



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

**“EXPLORING GAMIFICATION IN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE LEARNING IN ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL”**

RESEARCH PROJECT

As a prerequisite to obtain a:

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

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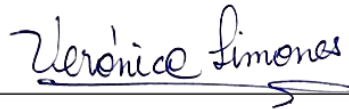
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Playas – Ecuador

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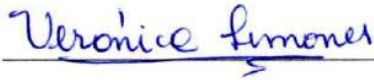
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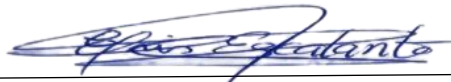


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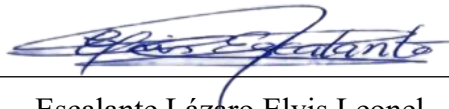
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Declaration

The content of the following graduation work titled “Exploring Gamification in English Language Learning in Elementary School” is my responsibility; the intellectual property belongs to Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena.

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I am deeply grateful to the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena and its faculty for contributing to my professional development throughout my academic journey. My sincere thanks also go to my thesis advisor for their invaluable guidance and support in preparing this work, as well as to everyone who supported me along the way.

Dedication

I dedicate this achievement to the most important person in my life, my beloved mother, Olga Lázaro, and to my siblings for their unconditional love and support throughout my academic journey; I always found my greatest encouragement in them. I also want to thank my friends, who put up with me for eight long semesters—I truly enjoyed our company on this adventure. But above all, my deepest gratitude goes to my friend Pablo Lara for always being there whenever I needed a helping hand. Thank you for encouraging me to keep going; I wouldn't have made it without you. This achievement is yours too.

With love

Escalante Lázaro Elvis Leonel

Abstract

This qualitative phenomenological study explores gamification as a methodology for teaching English to elementary school students in private educational institutions in Playas, Ecuador. The study seeks to understand how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers overcome various barriers, such as a scarcity of technological resources, limited infrastructure, and parents' perceptions of innovative methods, to achieve objectives through interactive strategies. Using a purposive, non-probability sample, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with five EFL teachers. Data collection was conducted using a nine-question interview designed to explore educators' experiences and perceptions. The results demonstrated that gamification is a flexible method that boosts motivation in young learners. Furthermore, it reduces anxiety and increases class participation. Educators also reported significant benefits in vocabulary acquisition and the assimilation of new words using flashcards, as well as the ability to address complex topics in a more engaging way. However, the study also highlighted relevant challenges, such as a lack of time to create activities, the evident limitations of various resources, and a lack of understanding from parents. In summary, this research offers recommendations for local teachers to adapt gamified activities, prioritizing creativity and the purpose of the lesson in less-than-ideal classroom environments, thus promoting English language acquisition through a more engaging and innovative approach.

KEY WORDS: Gamification, elementary school, motivation, young learners

Resumen

Este estudio cualitativo fenomenológico explora la gamificación como metodología para la enseñanza del inglés a estudiantes de educación básica elemental en instituciones educativas privadas de Playas, Ecuador. El estudio busca comprender cómo los docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) superan diversas barreras, como la escasez de recursos tecnológicos, la infraestructura limitada y las percepciones de los padres sobre los métodos innovadores, para lograr sus objetivos mediante estrategias interactivas. Se realizaron entrevistas individuales semiestructuradas a cinco docentes de EFL, utilizando una muestra intencional no probabilística.

La recopilación de datos se realizó mediante una entrevista de nueve preguntas diseñada para explorar las experiencias y percepciones de los educadores. Los resultados demostraron que la gamificación es un método flexible que impulsa la motivación en los estudiantes de básica elemental. Además, reduce la ansiedad y aumenta la participación en clase. Los profesores también informaron de beneficios significativos en la adquisición de vocabulario y la asimilación de nuevas palabras mediante el uso de tarjetas didácticas, así como la capacidad de abordar temas con mayor complejidad de una manera más atractiva. Sin embargo, el estudio también destacó desafíos relevantes, como la falta de tiempo para crear actividades, las evidentes limitaciones de diversos recursos y la falta de comprensión por parte de los padres de familia. En resumen, esta investigación ofrece recomendaciones para que los docentes locales adapten actividades gamificadas, priorizando la creatividad y el propósito de la lección en entornos de aula limitados, promoviendo la adquisición del idioma inglés a través de un enfoque más atractivo e innovador.

PALABRAS CLAVES: gamificación, educación básica elemental, motivación, estudiantes de básica elemental

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Introduction

Educational trends show that globally, teachers are seeking innovative alternatives to avoid the monotony of traditional methods, aiming to motivate young learners to learn English as a foreign language. However, not all teachers can adapt this methodology due to various limitations that arise in the classroom. Educators tend to take advantage of the benefits of using gamified activities to spark and maintain children's interest, due to the challenges of getting young learners immersed in acquiring English.

The reviewed literature highlights the positive effects on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation by this methodology in classrooms. For this reason, teachers are trying to incorporate point or reward systems as a pedagogical strategy designed to strengthen English language learning. For educators, using interactive activities allows language skills to be strengthened, while at the same time young learners lose their fear of participating and speaking during classes. Despite the advantages of gamification, teachers cannot always take advantage of its benefits due to various circumstances.

At the local level, different problems surrounding the teaching of a foreign language have been studied, as well as the inequalities that arise between educational units due to the multiple challenges that occur in the school environment, when trying to innovate in order to find a higher quality education. Therefore, this research addresses the need to explore the realities behind the lack of innovation in pedagogical methods. This qualitative study fills the gap regarding how teachers overcome limitations and provides insights into how to make gamification more effective. Similarly, the objectives of this qualitative research are aimed to explore how gamification enhances English language learning in Elementary schools in private educational institutions in Playas.

The main purpose is to analyze educators' perceptions to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences using this methodology. This aims to identify the factors that influence their choice of gamification over other options and to describe the benefits reported by participants in the questionnaire used to gather information. The research project has been structured in five chapters that allow following an academic and methodological trajectory following strict parameters suggested for qualitative research.

The first section presents a research topic and a brief explanation of the problem statement regarding gamification in elementary school students, and the justification for addressing this topic in the study. The research questions and their respective objectives are also detailed. The next chapter encompasses the theoretical framework and background information on the relevant literature that supports this project, addressing information on international and local works. It also presents the pedagogical basis that serves to explore methodologies and approaches, and finally the legal basis that supports education based on laws of the Ecuadorian government.

This document contains the methodological framework that justifies the use of qualitative research to generate data, detailed information about the participants, and the instrument for data collection. It also details the analysis of the data obtained from the sample and describes the results by categorizing the teachers' responses and triangulating them with the authors who support their statements. Finally, it integrates the recommendations that emerged after analyzing and organizing the data, as well as the recommendations that stem from connecting the objectives and questions of this research project with the results of the previous chapter.

Chapter I

The Problem

Research Topic

Gamification in English Language Learning

Title of your project.

Exploring Gamification in English Language Learning in Elementary School

Problem Statement

The current trend in many countries is to avoid traditional teaching and focus on more immersive methods or strategies that encourage interaction in a real-life environment, centered on communication and the student (Sulemanoski, 2022). For students, it is important that learning be fun to take advantage of the assimilation that children have and the brain plasticity at early ages (Giannakos, 2022). To achieve effective teaching and to get children interested and motivated to learn a foreign language, teachers often turn classes into an enjoyable environment.

This pedagogical method is applied in countries that invest in innovation focused on improving student performance. Teachers have integrated various elements of gamification into language learning, including video games, platforms, music, awards, challenges, even virtual reality. Along these same theoretical lines, Anjum et al. (2022) suggest that dynamic, game-based learning environments greatly improve educational experience through interactive resources where students can absorb knowledge by following these teaching methods.

Although gamification is often widely used in classrooms, its use tends to decline when activities no longer capture students' attention. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the mechanics of the games, and to know under what context and students need this method can be

applied without losing effectiveness and educational purpose (Suryatama, 2023). Moreover, young learners can easily lose focus due to the gaming elements, shifting their attention away from the core lesson objectives.

Not only are there educational challenges, but there is also a shortage of resources. For instance, in Ecuador some limitations like the lack of technological resources are more notable in rural areas. To make matters worse, there is no optimal infrastructure where students can learn adequately, and educators often lack the training required to move away from traditional teaching. As a result, fundamental knowledge is below minimum international standards. It is important to explore how teachers overcome the difficulties of implementing gamification despite the limitations and boundaries of this method.

Justification

This research is justified by the need to understand why elementary school teachers choose gamification to innovate in their English teaching practices. The persistence of the problem, which contributes to undesirable levels of English proficiency in Ecuador, is maintained because educators continually face profound systemic barriers. These include a notable shortage of technological resources, deficient infrastructure, and a lack of specific training to move away from rigid and traditional paradigms. As González et al. (2025) suggest, there are various barriers that limit access to timely, quality education.

While gamification has the potential to transform the classroom into an interactive and engaging space (Jaime et al., 2025) its application remains restricted by these regional disparities, causing young students' English proficiency to remain below international standards. These limitations foster cultural and educational gaps, creating critical challenges in areas with specific populations where English language learning is not commonplace in the classroom. If

this problem persists, it will hinder innovation through educational practices that help connect students with the competitive world and diminish their opportunities for future professional growth.

Therefore, this study is necessary to explore how teachers adapt and apply creative variations so as to enhance student's motivation. It aims to fill a local knowledge gap by analyzing how educators overcome the challenges of limited digital or physical resources to successfully enhance English language acquisition. The academic relevance of this project lies in its exploration of a phenomenon that remains underexplored locally. Specifically, it focuses on analyzing the adaptation of gamification methodologies within restrictive infrastructures and capturing the perceptions of teachers facing these limitations in Playas.

The international literature reviewed indicates gamification as an effective pedagogical tool. However, there is a notable gap regarding its implementation in environments with scarce digital or physical resources. Furthermore, it involves following a curriculum that must be followed and doesn't allow much room for trying new methods. Therefore, this study fills the need for local knowledge by providing empirical qualitative data on how educators overcome multiple barriers through creative pedagogical adaptations with limited resources.

This research provides valuable insights required by the educational community to explore the topic of gamification. On one hand, the exploration directly benefits English teachers in private institutions in Playas; the study offers a pedagogical framework that investigates how teachers adapt to limitations in the local educational context. On the other hand, it also benefits elementary school students by promoting an environment that stimulates and motivates them to learn a foreign language; furthermore, it facilitates English language acquisition by examining teachers' perceptions. Ultimately, by exploring the methodologies and strategies used by the five

EFL teachers in Playas, this research generates a strategic path that enhances students' motivation and English proficiency, reducing the language gap in the local educational context.

Problem question

How does gamification as a methodology enhance English language learning in Elementary school students?

Specific questions

What are the key factors that boost EFL teachers to choose gamification as a teaching method for elementary school students?

What are EFL teachers' perceptions of how gamification motivates elementary school students to learn a foreign language?

What are the benefits of gamification as a methodology to enhance English language learning in Elementary school students?

General Objective

To explore how gamification as a methodology enhances English language learning in Elementary school students.

Specific objectives

To identify the key factors that boost EFL teachers to choose gamification as a teaching method for elementary school students.

To analyze EFL teachers' perceptions of how gamification motivates elementary school students to learn a foreign language.

To describe the benefits of gamification as a methodology to enhance English language learning in Elementary school students.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

Background

Gamification as an innovative method

Globally, the shift towards methodologies that replace traditional teaching has positioned gamification as an innovative pedagogical approach to second language acquisition. Traditional methods had not been relegated as they are now by gamification. This active approach fosters participatory learning through game mechanics; previous findings show that these dynamics strengthen vocabulary retention and improve listening and speaking skills (Bolatbek & Tankibayeva, 2025). In doing so, students are encouraged to engage deeply with the language, which enhances both intrinsic motivation and skill development.

Gamification is a versatile pedagogical method applied in diverse educational contexts and disciplines, from language learning to computer science and the arts. According to Ghosh and Pramanik (2023), it offers a structured approach that enhances the student experience. Precisely because of its system and structure, it can be applied in multiple contexts. Moreover, this is important for this research because it requires exploring gamification in different contexts found in private schools in Playas. Many institutions are currently redesigning their curricula to incorporate these mechanics in order to maximize student potential.

Gamification activities offer a different option for learning and can even be used as an assessment method due to their diversity and flexibility (Moreno & Orcera, 2024). Not only can gamification replace traditional evaluations, but it can also be used to recognize the student's learning levels. This option is particularly relevant for young learners because it helps prevent children from becoming demotivated or stressed by completing a worksheet full of questions.

Furthermore, using it as an assessment method helps to instantly identify a student's strengths and weaknesses in real time. Based on these observations, the teacher can reinforce and mitigate learning gaps in their class and fill in any knowledge deficits, even designing another engaging activity to consolidate lessons or theoretical aspects, thus promoting equal learning opportunities for all students. More research is needed to explore whether teachers in Playas are taking advantage of these benefits.

Despite the benefits of this approach, Narváez-Vilema et al. (2026) mention that in Chimborazo, Ecuador, the memorization of grammatical rules and syntax patterns still prevails. This baseline indicates that traditional teacher-centered instruction remains prevalent in several locations across the country; therefore, it is necessary to explore alternative methods, and gamification is one option. Consequently, the student maintains a passive role, and the teacher is the one around whom the development of the class revolves. However, Rodríguez (2022) suggests that it sounds easy to replace the well-known traditional classroom routines, but to implement gamification it is also important to prioritize student motivation and an appropriate methodology if working with platforms like Quizizz or Wordwall.

How to adapt available digital tools to promote the acquisition of English and to manage class time appropriately are some of the challenges for teachers in Playas. This situation aligns with a broader national reality; Valarezo and Montesdeoca (2026) explored some of the barriers to teaching English as a foreign language in Ecuador and through their documentary research, they concluded that the hours of English classes must be reformed because the time commitment is insufficient compared to international standards.

At the local level, Torres (2022) points out that challenges arise when designing or choosing recreational activities and how they are administered to achieve their intended purpose.

Despite knowing the benefits of gamification, teachers need ongoing training to enhance their methodological execution. Ultimately, the author concludes that intrinsic motivation increased and students were more engaged, which is relevant because her sample of 7th-grade students shares a similar EFL context within the Ecuadorian educational system. Although the cited studies explored some barriers to English language teaching in Ecuador, a gap remains in understanding how teachers adapt gamification methodology within a limited educational structure. Therefore, this study aims to fill that local gap.

Pedagogical Basis

Communicative Approach

According to the reviewed literature, teachers seek to leverage the advantages of teaching children. In this sense, transforming the classroom into an enriching experience allows students to become familiar with a foreign language. As a result, cooperative learning is encouraged through play, which provides opportunities to simulate language use in the real world. In this context, creating a dynamic and communicative environment is fundamental for student participation as Reyes (2025) points out. Her research concluded that when language teachers implement dynamic classroom management strategies, student anxiety is reduced and active participation is fostered.

The context suggests that it is important to highlight that the mechanics of the game encourage students to try, participate and interact without fear of making mistakes, something that does not usually happen in a traditional class where the classroom setting can be perceived as more restrictive. Therefore, the teacher's ability to manage strategies in such a way that mistakes are perceived as part of the game and educational process is essential. If the child

becomes overwhelmed or frustrated, the same happens to the teacher when they are unable to achieve the educational goals set in the lessons.

One strategy to consider is the role of interaction; according to Mamadaliyeva and Raxmatova (2025), it can encourage learning, improve fluency, and make students feel more confident by practicing in a scenario that resembles a real-life environment. Furthermore, the authors point out that linguistic comprehension is also enhanced. When aligning this with gamification, the task must require using the language in a playful activity chosen by the teacher. This approach promotes learning English with the purpose of boosting communication skills.

In this way, students can focus more on earning points or rewards within the game, setting aside the fear of making mistakes (Ismoilova & Abdullayeva, 2025). Additionally, games help learners connect language with vocabulary, creating opportunities for communication. One example is holding competitions where those who answer questions correctly are rewarded. This encourages children to learn by participating and provides a safe context where they feel capable of completing tasks and communicating freely, without worrying about external constraints.

Task-based Learning

Within this framework, a task is defined as an activity that aims to achieve a purpose; in this context, a language-related goal is established. Within this activity, students use speech to achieve a tangible result in the real world; an approach where meaning predominates over form (Prabhu, 1987). For instance, the teacher could choose a dynamic where students simulate giving or asking for directions in English. One student takes on the role of a tourist and is forced to use English to reach a destination, while another learner pretends to be the one helping them.

In addition, challenges can be introduced by putting in the wrong addresses or pretending that public transport is not available for transfer. This activity departs from the traditional

method and uses an immersive and more enjoyable approach. The way gamification is linked to this approach lies in the fact that the student needs to use English to achieve the objective, while overcoming levels of complexity designed by the teacher. In this sense, they do not review grammar rules directly but rather try to use the language in a more realistic environment.

The purpose of gamification is to encourage participation; it can help young learners focus on achieving a goal and be committed to developing an activity that aims to enhance language skills by applying different methods. According to G'afurova et al. (2025), language acquisition and communicative competence can be encouraged through tasks that function in the real world. Furthermore, the student is encouraged to be the center of attention in the classroom; therefore, in this framework, the teacher acts as a guide to ensure the class flows smoothly and has educational value.

Differentiated Instruction in EFL

The teacher's role, in addition to providing guidance, is to adapt to the difficulty levels so that all students can learn interactively. It is well known that there are different levels of skill and knowledge in classrooms; therefore, the complexity of the games cannot always be the same for everyone. As Ortiqova (2025) mentions, creating simplified versions of the text or using visual aids allows educators to meet the needs of learners who require a change in the alternative instructional strategies. The author also suggests that if all students can participate in an accessible activity, collaboration and inclusion are fostered, which in turn boosts group motivation. Therefore, a motivated group creates an ideal environment for learning a foreign language.

Differences Between Gamification and Game-based Learning

To effectively implement innovative strategies in local school classrooms, it is crucial

to distinguish between two potentially confusing terms: gamification and game-based learning (GBL). While both utilize the advantages of games to enhance the acquisition of English as a foreign language (EFL), their structure and pedagogical use differ. On one hand, point systems, rewards, or progress bars are applied in the educational field mainly to motivate; these elements can be integrated into a conventional task to which a reward is given for performance. This is how gamification functions as a teaching method.

On the other hand, games with more realistic and immersive mechanics are used to integrate learning within the process itself. Therefore, the student learns as they progress or master the game's dynamics. The game becomes the medium through which the learner develops knowledge; the content or lessons are integrated so that the student discovers and learns them through play (Soriano-Sánchez et al., 2026). Currently, there is a wide range of online platforms that offer game-based learning experiences, and their structure allows the difficulty to be adjusted so that any learner can access their content.

Theoretical Basis

Constructivist Approach

According to Vygotsky (1978), children learn by interacting with their peers and then internalize the knowledge until it is completely assimilated; gamification facilitates this process. Furthermore, this methodology considers the student as a fundamental pillar, enabling them to acquire information through a process of analysis and organization, thus transforming it into active and productive learning. Another important principle is developed within the zone of proximal development; its relationship to gamification is reflected in the challenges learners face within a game dynamic, while providing them with tools to overcome the varying levels of difficulty. Students begin with foundational knowledge, and new content is added to build upon

that existing understanding. This theory is shared by Ausubel (1962), who suggested that they connect prior knowledge with new information.

According to Priandani et al. (2025), constructivism remains an essential basis for achieving the growth and evolution of a more up-to-date and innovative education. It is important to highlight that this approach has great potential when applied to language teaching because it reinforces practice, which is precisely what a student needs to improve their language skills (Halid, 2024). Furthermore, the student is required to be more involved and participate, interaction is encouraged through play.

Starting from the idea that learning is a participatory action expressed through doing and exercising, gamification is considered an element of this framework. It allows a focus on the student and their enjoyment, fostering the development of oral expression, collaborative work, critical thinking, problem solving, autonomy, and creativity skills often difficult to work on from a traditional approach. The first investigations were related to the business field where Werbach and Hunter (2012) divided gamification into three categories: dynamics, mechanics, and components.

Self-determination Theory

According to this theory, it is possible to analyze whether student motivation decreases throughout the activities or, conversely, increases as they feel they have control over the game or can make decisions within its mechanics. Ryan (2023) also mentions that the drive to achieve established goals generates satisfaction, which leads to greater learner engagement. Furthermore, since these activities encourage collective participation, young learners also feel included, thus promoting educational inclusion.

The Flow Theory

The dynamics of games can be highly engaging for children; however, there is a need to maintain a balance that the teacher must achieve. According to Csikszentmihalyi's theory, keeping the difficulty level low in an activity can generate disinterest or boredom in the student. On the other hand, if the challenge is excessive, it will discourage the child, leading them to give up or not even try. Arundhathi and Anitha (2024) describe flow theory within the field of language teaching as a factor that fosters an optimal mental state in which students become fully engaged in activities and generate efficient learning. Therefore, motivation and linguistic competence benefit from the creation of immersive, and gamified environments adapted to the abilities and limitations of the learners, which promotes continuous language acquisition.

Legal basis

In Ecuador, there is a legal framework that upholds education as a citizen's right and the state's obligation to ensure inclusive, quality education. The public system establishes that foreign language learning must be responsive to a competitive and globalized environment.

Constitución de la República del Ecuador

In the “*Constitución de la República del Ecuador*” (Asamblea Constituyente, 2008) the following articles are mentioned:

Art. 26. - It is established that education is an inescapable and inexcusable right that the State must guarantee to all Ecuadorians. Education represents a priority within public policy; furthermore, it is mandated that it is fundamental to state investment. Moreover, it is stated that it is an indispensable right that underpins the foundation of well-being. Therefore, it guarantees equality and social inclusion. (Asamblea Constituyente, 2008).

Art. 27. - Education will focus on the human being as the fundamental principle, guaranteeing their holistic development as a person. Education will be participatory, compulsory, intercultural, democratic, inclusive, and diverse, with the aim of introducing citizens to a society where they can develop their skills and competencies. Therefore, citizens will have the opportunity to work and create opportunities for their own well-being. (Asamblea Constituyente, 2008).

Art. 28. - Education, as an essential pillar of the state, is dedicated to its citizens and cannot be subject to interests that do not benefit Ecuadorians; it will not respond to individual or corporate interests. Furthermore, it is established that access to education is guaranteed for all, as is the right to remain in school and to move freely between educational institutions without discrimination of any kind. The importance of education as a cornerstone for ensuring the well-being of citizens is reflected in full access to early childhood education, basic education, high school, and third-level professional education. (Asamblea Constituyente, 2008)

Art. 29. - It is established that the state will promote the cultural identity of its people, just as it allows freedom of teaching within diverse pedagogical options. Therefore, teachers are free to choose innovative methods and strategies in the classroom to increase the level of English language acquisition. (Asamblea Constituyente, 2008)

Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural (LOEI)

Art. 2.3. - This section ensures that students can access academic training that meets the diverse needs of citizens in multiple local and international contexts, thus guaranteeing that English language teaching meets global demands. (Asamblea Nacional, 2011)

Art. 6. - It is established that an educational curriculum be designed that aligns with the Common European Framework of Reference, and that suitable teaching materials or educational texts be guaranteed for the teaching of English. (Asamblea Nacional, 2011)

Reglamento General a la Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural

Art. 29. - This article establishes that educational institutions must implement the national curriculum, which stipulates that English has a communicative approach. Furthermore, it demonstrates the importance of implementing the language from primary education through high school. (Presidencia de la República del Ecuador, 2023)

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

Qualitative Approach

This research project adopts a qualitative approach as it focuses on understanding, describing, and analyzing the experiences that participants share about a phenomenon in an educational context. According to Seeletse et al. (2024), who conducted a three-month case study of a phenomenon in a school, in which they used semi-structured interviews about how gamification fosters motivation, this approach allows for a broader exploration of the shared perceptions of the sample within an educational environment with similar limitations. Therefore, the perspectives and strategies of the educators comprising the study sample are included in this research.

Furthermore, Lincoln and Guba (1985), highlight that qualitative research helps to explore different realities that have formed within the same phenomenon shared by other people, which means that this is the most appropriate model to study and investigate the diversity of experiences that English teachers encounter in their pedagogical practices within private institutions in Playas. Specifically, this study focuses on exploring how participants adapt their methodologies to achieve the goal of enhancing English language acquisition among their students, considering the various limitations and resource scarcity these teachers face in the private institutions where they work. Therefore, this investigation relies on descriptive data to explore the experiences lived by the interviewees. (Frain, 2025).

Design and Type of Research

This research project uses a phenomenological design, an approach suitable for exploring and describing the shared experiences among educators regarding a specific problem.

Particularly, this study investigates the adaptation of gamification to motivate young learners of English as a foreign language. According to Moustakas (1994), the goal of this research is to understand the shared individual experiences of a phenomenon and to allow the description of common experiences with the same essence. In this study, the participant's perceptions compile the shared challenges and successes of teachers who adapt gamification in a context of limited resources. Through this lens, the investigation analyzes how teachers in private institutions experience, perceive, and navigate the hurdles of instruction within challenging educational environments (Tiwari et al., 2025).

Population and Sample

The selection for this qualitative study follows a non-probabilistic, purposive sampling method. This study consists of five English teachers. Furthermore, according to Creswell (2013), it aligns with the suggested approach for phenomenological studies. These types of samples typically include three to ten participants per investigation. This is done to explore the common experiences shared by the teachers in the sample. The context in which the study takes place is private schools located in Playas, Ecuador. The criteria for selecting the teachers are based on their shared understanding of the problem under investigation. It seeks to explore the experiences of teachers who use or adapt gamified strategies, methods, or activities to give innovative classes and who face similar limitations in the use or management of the different resources available.

Data Collection Techniques

One On One Interview

The qualitative data for this research project was gathered through individual semi-structured interviews. This technique is well-suited for phenomenological research design. The purpose is to explore the nuances and complexity of personal experiences from the participants'

perspectives. According to Cheron et al. (2022), interviews allow participants to express their interpretation of a phenomenon in which they are involved. Individual dialogue with participants allows the researcher to understand the features that English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers give to their pedagogical practices in their specific institutional contexts.

Instrument

Questionnaire

The instrument used for the semi-structured interviews was a nine-question open-ended questionnaire. In phenomenological qualitative research, this questionnaire is essential because it avoids restricting or limiting participants' responses. Therefore, it encourages the five English as a Foreign Language teachers to provide descriptive, narrative, and detailed explanations of their professional realities and perceptions in Playas. The questions are aimed at exploring the issues surrounding gamification as a method of teaching the English language. A dialogue was conducted with each teacher and recorded in audio. This interactive method ensures that the researcher can request immediate clarification on complex pedagogical responses, providing a complete and authentic qualitative dataset that will be transcribed and analyzed.

Types of Question

According to Fisher (2025), open-ended questions help expand the ideas or perceptions that a phenomenon explores. Because of the structure of these types of questionnaires, participants are encouraged to think about and analyze their own experiences as teachers, contributing to their personal and professional growth. Similarly, the instruments used in this study require open-ended questions to allow for an exploration that broadens the analysis of the perspectives of the teachers in the sample. When responses are allowed to demonstrate the variety of possibilities

within the exploration of a subject of study, much more valuable information is obtained compared to statistical data alone.

Data Collection Processing and Resources

To ensure the proper and ethical collection of information, the process will follow these sequential phases (What, Where, When, How and Why).

Table 1

Data Collection Processing and Resources

Question	Explanation
What?	To get information from teachers
Where?	Elementary schools in Playas
When?	Academic period 2026
How?	By one-on-one interview
What for?	Exploring gamification in English language learning

Note 1: Elements identified for inclusion in the data collection.

Chapter IV

Analysis of Findings

The analysis of the data collection is interpreted in this chapter. The objective was to interview five teachers of English as a foreign language who work in educational institutions in Playas, to explore their perceptions of gamification as a method for teaching English in elementary schools. The purpose of this research is to explore how teachers use gamification to enhance young learners in elementary school to learn English. Considering the most relevant aspects, such as the reasons for choosing this method, and the benefits and limitations of applying this methodology in the classroom. It was explored how educators take advantage of and utilize the possibilities that exist within gamification in the real context of an educational unit.

The interviews provided relevant data on how this method is implemented in different contexts and to meet the diverse needs of children. Furthermore, real-life situations were explored where teachers observed the results of gamifying their lessons. Therefore, the research also investigated what contributions educators could offer to strengthen gamification and increase its potential for success, based on their experiences and perceptions. The most essential data was compiled into five categories that describe the results of the interviews and how these are supported by the authors cited in this study.

Analysis of data from the interview group

Question report.

Table 2

Results from Exploring Gamification in English Language Learning in Elementary School.

CATEGORIES	ANSWERS	AUTHORS
Selection Factors for Gamification versus Traditional Methods	The participants agreed that they chose gamification to avoid traditional methods because they want to prevent classes from becoming repetitive and monotonous; they also highlighted its flexibility. They further indicated that it sparks children's interest and helps them concentrate in class. Not only is it interesting and rewarding for students, but it is also for teachers.	According to Sulemanoski (2022), the reason teachers choose gamification is because there is a trend to replace traditional teaching with methods and strategies that offer greater language immersion, as well as to place the student at the center of education. Similarly, Moreno and Orcera (2024), highlight gamification as a method that offers versatility and flexibility to adapt dynamics in classes.
Teachers' Perceptions of Student Motivation and Participation	The interviewees reported that gamification increases children's participation, encouraging them to speak up and overcome their fear of making mistakes. They also mentioned that the use of interactive activities made them more enthusiastic and willing to cooperate, and that they were motivated by knowing what activities they would be doing.	Reyes (2025), explains in his research that through dynamic strategies, student anxiety was significantly reduced, and she also mentions that class participation increased. Authors like Ismoilova and Abdullayeva (2025), have also pointed out that enthusiasm increases when points or rewards are involved.
Benefits of Gamification in English Language Learning	The educators that participated in the study indicated that the main benefit lies in vocabulary acquisition and word assimilation with visual support such as flashcards. Furthermore, they also agreed	Research by Bolatbek and Tankibayeva (2025), demonstrated that gamified activities strengthen vocabulary retention and improve language skills. On the other hand, Ortiqova (2025) mention that the use of

	that complex grammatical topics can be transformed into interactive activities, making the information process more enjoyable for children.	visual supports responds to the principles of differentiated instruction. The authors affirm that in this way different needs can be met in classes and inclusion is promoted.
Gamification and Reward Strategies Applied in the Classroom	Those interviewed for the study agreed that rewards and competition are ways to motivate children to interact. However, they pointed out that there must be a balance in the implementation of these activities so as not to lose sight of the educational purpose of the class or allow children to focus on winning without learning.	Arundhathi and Anitha (2024), concluded that a balance must be struck between the educational purpose of the lesson and rewarding students for winning, so as not to lose sight of the true objective. According to the authors, there must also be consistency in the difficulty of the challenges to avoid stress and frustration.
Limitations and Challenges in the Implementation of Gamification	Those interviewed stated that technological resources are insufficient or limited and do not help to improve performance. Furthermore, the educators mentioned that they do not have much time to design activities that meet all the students' needs and that there is a lack of creativity among the teachers and a lack of understanding from parents who prefer more traditional methods in the classroom.	According to González et al. (2025), structural limitations exist within Ecuador's education system that reveal inequality and disparities. This limits students' access to innovative, high-quality education.

Note 2: Data obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted with five teachers of English as a foreign language in schools in Playas that reflect the review of the literature.

The questionnaire consisted of nine questions designed to gather relevant information from the perceptions and experiences of a sample of five teachers of English as a foreign language. The responses were used to develop five categories that analyze the information in a descriptive table. The summary is supported by bibliographic sources that underpin the exploration of the phenomenon shared by educators in private institutions in Playas. The analysis of the categories on how gamification motivates elementary school students to learn English yielded these results.

The first category demonstrated that gamification "helps with students' dynamics", as stated by Interviewee one. Furthermore, it "sustains the attention of the students [...] for a longer time than some traditional methods," as Interviewee two confirms. Not only does it help capture attention and strengthen student participation, but it also reduces boredom, as mentioned by Interviewee four. Finally, Participant five maintains that teaching English "can also be fun" if educators connect the language to the students' interests. In the same way, Participant three adds that using gamified methods "is fun for everyone, both for primary school children and for the teacher."

In the second category the participants concluded that gamification transforms English learning into a "fun, challenging, and meaningful experience," as mentioned by Interviewee four. In addition, the successful use of this methodology strengthens interest because students are always "expectant to know what the teacher will bring" to the classroom, according to Interviewee one. It not only increases student participation but also helps young learners "destress and laugh" while overcoming the fear that speaking a foreign language can sometimes represent, as highlighted by Participant five.

Participant two added that children feel highly motivated when activities are related to "games, challenges, and rewards." This is essential to maintain high intrinsic motivation in learners, which allows for better results in the classroom and at the end of the day they will learn more. Similarly, Participant three mentioned that these types of highly interactive activities serve as an "ally for both the teacher and the children," meaning that traditional barriers to English learning can be overcome.

In the third category, the educators agreed that they acknowledged that gamification "assimilates mostly the vocabulary" as noted by interviewee three, this benefit represents a crucial addition to boosting linguistic skills. Moreover, interviewee four reported that it was evident that there was an open and positive attitude when carrying out activities that allow the student to participate and obtain some recognition or reward. For young learners, it is a relief not to fall into the constant repetition of words; on the contrary, they can achieve the same result by applying interactive and competitive variations to the strategy of memorizing and repeating.

Another important point made by interviewee 1 is that the correct choice of playful materials prevented the children from losing focus and kept them genuinely interested in completing the activity. She noted that her learners "liked to act more, and no longer stayed silent." Finally, the participants added that it is important to break the monotony of the traditional model and highlighted the importance of developing children's skills through effective activities that allow them to address complex topics without the difficulty that the content may have.

Some of the strategies mentioned by the teachers are described in category four, they mention that using activities to stimulate children's participation also helps to retain their attention, this is beneficial because children tend to get distracted easily. Teacher one highlighted that promoting group work is a strategy used in her classes, while teacher two mentioned that she

practices activities that include points or completing missions, such as treasure hunts, and also noted that she relies on audiovisual resources such as flashcards. Finally, interviewee three added that she works with bingos, group work with challenges, rewards store or allow them to go to recess early, in addition to using websites specializing in gamification such as Kahoot.

As interviewee five also stated, the possibility of relying on technological resources allows students to escape the stress that learning a foreign language can cause. He emphasized the importance of getting to know the students in order to create activities that meet their expectations and needs. He gave an example of how he leveraged his students' interest in social media to create a task related to the English subject. Similarly, interviewee four pointed out that the activities should be in accordance with the ages and abilities of the children in order to keep pace with their learning level.

The last category of the topic Exploring Gamification in English Language Learning in Elementary School, found that the lack of time to design gamified activities was a common limitation among the interview participants. The teachers emphasized that they do not always have the time to find or create activities within the classroom to avoid resorting to traditional methods. This is echoed by interviewees three, two, and one, who added that they haven't received enough support and understanding from parents for this methodology, even asking why the children weren't completing notebooks as is typical in other subjects, as noted by Participant three. Interviewee 4 also expressed that the ages of the children should be considered when choosing activities, an idea that is also shared by participant 5.

Another significant challenge shared by four of the educators in the sample is the lack of financial resources to implement activities requiring teaching materials unavailable at school. For this reason, if teachers wish to offer alternative rewards, they consider whether they can afford

the expense. Finally, another important aspect highlighted by the educators is changing children's mindsets. The teachers expressed that it's common for young learners to think they cannot learn English or that they don't even like or are interested in the subject. The challenge they share is trying to engage them in learning through this innovative methodology.

Chapter V

Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusions of the research project Exploring Gamification in English Language Learning in Elementary School. The purpose of this study was to gather the perceptions of educators who teach English to young learners through gamification in private schools in Playas. The interviews also provided data on the benefits of this methodology, and the limitations teachers face in using it effectively within their lesson plans. In addition, it was explored how gamification enhances the motivation to learn English according to the five participants in the sample.

Conclusions

In accordance with the first specific objective and its research question, which aimed to identify the most relevant factors driving teachers of English as a foreign language to choose gamification over traditional methods, this study concludes that the main pedagogical reasons behind this decision are the flexibility to create or use a wide variety of activities, increased student participation in class, and the need for teachers to break the monotony of traditional teaching that is deeply ingrained in the education system.

The results of this study demonstrated that educators regularly seek to move away from repetitive and routine strategies, as gamification allows them to capture and maintain the genuine attention and interest of young students for longer periods. This is leveraged by teachers to foster English immersion. Participants indicated that they sought to create a more student-centered environment that would allow children to find the experience of learning English rewarding, while also making the experience of new or innovative strategies rewarding for the educators themselves.

Regarding the second objective, which analyzed English as a Foreign Language teachers' perception of how this methodology motivates elementary school students, the study concluded that gamification acts as a stimulus that fosters both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in young learners. Teachers perceive the use of game mechanics such as points, rewards, and challenges tailored to their students' skills positively. They highlighted that these mechanics significantly reduce children's anxiety and lessen their fear of making mistakes when interacting in the classroom.

With the support of gamified strategies, they can make children feel more engaged in English acquisition, which is the goal of the educators, considering the challenges of teaching a foreign language. Moreover, this playful environment strengthens classroom interaction, allowing students to feel more confident and participate, speak, and try. Learners maintain high expectations for the new lessons their English teacher will present them, which makes the classes student-centered and motivates young learners to learn.

The results of the third objective and its corresponding specific question, which aimed to describe the benefits of gamification in English classes, showed that this methodology offers significant advantages in vocabulary acquisition, as well as boosting oral skills. The participants mentioned that complex grammatical structures can be transformed into more enjoyable activities for both students and educators, with the added benefit of not presenting these topics as tedious or boring. They added that the use of visual resources such as flashcards and interactive tools allows for adaptation to the different learning needs of each classroom. It was also highlighted that gamification fosters educational inclusion, which is another goal that teachers seek to achieve.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the results of this qualitative study, which had a sample of five teachers of English as a foreign language in private educational institutions in Playas, several recommendations emerged for the educational community, including school authorities, teachers and parents. The aim is to provide relevant information so that gamification can become a method that strengthens student and teacher engagement, making foreign language learning a pleasant, meaningful, and effective experience.

To school administrators and private educational institutions in Playas, it is recommended to adapt teachers' workload hours so that space can be opened for educators to look for, design, and modify gamified activities to be carried out in the classrooms, keeping in mind that the idea is not to overload teachers with work but to allow them to use their time efficiently and focused on promoting innovative methods to foster the acquisition of the English language.

For teachers of English as a foreign language, it is important to motivate students so that they can feel less anxious and more engaged, but gamified methods must be administered in a way that does not promote a lack of concentration in young learners. The recommendation is to maintain a balance between gamification and the objectives of the lesson in class, in order to prevent young students from prioritizing winning the reward over the true educational purpose of the lesson. Teacher training is also recommended so that they can create activities that do not require many resources and not be stopped by that limitation, for example using bingo, group dynamics, challenges or treasure hunts.

Schools should provide more information to the educational community and parents, or hold talks at parent-teacher meetings, so they can learn about the benefits of applying innovative and creative methods like gamification. This is crucial to changing the traditional mindset that

learning is only achieved by filling notebooks with notes. Parents' understanding and collaboration in using innovative teaching methods that motivate their children should be encouraged.

In conclusion, this qualitative study explored the perceptions of English as a foreign language teachers in private institutions in Playas, who use gamification to motivate the learning of young learners, and it demonstrated that educators choose this methodology because of its flexibility and the diverse ways it can be used in the classroom. Not only does it motivate and captures students' attention, but it also helps children participate and become more involved in learning. Through the benefits of gamification, teachers have sought to move away from the traditional method, despite facing several limitations in its effective application.

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Annexes

Annexe A: Certified Anti-plagiarism System

CERTIFICADO SISTEMA ANTI PLAGIO

En calidad de tutor del Trabajo de Integración Curricular denominado “EXPLORING GAMIFICATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL” elaborado por los estudiantes **Escalante Lázaro Elvis Leonel** de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación e Idiomas, de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, me permito declarar que una vez analizado en el sistema anti plagio COMPILATIO , luego de haber cumplido los requerimientos exigidos de valoración, el presente trabajo de investigación, se encuentra con 6 % de la valoración permitida, por consiguiente se procede a emitir el informe.



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Annexes B: Questionnaire

Question 1: What factors make gamification a preferred teaching method over traditional methods for elementary school students?

Question 2: What is your general perception as a teacher regarding the use of gamification in English language teaching?

Question 3: In your opinion, how can gamification motivate elementary school students to learn English?

Question 4: Could you describe a specific situation in which you have used gamification to motivate your students in the classroom?

Question 5: What strategies do you recommend as an English teacher to motivate students using gamification?

Question 6: What specific benefits have you noticed from using gamification as a teaching method for the English language?

Question 7: What limitations or challenges have you encountered as a teacher when using gamified methods?

Question 8: What do you consider to be the main disadvantages of choosing gamification as a method for teaching English?

Question 9: What needs to change in the educational context to make gamification more effective?

Annexes C: Categories

Selection Factors for Gamification versus Traditional Methods

Teachers' Perceptions of Student Motivation and Participation

Benefits of Gamification in English Language Learning

Gamification and Reward Strategies Applied in the Classroom

Limitations and Challenges in the Implementation of Gamification

Annexes D: Interviews

1. What factors make gamification a preferred teaching method over traditional methods for elementary school students?

Participant 1

Well, this technique that is here helps us with what has to do with the dynamics of the kids and with maintaining what is attention and keeping them more concentrated during a class hour, right? and we even awaken interest in the topic that is going to be covered on that day, this right here is going to boost what is motivation in them and we are going to reach the student.

Participant 2

Well, I consider that gamification, evidently, catches the attention of the little ones, of the students. Why? Because that way it converts learning into a fun and participative experience. And in the area of initial education, the strategy to teach the little ones is through play and work, the methodology. So the children this way feel motivated when they learn through games, also challenges, and we can also include rewards there, which favors their interest, and well, that way maintains the students' attention during some prolonged time, and well, above all as indicated in the initial question, for more time than some of the traditional methods.

Participant 3

Well, I think that gamification for everyone is fun, as much for primary children as for the teacher. One also has fun because since you have to share, explain to the children what they have to do and then see how they do it many times it is fun and funny. Because at the same time we go learning, right? I think that through play the children also have like an immediate response and assimilate much more than everything vocabulary. In the case of the traditional method it is like more repetitive and many times it does cost to change the chip from the repetitive, sometimes because of the context, sometimes because of the parents or sometimes simply because since one has been, they have taught you perhaps in that way, it costs many times to make certain changes

Participant 4

Students feel motivated when learning through games, challenges, rewards, and interactive activities, in what interests increase and reduce boredom. In itself, gamification favors the active participation of students.

Participant 5

Well, mainly we must understand that the English language, because we are talking purely about the English language, is a language that is not practiced at home by the students many times they only practice or speak English in the classrooms. This means that when we teachers work in English with them, many times they tend to get bored, many times they tend to think that the language is difficult. And I think that this method of gamification helps exactly that, right? For the students to realize that the language can also be fun, it can also be interesting, and mainly it can be linked to the interests of each one of them.

2. What is your general perception as a teacher regarding the use of gamification in English language teaching?

Participant 1

Well, it catches my attention a lot because it has been evidenced that students through flashcards or through games, apart from catching their attention, they show interest, they even like to participate more, they don't stay quiet anymore, they don't get distracted maybe talking to the other classmate, but instead they are waiting to see what the teacher is going to use that day in class and they are going to be totally interested, since through all these rewards that are also given to the students, they are going to be trying to stay concentrated to get them, right?

Participant 2

Well, my perception evidently is positive, since gamification allows the little ones to approach the English language in this way. If it is true, in the prioritized initial education curriculum, with which we have been working since last year, and actually never is, the area of English as a field is not there. However, there are certain skills in which teachers, in the case of initial and preparatory, well, we implement them. And this way well, it approaches the student in a more natural and also dynamic way, as I mentioned before, through games, songs, interactive activities, well, that propitiate learning in a more autonomous way, and at the same time approaching the little ones with greater enthusiasm, and so at the same time they lose the fear of making mistakes.

Participant 3

Like I told you a while ago, sometimes it is challenging because many of us I think we come with the type of traditional education that they gave us before, so adapting now and using

gamification and other methodologies is very cool even for us, as I mentioned, but sometimes it usually is a bit complicated, that is why at the same time we go learning. Many of the children see English in itself already as something difficult, sometimes even children come from different schools to "Semillero" who are afraid to participate because in their old schools they were mocked or they were laughed at, so that is something like that I avoid doing and I avoid that the children also do and I try like to involve them more, play, songs, look for diverse strategies and sometimes it is even our turn to assemble the games so that they can like perceive much better English and make them like it.

Participant 4

Well, in itself, my general perception about the use of gamification of teaching the English language is very positive. I have verified that, that methodology increases the interest and participation of students.

Participant 5

In a general way it is a method, it is a very interesting methodology, very striking, mainly now that we are with this of artificial intelligence, that the kids are with the boom of TikTok, in all this type of applications there are games that can be linked directly to the English language. So, I think me that it is interesting and goes hand in hand with what we are currently living.

3. In your opinion, how can gamification motivate elementary school students to learn English?

Participant 1

How does it motivate them? Well, it helps them since they learn more through the visual method, right? And so the little ones most of all, they maybe by seeing a flashcard, for example,

from EducaPlay, from games, things like that, then they are going to see and use, for example, the flashcard with the learned language, right? **** And they are going to be able to use it in a class, even with little classmates. For example, if at some point they want to carry out what are game strategies with numbers, they, through the two flashcards they have or that the teacher uses, are going to be using them not only maybe in the game, in classes, but also in games already, maybe during recesses because it has caught their attention and they have liked this method, they can also use it beyond a class.

Participant 2

Very well. Gamification motivates, because this way it transforms learning into a, into a more pleasant experience. Students feel curiosity to participate in the different activities planned in advance. Well also, as I mentioned in the previous question, like certain types of rewards, they feel motivated in winning points or completing missions. While well, well, they go learning vocabulary, pronunciation, expressions in English, feeling that they are performing a task somehow difficult, but we as teachers must plan these activities in a more dynamic and fun way so that the little ones can learn.

Participant 3

Yeah, I think that one of the ways to be able to motivate them, is that they can among themselves, themselves like they compete and children like to compete, they love to compete and many times to win they look to do it in the best way. Then we can if we can evaluate the level of knowledge acquired in a class where they are going to have to be seated, only copying, copying and a class where everything is more dynamic, where everything is more moving; between the two classes where they are going to acquire more knowledge, greater vocabulary, perhaps a better structure in grammar, it is going to be in the funner class and since it is something fun for

them it is not going to be forgotten by them, rather they are always going to have present that class.

Participant 4

Well, in my opinion, in itself, gamification motivates primary school students to learn English because it transforms learning from a fun, challenging, and meaningful experience for each one of them.

Participant 5

Well, it can motivate them exactly as I mentioned at the beginning. The students well have the possibility to discover, to learn and to immerse themselves in the language through games, through situations in which well it causes them laughter, causes them fun and mainly de-stresses them. Because many times it happens that although they are very little well the English class arrives and they say we are going to speak English. Many times well yes, they tend to not understand the teacher because many times there are teachers who do not modulate this of speaking English and Spanish with the students. So well for the kids it tends to be very tedious and very boring, but when we involve games, we involve interactions and mainly we manage to connect with the kids through that well I think it results in an interesting methodology.

4. Could you describe a specific situation in which you have used gamification to motivate your students in the classroom?

Participant 1

Yes, regarding that, one sees, for example, that one acquires good experiences, since all these mechanisms that one applies within the educational environment, we boost what is motivation and concentration, and through this, through this right here, we are witnessing that

they are acquiring the learning, since they are like a little sponge and they absorb everything, most of all through the visual method.

Participant 2

Yes. Well, since one works with little ones, we must look for playful, participative, innovative activities. It comes to my mind an activity related to colors in English, the basic colors, yellow, blue, red, and there we go to the secondary colors. But we, through playful activities, for example, I did an activity about two short weeks ago around there about an activity about treasure hunt inside the classroom, well, that the little ones should find objects of the color that is indicated. For example, I mentioned to them the color yellow, then we all must search for some object that has that color yellow. This activity well, in some way allowed them to learn by playing, stay active, and reinforce learning, the vocabulary in a more meaningful way. As I indicated before, we must look for playful strategies, strategies that incentivize the little ones to participate in a way and learn, above all in a fun way, not in a traditional way.

Participant 3

I remember that in my experience, something I did ago, last year was with the seventh-grade students, we are seeing verbs and so I looked for like what ways to make it not be for them tedious to learn the verbs in present, past and participle, so what I did was create bingos, I created bingos of the verbs and in one class we said today we are going to play bingo, I asked cooperation from certain parents to help me with candies and that way we did bingos, in others we did, we assembled groups and likewise like I gave them and told them among you, you are going to have to form or write sentences in past about your childhood, one sentence for each one, there was a leader, they had the vocabulary already, they had been given a little sheet and like that, they had images and it was like that the group that finished first won so many points, the

group that had the sentences let's say better structured won so many points, the group that shared them won so many points, so the class was like very dynamic and they right now are eighth and it is something that they always have present, they tell me do you remember when we did such a thing, so I think that that motivates a lot the students, also another of the tools digital I have used has been kahoot, which they love and always tell me now in this new year teacher when do you send us a kahoot, teacher when do we compete, teacher when do we do this, so it is something that they fascinate and something that stays marked in their life and not only in their life but that that has allowed them to acquire knowledge that when we already see something related to the topic we saw a previous year, it makes it much easier for them to assimilate it and much easier to understand it, even speak it.

Participant 4

Incorporating activities based on games, challenges, dynamics, where students show a greater interest in learning and this improves attention. In itself, also performing activities with little cards of animals, in which I have realized that students show greater interest because they increase greater learning for them.

Participant 5

Well, I tell you my experience. Well, currently well I work with kids a little bit bigger than primary, in this case well from secondary. And well, I work with kids of ninth of basic. These kids of ninth of basic well the course I have is a course a little bit euphoric. They are kids that well, well that get up, that are a little bit noisy. So they are kids that get bored many times easily. So this was happening to me that yes, the classes were getting a little bit heavy for me and I decided to work a kahoot with them, a simple kahoot, a very well-known activity, very easy to perform. And precisely today I take them to the lab. And we worked the Kahoot focused well on

the verb to be, which we are currently seeing, right? And believe me **they changed totally**. After they arrived, well, we arrived at the course, **they were very quiet, they were de-stressed**, they were quiet. It was like **they had left the routine, they had left the normal**. So **that is one of the benefits of gamification**, right? **It helps students** to exactly that, **to leave the routine, to leave the normal**, to leave the daily life and mainly well **to realize that English can also be fun**. And with little children I have also worked with kids of elementary basic, middle basic, in the same way, yes? With them well **I used to work activities like find the treasure**, I mean with them **they must be activities a little bit more elaborate by the teacher**, because if you take them to a lab to play Kahoot, they are not going to play a Kahoot, right? **But well with them they must be activities a little bit more elaborate, more created, more thought out by the teacher**. So like **find the treasure, say the little word, pronounce**. For example, the treasure turns out to be **a little card that they have to pronounce the vocabulary** that we are seeing and little things like that. **It catches a lot the attention of the kids**, right?

5. What strategies do you recommend as an English teacher to motivate students using gamification?

Participant 1

What do I recommend? **I would recommend** what are, for example, maybe, for example, it could be **dynamic games** in which they could **work in groups** as if to let them loose more, and to awaken them more regarding this language, because in groups they have like that **freedom to be debating** a topic and thinking about what it could be about that topic, well, what is being covered.

Participant 2

The institution has audiovisual resources, currently I work in the area of initial education, four or five years old, so I count with the resource of a TV. It is also recommended to use songs with movements, memory games, search for flashcards, as we mention, of the images, symbolic rewards, dynamics that also all the little ones participate, group dynamics, simple challenges, and interactive technological resources. The most important thing is to adapt all these activities to the age of the little ones and above all to the needs of each one of the students.

Participant 3

Something that I do and use a lot is points, they win points, it seems something simple but it really works, because already when they have to exchange them, many times they exchange them they in activities or homework or let's say an evaluation that didn't go very well for them because they didn't study and they exchange it, on other occasions I have made like a little shop, so the points usually are in bills, I have given them like bills that represent a point and in the little shop they can claim the candy that they want according to the cost that the candy or the object has, also it is like to challenge them, always challenge them, something that I always tell them, as I mentioned before, there are new children and they come with the mindset I can't and I don't know and I am not going to do it. So like what I do is challenge them and I tell them, you yes can, this week is the topic and this week we are going to achieve such a thing, so in the end they achieve it, they can achieve it and already the child that before said I can't or it makes it difficult for me, asks and says, ah this has been easy, I have been able to understand it, I have been able to perform it. Also many times when they perform the activity and like everyone has worked and like that and we have, let's say it's my turn before recess I tell them well today we are going to go down some five minutes before because we have earned it, with the little little children what we do is also like sing, we finish, well we are going to sing or we are going to do

such game, in the past week we saw body parts, so I taught them through songs, then we did activities and then we did the game Yadira says, which is like Simon says, but since I am Yadira I say Yadira says, and they delighted, even I took a lesson from them yesterday and for many of them it made it super easy, I mean super easy, among themselves themselves they helped each other, among themselves themselves it was I want you to take mine, I want you to take my lesson, because it works, it works very much so like to recognize them, encourage them, give them points, give them like those spaces of you have earned five minutes before recess so that you snack, or they have five minutes free, helps them a lot and really serves them because it motivates them, that seems insignificant but it motivates them.

Participant 4

Use strategies according to the age of the students, the interests, and the level of learning. Basing challenges in which each one must use the language to solve problems and complete the designated tasks.

Participant 5

Well, one of the strategies is exactly that. Know and understand the preferences of your students. Know what they like, know their hobbies, know a little bit more about them. I think that you knowing them can apply a gamified method in a correct way. Why? Because you are going to focus on their interests. For example, I had a course that they liked social networks. I had a course of boys, of girls, that liked a lot to make videos on TikTok. And one day we did an activity with those little TikTok games that there are, if you have realized. Those little games that you play. But obviously always focused on the subject. So that, know mainly your students. Apply creativity in a correct way, in a precise way with them. Expand the ideas. If you, for example, find an interesting gamified activity, you can expand it correctly and apply more things

in that idea. You have a student that, for example, is a leader. This boy is going to do this. That is to expand a little bit more the idea, basically.

6. What specific benefits have you noticed from using gamification as a teaching method for the English language?

Participant 1

The benefits that I see is that they learn more and, for example, more of what is about a topic stays with them, if they are learning, for example, the parts of a house, from the greetings, they, through these learning sheets already or the didactic resource that the teacher uses, they learn more in a more concrete way.

Participant 2

Well, as I mentioned it in the previous question, if it is true, each group of students has some type of... Each student has their needs, as such, right? So I have observed that through the activities and starting from the group with which I am currently working, the planned activities, well, I have observed an increase in participation, motivation, and also the interest in learning. Also, I have noticed a better retention also of vocabulary, we are we with the greetings in English, also with the colors in English, and well, greater interaction between peers and a learning environment also well, more positive and above all pleasant.

Participant 3

I think that one of them is participation, there is more participation, also they no longer have so much fear of making mistakes, they lose like the dread that someone tells them, that is wrong or no, like that it is not, but rather many times I motivate them and tell them, it is fine that you make mistakes, I mean it is normal that you make a mistake, because that way we realize

that we have to improve and even among them it is not that they mock, they don't mock the classmate nor tell him "you don't know" but rather they help each other, so that is very pretty and also helps them a lot to retain vocabulary, they can remember much more easy the vocabulary acquired in the class where a game has been implemented, than the vocabulary that many times we tell them, let's go today to copy it, but rather it is easier, they acquire it through the game.

Participant 4

The increase of motivation and interest of students to participate in class activities when learning is presented through games and challenges, where students show a positive attitude.

Participant 5

I mean, one of the benefits is that it helps you connect with the students, yes? You connect directly with them, right? You manage to get good things out of them, yes? You manage so they don't get bored, you manage so they leave the daily routine, you manage so they de-stress like the example I put before, you achieve many things with them. And mainly, well, you are doing something that they like, which is to play, yes? They think that the language is only to read, only to pronounce, only to speak English. But well, they realize that, well, you can also play. And beyond this, well, this helps you, I mean as a teacher, helps other teachers to apply gamification, not only in the English language, it can be applied in any other subject. So sharing these ideas with the other teachers, well, impulses that the method or the methodology of gamification is a little bit more used and more effective, logically.

7. What limitations or challenges have you encountered as a teacher when using gamified methods?

Participant 1

Regarding that, I have found, for example, limitations as a teacher that sometimes due to the time factor, maybe at the moment of planning a class, perhaps we don't have maybe the material, be it of the resources that we are going to want to use. **** We might have plenty of ideas, but sometimes what we are limited by is the budget and the material with which we are going to want to work with the kids. Apart from the fact that, for example, if it's flashcards and we want to work with a reduced group, it's going to be much better. But if it's a quite large group, well, there we have that disadvantage, because it would take us more time and even what is this material. And in a hypothetical case, if it happens monetarily, it would also lend itself to that.

Participant 2

Well, I think that one of the main challenges is the planning. Why? Because since these activities, if it is true, and you also must already know a bit, since in the internships you had to perform the planning, and therefore, these activities require time and preparation. Also, it can be complicated to maintain the balance between the game and the learning objectives, since it must be ensured that the activities do not lose their educational purpose.

Participant 3

One of the challenges I think I, or limitations, many times in our context, for example, in the school where I work, there are many parents like that say, why don't they have so much in the English notebook? Why do they have little? Then like they want that the children fill a notebook during the year, just like they fill the language notebook, math and like that. And it has been my turn like to me in the meetings explain to them and tell them, no look, this is the way to work, this we are doing with the children, this I expect from you, so that they can understand that many times a lot of written word bores them and in the end they end up hating English and that is what I don't want. Also other limitations is that many times inside the class, since the children are very

noisy and start to laugh and like that, yes there are like certain colleagues that say, what are they doing? why is there no control in the class? Then like sometimes there is that limit that perhaps someone who is outside listening doesn't like it because there is a lot of noise and they think that there is no control. And on the other side also it is inside the classroom, at least to the tiniest ones, learn them to control in the game, during the game and teach them also that it is fine if suddenly you didn't win a candy or something like that, it is fine. Because many children come like from the house with the fear that if I do something wrong my mom is going to hit me, if I don't win my mom is going to hit me, so like to teach them also that, it is fine to win and lose, it is because in the end we end up learning something. Then I think that that has been like limitations and challenges that in a personal way have presented themselves to me and another also I think me plan the games, because it is not common to see classes or see teachers that perform games inside their subject, so to speak. Then when there is certain topic it is like that I say lord or god I want that the children understand this topic but I want it, it is complex but I want them to understand it in a much easier way. What can I create? What can I do? Then I start to investigate based perhaps on other subjects or on things that to them catch their attention and there I create the game. And yes many times it takes time because one has to create it, analyze it, look for the rules and then implement it. That I think would be challenges and limitations.

Participant 4

Preparing materials, establishing rules, and organizing the dynamic demands more time than a traditional class. Technological resources, because not all institutions count with access to devices or access to the internet.

Participant 5

Well, the challenges, as I tell you, many times correspond to the topic of age, yes? Like I put the example, if they are little children, you cannot apply a gamified methodology with technological resources. For example, as I tell you, you take them to the computer, many times they don't know much, right? So in that aspect, well, it's the teacher's turn to be creative and many times there are teachers who are not creative. That is a great limitation, yes? There are teachers who are not creative, there are teachers who simply, well, base themselves on the planning, copy, paste and execute, copy, paste and execute. So that is a disadvantage for usually, it could be a disadvantage for certain teachers, yes? Who forget that we are working with people and personalities. So the first thing that you as a teacher must do is know the group that you have, yes? Know the group that you have, know their limits, know how far they can arrive and based on that, well, you apply what the course or the students need. So that can be a limitation many times, well, the lack of creativity of some teachers, the age of the students, mainly that.

8. What do you consider to be the main disadvantages of choosing gamification as a method for teaching English?

Participant 1

Well, the disadvantages that I see here that, for example, could be maybe perhaps for other subjects. That perhaps the kids like English more, because the teacher is maybe using what is gamification. And perhaps other teachers of mathematics and language, they don't use it. So, we can have that disadvantage that the student prefers maybe a class hour of another subject over the following subjects that are also important, right?

Participant 2

Well, I consider that a possible disadvantage is that some of the little ones might focus more on the reward than on the learning. Furthermore, not all institutions have the necessary

technological resources to implement certain gamified activities. Therefore, I consider that it is important to always adapt to the environment in which we work and with the group of students with whom we are going to work the planned activities.

Participant 3

Well, I mentioned it a short bit ago is that many children come like with that chip of I have to win yes or yes and if I lose it is wrong and I cry I want to win and at home the smallest ones leave even to do like tantrums and fits. Then there is where one has like to know how to dominate the situation and teach the child that losing or winning is fine. The important thing is to learn. Then that I think is a challenge and right this year a case of a child has presented itself to me that likewise if it doesn't turn out perfect he starts to cry. So like these weeks, recently we have I think two months already in the school period and it has been my turn to teach him and speak to him. Sometimes we are going to lose, but the important thing is to learn. The next time you are going to do it much better and you are already going to see. Then I think that that is a disadvantage inside the classroom.

Participant 4

In that, a very careful planning is required, motivating activities and at the same time that they fulfill the learning objectives, demand of time, creativity, and preparation.

Participant 5

Yes, as I tell you no, exactly that, yes. I think that in gamification the lack of creativity is a point, a point against. Another of the points against, for example, is that you know that we as teachers work with many courses, not only with one course, we work with many and many times for us the time factor plays against us. And, for example, I love to do kahoot, but sometimes

there is no time to execute the Kahoots, yes. There is no time to put the questions and, as I tell you, focus the questions to what the students know. Yes, because, for example, if the students you are teaching them the affirmative verb to be, you are not going to, you are not going to bring out a Kahoot copied from internet where activities of the interrogative or negative verb to be are put for them. So there you are going against, right? So what is your turn? Well to type many times the question and look only for the topic that you are applying based on what you are teaching. Many times the time factor plays against us as teachers. There is no time to execute the kahoot. Many times we are creative, but many times the time does not give us exactly to be able to put that creativity on the table, because we are teachers and we don't only give classes. Many times well we are in departments, we are in activities, we have extracurricular activities. So this is a great disadvantage to put, to carry out gamification. And remember that if you don't guide an activity correctly, it is of no use. Yes, of nothing is it useful to bring a very pretty activity, bring a well-made Kahoot, bring a playful activity with the students, if it is not well thought out and focused. If you simply right now took from the morning, at six in the morning you got up and copied an activity from internet and you say this I am going to do. If it is not well thought out, it doesn't work. It is 45 wasted minutes.

9. What needs to change in the educational context to make gamification more effective?

Participant 1

Well, what would need to change is, the contribution could be on behalf of the parent, right? Because we have to have it clear that the student doesn't only stay with the learning strictly from school, but also at home it is reinforced. And it would be very, very important to, to have the commitment maybe of the parent, explain to them about this, this learning technique to get

their support and have a, a closer bond and a much more certain learning experience with the students.

Participant 2

Well, if it is true, I consider that it is important to provide training to teachers on gamified strategies. At the same time also to have adequate resources and promote active methodologies within the educational institutions. This way, I consider that gamification can be implemented in a more effective way and well this, evidently, is going to benefit the learning of each one of the students.

Participant 3

I think training for the students who are profiling themselves to be English teachers and also training for the English teachers. Why? Because when one is in the university it is like they present to us, let's do such, such thing is going to be done or gamification exists and like that and like they present it to us and you have to create such game and like that. But never like we implement it or only one and with certain students that can be managed, but it is not taken to a real context, a context where perhaps there are 40 children, 45, which is what occurs in the public school area, or where there are children with needs. Then like a training that takes us to work in a real context where we can implement games. Also I have had like a clash with the curriculum, with the national curriculum, because there are many, I feel me that it is like there are many, many, many clauses and many things that you can, that you must, many things that you must fulfill according to the curriculum and that doesn't give you enough time as to work in a more interactive way with the student. At least we we handle ourselves with books. Then it is like we have to finish the book in the year and sometimes in my case I yes take certain time to talk about certain topics because they are crucial and important that they learn it well, assimilate

it well and can speak it. That is the challenge that I have also now, of that I want them to speak it because many of them understand it, do it perfect, write it. You them, you tell them explain to me and they explain it to you, but **at the moment of speaking it it costs them** and sometimes because of **the limited time** we have we unfocus from any area. It can be listening, it can be speaking, it can be writing, reading, from **one of those areas like we leave them aside**. Then **I think that that also needs to change**. **The institutional resources** also, many times **we don't count with certain materials that are needed**, more than anything in the English area, which is where we have to present songs, do games and right **now technology is very necessary**, project to them also like challenges and like that. Then yes **it is very complex** and sometimes **it takes time to write it** because sometimes they like they are waiting or many of them already get restless because one has to write what we are going to do and explain to them and like that. And also I think it is like **to change the type of mindset** that **many teachers see like the game a waste of time or interactive activities as a waste of time**, when really that is an ally for us and an ally for the children. I think that that, **gamification is something that helps the teacher and helps the student** and it is very good that we are taught to implement it like in depth inside a classroom.

Participant 4

Strengthen the training to the teacher, education and practice to design activities, objective and curricular activities and to the needs of the students, teaching resources, and advance technology a bit.

Participant 5

We need exactly to change. **We need mainly to understand that we live in a country where English is not spoken.** We live in a country that 90% of people speak Spanish. So, **understand also that there are certain families, certain cultures that share ideas a little bit closed**

with respect to the English language. I put an example for you. For example, you well know that we work over here in Playas. So here the language is a little bit very low with respect to the students. The majority of families do not dominate correctly the English language. So many students go with the idea that they are not going to learn English. They go with the idea that they will never be able to learn English. Why? Because their dad or their mom told them that they didn't learn and that it is difficult. And they go in their little head that the English language is difficult. They carry that in their little head and you as a teacher it's your turn to take that out of their head, that English is difficult. And how do you do it? Well that exactly, with gamification. So understanding the context where you are, you can apply a good method of gamification taking it out of the head of the students that yes you can. And not only telling them, but demonstrating it to them. How is it demonstrated to them? That's why gamification is a very good methodology that serves you to be able to remove the chip of that type of students. And not only in the context of us, a context at a national level. The English language here in Ecuador is very low. We have the rate of high school graduates with the lowest English level. So gamification helps you a lot in that aspect.