + performance rubric **Criteria:**

- Recognizes and names at least 8 items correctly (animals, foods, or colors) (2 points)
- Accurately classifies at least 6 items into the correct category (animals/food/colors) (2 points)
- Uses short descriptive phrases clearly (e.g., This is a green apple, The tiger is wild) (1 point) Total: 5 points.

CLASS 3: Classroom Objects and General Review

Specific Objective:

To demonstrate understanding of the vocabulary covered (adjective, animals, classroom objects) through review activities and final assessment.

Duration: 60 minutes

Resources:

- Flashcards of classroom objects
- Real classroom items
- Printed assessment with images and blank spaces
- Whiteboard and marker

Class Development:

Warm-up (10 minutes): “What’s Missing?” game – students observe objects, then one is removed and they guess which is missing.

Game 1 – “Who Am I?” (10 minutes): A student gives clues without saying the object’s name (e.g., I’m round and you can write with me).

Post-test (20 minutes): Printed worksheet with visual identification, matching, and word completion exercises.

Closure (5 minutes): Brief oral self-assessment: What did you learn this week? What did you enjoy the most?

Assessment:

Type: Written test + direct observation

Criteria:

Recognizes vocabulary from at least 3 categories (2 points)

Correctly writes at least 10 words (2 points)

Actively participates in oral activities (1 point)

Total: 5 points

CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GAMIFIED ACTIVITIES

This chapter analyzes and interprets the results obtained after implementing the gamified activities system designed to enhance the acquisition of receptive vocabulary in English among seventh-grade students in General Basic Education, parallel "B," during the 2025–2026 school year.

Through diagnostic and final assessments, the data collected is examined to determine whether the proposed teaching intervention contributed significantly to improving vocabulary recognition and comprehension skills. Additionally, the level of student participation and the impact of gamification on their motivation to learn a foreign language are examined.

4.1 Description of the Application of the Gamified Activities System to Improve English Vocabulary

This section outlines the implementation of a gamification-based teaching proposal aimed at enhancing receptive English vocabulary in seventh-grade students in General Basic Education, parallel "B," at a public institution in the city of Machala. The intervention was conducted over three face-to-face sessions on June 9, 11, and 12, 2025, with the participation of 22 students.

The proposal consisted of a system of gamified activities specifically designed to encourage student participation and motivation while reinforcing their understanding of the target vocabulary. To this end, various engaging strategies were employed, including games, visual resources, and collaborative dynamics, which fostered meaningful and motivating learning experiences.

Class 1 - Adjectives in Context

The first session focused on introducing basic English adjectives. It began with a warm-up discussion using flashcards to activate students' prior knowledge about size, emotions, and appearance (e.g., big/small, happy/sad). Playful activities included "Simon Says," where students performed actions based on adjective prompts, and a matching game where they placed adjective cards on appropriate images (e.g., "tall" on a giraffe, "angry" on a cartoon face). These dynamic and participatory strategies helped students to recognize, name, and use at least eight adjectives in simple phrases. A mini visual quiz and checklist were used to assess performance.

Class 2 – Colors, Animals and Food Vocabulary

The second session integrated vocabulary from three semantic fields: animals, food, and colors. A warm-up activity invited students to describe flashcards, reinforcing vocabulary from the previous class. "Adjective Charades" served as a review of descriptive words, while "Classify It" allowed teams to categorize items using both content and adjectives. Finally, "Bingo Time!" reinforced vocabulary recognition in a fun and competitive format. The class objective was for students to recognize and classify at least four words from each category through interactive activities. Assessment was based on accurate identification, classification, and use of short descriptive phrases.

Class 3 – Vocabulary Review and Classroom Objects

The third and final session aimed to review the vocabulary covered in previous classes, while introducing terms for classroom objects. The warm-up game "What's Missing?" activated memory and observation. Students then played "Who Am I?" to guess classroom items through clues. A post-test followed, which included matching, word completion, and visual identification of adjectives, animals, and classroom objects. The session closed with a brief oral self-assessment. This class consolidated understanding and allowed for evaluation of vocabulary

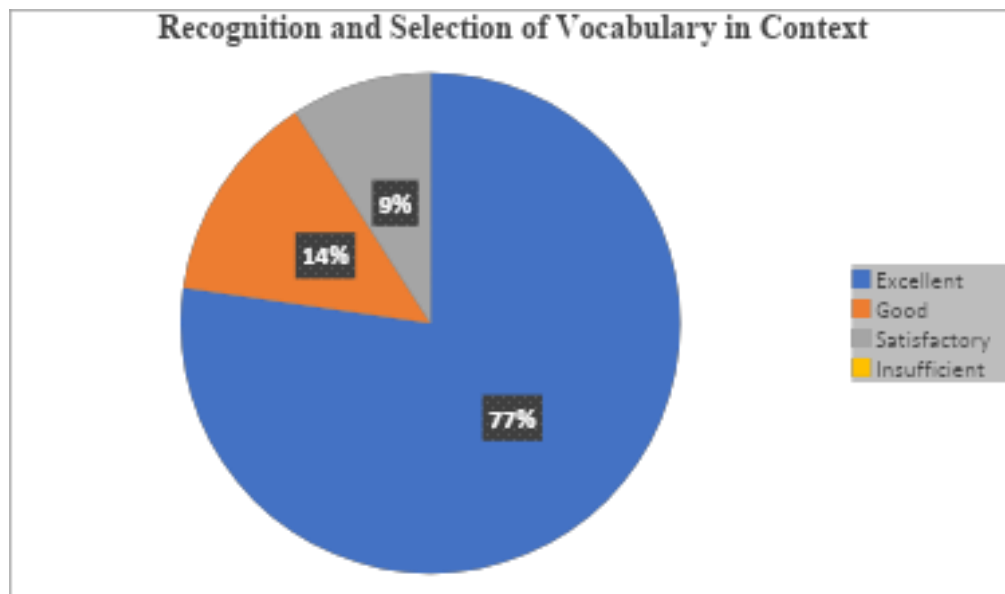
retention and oral participation across all three categories.

Throughout the process, gamification proved to be a valuable tool for encouraging student participation and engagement. The design of the activities allowed for vocabulary practice in meaningful contexts, promoting greater retention and a more enjoyable and practical learning experience.

4.2 Results of the application (post-test)

After applying the gamified activities system for three sessions, there was a significant improvement in student performance, particularly in vocabulary recognition in context, indicating a direct connection between the implemented strategies and the obtained results.

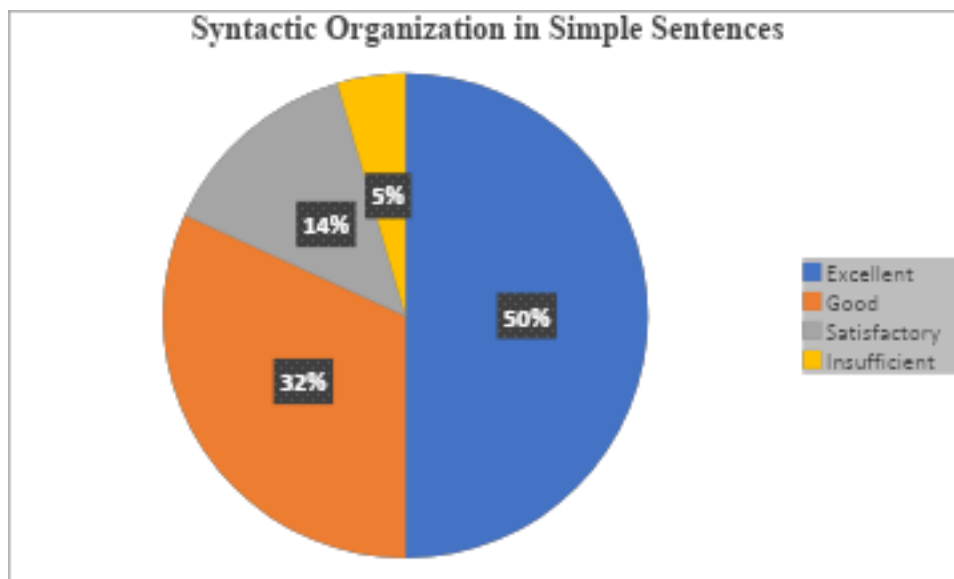
Indicator 1: Recognition and selection of vocabulary in context



Seventy-seven percent of students (17 out of 22) achieved an excellent level of performance, while the remaining 23% were categorized as follows: three students received a

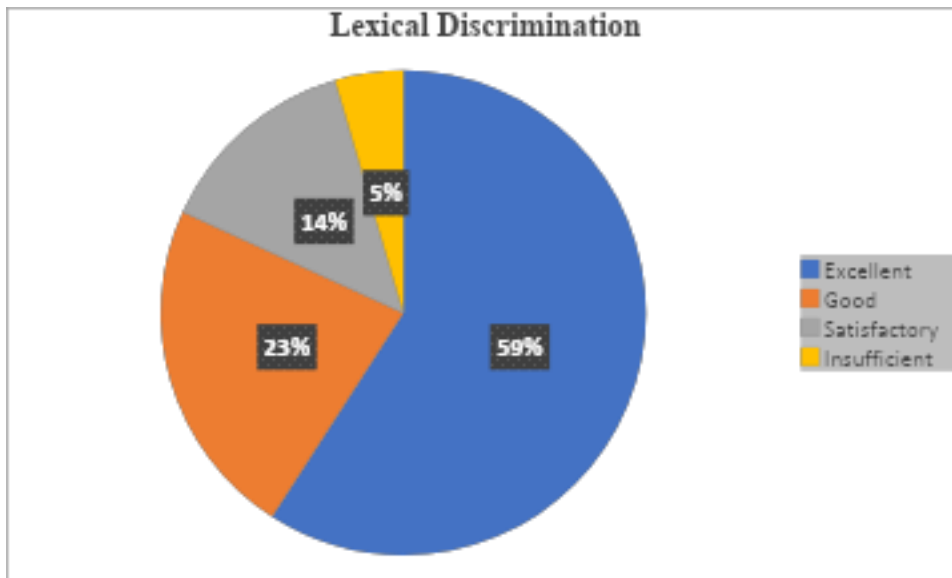
good rating, and two students achieved an acceptable rating. No students were reported to have results at the insufficient level. These results represent a significant improvement compared to the pretest, where low levels of achievement were prevalent. The enhancement in results is attributed to engaging activities, such as "Simon Says," and the use of visual aids, which helped students better understand the vocabulary in context.

Indicator 2: Syntactic organization in simple sentences



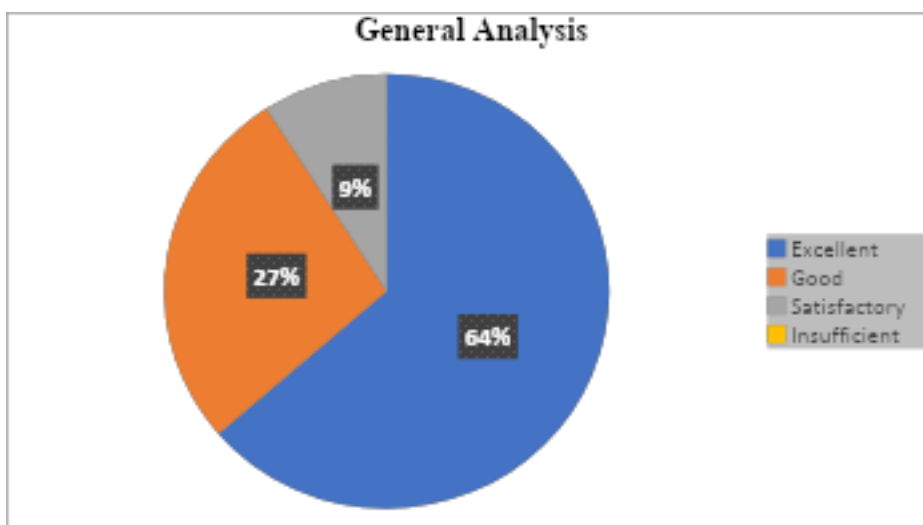
In this case, 11 students (50%) achieved an excellent level, and 7 (32%) achieved a good level. Meanwhile, 3 (14%) remained at an acceptable level, and only one achieved an insufficient result. Although there was improvement compared to the pretest, the percentage of students with average or low performance suggests that this dimension still presents challenges, which could be related to the need to reinforce grammatical structures through playful activities that promote greater structured verbal production.

Indicator 3: Lexical discrimination



This indicator demonstrated strong performance, with 13 students (59%) reaching an excellent level, 5 achieving a good level, 3 attaining an acceptable level, and only 1 student remaining at an insufficient level. There was a noticeable improvement in the students' ability to differentiate and select vocabulary, thanks to activities like bingo and charades, which facilitated multisensory and contextualized learning.

General analysis



Overall, a significant improvement in student performance was observed following the intervention. Fourteen students (64%) achieved an excellent level, and none received an unsatisfactory grade. These results demonstrate that gamification not only enhances receptive vocabulary learning but also fosters an active and motivating learning experience, aligning with the principles of meaningful learning and game theory. Peñafiel et al. (2024) mention that gamified platforms not only enhance academic results but also promote the development of critical skills necessary for students' comprehensive learning.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

This section aims to determine whether the didactic strategy based on gamified activities had a significant impact on the acquisition of receptive vocabulary in English among seventh-grade students of Basic General Education. To achieve this, the paired samples Student's t-test was used, as it is an appropriate statistical tool for comparing the results obtained by the same group before and after an educational intervention.

Paired t-test analysis (overall results)

Table 1

Individual pre- and post-test scores

Student	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference ($d_i = X_2 - X_1$)
1	11	11	0.0
2	9	11	2.0
3	9	10	1.0
4	9	9	0.0
5	9	11	2.0
6	9	8	-1.0
7	9	8	-1.0

8	9	7	-2.0
9	6	10	4.0
10	6	11	5.0
11	6	8	2.0
12	6	7	1.0
13	6	11	5.0
14	6	8	2.0
15	6	9	3.0
16	6	11	5.0
17	6	11	5.0
18	6	11	5.0
19	3	5	2.0
20	3	6	3.0
21	3	6	3.0
22	3	6	3.0

The highest score on both instruments was 11 points. Positive differences indicate improvements in most cases.

Table 2

Statistical Analysis

Stats	Value
Pre-test average	6.55
Post-test average	8.82
Average difference ($\bar{d}$)	2.27
Standard deviation of differences	1.62
T value (T calculated)	-4.89
Degrees of freedom (df)	21
p-value (significance)	0.0000788
Confidence level	95%

Analysis by Dimensions

Table 3

Linguistic Dimension

Performance level	Pre-test (22 students)	Post-test (22 students)	Change
Excellent	1 (4.5%)	15 (68.2%)	+63.7%
Good	3 (13.6%)	4 (18.2%)	+4.6%
Satisfactory	10 (45.5%)	3 (13.6%)	-31.9%
Insufficient	8 (36.4%)	0 (0%)	-36.4%

- In this dimension, students have shown a significant improvement in their recognition, comprehension, and proper use of English words and expressions.

Table 4

Productive dimension

Performance level	Pre-test (22 students)	Post-test (22 students)	Change
Excellent	0 (0%)	10 (45.5%)	+45.5%
Good	2 (9.1%)	7 (31.8%)	+22.7%
Satisfactory	8 (36.4%)	0 (0%)	-36.4%
Insufficient	12 (54.5%)	5 (22.7%)	-31.8%

- In this aspect, the changes reflect that more than 77% of students were able to use the vocabulary they learned in more effective communicative productions, demonstrating a functional transfer of the lexicon to real-life language situations.

Table 5

Stylistic Dimension

Performance level	Pre-test (22 students)	Post-test (22 students)	Change
-------------------	------------------------	-------------------------	--------

Excellent	0 (0%)	11 (50%)	+50%
Good	3 (13.6%)	4 (18.2%)	+4.6%
Satisfactory	5 (22.7%)	0 (0%)	-22.7%
Insufficient	14 (63.6%)	7 (31.8%)	-31.8%

- This progress indicates that students not only learned new words but also improved in lexical selection and organization, achieving more coherent, appropriate expressions in line with different linguistic registers.

Statistical analysis indicates that the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), which means that the difference between the pre-test and post-test results is statistically significant. Therefore:

The results obtained indicate that the teaching strategy, based on the use of gamification, had a statistically significant and pedagogically impact on the development of English vocabulary among seventh-grade students. The improvements evidenced in the three dimensions evaluated (linguistic, productive, and stylistic) reflect both quantitative and qualitative advances.

In particular, the reduction in lower performance levels and the considerable increase in higher levels indicate that students not only expanded their lexical repertoire but also strengthened their ability to use vocabulary in both written and oral communicative contexts. Furthermore, the average improvement of more than two performance levels and the overall progress of the group confirm that gamification contributed significantly to strengthening receptive and productive vocabulary in English, demonstrating the pedagogical effectiveness of the playful activities applied.

4.4 Discussion of results.

The analysis of the data obtained following the implementation of the gamified activity system reveals a significant improvement in the acquisition of receptive vocabulary in English among seventh-grade students from Basic General Education, class “B”. This improvement is evident in the post-test results applied after three intervention sessions, which showed notable progress across the linguistic, productive, and stylistic dimensions evaluated.

Firstly, in the linguistic dimension, students demonstrated increased ability to recognize and select vocabulary within specific contexts. This result can be attributed to the use of game-based instructional strategies, such as illustrated flashcards, matching exercises, and interactive dynamics that provided a contextualized learning environment. In such a setting, vocabulary was presented in a visual, meaningful, and repetitive manner. The incorporation of ludic activities helped to move beyond traditional memorization-based methods, fostering a deeper understanding of the vocabulary.

In the productive dimension, an improvement was observed in the students’ ability to organize simple sentences in English. This suggests that the activities implemented not only enhanced vocabulary recognition but also supported its active use in basic syntactic structures. Ongoing practice, immediate feedback, and collaborative dynamics enabled students to express themselves with greater fluency, overcoming previous difficulties in both written and oral production.

Concerning the stylistic dimension, students showed advancement in lexical discrimination, that is, the ability to identify vocabulary that does not belong to the same semantic field. This aspect of lexical development—often neglected in traditional approaches—was reinforced through activities such as classification tasks, semantic mapping, and games like

thematic bingo, which required students to establish meaningful relationships among words.

From a statistical perspective, the application of the paired-samples Student's t-test yielded a p-value lower than 0.05. This result leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that the gamified intervention had a significant effect on receptive vocabulary acquisition. This empirical validation supports the effectiveness of the proposed methodological approach and highlights gamification as a pedagogically sound instructional strategy.

Beyond academic performance, a positive impact was also observed in attitudinal variables such as student motivation, participation levels, and perception of their learning. These improvements were noted through observation guides and were reflected in a greater willingness to engage in English language learning. The inclusion of motivating dynamics, symbolic rewards, and progressive challenges allowed students to experience a more appealing and student-centered educational environment, promoting self-regulation and sustained engagement.

To sum up, the findings align with the work of authors such as Deterding et al. (2011), Moreno et al. (2024), and Vygotsky (1978), who argue that learning is enhanced when students actively participate in meaningful, contextualized, and socially mediated experiences. In this study, gamification not only improved lexical performance but also transformed the teaching-learning process, reaffirming its value as an innovative, relevant, and highly effective strategy for developing receptive vocabulary in basic education contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results obtained throughout the research process, the following conclusions are presented. These reflect the impact of the gamified strategy implemented and provide evidence of its effectiveness in improving receptive vocabulary acquisition among seventh-grade students in the context of English language learning:

1. The results obtained throughout this study confirm that the use of gamification as a pedagogical strategy has a significant impact on improving receptive vocabulary in English among seventh-grade students in the General Basic Education system. Initial assessment revealed, it was evident that students had difficulties identifying, understanding, and using words appropriately in specific contexts, with most performing at acceptable or insufficient levels. This reality highlighted the need to implement an innovative methodological approach that would motivate students and strengthen their learning.
2. The teaching intervention, based on gamified activities applied over three consecutive sessions, created an active, dynamic student-centered environment conducive to learning. The use of visual resources, group dynamics, and games such as "Simon Says," "Charades," and "Bingo" facilitated better lexical retention, enabling recognition, semantic classification, and contextual understanding of the terms being studied. This approach enhanced student attention and facilitated vocabulary use in real-life classroom situations.
3. A comparison of the pretest and posttest results showed quantitative improvements in the three dimensions evaluated: linguistic, productive, and stylistic. Students demonstrated significant improvement in their performance,

particularly in contextual recognition and lexical accuracy, resulting in a substantial reduction in levels of insufficiency. These advances were statistically supported by the Student's t-test, whose p-value of less than 0.05 allowed us to reject the null hypothesis, confirming that gamification did have a positive and significant effect on vocabulary learning.

4. In short, this study demonstrates that a gamification-based strategy not only enriches the English teaching and learning process but also strengthens student motivation, interaction, and autonomy. Therefore, the effectiveness of this methodology is validated as a viable pedagogical approach for improving vocabulary in similar school contexts, recommending its application and continuous adaptation in future teaching practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusions derived from this study, the following recommendations are proposed. These aim to support the integration of gamification in English language teaching and to promote the continuous improvement of pedagogical practices in similar educational contexts:

1. Incorporate gamification systematically as a pedagogical strategy in English language instruction, particularly at the elementary school level. Its application has been shown to effectively strengthen receptive vocabulary and foster a more meaningful, dynamic, and participatory learning experience.
2. Encourage teachers to design playful activities that integrate visual elements, group dynamics, and progressive challenges that stimulate students' interest and promote learner autonomy. The use of concrete materials, such as illustrated cards, games like "Simon Says," "Charades," and "Bingo," as well as interactive digital resources, can significantly enhance the development of lexical skills in the English classroom.
3. Promote institutional training programs focused on active teaching methodologies, including gamification, as a viable and adaptable pedagogical tool aligned with curricular goals. Providing teachers with adequate support and resources will be essential to ensuring the sustainability of these innovative practices.
4. Replicate this proposal in other educational institutions and grade levels to continue exploring its impact on various language skills, such as oral expression and reading comprehension. Future studies could examine its effects on broader

language competencies, thereby strengthening the pedagogical value of gamification in Ecuadorian education.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1

Observation Guide

Nº	Behavior observed related to vocabulary learning and classroom engagement	Yes	No	Observations
1	The student recognizes and points out vocabulary using visual materials (e.g., flashcards, objects).		X	
2	Participates actively in the gamified activities (Simon Says, Bingo, Charades).		X	
3	Shows understanding of vocabulary through gestures or matching games.		X	
4	Demonstrates motivation and enthusiasm during group dynamics.		X	
5	Uses the target vocabulary spontaneously or when prompted.		X	
6	Correctly identifies and classifies vocabulary according to categories (e.g., animals, body parts, classroom objects).		X	
7	Works cooperatively with peers during the learning activities.	X		
8	Responds appropriately to teacher instructions related to vocabulary tasks.	X		

Annex 2

Diagnostic test (pre- and post-test)

Nombre del estudiante: _____

Curso: _____ Fecha: _____

Instrucciones: Escribe la respuesta correcta o encierra la opción correcta según se indique.

1. Escribe el significado en español de estas palabras en inglés: (D.L)

a) House: _____

b) Car: _____

c) Happy: _____

2. Lee la oración y elige la palabra correcta para completarla. (D.L)

I eat an _____ every day.

- a) ball
- b) apple
- c) cake

The _____ is flying in the sky.

- a) bird
- b) chair
- c) pig

3. Ordena las siguientes palabras para que la oración tenga sentido. (D.P)

a) play / I / soccer

b) sister / my / She / is

c) book / a / read / I

4. ¿Cuál palabra es diferente por estilo o intensidad? Marca la que no pertenece

a) Small – Tiny – Huge: _____

b) Sad – Angry – Purple: _____

c) Walk – Run – Chair: _____



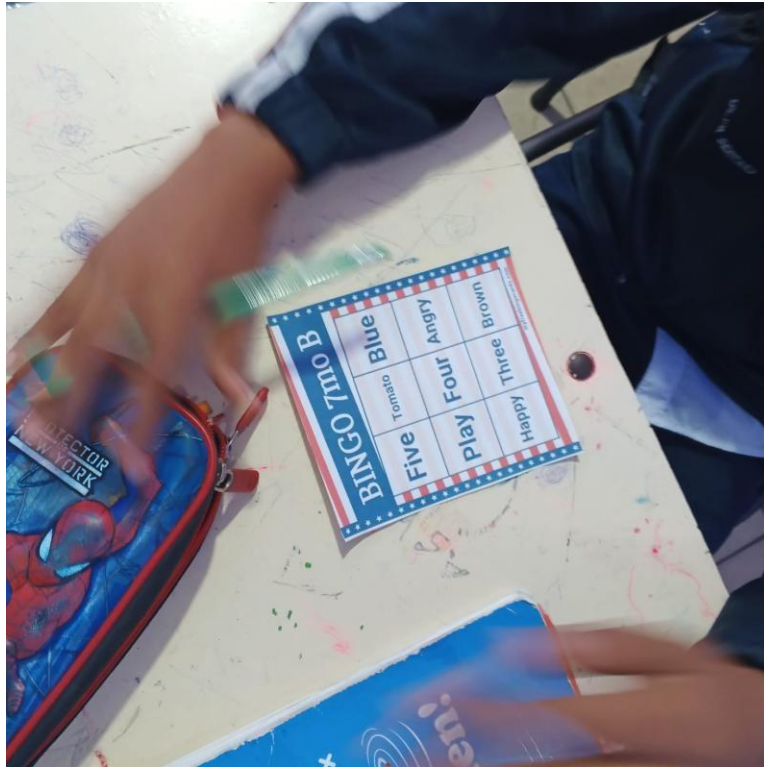
Annex 3

Adjective charades



Annex 4

Bingo time



Bingo Card ID 001

BINGO 7mo B		
Pig	Basketball	Soccer
Two	Eat	Black
Green	Confused	Three

myfreebingocards.com

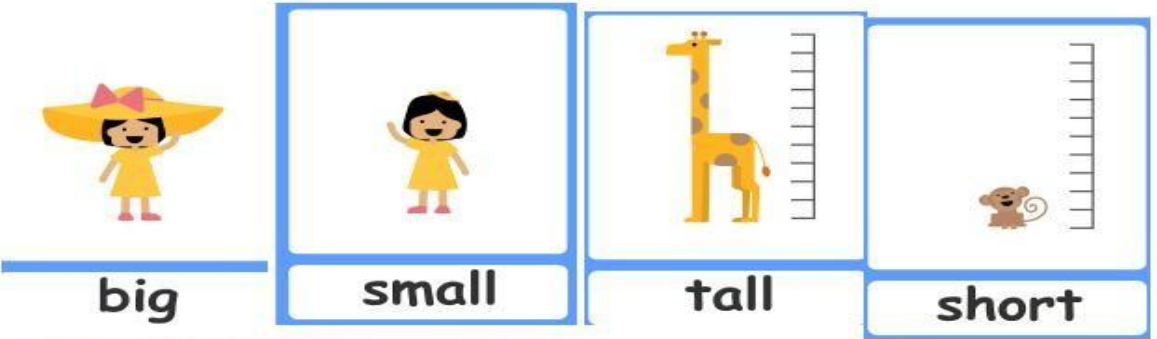
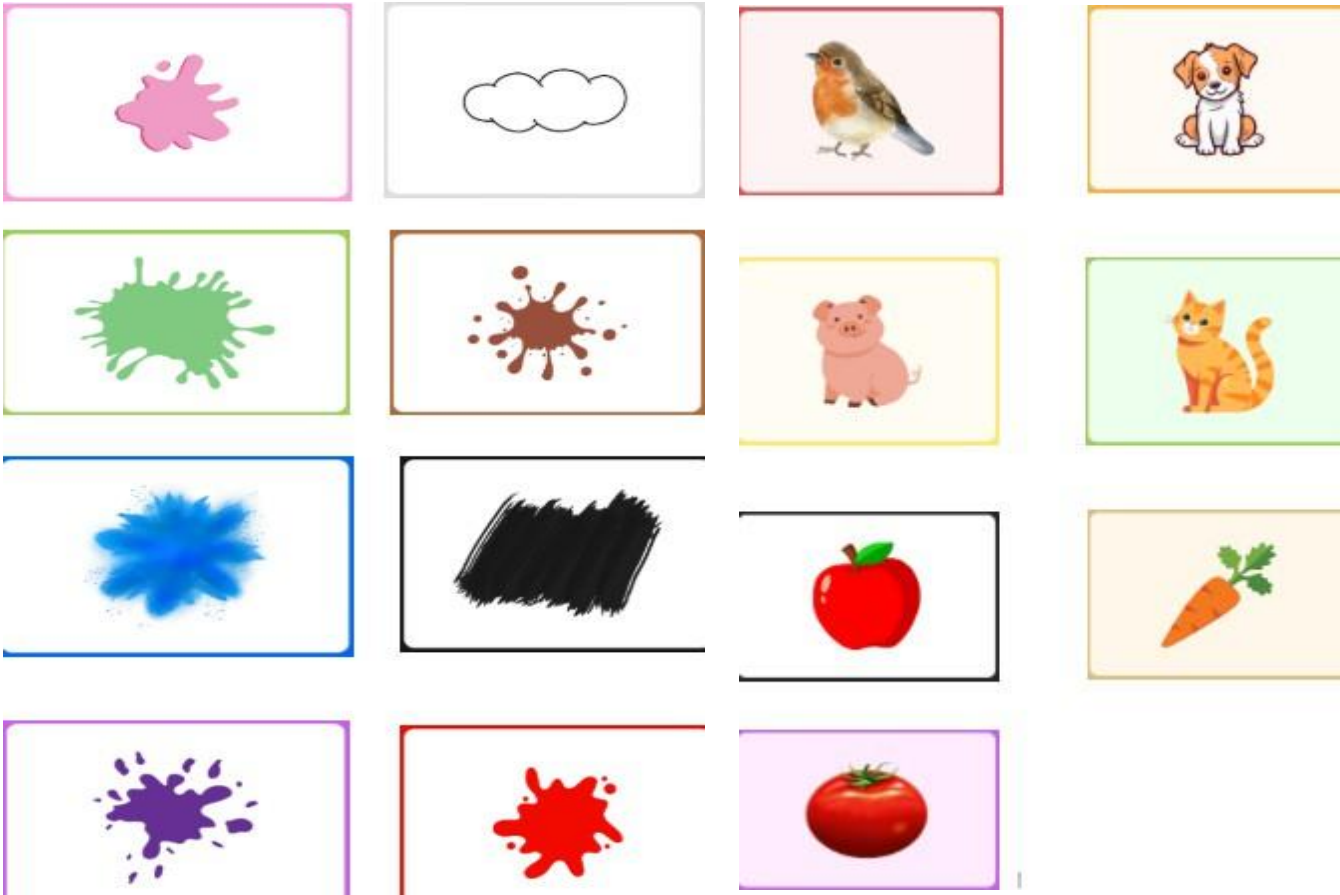
Bingo Card ID 002

BINGO 7mo B		
Pink	Five	Short
Happy	Walk	Pig
Carrot	Confused	Three

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Annex 5

Flashcards





Annex 6

Rubric

Criteria (Dimension)	Indicator	Excellent (4 pts)	Good (3 pts)	Satisfactory (2 pts)	Insufficient (1 pt)
Linguistic	Recognition and selection of vocabulary in context	Recognizes and correctly selects 5 or more of the given words	Recognizes and correctly selects 3 - 4 words.	Recognizes and correctly selects 2 words.	Recognizes and selects only 1 word or none.
Productive	Syntactic organization in simple sentences	Correctly organize 3 simple sentences with subject + verb + complement structure.	Correctly organize 2 sentences.	Correctly organize 1 sentence.	It does not organize any sentence correctly.
Stylistic	Lexical discrimination	Correctly identify the intrusive word in the 3 groups	Correctly identifies 2 intrusive words.	Correctly identify 1 intrusive word.	It does not identify any intrusive words or incorrect answers in all cases.