



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

**“UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT
GAMIFICATION IN VOCABULARY LEARNING”**

RESEARCH PROJECT

As a prerequisite to obtain a:

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

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La Libertad, November 28th, 2024.

Advisor's Approval

In my role as Advisor of the research paper entitled "**UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT GAMIFICATION IN VOCABULARY LEARNING**" prepared by **Mora Meza Morely Marian** and **Tomalá Morales Karina Paola** undergraduate students of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Major, at the School of Educational Sciences and Languages at Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena, I declare that after oriented, studied and reviewed the project, I approve it in its entirety, because it meets the requirements and is sufficient for its submission to the evaluation of the academic tribunal.

Sincerely,



Vergara Mendoza Ketty Zoraida, Msc.

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Statement of Authorship

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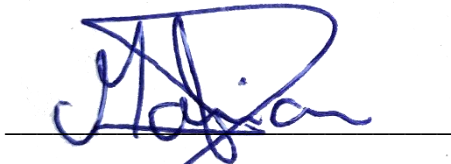
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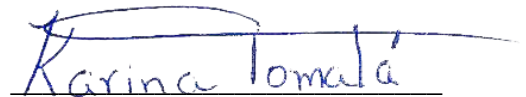
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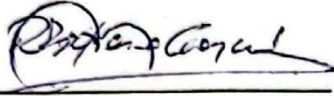
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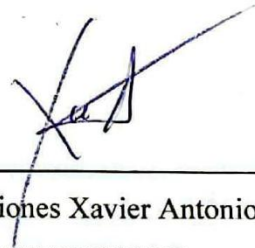
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To my mother Tulmira Meza Cevallos, who has helped me continue with my studies, working hard every day to support me financially and morally in this difficult process. She is an intelligent, brave, and fighter woman, who inspires me to continue.

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Dedication I

I dedicate this research project to my Lord Jesus Christ, who teaches every day the value of forgiving, loving and living. Who shows me his unconditional love daily. I also dedicate this research project to my mother Tulmira Meza Cevallos, who has been a fundamental pillar in my university process, who supported me in my worst moment and encouraged me to continue. She always believes in my potential and my value; she shows me that life is not easy but that it is worth living.

Dedication II

I dedicate this research project to my dear and beloved parents, Luis Tomalá Bazán and Noralma Morales Tomalá, who have tirelessly fought by my side to ensure I obtain a third-level academic degree. This achievement is as much theirs as it is mine, as their love, sacrifice, and dedication have been fundamental at every step I have taken. I want them to know that, finally, all the effort they have invested in me over the years has borne fruit. Every step we took together, with discipline, constant effort, and unconditional love. This achievement is a reflection of everything they have taught me and their unwavering faith in me.

Abstract

This study investigated university students' perceptions of gamification tools in vocabulary learning within English language education. Focusing on digital tools like Wordwall, Quizizz, Kahoot, and Educaplay, it highlighted how gamification enhanced engagement, motivation, and vocabulary retention. Through qualitative research, including interviews with students from the Pedagogy in Foreign and National Languages primary at Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena, the study revealed positive views on gamification's role in making learning interactive and enjoyable. Even with problems like distractions, internet issues, and noise during group work, the benefits outweighed the drawbacks. To make it work well, classroom rules were set to reduce noise, specific roles were assigned during group work to aid communication, and a reliable internet connection was ensured for online activities. The research concluded that gamification was a valuable strategy for vocabulary acquisition in English language learning.

Key Words: Gamification, Vocabulary learning, Digital tools, Motivation.

Resumen

Este estudio investigó las percepciones de los estudiantes universitarios sobre las herramientas de gamificación en el aprendizaje de vocabulario dentro de la educación en el idioma inglés. Centrándose en herramientas digitales como Wordwall, Quizizz, Kahoot y Educaplay, se destacó cómo la gamificación mejoraba la participación, la motivación y la retención del vocabulario. A través de una investigación cualitativa, que incluyó entrevistas con estudiantes de la carrera de Pedagogía en Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, el estudio reveló opiniones positivas sobre el papel de la gamificación en hacer el aprendizaje más interactivo y agradable. Incluso con problemas como distracciones, problemas de conexión a internet y ruido durante el trabajo en grupo, los aspectos positivos superaron a los negativos. Para que funcionara correctamente, se recomendó establecer reglas en el aula para reducir el ruido, asignar un trabajo específico a cada persona durante el trabajo en grupo para mejorar la comunicación y asegurar una buena conexión a internet para las actividades en línea. La investigación concluyó que la gamificación era una estrategia valiosa para la adquisición de vocabulario en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés.

Palabras clave: Gamificación, Aprendizaje de vocabulario, Herramientas digitales, Motivación.

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Introduction

In recent years, the implementation of strategies that incorporate game elements has played a crucial role in Education. In the digital era, a learning strategy such as gamification has emerged as a nontraditional way to learn English, which increases motivation levels in the classroom and engages learners in the learning process.

Gamification incorporates rewards, competition, and challenges that transform learning into an enjoyable and interactive process. This research project aims to investigate the university students' perceptions regarding the use of Gamification in vocabulary learning.

The acquisition of vocabulary is an important aspect of language learning. In some cases, learning vocabulary can be boring, complex, and tedious. For that reason, implementing learning strategies such as Gamification can offer a possible solution to improve learners' lexical skills. This study explored how the use of Gamification can impact and influence students' perceptions from their experiences using digital tools to learn vocabulary. By understanding the learners' perspectives, teachers can gain relevant information about the effectiveness of Gamification and its validity as a strategy to learn English vocabulary.

Chapter I: The Problem

Research Topic

Gamification - Vocabulary

Title of the project

University Students` Perceptions of Gamification in Vocabulary Learning

Problem Statement

Currently, English is known as an international language spoken in different corners of the world. Almost one billion people speak and understand English in countries such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and other countries that use it as their first or secondary language (Ilyosovna, 2020).

Every day, the number of people who learn English is increasing, and it is essential to consider the relevance of this lingua franca to global communication. Communication plays a vital role in each person's daily life, guaranteeing society's development (Quispe, 2020). This means that communication is vital in any field because it is the base of building good human relationships. For instance, when a person is learning English as a second language, developing skills is crucial to ensuring effective communication.

For academic and professional opportunities, mastering English, especially for university students from any major who are completing their studies at higher school, contributes more success in their work and personal development. When university students learn English, they have many chances to have an excellent job in the future, not only in their countries but also in foreign countries where companies require employees with English skills. Another favorable thing for university students is that they can teach English to other people who require private tutor services, and in this way, they have an extra economic outcome. Learning a second

language in the modern world improves university students' lifestyles, giving them better opportunities in all aspects.

On the other hand, according to research done at Universidad Técnica de Babahoyo in Ecuador, it is fundamental that university students who are studying a major in education to be teachers, specifically students from Pedagogy in English majors, must have excellent knowledge and proficiency in English. Educational institutions currently require staff with international English certification (Coello et al., 2021). mentions the value of international certifications in English, which must ensure good job opportunities for future English teachers.

Likewise, an excellent performance in English is linked to the significance of mastering the four English language skills (speaking, writing, listening, and reading). Those skills represent the bases that support the language (Hamudi, 2022). Undoubtedly, future English teachers must have optimal language proficiency and understanding, master each English skill to ensure a suitable work environment and contribute solid teachings to future generations.

University students studying pedagogy in the English language must acquire vocabulary to master each of the English skills. Becoming proficient in English competencies such as conversing, giving oral presentations, writing a letter, or understanding a speech is only possible with vocabulary.

Research in Santa Elena mentions that some students do not know how to improve their vocabulary. This detail can provoke in them many negative emotions such as anxiety, nervousness, frustration, and sadness. Those emotions directly affect their mental health and academic growth (Bailón & Infante, 2023). It emphasizes that vocabulary is the pillar that strengthens speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills, but acquiring vocabulary has its obstacles for university students who have English as a second language.

Furthermore, strategies can be applied to overcome those obstacles; this alternative can help engage university students using non-traditional strategies in vocabulary learning. One of the most explored strategies is Gamification; with this option, students can acquire vocabulary through the use of applications that assess their knowledge through a series of interactive games that measure their English level with a score and rewards, giving them the sense of learning independently, increasing motivation levels in university students (Sadeghi et al., 2022). It assumes that Gamification is a great strategy to encourage students to learn vocabulary in a non-traditional way, adapting the contents to increase class participation.

Justification

The principal motive for conducting this research project is to inquire, recognize, and notice the university student's opinions about the efficacy of using Gamification tools such as Wordwall, Quizizz, Kahoot, and Educaplay to acquire vocabulary in English learning. These gamification tools have become an excellent strategy for learning English. Today, the world is living in a massive wave of digitization, specifically in English language teaching, giving students innovative alternatives to develop linguistic skills.

Nowadays, university students take online classes, and in most cases, they use hybrid modes when teachers integrate digital tools into the language teaching process. An important point to recognize is learners' different perspectives about the use of those tools because it helps to know if Gamification does work in the development and achievement of vocabulary acquisition.

This research provides essential information about university students' different experiences and points of view using Gamification tools because they are the principal individuals who can take advantage of this strategy to obtain results in their academic

performance. Some students can differ in their opinions on whether or not the use of gamification tools can benefit them; it can vary depending on each of their observations during classes.

Digital tools are considered essential in the modern education era to facilitate the learning process (Zamora & Flores, 2023). All the Gamification tools mentioned before are convenient for learners who face daily academic challenges in second language learning. The aim of those tools is to motivate university students by implementing interactive games to catch their attention, strengthen their knowledge, and improve their vocabulary expertise, creating a positive environment in the classroom.

Given these facts, the information from this research project is relevant to providing the different university students' viewpoints about the use of Gamification tools in English learning, specifically for lexical acquisition. Considering all the points discussed, this research could be a reference and a guide for future research about the use of Gamification in vocabulary learning.

Problem questions

General question

What are the university students' perceptions concerning using Gamification as a strategy in vocabulary learning?

Specific questions

- How can Gamification influence university students' class participation in vocabulary learning?
- How effective is the use of Gamification in vocabulary learning?
- How can we deal with barriers to implementing Gamification in vocabulary learning?

Objectives

General Objective

To analyze the use of Gamification tools as a learning vocabulary strategy and identify their influence on learners through exploration based on university students' opinions.

Specific objectives

- To recognize the characteristics and functions of Gamification for English vocabulary learning.
- To explore the different perceptions that university students have about Gamification tools to improve their vocabulary acquisition.
- To explain university students' challenges in implementing Gamification tools to improve their English vocabulary.

Chapter II: Theoretical Framework

Background

Worldwide, in the last four decades, technology has experienced notable development, specifically in the educational field within the learning area, giving teachers and students a set of tools that offer significant uses to assess and evaluate (Li et al., 2023). The evolution of technology has transformed Education and the way of learning because with the use of Gamification, teachers can create lessons according to the styles of learning of students and improve the interaction between students.

According to a literature review done in Algeria, since the Covid-19 pandemic, students from higher Education have undergone changes from traditional classes to online classes; this forced the educators to implement strategies to capture the attention of learners, one of them was Gamification (Khaldi et al., 2023). This highlights the drastic shifts that university students have experienced in the last years in their educational formation and how teachers have worked hard in solving those problems, executing a series of strategies to create a satisfactory digital environment and overcome all the challenges that can arise in the learning process.

A regional study done by an academic researcher and an EFL teacher from Universidad Andres Bello in Santiago - Chile, shows remarkable information about the influence of Gamification on EFL students, especially within the process of vocabulary learning. The results from this study give a broad view of the benefits of using Gamification tools, such as the improvement of active participation in students during activities and also the increase in retention from the use of images (Avila & Fonseca, 2021). This study emphasizes the benefits of gamification in the academic formation of students, not only helping to expand their vocabulary and lexical skills but also creating a competitive attitude in the classroom. Those quantitative

results and qualitative findings supply relevant information that supports how beneficial Gamification can be for English learners in the acquisition of vocabulary.

Similarly, a preliminary study from Ecuador entitled "Fostering English vocabulary learning through gamification strategy," done by university students from Universidad Tecnica de Ambato reveals crucial data about the efficacy of using Gamification in the process of vocabulary learning in university students from Pedagogy of National and Foreign Language major. Data demonstrates that before to implement the Gamification strategy, learners had a basic level in English language, but with the use of a Gamification tool (Duolingo) they improved their level, obtaining an intermediate level (Jordán et al., 2023).

Based on local data, Gamification is applied in the educational area and can be performed with superior English vocabulary skills; this consequently leads to a good working environment, creating good active participation in the classroom (Bernardino, 2022). As a result, that is necessary for the students currently get involved with the gamification, in this way being transitioned digitally adapting it with learners in the second language where you will be able to see it promotes good development for vocabulary in the target language in this way have a good online element.

According to recent studies, gamification has been a foundation for expanding vocabulary, leading to the students' efficiency in a conducive learning environment for different levels of students (Arèvalo, 2022). As noted in this educational field, the new generation currently has an educational system that is more technological. Due to this, Gamification has changed, and it could be adapted to digital natives, considering that it is a principal factor among educational learners.

Gamification in Higher Education

Gamification is a strategy that integrates game components into non-gaming conditions; it can be used in various fields, especially in language learning (Wulantari et al., 2023).

Gamification can be implemented in the classroom through activities using tangible material, digital tools, or platforms. This strategy has become useful for teachers because it transforms the contents of tasks into games in order to make the learning experience less boring and more satisfactory.

A study done in Colombia entitled "Gamification in English Teaching in University Education" reveals data results about the use of digital tools to learn English, highlighting the usefulness of Gamification tools in Higher Education, demonstrating that this strategy improves reading comprehension skills and encouraged them to participate in class activities (Laura et al., 2020).

According to the previous details, Gamification not only works for kids or teenagers but also for university students who are learning English as a second language.

Advantages and disadvantages of Gamification

A case study done in Slovakia shows essential information obtained by a survey, which provides important details of the advantages and disadvantages of applying Gamification in Higher Education. Gamify classes make the class less boring, catch the attention of students, and increase motivation and active competition. Nevertheless, some disadvantages may arise, such as little time for teacher preparation, and some university students consider that Gamification is a strategy for kids (Bencsik et al., 2021). This study demonstrates that the implementation of Gamification in Higher Education has its good and bad points. Evidently, it is important consider

that the results depend on the opinions that students have respect to the use of the learning strategy.

Gamification mechanics

Gamification uses three principal mechanics: a system that gives points or a score to players who carry out the activities; badges that represent rewards to students who do an activity in an exceptional way; and a ranking which consists of illustrating in a table the students' scores from the highest to lowest, considering the badges obtained by them (Reyes, 2021). The main of game mechanics is to capture students' attention, to keep them entertained in the class time and to increase class participation.

Gamification tools

Wordwall

Wordwall is a digital tool used to create interactive games for learners. This tool has a vast variety of templates in which teachers can monitor the process of learning in an efficient way, in order to generate innovative activities that can be completed by students in classes or assigned as homework.

Data collected from a study done in Indonesia in 2023 discusses the efficacy of implementing Wordwall in vocabulary learning. It demonstrates interesting findings especially about the changes in the attitude of students before and after of applying Wordwall to learn vocabulary. Students went from being lazy and bored during classes to being more active in all activities (Syamsidar et al., 2023). Those aspects exposed in the study highlight the interest that students demonstrate in expanding their English vocabulary using digital tools, in this case, Wordwall.

Quizizz

Quizizz is a digital platform which is used by teachers and students in the process of learning. With this tool, teachers can create questionnaires, lessons, and educational games for students because it contains several designs that permit the building of suitable digital learning spaces. Another remarkable characteristic of Quizizz is that it allows to design quizzes with multiple choice questions, open and closed questions, true and false and matching.

A systematic review done in Malaysia provides crucial facts that demonstrate how effective is the implementation of Quizizz in English vocabulary learning. The relevant findings are: Quizizz is the most accepted tool by teachers, because this permit that students can be evaluated in a suitable way; Quizizz provides a lot of benefits in English learning, such as the development in language proficiency and English skills (Lim & Yunus, 2021).

Kahoot

Kahoot is one of the most used tools in Education, specifically in an online context. This digital tool can be used for learners from school, high school or college because Kahoot is suitable for people of any age and easy to manipulate for students and teachers as well. Teachers can create activities for students such as reviewing content, and recreative games, and even their knowledge can be evaluated with Kahoot, and also users access this from any device to work individually or into small groups.

An Indonesian research mentions remarkable findings about the benefits of Kahoot as a tool in vocabulary learning. Among the results obtained from this particular research are the following: an increase of motivation in students during the classes, teacher indicates that Kahoot is easy to use, students consider that this tool is funny and engaging (Adnyani et al., 2020). All details mentioned above are indicators of the efficiency of Kahoot in Education and its

implementation during online classes, demonstrating good results not only from the students' perspectives but also from teachers.

Educaplay

Educaplay is a digital tool used by teachers to create activities implementing different scenarios such as matching, crosswords, word search, riddles and much more. Teachers can create class material adopting the games to preferences of students. This tool allows sharing educational games in realtime and the most important thing, it is free for users.

A study done in the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja, Ecuador, highlights relevant results about the use of Educaplay in EFL learners. This helps students to expand their vocabulary through the contextualization of topics, making the process meaningful in that learners can complete their tasks successfully; in addition to that, Educaplay promotes class participation and improves the students' academic performance (Vargas & Espinoza, 2024). Educaplay promises to help students not only in English vocabulary acquisition but also in learning other languages and even general knowledge.

Vocabulary Definition

To begin with, the vocabulary is based for any language, known also as compilations of word that help with many terms to define better each knowledge or inclusive the use of word whether in any types of forms of communication. Moreover, the vocabulary is not only focused on the grammatical but also on the smooth communication given that it is very extensive as well as. Good communication can be more interesting if there is enhanced vocabulary that can engage a very good conversation (Edupedia Publisher, 2023).

As a result of having advanced vocabulary, it guides in expressing oneself with precision by mastering the language with more words and knowing how to use them in any scenarios such as at work, daily life, family or with friends.

Importance of Vocabulary

The importance of vocabulary can be referred to in daily communication because it, technically, is the principal for communication in any language; available in different contexts and can be able of transmit and recognize new sentences in different types of communication, which can be reading, speaking, and writing, development this skill many important for learners involves the best way for understand clearly is with a rich vocabulary in any person and is most impact in the conversation in academic success or personal growth (Ghalebi et al., 2021). A well-chosen vocabulary in each daily situation makes communication easier, promoting professional growth.

Challenges in Vocabulary Acquisition

At its core, the challenges in vocabulary acquisition consist of the discipline. The lack of information or strategies for vocabulary acquisition is the principal point for being unable to move forward. This challenge can be an obstacle to the learners. The native language is the form of study as a methodology because, acquiring a vocabulary that is not our own, we must choose an effective method and should even be the first to take it into account before learning more. Sorting words is also another challenge; associating the word with any topic is the correct form of learning, associating with pronunciation and writing. On the other hand, the meaning can be a little confusing. In many words, you cannot acquire the correct vocabulary to make sense of a sentence (AS & Apoko., 2023).

Gamification in Vocabulary Learning

To begin with, in English, learning is the key role for vocabulary due to gamification facilitates vocabulary acquisition in different situations and methods by social experience and learning formal environments forms expressions across a lifetime learning fresh terms can be learned for terminology in writing and diction oral communication forms (Díaz et al., 2022).

Pedagogical basis

Behaviorism

Behaviorism is a theory that analyzes human behavior and how it affects the process of learning. Additionally, behaviorism considers that human behavior is conditioned for punishment and reward, considering that each student learns in a particular way depending on age, culture, motivation level, and other factors.

Human interaction in one of the bases in social communication. It is believed that behavior is the result of genetic transfer from parents to children, but it also can be molded by external stimuli such as the environment or situations that people face every day (Efgivia et al., 2021). This indicates that every stimulus provokes a variety of responses in each person, and from that learner can be conditioned to obtain expected results into the classroom.

The behaviorism theory is linked with the use of Gamification in vocabulary learning because the mechanics of Gamification are made up of three aspects: scores, badges, and ranking. Those aspects condition learners to give their best during the activities section to reach the rewards that digital tools offer; likewise, learners can be demonstrating more interest in learning new

vocabulary because they are obtaining badges and academic rewards based on their effort. The process of learning really occurs when students change their behavior based on pleasant experiences using suitable learning strategies such as Gamification.

Constructivism

Constructivism is a learning theory in which people learn through a dynamic process using the necessary tools to improve their skills. In this theory students receive information from previous personal experiences building their own knowledge. The aim of constructivism is to obtain information from the interaction, experiences and tasks, and additionally, it suggests that acquire a language is a constant learning process in which the consistent practice is the key.

A qualitative study done in Babahoyo – Ecuador, mentions remarkable data that highlights the benefits of the application of constructivism theory in Education; these include the following: it is adaptable to the learner's needs, it provides problem solutions, it foments collaborative learning (Murrieta et al., 2023). Constructivism theory is related to the implementation of gamification in vocabulary acquisition because students use digital tools to improve their knowledge.

Constructivism and Gamification work together to facilitate the process of vocabulary learning. Students explore experimental learning using digital tools, which facilitate the process of vocabulary acquisition. Include games in the educational context so that learners cannot only work individually but also in teams in order to engage in social interaction with peers; from that, students can obtain more information and experiences in an academic and personal context.

Legal basis

Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador

There are various articles that constitute the legal basis of the legal foundation for the country's education. Section number five of the Constitution of Ecuador, specifically in article number 27 describes the

Education as a right that all people have in a democratic country, being the educational process intercultural, diverse and quality, promoting gender equality and encouraging individuals to develop skills in the creative and work field. Education is the pillar in creating a sovereign nation and in the develop of a country.

Ministerio de Educación

The Ministry of Education, by means of the Ministerial Resolution "Regulations for the Implementation and Instrumentation of the Transitional Provision Contained in Ministerial Agreement No. 041.142," It has set forth several guidelines concerning English language Instruction.

Art. 3.- DISPONER que para la implementación de la asignatura de inglés las instituciones educativas públicas incorporen a su planta docente, personal con calificación mínima de B2 de acuerdo con la escala del Marco Común europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas, y pongan a disposición de los estudiantes los recursos pedagógicos necesarios para garantizar el adecuado aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera. Al inicio de da año lectivo la institución educativa deberá remitir a la respectiva Dirección Distrital un informe con el detalle de los grados que han sido incorporados a la enseñanza del idioma inglés. (pág. 3)

Art. 4.- DISPONER que el Viceministerio de Educación coordine con el Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa, la evaluación anual de los resultados del aprendizaje del

idioma inglés en las instituciones educativas públicas, fiscomisionales y particulares, y que la Subsecretaría de Fundamentos Educativos establezca los estándares mínimos que deberán alcanzar los estudiantes, a partir del año lectivo 2016-2017, régimen Sierra. (págs. 3 - 4)

Chapter III: Methodological Framework

Research Method

A crucial component of the methodological framework is the approach for defining how data will be obtained and examined, ensuring the research is carried out in a methodical and precise manner. Different research methods are employed according to the specific objectives of the research, with each method appropriate to specific types of investigations. Several are more effective for comprehensive qualitative analysis, while others are more effective for quantitative data.

Qualitative Research

Busetto et al. (2020) describe that qualitative research is as a manner of investigation based on natural contexts and centers around non-numeric information. This research methodology seeks to comprehend and investigate phenomena instead of merely explaining or modifying factors. Furthermore, it is interpretative, highlighting the growth stages and trends for focusing solely on the results.

Consequently, a qualitative methodology is implemented, focusing on the opinions, perspectives, and experiences of people, university students. The interviews to explore how these students analyze gamification in vocabulary learning using digital tools with qualitative research employ open-ended questions to gain insight into the data, which is subsequently examined and that facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of this research.

Type of Research

Phenomenological Method

This methodological approach allows researchers to grasp the depth and intricacy of how individuals perceive and engage with the word. According to Alhazmi & Kaufmann (2022),

phenomenology is a research approach that concentrates on the exploration of subjective experiences and the different perceptions that population has from a specific situation.

This phenomenological study seeks to identify university students' perceptions of Gamification in vocabulary learning through the exploration of their experiences, obtaining significant conclusions to enhance the present research work.

Population and Sample

In research, the population is a set of individuals or elements which are the principal object of study to draw the conclusions of any topic. This research project focuses on university students' perspectives about Gamification as a strategy to acquire vocabulary. On the other hand, the sample is small group selected from a large population to collect relevant data in a research study.

Therefore, university students, especially those in the seventh semester of English major at UPSE, were chosen. A total of eight students were chosen who employ gamification in vocabulary learning.

Description

For this project, the sample are eight students from seventh semester at Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena; specifically, students from Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages major, during the academic period 2024-2.

Data collection techniques and instruments

The goal of qualitative research is to obtain information about emotions, beliefs, or opinions of people regarding specific phenomena in their daily life situations (Hyginus & Chinyere, 2023). In a research, real and personalized information can be gathered from data

collection, this helps to get extensive details to explore the perceptions that students have relate to Gamification strategy in the process of learning.

Data collection techniques

Interviews

In the present study, only one data collection technique was selected, interviews. According to Jain (2021) interviews are useful technique for collecting data, because the researcher can obtain information directly from the source, exploring personal answers from interviewees. The interviews can be held in any modality, on-line modality or face to face, accommodating the preferences of people.

The interviews were held via Zoom. The interviewees mentioned that in virtual interviews they felt more comfortable because their classes are hybrid modality, that means that they receive face to face and on-line education.

Instruments

Questionnaire

Questionnaire is the only instrument used in this research. According to Caicedo et al. (2022) a questionnaire must be in an orderly manner, be clear and specific, because each one of the questions can give a variety of contents that interviewers have to examine meticulously. This instrument is beneficial to collect necessary and consistent information, exploring people's opinions in a direct and personal way.

With the application of open – ended questions, the participants can analyze them, having the opportunity of express their ideas without limitation and giving responses based on their experiences and knowledge.

Type of questions

To obtain information on university students' perceptions of Gamification in vocabulary learning, the interview presented eight questions. In each one of the questions, students will share their opinions, previous experiences and ideas using Gamification to learn vocabulary.

Applying open – ended questions in the interview, learners can freely express their ideas providing relevant data that permit to examine how effective Gamification in vocabulary learning.

Chapter IV: Analysis of findings

This section presents the interpretation of relevant data obtained from interviews; this contributes essential information to the research project titled “University students’ perceptions about Gamification in vocabulary learning”.

Interpretation of data from interviews

The interviews with students from the seventh semester of the Pedagogy in Foreign and National Languages major were carried out in English, in an online modality, specifically via the Zoom platform. All the data was collected from the interpretation of eight open-ended questions, which are explained below:

Question 1: What do you understand by Gamification?

Based on the responses to the question "What do you understand by Gamification?", the most frequent words were "game-like feature" which indicate the addition of game components to activities. Other frequently mentioned notable terms include "learning," "education," and "rewards." the replies show that gamification—which is defined as the use of game-like components such as points, awards, and engaging activities—can significantly increase the interest, enjoyment, and effectiveness of learning. This approach not only adds an element of fun and memorability to education but also cultivates a positive and motivating learning environment. Students improve their academic outcomes due to Gamification can foster greater knowledge retention and a more positive attitude towards continuous learning by encouraging active class participation and developing critical skills such as problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity.

Question 2: What do you think about the use of Gamification in Education?

Based on the responses to question number two, the most frequent words were, "motivation." Other terms frequently mentioned include "skills," "participation," "enjoyable," and "learning.". the responses suggest that the use of gamification in education can make learning more engaging, enjoyable, and effective. It facilitates student motivation, skill development, involvement encouragement, and the transformation of the conventional classroom into a more dynamic and participatory setting. Teachers can design learning with a good experience that instructs students and engages and amuses them using game-like. Furthermore, gamification can create a sense of community and teamwork among students, as many game-based activities encourage collaboration and interaction with peers.

Question 3: Can you describe an experience that you have using Gamification tool during classes?

Based on the replies to question number three, the most frequent words were "Kahoot," "group," and "competition," Other commonly mentioned terms include "memorable," and "focus". The responses suggest that the use of gamification tools in the classroom is highly effective in making learning more engaging, fun, and memorable. Group activities and competitions for extra points establish an engaging and dynamic learning atmosphere to maintain students' motivation and focus. The possibility of irritation with timed activities should be controlled. Gamification improves the educational process by fusing play with learning, which motivates students to collaborate and actively participate.

Question 4: How do you feel about gamification as it relates to learning English?

Based on the responses to question number four, the most frequent words were "engaging," "interactive," "enjoyable," and "motivation." Other notable terms mentioned include "memorization," "teamwork," and "practice".

This answer can be interpreted favorably in the context of English language instruction since it increases student motivation, engagement, and enjoyment. The implementation of Gamification helps to reduce stress, promotes teamwork, creating a collaborative learning environment by making vocabulary and grammar exercises engaging and enjoyable.

Question 5: Based on your experience, what are the benefits of using Gamification to acquire vocabulary?

According to responses for question number five, the most frequent words were “retention,” “feedback,” “memorize,” “fun,” and “interest.”

Interviewees expressed information about the benefits of using Gamification to learn vocabulary based on their experiences. Among the positive aspects that Gamification offers are: during the classes it helps significantly to memorize words, this is a significant aspect in English learning, because sometimes learners consider that keep vocabulary in mind is difficult without practice and sometimes, they forget some words. In addition to that, Gamification tools give feedback in which students can examine their learning process. Moreover, students indicated that they find this strategy as a fun way to learn compare with others, increasing their interest in vocabulary learning.

Question 6: When you have used Gamification to learn vocabulary, what challenges have you faced?

Based on answers for question number six, the most frequent words were “distraction,” “internet connection,” and “and communication.”

Interviewees mentioned that different factors can influence when Gamification is implemented during vocabulary learning. Among those factors, learners face some challenges;

one of them is distraction, which may arise when the classroom becomes a noisy place. Internet connection is another crucial factor because it is a fact that sometimes the instability of the internet can prevent the development of activities using digital tools. The lack of communication during group work is another point that is linked with the challenges that emerge from the use of Gamification to acquire vocabulary.

Question 7: Which digital Gamification tool do you find most useful for learning English vocabulary?

Based on question number seven, the most frequent words were “Kahoot” and “Wordwall.”

Among the digital Gamification tools that interviewees mentioned are Kahoot and Wordwall. Responses allude to the fact that students answered that those particular digital Gamification tools provide fun activities in which they can learn vocabulary through interactive games. Interviewees find those tools useful for learning English vocabulary for many reasons, such as: both Kahoot and Wordwall are easy to manipulate, provide immediate feedback, increase motivation in students, increase class participation, and the most important characteristic is that these digital tools have a free version for students and teachers.

Question 8: Based on your experience, what are the advantages or disadvantages of using Gamification to learn vocabulary during your English language studies?

Based on question number eight, the most frequent words were “motivation” and “improve,” “distraction,” “noise,” and “internet connection.”

Answers from question number eight offer the following information:

Interviewees mentioned that Gamification is useful during the process of learning vocabulary in English because it is an innovative strategy that gives students a variety of tools to

increase their knowledge in a fun way and increases the motivation to acquire new vocabulary. On the other hand, some disadvantages can be noticed in the use of digital Gamification tools during English language studies. Interviewees mentioned that sometimes there can be a lot of noise during the activities, provoking distraction, and the instability of the internet connection can be an obstacle to completing tasks successfully.

Table 1
University Student's Perceptions about Gamification in Vocabulary Learning

Questions	1.- What do you understand by Gamification?	2.-What do you think about the use of Gamification in Education?	3.-Can you describe an experience that you have using Gamification tool during classes?	4.-What is your opinion about the use of Gamification in English language learning?
Answers	<p>Students are agree that gamification - defined as the use of game-like components such as points and engaging activities - can significantly increase the interest, enjoyment, and effectiveness of learning and that this approach not only adds an element of fun, but also</p>	<p>University students suggests that the use of gamification in education is highly valued for its ability, making more effective and enjoyable the learning process. It helps to motivate students, develop skills, encourage participation, and transform the traditional classroom environment into a more dynamic</p>	<p>Students believe that Gamification tools such as Kahoot are effective in making learning more engaging, fun and memorable. Group activities and bonus point competitions create an interactive learning environment that keeps students focused and motivated.</p>	<p>Students referred to Gamification as a useful strategy to increase engagement, motivation and enjoyment in the classroom. By making learn vocabulary and grammar more practice, interactive and fun, Gamification helps relieve stress, encourages teamwork, and fosters collaborative learning environment.</p>

	cultivates a positive and motivating learning environment. Students improve their academic results.	and interactive space. By integrating playful elements, teachers can create a learning experience that not only educates, but also entertains and excites students.	However, the potential for frustration with timed activities must be managed to ensure a positive experience for all learners.	Overall, gamification is considered a valuable tool for improving the effectiveness of English language teaching, especially for younger learners, who thrive in dynamic and fun environments.
Authors	Students may have specific learning objectives such as comprehending a concept, completing the learning program, or being able to carry out a certain task. (Huang and Soman, 2013)	The advent of gamification in educational settings and its continued growth encourage critical reflection on the creation of initiatives that improve students' educational experiences. (Garone & Nesteriuk, 2019).	Kahoot! is a kind of software that enables teachers to pose queries or surveys about the content being taught, and students can reply using their own mobile devices, including. (Cerro, 2015)	They claimed that as gamification was used to achieve project goals, various educational approaches would have an impact on the system development in addition to various student personalities and learning styles. (Hanus & Fox, 2015)
Questions	5.- Based on your experience,	6.- When you have used Gamification to	7.- Which digital Gamification	8.- Based on your experience, what are the

	what are the benefits of using Gamification to acquire vocabulary?	learn vocabulary, what challenges have you faced?	tool do you find most useful for learning English vocabulary?	advantages or disadvantages of using Gamification to learn vocabulary during your English language studies?
Answers	Among the positive aspects that Gamification offers are: it helps to memorize words, gives feedback of contents, it is a fun way to learn and creates interest in vocabulary learning.	The challenges that interviewees mentioned were the distraction when the classroom becomes a noisy place, low internet connection, and the lack of communication during group work.	Students mentioned that Kahoot and Wordwall are two useful tools for learning English Vocabulary. Those tools help students to learn vocabulary through interactive games, which are easy to complete, and in addition to that, increment the motivation for completing the tasks.	Gamification is useful during the process of learning vocabulary in English because it is an innovative strategy that gives students a variety of tools to increase their knowledge in a fun way and also increases the motivation to acquire new vocabulary. Also, students mentioned that sometimes there can be a lot of noise during the activities, provoking distraction, and the instability of the internet connection can be an obstacle

				to completing tasks successfully.
Authors	<p>Before</p> <p>to implement the Gamification strategy, learners had a basic level in English language, but with the use of a Gamification tool they improved their level, obtaining an intermediate level (Jordán et al., 2023).</p>	<p>Since the Covid-19 pandemic, students from higher Education have undergone changes from traditional classes to online classes; this forced the educators to implement strategies to capture the attention of learners, one of them was Gamification (Khaldi et al., 2023).</p>	<p>Kahoot</p> <p>is easy to use, students consider that this tool is funny and engaging (Adnyani et al., 2020). Students went from being lazy and bored during classes to being more active in all activities (Syamsidar et al., 2023).</p>	<p>Some disadvantages may arise, such as little time for teacher preparation, and some university students consider that Gamification is a strategy for kids (Bencsik et al., 2021)</p>

Chapter V: Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The study demonstrates that college students believe gamification to be a valuable method for vocabulary acquisition in English. Motivation among students is greatly influenced by extrinsic (academic success and recognition) and intrinsic (personal interest and love of learning) aspects. According to responses, gamification makes learning more enjoyable and exciting, which arouses their attention and motivates them to continue learning more excitingly.

Moreover, the tactics like Gamification have a positive effect on student motivational factors to learn English. The implementation of game elements in the class activities increase engagement and enthusiasm in students. Learners prefer to use digital tools such as Wordwall and Kahoot, because are simple to use and also offer feedback of tasks.

The data recollected from the study shows information about the difficulties that may occur when Gamification is used in the classroom, such as distraction during classes and internet connection problems, but all after mentioned challenges are minimal compared to the advantages of applying Gamification in learning process. To maximize the benefits of gamification in English vocabulary acquisition, it is essential to have an ideal learning environment with suitable media and support from peers and teachers. Another aspect noted by students is that the implementation of gamification in the classroom can lead to a noisy environment, particularly among group members, which can cause discomfort and negatively impact the performance of specific student groups. Another issue that could prevent the suggested activities from being carried out correctly is low internet quality, mainly when working online.

In summary, this research project shows that gamification is a good and novel strategy because it greatly improves the effectiveness of English vocabulary acquisition and increases

learner motivation and engagement. Educators should consider implementing these gamification elements in their pedagogical practices to create a more effective learning environment.

Recommendations

To implement Gamification as a strategy to learn English vocabulary, educators should consider some important aspects:

To avoid disturbances in the classroom during activities that use Gamification tools, it is important to take into account the reaction of students to noise because, for some university students, that can be enjoyable and cause distraction, which can affect the process of vocabulary learning. To overcome these aspects, teachers should establish game rulers during the Gamification activities, such as not shouting, not offending classmates, or inciting disorder during class activities. If any student breaks any rule, their score in the game is affected or may be removed from the game activity, depending on the severity of the action.

To improve communication during group activities that use Gamification to learn vocabulary, students should establish roles within group work sections, assigning a leader, a strategist, and an executor. Those roles help to maintain good levels of communication and interaction. Establishing roles in group work guarantees that students can organize in a suitable way, creating a productive class environment.

To overcome internet connection issues, it is crucial to understand that it is a factor that can fail for several reasons, but the most common are electricity failure and Wi-Fi network failure. For those reasons, it is recommended that students complete the Gamification activities during face-to-face classes or teacher should assign the activities as homework, allowing for a considerable amount of time to complete the assignment without impediments.

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Annexes

Annex 1. Certified Anti Plagiarism System

La Libertad, 28 de Noviembre del 2024

CERTIFICACIÓN

En condición tutor del trabajo de “**UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT GAMIFICATION IN VOCABULARY LEARNING**”, certifico que las señoritas **Mora Meza Morely Marian** y **Tomalá Morales Karina Paola**, han desarrollado su trabajo de acuerdo a los lineamientos dados, observando las disposiciones institucionales, metodológicas y técnicas, que regula esta actividad académica, luego de haber cumplido con los requerimientos exigidos de valoración, el presente proyecto ejecutado se encuentra con 4% de la valoración permitida, por consiguiente se procede a emitir el presente informe.

Adjunto reporte de similitud.

Atentamente,



Vergara Mendoza Ketty Zoraida, Msc.

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*Annex 2. Interview model***Interview with students**

Topic: University Students` Perceptions about Gamification in Vocabulary Learning

1. What do you understand by Gamification?
2. What do you think about the use of Gamification in Education?
3. Can you describe an experience that you have using Gamification tool during classes?
4. What is your opinion about the use of Gamification in English language learning?
5. Based on your experience, what are the benefits of using Gamification to acquire vocabulary?
6. When you have used Gamification to learn vocabulary, what challenges have you faced?
7. Which digital Gamification tool do you find most useful for learning English vocabulary?
8. Based on your experience, what are the advantages or disadvantages of using Gamification to learn vocabulary during your English language studies?

Annex 3. Interview Transcriptions

Interview with students

Topic: The advantages and disadvantages of mobile applications on the development of listening skills.

Interview of students via Zoom

Interview 1

1. Gamification uses game-like features, such as points, in non-game activities to make them more fun and improve learning.
2. Using gamification in education can greatly help students by making learning feel more like a game. It keeps them engaged, boosts motivation, and encourages healthy competition.
3. Recently, in class, there was a group competition activity where you had to answer the questions correctly and even write the word that the teacher said correctly. In the end, the group with the highest score earned extra points for the exam.
4. Gamification is a powerful strategy for English language learning. It can create a more engaging and interactive environment, motivating students to practice language skills more frequently.
5. Gamification allows me to acquire new vocabulary, encourages repeated practice for better retention, and provides instant feedback to adjust my learning style.
6. The most common in my case are distraction and availability of certain resources.
7. The ones I use most often are Kahoot and Quizlet.

8. The advantages of using Gamification to learn vocabulary include increased motivation, immediate feedback, and the ability to track progress in an engaging way. On the downside, some disadvantages could include the potential for distraction from the core learning objectives and the risk of fostering unhealthy competition among students.

Interview 2

1. Gamification is a technique that teachers can use in the teaching process and make the learning process more memorable for students.
2. I consider it interesting to use gamification because is a enjoyable way to learn for them.
3. A teacher used to use digital gamification tools, and it was interesting to learn in that way, it caught my attention and was memorable.
4. That is an entertained way to learn and make the teaching-learning process more memorable and enjoyable.
5. Well, based on my experience, it was positive because it is like a game, so students pay attention and remember better the contents taught through this technique than using traditional methods.
6. The challenge would be that, because of the environment, students are excited and make a lot of noise and it can be disturbing for other students.
7. Well, I know platforms such as Kahoot, Quizlet, and an app that is Duolingo.
8. The advantages are that it is an innovative way to teach and learn letting behind the traditional and teacher centered methods, it is enjoyable and make easy to remember the contents taught. In addition, digital platforms permit to students have access to the content every time they want to review or practice. The disadvantages can be, that students can get easily distracted, disturbing others students, produce too much noise.

Interview 3

1. Gamification is adding game-like elements to non-game activities to make them more engaging and fun, like using points or rewards. It makes tasks feel less serious and more enjoyable.
2. I think it's a great way to motivate students and make learning more enjoyable, as it adds excitement to the process. It helps students stay focused and eager to participate.
3. Yes, I once used Kahoot in class to review for a test. It was fun and helped me remember key points while competing with friends. The competition added energy to the review, making it easier to retain information.
4. I believe it's very helpful because it makes practicing vocabulary and grammar more interactive and enjoyable. It also makes it feel less stressful and more relaxed.
5. It makes learning new words feel less like memorizing and more like playing, which helps me remember words better and stay interested. It also builds confidence when I see my progress.
6. Sometimes, I get too focused on the game and forget to actually learn the words or grammar, which affects my progress. It's also easy to lose focus if the game is too fast-paced.
7. Quizlet is really useful because it lets me study vocabulary with flashcards and games, and I can review at my own pace. Plus, it has various game modes to keep things interesting.
8. An advantage is that it keeps me motivated and engaged. A disadvantage is that it can sometimes be distracting if I focus too much on winning and less on learning. It can also feel repetitive if used too often without variety.

Interview 4

1. What comes to mind with the word “gamification” is the implementation of games in the educational field, I also believe that it is about learning as you play. It is a tool to end boredom and disinterest while teaching a class, which seeks to cause the opposite, which is to motivate learners.
2. I think it is used in teaching, to develop certain skills or work on certain content that the game provides. It is applied to motivate students to learn in a more fun and non-traditional way, also it awakens their curiosity and interest in learning.
3. Well, in some subjects in previous semesters teachers used to applied Kahoot or Quizzes to take lessons, most of them were played during the classes and for me it was exciting to know if you got points for correct answers and moved up to the next level or if you were disappointed and lost. But it always kept me focused on the subject being tested.
4. I think it is very positive and a good way to motivate students, especially when they are young, they can take advantage of it and what better way than in the English language learning. It helps to keep the student's attention on the subject being taught.
5. It facilitates long-term vocabulary learning. It helps us memorize words and meanings effectively.
6. It is always difficult to create the didactic material, especially by taking the time to look for the material, look for the tool and create the activity, because sometimes I can't find a game that adapts to the topic or vocabulary I need to learn and I have to do it by myself.

7. Wordwall is a very good tool, I have used it both to study and to teach, I can say that based on my experience it helps a lot to maintain motivation and above all to review the topics and that in the same way they remain in my memory forever.
8. One advantage is that there are a variety of tools on the Internet that I can use to learn vocabulary. A disadvantage may be that sometimes I can't find an activity about the vocabulary I need to learn.

Interview 5

1. Gamification is the process of adding game elements to an activity to make it more fun or interesting.
2. I think that using gamification in education is very good when starting new content, such as review or evaluation. Since students can test their skills in a more fun way.
3. During certain classes, especially during the time of online classes, we used apps such as Kahoot or Quizzis for evaluations or group work. It kept learning fun but since the activity was timed, it generates a bit of frustration.
4. It encourages teamwork, since the games are implemented in a classroom where everyone must participate.
5. It is very useful for learning vocabulary as it helps reinforce memorization skills, learning new words that can be a bit complicated in more relaxed and fun contexts.
6. As I mentioned, we used to work on these activities more during online classes. So, the biggest challenge was working in a group, since not being able to communicate directly with classmates made it difficult to carry out the activity.

7. Duolingo is very good for learning basic vocabulary and some grammatical structures. Quizlet is also another good option, as it offers a variety of presentations to learn vocabulary, from flashcards to review mode.
8. I think one of its advantages is that it keeps learning entertaining, so students can have a moment of relaxation through the activity that involves breaking away from the mold of traditional classes that only involve theory or reading. One of its disadvantages could be that it can frustrate students a little and it can be good activities for a moment but does not ensure long-term learning.

Interview 6

1. I understand that in education it is like a game technique that helps to have better results in a class.
2. I think it is an excellent idea to encourage student participation in class in a more enjoyable and relaxed way.
3. I remember one time the teacher made us work in groups in a game where the group that got the most answers right got extra points on the exam. It was fun because even though it was one hour of class, the teacher tried to encourage group work and healthy competition, motivating also the interest to earn those extra points.
4. I think it is a very good tool for learning the English language, especially for memorizing vocabulary and grammatical structures.
5. In my case, gamification is not always present in all my classes and it has not been a technique that I use a lot to learn vocabulary but it does help to stimulate interest in a class.

6. As I said before, I have not used gamification as a method of learning vocabulary but I consider that if this technique is used correctly, it may be one of the easiest ways to learn vocabulary.
7. I'm not sure if it counts as a game but Duolingo is one of the most famous applications to learn new vocabulary of the language you want to study.
8. Depends. To learn vocabulary, I prefer to watch videos with examples of vocabulary but at the same time, I think that games can be a very attractive alternative for those people who find it hard to pay attention to something.

Interview 7

1. The word gamification has a relation with the word game, I think it is about methods or a list of activities with the aim to learn while you are playing.
2. The gamification in education is a good option because as I said before, helps you as a teacher to turn a boring class into a fun one, while at the same time they are learning new things.
3. My experience using gamification I can say that is when I play with my classmates on Kahoot, I really like when the professors in college bring up these types of activities.
4. If you ask me, it is easier to work that way because at least with the children it works because as it is a game, they are much more likely to memorize vocabulary.
5. There are a lot of advantages to using gamification, one of them and the most important is that it helped me improve my word retention, and also the contextual understanding and the ability to recognize and remember words.

6. One of them is the difficulty in understanding instructions, the low level of vocabulary as well. and the internet connections or not knowing how to enter to the platform.
7. I am going to recommend my favorites, Duolingo is a good one, and Kahoot, both are very good for learning.
8. The advantage as mentioned before was the ability to understand certain words, it helps me to improve my vocabulary, and one disadvantage for me maybe could be the connection, I used to have a bad connection and that could be the only problem with gamification.

Interview 8

1. Gamification is when we use games in class to make learning more interesting for students.
2. I think it's a fun way to get students excited about learning. Games make the classroom feel different and more enjoyable.
3. Once, our teacher organized a group activity where teams competed to answer questions accurately for extra points on an upcoming test. It added a fun, collaborative element to the class, making everyone more eager to participate.
4. My opinion about the use of gamification in English language learning is a good helper if you are taking classes of English as a second language, because many students like to work with games, because the theory could be boring for them.
5. Games help make the words easier to remember, and they also make learning more enjoyable.

6. One challenge could be that sometimes games don't focus enough on vocabulary, so it's important to find the right type of game.
7. One useful app is Quizlet. It has games and activities to help you practice and remember vocabulary.
8. An advantage is that games are fun and help us pay attention. But sometimes games might not cover everything we need to learn, so it's good to use other methods too.