

UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA ESTATAL DEL CARCHI

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**MASTER'S DEGREE IN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY FOR NATIONAL AND
FOREIGN LANGUAGES, WITH A MAJOR IN ENGLISH TEACHING**

Topic: Using Play as a Didactic Strategy to Enhance English Vocabulary Acquisition

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master's in
Language Pedagogy for National and Foreign Languages, with a major in English
Language Teaching**

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Tulcán, 2025

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This work complies with the regulations and methodology established in the Postgraduate Degree Project Unit Regulations, according to RESOLUTION N° 150-CSUP-2020. Therefore, I authorise its presentation for the corresponding oral defence.



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I, Carmen Elizabeth Taimal Jiménez, Ecuadorian citizen with identity card number 040167976-6, hereby declare that this research is entirely original, authentic, and my own work. The results and conclusions presented are solely my responsibility.



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Tulcán, September 2025

DEDICATION

To my beloved family, for being the fundamental pillar of my life, for their unconditional love and constant support throughout this challenging journey. To my children, whose joy and tenderness have been my greatest source of inspiration to never give up and keep moving forward. You are my reason to always give my best.

To God, for guiding me with his light and strength every step of the way. Thank you for granting me the wisdom, patience, and opportunities needed to achieve this goal.

This work is an expression of my gratitude to all of you and my commitment to give back everything you have given me. Without you, this would not have been possible.

Carmen Elizabeth Taimal Jimenez

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RESUMEN

El presente estudio tuvo como propósito diseñar una guía de actividades que integre el juego como estrategia didáctica para potenciar el desarrollo del vocabulario en inglés entre los estudiantes de básica elemental de la Unidad Educativa César Antonio Mosquera, durante el año lectivo 2024-2025. La investigación adoptó un enfoque mixto-convergente, empleando cuestionarios, entrevistas y diarios de campo para la recopilación y análisis de datos, seguido de una triangulación de resultados. A partir de la problemática identificada, se realizó una revisión teórica que permitió determinar las características fundamentales que debe poseer una estrategia didáctica basada en el juego como metodología de aprendizaje, adaptándose a las necesidades específicas y el contexto de los estudiantes. El análisis de los datos cuantitativos se llevó a cabo mediante su tabulación, mientras que la información cualitativa fue examinada utilizando el software Nvivo. Los resultados obtenidos evidenciaron que los estudiantes cuentan con un vocabulario limitado en inglés y que, en ciertos casos, las metodologías de enseñanza actuales no logran consolidar las palabras aprendidas en el proceso educativo.

Palabras Clave: Vocabulario, inglés, estrategia, didáctica, juego

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to design a guide of activities incorporating play as a teaching strategy to enhance English vocabulary development among elementary students at the César Antonio Mosquera Educational Unit during the 2024–2025 academic year. A convergent mixed-method approach was employed, using questionnaires, interviews, and field journals for data collection and analysis, followed by triangulation of the results. Based on the identified problem, a theoretical review was conducted to establish the fundamental characteristics that a didactic strategy based on play as a learning methodology should possess, tailored to the students' specific needs and context. Quantitative data were analyzed through tabulation, while qualitative data were examined using NVivo software. The findings revealed that students have a limited English vocabulary and that, in some cases, current teaching methodologies fail to reinforce the words learned during the educational process.

Keywords: Vocabulary, English, teaching strategy, didactics, play-based learning

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

1.1. Research Problem Statement

The learning of the English language has become an essential skill in an increasingly globalized world; however, for children, facing this challenge can be a complex experience. The need to acquire this language from an early age presents a series of problems, ranging from the difficulty of grasping new grammatical structures and vocabulary to the lack of exposure and practice in real-life contexts. Furthermore, teaching methods must be adapted to the cognitive and emotional characteristics of children, who require dynamic and motivating pedagogical approaches to maintain their interest and ensure effective learning. Addressing these challenges effectively is crucial to ensure that children not only learn English but do so in a way that enables them to communicate confidently and competently in a global environment.

In this regard, English as a second language learning among children faces several difficulties worldwide, influenced by social, educational, and psychological factors. According to García and Weiss (2020), one of the main challenges is the lack of access to quality educational resources, especially in underprivileged regions. Additionally, Pinter (2021) highlights that differences in students' cultural and linguistic contexts can affect their motivation and attitude toward learning English. Recent studies, such as that of Genesee (2022), indicate that insufficient parental support and a lack of teachers trained in teaching English as a foreign language also contribute to the difficulties children face in the learning process. These factors, combined with possible language anxiety and variability in language exposure, further complicate early English language acquisition.

At the national level, Ecuador's performance in the international ranking according to the EF English Proficiency Index places it at position 81 out of 100 countries evaluated, raising concern not only about the contents included in the curriculum that must be addressed in schools, but also about how those contents are being implemented, that is, the strategies used by teachers to develop the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. Angelis (2022) mentions that, despite the need in many Latin American countries to prepare students

in the English language as a way to ensure better performance in a globalized world, Ecuador remains one of the countries with the lowest development levels in this area.

Furthermore, in Ecuador, there is no systematic monitoring of progress in English language learning. While subjects such as Mathematics, Language and Literature, Natural Sciences, and Social Studies are regularly assessed by the *Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa (INEVAL)*, there is no such evaluation for English, particularly in public educational institutions.

Moreover, the Ministry of Education of Ecuador, within the curriculum for the elementary basic level (second, third, and fourth grades), allocates only 3 hours per week for English language learning, considering it a complementary subject. In this regard, Ponce et al. (2019) point out that the lack of follow-up in language learning and the limited time assigned at the basic education level result in students failing to properly develop the necessary skills in the key competencies of reading, listening, writing, and speaking, difficulties that persist even in higher education.

In the province of Carchi, specifically in the Julio Andrade parish, this research work is carried out at the elementary level of the Unidad Educativa César Antonio Mosquera, where, during English classes, a low level of vocabulary acquisition among students has been identified. Among the causes detected are lack of motivation toward classroom activities, confusion about content, fear of speaking a foreign language aloud, and difficulty remembering previously learned words. Since these difficulties are identified at early ages and no strategies have been developed to reduce them, the students' learning process is negatively affected even in higher educational levels.

1.2. Problem Statement

This research arises from the issues identified at Unidad Educativa César Antonio Mosquera, specifically within the elementary basic level, which includes the second, third, and fourth years of general basic education. Each grade level consists of three parallel classes, with an average of 30 students per class.

The students attending this institution come from nearby communities in the rural Julio Andrade parish. Both within the school and in the students' homes, access to technological

resources is limited. As a result, the teaching-learning process follows a traditional model, where most activities tend to be repetitive for the students.

During English classes across the different elementary grades, a low level of motivation was observed among students. This is largely due to their perception that the proposed activities are repetitive and not engaging. Additionally, confusion in pronunciation and spelling of English words was identified, which further leads to difficulties in recalling or retaining vocabulary learned in class and applying it in real-life situations.

1.3. Research Questions

- What are the theoretical foundations that support game-based learning as a strategy that promotes vocabulary development in the English language?
- How does play function as a didactic strategy for vocabulary learning in English?
- What are the most common problems students face when acquiring vocabulary in English?
- What characteristics should didactic strategies such as games have in order to promote vocabulary development in the English language?

1.4. Research Objectives

General Objective

To propose an activity guide based on play as a didactic strategy to foster vocabulary development in English among elementary-level students at Unidad Educativa César Antonio Mosquera during the 2024–2025 academic year.

Specific Objectives

To diagnose the level of vocabulary development in English among elementary-level students at Unidad Educativa César Antonio Mosquera in the 2024–2025 academic year.

To analyze the characteristics that games should have when used as a didactic strategy to promote vocabulary learning in English among elementary-level students.

To design an activity guide that incorporates play as a didactic strategy for vocabulary development in English among elementary-level students.

1.7. Justification

In the contemporary educational context, learning foreign languages has become an essential skill for students. In South America, and particularly in Ecuador, proficiency in English is fundamental for integration into a globalized and competitive world. However, one of the persistent challenges in teaching English as a foreign language is the acquisition and retention of vocabulary, a crucial aspect for developing communicative competence. This study focuses on the implementation of play as a didactic strategy to facilitate vocabulary learning in English.

The use of play in education is not a new concept, but its application in foreign language teaching has gained renewed relevance in recent years. According to Ramos and Maya (2022), didactic games offer a dynamic and motivating learning environment that facilitates knowledge acquisition in a playful and effective way. This methodology promotes active and participatory learning, where students become fully engaged in the educational process.

Game-based learning for vocabulary acquisition in English among elementary basic education students is a highly relevant and important topic, since, in most public institutions, it represents the first experience with a foreign language. For this reason, play is intended to be considered as an alternative tool to awaken interest among elementary students when acquiring foreign language vocabulary actively and enjoyably. Additionally, the concepts explained on the topic will help understand how to apply playful activities to achieve effective learning that aligns with the natural enjoyment of play; at the same time, introducing English vocabulary so that students feel confident when acquiring words in another language.

Teachers face various challenges, including limited resources and traditional methods that fail to capture students' interest. In this regard, recent studies have shown that the incorporation of innovative methods, such as play, can transform the educational experience. Caraballo (2023) highlights that the use of games in the classroom promotes greater student participation and facilitates the internalization of concepts through repetitive practice and positive reinforcement. This approach is particularly relevant for English vocabulary learning, as it allows students to interact with the new language in meaningful and practical contexts.

Therefore, this proposal arises from the need to strengthen the English teaching-learning process at the basic education level, recognizing its importance in the student's comprehensive formation and preparation to face the challenges of a globalized world.

From an institutional perspective, the implementation of playful and contextualized didactic strategies contributes to improving educational quality indicators, favoring the fulfillment of the national curriculum objectives. Furthermore, it promotes the professional development of teachers through pedagogical innovation and the use of creative resources, generating an institutional culture of continuous improvement.

At the community level, strengthening English as a foreign language opens opportunities for students to interact more effectively in diverse social, cultural, and work environments. This proposal promotes communicative skills that not only increase access to higher education and employment opportunities but also strengthens the human capital of the community, favoring its long-term economic and social development.

In this sense, the proposal not only responds to the immediate needs of the classroom but also projects itself as a tool for educational and social transformation, with the potential to generate a positive and sustainable impact both within the institution and in the surrounding environment.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Research Background

The learning of the English language has gained increasing relevance globally, especially in educational contexts. Pineda (2024) states that the acquisition of linguistic competencies is fundamental for academic and professional development. However, many students face difficulties in vocabulary retention and usage, which limits their progress in mastering the language. In this regard, innovative didactic strategies, such as the use of play, have been proposed as an effective tool to facilitate English vocabulary learning. These playful techniques not only promote a more dynamic and motivating learning environment but also stimulate students' cognitive, social, and emotional development, significantly improving the assimilation and retention of new terms.

Among the most recent studies related to play as a strategy for English language learning, Mogrovejo, Mamani, and Tipo (2019) present research focused on using games as strategies for English language learning development. The study addresses the problems of English learning in Spanish-speaking students, highlighting the monotony of traditional methods such as memorization and repetition. The methodology includes the use of popular TV show simulations as a basis for learning. This technique, known as Didactics of Play and Simulation of Television Contest Programs (JSPCT), was implemented in two schools in Peru and showed significant improvements in English vocabulary learning after ten weeks, with the pass rate increasing from 11.1% to 99.1%.

Similarly, Jackson (2020) emphasizes the importance of students not only learning English vocabulary but also developing communicative competence through activities that promote content application and stimulate student motivation during their execution. It is highlighted that effective English teaching requires didactic strategies focused on skill development from less traditional and more appealing environments for students. In this sense, teachers must carefully select appropriate strategies to enable students to apply the language in real contexts, thus achieving significant improvement in their communicative competence.

Cock's study (2020) points out that motivation to learn English has decreased among students, largely because the didactic strategies implemented in the school context are

inadequate. It is noted that the school environment is the only place where children can practice English, limiting their learning to classroom experiences. This underlines the need for innovative didactic strategies that foster student motivation by integrating games and interactive media that connect English content with other social contexts.

Among the didactic strategies evaluated, playful activities and the use of interactive media are mentioned as effective in improving English learning. Local and international studies suggest that the use of play and interactive media can be linked to the socio-affective factors of students, generating a more motivating learning environment. In this way, critical thinking and the development of linguistic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic competencies are promoted, aligning with current educational expectations and goals.

The incorporation of playful activities, such as theatrical dramatization, has proven to be an effective tool in teaching a second language, in this case, English. According to **Bedoya and Ramírez (2020)** in their study “Theatrical Dramatization as a Didactic Strategy for Teaching a Second Language: English”, the use of theater in the classroom fosters a dynamic and participatory environment that significantly favors the acquisition of linguistic competencies. This methodology promotes social interaction and contextualization of learning, essential elements for developing communicative skills in a foreign language.

The playful nature of these activities allows students to overcome the fear of making mistakes, increasing their confidence when speaking and their willingness to interact in English. Additionally, improvements have been observed in technical aspects such as pronunciation and fluency, along with an increase in student motivation, who find theater to be a creative and motivating space. These results suggest that playfulness not only facilitates learning but also transforms students’ perceptions of the educational process, making it more attractive and less intimidating.

The use of playfulness not only enhances the learning experience but also contributes to the comprehensive development of students, fostering social and emotional competencies essential for their academic and personal performance.

Gamification as a didactic strategy has emerged as a key tool in foreign language teaching, particularly English. The article *Gamification as a Didactic Strategy for the Development of Communicative Competences in English: A Theoretical Reflection* explores

how this methodology fosters active participation, intrinsic motivation, and the development of communicative skills within a playful and challenging environment.

Gamification transforms the learning process by integrating game elements, such as rewards, levels, and challenges, into the design of educational activities. According to García and Larreal (2023), this strategy enables students to practice language skills repetitively and meaningfully, minimizing the perception of monotony and stress associated with traditional methods. Additionally, the interactive and competitive nature of gamified dynamics stimulates collaboration, teamwork, and critical thinking—skills essential in communicative learning contexts.

Among the highlighted benefits is an increase in student motivation and engagement, as learners experience a sense of achievement and personal growth while progressing through the proposed challenges. Improvements in verbal fluency, listening comprehension, and pronunciation are also noted, thanks to constant exposure to the language in practical and engaging scenarios.

This background reinforces the importance of implementing gamification strategies in language teaching, evidencing their positive impact on meaningful learning and students' holistic development.

Another important tool is the use of songs within the teaching-learning process. The use of songs for English learning in early childhood education has proven to be highly effective. According to Mariscal, Gaibor, and Sotomayor (2020), songs generate a positive impact on children's motivation, facilitating natural and playful foreign language learning. Through singing, students assimilate vocabulary and basic grammatical structures without feeling the pressure of a traditional academic setting. This methodology also promotes active participation and the development of listening skills, which are crucial in the early stages of language acquisition.

Moreover, songs reinforce memorization, as melodies and rhythms enable children to easily remember learned words and phrases. This approach is particularly valuable in early education, where repetition and play are fundamental for cognitive development. The study highlights that children feel more motivated and confident when learning English through songs, resulting in a richer and more meaningful learning experience.

Another facilitating factor in the learning process is motivation, which according to the contributions of **Pionce, Véliz, and Mendoza (2023)**, allows for more efficient learning, since students often remember better what they learn while having fun. These researchers conducted a study in the province of Manabí, Ecuador, analyzing the effects of gamification on English language learning in upper basic education students, obtaining positive results compared to traditional strategies.

Additionally, **Moreno (2024)** analyzes in his study “The Importance of Motivation in the English Teaching-Learning Process among Students of an Educational Unit in Ecuador” how virtual didactic tools can enrich English learning. However, he emphasizes the importance of considering the context of each student group to ensure relevance.

Continuing with gamification, **Carchi (2024)** highlights gamification as an effective educational tool, noting its ability to foster creativity, critical thinking, and motivation in participants. Recommended platforms include Kahoot, Quizizz, Educaplay, and LiveWorksheets, which offer interactive options for creating educational games. These tools allow parents to design activities tailored to their children’s needs and specific topics, promoting a more attractive and dynamic learning experience.

Furthermore, the strategy “*Let’s Learn While Playing*” aims to integrate game elements into the educational process, not only to stimulate learning but also to strengthen parent-child interactions in a collaborative environment. The proposed activities focus on challenges related to the use of technology in education, demonstrating how games can facilitate concept comprehension and improve participant engagement. This approach shows that through the proper integration of educational games, learning can be transformed into a fun and meaningful experience adapted to the challenges of modern education.

The article “*Methodologies for Teaching English to Preschool Children at the Isla de los Milagros Educational Institution*” by **González, Vega, and Garavito (2024)** demonstrates how implementing game-based didactic strategies significantly improves English learning in preschool children. At the Isla de los Milagros Educational Institution, traditional methodologies were insufficient, leading to the incorporation of interactive tools and playful resources such as songs, nursery rhymes, and audio stories. These strategies motivated students and facilitated the acquisition of language skills.

The focus on play not only boosted children's interest in language learning but also promoted a more dynamic and participatory environment. The use of technologies such as ICT, together with activities designed to engage students, stood out as an effective method to teach English in rural contexts with limited resources.

The results conclude that the combination of playful activities and technological resources not only improves the quality of learning but also fosters active student engagement, transforming teaching into a meaningful experience adapted to children's needs.

2.1. Legal Foundations

Education is an inalienable right of children and adolescents from all social classes and regions, which means that every government is obligated to guarantee access to education without any discrimination. Furthermore, this education must be of quality.

Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 26 establishes that: "Everyone has the right to education," which must be free and on equal terms. Additionally, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), adopted by the United Nations (UN), highlights in Articles 28 and 29 the importance of education focused on developing active members of society who respect and guarantee the rights of all.

In Ecuador, education as a right is guaranteed by the Constitution of Ecuador (2008), Article 26, which states: "Education is a right of people throughout their lives and an inescapable and undeniable duty of the State." In this regard, the Ecuadorian state guarantees access to free education, especially concerning compulsory education from initial stages through basic education and high school.

Similarly, the Intercultural Bilingual Education Law (LOEI) of 2011, and its reform in 2023, establish education as a state responsibility, not only guaranteeing access but also ensuring the provision of quality education adapted to meet the diverse needs of students. The law promotes inclusive, equitable education that respects the country's cultural and social diversity.

As part of the United Nations, Ecuador aligns with the 2030 Agenda (UN, 2023), which in its national development plan includes compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4 focused on quality education. This goal encompasses aspects such as accessibility, gender equality, infrastructure, and education habits for sustainable development.

Within the Ecuadorian Constitution, the LOEI, and Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda, the importance of “learning for life” is emphasized, aimed at preparing students with the necessary competencies to function effectively in society and their professional lives. Among these competencies is the learning of a foreign language, enabling students better communication and participation in an increasingly globalized world, where English is considered one of the most important languages in the professional field.

2.2. Theoretical Foundations

Teaching-Learning Process at the Elementary Level

Throughout history, the concept of learning has undergone several changes according to societal advances. At the beginning of the 20th century, ideas about learning emerged around classical conditioning promoted by Pavlov (1904), behaviorism (Watson, 1913), and operant conditioning proposed by Skinner (1938), considering learning as a behavior developed through stimuli, reinforcements, and punishments.

Later, the concept of learning shifted toward a more student-centered view, focusing on how knowledge is acquired differently depending on mental maturation stages, with contributions from Piaget (1956) through his cognitive development theory and Bruner (1956) with discovery learning. These theories led to understanding learning as a process that also involves social aspects, as in Bandura's (1961) social learning theory, which considers learning through observation and imitation of others, and Vygotsky's (1966) social constructivism, where learning is built through interaction with others and the environment.

Once learning was understood as a social process, research also focused on individual differences, giving rise to Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences and Ausubel's (1995) meaningful learning, which consider the environment, prior knowledge, connections with new information, and learning styles. Thus, learning has evolved alongside societal advances to become more efficient, adapting to the digital age with connectivism (Siemens and Downes, 2004), project-based learning, and competency-based learning.

In this sense, it is important to understand that learning has not remained a static concept over the years but has evolved to be more efficient and to respond to the new needs of students, context, and standards set by the educational systems of each country.

Currently, according to the Ministry of Education of Ecuador (2022), learning must focus on student protagonism, as the student is the one who constructs their learning, and the

teacher becomes a guide or facilitator responsible for providing learning spaces and strategies that foster the process.

In this context, the teacher not only analyzes the factors involved in learning but also examines how each student learns and the context in which learning occurs to design strategies and activities that facilitate the process. This creates individualized learning that considers each student's potential and how to apply it in real situations, also generating a love for learning.

English Language Learning as a Foreign Language

The Ecuadorian educational system is governed by the 2016 Educational Curriculum and its 2022 update, which focus on competency development. Additionally, there is a prioritized curriculum for emergency situations published during the COVID-19 pandemic. These curricula organize learning by skills with performance criteria and emphasize the fulfillment of an exit profile aimed at preparing students to perform effectively in the workforce.

Specifically for the English language, according to the Ministry of Education (2016), the curriculum incorporates five key approaches for student learning. The communicative approach promotes language learning as a tool for interaction and communication, moving away from mere memorization of concepts. Student-centered methodologies prioritize learners' skills and needs, fostering adapted and effective learning. Furthermore, learning a foreign language contributes to cognitive, social, and creative development, which are essential for citizenship and lifelong learning. The CLIL model (Content and Language Integrated Learning) combines linguistic development with cultural and cognitive elements, strengthening students' holistic growth. Finally, the curricula align with global standards such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to ensure quality in language teaching.

Below, some researched concepts will be presented on how vocabulary in English is taught and learned, particularly in elementary general basic education (EGB Elemental) children.

Principles and Practice in Second Language According to Stephen D.Krashen

The solution to our problems in language teaching is not found in expensive equipment, exotic methods, preferred linguistic analyses, or new laboratories, but rather in the full use of what we already have—speakers of the language using it for real communication. Krashen also

concluded that the best methods might be the most enjoyable, and, strange as it seems, language acquisition occurs when language is used for the purpose it was designed for.

Krashen (1982) highlighted that today there is a wide range of resources and innovative methodologies available for language learning, but not all of them fit the context in which students carry out their learning. As educators, it is important to consider learning styles that promote participation and learning through playful strategies, as these favor easier acquisition and learning of the English language by students.

Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory

The Acquisition-Learning Distinction

The first form is language acquisition, a process similar, if not identical, to the way children develop their first language ability. Language acquisition is a subconscious process; language acquirers are usually not aware that they are acquiring a language, but only aware that they are using it to communicate. (Krashen, 1982). The second way to develop competence in a second language is through language learning. From now on, we will use the term "learning" to refer to the conscious knowledge of a second language; knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them (Krashen, 1982).

Learning a second language not only supports the normal development of a child but also helps sensitize them to cultural aspects resulting from the knowledge and contact with a different culture. This is because when learning a second language, one acquires a second perspective of the world around us. The learning of a foreign language has been considered a relevant topic within the educational sector, particularly when it comes to elementary general basic education (EGB Elemental) children, as it represents a long-term social transformation that can produce many benefits both professionally and personally, as well as for traveling to different countries. Furthermore, we are in an increasingly globalized world where children will need to communicate in languages other than their mother tongue; that is, foreign languages; to be able to function anywhere in a multicultural world.

The Natural Order Hypothesis

One of the most exciting discoveries in language acquisition research in recent years has been the finding that the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order. (Krashen, 1982). English is perhaps the most studied language regarding the natural

order hypothesis, and among all English structures, morphology is the most researched. Brown (1973) found that children acquiring English as their first language tended to acquire certain morphemes, or word functions, before others. (Krashen, 1982).

After Brown's results were published, Dulay and Burt (1974, 1975) reported that children acquiring English as a second language also exhibit a "natural order" for morphemes, regardless of their native language. (Krashen, 1982).

The Monitor Hypothesis

The Monitor Hypothesis states that acquisition and learning are used in very specific ways. Normally, acquisition "initiates" our utterances in a second language and is responsible for our fluency. Learning has only one function, which is to monitor or edit. Learning comes into play only to make changes to the form of our utterance after it has been "produced" by the system. This can occur before we speak or write, or after (self-correction). (Krashen, 1982).

The Input Hypothesis

The Input Hypothesis runs counter to our usual pedagogical approach to second and foreign language teaching. As Hatch (1978a) pointed out, our assumption has been that we first learn structures, then practice using them in communication, and this is how fluency develops. The Input Hypothesis says the opposite. It claims that we acquire language by "seeking meaning" first, and as a result, we acquire structure! (Krashen, 1982).

The Affective Filter Hypothesis

The Affective Filter Hypothesis explains how affective factors relate to the second language acquisition process. (1) Motivation. Learners with high motivation generally perform better in second language acquisition (typically, but not always, "integrative" motivation 13). (2) Self-confidence. Learners with self-confidence and a positive self-image tend to perform better in second language acquisition. (3) Anxiety. Low anxiety seems to be conducive to second language acquisition, whether it is measured as personal anxiety or classroom anxiety. (Krashen, 1982)

Game-Based Learning

Game-Based Learning as a methodology stems from an innovative educational strategy in which children become the protagonists of their own learning. The teacher abandons the

traditional one-way transmission of information to become a guide and mediator of the emotional, cognitive, and educational processes of their students. (Martin, 2020). As a central part of our research work, game-based learning plays a key role. The use of playful strategies that each foreign language teacher; particularly English; must implement in their classes represents a challenge. It is the responsibility of all foreign language teachers to enhance their teaching process through these methods.

Playful Didactic Methods for English Vocabulary Teaching and Learning

“It was the Romans who invented the word *Ludo*, which means to play; for this reason, everything related to play is called playful. One of the most important definitions of the term game was proposed by *Huizinga (1949)*, who stated that a game is ‘a free action or occupation, which takes place within certain time and space limits, according to mandatory rules, although freely accepted’ (Vásquez and López, 2020, p. 45).

Undoubtedly, play is fundamental to life; an activity carried out by one or more individuals, whose immediate purpose is entertainment and fun; but in addition to entertainment, another function of games is the development of skills and abilities; intellectual, motor, and social. When children play a game, they learn to negotiate, reach consensus, and socialize. Therefore, play in humans fulfills the same function, even though it may seem like a simple form of entertainment. What distinguishes it, then, from other forms of education and cognitive development? Games allow mental rest, variety in routine, and the activation of other types of processes, such as reflexes and intuition.

The learning of English as a second language is very significant in the child’s development, as it involves the use of different playful strategies aimed at awakening interest and motivation to acquire new vocabulary; knowledge of English vocabulary provides new opportunities in various areas: educational, social, etc. Therefore, it is important to identify how playful strategies affect English learning in EGB Elemental children regarding scientific theories, learning through playful strategies, and their importance; a guide of playful strategies in English learning will serve as support for foreign language teachers and for students.

Games have been used as pedagogical tools for a long time, with the roots of game use in teaching tracing back to ancient Greece, where games were used to teach important skills and concepts to children. In the Middle Ages, board games and playful activities were used to teach strategy, mathematics, and morality.

However, the modern concept of ‘Game-Based Learning’ (GBL) has gained popularity in recent decades, especially with the rise of digital technology and video games. Educational

gamification, which involves applying game elements in non-playful contexts, has also contributed to the more systematic integration of games in the classroom. In short, although games have been used for educational purposes throughout history, the way they are applied and conceptualized in education has evolved significantly over time, adapting to current needs including technology.”

Sociocultural Theory of Vygotsky

Play creates a zone of proximal development in the child. During play, the child is always above their actual age. Play contains behaviors that represent evolutionary trends, and therefore is a very important source of development (Vygotsky, 2008). (Gallardo López & Gallardo Vázquez, 2018). With this information, we can assert that after playing, we have always learned something new, our behavior has been modified regarding cognitive aspects that were unconsciously practiced.

Types of Games

Around the world, there is a wide variety of games, according to the cultural and social context where life unfolds. For this, we explain some researched concepts about different types of games:

Movement Game

Movement play in the early years of schooling is very important, as it constitutes a natural learning sphere for the child that allows new notions in their motor schemes (fine and gross) and learning of physical, intellectual, social skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values. In addition, they incorporate new knowledge spontaneously through the experience each one goes through, which can lead to the achievement of meaningful learning. Carrera, L et al. (2023). The child always needs to be in constant movement and does this through playful activities, participating preferably interactively with other children, which allows them to develop physical and intellectual skills and abilities.

Argument Game

It consists of creating dialogues about a specific topic, presenting the topic creatively, either through a story or another activity to capture students' attention... The activities or games that can be used within this type are: debate, conversation circle, describe the image, answer your classmate's question, steal the point, etc. Carrera, L et al. (2023). Another game in which

the child participates with great enthusiasm is when there are dialogues with their classmates; this becomes a learning strategy, for which the teacher must have the skill to guide them.

Role Play

Role play promotes students' critical thinking, since when developing the proposed topics, they must analyze and organize ideas. Some examples of games where roles can be used are: library, gas station, school, explorers, space adventures, etc. Carrera, L et al. (2023). It is a game that involves a large amount of vocabulary; it is an opportunity for the foreign language teacher to develop strategies when teaching words in a foreign language.

Traditional Game

Naturally, traditional games and those of an ethnic or popular nature already constituted a broad category of established games, with very precise rules and a justification maintained by tradition... (Pedro et al., 2016). To adapt traditional games, the tastes and interests of the students, the topic, the subject, and their age will be taken into account. Traditional games such as bingo, tic-tac-toe, hide and seek, blind hen, hopscotch, statues, pop the balloon, among others, have been passed down from generation to generation... Carrera, L et al. (2023). Traditional games become an ally of the foreign language teacher to increase new vocabulary; since words are directly associated with the context where the child develops daily; and in turn, are the words with which they identify in their social environment.

Construction Game

There are games that involve construction, from simple puzzles to combinations of two- and three-dimensional pieces and elements. It is not only about building known and familiar elements, but often the game proposes the combination of a series of elements to achieve different forms, which when combined become a whole. This elevates construction to a certain creativity that is valued and rewarded by the participants. (Pedro et al., 2016). These games can be: paper city, Legos, graphing the first day of school, building the school, models, etc. Carrera, L et al. (2023). This game allows the child to learn vocabulary from a technical field where foreign words are more frequently used, and it motivates the development of creativity.

Symbolic Game

A factor that generally defines games is the symbolic one: it is the game of "pretending...", that is, to represent, imagine and reproduce everyday situations, imitating and representing what they see and feel. Something beyond role-playing games and that, in this case, has much to do with theatrical interpretations, pantomimes, music, and dance, which accompany the participants and are often improvised by groups and collectives, as a certain

competition in which imitation, the jocular nature of such attitudes, and the parody of everyday situations count (Pedro et al., 2016).

Symbolic play makes children expand their imagination, building scenarios based on what they have observed in their context, encourages the acquisition of new behaviors, expands vocabulary, and stimulates creativity. Some examples of this type of game can be, dad or mom (family), teacher, cops and robbers, detectives, the floor is lava, doctor, among others. Carrera, L et al. (2023). These are games that develop imagination and enhance vocabulary, both in the mother tongue and in a foreign language.

With this, we can conclude that the different types of games are a fundamental basis for creating vocabulary learning strategies in a foreign language for children in EGB Elemental. Furthermore, it has been explained that play in children is one of the most important activities in the development of their early years of life, where they learn the basics that will be enhanced in later years of study and social coexistence.

CHAPTER III.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Description of the Study Area/Study Group

The present research was conducted at the César Antonio Mosquera Educational Unit, which belongs to Education Zone 1, specifically to Educational District 04D01 responsible for the Huaca-Tulcán territory. The César Antonio Mosquera Educational Unit is located in the Province of Carchi, Tulcán canton, Julio Andrade parish. This parish is located in the rural area and has around 13,000 inhabitants. Most of its inhabitants are engaged in agriculture and commerce. Within this sector, there are two publicly funded educational institutions: one municipal and one semi-public.

This institution has approximately 1,300 students and 71 teachers. The infrastructure of the educational institution is good in terms of classroom size, playgrounds, and maintenance of spaces. The preparatory and elementary sublevels are separated from the middle basic level and have bathrooms adapted to the needs of the students. Regarding technological resources, the site has a laboratory with 30 computers with internet access. However, since there is no computer science teacher, this space remains unused.

Figure 1.

Location of the César Antonio Mosquera Educational Unit Site 1



Note. Screenshot from Google Maps

3.2. Research Approach and Type

The approach under which this research is carried out is of a mixed nature; from the qualitative aspect, different categories of analysis were determined, and the characteristics and particularities of the study group regarding their vocabulary learning in the English language

were analyzed. From the quantitative approach, the necessary data corresponding to the level of learning development of the students were collected. Acosta (2023) mentions that mixed approaches allow for the analysis of the problem from two perspectives that provide complementary data, giving it greater meaning and weight, as well as offering the possibility of finding more efficient solutions based on an understanding of all the factors involved in the issue.

In the research, a convergent mixed design was used to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the subject of study. This approach allowed for the simultaneous collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, comparing and integrating them in the final interpretation. Through vocabulary questionnaires, quantitative data were collected to measure the impact of the use of games on language learning. At the same time, through classroom observations and interviews with teachers, qualitative information was obtained about the experiences, perceptions, and attitudes toward the use of playful strategies. The combination of both types of data allowed for the triangulation of information, reinforcing the validity of the results and providing a more complete view of the effectiveness of games as a didactic strategy in English language teaching.

3.3. Population and Key Informants

The population of this research study consisted of 240 elementary-level students from the César Antonio Mosquera Educational Unit and two English teachers from the elementary level.

3.4. Sampling Type

The type of sampling used was non-probabilistic by convenience; according to Hernández (2021), non-probabilistic convenience sampling allows the researcher to determine the group with which to work according to the interest of the study. That is, the subjects are not chosen randomly but are selected based on the researcher's accessibility to the group and its relevance. For this study, a sample of 2 English teachers and 240 elementary-level students was selected, belonging to the second, third, and fourth grades of basic education, with 3 parallel classes per grade and an average of 26 students per class.

The selection criteria for the sample were determined by the relevance of the participants according to the objectives of the study. The following inclusion and exclusion criteria were considered.

Inclusion criteria included:

- Teachers who teach English classes in the second, third, and fourth years of basic education at the César Antonio Mosquera Educational Unit.
- Students who are enrolled and regularly attending the second, third, and fourth years of general basic education at the Educational Unit.
- Willingness of teachers and students to participate in the research.

Exclusion criteria included:

- Teachers who do not teach English classes in the selected grades.
- Students who do not belong to the selected grades.
- Participants who do not provide their consent or whose participation is not authorized by their legal guardians for the study.

3.5. Procedures

Phase 1. Diagnose the level of vocabulary development in the English language among elementary-level students at the César Antonio Mosquera Educational Unit during the 2024–2025 academic year.

The aim was to collect and organize various data related to the students' development level concerning the main skills they should have in the English language, in accordance with their age, preferences, and the standards proposed by the Ministry of Education. The categories of analysis considered for the design and validation of the instruments were comprehension, retention, usefulness, and motivation, which can be found in **Annex A**. These categories address important factors to consider in the learning process.

Survey Applied to Students

The survey was created based on the categories of analysis (Annex A), taking into account indicators that allowed the measurement of students' comprehension and retention regarding topics such as family members, days of the week, months of the year, natural numbers, ordinal numbers, and colors. In addition, questions were included to measure students' satisfaction with group activities, individual activities, dynamic tasks, and text replication. The questions were divided into two sections. The first focused on measuring comprehension and retention with 18 questions covering 10 specific topics from the elementary curriculum, including family members, days of the week, months of the year, ordinal numbers, among others (see **Annex B**).

The second section analyzed usefulness and motivation through a satisfaction scale in four questions related to how students feel in class and about the activities they carry out in the

classroom, as well as group activities. The questionnaire was applied to a total of 270 elementary-level students from the César Antonio Mosquera Educational Unit, site 1. The questionnaire was validated through expert opinions (see **Annex E**). For data analysis, a tabulation was carried out using Microsoft Excel.

Field Diaries

The data from the field diaries were collected through participant observation, which offers the researcher the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of the characteristics, influencing factors, data, and everything related to the object of study. Tejero (2021) mentions that this method not only allows the researcher to observe what is happening but also provides the possibility for the researcher, by being included in the process, to gain a perspective as an actor in the process and understand how the context and other factors influence it. In the present study, participant observation was conducted over a period of 2 months in the 9 elementary-level class sections, with one hour per week for each class. To collect the data, a field diary was created, which is described below.

The field diary was developed based on categories of analysis (comprehension, retention, usefulness, and motivation) that correspond to the students' development level in English language competencies: reading, listening, speaking, and writing (see **Annex C**).

The instrument consisted of two sections: one focused on describing the English classes, and the other on interpretation, which allows the data to be analyzed and categorized by colors corresponding to student comprehension, vocabulary retention, usefulness and application, and motivation toward learning. The field diary was used during the English classes of the 9 class sections, 2 hours per week over a period of 30 days.

Interview Applied to Teachers

The interview is a widely used data collection technique in qualitative research due to its flexibility in gathering data, interviewees' perspectives, feelings, and other factors that help to better understand the object of study.

In this regard, López (2020) mentions that the semi-structured interview stands out as an effective technique for collecting qualitative data thanks to its ability to adapt to the unique characteristics of each interviewee and provide detailed information. This method not only gathers concrete data but also emotional, contextual, and subjective aspects that enrich the analytical process.

For analyzing the data collected through the interview, tools like NVivo offer invaluable support by allowing automated coding and organization of the data. This software helps identify patterns, recurring themes, and trends through features such as word trees and tag clouds, providing researchers with an organized and visually comprehensible analysis.

The interview guide was structured into 5 sections, considering the categories of comprehension, retention, usefulness, and motivation, as well as an additional category for this instrument: conceptualization, focused on understanding the teacher's knowledge of the concepts of gamification and game-based learning. The instrument was applied to the English teacher and subsequently analyzed using NVivo software (see Annex D).

Phase 2: Analyze the characteristics that games used as a didactic strategy should have to promote vocabulary learning in the English language among elementary-level students.

The previous chapter detailed the main themes that support the importance of vocabulary development in the English language and how games serve as a methodology that facilitates learning in elementary-level children, beginning with an approach to education as a right and the evolution of education over the years to meet the needs of students.

The research background was also described, emphasizing the positive results that the use of games as a didactic strategy for learning has had in other studies. The theory of second language acquisition is another key topic for understanding the benefits that learning English provides in a child's education and how games play a facilitating role.

Phase 3: Design an activity guide that considers games as a didactic strategy for vocabulary development in the English language among elementary-level students.

This phase focused on designing a guide with each of the strategies and activities developed to promote English language learning in elementary-level students, from a playful approach. Based on the categories of objectives, content, interaction, collaboration, and motivation. The guide was structured considering the justification and importance of games as a didactic strategy, the description of each game developed for each topic, including the necessary resources for each game, and finally, the micro-curricular planning where the class topic and each activity to be carried out by the teacher and students can be observed.

3.6. Bioethical Considerations

Science and research, like any human activity, are subject to ethical principles, which give them their condition as human acts. For the application of information collection instruments and the gathering of the necessary data for research, the bioethical principles that govern research must be applied, so that it fulfills, in addition to technical conditions, the premises of respect for the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, and justice. It would not be justifiable to propose a study that does not provide a benefit to people or a relevant advancement in knowledge. Different interests may give rise to ethical conflicts in research, as well as issues related to falsification, plagiarism, and other concerns surrounding the publication of results and authorship. For the application of research instruments such as interviews, surveys, observation sheets, etc., complete confidentiality of the participants' data will be maintained.

CHAPTER IV

4.1. Results Obtained Through the Questionnaire Applied to Students

Results Described by Section

This instrument was applied to second, third, and fourth grade students of general basic education to determine the level of vocabulary development in the English language. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: the first focused on measuring comprehension and retention of vocabulary learned, related to 9 topics, which are: family members, days of the week, parts of the body, gender, colors, natural numbers, ordinal numbers, geometric shapes, and months of the year. For data analysis, the questionnaires were grouped by grade level as shown below.

Section 1. Comprehension and Retention

Table 1.

Percentage of Correct and Incorrect Answers – Section 1, Second Grade

QUESTIONNAIRE APPLIED TO STUDENTS				
SECTION 1. COMPREHENSION AND RETENTION				
SECOND YEAR OF GBE				
TOPICS	CORRECT	INCORRECT	% CORRECT	%INCORRECT
FAMILY MEMBERS	60	100	37,50	62,50
DAYS OF THE WEEK	65	95	40,63	59,38
PARTS OF THE BODY	75	85	46,88	53,13
GENDER	50	110	31,25	68,75
COLORS	20	140	12,50	87,50
NATURAL NUMBERS	90	70	56,25	43,75
ORDINAL NUMBERS	40	120	25,00	75,00
GEOMETRIC SHAPES	30	130	18,75	81,25
MONTHS OF THE YEAR	70	90	43,75	56,25
TOTAL	500	940	34,72	65,28

Source: Own elaboration based on the diagnostic questionnaire

The questionnaire applied to second-year basic education students evaluated their comprehension and retention of English vocabulary across various topics: family members, days of the week, parts of the body, gender, colors, natural numbers, ordinal numbers, geometric shapes, and months of the year. The results show a general trend of a higher number of incorrect answers (65.28%) compared to correct ones (34.72%), indicating limited comprehension and retention within this student population.

The topics "colors" and "geometric shapes" recorded the lowest percentages of correct answers, with 12.50% and 18.75%, respectively, and the highest error rates, with 87.50% and 81.25%. This suggests that students face greater difficulties in associating vocabulary related to visual elements, possibly due to a lack of practical exposure or insufficiently dynamic teaching methodologies.

In contrast, the topics "natural numbers" and "months of the year" showed the highest percentages of correct answers, with 56.25% and 43.75%, respectively. This relatively better performance could be attributed to the familiarity students already have with these concepts in their native language, facilitating the transfer of knowledge to English.

The low percentage of correct answers in topics such as "family members" (37.50%) and "gender" (31.25%) suggests that even basic concepts are not being fully understood or retained. This highlights the need to reinforce the teaching of basic vocabulary through more interactive methods, such as games, practical activities, and audiovisual support.

Table 2.

Porcentaje de aciertos y errores sección 1 tercer grado

**QUESTIONNAIRE APPLIED TO STUDENTS
SECTION 1. COMPREHENSION AND RETENTION
THIRD YEAR OF GBE**

TOPICS			%	
	CORRECT	INCORRECT	% CORRECT	INCORRECT
FAMILY MEMBERS	85	75	53,13	46,88
DAYS OF THE WEEK	100	60	62,50	37,50
PARTS OF THE BODY	75	85	46,88	53,13
GENDER	50	110	31,25	68,75
COLORS	20	140	12,50	87,50
NATURAL NUMBERS	120	40	75,00	25,00
ORDINAL NUMBERS	40	120	25,00	75,00
GEOMETRIC SHAPES	30	130	18,75	81,25
MONTHS OF THE YEAR	80	80	50,00	50,00

TOTAL	600	840	41,67	58,33
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Source: Own elaboration based on the diagnostic questionnaire

In this case, the results reflect an overall performance of 41.67% correct answers and 58.33% incorrect answers, showing a slight improvement compared to the second-year students. The topic "Natural Numbers" stands out with the highest percentage of correct answers (75.00%) and the lowest percentage of errors (25.00%). This performance suggests that students have a stronger understanding of this topic, possibly due to its relation to content commonly used in their native language. "Days of the Week" also shows a high percentage of correct answers (62.50%), indicating some familiarity with this vocabulary.

As in the second year, the topics "Colors" and "Geometric Shapes" present the lowest results, with only 12.50% and 18.75% correct answers respectively, and high error percentages (87.50% and 81.25%). This reinforces the idea that students experience significant difficulties retaining vocabulary related to visual or abstract elements.

The topic "Family Members" achieved a 53.13% success rate, representing an improvement over the second year (37.50%). However, topics such as "Gender" and "Ordinal Numbers" continue to be problematic, with correct answer rates of 31.25% and 25.00%, respectively. This suggests that more abstract concepts or those less frequently used in everyday life are the most challenging for students to learn.

Table 3.

Porcentaje de aciertos y errores sección 1 cuarto grado

**QUESTIONNAIRE APPLIED TO STUDENTS
SECTION 1. COMPREHENSION AND RETENTION
FOURTH YEAR OF GBE**

TOPICS			%	
	CORRECT	INCORRECT	% CORRECT	INCORRECT
FAMILY MEMBERS	120	40	75,00	25,00
DAYS OF THE WEEK	90	70	56,25	43,75
PARTS OF THE BODY	105	55	65,63	34,38
GENDER	58	102	36,25	63,75
COLORS	67	93	41,88	58,13
NATURAL NUMBERS	114	46	71,25	28,75
ORDINAL NUMBERS	45	115	28,13	71,88
GEOMETRIC SHAPES	30	130	18,75	81,25
MONTHS OF THE YEAR	78	82	48,75	51,25
TOTAL	707	733	49,10	50,90

Source: **Own elaboration based on the diagnostic questionnaire**

The questionnaire applied to fourth-year basic education students evaluated their level of comprehension and retention of English vocabulary. With an overall accuracy percentage of 49.10% and 50.90% errors, the results show an improvement compared to previous levels (second and third year), reflecting progress in learning as students advance in their education.

The topic "family members" stands out with 75.00% accuracy and only 25.00% errors, positioning it as the best-performing topic. This result could be attributed to the relevance and familiarity of this vocabulary in everyday contexts. "Natural numbers" also presents a high performance, with 71.25% accuracy, indicating a solid retention of basic numerical concepts.

The topics "days of the week" (56.25% accuracy) and "body parts" (65.63% accuracy) show intermediate results, reflecting a moderate understanding of these concepts, possibly due to greater practice or exposure in class activities.

On the other hand, the topics "geometric shapes" (18.75% accuracy) and "ordinal numbers" (28.13% accuracy) have the lowest percentages, with high error rates (81.25% and 71.88%, respectively). This shows that students continue to face significant difficulties with more abstract or less commonly used concepts in their daily lives. "Gender" also has a low performance, with 36.25% accuracy and 63.75% errors, suggesting a need to reinforce this vocabulary.

The increase in the total accuracy percentage compared to previous years reflects gradual progress in the comprehension and retention of English vocabulary. However, topics related to abstract or specialized concepts remain the most challenging for students.

Although a general improvement in performance is observed, specific strategies are required to address difficulties in topics such as "geometric shapes," "ordinal numbers," and "gender." The implementation of active methodologies, such as the use of visual materials, practical activities, and educational games, could facilitate learning. Furthermore, integrating vocabulary in real contexts and everyday situations could improve retention. An individualized approach to reinforce areas of difficulty would also be beneficial to maximize learning at this educational stage.

Section 2. Motivation and Usefulness

In section 2, the data is addressed in a general manner, summarizing students' preferences regarding the activities they perform in class and their degree of satisfaction related to English classes.

Table 4.

Results in the categories of motivation and usefulness

SECTION 2. MOTIVATION AND USEFULNESS ELEMENTARY EDUCATION STUDENTS						
QUESTION	NOT SATISFIED	SLIGHTLY SATISFIED	NEUTRA L	VERY SATISFIED	TOTALLY SATISFIED	TOTAL
1. When I do activities such as writing, copying texts, or memorizing, I feel:	140 51,9%	70 25,9%	0 0,0%	40 14,8%	20 7,4%	270 100,0%
2. My English classes make me feel:	98 36%	39 14%	12 4%	75 28%	46 17%	270 100%
3. When I do activities such as singing, dancing, playing, I feel:	15 6%	5 2%	12 4%	80 30%	158 59%	270 100%
4. When I do group activities with my classmates or friends, I feel:	12 4%	7 3%	7 3%	98 36%	146 54%	270 100%

Source: **Own elaboration based on the diagnostic questionnaire**

The questionnaire applied to elementary education students evaluated how they perceive various activities related to English learning based on their level of satisfaction, using a measurement scale with the options: not satisfied, slightly satisfied, neutral, very satisfied, and totally satisfied. The most outstanding results are detailed below.

1. When I do activities such as writing, copying texts, or memorizing, I feel:

Most students (51.9%) feel "Not satisfied" when doing traditional and repetitive activities such as writing or memorizing. A 25.9% consider themselves "Slightly satisfied," and 14.8% report feeling "Very satisfied." Only 7.4% feel "Totally satisfied." This indicates that this type of activity does not generate high levels of motivation, which could affect learning.

2. **My English classes make me feel:**
36% of students state they feel "Not satisfied" with English classes, while 14% feel "Slightly satisfied." However, a significant percentage (28%) feel "Very satisfied," and 17% "Totally satisfied." This shows that although there are areas for improvement, a substantial part of the students finds value and motivation in the classes.
3. **When I do activities such as singing, dancing, playing, I feel:**
Playful activities have a very positive impact on student motivation. 59% feel "Totally satisfied" and 30% "Very satisfied," totaling 89% at high satisfaction levels. Only 6% and 2% are at the "Not" or "Slightly satisfied" levels, respectively, demonstrating that these activities are highly effective at engaging students.
4. **When I do group activities with my classmates or Friends, I feel:**
Like playful activities, group activities generate high satisfaction levels. 54% feel "Totally satisfied" and 36% "Very satisfied." Only 7% and 4% reported feeling "Slightly" or "Not satisfied," respectively. This highlights the importance of fostering collaborative work in the classroom.

The results show that playful and group activities are the most motivating for students, while traditional activities generate less satisfaction. It is essential to adjust pedagogical strategies to include more participative and collaborative dynamics that strengthen motivation and interest in learning English.

4.2. Results Obtained Through Participant Observation

Based on participant observation and the application of field diaries during English classes with elementary education students, it was evident that students show difficulty in developing vocabulary in the English language. The data obtained through the diaries were analyzed using qualitative data analysis software and synthesized in the following figure:

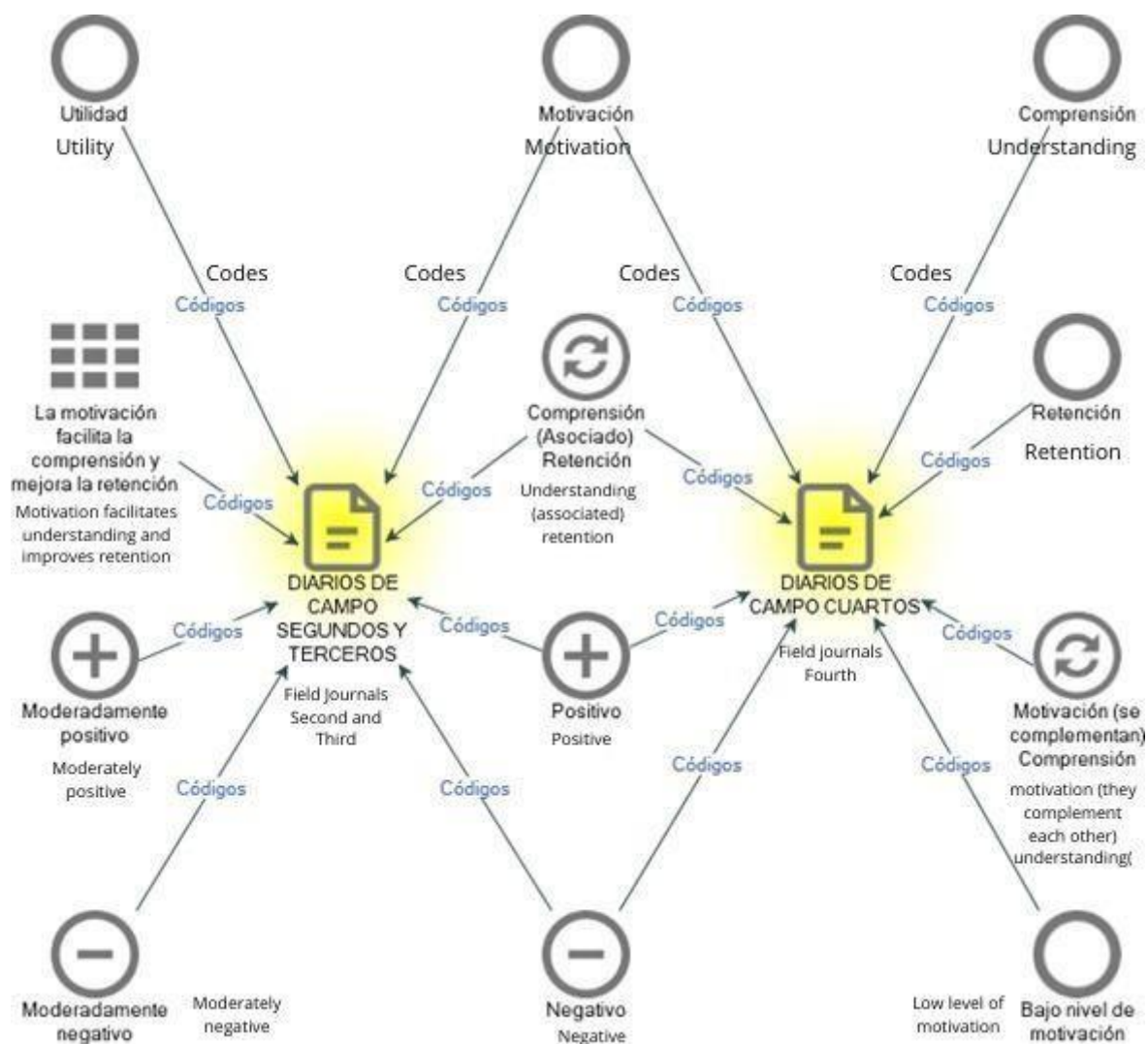


Figure 2. Coding of data obtained through field diaries by analysis categories.
Source: Own elaboration using Nvivo

The figure reflects a thematic analysis of field diaries from second- to fourth-grade students during English classes, identifying key factors related to motivation, comprehension, and retention. The data have been categorized around positive, negative, and moderately positive aspects, revealing an intrinsic relationship between motivation and learning outcomes in language acquisition.

In second and third grades, moderately positive comments predominate, suggesting that students show initial interest in learning English. However, this interest may not be strong enough to ensure lasting learning. This is related to the activities carried out in class, which are structured around skills such as repetition and a more passive role for the students. The associated codes highlight that "motivation facilitates comprehension and improves retention,"

emphasizing the importance of pedagogical strategies that strengthen student enthusiasm from early stages.

In this regard, Hernández and Cordero (2020) mention the importance of motivation as a facilitator in learning English as a foreign language, especially at early ages, as it improves concentration and facilitates comprehension. Thus, by using activities that are attractive and fun for students, they will be more interested in learning and will better understand the content to be covered and retain the information for longer

On the other hand, the field diaries of fourth grade show a greater variety in perceptions, with the presence of both positive and negative aspects. Positive records emphasize that motivation complements comprehension, while negative ones reflect a "low level of motivation," which negatively impacts learning retention. This suggests that as students progress in their education, challenges in language teaching become more evident, possibly due to higher expectations, more complex content, or less playful activities.

The concept of "comprehension associated with retention" emerges as a critical axis at both levels. Students who manage to better understand the material tend to retain it more easily, reinforcing the need for teaching methods focused on positive reinforcement and active participation. However, in cases of low motivation, retention is considerably affected.

Therefore, the analysis suggests that fostering motivation from a dynamic and contextualized pedagogical perspective is essential to improve both comprehension and retention in English classes. The differences between the grades analyzed highlight the need to adapt teaching strategies to the characteristics and developmental levels of each group, considering the age-specific needs such as the role of play as a facilitator of student concentration

4.3. Results of the Interview Conducted with Two English Teachers

This section presents the results obtained through interviews with two elementary English teachers. Both educators shared their experiences and perspectives regarding the use of games in the teaching and learning process of English as a second language.

Conceptualization

Regarding the concept of gamification, both teachers agree that it is a methodological strategy that incorporates game elements to stimulate motivation. However, teacher María Rodríguez mentions that gamification “takes certain parts of a game such as mechanics, dynamics, points, leaderboards.” Both refer to the motivating role that games play in learning, especially for young children.

When asked about the differences between gamification and game-based learning, teacher Vanesa Cevallos refers to the focus of each: she states that “the focus of gamification is to transform a traditional activity into a more engaging experience using game mechanics. Whereas in game-based learning, the game itself becomes the central means of learning.” This aligns with what teacher María Rodríguez mentions, as she states that gamification “takes certain elements of a game, while game-based learning uses complete games.”

Comprehension

The interviewees highlighted that implementing games in teaching English vocabulary is effective in motivating students and promoting long-term learning. María Rodríguez mentioned that students “remember vocabulary by associating it with previous playful experiences,” while Vanesa Cevallos emphasized that this approach “facilitates vocabulary retention, allowing children to recall it in later contexts.”

Retention

Both teachers noted that traditional methods based on repetition and memorization tend to lead to short-term learning, limited to immediate assessments. In contrast, playful strategies stimulate student interest and foster long-term knowledge retention, as children associate vocabulary with enjoyable experiences.

Usefulness

The teachers have used various playful strategies adapted to students’ ages and levels. M.R. has used digital applications such as “Educaplay and Quizziz with teenagers,” while with younger children she has implemented group games like “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” and flashcard activities. Meanwhile, V.C. has used “traditional games like hangman, riddles, tingo-tingo-tango, and hopscotch,” highlighting that hangman has been particularly effective for reinforcing vocabulary retention.

Assessment

To evaluate vocabulary learning, Rodríguez has used digital tools like Quizziz and group activities with immediate feedback. Cevallos, on the other hand, has used structured exercises such as word searches, word-image matching, and sentence ordering. Both teachers agree that feedback should be immediate and supported by visual or auditory strategies, such as songs and videos from digital platforms.

4.4. Triangulation of Results

The data collected through the three instruments reveal highly relevant information regarding the level of vocabulary development in English among students. On one hand, the questionnaire results show a higher level of errors in the comprehension category for second, third, and fourth grades of elementary education, with error percentages of 65.28%, 58.33%, and 49.10%, respectively. When contrasted with data from the field diaries, it becomes evident that comprehension is hindered by students' lack of motivation when performing repetitive activities. Similarly, comparing this with the teachers' statements, it is clear that it is easier for students to recall content learned through engaging and appealing activities.

In this regard, Pacheco (2022) states that the difficulty students face in developing vocabulary and learning English can often be reduced by using different tools and activities that spark motivation for learning. For primary school students, it is easier to remember content learned through enjoyable activities, considering that play is a natural and essential aspect of early childhood.

Moreover, analyzing the data obtained through the field diaries reveals a relationship between motivation as a facilitator of comprehension, and in turn, comprehension promoting higher retention of learned content. Another factor that enhances retention is the usefulness of the content and its application in familiar situations for students. This aligns with what was mentioned in the interviews, where teachers affirmed that students “remember vocabulary by associating it with previous playful experiences.”

Considering also the data from the student questionnaire in the categories of motivation and usefulness, students show a stronger preference for activities such as playing, dancing, singing, and group work, as opposed to individual and mechanical tasks. The contrasting percentages

show that in mechanical activities, 51.9% feel not satisfied, while 59% feel totally satisfied during more playful activities.

Therefore, it is necessary to consider elements such as usefulness, familiarity with context, content comprehension, and above all, playful components when designing teaching strategies focused on vocabulary development in the English language.

CHAPTER V. PROPORSAL

“Magic Words Adventure”: A Didactic Strategy to Enhance English Vocabulary Development in Elementary Students at Unidad Educativa César Antonio Mosquera.



5.1. Introduction

Learning English in elementary education represents a significant challenge, especially in contexts where students are not consistently exposed to the language outside the classroom. Traditional teaching methods based on memorization and repetition of isolated words often result in ineffective and demotivating learning experiences. In this context, it is essential to explore innovative strategies that facilitate vocabulary acquisition in a playful and meaningful way.

According to Vygotsky (1978), learning is a social process in which interaction and play play a crucial role in the cognitive development of children. Play allows students to internalize concepts through dynamic and practical experiences, favoring better knowledge retention. Arrieta and Aravena (2023) state that in the field of language teaching, gamification has proven

to be a highly effective strategy to improve student motivation and participation, while reinforcing vocabulary acquisition and language comprehension.

Studies such as Moreno's (2020) have shown that the use of games in second language learning improves fluency, vocabulary retention, and confidence in oral communication. In the case of children in elementary education, English teaching should focus on strategies that integrate learning with interactive activities, ensuring a more effective and natural educational process.

In this regard, the proposal "Magic Words Adventure" seeks to transform English teaching through the use of educational games specifically designed to strengthen vocabulary development in elementary students. Through playful activities, the aim is to improve students' motivation and interest, facilitating language acquisition in a dynamic and stimulating environment. This proposal not only responds to the educational needs of children but also offers practical tools for teachers, enabling them to diversify their teaching methodologies and improve the quality of English education.

5.2. Theoretical Justification of the Strategy

Magic Words Adventure is a didactic strategy designed as a way to contribute to the learning and development of vocabulary in the English language, allowing students not only to memorize words but also to develop communicative skills through playful dynamics that foster interaction and practical use of the language. This strategy focuses on enhancing learning through play, a pedagogical tool that stimulates motivation and active participation in children.

It is essential to define the concept of a didactic strategy, which, according to Chimarro (2023), is understood as a system of actions aimed at improving the learning process, transforming it into a dynamic process in which students acquire knowledge effectively. In this sense, the use of didactic strategies such as play makes it possible to capture children's attention and turn learning into an engaging and potentially meaningful experience.

Likewise, it is important to establish what is meant by play as a pedagogical resource. According to Piaget (1986), cited by Orrala and Roca (2022), play is a fundamental activity in child development, since through it, children explore, experiment, and construct knowledge, assimilating elements of reality without having to accept its limitations for their adaptation. In the case of *Magic Words Adventure*, play becomes the central axis of vocabulary teaching in English, allowing children to learn new words through interactive activities, challenges, and

group

dynamics.

The material used in this strategy has been designed to be accessible and relatable to students, employing resources such as word cards, interactive boards, and dramatization activities. Furthermore, the construction of learning is carried out collaboratively, giving students a leading role in their vocabulary acquisition process. The teacher, in this context, acts as a guide and facilitator, orienting the children while they themselves discover and reinforce new words and linguistic structures through play.

Moreover, the use of games for vocabulary learning allows the same topics to be worked on with children of different ages, as is the case in elementary education. Through the present proposal, the aim is to develop vocabulary with second, third, and fourth-year EGB students using the same activities, with only slight adaptations in the process to include the individual characteristics and knowledge level of each group. The proposal also offers the possibility of being adapted to different contexts by including flexible activities and easily accessible resources, so that learning is not limited by factors such as resources, time, age, or other potential obstacles.

In Ecuador, proficiency in the English language has become an essential requirement for academic and professional development. According to the EF English Proficiency Index (2023), Ecuador is among the Latin American countries with a low level of English proficiency, highlighting the need to strengthen its teaching from the early stages of education.

The Ministry of Education (2016) has implemented various policies to improve the teaching of English in the country, including making the subject mandatory in basic and high school education. However, one of the main challenges continues to be the methodology used in the classroom. Often, students learn English in a mechanical way, without opportunities to practice it in real contexts, which limits their communicative development. Learning English not only expands Ecuadorian students' academic and job opportunities, but also facilitates integration into a globalized world, where English is the predominant language in business, science, and technology. In addition, language proficiency allows access to a greater number of educational and cultural resources, promoting a more comprehensive and higher-quality education.

From a pedagogical perspective, it is crucial that English teaching in Ecuador is based on interactive and dynamic approaches that respond to the needs and characteristics of the students. Strategies such as gamification and game-based learning can be key to overcoming

current difficulties and fostering a positive attitude toward language learning. The Magic Words Adventure proposal aligns with this vision, providing an innovative methodology that seeks to improve English teaching in an effective and motivating way in elementary education.

At Unidad Educativa César Antonio Mosquera, it has been identified that many students face difficulties in acquiring English vocabulary. This is due to the lack of innovative teaching strategies and the predominant use of rote memorization methods. This proposal seeks to transform the educational process by promoting an inclusive and stimulating environment that encourages the active participation of students.

In this sense, Magic Words Adventure aims to transform vocabulary teaching in English into a meaningful and motivating experience, in which learning occurs naturally and effectively through the integration of play as a didactic strategy.

5.3. Objectives

General Objective

To develop English vocabulary in elementary school students through the use of didactic games, fostering meaningful learning and classroom interaction.

Specific Objectives

- To design accessible and adaptable educational activities and games for different levels of knowledge.
- To implement playful strategies to improve English vocabulary acquisition.
- To promote interaction and collaborative work among students through dynamic activities.
- To evaluate the impact of games on language learning.

5.4. Methodology

Didactic Strategy

The "**Magic Words Adventure**" strategy is based on game-based learning, incorporating interactive activities that foster motivation and active student participation. The aim is for children to acquire English vocabulary progressively and naturally through group dynamics, friendly competitions, dramatizations, and guided repetition exercises.

Each proposed activity is designed to reinforce specific language skills, combining visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements to improve vocabulary retention. In addition, the playful approach allows students to build confidence in their ability to communicate in English, promoting a positive and anxiety-free learning environment.

Planning and Execution

The proposal will be implemented over a six-week period, dedicating one hour per week to vocabulary teaching through games. Structured sessions will be organized as follows:

1. **Week 1:** Introduction to cardinal numbers using dice-throwing games and number cards.
2. **Week 2:** Learning ordinal numbers through team competitions.
3. **Week 3:** Identification and use of colors with a treasure hunt involving objects of different shades.
4. **Week 4:** Associating the days of the week with daily activities through storytelling and dramatizations.
5. **Week 5:** Recognition of the months of the year using illustrated cards with special events.
6. **Week 6:** Identification of family members through interactive activities and group dynamics.

To ensure the effectiveness of the proposal, adaptations will be implemented according to the students' ages and levels, allowing for adjustments in the complexity of activities and the use of visual and auditory support materials.

Description of the Games and Resources to Be Applied in the Planning

1. Natural Numbers (Cardinal Numbers): “Number Ladder” (Escalera de Números)

The teacher will form teams of approximately 6 students each. Every group will receive a pair of dice and a set of 12 cardboard cards measuring 10 cm x 5 cm.

Each team will decide the order of participants. In the chosen order, each student will roll both dice, add the results, and say the number out loud in English. Then, they will write the number in digits and in words on a card and place it on the floor. The next student will

repeat the process and place their card next to their teammate's, organizing the numbers in ascending order. With 6 students per team, each student will have two turns. The winning team will be the first to correctly complete the ascending sequence of 12 numbers, ensuring all numbers are correctly written.

If a number is repeated during the game, the participant must roll the dice again to form a different number.

Adaptation for Second Grade: Considering that second-grade students have less developed reading, writing, and calculation skills, a minor adaptation will be made: they will be given only one die and 6 cards, and they will complete the activity using numbers from 1 to 6 only.

2. Ordinal Numbers: “We Look Better in Order” (Ordenados nos vemos mejor)

The teacher will divide the students into teams of 8 to 10 participants. Each student will receive half a sheet of cardboard and will be asked to write an ordinal number in words (one number per card). The cards will then be stacked in a disordered pile on the floor at the front of the classroom or schoolyard.

Each team will form a line in front of their pile, with a small space between teams. Then, the teacher will give out loud commands such as:

“First”: the student with an M in their name

“Third”: the student wearing black shoes

And so on. Students will listen to the commands and quickly decide who should go first, second, third, etc. The student who matches the characteristic must run to their team's pile, find the correct card, and position themselves in the corresponding place in the line. The team that successfully arranges themselves in the correct order first wins.

Adaptation: For second-grade students, the ordinal numbers will be displayed using digits only (e.g., 1st, 2nd, 3rd...) to facilitate understanding.

3. Colors: “Hunting Colors” (Caza de Colores)

For this game, the teacher will have previously hidden various objects around the school, such as toys, fruits, drawings, and other items of different colors. Students will form teams, and each team will be assigned a color. Each participant will receive a cardboard circle in the team's color, with the color name written on it (this can be replaced by a colored T-shirt or another identifier, depending on the school's resources). Once teams are formed, the teacher will hand each team a flag in their designated color. The teams will position themselves at a starting point indicated by the teacher.

The instructions are, each team must first hide their own flag well, then begin searching for colored objects. Each team earns 1 point for every collected object and 5 points for each flag of a different color found. At the end, all collected objects and flags are counted. Each student must say, for example: "The ball is green", "This pencil is blue".

The team with the highest score or most items collected wins.

Adaptation: No adaptation is needed in this case, as the elements can be identified by color.

4. Days of the Week: “7 days” (7 Días)

The teacher should prepare sheets of paper with letters of the alphabet in advance, enough to form the names of the days of the week (one letter per sheet).

Students will be divided into teams according to the class size. Each team will receive two sets of letters, enough to form the names of the seven days. Teams will have 3 minutes to organize and distribute the letters among themselves. Once ready, the teacher will call out the name of a day, and students must arrange themselves, displaying the letters in order to spell the correct word. The first team to form the correct day wins that round. Each correctly formed day earns 1 point. At the end, the team with the most points is the winner.

Adaptation: For second-grade students the teacher will place a poster at the front of the classroom with the names of the days of the week in order, so students can use it as a guide while forming the words.

5. Months of the Year: “Happy birthday” (Feliz Cumpleaños)

Each child writes their birth month on a card and writes “My birthday is in” followed by their birth month. Then, the teacher collects the cards and places posters around the classroom with the names of the months. The teacher places the cards on the floor along with other cards previously prepared, on which the same phrase is written, but with the months

spelled incorrectly. When the teacher gives the signal, the students begin picking up the cards, identifying if they are correctly written, and run to stick them on the correct poster. Each student may pick up only one card at a time, and the student who has stuck the most cards on the posters at the end wins.

Adaptation: For second grade, the cards are replaced with photos of the children. Each child will first say their birth month out loud, and then they will search for their classmates' photos and place the photo in the month mentioned as their birthday.

6. Family Members: "My roots" (Mis raíces)

Each child is assigned a family member on a card. Then, using a ball of yarn, they will form a living family tree. Afterwards, the teacher will ask each student questions such as "Who is your sister?" and each child will respond according to their role in the tree. The number of correct answers will be counted, and if correct answers outnumber mistakes, the children will not have homework that day. This is a group activity that allows the whole class to interact and work toward a single goal, which in this case is not having homework.

Adaptation: This activity can be used without problems in all three years of basic education.

5.5. Micro-Curricular Planning

Below is a micro-curricular planning that includes the topics and activities mentioned during the first part of the proposal. It is important to note that this planning is designed to dedicate one hour per week exclusively to vocabulary. The Ministry of Education (2024) includes three weekly hours for the English subject in the curriculum, so the remaining two weekly hours can be used by the teacher to develop the planned topics and other competencies of the subject.



UNIDAD EDUCATIVA “CÉSAR ANTONIO MOSQUERA”

School Year
2024- 2025

MICRO-CURRICULAR PLANNING

Grade/Course:	Second, Third and Fourth	Area:	Foreign Language	Trimester:	First
Level:	Elementary	Subject:	English	Start Date:	
Class Sections:	“A”, “B”, “C”	Teacher’s Name:	Lic. Carmen Taimal	End Date:	

CROSS/CUTTING THEMES:

- Socio-emotional
- Learning culture
- Communicational and linguistic
- Logical-mathematical reasoning
- School permanence

DISCIPLINARY LEARNING:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

O.EFL 2.2

Assess and appreciate English as an international language, as well as the five aspects of English that contribute to communicative competence.

Evaluar y apreciar el inglés como idioma internacional, así como los cinco aspectos del inglés que contribuyen a la competencia comunicativa.

O.EFL 2.3

Independently read level-appropriate texts in English for pure enjoyment/entertainment and to access information.

Leer de forma independiente textos en inglés apropiados para su nivel por puro disfrute / entretenimiento y para acceder a la información.


O.EFL 2.7

Appreciate the use of English language through spoken and written literary texts such as poems, rhymes, chants, riddles and songs, in order to foster imagination, curiosity and memory, while developing a taste for literature.

Apreciar el uso del idioma inglés a través de textos literarios hablados y escritos como poemas, rimas, cánticos, acertijos y canciones, con el fin de fomentar la imaginación, la curiosidad y la memoria, mientras se desarrolla el gusto por la literatura.

SKILLS WITH PERFORMANCE CRITERIA EVALUATE ACTIVITIES	LEARNING ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES	EVALUATIVE ACTIVITIES
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<p>WEEK 1: CARDINAL NUMBERS</p> <p>EFL 2.2.4 Identify items of specific information within simple messages or from short and simple descriptions about familiar contexts, especially if visual support is provided. (Example: letters of the alphabet, numbers, prices and times, days, dates and months, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the topic to students through the song “Numbers Canciones para Aprender Inglés.” • Present the numbers on colorful cardboard including their written form. • Ask for voluntary student participation by repeating the numbers and their spelling. • Propose the activity "Number Ladder" (Escalera de Números). (described in the previous section). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer • Speaker • Dice • Cardboard Cards • Markers 	<p>Technics</p> <p>Students’ participation</p> <p>Instruments</p> <p>Questionnaire with open and close ended questions.</p>
<p>WEEK 2: Ordinal Numbers</p> <p>EFL.2.2.4. Identify items of specific information within simple messages or from short and simple descriptions about familiar contexts, especially if visual support is provided. (Example: letters of the alphabet, numbers, prices and times, days, dates and months, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the students to leave the classroom and run to the playground and back. • Give each student a sheet of cardboard with the ordinal number in digits and words, both in Spanish and English, corresponding to the place they arrived in the race. • Ask the students to read the number in Spanish and repeat the number in English after the teacher. • Reinforce through the following video: “Números Ordinales Aula chachi - Vídeos educativos para niños.” • Explain other uses of ordinal numbers in everyday situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer • Internet • Speaker • Cardboard Cards • Markers 	<p>Technics</p> <p>Students’ participation</p> <p>Instruments</p> <p>Questionnaire with open and close ended questions.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate through the activity “We Look Better in Order” (ordenados nos vemos mejor). 		
<p>WEEK 3: Colors EFL.2.2.9. Spell out key vocabulary items using the English alphabet. (Example: names, colors, animals, possessions, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present the following image to the students  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask reflective questions: What is in the image? What colors do you see? Do you know the names of the colors in English? Name each color in English and write them on the board next to the image. Use puppets dressed in different colors to practice saying the colors out loud. Carry out the activity “Hunting Colors (caza de colores)” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rainbow image Color puppets Colored toys Cardboards Color Flags Markers Board 	<p>Technics Students’ participation</p> <p>Instruments Oral lessons</p>
<p>WEEK 4: Days of the week EFL.2.2.4. Identify items of specific information within simple messages or from short and simple descriptions about familiar contexts, especially if visual support is provided. (Example:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the children: What day is it? Do you know the days of the week? Which ones are they? Narrate the story “The Adventure of the Magic Week” (see Annex F). Present cards with the names of each day of the week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cards with the names of the days of the week Sheets of paper with alphabet letters 	<p>Technics Students’ participation</p> <p>Instruments Questionnaire with open and close ended questions.</p>

letters of the alphabet, numbers, prices and times, days, dates and months, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out the activity “7 days” (7 días).” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Story “The Adventure of the Magic Week” 	
<p>WEEK 5: Months of the year EFL.2.2.4. Identify items of specific information within simple messages or from short and simple descriptions about familiar contexts, especially if visual support is provided. (Example: letters of the alphabet, numbers, prices and times, days, dates and months, etc).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present to the students cards with images of festivities for each month. (January: Three Kings Day, February: Valentine’s Day, March: Women’s Day, etc.). Ask the students in which month each festivity is celebrated to guess the months and explain both their pronunciation and spelling in English. Guide the development of the activity “Happy Birthday (feliz cumpleaños).” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cards with images Photos of the students Posters with the months of the year Cardboard cards Markers 	<p>Technics Students’ participation</p> <p>Instruments Questionnaire with open and close ended questions.</p>
<p>WEEK 6: Family members EFL2.2.3. Recognize familiar names, words, and short phrases about simple everyday topics whether heard in isolation or within short, simple spoken texts describing people and objects. (Example: vocabulary about self, family, friends and immediate surroundings at school and home, adjectives for color and size, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play the video “Kids vocabulary - Family - family members & tree - Learn English educational video for kids.” Analyze with the students the family members, their pronunciation, and spelling on the family tree. Propose the activity “My Roots (mis raíces).” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer Speaker Yarn Cards with family members 	<p>Technics Students’ participation</p> <p>Instruments Questionnaire with open and close ended questions.</p>
ELABORADO POR DOCENTE	APROBADO POR VICERRECTOR/A		APROBADO POR RECTOR/A

Name: Lic. Carmen Taimal	Name:	Name:
Signature:	Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:	Date:

5.6 Evaluation

The evaluation of the impact of the strategy will be carried out through a comprehensive approach that combines qualitative and quantitative techniques. The following evaluation methods will be applied:

- **Direct Observation:** Recording the level of participation, enthusiasm, and understanding of the students during the activities. For this, an observation guide with indicators such as attention, interaction with peers, level of enthusiasm, and use of the learned vocabulary will be used. (See Annex G).
- **Pre- and Post-Application Questionnaires:** Diagnostic tests will be applied before and after the intervention to measure progress in vocabulary acquisition. The questionnaires will include multiple-choice questions, sentence completion with the appropriate word, and pronunciation exercises. (See Annex B).
- **Performance Rubrics:** Evaluation of correct pronunciation, writing, and contextual use of the learned words. A rubric will be developed with criteria such as pronunciation accuracy, appropriate use of vocabulary in specific contexts, and active participation in activities.
- **Teacher's Field Journal:** Qualitative analysis of the strategy's development, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. The teacher will keep a record where observations about student responses, difficulties encountered, and possible improvements in the activities will be noted. (See Annex C).
- **Formative Evaluation:** Constant feedback to students to reinforce learning and make adjustments to methodologies according to their needs.

At the end of the application period, the results obtained will be analyzed and a report with recommendations for the continuity and improvement of the program will be prepared.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

- The elementary students of César Antonio Mosquera Educational Unit have not managed to develop vocabulary in the English language in the topics analyzed; furthermore, they show a low level of motivation for engaging in activities related to the subject. This causes a delay in the learning of the subject since vocabulary is a very important component in the language learning process.
- The didactic strategies for vocabulary development in the English language must be focused on giving prominence to the student and include playful components that stimulate student motivation, since it is easier for children to remember content developed through activities they enjoy and apply in familiar situations. These strategies must be structured in a way that considers student preferences and the resources available in their context.
- “Magic Words Adventure” is a didactic strategy focused on the development of English vocabulary, mainly structured with playful activities and games created to facilitate student interaction with the language. Additionally, it uses flexible resources, taking into account the students’ context and the lack of availability of technological resources.

RECOMENDATIONS

- Promote the use of playful strategies that strengthen English language skills (speaking, writing, listening, and reading). It is recommended that teachers incorporate planned activities such as educational games, dramatizations, songs, interactive stories, and simulations of real-life situations at least twice a week. These strategies should allow students to apply what they have learned in everyday contexts in order to make learning more meaningful, motivating, and functional for their lives.
- Implement an institutional continuous training plan aimed at teachers and school administrators, focused on strengthening the teaching of English as a foreign language. This plan should include quarterly training sessions on active methodologies, competency-based teaching, and the use of educational technologies. Additionally, it should include evaluation mechanisms that allow measuring the impact of the training on pedagogical practices and on students' academic performance.

- Develop a pilot experience with the didactic strategy “Magic Words Adventure,” adapting it to the characteristics and needs of each student group. To do this, it is recommended to first carry out a diagnosis of the group’s vocabulary level, implement the strategy over one academic term, and then evaluate its effectiveness using tools such as rubrics and checklists. This will make it possible to measure progress in English vocabulary acquisition and adjust the strategy for future applications.

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ANNEXES

Annex A. ABSTRACT- EVALUATION SHEET

UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA ESTATAL DEL CARCHI FOREIGN AND
NATIVE LANGUAGES CENTER

ABSTRACT- EVALUATION SHEET				
NAME: Taimal Jimenez Carmen Elizabeth				
DATE: Martes, 21 de octubre de 2025				
Topic: "Using Play as a Didactic Strategy to Enhance English Vocabulary Acquisition"				
"MARKS AWARDED		QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE		
VOCABULARY AND WORD USE	Use new learnt vocabulary and precise words related to the topic	Use a little new vocabulary and some appropriate words related to the topic	Use basic and simplistic words related to the topic	Limited vocabulary and inadequate words related to the topic
	EXCELLENT: 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	GOOD: 1,5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AVERAGE: 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	LIMITED: 0,5 <input type="checkbox"/>
WRITING COHESION	Clear and logical progression of ideas and supporting paragraphs.	Adequate progression of ideas and supporting paragraphs.	Some progression of ideas and supporting paragraphs.	Inadequate ideas and supporting paragraphs.
De	EXCELLENT: 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	GOOD: 1,5 <input type="checkbox"/>	AVERAGE: 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	LIMITED: 0,5 <input type="checkbox"/>
ARGUMENT	The message has been communicated very well and identify the type of text	The message has been communicated appropriately and identify the type of text	Some of the message has been communicated and the type of text is little confusing	The message hasn't been communicated and the type of text is inadequate
	EXCELLENT: 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	GOOD: 1,5 <input type="checkbox"/>	AVERAGE: 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	LIMITED: 0,5 <input type="checkbox"/>
CREATIVITY	Outstanding flow of ideas and events	Good flow of ideas and events	Average flow of ideas and events	Poor flow of ideas and events
	EXCELLENT: 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	GOOD: 1,5 <input type="checkbox"/>	AVERAGE: 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	LIMITED: 0,5 <input type="checkbox"/>
SCIENTIFIC SUSTAINABILITY	Reasonable, specific and supportable opinion or thesis statement	Minor errors when supporting the thesis statement	Some errors when supporting the thesis statement	Lots of errors when supporting the thesis statement
	EXCELLENT: 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	GOOD: 1,5 <input type="checkbox"/>	AVERAGE: 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	LIMITED: 0,5 <input type="checkbox"/>
9 - 10: EXCELLENT TOTAL/AVERAGE 7 - 8,9: GOOD TOTAL 9 5 - 6,9: AVERAGE 0 - 4,9: LIMITED				



Informe sobre el Abstract de Artículo Científico o Investigación.

Autor: Taimal Jimenez Carmen Elizabeth

Fecha de recepción del abstract: Viernes, 17 de octubre de 2025

Fecha de entrega del informe: Martes, 21 de octubre de 2025

El presente informe validará la traducción del idioma español al inglés si alcanza un porcentaje de: 9 – 10 Excelente.

Si la traducción no está dentro de los parámetros de 9 – 10, el autor deberá realizar las observaciones presentadas en el ABSTRACT, para su posterior presentación y aprobación.

Observaciones:

Después de realizar la revisión del presente abstract, éste presenta una apropiada traducción sobre el tema planteado en el idioma Inglés. Según la rúbrica de evaluación de la traducción en Inglés, ésta alcanza un valor de 9; por lo cual se valida dicho trabajo.

Atentamente



Firmado electrónicamente por:
**MARTHA ARACELLY VIVEROS
ALMEIDA**


Validar Únicamente con FirmaEC

MA. Martha Viveros
Responsable del CIDEN

Annex B. Categorization of Variables



CATEGORIZATION OF THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLE AS A DIDACTIC STRATEGY		
CATEGORIES	INDICATORS	INSTRUMENT
Objetives	Increase English language vocabulary	Questionnaire Field diary
Contents	Application of declarative, procedural, and attitudinal content in vocabulary learning in English	Questionnaire Field diary
Interaction and Collaboration	Degree of participation and collaboration during game-based activities. Impact of teamwork on vocabulary acquisition.	Questionnaire Field diary
Motivación	Level of interest and enthusiasm shown by students during playful activities. Students' perception of the effectiveness of games in learning.	Questionnaire Field diary
CATEGORIZATION OF THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE AS A DIDACTIC STRATEGY		
CATEGORIES	INDICATORS	INSTRUMENT
Comprehension	Level of vocabulary comprehension Ability to understand the meaning of words in context Accuracy in interpreting new words	Questionnaire Field diary
Retention	How long can students remember the learned words Comparison between vocabulary retention taught through games and traditional methods	Questionnaire Field diary
Usefulness	Active use of vocabulary Frequency and context in which students use new vocabulary in oral and written communication	Questionnaire Field diary

	Ability to integrate words into sentences and dialogues	
Motivation	 Level of interest and enthusiasm shown by students toward learning English vocabulary	Questionnaire Field diary

Annex C. Student Questionnaire



English Vocabulary Diagnostic Questionnaire

Objective: To diagnose the current status of elementary students at César Antonio Mosquera Educational Unit in relation to their level of English vocabulary development.

Student Information:

Name:

Grade level:

Section 1. Comprehension and Retention

Instructions: Read each question and select the letter that shows the correct English spelling of the word in quotation marks.

Topic: Members of the Family

1. What is the English word for "madre"?

- a) Sister
- b) Aunt
- c) Mother
- d) Grandmother

2. How do you say "hermano" in English?

- a) Brother
- b) Cousin
- c) Father
- d) Uncle

Topic: Days of the week

3. Which is the correct English translation for "miércoles"?

- a) Monday
- b) Wednesday
- c) Friday
- d) Saturday

4. What day comes after "Thursday"?

- a) Tuesday
- b) Saturday
- c) Wednesday
- d) Friday

Topic: Colors

5. What color is "verde" in English?

- a) Blue
- b) Green
- c) Yellow
- d) Red

6. Which color is "purple"?

- a) Amarillo
- b) Morado
- c) Azul
- d) Naranja

Topic: Parts of the Body

7. What is the English word for "cabeza"?

- a) Head
- b) Hand
- c) Leg
- d) Eye

8. How do you say "ojos" in English?

- a) Nose
- b) Mouth
- c) Ears
- d) Eyes

Topic: Gender

9. What is the masculine form of "girl"?

- a) Woman
- b) Sister
- c) Boy
- d) Aunt

10. What is the feminine form of "uncle"?

- a) Aunt
- b) Mother
- c) Daughter
- d) Sister

Topic: Natural Numbers

11. How do you say "7" in English?

- a) Seven
- b) Six
- c) Eight
- d) Nine

12. What is the number for "nueve"?

- a) Ten
- b) Nine
- c) Eleven
- d) Twelve

Topic: Ordinal Numbers

13. What is the ordinal number for "primero"?

- a) Second
- b) First
- c) Third
- d) Fourth

14. What is the ordinal number for "cuarto"?

- a) Fifth
- b) First
- c) Second
- d) Fourth

Topic: Geometric Shapes

15. What is the English word for "círculo"?

- a) Triangle
- b) Square
- c) Circle
- d) Rectangle

16. How do you say "triángulo" in English?

- a) Triangle
- b) Square
- c) Rectangle
- d) Circle



Topic: Months of the Year

19. What is the English word for "enero"?

- a) January
- b) March
- c) June
- d) December

20. Which month comes after "October"?

- a) September
- b) December
- c) November
- d) August

Topic: Days of the Week

21. How do you say "domingo" in English?

- a) Monday
- b) Friday
- c) Sunday
- d) Saturday

Topic: Greetings

17. What is the English word for "hola"?

- a) Hi
- b) Bye
- c) Thank you
- d) Good night

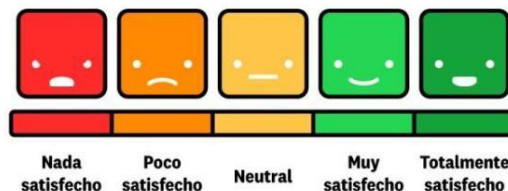
18. How do you say "adiós" in English?

- a) Hi
- b) Goodbye
- c) Good morning
- d) Hello

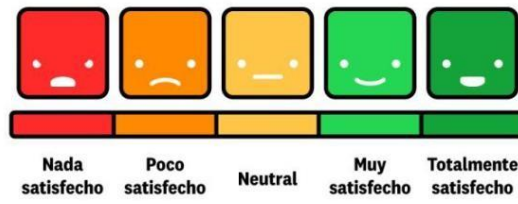
Section 2. Motivation and Usefulness

Instructions: Select the image that best represents how you feel in each situation.

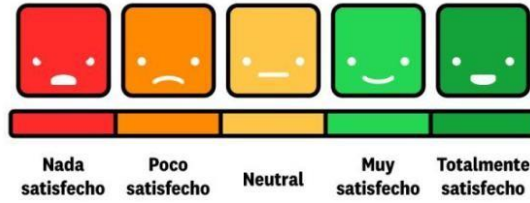
1. When I do activities like writing, copying texts, or memorizing, I feel:



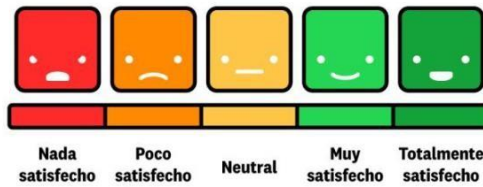
2. My English Classes make me feel:



3. When I do activities like singing, dancing, or playing, I feel:



4. When I do group activities with my classmates or friends, I feel:



THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLABORATION

Author: Lcda. Taimal Jimenez Carmen Elizabeth

Annex D. Field Diary



COLOR CODE FOR DATA ANALYSIS IN THE FIELD DIAR		
CATEGORIES	INDICATORS	COLOR
Comprehension	Level of vocabulary comprehension	BLUE
Retention	How long can students remember the learned words	GREEN
Usefulness	Active use of vocabulary Ability to integrate words into sentences and dialogues	PINK
Motivation	Level of interest and enthusiasm shown by students toward learning English vocabulary	YELLOW

DESCRIPTION	INTERPRETATION
Detailed description of the development of English classes in the different grades of elementary level at César Antonio Mosquera Educational Unit.	Coding of qualitative data obtained through the descriptions using the corresponding color for each category for analysis in Nvivo software

Annex E. Interview Guide

Teacher Interview Guide



Category: Conceptualization

- 1.- What do you understand by gamification?
- 2.- What are the differences between gamification and game-based learning?

Category: Comprehension

1. How do you think the use of games in your English classes helps students understand new vocabulary?
2. What differences have you observed in vocabulary comprehension between students who participate in playful activities compared to those taught using other methods?

Category: Retention

3. What types of games have you implemented to reinforce vocabulary retention, and how have students responded?

Category: Usefulness

4. From your perspective as a teacher, how do you assess the usefulness of games for teaching English vocabulary compared to other methods?
5. What positive impact do you see on long-term vocabulary development?

Category: Evaluation

- 6.- What strategies do you use to assess the vocabulary taught to your students?
- 7.- How do you carry out the feedback process after teaching vocabulary to your students?

Annex F. Instrument Validation



VALIDITY OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Dear professional, you have been chosen to participate in the evaluation process of the research instrument.


We thank you in advance for your contributions, which will help validate the instrument and obtain valid information, a required criterion for the research. Below, we present a checklist; please analyze and review the research instrument, whose objective is to diagnose the level of vocabulary development in the English language of elementary basic students at Unidad Educativa César Antonio Mosquera, in the 2024-2025 academic year. Based on your criteria and professional experience, we kindly ask you to validate this instrument for its application.

For each criterion, please consider the following scale:

1 Not acceptable	2 Slightly acceptable	3 Fair	4 Acceptable	5 Very acceptable
------------------	-----------------------	--------	--------------	-------------------

VALIDITY CRITERION	SCORE					ARGUMENT	COMMENTS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS
	1	2	3	4	5		
Content Validity				X		The questionnaire and the interview guide comprehensively address the key aspects for diagnosing the development of English vocabulary and understanding how play impacts learning. However, they could benefit from an expansion of the questions related to the context and application of vocabulary	Including questions that assess the use of vocabulary in real contexts will help ensure that students not only recognize it but also can apply it in different communicative situations, thus providing a more complete view of their development.

					in more varied communicative situations.	
Criterion Validity of Methodology				X	The selected methods (questionnaire, field diary, and interview guide) are appropriate for obtaining both quantitative and qualitative data, allowing for effective triangulation of results. The questionnaire enables a structured assessment, while the field diary and interview guide provide a deeper and more subjective perspective.	It is important for teachers to understand the use of the field diary and the color-coding system; including examples of observation records could improve consistency in data collection.
Validity of Intent and Objectivity of Measurement and/or Observation				X	The questions are designed to measure the concepts accurately and objectively. However, some questions in the motivation section could be subject to personal interpretation, which may affect the objectivity of the results.	Reformulating the questions in the motivation section to make them less open to interpretation or adding response options that reduce bias would be beneficial. For example, Likert scales could be used to quantify levels of interest and enthusiasm instead of relying solely on open-ended questions.
The questions align with the research objectives				X	The questions and categories are aligned with the research objectives, especially regarding the diagnosis of vocabulary level and the analysis of the characteristics of games as a didactic strategy.	Consider including an additional category in the questionnaire or interview guide that explores potential barriers students might encounter in learning

							vocabulary through play. This would help better tailor activities to the students' specific context.
Partial Total							
TOTAL	18/20 points						

Score

From 4 to 11: Not Valid – Reformulate	
From 12 to 14: Not Valid – Modify	
From 15 to 17: Improve	
From 18 to 20: Apply	X
Name and Surname	Lincon Oliver Echeverría Zurita
Academic Degree	Master in Curriculum & Instruction
Date	30/10/2024



.....
Lincon Oliver Echeverría Zurita

CC: 1307495430

su criterio y experiencia profesional, validar el presente instrumento para su aplicación.

Para cada criterio se debe considerar la siguiente escala

1 Nada aceptable	2 Poco aceptable	3 Regular	4 Aceptable	5 Muy aceptable
------------------	------------------	-----------	-------------	-----------------

CRITERIO DE VALIDEZ	PUNTUACIÓN					ARGUMENTO	OBSERVACIONES Y/O SUGERENCIAS
	1	2	3	4	5		
Validez de contenido					X	La estructura y las preguntas del cuestionario se alinean directamente con los objetivos de investigación. Los ítems seleccionados abordan temas clave para el diagnóstico del vocabulario, asegurando que el contenido cubra las áreas esenciales de comprensión, retención, motivación y uso activo del vocabulario en inglés, lo que justifica una puntuación máxima.	
Validez de criterio metodológico					X	Los métodos empleados, como cuestionarios y diarios de campo, son apropiados y efectivos para evaluar el desarrollo de vocabulario en niños de	

					básica elemental. Esto permite que el instrumento logre un análisis robusto y replicable, ofreciendo una alta confiabilidad, lo que respalda una valoración de 5.	
Validez de intención y objetividad de medición y/o observación				X	Las preguntas y los indicadores están diseñados de manera objetiva, minimizando sesgos y promoviendo una evaluación precisa del nivel de vocabulario. La estructura facilita la recolección de datos claros y objetivos, mereciendo así la puntuación más alta.	
Las preguntas responden a los objetivos de investigación				X	Cada pregunta en el cuestionario está orientada a medir aspectos específicos del aprendizaje de vocabulario y responde directamente a los objetivos planteados en la investigación. Esto garantiza que las preguntas tienen relevancia y adecuación, justificando el puntaje de 5.	
Total parcial					20	



TOTAL	20/20 puntos
-------	--------------

Puntuación

De 4 a 11: No Válida Reformular	
De 12 a 14: No Válida Modificar	
De 15 a 17: Válida mejorar	
De 18 a 20: Válida Aplicar	X
Nombres y apellidos	Luis Stiven Ponce Anchundia
Grado Académico	Master
Fecha	11 de noviembre de 2024



Formado electrónicamente por:
LUIS STIVEN PONCE
ANCHUNDIA

Luis Stiven Ponce Anchundia

Nombres y Apellidos

CC: 131484454-7

Nota: La validez deberá realizarse por cada ítem del instrumento de investigación.

Para cada criterio se debe considerar la siguiente escala


1 Nada aceptable	2 Poco aceptable	3 Regular	4 Aceptable	5 Muy aceptable
------------------	------------------	-----------	-------------	-----------------

CRITERIO DE VALIDEZ	PUNTUACIÓN					ARGUMENTO	OBSERVACIONES Y/O SUGERENCIAS
	1	2	3	4	5		
Validez de contenido					X	El instrumento es muy util para la validacion de conocimientos de vocabulario, asi como conocer la retencion de vocabulario despues de varias clases, o como post actividad.	
Validez de criterio metodológico					X	La metodologia en la recoleccion de datos en cada una de las propuestas es plausible.	
Validez de intención y objetividad de medición y/o observación					X	La valides del instrumento es de alta objetividad, conjuntamente con el standars de intencion sobre la investigacion.	

Las preguntas responden a los objetivos de investigación					X	Muy de acuerdo	
Total parcial	0	0	0	0	20		
TOTAL	/20 puntos						

Puntuación

De 4 a 11: No Válida Reformular	
De 12 a 14: No Válida Modificar	
De 15 a 17: Válida mejorar	
De 18 a 20: Válida Aplicar	X
Nombres y apellidos	Roberth Israel Ponce Martinez
Grado Académico	Master
Fecha	Oct 30, 2024

.....


Nombres y Apellidos: **Roberth Israel Ponce Martinez**

CC: **1308948692**

Nota: La validez deberá realizarse por cada ítem del instrumento de investigación.

ANNEX G. STORY



Once upon a time, in the city of Brightville, there was a boy named Tim who always forgot the days of the week. One day, his teacher, Miss Emily, gave him a magical calendar that could talk.

“Hello, Tim! I will help you remember the days of the week,” said the calendar with a cheerful voice.

On **Monday**, the calendar said, **“Today is Monday! M-m-monday! Let’s start the week with energy!”** Tim repeated, “Monday!”

On **Tuesday**, the calendar sang, **“It’s Tuesday! T-t-tuesday! Let’s learn something new!”** Tim laughed and said, “Tuesday!”

On **Wednesday**, the calendar cheered, **“Happy Wednesday! W-w-wednesday! We are in the middle of the week!”** Tim smiled, “Wednesday!”

On **Thursday**, the calendar whispered, **“Today is Thursday! Th-th-thursday! It’s almost the weekend!”** Tim shouted, “Thursday!”

On **Friday**, the calendar danced, **“It’s Friday! F-f-friday! Time to finish our work and have fun!”** Tim jumped and said, “Friday!”

On **Saturday**, the calendar laughed, **“Hooray! It’s Saturday! S-s-saturday! Time to play and rest!”** Tim clapped, “Saturday!”

On **Sunday**, the calendar yawned, **“It’s Sunday! S-s-sunday! Time to relax and get ready for a new week!”** Tim stretched and said, “Sunday!”

After a week practicing with his magical calendar, Tim never forgot the days of the week again. Since then, he loved saying their names every morning with a big smile.

The End.

ANNEX G. OBSERVATION GUIDE



Evaluation Criteria	Description	Rating Scale (1-5)
Attention during activities	Observes and follows instructions without getting distracted.	
Use of vocabulary in context	Applies learned words in sentences and activities.	
Interaction with peers	Actively participates in group dynamics and collaborates with classmates.	
Motivation and attitude	Shows enthusiasm and willingness to learn through play.	
Following instructions	Understands and correctly carries out the activities presented in English.	
Pronunciation accuracy	Pronounces new learned words correctly.	
Writing and spelling	Writes the learned vocabulary correctly with good spelling.	
TOTAL		

Rating Scale:

- **1:** Poor (Does not demonstrate the skill)
- **2:** Fair (Demonstrates the skill occasionally and with difficulties)
- **3:** Acceptable (Shows the skill with teacher support)
- **4:** Good (Shows the skill independently and adequately)
- **5:** Excellent (Demonstrates the skill independently and outstandingly)

Achievement average equivalence: To determine the level of learning mastery, the average score obtained in each criterion will be calculated and the following scale will be used:

- **1.0 - 1.9:** Low Level (Has not achieved the competency and requires intensive reinforcement).

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- **2.0 - 2.9:** Fair Level (Shows difficulties and needs more teacher support).
 - **3.0 - 3.9:** Acceptable Level (Develops the skill with occasional help and supervision).
 - **4.0 - 4.5:** Good Level (Manages the competency with autonomy and confidence).
 - **4.6 - 5.0:** Excellent Level (Fully masters the competency with high performance).