



INVESTIGACIÓN 

CONTEMPORANEA

desde una visión multidisciplinar

LIBRO 2. CIENCIAS SOCIALES



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Resumen

El libro 2 investigación multidisciplinaria, en su apartado ciencias sociales, incluye capítulos, que busca actualizar los conocimientos obtenidos mediante la observación y la experimentación, a través del uso de ciertas herramientas tecnológicas nuevas y modernas, que pueden mejorar las destrezas del estudiante para el aprendizaje del idioma inglés. El inglés se constituye hoy en día en el idioma de la comunicación internacional, y, por tanto, es un requisito indispensable en todas las áreas de educación para su avance y desarrollo. Se destaca otro capítulo acerca del impacto de la Pandemia por Covid- 19 en el sector del turismo y deporte, que están estrechamente relacionados, y que durante el período crítico de la pandemia conllevó cancelaciones de eventos, pérdidas financieras, recortes de empleos, produciendo un serio problema en estos sectores que subsistían de eventos con multitudes de personas; pero que, lamentablemente por el SARS COV 2, tuvieron una disminución considerable de ingresos. Finalmente, el libro de Ciencias Sociales presenta el capítulo acerca de la gestión de calidad de la educación superior en el Ecuador que explora la importancia de implementar sistemas efectivos de gestión de la calidad dentro del ámbito de las instituciones de educación superior. Al reconocer la creciente importancia de la excelencia académica y la creciente competencia entre las instituciones educativas, el artículo enfatiza la necesidad de prácticas sólidas de gestión de la calidad para garantizar la entrega de una educación de alta calidad y servicios centrados en el estudiante universitario.

Palabras Clave: Aprendizaje, inglés, destrezas, tecnología, gestión de calidad, educación, impacto de Covid 19.

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Capítulo I

The effectiveness of authentic materials through technology on seventh graders' listening comprehension skills

La eficacia de los materiales auténticos a través de la tecnología en la capacidad de comprensión oral de los alumnos de séptimo grado.

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1. Introduction

Listening plays a paramount role in English language acquisition, enabling learners to understand and interpret the spoken language. Indeed, Khaydarov (2023) defines this ability as a fundamental pillar to build up other language.

skills such as speaking, reading, and writing. In Ecuador, the Ministry of Education aims for students at elementary educational levels to develop their listening comprehension which helps them to identify and comprehend relevant information conveyed by native speakers in familiar contexts.

Many researchers have found out that elementary school students often struggle with listening comprehension skills, especially in predicting information, sequencing events, and understanding the main ideas, specific details, and vocabulary conveyed in audiovisual materials, which makes them feel bored and frustrated (Ilyasova and Seidaliyeva, 2022). In that sense, the use of authentic materials through technology has been considered an effective and innovative solution for developing this skill since they increase students' motivation and interest in learning the English language within real-life situations (Barzani et al., 2022). As an additional fact, they allow students to infer, recognize general messages, identify essential parts, understand keywords, and systematically order the events mentioned in the audiovisuals (Arsy et al., 2020; Páez, 2021; Mamadaminovich, 2021; Simamora and Oktaviani, 2020; Williams, 2018).

Considering the reasons given, this research seeks to improve English listening comprehension skills through the use of authentic materials among seventh-grade students at an elementary private school. On the basis of this objective, the following research question was stated: What is the level of improvement in English listening comprehension sub-skills when using authentic materials through technology among seventh-grade students at an elementary school? This will help to gain a deeper insight into the influence of authentic materials on listening comprehension and understand their practical usages within the field of teaching listening in English as a Foreign Language.

Bearing this information in mind, the present study outlines the following 7 sections: 1) "Abstract", which briefly describes the essentials of the research. 2) "Introduction" that presents the issue, the main rationale, and the importance of the study. 3) "Materials and methods" show procedures, instruments, and techniques employed to develop the study. 4) "Results" underlines the main findings before and after the intervention. 5) "Discussion", compares and contrasts the results obtained with the previous body of literature. 6) "Conclusions", state the key implications reached after the data analysis. 7) "References", which finally list the authors cited in the body text of this study

2. Literature review

The present section describes the theoretical foundations of two main titles such as (1) authentic materials and (2) listening comprehension skills. The former included the definition of authentic materials, their influence on EFL learning, and some of their types. The latter involved its conceptualization and the five sub-skills. All of this information was collected from different researchers, sources, and databases like Google Scholar and ERIC.

What are authentic materials?

Authentic materials refer to the spoken and written materials produced by native speakers that provide the audience with different real-life situations. According to Ruzievna (2022), these materials are created when speakers naturally and spontaneously use language to communicate with each other. Therefore, they are excellent resources to expose students to real discourse and increase their vocabulary to interact with the globalized world.

Authentic materials on English as a Foreign Language

Some studies on the use of authentic materials in language teaching argue that these materials can increase learners' motivation and interest in learning English, as they can relate to the topics and themes presented in them. Additionally, authentic

materials promote communicative competence because they provide learners with rich and diverse linguistic input, enabling them to encounter a range of vocabulary, grammar, and language functions. Finally, the authors suggest that using authentic materials can enhance learners' cultural awareness and understanding of the target language, as they can learn about the cultural and social context in which the language is used. These findings support the idea that authentic materials can be an effective tool for language learning, as they allow learners to engage with language in a more meaningful way and develop a deeper understanding of its cultural and social background (Joraboyev, 2021; Mufarrohah and Munir, 2022; Rao, 2019).

The implementation of authentic materials in the classroom offers a wide variety of advantages to the English language teaching-learning process, as they provide students with direct exposure to real language that prepares them to communicate effectively in the modern world. In this sense, Barzani et al. (2022) mention that "Using these materials to teach English will make the learning experience much more exciting, creative and inspiring for students" (p.3). As a result, the students will feel more motivated and develop a close relationship with the target language through the language skills such as speaking, reading, listening, and writing.

Another positive aspect of authentic materials is that they enable learners to acquire cultural aspects of the target language and successfully develop their listening comprehension skills. According to Iliysova and Seidaliyeva (2022), authentic audio-visual materials help students to distinguish real situations of the language, recognize semantic changes, and correctly understand the spoken messages conveyed by native speakers. Thus, it can be concluded that these resources make students better listeners and communicators.

Types of authentic materials

There are three types of authentic materials that can be used to improve listening comprehension skills. As Fachraini and Sartika (2019) state "Authentic materials can be in the form of printed, video and audio that can be found around them such

as newspapers, magazines, photos, reality shows, soap operas, short films, radio broadcasts, and others" (p. 277). Together, these resources help students to learn the English language in different real-life situations.

In this context, platforms like YouTube cover some authentic materials such as cartoons, conversations, TED talks, documentaries, and songs which can be selected taking into consideration the students' level, interests, and age.

Cartoons. Type of authentic material presents animated characters that describe stories humorously and give a moral about something. According to Ozer (2020), "Cartoons are children's programs that convey messages to children with scenarios and heroes by bringing life to drawn lines" (p.1349). That is to say, these cartoons are authentic materials focused on entertaining students, developing their creativity, and improving both their language skills and their cognitive skills.

Many researchers have shown that cartoons are highly effective in developing listening comprehension skills, as they include funny dialogues between characters that attract students' attention and curiosity. To illustrate this statement, Saputri et al. (2019) conducted a study with tenth-grade students, in which they concluded that cartoons helped participants to easily identify the main idea and sequence the events presented in the audiovisuals. They also highlighted cartoons as useful resources to increase students' vocabulary and promote their active participation during English lessons.

TED Talks. Labeled as a video authentic material, TED (Technology, Entertainment, and Design) has been broadly studied as an EFL resource to promote the development of listening comprehension (Wu, 2020). The essence of this material relies on the presentation of short films and conferences developed by expert speakers who seek to motivate listeners through their genuine experiences. This is what makes TED talks a splendid and authentic resource for improving EFL students' listening skills (Mojgan and Tollabi, 2019) since they immerse learners into real and spontaneous contexts such as real-world issues which Wu (2020) remarked as an efficacious manner to gain learners' attention.

Furthermore, among the language learning advantages of this resource, Ghory and Ghafory (2021) remarked the speakers' voice rate, speech accuracy, and quality, subtitles, and translations, along with the feature of watching and re-watching a lesson multiple times stated by Tilwani et al. (2022). Due to this wide range of elements, learners realize and benefit from the usage of the English language in diverse contexts, training their listening skills while obtaining new knowledge in turn (Tilwani et al., 2022).

Songs. In the research of Güler and Bozkurt (2021), they discussed why songs should be considered an authentic pedagogical resource to teach EFL listening. They explained the potential of these tools in lowering students' anxiety, improving students' listening skills, and nurturing positive attitudes toward English learning. These results joined the implications presented by Samad and Paris (2022) who stated that songs are meant to be beneficial in training at maximum students' listening comprehension since, in nature, songs demand learners to consciously recognize, discriminate, and analyze the words embedded in the lyrics to fully understand the meaning and intention of them. Thus, activities such as filling in the blank, catching the word, or blind listening (without looking at the song lyrics) are totally recommended to encourage students to academically train their listening comprehension (Melisa, Silviyanti, and Syamaun, 2022).

Conversations. Conversations that portray authentic examples of what native speakers frequently listen to represent a great source for EFL students' listening training (Tuanany, 2020) since learners familiarize themselves with each listening situation. This allows pupils to develop suitable listening strategies and adopt behavioral attitudes, presented in the situations displayed, which help them to comprehend the use of the target language (Alabsi, 2020). Djabborova (2020) recommends teachers introduce this type of authentic material in three stages 1) prompting students about the listening activity with some keywords that allow them to predict what the task will involve, 2) having students confirm their inferences through a range of different tasks, 3) asking learners their opinion on the situation presented, and 4) letting them relate that situation with their own experiences.

Documentary. Documentaries are defined as a form of narrative visualization that provides information beyond simply knowing facts, such as civic and cultural data (Chattoo, 2020). Currently, this authentic material has been increasingly used within the educational field to promote social awareness, influence individuals' behavior, and heighten their motivation towards solving an issue (Hynes, et al., 2020). For instance, Akazhanova (2021) explained that these English films might be implemented as an aid to assist the development of listening comprehension since they recreate scenarios where the target language is spoken by various characters in different accents. This somehow provides students with a general outlook of the language and trains their ears to distinguish numerous speech and non-speech conditions in the form of facts concerning the daily life, culture, and traditions of native speakers.

What is listening comprehension?

Listening comprehension is defined as an active process that consists of receiving and understanding spoken language. Nazarieh et al. (2022) claimed that "listening comprehension is a conscious and dynamic activity used by the learners to construct their own understanding by means of cognition and the existing contextual information" (p. 1). From this definition, it can be stated that listening comprehension is a challenging skill for non-native listeners since they need to identify, discriminate, and interpret the meaning of words and sentences to fully understand verbal messages. Tran and Duong (2020) added that there are two main factors that students need to consider when listening such as "(...) their language knowledge (i.e., vocabulary, sounds, and grammar) and background knowledge to comprehend what is spoken" (pp. 79-80). Based on this rationale, it can be understood that listening comprehension is a process that connects the language components with the context given during discourse.

Importance of listening comprehension skills

The ability to comprehend spoken language is vital for effective communication and language learning. In other words, nurturing this skill can represent improvements

in other language competencies, including speaking, reading, and writing as well as facilitate vocabulary, grammar, intonation, and pronunciation growth. Furthermore, the development of listening comprehension cultivates autonomous learning, which enables students to access authentic language sources beyond the classroom. Given these benefits, educators must prioritize the development of listening skills in their English language curriculums to equip learners with the language proficiency needed to acquire essential language skills that can benefit them in various aspects of their lives (Kuchkarova, 2021)

Listening comprehension sub-skills

As noted by Nazira et al. (2019), the listening comprehension sub-skills can be evidenced through several activities in which students recognize general and specific information of the aural material to answer the questions provided by the teacher. Within this framework, the most commonly used listening sub-skills are listening for predicting, listening for gist, listening for specific information, listening for understanding vocabulary, and listening for sequencing which allow students to effectively understand the content of authentic materials. These are described as follows:

Listening for predicting. It is a sub-skill that requires students to employ their prior knowledge to predict the content of visual material. Bao and Guan (2019) suggest that prediction is a cognitive strategy commonly employed to enhance listening comprehension, as it enables learners to establish connections between their learning and the listening material. It is worth noting that this strategy is critical for comprehending the messages conveyed by speakers, as it allows listeners to anticipate the type of information that will be presented during the listening process.

Numerous researchers have conducted various studies to demonstrate the effectiveness of utilizing prediction activities for improving students' listening comprehension abilities. Arsy et al. (2020), in their research, implemented the Predict-Observe-Explain strategy, where they discovered that prediction helps students to actively participate, enhance their knowledge, improve their listening skills, and cultivate both their

creativity and critical thinking abilities. Therefore, it can be concluded that listening for prediction is an exceptional sub-skill that provides students with the necessary background knowledge to contextualize authentic material.

Listening for gist. It refers to the comprehension of the central idea of discourse, irrespective of specific details mentioned in the listening material. Páez (2021) mentions "listener instead of listening to every speaker's words, just focus on the general topic of what they are talking about" (p. 15). As per the concept given by the author, it is crucial for teachers to encourage this sub-skill to facilitate students' understanding of the overall message.

Several authors concur that listening for gist is an effective sub-skill within the listening comprehension process, as it allows students to link their knowledge to the content of authentic material, thereby facilitating their comprehension of spoken language. Fuertes (2021) states that "Besides the other linguistic skills used when listening for gist, a person also uses the context and his/her prior knowledge to help him/her catch the whole picture of auditory messages" (p. 12). This quote supports the fact that listening for the main idea has a positive influence on students because it encourages them to apply their learning while listening to videos or audio.

Additionally, listening for gist can be utilized with various courses and authentic materials that provide students with real-life language. Siegel (2018) highlights that "Gist-level listening can occur with any type of aural text: conversations, lectures, news reports, songs" (p. 1). Based on the quote presented in this paragraph, it can be concluded that listening material should be integrated with listening for gist to motivate students and enhance their interest in acquiring the language.

Listening for specific information. This sub-skill entails identifying the crucial points presented by authentic materials such as songs, YouTube videos, and podcasts. According to Mamadaminovich (2021), this sub-skill refers to comprehending particular details. In general, it involves exposing learners to audiovisual materials in which they must concentrate on the relevant parts given by native speakers through their spoken discourse.

Furthermore, it is essential to note that one of the advantages of employing this sub-skill is that it enables students to listen to the essential parts of videos or audio, such as places, dates, numbers, professions, objects, and names, which are necessary details for comprehending the context of the discourse. In this regard, Lopez and Saldarriaga (2020) state that "This sub-skill will help them find the specific item they are looking for" (p. 18). Based on the viewpoint proposed by the authors, it can be inferred that teachers should promote listening for specific information in the English teaching-learning process to enhance students' listening comprehension skills.

Listening for understanding vocabulary. It discusses students' ability to recognize and comprehend words and phrases used by speakers during the listening process, which is a critical component of listening comprehension in English language learning. Simamora and Oktaviani (2020) emphasize the importance of this sub-skill and suggest that lesson plans should include listening activities that enable students to learn new vocabulary and apply it in real-life contexts.

However, it is worth noting that developing this sub-skill can be challenging for students, as they may encounter difficulty in understanding unfamiliar words and expressions commonly used by native speakers. Namaziandost et al. (2019) conducted a research study that revealed the negative impact of limited vocabulary on students' listening comprehension abilities. Thus, teachers should prioritize vocabulary instruction and provide students with the necessary tools to facilitate their listening process when exposed to authentic material.

Listening for sequencing. The final sub-skill, known as listening for sequencing, involves systematically arranging the information conveyed by the speakers in accordance with the details provided in the authentic materials. Williams (2018) defines this sub-skill as an advanced ability that can be utilized to reinforce students' listening comprehension skills. From this perspective, it can be inferred that sequencing the events narrated in the audio or video is an excellent means to evaluate students' understanding and learning.

Numerous scholars have suggested that listening for sequencing is an effective strategy to enhance students' listening comprehension skills, as it enables them to orderly organize the content heard in videos. In their study, Lopez and Saldarriaga (2020) noted that implementing this strategy made the English teaching and learning process more dynamic and engaging, thereby assisting students in improving their listening comprehension skills and developing various sub-skills, such as listening for predicting, listening for gist, and listening for specific information. Hence, it can be established that listening for sequencing has a positive impact on students during their listening process.

3. Methodology

This study was in nature quantitative, since it targeted the improvement of listening comprehension through authentic materials. Moreover, it utilized the action research design because of the focus provided on solving an educational issue identified by the teacher in turn who operated as a researcher (Gay et al., 2012).

The following study was conducted during the 2022-2023 school year with a population of students belonging to Basic Middle Education at an elementary school in the city of Loja. The sample consisted of a group of twenty-seven seventh-grade students, divided into four males and twenty-three females, with an average age between 11 and 13 years old, who had an A2 level of English language proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. This sample was selected by using a convenience method, as participants were chosen based on proximity and accessibility (Dawson, 2016).

The data for this study was collected considering the testing technique (Madsen, 1983) with a researcher-made pre-test and post-test. The pre-test assessed the students' listening comprehension skills before the treatment, while the post-test was employed for analysing the level of improvement of the students' listening comprehension sub-skills after the intervention with authentic materials (Creswell, 2012).

In that sense, the test consisted of one sequencing question and four closed multiple-choice questions that were developed with the selection method, as the students chose the correct answer from a group of options (Gay et al., 2012). These quantitative data obtained from the tests were compared with the national grading scale established by the Ministry of Education through the criterion-referenced scoring proposed by Gay et al. (2012), which was fundamental to determining the students' performance during the assessment process.

The research design used in this study was practical action research, as the pre-service teacher took on the role of a researcher and applied an action plan to improve English listening comprehension skills among seventh graders at an elementary school in Loja. According to Efron and Ravid (2019), practical action research involves six phases, including 1) identifying the problem, 2) gathering background information, 3) designing the study, 4) collecting data, 5) analyzing and interpreting data, and 6) implementing and sharing results.

The initial stage of the study focused on "identifying the problem" in the listening comprehension skills among students in a private school in Loja. This issue was identified during the practices carried out by the pre-service teacher, who noticed the seventh-grade students struggling to understand the listening materials provided in the English classes. Therefore, the target group was selected through convenience sampling due to their significant difficulties in listening skills.

After identifying the problem, the researcher gathered background information related to authentic materials and strategies used in teaching listening. The researcher reviewed the relevant literature on academic journals, books, and online resources. The gathered background information helped to inform the selection of appropriate teaching materials and strategies for the intervention.

The design of the study was aligned with Gagne's nine events of instruction, which included pre-listening activities, while-listening activities, and post-listening activities focused on improving students' listening comprehension skills (Gagne et al., 1916). The

lesson plans were designed with learning objectives, warm-up, objectives discussion, instruction, model, guided practice, independent practice, and assessment.

During the data collection phase, the researcher implemented the intervention plan using authentic materials such as conversations, cartoons, TED talks, documentaries and songs. It was developed over two months in eight weeks. Furthermore, the data was gathered using pre-test and post-test instruments.

The next step was to analyze and interpret the quantitative data collected during the intervention plan. This involved using different frequency tables and graphs to establish conclusions and recommendations. Finally, the results obtained during the research process were shared with the educational community to carry out further studies that allow teachers to improve their students' listening comprehension skills through authentic materials.

The quantitative data collected from the pre-test and post-test were processed by using descriptive statistics (Creswell, 2012) and represented through two frequency tables and a bar graph designed with the Excel program, which helped the researcher to measure the central tendency (mean) of the scores obtained by seventh graders in the five listening comprehension sub-skills such as "listening for predicting", "listening for gist", "listening for specific information", "listening for understanding vocabulary" and "listening for sequencing".

4. Results

The data of this research study were collected with a pre-test and a post-test which allowed researchers to verify the effectiveness of using authentic materials through technology to improve English listening comprehension skills among seventh-grade students at an elementary private school. The results will be presented in tables and a bar graph with their corresponding interpretation and analysis.

4.1. Pre-test results

Table 1

Pre-test scores on the performance of seventh-grade students' listening comprehension skills

Grading scale (2/2)	LP		LG		LI		LV		LS	
	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)
Grades (0-0,5)	7	26	3	11	5	19	8	30	0	0
Grades (0,6-1)	0	0	0	0	9	33	7	26	5	19
Grades (1,1-1,5)	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	30	0	0
Grades (1,6-2)	20	74	24	89	13	48	4	14	22	81
Total of students	27	100	27	100	27	100	27	100	27	100
Mean	1,48		1,78		1,39		1,15		1,81	

Note. LP = Listening for predicting, LG = Listening for gist, LI = Listening for specific information, LV = Listening for understanding vocabulary, LS = Listening for sequencing.

The above table illustrates the number and percentage of seventh-grade students who obtained scores between 0-0,5; 0,6-1; 1,1-1,5 and 1,6-2 in each of the listening comprehension sub-skills, such as "listening for predicting", "listening for gist", "listening for specific information", "listening for understanding vocabulary" and "listening for sequencing" during the application of the pre-test before implementing the proposal with authentic materials like cartoons, conversations, TED talks, songs, and documentaries.

From the data shown in Table 1, it can be seen that 74% of students achieved a score between 1,6-2 in the sub-skill of "listening for predicting" since the picture presented by the researcher was easy and clear. On the other hand, 26% of students got a

score between 0-0,5 because they did not correctly predict the topic due to various factors such as lack of motivation, interest, and concentration. Overall, these results revealed a mean score of 1,48 out of 2.

In terms of "listening for gist," the results show that 89% of the participants had a score between 1,6-2, which means that they were able to recognize the main idea from the conversation through the setting and context of the video. In contrast, 11% of them obtained grades between 0-0,5 since they could not understand the authentic material because of the native speakers' dialect and the limited use of this type of vocabulary in the teaching-learning process. In summary, the results indicated a mean score of 1,78 out of 2.

Likewise, Table 1 provides an overview of the sub-skill called "listening for specific information" where 48% of the sample obtained a score between 1,6-2, which shows that students clearly understood the key details of the whole conversation. Instead, 33% of the participants got grades between 0,6-1 due to the complex process of identifying unfamiliar words, phrases, and idiomatic expressions used by native speakers. Finally, 19% of them achieved scores in the range of 0-0,5 since they were not able to comprehend the content of the video. Taken together, these data gave a mean score of 1,39 out of 2.

The quantitative data gathered by the researcher indicate that 30% of the students had grades between 1,1-1,5 in the sub-skill of "listening for understanding vocabulary" because they could comprehend only some words from the authentic material. Likewise, 30% of them reached points in the range of 0-0,5 as they did not know the meaning of the words. On the other hand, 26% of the sample obtained scores between 0,6-1, which revealed that few students understood the vocabulary used during the conversation because of their low level of lexical variety. Last but not least, 14% of the participants achieved a score in the interval of 1,6-2 since they were able to recognize all the words mentioned by the English speakers. Together, these results provided a mean score of 1,15 out of 2.

Finally, the results on the sub-skill of "listening for sequencing" demonstrate that 81% of the participants achieved a score between 1,6-2 because they correctly order the events displayed in the conversation. On the other hand, 19% of them obtained grades in the range of 0,6-1 since they made some mistakes due to the speed of the dialogue between the native speakers. Together these data indicated a mean score of 1,81 out of 2.

Post-test results

Table 2

Post-test scores on the performance of seventh-grade students' listening comprehension skills

Grading scale (2/2)	LP		LG		LI		LV		LS	
	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)
Grades (0-0,5)	3	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grades (0,6-1)	0	0	0	0	2	7	0	0	0	0
Grades (1,1-1,5)	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	33	0	0
Grades (1,6-2)	24	89	27	100	25	93	18	67	27	100
Total of students	27	100	27	100	27	100	27	100	27	100
Mean	1,78		2,00		1,93		1,83		2,00	

Note. LP = Listening for predicting, LG = Listening for gist, LI = Listening for specific information, LV = Listening for understanding vocabulary, LS = Listening for sequencing.

Table 2 shows the number and percentage of seventh-grade students who obtained scores between 0-0,5; 0,6-1; 1,1-1,5 and 1,6-2 in the five listening comprehension sub-skills, such as "listening for predicting", "listening for gist", "listening for specific information", "listening for understanding vocabulary" and "listening for sequencing"

during the administration of the post-test after two months of the intervention plan with authentic materials like conversations, TED talks, songs, cartoons, and documentaries.

As can be seen from Table 2, 89% of the participants obtained scores between 1,6-2 in the sub-skill of "listening for predicting" since they correctly predicted the content of the video based on the setting of the picture, which helped them to have a prior idea of what the conversation was going to be about. On the other hand, 11% of them had grades in the range of 0-0,5 due to a lack of concentration during the assessment process. Taken together, these results indicated a mean score of 1,78 out of 2.

Moreover, Table 2 shows that the sub-skill called "listening for gist" was improved by 100% of the seventh-year students who achieved a score between 1,6-2, which means that they were able to identify and choose the main idea of the English conversation. Overall, the data revealed a mean score of 2 out of 2.

Regarding "listening for specific information", data reveal that 93% of the students obtained scores in the range of 1,6-2 since they understood all the essential parts of the conversation between the native speakers, which allowed them to complete the test successfully. In contrast, 7% of the participants achieved a score between 0,6-1 because they still had problems identifying key details. Together, these data provided a mean score of 1,93 out of 2.

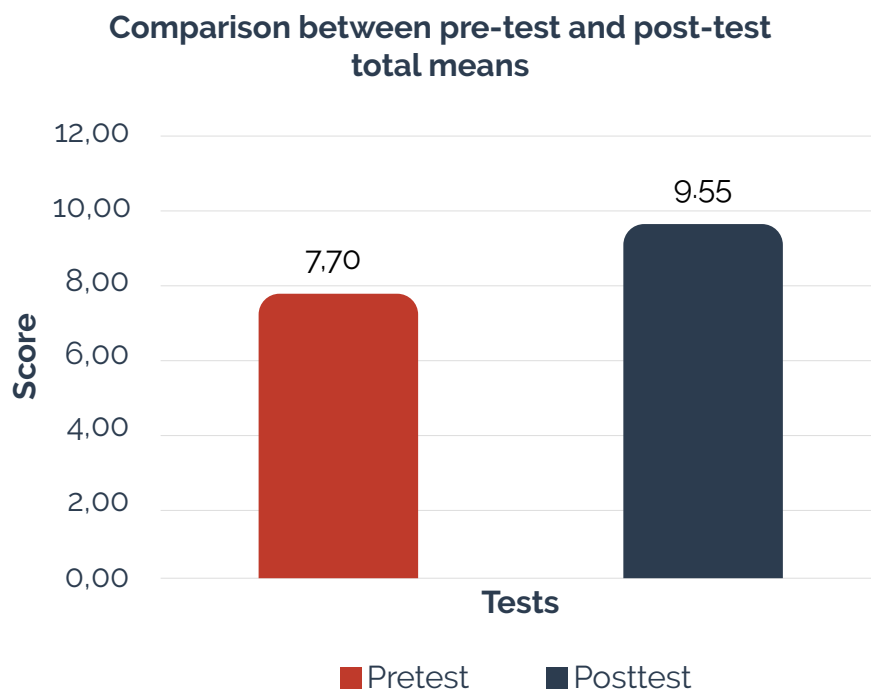
In addition, the results presented in Table 2 demonstrate that 67% of the students achieved a score between 1,6-2 in the sub-skill of "listening for understanding vocabulary" because they identified all the words mentioned by the native speakers. However, 33% of them obtained grades in the interval of 1,1-1,5 since they struggled to understand some of the expressions used during the English conversation. In summary, the results gave a mean score of 1,83 out of 2.

Finally, the data collected by the researcher in the sub-skill of "listening for sequencing" indicates that 100% of the students obtained a score between 1,6-2 since all of them could correctly order the events of the conversation. As a result, the mean score was 2 out of 2.

4.3. Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test results

Figure 1

Comparison between pre-test and post-test total means on the performance of seventh-grade students' listening comprehension skills



The present bar graph compares the total mean score obtained by the seventh-grade students during the pre-test and post-test in order to show the impact of authentic materials on the improvement of participants' listening comprehension sub-skills such as "listening for predicting", "listening for gist", "listening for specific information", "listening for understanding vocabulary" and "listening for sequencing".

Based on the above results, it can be seen that 100 % of the students got a total mean score of 7,70 out of 10 in the pre-test, which placed them in the satisfactory qualitative rating scale according to the Ministry of Education, whereas the overall post-test mean was 9,55 out of 10, allowing them to move up in the highly satisfactory

rating scale. Undeniably, this data demonstrated the importance of applying different authentic materials such as conversations, TED talks, songs, cartoons, and documentaries to develop the students' listening comprehension sub-skills since these provided them with a meaningful teaching-learning process within the classroom.

5. Discussion

What is the level of improvement in English listening comprehension sub-skills when using authentic materials through technology among seventh-grade students at an elementary school in Loja city?

In this study, the seventh-grade students achieved a total improvement of 1.85 points in their listening comprehension after the treatment with authentic materials. That is to say, their mean score on the post-test increased in comparison to their pre-test. In that sense, at the end of the intervention, this group of young learners was able to accurately predict what the English material was about by just watching and listening to the teacher's prompts, as well as, they recognized the general idea and identified the requested information on audio and videotapes. Finally, the students also boosted their English vocabulary and rehearsed their listening for sequence sub-skill. These results are attributed to the use of authentic materials since they introduced the learners to real-world issues in which the target language was being used. This somehow caught students' interest in the English language because they could see that the words they were going to learn were useful to keep the conversation in spontaneous situations, which kept them concentrated while listening.

Considering the aforementioned information, these results corroborate the fact that authentic materials can be used as such a source to enhance listening skills as stated by Mojgan and Tollabi (2019). Moreover, according to Saputri et al. (2019), students can find authentic materials interesting which enables them to master their skills of main idea gathering and event sequencing, just as the participants of this study did. Finally, as noted by Akazhanova (2021) authentic materials facilitate the development of word recognition during listening since students get exposed to several speech

dialects which demand them to concentrate even more in order to identify the words. This can explain why the learners of this study enhanced their sub-skills of listening for understanding vocabulary and specific information, since the authentic materials introduced depicted various real-life scenarios with characters of numerous cultural backgrounds who each pronounced the words differently.

This study was subject to some limitations that can be addressed in future research. The first was related to the unexpected situations that occurred in the classroom which did not allow the students to successfully complete their listening comprehension exercises and the second was the lack of authentic materials according to listeners' level and age since most of them were structured with advanced grammar and vocabulary.

6. Conclusions

Based on the results gathered, it can be concluded that 1) The use of authentic materials through technology allowed the participants of this study to significantly improve their listening comprehension sub-skills in terms of listening for predicting, listening for gist, listening for specific information, listening for understanding vocabulary, and listening for sequencing. 2) Authentic materials can be a great source of motivation for students in English language learning and help them to keep focused on listening. 3) Through the use of technology, authentic materials help to recreate numerous settings, which can be found significantly interesting for learners, where the target language is used naturally in the form of animated videos, educational stories, and genuine audiotapes allocated in different web sources. For these reasons, the conduction of further research that studies the effects of authentic materials on other language skills, in bigger samples, longer time lapses, and different educational levels is totally recommended. This will help to understand more the scope of this variable on English language learning.

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Capítulo II

Storytelling in simulated environments for the development of the English-speaking skills

Narración de cuentos en ambientes simulados para el desarrollo de la destreza de hablar inglés

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1. Introduction

Speaking skill is an important tool for learners of English to express a message or to communicate for different purposes effectively (Celce-Murcia, 2019). This skill is one of the most essential components in the English learning process since it allows users to interact in the same language. For that reason, the Ministry of Education (MINE-DUC), has included this subject in its national curriculum to enhance the language level established by the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR). The students who belong to the Bachillerato General Unificado level at the end of the second year must achieve the B1.2 level of English proficiency which allows learners to be able to have basic conversations and introduce themselves, and others.

The development of speaking skills is the biggest challenge in learning a second or foreign language. This happens because students usually do not feel encouraged at the moment of speaking. They rarely raise their hands to answer a question voluntarily so teachers most of the time force them to say something by asking straight away a determined student. What is more, when they have to speak, they feel very insecure about what they pretend to say. Many authors such as Doğan and Selcen (2021), and Marzuki et al., (2016), have found that students have problems with speaking skills due to physiological, or sociological effects on speaking caused by their anxiety of themselves at the moment of producing a message. For that reason, it has been considered to apply digital storytelling to improve students' speaking skills. Zuhriyah (2017) states clearly that "Storytelling can help to solve problems of the hesitation and weakness of speaking".

In order to face the gap in speaking skills, it has been established the following central research question: How does storytelling help learners improve speaking skills through simulated environments with students of Bachillerato General Unificado at a high school in Loja city? This general research has been derived into two sub-question: What is the effectiveness of storytelling on the development of English-speaking skills through simulated environments, and what are the students' perceptions about

the advantages of storytelling in developing students' speaking skills components through simulated environments?

In order to carry out this study, action research was planned. The researcher made a pre-test to determine the level of speaking that students had at the beginning of the proposal, and a post-test was conducted at the end of the study. It was also necessary to apply a questionnaire to know the students' perceptions about the experience of learning through storytelling in simulated environments. Therefore, it was possible to gather quantitative and qualitative data that helped to answer the research questions. The implementation of strategies for storytelling in simulated environments permitted students to face their difficulties in speaking skills. Likewise, it can be said that the present research work provided an important contribution since it implemented storytelling by using simulated environments to improve students' English-speaking skills. The biggest advantage of this research benefited both teachers for new methodological styles and learners for their improvement in this skill.

The following chapter contains seven parts, the first one is the abstract, which is a summary of what the chapter is about. The second one is the introduction, which is about the most relevant points about the variable under study. The third one is the methodology, which presents where, and how, the research was carried out. Next, the result expresses the main findings. After that, is the discussion, which contains an analysis of the findings related to other authors or previous studies. The conclusions section mentions what the researcher found and concludes. Then, the recommendations suggest or propose something derived from the findings. Finally, the references give reliability to this work and put it in context.

2. Literature review

To argue the development of this chapter, the conceptual and scientific foundations, theoretical bases, and their respective authors that are considered relevant to this research will be presented below.

Simulated Environments

Simulated Environments, also called Virtual Reality (VR), is a sophisticated simulation of an environment that slightly seems to be in that situation using technological equipment. Liu et al. (2017) affirm that the idea of Virtual reality is to create a fantasy of what people are watching. The purpose of virtual reality (VR) is to create those participants supposed to be in that virtual space and be part of what is happening (p.19). Likewise, Seidel & Paul (1997) defined virtual reality as “human immersion in a synthetic environment”; so that, farther from this fantasy, virtual reality is designed to be computerized, synchronously, and even controlled through body movements. Therefore, VR has been considered a tool to be implemented in the educational field. That is why VR provides multiple benefits that contribute to the improvement of students' learning.

Virtual Reality in Education

Currently, the advancement of technology and the teaching-learning process have been influenced by VR. This development has created a surround where students can have the opportunity to be immersed and explore the capabilities that VR has to gain students' attention. In that way, the students will demonstrate interest, develop their target skills in the target language, and will get meaningful learning. To support this claim, Kamenov (2017, par. 4) states in his paper that he affirms that the benefits of bringing VR to the educational field involve relevance, creativity, engagement, and participation. For that reason, VR is an innovative teaching tool that provides many ways to communicate, share, and interchange information, knowledge, and skills.

Simulated Environments in the Teaching Process

Simulation inside the teaching-learning process contains a wide variety of advantages. It adapts to students' needs, time, speeds, and knowledge. This technique promotes putting into practice what they know, and that helps students learn by themselves. Besides, VR through situations allows students to be creative and thoughtful. The

main problem with this explanation is that people tend to think that VR's purpose in this field is to offer diversion to students. However, there is an inconsistency with this argument because VR contributes to learners being integrated into this world. Virtual Reality allows being capable of solving problems, becoming talented children, and developing their metacognitive abilities. Although, Shaviniva (2013) differs in that innovation is an extremely important element in the educational process. Her theory is different from others in that innovation does not build innovators, but this is an alternative way of teaching, which helps students develop their talents, motivation, and critical thinking since students are not going to demonstrate an interest in it at all.

Blended Environments

Interestingly, blended learning is a kind of method that mixes both traditional with modern classrooms. Modern technological tools provide a wide, flexible space for teaching and learning. Storytelling immersed in blended learning environments develops the skills of participating interactively. It provokes in students the necessity of becoming self-aware of their knowledge to construct the ideas to then say them. In contrast, this method gives students the opportunity of learning at any time, in any place, since it helps their formative assessment.

The teaching is no longer to pick up a pen and paper to write and memorize something. Instead, Abouchacra points out this statement.

A blended model means that learning is no longer constrained by the timing and location of a traditional lecture. Instead, coupling face-to-face learning with online instruction can provide students and educators with more flexibility than the traditional classroom can. In this environment, students have access to supplementary course material such as readings or recorded lectures. This means students can choose when and where they study, as well as how often they access material to fully understand a concept. Blended learning also gives instructors additional flexibility. (2022, p. 7)

Storytelling

Storytelling is more than the art of telling something, it promotes communication and interaction at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. It can be told through games that inspire purposeful conversation. Friday (2014) Storytelling as the word itself describes it is the art of telling something with the purpose of, getting attention, and motivating those who are listening or reading to speak. The storytelling technique provides students with the chance to go through a story, express thoughts, and emotions, know more about a different culture, and be able to connect with that moment. It has a variety of materials to be implemented, and teachers can use them to create a new story. It can be represented by singing, showing pictures, gestures, or in a written way.

Recent studies have manifested that storytelling is an effective method to teach a foreign language, since it breaks the rule of traditional classes. From that point of view, it is easy to know how efficient storytelling is in the teaching-learning process. Likewise, it wakes up students' curiosity and reflection while they watch or listen to the story.

Types of Storytelling

Throughout history, telling stories has become an art. This art keeps preserving our culture, and in that way, there have been appearing different ways to tell stories, there are four types of storytelling which are described above

Oral Storytelling: It has become an important part of our society since the main purpose of oral storytelling is to pass information from one to another. One of the main characteristics is that oral storytelling seeks to entertain, reflex, and share life experiences or fantasy stories. There are many ways of storytelling to be expressed such as singing, reciting poetry, games, or telling jokes.

Visual Storytelling: This type of storytelling has been involved in the art field. It can be represented by paintings, drawings, photos, illustrations, or infographics. Currently,

modern technology has been modified through a screen using cartoons or another application to get the audience's attention.

Written Storytelling: Writing stories is another incredible and unique way to express feelings and emotions through different styles. These styles are designed for all kinds of people who are interested in romance, sci-fi, comedy, or love.

Digital storytelling: these days' technology has been the biggest tool for teaching since you can combine the previous type of storytelling with new digital elements even if it can add music, voices, and so on. On the internet, there are many options to create a story or just use one which has been already designed.

"Plotagon" Application

Some applications allow working with storytelling. The creator of this application Love says that "Plotagon" can produce animated movies of text dialogue (2013). The major objective of this platform is to potentiate critical thinking skills, enrich students' creativity, and enhance communication among students. Technically, this tool consists of two main sets of scenes and characters. The user has the chance to choose the sets, spaces, characters, kind of background, and dialogues, and give them a voice. The main choices why "Plotagon" needs to be immersed in the teaching-learning process are: it is an online free tool, and you have many amazing options for your scenes and a variety of characters for any situation. From the curricular point of view: It allows the expression of ideas and sharing of knowledge, during this part, students will be involved, and so they will participate actively and logically.

Learning by doing something is a great motivation for teachers as for students because the management of this tool develops the student's multiple intelligences. Its use will provide many solutions to today's students' problems with speaking skills. Giving them access to knowledge through the use of simple tools promotes them the opportunity to get meaningful and lifelong learning, especially in the skill focused.

Avatars

Avatars are another simulation of the real world such as people, animals, places, and so on. They have been created to be part of interaction in virtual spaces. Antonio (2019) One of the biggest advantages is that Avatars can be used according to what the tutor wants to present. Avatars offer students the opportunity to engage students inside an unreal, imaginary experience that occurred in the surroundings they are living. In other words, it is said that Avatars help those students who have problems interacting with others. So, avatars are not only technological toys, but also, allow students to communicate by expressing feelings, thoughts, and ideas. It changes the role of the tutor towards one sophisticated guide as well.

Speaking skills

Speaking skills is a fundamental skill that all foreign language learners need to achieve success and obtain a fruitful, clear conversation. To be clearer about the definition of this skill. Zuhriyah (2017) claims that communication is part of our daily life and is developed by speaking. This skill allows one to interact and express what a speaker means orally. In that way, Bahadorfar & Omidvar, (2014) argue that speaking skills are a crucial tool to communicate with each other.

Speaking is one of the productive skills of English language learning. Derakhshan, (2016) states that English contains four skills which are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Inside those skills, speaking and writing belong to this category. They are said that they are the hardest to be developed for many factors such as their practice, knowledge of the language, and their influence in an English environment. Therefore, Derakhshan affirms that speaking skill is difficult to learn, so this skill should be acquired cooperatively.

During learning English Oradee (2012) indicates that speaking is the skill more important to be achieved. This skill allows pupils to interact and transmit what they think in a real situation. In order to interact, students have to use the language fluently and

effectively. To enrich the effective use of the language, students must get over some difficulties such as pronunciation, intonation, and coherence. Nevertheless. The same author reports that second English learners face some troubles at the moment of acquiring the language. The lack of students' self-confidence when they have the opportunity to communicate with a native speaker or even in the EFL classroom. In other words, students feel scared of making mistakes when they are using the language. As a result, communication sometimes tends to be weak or misunderstood.

Fortunately, many technological tools have been immersed in the classrooms to improve the learners' speaking skills. Teachers have adopted it to motivate and encourage students to speak as much as they can. Therefore, the presence of the internet and its advantages have gone hand in hand with the teaching process, especially in the teaching of speaking skills.

Accounting for what has been mentioned, to become a master in speaking skills it is important to know that some components must be learned which are pronunciation, accuracy, cohesion, grammar, and vocabulary. To enhance this skill in the EFL classroom, teachers have to offer a methodology that implements communication by using authentic materials or technology.

Components of Speaking

Regarding the basic components of English-speaking skills, Cameron (2001) points out that to correctly produce a language. It is mandatory to use the appropriate components, to transmit the message effectively and in an exact way. Puma (2016) corroborates that enriching speaking skills demand adequate use of these components such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation that need to be transmitted with accurate fluency at the moment of learning a second language.

Pronunciation

Every single language has its own dialect. Pronunciation is how a language is spoken. This component refers to the act or manner of pronouncing a series of words to produce specific sounds. It can involve physical acts, eye movements, facial expressions, and gestures. In other words, pronunciation contributes to the message or the intentions of the person who is talking will be clear, understandable, and direct.

According to Gilbert (2008), pronunciation involves many challenges. The most important one is that the teacher does not normally have time to teach their students the sounds of the words, and when they do have time to teach them, they help them with the sounds of words, but sometimes they find some other challenges that hamper them from continuing teaching pronunciation (p. 1).

Fluency, Accuracy, and Complexity

According to Goh & Burns (2012) "the effects of cognitive processing demands on learners' language use is that they may not have adequate cognitive resources to produce speech that is both fluent and adequate" (p. 42). Each of these components is measured together and shows a proficient domain of the language since they are so important at the moment of producing the target language. So, in this way, the authors gave meaning to each one of the components to have a clear understanding of them.

3. Methodology

Setting and Participants

This research work was conducted at a private high school in the city of Loja for students who belong to the second-year-high school level, during the 2022-2023 school year. It is located in a highland area in the south of Ecuador in South America, whose geographic coordinates are 3° 59' 35.27" South, and 79° 12' 15.19" West.

The sampling group was selected by convenience, which is the process of taking the desired members for the study based on the accessibility that the researcher had (Gay et al., 2012). This students' group was naturally homogenous, which fits well with the research design. Finally, to collect the data, participants were provided with an anonymous code to comply with the ethical principle of privacy.

Method and Research Design

As previously mentioned, the research problem of this study was how storytelling helps to improve English-speaking skills through simulated environments among second-year students of BGU at a high school in Loja city, during the 2022-2023 school year. To figure out this issue, the researcher used an action research model with a mixed focus which combines both quantitative and qualitative collection of numerical and narrative data (Creswell, 2012; Gay et al., 2012).

Furthermore, this study used action research since its main goal was to investigate a specific situation that improves the practice (Creswell, 2012) and contributes to solving a problem in which the researcher is part of the problem and elaborated on a solution for this problem. This model has been suitable because this study utilized a sequence in the following stages suggested by Efrat and Ravid (2022). The authors assume that cyclical action research begins with a question and finishes with the implementation of enough knowledge which allows the execution of the research work focused on the research question.

This model of research has six important stages of cyclical research. The first one focused on identifying the main problem to be solved. The second step involved the process of gathering all the information available about the problem that the researcher decided to explore. In the third step, the researcher designed a plan for the methods to be used in the study. Therefore, in the fourth step, the researcher gathered all the data in the target group where the problem was found. The fifth step shows the interpretation of the information obtained. Finally, the sixth step is based on presenting the research analysis (Efrat and Ravid, 2022).

Data Collection

The testing technique was used with the instrument of pre-test, which allowed the collection of data before the intervention. This technique is used to examine people's knowledge to determine what that person knows or has learned. (Madsen, 1983). While the post-test helped to identify the effect that storytelling through simulated environments had on speaking skills. Moreover, there was a selection method used to score through the criterion-referenced scoring suggested by Gay et al. (2012). Likewise, the technique of survey with the instruments of a questionnaire was applied to gather information about students' perceptions of the influence of digital storytelling on the development of speaking skills. This survey included closed-ended and open-ended questions in order to argue the students' answers (Creswell, 2012).

Data Analysis

Considering the design of the study, it is important to mention that the researcher used descriptive statistics through the Microsoft Excel program, which was useful for analyzing the results gathered in the questionnaire. The data were categorized and analyzed with themes with the indicators (Creswell, 2012). The data helped to support the outcomes about the influence of digital storytelling on speaking skills. These data were analyzed based on the students' perceptions using an adaptation of the Likert scale that allowed the researcher to organize and set these results.

4. Results

Pre-test and Post-test

Objective 1: To identify the effectiveness of storytelling on the development of the speaking learning experience by using simulated environments among second-year students of high school.

The following segment shows the results obtained throughout the research. The pre-test was administered at the beginning of the intervention, and a post-test was applied at the end, respectively. These instruments allowed the researcher to measure students' speaking skills such as "pronunciation", "fluency", "accuracy", "vocabulary", and "coherence".

Figure 1
Pre-test results.

Results gathered from the Pretest of the Second year BGU students' speaking skills components.

Grading scale (2/2)	Pronunciation		Fluency		Accuracy		Vocabulary		Coherence	
	Frequency (F)	(%)	Frequency (F)	(%)	Frequency (F)	(%)	Frequency (F)	(%)	Frequency (F)	(%)
Grades (0-0,5)	3	10	4	13	5	17	6	20	5	17
Grades (0,6-1)	7	23	8	27	7	23	6	20	3	10
Grades (1,01-1,5)	8	27	6	20	9	30	9	30	9	30
Grades (1,6-2)	12	40	12	40	9	30	9	30	13	43
Total of Students	30	100%	30	100%	30	100%	30	100%	30	100%
MEAN		1,48		1,43		1,37		1,21		1,46

TOTAL OF MEAN = 6,91

What is it interesting in the data in Table 1, is that students presented many deficiencies in their speaking skills. Therefore, they were not able to attain the average set by the national grading scale (7/10). For that reason, it was crucially necessary to plan and carry out an intervention plan that empowers the skill under study. This table, shows the number of students and the percentage of scores acquired in the pre-test between 0-0,5; 0,6-1; 1,1-1,5; and 1,6-2 per component, such as "pronunciation", "fluency", "accuracy", "vocabulary", and "coherence". These skills were evaluated

before the intervention to identify the effect of implementing digital storytelling with the Plotagon Application.

Regarding the "pronunciation" component, with a mean of (1,48/2), 40% of students had a score of 1,6-2, which means students did not have problems producing a message. It is followed by 27% who got a grade between 1,01-1,5 which is almost good pronunciation. 23% obtained a grade between 0,6-1, showing some trouble in pronunciation, and 10% got a score of 0-0,5 because their speech was unintelligible, they made mispronunciations and hesitation which caused a misinterpretation of the message and reduced clarity at times.

Similarly, in the "fluency" component, with a mean of (1,43/2), 40% of the students scored 1,6-2, as they found it easy to speak faster and with confidence. Likewise, 20% accomplished a grade of 1,01-1,5 which means that their fluency was not the best but not unsatisfactory. On the other hand, 27% reached a score of 0,6-1 which reflected the students' difficulties using suitable words at the moment of speaking. Additionally, in 13% with a 0-0,6 score, the students had complications speaking quickly due to their limited vocabulary and filler words which made the message difficult to understand.

As for the "accuracy" component with a mean of (1,37/2), 30% of students with a score of 1,6-2 did not make mistakes in relation to grammar structures, and the message was understood. The 1,01-1,5 score with 30% of students showed that they faced some obstacles to be direct and precise. Unlike the last grade, 23% of students obtained a score of 0,6-1, which meant that students dealt with the organization of their ideas. Unfortunately, 17% of students got a score of 0-0,5 because they could not manage this component at all. Their responses were not clear at all and the sentences were weak with deficient utterances.

With reference to the "vocabulary" component, the result was not as satisfactory as expected, with an average of (1,21/2). 30% of the students scored 1,6-2 which means that the students had a wide knowledge of words that allowed them to describe anything. In this sense, the other 30% that achieved a score of 1,01-1,5 presented minimum problems remembering some words to describe something or telling

information. Lamentably, 20% with a grade of 0,6-1 demonstrated that they lack enough vocabulary to express ideas. However, the last 20% scored 0-0,5, which shows that when the students had to describe an image, they found it impossible to convey an adequate and accurate description.

Concerning the "coherence" component, with a mean of (1.46/2), 43% of the students with a score of 1,6-2 successfully passed this component, as they had no problems linking their ideas. Apart from this, 30% of students got a score of 1,01-1,5 since they express roughly great and clear ideas. On the contrary, 10% with a grade of 0,6-1 showed that making coherent sentences was such hard work. 17% of the students with a score of 0-0,5 were not able to handle the linker to create sentences and express precise ideas. They knew the linkers but used them inadequately, which did not allow them to express a complete thought and broke the sequence of the message, with the consequent loss of coherence.

In a nutshell, students' lowest performance was reflected in the "vocabulary" component, which refers to the suitable use of expressions, or words to convey clear ideas about the topic to be talked about. Unlike that, the highest performance was seen in the "pronunciation" component, which stands for the flexible understanding and intonation throughout the message. Nevertheless, fluency, accuracy, and coherence were also some of the main focuses for the researcher to improve during the intervention proposal.

Figure 2*Post-test results*

Results gathered from the Post-test of the Second year BGU students' speaking skills components.

Grading scale (2/2) Frequency (F)	Pronunciation		Fluency		Accuracy		Vocabulary		Coherence	
	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)
Grades (0-0,5)	1	3	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0
Grades (0,6-1)	4	13	10	33	9	30	1	3	3	10
Grades (1,01-1,5)	10	33	7	23	10	33	8	27	6	20
Grades (1,6-2)	15	50	13	43	10	33	21	70	21	70
Total of students	30	100%	30	100%	30	100%	30	100%	30	100%
MEAN	1,65		1,55		1,48		1,88		1,86	
TOTAL OF MEAN = 8,38										

Table 2, illustrates the number of students and the percentage of scores obtained during the post-test between 0-0,5; 0,6-1; 1,1-1,5; and 1,6-2 per component, such as "pronunciation", "fluency", "accuracy", "vocabulary", and "coherence". This was evaluated after 40 hours of intervention to identify the effect of implementing digital storytelling with the Plotagon Application.

Regarding the "pronunciation" component, with a mean obtained of (1,65/2). 50% of the students had a score of 1,6-2 improved significantly since students could pronounce almost many words without a second thought. This reflected not only the students' engagement but also the teacher's competence in teaching basic phonetic sounds. 33% with a grade of 1,01.1,5 accomplished improving their pronunciation even though they make some pronunciation mistakes. With a score of 0,6-1,

13% of students kept struggling with the phonetic sounds. On the other hand, 3% of the students got a score of 0-0,5 due to their no-attendance or because they did not pay attention and learned some basic phonetic sounds.

With regard to the "fluency" component, the mean obtained was (1,55/2), interestingly, 43% of students' speech improved even though there was not the highest level of fluency, but the message was captured and understandable to the listeners. Likewise, 23% of the students with a grade of 1,01-1,5 had almost a fast way of telling and conveying their intentions even though they paused rarely. Whereas the 0,5-1 score had a 33% which means that students took time to think, and sometimes they used filler words, but finally, the message was logical.

Talking about the "accuracy" component the mean obtained was (1,48/2), 33% of students obtained a score of 1,6-2 because students' production was clearer and as direct as expected. While, 33% with a score of 1,01-1,5, and 30% with a score of 0,6-1 make reference to students who had almost few grammatical mistakes at the moment of speaking. Although 3% of students produced rare mistakes in sentences they were occasional, this allowed students to immediately provide themselves with a self-correction.

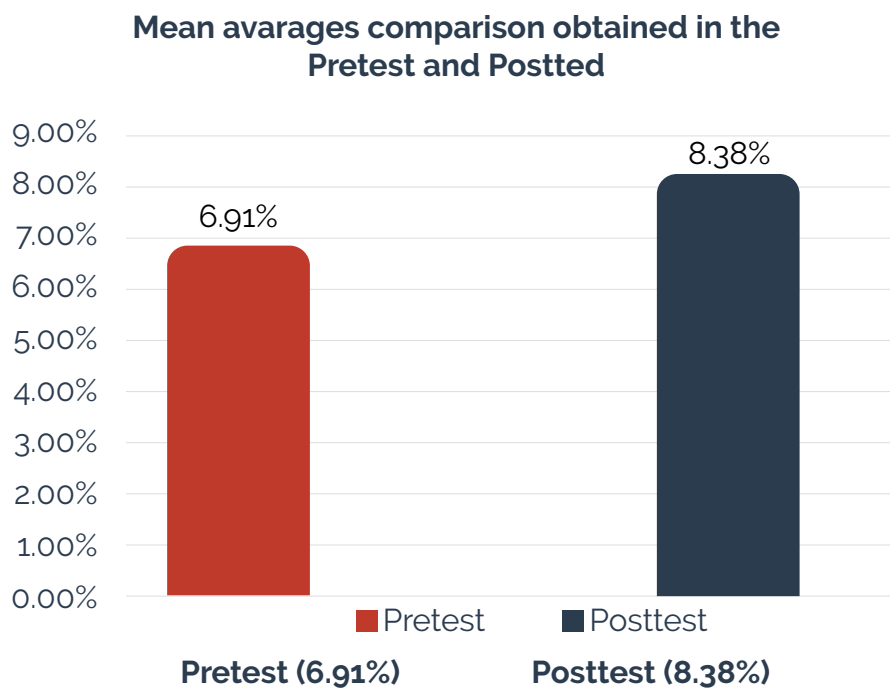
As for the "vocabulary" component with an of (1,84/2), the result was surprisingly unexpected since 70% of students got a score of 1,6-2 the contents taught, the stories, and the creation of morals promoted new useful and suitable vocabulary to strengthen sentences and convey information. Followed by 27% with a score of 1,01-1,5 which means students got to extend their lexis, However, 3% still struggle with this component since they could not remember the exact vocabulary for what they were talking about.

Regarding the "coherence" component with a mean of (1,86/2), in the 1,6-2 score 70% of students' English production changed notably in their performance at the moment of speaking since they learnt deeply how to use correctly the connectors for contrasting or adding information without losing the sequence of the message. Unlike, in the pre-test grade of 1,01-1,5 went down 10%, which means that students started using

the connectors accurately. Whereas, 10% of students with a grade of 0,5-1 showed some difficulties in strengthening sentences by using appropriate connectors.

Figure 3

Comparison between Pre-test and Post-test results



It is satisfactory to say that the results obtained in the post-test showed that there was a significant improvement in students' speaking skills, after the application of storytelling through simulated environments during the English learning process. The results are noticeable, the average of the pre-test 100% of students got a score of 6,91/10 while in the post-test it increased to 8,39/10. It can be said that the students' average reached a higher level of improvement that belongs to the satisfactory range between 8 and 9 according to the Ministry of Education scale.

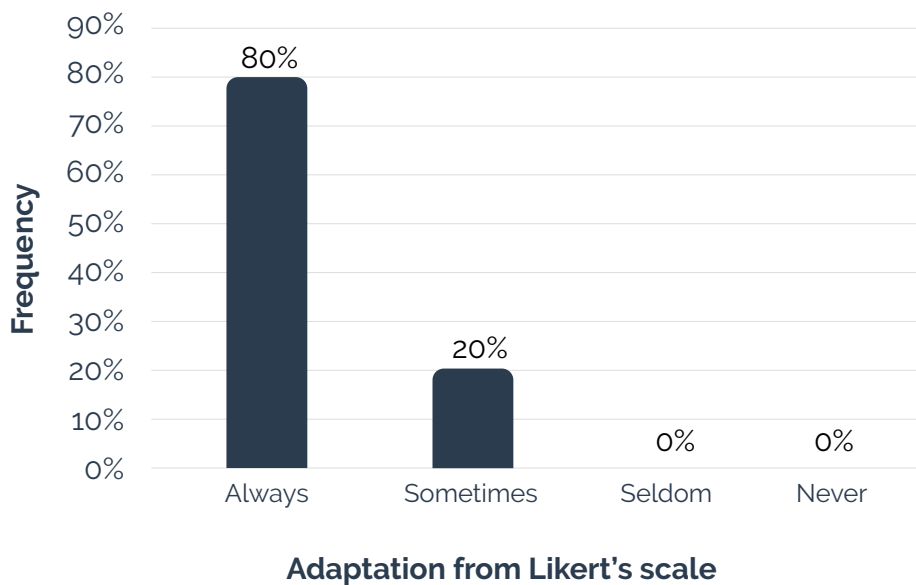
Questionnaire

Objective 2: To describe the students' perceptions about storytelling on developing speaking skills among second-year students of high school.

Furthermore, the researcher decided to apply a questionnaire to corroborate and know students' perceptions of the advantages of storytelling in a simulated environment and how this has influenced their speaking skills development.

Figure 1

Students' responses about how often stories caught their attention

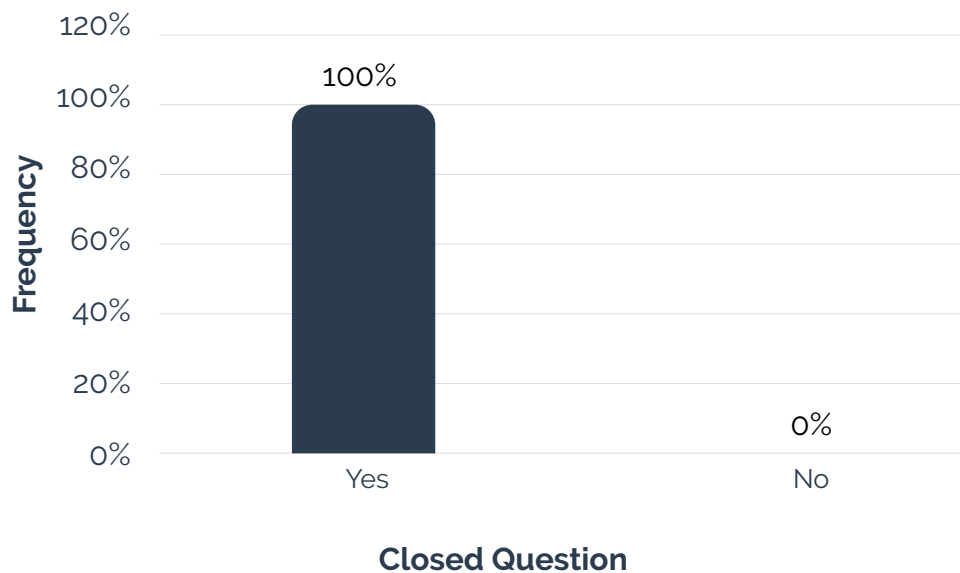


When students were asked about how often the stories in simulated environments caught their attention, 80% of the students answered that the digital stories caught their attention, and sometimes were catchy for them. From the open-ended questions, students provided extra information for this selection. They said it was catchy because it is like a film but with questions at the end to know that they have understood, besides learning new vocabulary and pronunciation. On the other hand, 20%

commented that sometimes they lost due to the unknown words in the story. From the researcher's point of view, as it was observed, students felt that the stories were interesting since they were interactive for the questions at the end, moreover, it encouraged them to pay attention.

Figure 2

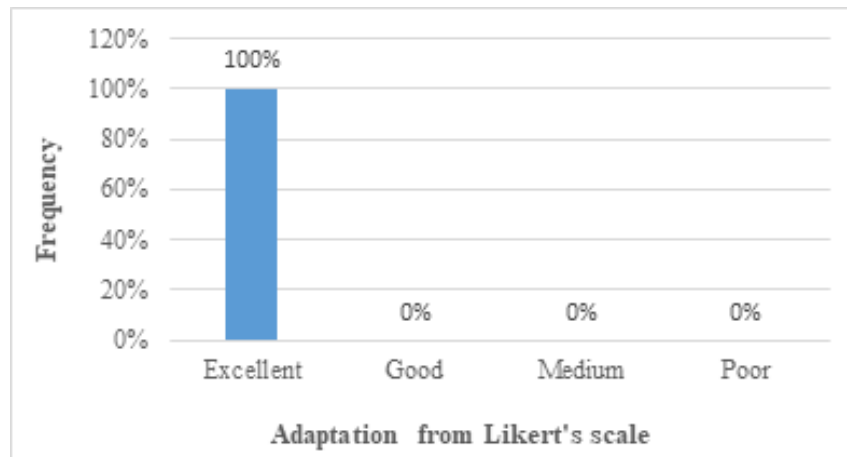
Students' responses about the application arise their curiosity



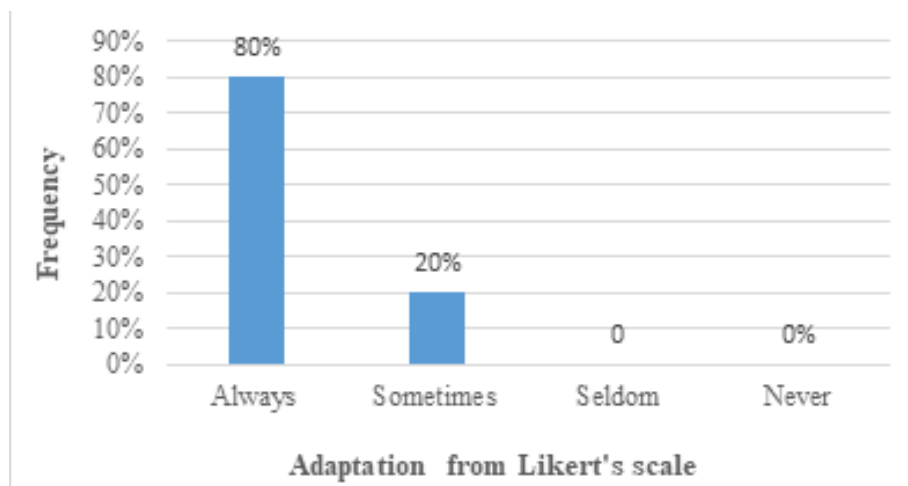
Likewise, 100% of the students interestingly selected the Plotagon application to arouse their curiosity. From the open-ended questions, the researcher was satisfied with the students' engaging comments, they said that this application could be used to make funny stories, and it can be used for other subjects since the way of handling it was easy and the stories can be elaborated in a short period of time. From the researcher's perspective, this opinion can be confirmed because the students were involved in the story process, and in the scene organization.

Figure 3

Students' responses about how the strategy helped them to summarize a story

**Figure 4**

Students' responses about how creating a new ending fostered their fluency in speaking



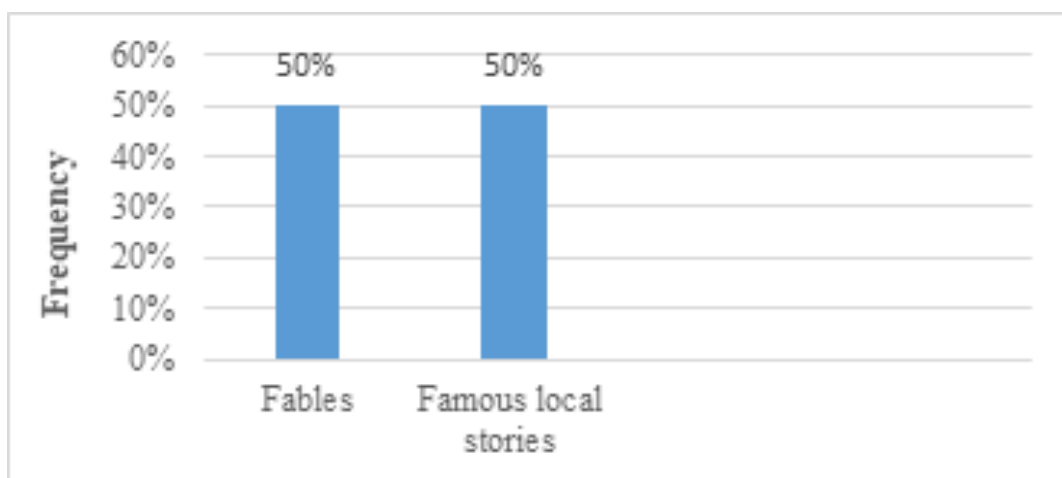
In relation to the Someone, Wanted, But, So, Then (SWBST) strategy for summarizing a story, 100% of the students surprisingly opted for selecting that this strategy was

“excellent” to summarize a story because through it, they were able to sequence and say the story in a few words. From the open-ended questions, one of the students said “This strategy allowed us to get a short but precise summary of any story, it doesn't matter how large the story could be” (Student 06). From the researcher's viewpoint, it is said that students easily master, domain, and identify the critical elements from the stories worked on in class and the stories that they already wrote.

The results show that 80% of the students answered that creating an ending in a story helped them to foster their fluency in speaking skills, but 20% selected that sometimes it helped them to gain fluency in speaking. In the open-ended questions, students said that creating a new ending for the stories supported them not only with their fluency but also helped to develop their creativity taking into account the contents taught. While others argued that only sometimes it fostered their fluency since they have a limited vocabulary or did not have the ability to organize their ideas quickly. The researcher's opinion shows that this thought process was ratified because most of the students used the grammar and vocabulary learned previously when they had to create a new ending in a story. Previous knowledge was used to express what they wanted to say using their imagination.

Figure 5

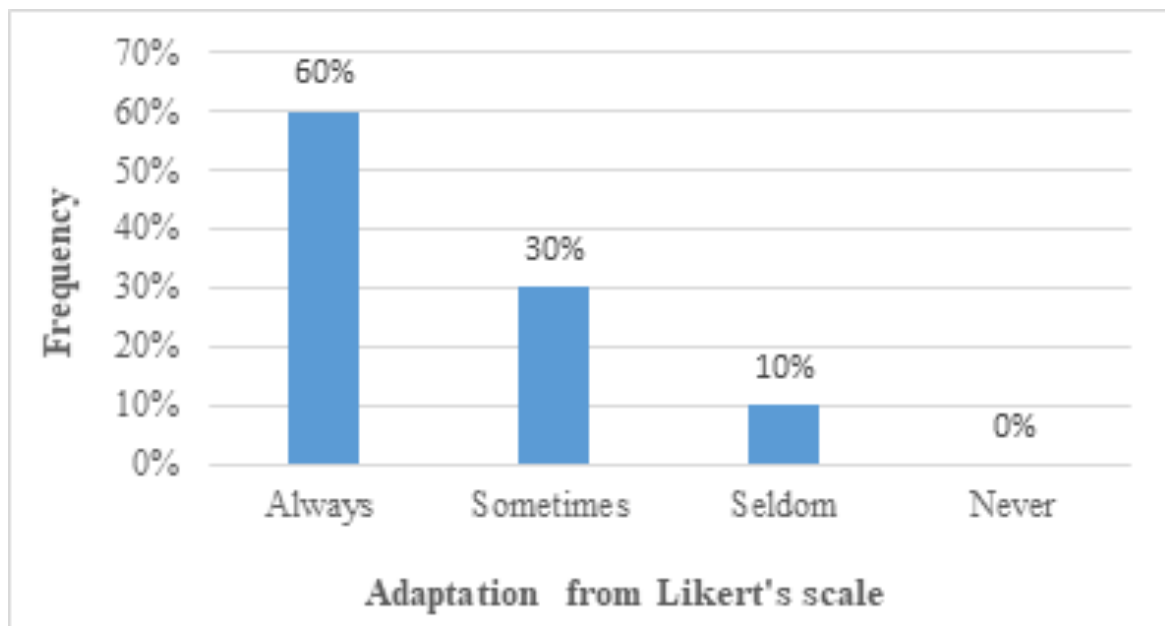
Students' answers about the best genre of the stories



Regarding what type of stories students liked the most, 50% of the students answered that the fables and famous local stories were more entertaining. In the open-ended questions, students argued that they liked both because fables and famous local stories have a kind of moral or message which makes them more exciting. According to one of the students, "Fables are good since they provide information through morale in the story, and this also increases my vocabulary" (Student 02). Likewise, the other 50% commented that famous local stories are also good since they are well-known and can relate Spanish words to English ones. From the researcher's point of view, it is corroborated that students were very interested in these two types of stories.

Figure 6

Students' responses about the morale in stories promoted their critical thinking



When students were asked about how the creation of a moral in the stories promoted their critical thinking, 60% of the students selected "always", 30% pointed out "sometimes", and 10% of them chose seldom. The open-ended questions mentioned the creation of morale allowed them to develop their critical thinking because

they had to think and rethink deeply the message of the story. In accordance with (Student 20) "writing a morale was so important because it helped us to be humbler with the others, and being respectful". The students who selected "sometimes" were those who had difficulties expressing ideas clearly. The ones who answered seldom mentioned that vocabulary was the main obstacle to carrying out this activity. From the researcher's point of view, it is clearly expressed that most students had to work on a deep analysis to create the morale of a story, which definitely is a process of developing critical thinking.

5. Discussion

This research work was conducted to improve English-speaking skills through simulated environments among second-year students of bachillerato at a high school in Loja city, School year 2022-2023. Therefore, based on this main objective, two subsequent questions were settled down.

The first question sought to determine "What is the effectiveness of storytelling on the development of English-speaking skills through simulated environments?". A pretest with a score of 6,91 and a post-test with a score of 8,38 results showed that there was a significant statistical difference of 1,47 between both instruments applied. It leads me to think that there was positive and productive effectiveness in their speaking skills after having applied storytelling through simulated environments. This outcome is supported by Salama (2019) who found that applying Digital storytelling as a pedagogy helped students to develop their speaking skills components such as pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, and coherence. Likewise, this is corroborated by Schank (1990) who states that storytelling has positive, significant, and demonstrable value in teaching. Therefore, it can be said that the outcomes obtained agree with the results of the previous studies which showed that digital storytelling is a good resource for teaching and improving English-speaking skills and it is recommended to carry out further research on this topic.

What are the students' perceptions about storytelling on developing English-speaking skills through simulated environments? To give qualitative support to this question a questionnaire was designed in which interestingly 100% of students agreed that the SWBST strategy through the use of fables, and local famous stories genres help to become creatives, critical thinkers, and motivated to participate in class when the avatars asked them. Likewise, 100% of the students interestingly selected the Plotagon application enriched their curiosity, allowing them to be involved during the lesson which improves their fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy. This finding is consistent with those of Salama (2019) who found that applying digital storytelling as a pedagogy strategy helped students to develop their speaking skills.

Likewise, another interesting result is that 80% of the students indicated that both types of stories captured their attention, as the vocabulary was familiar to them and the stories were entertaining. This result is similar to what was observed by Syafr-yadin et al. (2019), the variety of genres in stories helped to effectively develop oral skills. It is corroborated by 80% of the respondents, who mentioned that creating new morals or creating new endings for local fables and stories fostered their fluency. Although some students had difficulties with the language and the organization of their ideas, it can be said that it was not as difficult as it seemed, as they struggled to choose the best connector. Therefore, it can be mentioned that the limitations of this study were, the limited 40 hours of intervention, students' no-attendance, and that students were only exposed to the target language in English classes.

6. Conclusions

The implementation of storytelling in simulated environments was effective in teaching and improving students' speaking skills. This enabled the students to adequately enrich the main components of speaking such as vocabulary and coherence, on a minor scale, it supported students to improve their pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy, even though the 40 hours of intervention were not enough to master all these components.

It is concluded that students had positive perceptions towards the application of storytelling with the support of simulated environments. The results showed that the use of the Plotagon application in simulated environments helped students to become critical thinkers, and more creative, awaken their curiosity, and feel motivated to participate by the questions asked by the avatars. Therefore, it can be said that the advantages of storytelling in simulated environments provided remarkable improvement in students' speaking skills during the English learning process.

The Someone, Wanted, But, So, Then (SWBST) strategy was useful for telling a story in a short summary, which helped students to become more specific in narrating a story. This strategy supported the development of speaking sub-skills such as summarizing a story in a few words, fluency while telling the story, and sequencing the events on it.

It is recommended for teachers of English as a Foreign Language to use and incorporate storytelling by using simulated environments in the classroom because they offer diverse contexts and genres in a story that are engaging and motivating for students. There are many technological applications to teach through storytelling not only to improve students' speaking skills but also other skills in the English language teaching-learning process, and they can be a source for further research.

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Capítulo III

Gamification and English vocabulary learning

Gamificación y el aprendizaje de vocabulario en inglés

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1. Introduction

Education in Ecuador has highly promoted the learning of the English language in the last decade, offering the necessary importance to support teachers and students in this subject. According to the National Curriculum of Ecuador (2019), one of the aspects that students should learn is vocabulary, which is incredibly important to master appropriately communicating in the English language either in a written or spoken way. In the same way, Brooks, Clenton, and Fraser (2021) explain that having sufficient vocabulary knowledge influences reading and listening comprehension skills. On the contrary, the lack of these will definitely lower the students' performance in English. Therefore, learning English vocabulary must be more than just memorizing words. It should encourage engagement and increase students' participation in class.

Contemplating the aforementioned details, the researcher considered implementing gamification as an innovative strategy for improving English vocabulary learning. According to the Ministry of Education in its National Curriculum (2019) for English as a Foreign Language (EFL), students from ninth grade should have an A2.1 level of proficiency according to the Common European Framework of References (CEFR). Despite this, the participants of this research initially reported problems in using the vocabulary aspects: form, meaning and use. Students had trouble recognizing the grammatical function of the words, relating the form of the words to their meaning, and identifying prefixes and suffixes to build new words. For this reason, this research paper has the main objective of improving English vocabulary learning by using gamification among ninth-grade students of superior basic education at a public institution in Loja, during the 2022–2023 school year.

Regarding the method of this research, quantitative and qualitative methods were employed, which adopted the pre-test, the post-test, and the questionnaire as instruments to collect the data. Similarly, this study followed the design of action research which implies four steps: diagnosing, action planning, acting, and evaluating and reflecting. All of these were useful to answer the following research question: How does the use of gamification improve English vocabulary learning? And to validate

the findings of this research, which corroborated the effectiveness of the application of gamification in improving English vocabulary learning. This study will be beneficial for other researchers; future investigations could explore using different samples to study the progress of students and their perceptions of the use of gamification tools.

Finally, this research study contains the following structure: the abstract where the most important details of the research are described, the introduction which highlights the background of this research, the methodology which specifies the research method and design along with the instruments and participants. Likewise, the results and discussion compare the pre-test and post-test scores as well as the level of gamification acceptance by students. The conclusions establish the main findings of the research.

2. Literature review

This chapter has the purpose of building a relevant theoretical revision about the independent and dependent variables of this study. Mainly, some significant approaches were found in this process to understand and study gamification to develop English vocabulary. As well as, the gathering of new methodologies, strategies, and activities contribute significantly to reaching the general research objective. Firstly, the independent variable "gamification" is defined, the elements of gamification are named, and the most important and helpful gamification digital tools for teaching English Vocabulary are detailed.

What is gamification?

In accordance with Vega and Hernandez (2017), gamification is defined as the use of game design standards in the teaching-learning process in order to change an ordinary activity into a funny and charming game. Sánchez (2015) argued that this practice, famously known as gamification, is connected to important educational games and stems from the application of incorporating technology into educational activities.

Gamification elements

Gamification elements are recurring characteristics that are used to create games. Points, badges, leaderboards, progress bars/progression charts, performance graphs, quests, levels, avatars, social elements, and awards are all examples of these elements. All of these components have different goals and can be used in any educational setting.

Table 1 provides a detailed description of each component (Figueroa, 2015).

Table 1

Gamification elements

Elements	Definitions
Points	Numeric accumulation based on certain activities.
Badges	Visual representation of achievements for the students' use shown online.
Leaderboards	How the players are ranked based on success
Progress bars/Progression	Shows the status of a player
Performance graph	Shows player performance
Quests	Some of the tasks players have to fulfill in a game
Levels	A section or part of the game
Avatars	Visual representation of a player or alter ego
Social elements	Relationships with other users throughout the game
Rewards/reward system	System to motivate players that accomplish a quest

Retrieved from *Using gamification to enhance second language learning* (p. 89), by J. Figueroa, 2015, Digital Education Review. Copyright 2015 by Jorge Figueroa.

Gamification as a Motivational Resource

Fernández (2015) makes a distinction between two types of motivation that teachers should take into consideration: extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation occurs when a learner wants a reward as payment for their effort, while intrinsic motivation occurs when an individual simply enjoys performing a particular action without receiving any external reward.

In the same way, the research work of Dale (2014) detailed four types of motivational behavior:

- *Express*. People who appreciate self-expression are inspired by the prospect of expanding their talents to express themselves.
- *Compete*. Social gameplay and self-improvement are driven by competition, which means that a student competes with her or himself to improve his/her own progress.
- *Explore*. Information, access, and knowledge motivate those who enjoy exploring; isolated information will be meaningless to them.
- *Collaborate*. Collaboration and group action are intentional ways of socializing. Collaborative people appreciate winning with others and being a part of something bigger than themselves.

Step Process to Gamify Effectively a Topic in Education

In terms of Soman (2013) identifies five steps to gamify concepts in an educative setting:

1. In the first step, the designer has to understand the target audience and the context, considering the time of the learning program, the place where the program will be conducted and the student group size.

2. In the second one, learning objectives will be defined. It is necessary to plan general instructional goals, specific learning goals, and behavioral goals.
3. Step three looks at structuring the experience. This step is a useful tool for educators because it allows them to organize knowledge and define what students must learn and achieve at the conclusion of each stage.
4. Step number four is about identifying resources; among these resources are the tracing mechanism, currency, level, rules, and feedback.
5. Finally, in step five, the designer has to apply the gamification elements, which are classified in Table 1.

Gamification Digital Tools for Teaching English Vocabulary

Kahoot! Designing a Kahoot! learning the game just takes a few minutes. Teachers can build a Kahoot form using a mix and combine questions with the help of the question bank tool, use a template, or adopt different Kahoots published by other users (Kahoot, 2022).

Educaplay. It is similar to an online tool or platform that gives educators the ability to develop free educational games that have a creative and professional end result. The management of the website is completely free, and there is no requirement to use any specific software (Surachmi and Sison, 2021).

Genially. The Genially Team (2022) presents a concise description of the Genially platform. This is the most flexible tool for the creation of a wide range of outstanding materials. Its mission is to enable anyone, regardless of their level of experience, to produce interactive and visually appealing content. The use of this technology in classrooms facilitates teaching and learning English through the use of interactive learning materials.

What is Vocabulary?

In the Cambridge Dictionary, vocabulary is described as “all the words that exist in a particular language or subject.” Additionally, Susanto (2017) argues that “vocabulary is considered as the central in language teaching and is of paramount importance to a language learner. Vocabulary is the basics of learning a foreign language.”

The Knowledge Involved in Knowing a Word

As stated by Rosauli and Jafari (2016), vocabulary knowledge encompasses the mastery of the following types of information:

- Meaning: to know the explicit and implicit meaning of a word
- Written form: to know the spelling or dictation of a word
- Spoken form: to know the pronunciation of a word
- Part of speech: to know if the word is a noun, verb, adjective, etc.
- Frequency: to know if the word is old-fashioned, common or rare
- Collocations: to know certain words that accompany another word
- Register: to know if the word is formal or informal; general or technical
- Associations: to know how a word relates to other words

As can be seen in Table 2, there are three distinct aspects or categories that make up one's knowledge of words: knowledge of form, knowledge of meaning, and knowledge of use. Each of these parts is further segmented into three subgroups on their own. Each subgroup is further segmented into productive knowledge (represented by a P) and receptive knowledge (represented by a R). The receptive

knowledge of a word relates to words that are recognized when they are heard or read, whereas productive knowledge refers to words that may be remembered and employed in speech or writing (Syarifuddin, 2016).

Table 2

The knowledge involved in knowing a word

Form	Spoken	R	What does the word sound like?
		P	How is the word pronounced?
	Written	R	What does the word look like?
		P	How is the word written or spelled?
	Word parts	R	What parts are recognizable in the word?
		P	What word parts are needed to express this meaning?
Meaning	Form and Meaning	R	What meaning does this word form signal?
		P	What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	Concepts and referents	R	What is included in the concept?
		P	What items can the concept refer to?
	Associations	R	What other words does this make us think of?
		P	What other words could we use instead of this one?
Use	Grammatical functions	R	In what patterns does the word occur?
		P	In what patterns must we use this word?
	Collocations	R	What words or types of words occur with this one?
		P	What words or types of words must we use with this one?
	Constraints on use (register, frequency ...)	R	Where, when, and how often would we expect to meet this word?
		P	Where, when, and how often can we use this word?

Retrieved from *Using gamification to enhance second language learning* (p. 89), by J. Figueroa, 2015, Digital Education Review. Copyright 2015 by Jorge Figueroa.

2.3. Previous Studies about Gamification and English Vocabulary Learning

The research work of Boyinbode (2018) involves the development of a mobile English vocabulary learning system that incorporates gamification approaches as a source of encouragement for students. In addition, informational technology was implemented, including gamification tactics, text-to-speech features, and effective difficulty level adjustments were used based on the difficulty curve concept. Likewise, Shabaneh and Farrah (2019) carried out mixed research work to explore the efficiency of using gamification in vocabulary learning inside classrooms. The findings of the research revealed the efficiency of utilizing games in the educational process because it helped students to retain unfamiliar vocabulary, associate new information with their surroundings, and develop their language and communication skills. In addition, the results of the interviews, according to Mustiarini's (2020) research work, indicated that participants liked learning vocabulary through guessing picture games because it was enjoyable, increased new vocabulary and their enthusiasm, and active learning. It was not monotonous, and this made it easier to remember words. Based on observations and interviews, there were positive results from students learning through the use of guessing picture games. Finally, it is relevant to cite the research work of Tamtama et al. (2020); the objective of this study was to develop an approach to teaching and learning English, particularly for kindergarten-aged children. This mobile phone-based application contains three categories in the introduction to English: numbers, pictures, and spelling, so the researcher used the concept of gamification and followed a flowchart methodology. A mobile application was developed which allowed students to playfully learn English. Students were assessed through questions in the mobile phone application. The report of table scores and rewards were taken into consideration to detail the findings of this research. From these studies, it was shown that gamification increases children's interest and motivation to learn English.

3. Methodology

Participants

This investigation used a convenience sample of twenty students from the ninth-grade of the Superior Basic Education Level at a public institution in the city of Loja. The criteria for selecting the subjects were as follows: all of the participants were at the A1.2 English proficiency level according to the National Curriculum of Ecuador (2019), and they also have the same age between thirteen to fourteen years old. Within this group, there were twenty students that were divided into twelve boys and eight girls. Moreover, the participants had the same availability at a given time and the willingness to participate in the research study (Etikan et al., 2015).

Method

The present research work was conducted by utilizing the mixed approach method in which quantitative and qualitative data were gathered with the objective to study the effectiveness of the application of gamification to improve English vocabulary. This method provided the researcher with a stronger understanding of the research question. It helped obtain different perspectives and explanations about the quantitative and qualitative results. This granted both opportunities to evaluate the process as well as the outcomes of the entire methodological proposal (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Instruments

This current research gave a pre- and a post-test to participants before and after the application of gamification activities to measure their English vocabulary level (quantitative information). Moreover, a questionnaire was employed at the end of the intervention plan to obtain the most relevant students' opinions and perceptions about the use of gamification to improve their English vocabulary (qualitative information). Also, the researcher filled out one checklist for each lesson to record the most relevant events during each class.

Design

This research study followed the process of the action research design, proposed by Gerald Susman (1983), which included action research as an alternative to solve the research problem: How does the use of gamification improve English vocabulary learning?

Diagnosing

First, the researcher had to request permission from the educational institutional institution the corresponding permission to be able to interact with the students to develop the intervention proposal. After that, difficulties in English vocabulary learning in the target population were recognized. The researcher was able to gather further information on the issue through the application of the pre-test to the target group, which allowed a more precise diagnosis.

Action Planning

Secondly, a significant literature review was developed where some scientific articles were the base to initiate this study. It was the medium to collect strategies, techniques, experiences, and useful information to formulate the methodological proposal. Subsequently, an action plan was established following the design based on the model Soman et al. (2013) model, which proposed five steps to effectively gamify a topic in education. This proposal was developed based on the gamification tools: Kahoot, Genially, and Educaplay, which were essential to motivate students to learn English vocabulary.

Acting

Third, at this step, the intervention plan was implemented through the application of certain gamification strategies that aided in the solution of the English vocabulary learning issues. During the proposal application process, the researcher collected

data utilizing a checklist for each lesson that permitted the recording of essential information about the classes. Later, it was utilized to correlate or compare the data and present the study's findings. Using English instruction, the intervention plan lasted ten weeks, and the teaching approach was implemented through face-to-face sessions at an educational institution in the city of Loja with ninth-grade students.

Evaluating and reflecting

The last step refers to the administration of the post-test to evaluate the students' vocabulary levels along with the questionnaire, which was useful to identify students' perceptions of gamification. When the results were obtained, the researchers established if gamification had a positive impact on English vocabulary learning and reflected on it through static analysis (comparison of means).

4. Results

The results section explain the students' progress in improving English vocabulary learning after and before the intervention plan. Therefore, the researcher applied a pre-test in order to diagnose the issues that limit the students' improvement, followed by a post-test that was settled with the objective to know the effectiveness of gamification in class to improve English vocabulary. Finally, the questionnaire was applied with the aim to apply the most suitable tools of gamification to improve English vocabulary learning among ninth-grade students of Superior Basic Education at a public institution of Loja, during the 2022–2023 school year.

4.1. Pre-test and post-test results comparison

The comparison between the pre-test and post-test scores are described in Table 3, which validated the effectiveness of the application of gamification in improving English vocabulary learning among students of Superior Basic Education at a public institution in Loja, during the 2022–2023 school year.

Table 3

Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test means of the ninth-grade students of Basic General Education in the use of English vocabulary.

Indicators	Pre-test	Post-test
Form (4/4)	2.32	3.90
Meaning (2/2)	1.38	1.94
Use (4/4)	1.22	2.09
Total means	4.92	7.93

As can be seen from Table 3, there is a comparison between the pre-test and post-test scores, which evaluated the students' vocabulary levels before and after applying the intervention plan using gamification tools. The results obtained support a positive improvement in the three-vocabulary aspects: form, meaning, and use. The means of the "Form aspect" increased from (2.32/4) in the pre-test to (3.9/4) in the post-test. This important progress evidenced that students could now easily write words with the correct spelling, pronounce words, and use prefixes and suffixes. Likewise, students demonstrated high performance in the "meaning aspect." They developed the ability to get the concepts of words by reading or using visual representation, labeling, and matching activities. The score changed from (1.38/2) in the pre-test to (1.94/2) in the post-test. Finally, the progress reached in the "Use aspect" of vocabulary is a little low; the mean in the pre-test was (1.22/4) and in the post-test was (2.09/4), which means that students have not developed sufficient knowledge to differentiate parts of speech such as adjectives, nouns, and verbs. Therefore, they are unaware of their grammatical functions. To conclude, it is important to highlight the total score means, in the pre-test of 4.92/10. Fortunately, in the post-test, students overcame the majority of their English vocabulary issues by obtaining a mean of 7.93/10.

4.2. Questionnaire results

The instrument of the questionnaire was applied when the intervention plan was finished. The main aim was to apply the most suitable tools of gamification to improve English vocabulary learning among ninth-grade students of Superior Basic Education at a public institution in Loja, during the 2022–2023 school year. The results are presented in the following figures.

Table 4

Ninth-grade students' perceptions of the use of gamification to overcome English vocabulary issues and to encourage positive competition.

Statements	SA		A		D		SD		T	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Sense of English instruction,	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0	20	100
Sense of Competition	15	75	5	25	0	0	0	0	20	100

Note. F = Frequency, SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree, T = Total, % = Percentage

The findings in Table 4 evidence that a significant majority of students (80%) strongly agree that the application of gamification tools in English class helped them to overcome the issues presented in vocabulary learning. In the same way, 20% of them agreed with the same fact mentioned above. Moreover, this result is corroborated by the information obtained from the checklist, where the researcher took note when Kahoot! Was employed. It helped students to better understand the meaning and use of vocabulary because it created group game competitions between them. Similarly, there is a clear trend of agreement regarding the use of gamification to encourage positive competition among the class. In other words, a huge number of participants (75%) strongly agree with the aforementioned statement. This means that students were influenced by a positive sense of competition, where their social skills

and self-improvement were developed in a dynamic way during the employment of gamification tools like: Kahoot!, Genially, and Educaplay. Finally, These findings are supported by the data collected in the checklist. The researcher could appreciate that students made more effort when they had to complete a competitive game in groups or pairs rather than when they had to do activities alone.

Table 5

Ninth-grade students' perceptions on if gamification is a motivating factor to learn English vocabulary and encourage active participation in class

Statements	HE		SE		VE		NE		T	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I felt motivated to learn English vocabulary by using gamification tools.	17	80	4	20	0	0	0	0	20	100
he gamification tools encouraged my participation by using gamification activities.	18	75	5	25	0	0	0	0	20	100

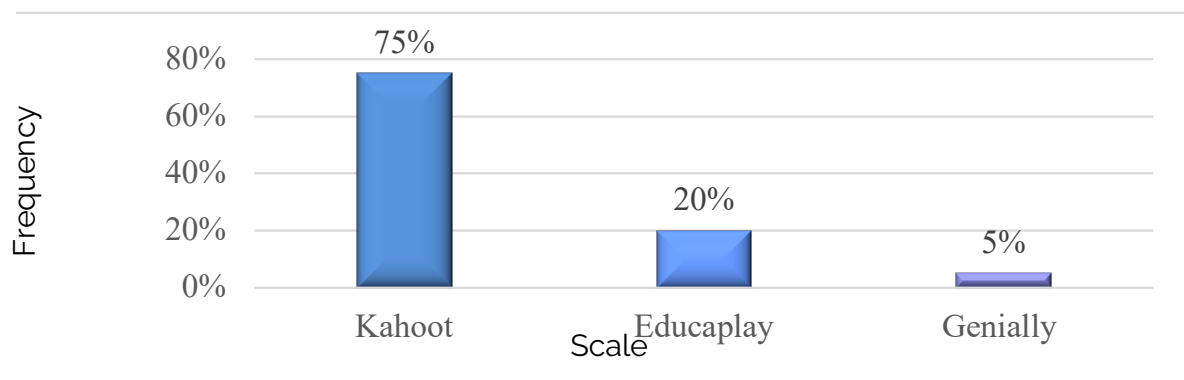
Note. HE = Highly effective, SE = Slightly effective, VE = Very effective, NE = Not effective at all, T = Total, F= Frequency, % = Percentage.

As it can be seen, Table 5 demonstrates that 85% of students felt highly motivated during the application of gamification tools to learn English vocabulary, similarly, another small part of them (10%) said that according to their learning experience with gamification, activities made them feel very motivated as well. According to the remarks collected from the checklist, the researcher was aware that when the contents were presented on Genially, students were interested in the topic

especially when the teacher used interactive images to show vocabulary, as well as, the Educaplay games like scrabble letter and matching columns were the favorite activities for students to practice spelling. In summary, gamification tools contributed significantly to the students' improvement of vocabulary skills in a motivational manner. In the same way, 90% of participants considered that the use of gamification activities was highly effective to encourage active participation in class at the moment to learn English vocabulary, and the other small part (10%) said it was slightly effective. This demonstrated, students were involved in an entertaining and active learning environment, which allowed them to experiment with innovative ways to perform their English vocabulary learning. In relation to the checklist data, it is corroborated that students enjoyed being part of games, they liked to compete in pairs and in groups, they showed a dynamic way to interact with others and lastly, they demonstrated collaboration skills in the workgroups, therefore it is concluded that the application of gamification activities like Kahoot, Genially, and Educaplay was effective to learn English vocabulary.

Figure 2

Gamification tool preferences to overcome English vocabulary issues.



As it is visibly set out in Figure 1, the majority of participants, 75%, mentioned that they preferred to work with Kahoot!, 20% of them preferred Educaplay and some others (5%) of students liked Genially better. The obtained positive results are verified and confirmed through the observations written down in the checklist. This explained that the activities were completed using Kahoot, which was one of the most valuable strategies for developing English vocabulary in a challenging manner, especially in the aspect of meaning. Similarly, Educaplay meaningfully contributed to practicing spelling and helping students to check vocabulary in a written or spoken way. To conclude, the three gamification tools used by the researcher during the intervention plan helped the students' English vocabulary learning more effectively. Therefore, the most suitable gamification tools for improving English vocabulary learning were: Kahoot!, followed by Genially, and lastly Educaplay.

5. Discussion

Gamification is a useful strategy to implement the study of English vocabulary. The interactive dynamics of each of the games allowed the students to be motivated to continue learning new words. In the case of this research study, three gamification tools were selected to structure the intervention proposal: Genially, Educaplay, and Kahoot!. Each one of them was employed to review the form, the meaning, and the use of English vocabulary words. Consequently, positive results were identified at the end of the instruction period. Students overcame their difficulties in spelling vocabulary, forming new words by using suffixes and prefixes, differentiating the grammatical function of words such as nouns, adjectives, and verbs, and using words in a natural context. The effectiveness of gamified teaching in English vocabulary was reflected in the pre-test mean (4.92/10) and post-test mean (7.93/10) with a difference of 3.01 points of progress. Similarly, students experienced an enjoyable learning environment by using gamification tools.

It is a fact that gamification is an effective way to learn, retain, and comprehend new English vocabulary. In addition, gamification in the classroom is beneficial for both teachers and students since it fosters an entertaining learning atmosphere

and gives teachers new, interesting, and inspiring ways to engage their students. Therefore, it would be important for future researchers to look for different gamification tools to be applied at various educational levels to help achieve better outcomes. Thus, teachers would have access to a wide range of tools, and it is probable that successful results would be obtained.

Finally, it is recommended that teachers should start by identifying students' challenges in learning vocabulary; this is the first step to planning a methodological proposal based on their weaknesses and interests in learning through gamification tools. It will provide students with amusing activities that inspire positive attitudes, competition, and collaboration to complete vocabulary activities. Genially can be used to present the content, Educaplay can be used to practice the spelling, form, and meaning of words, and Kahoot! can be used to evaluate the lesson. Finally, the use of gamification elements should be employed to reward the students' performance.

6. Conclusions

This study identified the English vocabulary issues that ninth-grade students had in the form, meaning, and use of words. Students presented problems in spelling, adding suffixes and prefixes to form new terms, linking the forms of words to their meaning, and recognizing the grammatical functions of words in a natural context.

Moreover, this research found that the use of Educaplay, Kahoot, and Genially as gamification tools significantly supported the learning and improvement of English vocabulary and decreased the students' limitations. Therefore, through these motivational and interactive technological tools, students were able to correctly use the three vocabulary aspects: form, meaning, and use. Finally, the present investigation affirmed that gamification successfully improved English vocabulary learning. Thus, students demonstrated a higher level of communication. Gamification provided students with valuable learning experiences. It increased their motivation for learning new words, encouraged positive competition and active participation, and mainly, helped students to overcome their vocabulary issues.

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Capítulo IV

Gamification elements in developing English-speaking skills

Elementos de gamificación en el desarrollo de los dominios orales del inglés

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1. Introduction

It is remarkable that many Ecuadorian students want to be fluent in English for a variety of reasons. Among these, this language has the power to close gaps to connect with people from different cultures, build working relationships, improve people's understanding of personal interests, and support learning for educational purposes. Certainly, this objective of English mastery in education is proposed by the Ministry of Education, whose final proficiency goal is for students to reach the B1 level, but the achievement of that goal may be hindered in certain skills of English.

Speaking English allows people to express their ideas and communicate with the world (Recino, 2019). However, native Spanish speakers may confuse their mother tongue with English; therefore, they may not be able to learn and develop this new language properly (Gooding, 2021). On the other hand, although the institutions are the primary sources in charge of teaching English and supporting the students' progress in speaking skills (Ministerio de Educación, 2016), this does not guarantee that all learners will achieve the highest level in vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. In fact, teachers mostly focus on receptive skills, such as listening and reading because they are easier to assess and do not require a lot of time.

The researcher identified that the best method to improve speaking is the incorporation of an innovative strategy through technology (Shaharane et al., 2016). For this, Deterding et al. (2011) found that games have indescribably transformed the educational landscape, with a greater emphasis on learner-centered pedagogy. Moreover, Figueroa (2015) revealed that gamification strategies can help to progress the learning of writing, reading, and speaking skills while motivating collaboration and interaction. For instance, many studies have found that gamification improves speaking skills since it encourages students' participation, and they are more motivated to practice using games (Asih and Halisiana, 2022; Putra, 2020; Marin-Pacurucu and Argudo-Garzón, 2022). As a result, this research aimed to identify the effectiveness of gamification through technology in the development of English-speaking skills.

Regarding the procedure of this research, the quantitative research design was adopted through the implementation of the pre-test and post-test. Additionally, this study followed an action research design. Finally, the data suggested that speaking skills can be achieved through gamification elements, which are presented in the following data.

These findings will be of interest to other educational researchers and teachers who want to further explore a natural progression in analyzing the effectiveness of gamification through technology in the development of listening, writing, reading, and speaking skills.

This chapter begins with the abstract. It will then go on to the introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, conclusions, recommendations, and bibliography sections.

2. Literature Review

Technology advances over the years. As Franssen and Koller (2016) state, technology is defined as a technique or a procedure that looks for the progress of society within any context. Due to the improvements that arise on a daily basis, technology is capable of presenting resources that cover and improve any area of study.

By means of certain technological resources, learners can improve their ability to master a foreign language, thanks to the positive impact of technology in today's environment within education. According to a study published by Shaharane et al. (2016) comments that it is vital to identify the most commonly used learner-learning tools as it enhances the ability to acquire and achieve English language proficiency.

In fact, digital tools have transformed the landscape of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) acquisition, making it more accessible and convenient for learners (Le & Hung, 2021). Therefore, if digital resource support is introduced in the classroom for English as a foreign language acquisition, students' outcomes will be more

successful around good proficiency in practicing speaking skills. For that reason, the following variable under study emerged.

Gamification

There are many ideas about the term gamification, and it is used in different contexts because it can capture people's attention to complete something through the experience of the game. Besides, Kim et al. (2018) affirm that there are possible variations on the starting point of gamification, so it is difficult to determine the precise origin of its concept. Similarly, the employment of narratives to change the setting around a routine task, the establishment of social rivalry, and the motivating of behavior through badge and reward systems are all instances of gamification (Hanus & Fox, 2015).

Gamification for English as a Foreign Language Acquisition

When students feel comfortable with a new technique implemented through gamification, they have the opportunity to acquire a foreign language skill efficiently. This statement was demonstrated by Roig's study (2022) where gamification elements provided a positive effect on learners' motivation and engagement in learning a foreign language. Similarly, it has been verified that the implementation of digital games in classes increases the interest in learning new languages at any level; it also creates responsibility for the student's own learning. A simple study by Hitchens and Tulloch (2018) affirms that pupils' expectations for future English language learning changed as a result of digital gamification.

Overall, gamification can make learning English as a foreign language more fun and engaging, while also providing opportunities for students to practice and improve their language skills in a variety of contexts.

Gamification Elements

In 2019, Alomari et al. published a paper in which they described the different elements within gamification. First, the points are the numerical values used to assess the performance of individuals. Second, badges stimulate students to compete by showing their achievements in a visual way. Third, leaderboards present progress to their peers in order to encourage students to raise their grades. Fourth, rewards come in various forms, and they can be adapted to the difficulty of each task. Fifth, social factors could be incorporated within games, such as discussions, teamwork, hosting, and a variety of others. Sixth, time-limited activities motivate pupils to complete the activities within a certain amount of time and take it as a real challenge.

Effectiveness of Gamification

Motivation: The achievement of an action or objective has a reason, it has not always been easy for the learner to find a motive to achieve a goal. However, motivation has been a challenge in the educational field, but gamification has seen motivation as a primary focus. Numerous studies have revealed that the implementation of a gamified classroom engaging and motivating for learners. An investigation into the impact of gamification on students showed that most learners were entertained by gamification, and it could motivate students to learn (Zainuddin et al., 2020). Another study by Jo et al. (2018) showed that the gamified flipped classroom environment fostered higher motivation and engagement in students. These findings are in line with those of Özdener and Demirci (2018) who found that there was a higher motivation in gamified classrooms in comparison to non-gamified classes.

Feedback: As is well known, feedback allows taking the time to analyze and look for better solutions to enrich performance. Therefore, gamification allows the learner to improve and engage their focus to improve their results at any stage. By incorporating some gamification elements, students can be informed of their progress, orientation, and performance; the objective of this is to improve their learning. Research about benefits gained from gamification expressed a strong sense of accomplishment

produced by constructive feedback generated by specific gamification elements such as challenges, rewards, and leaderboards (Huang & Hew, 2018).

Improve students' performance levels: The performance level describes each student's use of a language; it increases as the student's learning progresses in any activity. At this point, it is important to mention that through an evaluation, it is possible to assess the academic performance of students. Thus, once technology and gamification are introduced in the classroom, they allow students to associate assessments with fun and no longer fear completing them (Artar & Huseynli, 2019). In addition, five research papers have been examined to identify whether gamification can improve the performance level of students (Orhan Göksün & Gürsoy, 2019; Groening & Binnewies, 2019; Hidayat, 2021; Zainuddin et al., 2020). These findings imply that gamification tools have a positive and far-reaching impact on students' performance levels.

Tools for Gamification in Classroom

There are a variety of tools or applications that can be incorporated for classroom gamification. It has been noticed that the results of one study indicate that using gamification allows teachers to employ different tools to select appropriate activities to fulfill learners' needs (Lawrance et al., 2021).

ClassDojo. It is a digital page that encourages motivation and active engagement of students in the classroom by giving them points for their participation. Likewise, its objective is to provide an easy-to-use digital classroom that can be customized according to the needs of the classes, allowing the teacher to score points, and evaluate the performance of their students. Azzouz (2021) confirms that ClassDojo has a motivational value in supporting teaching by using gamification.

Bamboozle: This website allows users to create and apply elements of gamification related to the class topic. In addition, it offers certain elements that are part of gamification, such as points and rewards. Furthermore, Bamboozle consists of

students participating in groups by choosing a box containing a question or extra points; the team that scores the most points wins, but sometimes these points can be lost by choosing and answering a wrong box.

Speaking in the EFL Classroom

In education, it is important that the learner is able to achieve the speaking skills to fulfill certain communicative functions in the foreign language, such as expressing greetings, regrets, thanks, apologies, or making requests and asking questions. Nevertheless, many teachers skip teaching speaking due to the fact that they focus on parameters that can be more easily graded. Other educational institutions focus English teaching on oral communication to ensure that traditional repetitive grammar and direct translation are not used. (Jalleh et al., 2021).

On the other hand, speaking is a productive skill that is interrelated with listening. There are a number of similarities between speaking and listening. For example, students in classes may imitate the way their teachers pronounce words. Therefore, the activities involve both listening and speaking comprehension and expression. As Tunagür et al. (2021) mention, what children learn in listening activities can facilitate their speaking production.

Additionally, the behavior of Spanish-speaking students when trying to use a foreign language in class is negative. An earlier study shows that students feel anxiety, stress, and nerves when speaking in an English class (Shazly, 2022). However, starting a foreign language is usually not easy to acquire on the first try; in fact, students need to practice it outside the classroom as well as in the classroom.

Speaking within The CEFR common reference levels. The term refers to international proficiency standards that detail the levels of language proficiency (International Language Standards, 2023). It is important to see the level of different qualifications which can vary among basic users (A1 & A2), independent users (B1 & B2), and proficient users (C1 & C2).

In Ecuador, speaking proficiency expects students to finish with a B1. This is recognized by Ministerio de Educación (2016). Thus, B1 learners are able to deal with situations where the language is spoken without the need for preparation on everyday topics of personal interest, they should also be able to describe experiences by connecting sentences to give explanations and follow much of everyday conversation and discussion (Alrasheedi, 2020).

Speaking to Senior high school students. Speaking should provide students with opportunities to use the English language in contexts relevant to their needs. The current curriculum of Ministerio de Educación (2016) details that “adolescents may sometimes begin to feel more anxiety resulting from not being able to express themselves well, being constantly corrected and feeling inauthentic” (p. 10). Therefore, it is essential to ensure a friendly environment where speech failures are filtered without fear for the positive development of another language (Pichon & Kambel, 2022).

What are speaking skills?

Speaking skills are the ability to talk or communicate comprehensibly in the English language. It will support students throughout their daily conversations, and this skill can be developed at an early age.

There are some essential points or elements when it comes to speaking skills, which are pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary (English BINUS University, 2018).

Vocabulary: This term refers to words used in a given language; in speaking, vocabulary facilitates effective production, understanding, and pronunciation of the words used by students to express themselves. As Cakmak et al. (2021) study reveals, there is progress among the learners that can be seen in their move from learning vocabulary towards their participation in speaking activities.

Grammar: These are the rules of a language for forming sentences in the correct order. Grammar is linked to speaking as it allows the correct use of structures in conversation, and this helps to recognize the tenses that are heard when holding a

conversation. In addition, Putra (2020) argues grammatical competence helps speakers to use and understand English language structure accurately and immediately.

Pronunciation: This is the way sounds are produced in the speech of a language. Students can develop this element by reading and listening to English content in order to identify sounds, intonation, articulation positioning, and stress to be able to use them in their speech. But Nagai et al. (2020) proposed that students make constant errors in pronunciation, but it is considered okay because native speakers could make mistakes too.

Fluency: In Krashen's view (2003), fluency can be achieved not only from speaking but also from the practice of listening and reading comprehension. This is a skill that is achieved with practice. Within speech, children listen to certain words and they have the domain to understand them and pronounce them appropriately; this is called fluency.

How to teach Speaking

Five principles for teaching speaking have been suggested by Brown and Lee (2015): a) encourage the use of authentic language b) give intrinsically motivating techniques c) take into consideration fluency and accuracy d) give students the opportunities to initiate oral communication e) focus on the natural connection between speaking and listening.

The Engage-Study-Activate (ESA) Model for Teaching: ESA is a methodology that teachers use when instructing students in a foreign language. This ESA method helps to plan classroom lessons in a more flexible, organized, and effective way (Dunsmore, 2018). The phases presented by this model are:

The engage phase: this is also called a "warm up" due to the fact that games, images, music, brainstorming, etc. are presented in order to prepare the students to engage in class (Laird, 2020).

The study phase: in this phase, the focus is on practice and production to learn another language, and the tasks should guide students to develop the activities based on their answers (Weller, 2021).

The active phase: active phase is concerned with informing teachers about how the students' learning process is going, and this helps them to notice if there are any problems with the students solving the tasks on their own; thus, allowing the teacher to provide feedback in order to solve the problem (Fithria & Ratmanida, 2019).

Activities for Speaking skill

A variety of activities are available to develop speaking skills, which can be divided as follows:

Warm-ups give students feedback on previous topics or give them an introduction to the topic to be learned in each class. This section can include visuals, videos, songs, open questions, dynamics activities, and mind maps.

The activities for the development of classes can vary according to the content, among the most outstanding games for speaking practice could include: dictogloss, finish the sentence, bingo, and roulette questions.

Consequently, the following are dynamic, outstanding activities designed to improve students' level of speaking skills proposed by Brown and Larson-Hall (2012):

Oral presentations: Students orally present an idea, a report, or any topic. This is mostly selected when the teacher needs to evaluate because it can cover all elements of speaking skills.

Discussion: It is the conversation between students where the teacher's objective is to test the main topic of the observed discussions. Learners can practice their abilities, such as topic nomination, body language, comprehension signals, control, questioning, etc.

Games: There are different games which help in speaking skills. For example, crossword puzzles with personal information on the students are assigned, but each student has to ask questions in order to guess the correct name of the person. Guess the object is another game where students will cover their eyes and guess the name of the object (asking for its characteristics), this activity must be related to the class topic.

Role-playing: Students act out the role of another person in a creative way. This activity allows learners to lower their anxieties about speaking because they take the form of someone else. Also, teachers can control and participate in this activity.

Storytelling: Using images, students can create a story. The teacher asks learners to describe the images they see, and then they have to create a sequence to tell a story.

Students will be more engaged with activities related to their personal experiences and issues in the world around them. Additionally, the use of activities allows them to practice speaking English, feel more confident, and worry less about speaking in class. On the other hand, these activities will be a tool for the teacher to evaluate or guide students in their speaking skills.

3. Methodology

This research work was conducted in Loja, Ecuador. It was developed during the 2022-2023 school year in a public school. The researcher conducted the study with senior high school students. In addition, among the participants, seventeen were females and seven were males, whose ages ranged from 15 to 17 years old. Likewise, the students were assigned a participation code in order to respect the principles of privacy ethics in this research (*World Health Organization, 2022*).

This study used the quantitative method, which emphasizes the numerical analysis of students' scores when the data were collected (*Research Guides: Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper: Quantitative Methods, 2023*). Then, the researcher used the pre-test and post-test instruments because these demonstrated the before and after effects of gamification elements through technology on speaking skills.

Moreover, the research design of this paper was an action research model because the researcher was part of it.

The following are the phases of action research proposed by Susman, in which the researcher will describe in detail the implementation of the intervention:

Diagnosing: In this phase, the researcher identified the general background on the importance of speaking skills and innovative strategies to develop English skills. Likewise, the institution facilitated the research approval of the application to evaluate students' vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation through the pre-test.

Action Planning: When the researcher found the problem of the study, the predictive solution was to implement innovative intervention plans focused on gamification using technology to improve speaking skills. Therefore, the ESA (Engage, Study and Active) teaching model was used because its method is flexible, and it engages students to develop productive skills in English (Harmer, 2007). These lesson plans contained: the learning objectives, the class topic, the materials, the phases of the model, the process, the time, and the activities to develop learners' interaction in the classroom. Additionally, the different elements of gamification were: points, leaderboards, rewards, social factors, and time-limited activities (Huiyu & Fang, 2021). Indeed, the speaking skills included vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation.

Taking action: The intervention plan was designed in accordance with the previous findings of the theoretical framework. Thus, its design consisted of ten lessons plans based on the ESA model, in which the "Engage" phase contained the warm-ups, the explanation of the objectives and the topics, while the "Study" phase consisted of the activities, exercises and examples, and the "Active" phase was where the learner produced the English language (Laird, 2020). As a whole, two games called Bamboozle and ClassDojo were selected and implemented in class, since they provided gamification elements.

The speaking activities included in the intervention can be found in Table 1, where the warm-ups referred to the activities performed at the beginning of the class, followed

by the actions performed during the development of each class, and finally, the evaluations that were given throughout the study. The purpose of this classification is to maintain organization and efficiency in the delivery of classes.

Table 1

Activities to be considered within each lesson plan.

WARM-UPS	CLASS DEVELOPMENT	ASSESSMENT
Visuals	DictoGloss	Oral presentations
Videos	VideoGames	Discussions
Songs	Role-playing	Dialogues
Pre-teach vocabulary	Storytelling	Roulette questions
Open Questions	Finish the sentence	Record Video
Dynamics	Sound discrimination	

Evaluating and Reflecting: Although the researcher succeeded in implementing the innovative proposal and solving the initial aim of improving the development of students through gamification elements using technology, there was the challenge of different English levels, the participants did not demonstrate from the beginning the proficiency that they were expected to have in their grade.

Regarding techniques, the researcher gave the pre-test and post-test in order to show the quantitative data of the students' level of speaking skills. The pre-test was used to collect data before the intervention, and the post-test was designed to gather the data after the application of gamification elements (Creswell, 2012). In this sense, the questions consisted of a closed-ended question related to measuring the participants' pronunciation in their speaking, whilst two open-ended questions asked for spoken responses in order to test students' vocabulary, grammar, and fluency.

4. Results

Table 2

Pre-Test Results on the Performance of Senior High School Students' Speaking Skills.

SCORES (0.50 – 2.50)	VOCABULARY		GRAMMAR		FLUENCY		PRONUNCIATION	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
0.50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1.00	22	91.67	21	87.5	22	91.67	22	91.67
1.50	0	0	2	8.33	0	0	0	0
2.00	1	4.17	1	4.17	2	8.33	2	8.33
2.50	1	4.17	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL OF STUDENTS	24	100	24	100	24	100	24	100
MEANS	1.10		1.08		1.06		1.08	
TOTAL OF MEAN	4.35/10							

Note. F = Frequency, % = Percentage

The pre-test showed the prior knowledge of senior high school students before the intervention plan, where their speaking skills were evaluated. According to Table 2, the total mean of all participants' grades was 4.35/10 in relation to the criterion-referenced scoring established by the Ministry of National Education. Likewise, this showed that all students could not communicate effectively and had not developed a language proficiency to master their speaking skills. Therefore, the researcher conducted a study that aimed to improve these skills through gamification.

In relation to vocabulary skills, the students used simple vocabulary to convey personal information, and they showed insufficient vocabulary for discussing familiar topics. In addition, they only produced isolated or memorized words.

Regarding grammar, the test showed that students need to improve the use of grammar structures, rules, and principals because they could not produce basic sentence forms. In fact, some students answered with single words and used incorrect rules when they wanted to talk about when they met their friend. Also, most of the students did not follow the principles of when to add -es/-s to verbs in the present tense.

For the fluency skill, the participants described their friend using an idea card as a guide. However, the students had lengthy pauses before most words, and they demonstrated little communication because they did not use fluent and confident speech, and they used filler words all the time. Actually, some students did not understand the question, and they read the card given at the beginning.

In the last part of pronunciation, students' speech was often unintelligible since students did not pronounce words with the correct intonation and pronunciation. For example, they read the words as they were spelled, and they did not use the different sounds that past tense verbs have.

In summary, there was a high percentage of students who needed to improve each speaking skill, which was evident in their lack of vocabulary, incorrect use of grammar, no fluent speaking, and mispronounced words.

Table 3*Post-test Results on the Performance of Senior High School Students' Speaking Skills.*

SCORES (0.50 – 2.50)	VOCABULARY		GRAMMAR		FLUENCY		PRONUNCIATION	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
0.50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1.00	0	0	1	4.17	5	20.83	0	0
1.50	4	16.67	7	29.17	5	20.83	7	29.17
2.00	10	41.67	8	33.33	10	41.67	9	37.5
2.50	10	41.67	8	33.33	4	16.67	8	33.33
TOTAL OF STUDENTS	24	100	24	100	24	100	24	100
MEANS	2.13		1.94		1.75		2.02	
TOTAL OF MEAN	7.77/10							

Note. F = Frequency, % = Percentage

The intervention plan was implemented over ten weeks by the researcher, where the students completed activities related to enhancing speaking skills and gamification through technology. Similarly, the results obtained from the post-test after this intervention are presented in Table 3, which indicates that the average score of the participants rose to 7.77/10. Therefore, it is demonstrated that the students' speaking skills level increased.

Senior high school students were able to use vocabulary resources flexibly to discuss a variety of familiar topics; they incorporated more words when talking about personal information. According to the data, students showed a higher level of improvement in the use of simple vocabulary. This result evidenced that the students increased their knowledge in regard to their vocabulary skills. Despite the growth in this aspect,

students continued making mistakes using the correct incorporation of words taking into consideration the spoken context.

Students could use a range of complex structures with some flexibility and often produced error-free sentences, although some grammatical mistakes persisted. Based on the data, their grammatical skills increased because learners incorporated the structures, usage rules, and some principles such as connectors. Thus, this result showed students learned the components of grammar. Although this skill has increased, learners can make frequent errors with complex structures because they do not fully differentiate the multiple tenses when speaking.

The data showed that fluency was one of the least improved speaking skills. Students were unable to respond without noticeable pauses and still spoke slowly with frequent filler words and self-corrections. They linked basic sentences but with repetitive use of simple connectives and some lack of coherence. Therefore, the results indicated that the students developed less fluency skill practice. Despite the fact that the students had fewer fluency errors, the message they wanted to show was understandable.

In relation to pronunciation skills, this was an improvement because learners used a range of pronunciation features with mixed control of intonation and only occasional lapses. Consequently, the data demonstrated positive growth in the range of spoken utterances. In fact, learners pronounced some words better but with minimal mixed intonation errors.

Figure 1

Pre-test and Post-test Summary on the Performance of Senior High School Students' Speaking Skills

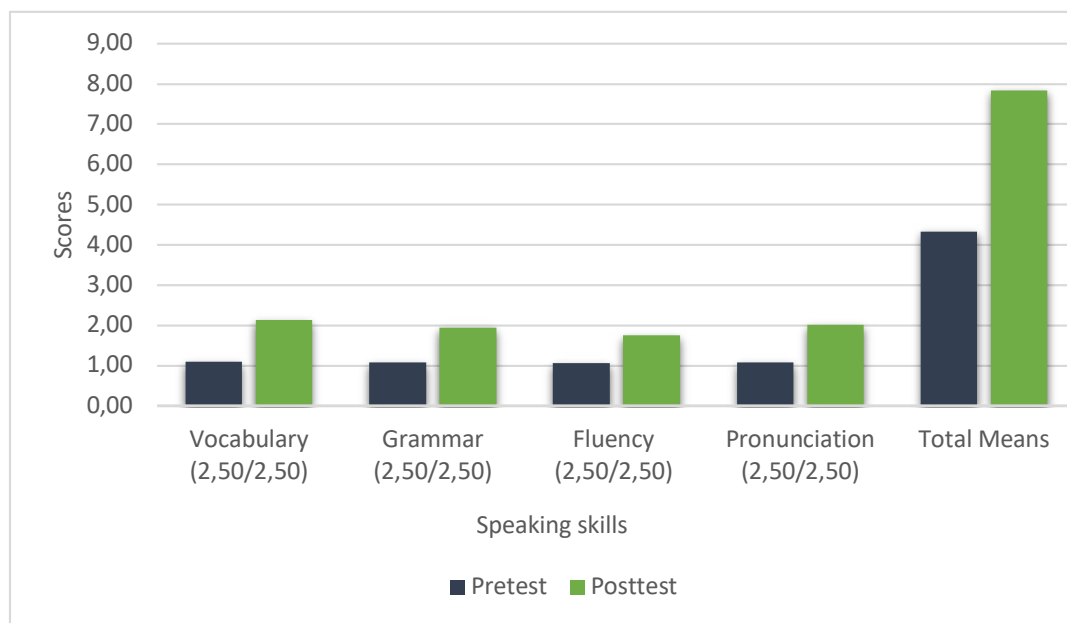


Figure 1 outlines the degree of improvement that occurred as a consequence of the intervention plan using gamified activities to improve the students' speaking skills through technology.

The lowest score from the pre-test (1,10/2,50) corresponded to the skill of "vocabulary" in word form, but after the intervention, the score was higher (2,13/2,50). In the beginning, the lowest score in "grammar skills" was structure usage (1,08/2,50), which contrasts with the result obtained after the treatment (1,94/2,50). The "fluency" skill had a low score at the beginning (1,06/2,50), while this score later rose slightly (1,75/2,50). The skill "pronunciation" showed the largest improvement within intonation (1,08/2,50), which then increased to (2,02/2,50).

Nonetheless, it is noticeable that the post-test overall percentage (7.84) was sufficient to reach the expected scale score (7), as established by the national grading scale.

The biggest barrier to not achieving the desired grade was the lack of time and understanding. The researcher was not able to address all the issues related to mastering the English language because they were able to provide personalized feedback on the skills of each student. Students' misunderstanding was due to their lack of listening comprehension skills since they did not understand the questions and activities; however, when asked in Spanish, they responded and completed them without any problem.

To conclude, the pre-test provided an initial overview of the students' knowledge of their speaking skills. Afterward, the effect of incorporating gamification elements with technology for speaking skills was measured by means of the post-test.

5. Discussion

The question of this research sought to determine the effectiveness of gamification elements through technology in the development of English-speaking skills. The pre-test results showed a low score in the students' speaking skills, but in the post-test, the score increased by 3.52 points due to the incorporation of gamification elements through technology. These findings are corroborated by Marin-Pacurucu and Argudo-Garzón (2022) who found gamification not just motivates students, but it allows them to considerably improve their speaking level. In line with the previous study, Cruz (2019) affirmed that this strategy helped learners to enhance their speaking skills. These findings were also reported by Huang and Hew (2018) who concluded that gamification built strong feedback into classes. By comparing these results, it is demonstrated that gamification through using technology could improve vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation since it provides motivation, feedback, and increment in the learning outcomes.

6. Conclusions

Although the Ecuadorian students' native language is Spanish, they were able to remediate their language confusion to develop their English-speaking skills. Based

on the integration of new technologies in the classroom, this study has found that the incorporation of gamification elements improved knowledge retention and practice through motivation. In fact, at the beginning, the students showed a lack of knowledge in the area of English speaking. However, the researcher applied gamification through technology in the lesson plans, which through its combination of game elements achieved effectiveness and improvement in vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and fluency skills while speaking.

Furthermore, the results showed that the students' knowledge at the beginning was low in comparison to the level that the Ministry of Education of Ecuador required. However, by implementing gamification elements points, leaderboards, rewards, social factors, and time-limited activities, students were able to improve their grades and speaking skills. That is, students were able to expand their vocabulary, order the sentences according to the tense, intonate some words well, and express smoothness with few errors. Therefore, gamification elements are established as quality tools in the development of speaking skills in English language teaching.

In addition, technology can give learners immediate feedback on their English-speaking skills, allowing them to identify areas for improvement, and track their development over time. This can be useful for learners who might not have regular access to native English speakers for feedback and practice.

Considering all the information gathered, this study states the following three recommendations for future investigations: first, the effectiveness of gamification through technology on different English skills such as listening, reading, and writing should be tested. Second, a greater focus on gamification could produce interesting findings that include several more applications that contain elements of points, leaderboards, rewards, and time-limited activities. Finally, researchers could analyze the effects of gamification in different levels of education and over a longer period of time.

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Capítulo V

Students' perceptions about gamified strategies on the development of reading skills using technology

Percepciones de los estudiantes sobre las estrategias gamificadas en el desarrollo de habilidades lectoras utilizando tecnología

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1. Introduction

The skills of reading are of great importance in the acquisition of language since they are used to acquire and interpret information from texts.

This ability is multifaceted and must be developed interactively to obtain favorable results. Grabe and Stoller (2011) define reading skills as the ability to understand and interpret information appropriately from a text, whether, in print or digitally. For this reason, there are a variety of methods and techniques to improve reading competence. For the present research gamification was used as a technique for developing this proficiency.

Several authors have mentioned that gamification is a strategy that makes use of games and dynamics to promote learning and solve educational problems (Kapp, 2012). Similarly, Matsumoto (2016) claims that this strategy influences people's behavior and improves motivation within classrooms. In accordance with Faiella and Ricciardi (2015), the use of gamified applications can also be implemented to complement teaching and help the teacher to turn a boring class into one with active and simultaneous participation of students where teachers can observe the variation in the behavior of their students.

Furthermore, it is important to point out that students can improve reading skills such as reading comprehension, vocabulary, phonics, phonics awareness, and fluency through gamified strategies like assign points, badges, challenges, and leaderboards. Additionally, it is worth mentioning the new strategies that teachers can implement in their classrooms and improve their teaching, thus gradually leaving traditionalist education.

Taking into consideration the aforementioned information, this study aims to find out the students' perceptions about using gamified activities in the development of reading skills among lower secondary education students at a public institution of Loja city. To carry out this research, the following question has been established:

What are students' perceptions about using gamified activities in the development of reading skills among lower secondary education at a Public Institution of Loja city?

In addition, the present research adopted a mixed action research method, in which quantitative and qualitative data were obtained. Furthermore, the instrument used was a questionnaire whose results revealed the students' perceptions about gamified strategies on the development reading skills.

Finally, this research paper is structured as follows: the title, abstract which summarises the content of the study, introduction, literature review with theory and concepts from the author and submissions from other authors about the topic, materials and methods, results, discussion, conclusion, and references.

2. Literature Review

In this section the theoretical description about the variables of the researched topic, is presented in detail. The first variable includes all the themes and subthemes about gamification; and the second defines the topics and subtopics regarding skills. The purpose is to go in a deeper analysis of each category that are involved in this study.

Gamification

Currently, educators are using the gamification technique to instruct their classes. As a result, it has been well accepted by students because it adds entertainment and energy to the classroom environment for both teachers and students.

What is gamification?

Gamification is a learning technique that functions best when the learner is actively involved. Additionally, this innovative strategy aims to improve student performance through factors that engage and motivate them to enhance. According to Kapp (2012),

gamification is the use of game-based mechanics, aesthetics, and game thinking to involve users, spur action, advance learning, and address issues.

Gamification is more than just using games for participants' pleasure. It is a tactic that must also be used to inspire and shape the students' behavior while they are learning. Gamification is a technique for influencing and motivating people's behavior, but it must be used properly in order to be effective in changing pupils' behavior (Matsumoto, 2016).

Gamification in Learning and Education

As reported Kim et al. (2018), gamification in learning and education is a "set of activities and processes to solve problems related to learning and education by using or applying game mechanics" (p. 29). That is to say, gamification in education will assist students in completing their assignments in a more enjoyable and engaging manner by incorporating games. Additionally, it eliminates monotony and boredom while encouraging and supporting students in the classroom.

Gamification in education uses a variety of games and tools to enhance students' learning. It is crucial to keep in mind that these activities should be used according to the age or academic level of the players within this framework. Moreover, Buck (2017), state that gamification seeks to improve learning by utilizing the motivating qualities of (digital) games and game-specific elements, such as experience points, leveling, quests, rankings, etc.

In order to encourage a desired type of behavior, Faiella and Ricciardi (2015) advise using gamification in areas of everyday life where boredom, repetition, and passivity are common; for this reason, this method is the best suited for being used in the classroom.

Gamification Strategies for Learning

There are different strategies within gamification which help to develop and enhance student learning in the educational environment. As stated in Buljan's (2021) study there are four strategies: the most popular in the field of teaching and learning.

- **Point Systems.**—Giving students points for finishing various tasks can motivate them to put in extra effort. Additionally, it accurately reflects their degree of effort demonstrating their growth throughout the lesson or course.
- **Badges.**—Giving badges to students as a recognition for their efforts is a great idea. A badge is an acknowledgment that can be given in a printed or virtually way. It is a fantastic way to show how much you value the time and effort put into the work. Educational badges are praised as a substitute for grades that can increase student incentives (Abramovich et al. 2013).
- **Leaderboards.**—Leaderboards work best to incite competition among students because they will push themselves harder to achieve success if they see their name at the top. Even greater competition can be achieved by the teacher by dividing students into smaller groups and creating distinct leaderboards based on various teams.
- **Challenges.**—These represent a challenge for pupils to meet. Challenges will support the student in using their own time and energy to complete the assigned job while working independently. It is also essential to note that if they are unsuccessful or performed incorrectly, there will be no negative consequences.

Platforms to develop gamification in the learning process

The following describes some applications which will help to develop gamification in the learning process. In light of this, Buljan (2021) suggests four effective applications which are:

Educaplay.— Teachers can make free instructional games online using the Educaplay tool. Teachers can make free educational games of all kinds (quizzes, matching, crosswords, etc.). Once they register, share teachers with their students, and get the rewards (Technology Edu, 2021).

Wordwall.- Activities that are printable and engaging can be made with Wordwall. The majority of our designs come in printable and interactive formats. Any internet-connected device, including a computer, smartphone, phone, or interactive whiteboard, can be made interactive. Students can play alone or under the teacher's guidance while taking turns directing the class in front of them.

Kahoot.- For both students and instructors, Kahoot is the perfect quiz platform. Since the game-based platform enables teachers to design quizzes from inception, it is also possible to be innovative and provide learners with customized learning options. According to Edwards (2022), Kahoot is a tool that can be accessed through a web browser on the majority of devices. This implies that both instructors and students can use it at home or in the classroom.

British Council.- This application can be found in over 100 countries. It aims to promote greater awareness of the UK and the English language around the world; promoting cultural, scientific, technological, and educational cooperation. On this platform, you can find a variety of games, readings, videos, audio, and other fun activities to arouse curiosity and increase the students' motivation (Putri & Francy 2022).

In this study, it is also important describe the second variable which is in relation to the problem that the research is focused. Reading is one of the four skills among speaking, listening and writing that intervene in the English language teaching learning process. It is a receptive skill that give learners of English as a Foreign language a lot of input and vocabulary before starting to produce the target language.

Reading skills

Reading is one of the four language skills in the English Language. This ability is multifaceted and it can be developed in different ways, but the most effective one is to develop it in stages: before, during, and after reading.

What are reading skills?

Reading is more than just picking up a book, starting it, and finishing it. In order to benefit from reading, it is necessary to take notes, underline the main ideas, and look up unfamiliar words. In addition, it is important to know and feel what you are reading. You have to put yourself in the writer's shoes and guess what will happen in the next chapter or even imagine a new beginning or end to the reading. Likewise, Stoller and Grabe (2011) proclaim that reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately.

Reading skills are not just about reading, it involves more than that. For instance, it helps the reader to comprehend and understand what is being read in a meaningful way. In addition, it should be noted that this skill is closely related to writing, speaking, and listening. Biçer and Can (2021), consider that reading is a crucial language skill for learning, interpreting, and applying knowledge in a variety of contexts.

Importance of Reading

Reading is not only important in the educational field but it is also imperative in several daily areas of life such as social, professional, cultural, political, and others. Davis (2021) suggests several important aspects about reading:

- Knowing today's culture, people must read.
- Finding a decent job, requires having strong reading skills.
- Intellect development as a result of reading.
- It is how we make fresh discoveries.
- The mind grows when people read.
- People's ability to be innovative is enhanced by reading.
- A positive self-image is developed through reading.

Elements of Reading

In this regard, Bonnie and Armbruster (2001) mention five elements to help develop reading skills are described below.

Table 1

Five elements of reading

Elements of reading skills development	
Elements	Meaning
Phonemic Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the ability to hear, identify and manipulate individual units of sound. • It is focused on helping students understand the role that phonemic awareness plays in learning to read and write. • The smallest units making up spoken language combine to form syllables and words.
Phonics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonics is the process of mapping the sounds in words to written letters. • Teaches students how to use these relationships to read and spell words. • Phonics also develops students' ability to read by sight, i.e., register whole words at a glance without sounding out each individual letter.
Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency enables readers to jump from comprehending what it means as you state later. Fluent users don't have to focus on word-by-word decoding. That implies that they are free to quickly understand the meaning of the words they are reading. • Fluency is important because it bridges the gap between word recognition and comprehension.
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding is strongly related to vocabulary growth. It is simpler to understand the text if the reader has a larger vocabulary (oral or written). • Children who have a superior vocabulary can understand a text more quickly. • There are two main methods for introducing new vocabulary word., both for parents and teachers. The first method is explicit instruction, in which a parent or teacher explicitly explains to the pupils how to pronounce a word.

- The intricate brain process that readers use to understand what they have read is called comprehension. This understanding is greatly aided by instruction in and growth of vocabulary.
- Comprehension
- Understanding the main idea of a text requires comprehension where one puts various facts and informational pieces together.
 - Reading comprehension is the most difficult part of reading. This is due to the fact that it incorporates the other four elements of reading.
-

Note: Five elements to help learners develop reading skills.

The importance of teaching reading with technology

The use of digital devices in schools is increasing and students are using tablets and laptops in elementary school for reading, writing, and other skills. This is why, new teachers must make use of these tools, which are part of updated technology, to help students improve their reading skills. Using technology students are going to have access to information and resources which are part of databases, e-books, texts, articles which can help them to improve reading skills. Technology also offers a lot of applications to make learning more interactive through gamified activities. These applications often include features that highlight multimedia elements that awake students' interest which makes the class more students centered. Technology is extremely beneficial in teaching English reading skills, since the use of applications allow students to learn while having fun, which is motivating by making the class more interactive. In the same way, these tools can help with pronunciation, and the meaning of unknown words in the text. What is more, the games allow students to keep engaged in the reading by understanding the text and be able to answer the questions later. Likewise, technology makes reading more dynamic, fun, and easy for children, young people, and even adults who are gradually becoming more immersed in the use of technology (The education hub, 2019).

3. Methodology

This research work was carried out at a public educational institution in the city of Loja. Ecuador is located at latitude -3.99313 and longitude -79.20422. The tested population belonged to the lower secondary education at a public educational institution in the city of Loja. A sample was obtained from a group of ninth-grade students. The group shared similar characteristics in terms of English language proficiency. The participants were selected by convenience sampling, which is a type of non-probability or non-random sampling in which the members of the population are easily accessible for the researchers. Furthermore, these elements mean that the sample can be selected simply by being located spatially or administratively close to where researchers were collecting data or just by a willingness to participate in the study (Etikan et al., 2016).

The research was based on a mixed-action research approach in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected to meet the specific objective that guided the entire research process. Creswell (2012) concludes that the quantitative and qualitative methods to better understand research problems and questions that either method alone would not be able to understand.

For that reason, in the collection of data, the researchers used a questionnaire, which was used to find out the students' perceptions about using gamified activities in the development of reading skills among lower secondary education students at a Public Institution of Loja city.

This study was conducted by using the action research cycle model, which consists of systematic research that consists of collecting information on the functioning of schools, educators' teaching, and pupils' learning. The purpose of this study is to offer teachers a technique for handling common issues in classrooms, so they can enhance both student learning and teacher efficacy (Gay et al., 2012). As suggested by Gerald Suman (1983), this research was sequenced into three stages: diagnostic, planning, acting, evaluating, and reflecting which was adapted by the researchers in this study:

Diagnosing.– Through the observations made above, the researchers were able to recognize the problem that ninth-grade high school students at a public institution had in English reading skills. In addition, the researchers were able to collect more information about the problem in theoretical references. Also, the researchers concluded that a questionnaire was the most appropriate instrument to find out students' perceptions about using gamified activities in the development of reading skills.

Planning.– Once the main problem of reading deficiencies in the English language was identified, the researchers proposed gamification strategies such as leaderboards, challenges, badges, and assigned points; these address the problem concerning reading aspects like reading comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, phonics, and phonemic awareness.

Acting.– The intervention plan was carried out in face-to-face classes at a public educational institution located in the city of Loja, with a group of students that belongs to the ninth year of Superior Basic Education. The intervention was carried out in a period of forty minutes per class, with a duration of forty hours, which were conducted over a period of ten weeks during the 2022-2023 school year. The classes were conducted using various gamification strategies which focused on improving reading skills in the English language.

Evaluating & reflecting.– In this stage, the results obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed through the interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data. In the same way, a report was made on the general results. Conclusions and recommendations helped to answer the specific objective proposed in this study, as well as to develop further research on the topic. Additionally, some limitations were presented in the study such as the lack of internet connection, students' low levels of reading skills, extracurricular activities, deficient infrastructure, and among others. Moreover, it is important to report the results because they can be used by future educators who are constantly looking for ways to improve their practices in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL).

Once the intervention plan was finished, a questionnaire was provided to know the students' perceptions of gamification strategies such as leaderboards, challenges, assigned points, and badges. Moreover, some applications like Wordwall, Educaplay, British Council, and Kahoot were applied to develop reading skills, as well as students' motivation, enthusiasm, enjoyment, and entertainment (Gay et. al., 2012). Furthermore, the instrument was a kind of mixed-questioned instrument because it was possible to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2012). In this sense, the researchers designed nine closed, multiple questions followed by an open-ended question that allowed research participants to justify their answers.

4. Results

In this section, the results of the questionnaire applied to the students after the intervention period of time, is presented. They include the specific questions that it included with the obtained data and their frequency represented in percentage.

Table 2

Students' perceptions of gamified strategies

N°	Questions	Yes	%	No	%	T. P.	%
1	Do you think reading is more entertaining when the teacher assigned points?	19	86	3	14	22	100
2	Do you think that the challenges you were given by the teacher helped you to improve your reading skills?	21	95	1	5	22	100
3	Did you feel more motivated when the teacher used badges to congratulate you for completing your homework?	21	95	1	5	22	100
4	Did you feel more motivated when you saw your name at the top of the leaderboards?	18	82	4	18	22	100

Note: N= Number of questions, % Percentage, T. P= Total of participants

As data presented in Table 2 shows, students' perceptions about gamification strategies were positive and beneficial for improving reading skills. First, the majority of the students, 86% indicated that they were more entertained when the teacher "assigned points" to the activities that were done after the reading. They found it exciting to do since they knew that they would get a grade, and they tried to do their best. However, 14% of them mentioned that they did not find this enjoyable because when they knew that the activity had a grade, they felt nervous and more worried about how long it would take to them do the activities.

Furthermore, 95% of the students claimed that "challenges" and "badges" motivated them to continue improving their reading skills and to complete all the tasks assigned by the teacher. This is due to the fact that by receiving challenges, students were more competitive and therefore more dedicated to their activities. Similarly, when students received badges, they felt pleased because the teacher rewarded their effort and work in an enjoyable way. Nevertheless, 5% of students stated that the challenges and badges made them feel sad because they did not always meet the challenges and therefore did not receive a badge. They felt demotivated and a little sad to see that other classmates met the challenges and therefore they received a badge.

On the other hand, 82% of the students mentioned that they found the "leaderboards" interesting and motivating, as it was the first time the teacher used them to show the rest of the class their effort during the week. Moreover, 18% of students stated that they were not motivated by these leaderboards because, during the entire intervention, they did not see their names at the top of the table, which discouraged them from completing the rest of the activities.

Table 3*Students' motivation on games and dynamics*

N°	Questions	Yes	%	No	%	T. P.	%
5	Did you feel more motivated when the reading was presented through games and dynamics?	21	95	1	5	22	100

Note: N= Number of questions, %=Percentage, T. P.= Total of participants

Table 3 shows data on students' motivation toward games and dynamics. First, 95% of the students stated that the dynamics and games that took place during the whole intervention plan were enjoyable and very important, as they helped them to relax and become more confident in their own reading abilities. Additionally, these dynamics helped them to de-stress from the previous classes and be fully prepared to learn the new topics that the teacher had prepared beforehand. However, 5% of students mentioned that they found these games a bit overwhelming and even childish.

Table 4*Students' perception of gamified applications*

N°	Questions	Yes	%	No	%	T. P.	%
6	Did you enjoy using the Educaplay application in order to reinforce your knowledge?	22	100	0	0%	22	100
7	When the reading was presented through the "British Council Website," did you feel more enthusiastic when doing the activities related to the reading?	19	86	3	14	22	100
8	Did you like being evaluated using the Kahoot application?	22	100	0	0	22	100
9	Did you enjoy the WordWall application when the teacher used it to evaluate your knowledge?	22	100	0	0	22	100

Note: N= Number of questions, %=Percentage, T. P.= Total of participants

As can be clearly seen in Table 4, students' perceptions showed that gamified applications were useful for improving reading skills. For this reason, 100% of the students selected that they enjoyed "Educaplay", "Kahoot" and "WordWall" applications for learning. In addition, some of the students' responses were that it was the first time they had learned English through applications or any other type of technology as they say that "Most classes are boring, but the English class is enjoyable" (ST-05). Eventually, these applications reinforced their knowledge and prepared them for future activities that the teacher would present them.

Similarly, 86% of students mentioned that the "British Council website" made them feel enthusiastic when doing their activities. Through this application, they receive immediate feedback by giving them a grade. They could see where they had failed and where they had to be more careful in the next activities. One student commented, "it was exciting because we have more opportunities to give the answer" (ST-12). On the contrary, 14% of the participants expressed that they felt frustrated with this application as it had too many activities that were related to the previous reading, and this made them feel a bit anxious as they feared that they would not finish all the activities on time. A student mentioned "I feel desperate trying to finish the reading task, but in the end, I finished the task" (ST-07).

5. Discussion

The general question for this research was "What are students' perceptions about using gamified activities in the development of reading skills among students in lower secondary education at a public institution in Loja city? Through a questionnaire that was given to the students during the study, it was possible to obtain their perceptions on the use of gamified activities in the development of reading skills. Taking into consideration the answers that students gave in the questionnaire, all the gamified strategies, such as leaderboards, badges, challenges, and assigned points, which are part of gamification, helped them to improve their behavior, motivation, and participation. Many even mentioned that these activities were enjoyable and

entertaining. Finally, these strategies were applied to improve elements of reading such as reading comprehension, vocabulary, phonics, phonemic awareness, and fluency.

The most interesting finding was that the gamified strategies positively impacted students' perceptions of activities based on reading skills. Moreover, students indicated that the applications used during the intervention plan were attractive, amusing, and more interesting to complete.

This corroborates with previous research made by Ling (2018) who mentions that the application of games within classes improves reading skills significantly, and even they help to clarify misconceptions. As stated in the literature review, Kim et al. (2018) argued that gamification within the educational environment is like having a set of activities and processes that will serve to solve problems related to learning by using games or applications.

Similarly, Kim et al. (2018) remark that the use of gamification in education will help students to solve tasks in a more enjoyable and dynamic way through the implementation of games. Furthermore, it increases learners' motivation and encouragement in class and minimizes boredom and monotony (Sanchez et. Al., 2021).

Nevertheless, it is necessary to mention that some limitations were presented during the intervention process such as the lack of internet in the classrooms, and the time that the application of the intervention plan lasted. Therefore, it is suggested that future researchers take into consideration the connectivity beforehand. Additionally, they should make sure that the time of the intervention will last enough to obtain more reliable outcomes.

6. Conclusions

The students' perceptions of gamified activities were positive, favorable, and satisfactory because they showed a meaningful improvement in the development of English reading skills at the end of the research. Moreover, active participation was observed in the classrooms, when students were eager to learn, to read while they have

fun. They were also satisfied, participative, motivated, relaxed, and enthusiastic. The researchers found that gamified strategies, such as challenges and badges, were the most effective because they pushed students to complete tasks that enhanced their knowledge in reading skills. In addition, by completing these tasks, students received badges that increased their self-esteem and motivated them to keep practicing.

The use of gamification in the class is an excellent way to help students improve their reading skills in the following elements reading comprehension, fluency, phonics, fluency and phonics awareness this was notable because students' involvement, enthusiasm, and interaction improved significantly in the classroom. In addition, it transforms monotonous readings into engaging activities in which students can participate in an entertaining way, without worrying about being judged and without caring if they make mistakes because they will be corrected in class.

The use of technology in the classroom is a favorable tool for teachers as it helps to create more interactive, dynamic, and interesting classes for students. In addition, teachers can find a variety of platforms in which they can create and use different games for students to learn not only reading skills but also many other components of English language learning.

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Capítulo VI

Gamification on learning English grammar by using technology

Gamificación en el aprendizaje de la gramática del inglés mediante el uso de la tecnología

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1. Introduction

Since, the Ministry of Education in Ecuador (MINEDUC) has implemented the English Language as a school subject in the superior basic education, some new innovative methodologies have emerged through the time, which have improved the teaching and learning process. One aspect of English to be mastered by students is the grammar competence, which is considered as the whole system and structure of the language in general (Berry, 2018). Therefore, learning English grammar is relevant, because it provides students with the means for speaking fluently and writing appropriately. Establishing the importance of the topic, the study of grammar focuses on how speakers put meaning into sentences by putting words together properly. These word combinations come together to form larger structures, which are referred to as phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs (Crystal, 2017).

Taking into consideration the information above, the researcher has found that it is necessary to implement gamification as an innovative alternative for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) grammar. Corresponding to The National Curriculum of Ecuador (2019), it looks for the way that students from 9th year that belong to the Superior Basic Education should attain the A1.2 English level of proficiency (MINEDUC, 2019). However, the participants of this research presented some difficulties to manage the three grammar dimensions: form, meaning and use, appropriately which affect directly to their performance in communication either written or spoken way. That is why, this research paper has as its main objective to verify the effectiveness of using gamified teaching in the improvement of English grammar learning by using technology among ninth year students at a public institution of Loja city during the 2022 – 2023 school year.

Regarding this, the following sub question was proposed to validate the findings of this research: How effective is gamified teaching on the improvement of English grammar learning by applying technology? To accomplish this, the present research adopted a quantitative design method, and as instruments, a pre-test and a post-test were applied whose results corroborated that the use of gamification was

effective to overcome the English grammar issues, all of this information will be useful as a starting point for future researches with different size of samples and with another kind of population.

Finally, this chapter is structured as follows: the title, abstract with summaries of the study, introduction, literature review, methodology, results and discussion, conclusion, and references.

2. Literature review

Gamification

What is gamification?

Werbach and Hunter (2012) define "gamification" as the use of game mechanics and game design principles in settings where games have not been involved. This theory was developed as a result of extensive research into human psychology, growth of social media, and the success of the gaming industry. Every task, project, procedure, or theoretical environment can generally be turned into a game. Furthermore, "Gamification is a relatively new trend that focuses on applying game mechanics to non-game contexts in order to engage audiences and to inject a little fun into ordinary activities besides generating motivational and cognitive benefits" (Sardi et al. 2017, p. 31).

Gamification in education

Researchers used video games' definition as technology and their relationship to cognitive processes to describe the underlying principles of gamification in education. Applying cognitive processes to students of any age involves a variety of requirements and responsibilities; as a result, the goals of gamification should be very clear about the target audience and users in order to develop the right optimization of these techniques, considering the capabilities and abilities that each learner has. Additionally, maintaining a balance in a gamification process is

crucial. If the gamification tool has an impossibly difficult progression, students will become frustrated. On the other hand, gamification without challenges or games that are too easy are abandoned much more quickly because the player is able to quickly realize that there is no interesting factor inside it (Contreras and Eguia, 2016). Finally, gamification in learning and education is needed to help students check their progress, promote collaborative skills, and ensure their learning performance and academic achievement. It will be the result of gamified instructions (Kim et al., 2018).

Gamification elements

Gamification, which uses game design elements to improve students' interest and motivation, is already widely used in learning environments and instructional methodologies. As Wang et al. (2022) note, gamification implementations usually include both stories or narratives and standard gamification elements such as points, challenges, scoring, leaderboards, progress bars, ranks, prizes, and incentives. This present research work employed the following ones:

Points: Alternately referred to as scores, experience points, skill points, and so on. It is a straightforward method for offering extrinsic feedback in response to the actions of users. Points are the most fundamental element included in every type of gamified application (Toda, 2019).

Competition: It is a fundamental idea that is connected to a competition in which one user competes against another user to accomplish a shared objective, such as through the use of scoreboards that are determined by the total number of points, badges, levels, podium, etc (Toda, 2019).

Badges: The successions of badges guide them on a learning path and students receive feedback from inbuilt sequencing so that there are multiple small units of accomplishment. Within these, there are larger units that acknowledge a unit of accomplishment (Botra et al., 2014).

Gamification tools

Wordwall. It is a digital means of creating learning exercises that are free. It is an online application that offers entertaining quiz-based activities with instructional content. For students, this application may be an engaging learning resource, media, and assessment tool (Nenohai et al., 2022).

Educaplay. Educaplay's Canvas virtual platform enabled students to easily design and share interactive educational activities and to develop an active and dynamic learning style, motivating them to learn English (Cuesta, 2020).

BritishCouncil. This digital tool endorses the cultural bonds between different countries through the free spreading of art, education and language learning. These whole number of features makes BritishCouncil the ultimate guide towards unlocking countless external opportunities (BritishCouncil, 2022).

Baamboozle. It is an online educational game similar to quizzes that doesn't require students to create an account. The Baamboozle website has several benefits, including its flexibility of use, its usability, and the fact that it can be used for both online and offline learning, encouraging learners to combine knowledge acquisition with play so that kids don't get bored with schoolwork (Rahayu and Rukmana, 2022).

English grammar

What is grammar?

The set of structural principles that determine how sentences, phrases, and words are formed in a given language is known as grammar. Language is studied and described systematically in linguistics, allowing individuals to understand how words are put together to form sentences. Additionally, the author asserts that following grammar rules might help children develop the habit of thinking clearly and logically. Students

can use a language more precisely after studying grammar. It is challenging to express coherently without using good grammar. Proper language reduces misunderstanding when speakers communicate thoughts and ideas. A person's poor grammar skills can give people the wrong impression of them (Saidvaliyevna, 2018).

The importance of teaching grammar

According to some pertinent scientific studies regarding the value of teaching English grammar, Ismael (2010) cited in Apsari (2018) said that grammar is a set of structural techniques that organizes a language's meaning. Considering structure, it is the essential competence and knowledge required to understand the language as it is created and used. Moreover, it covers how words, clauses, or sentences are arranged and combined. The author also makes it clear that students cannot ignore how structure forces them to construct grammatically correct sentences in order to convey information in their daily speaking and writing. Additionally, it is highlighted that grammar is crucial to communication since it shows how language is used.

Grammar training is an important part of learning a foreign language because learning a language involves a precise understanding of language structures, it is usually helpful for students to see how language works in sentences or paragraphs, and teaching grammar in context will give students the chance to see how grammatical structures work in sentences. Students will learn the nature of the language more effectively if grammar is taught in a context that helps them understand it (Mart, 2013).

Grammar dimensions

While students can practice and utilize forms in communicative activities, the fundamental principles of grammar instruction emphasize all three dimensions of grammar, including form, meaning, and use, and place an emphasis on both input-based comprehension and output-based learning production (Rofid, 2018).

Form. - It denotes the composition of a phrase or a clause. The form indicates either the needed form of a word. For example: She likes to travel is preferred to She likes to travel or a required word order I can't tell you is preferred to I no can't tell you. (Roza, 2018). "Form refers to the visible and audible parts of grammar units: structure, endings, syntax (word order), choice of noun or verb, etc" (Word Learning, 2017) (p. 6).

Meaning. - It refers to the semantic component, understanding the meaning of words, which would need some type of associative learning, therefore, students have to make connections between the form and meaning of a certain target structure (Roza, 2018). According to Word Learning (2017) "there are two aspects of meaning. First, what is the 'essential' meaning of a grammar structure? Second, what does it mean in the context it's being used in?" (p. 6).

Use. - It corresponds to choosing the appropriate grammar form for a given situation, therefore, students have to decide on among two or more forms the one that is most suited for the setting and or according to how they intend to position themselves, such as namely in a cooperative manner, a polite way, or an assertive way (Roza, 2018). That means "the grammar structures we choose to use are determined by the situation we are in and/or what we want to communicate to our listener(s). Use is interconnected with meaning" (Word Learning, 2017, p. 6).

The importance of teaching grammar with technology

The use of technology in the teaching and learning process of English grammar has always been crucial. The ability to encourage students' learning is an essential part of a teacher's job. The word "integration" is often used when discussing how technology is used in education. Because technology is being included in every aspect of our lives, it is important to seriously consider the idea of incorporating it into the curriculum and to look for ways to use it in the classroom to facilitate learning. In other words, as educators prepare learning experiences and move through the teaching and learning process, technology becomes an essential component of the learning experience and a substantial challenge for them (Ahmadi, 2018).

Newer technologies, in contrast to traditional L2 grammar learning and teaching, are not limited by the traditional dichotomy of implicit and explicit teaching approaches. It also emphasizes learner-computer and person-to-person communication by enabling students to experiment with authentic language and promoting independent knowledge and learner autonomy. The participation of teachers is essential because they may start, stimulate, monitor, and direct offline as well as online activities that are beneficial for L2 grammar instruction and learning. The way that grammar is taught in the L2 classroom has changed as a consequence of the increasing use of technology; as a result, teachers must be able to use technology-based methods and resources with the aim of assisting their students' needs (Chapelle and Sauro, 2017).

3. Methodology

This research study used quantitative data, which involves the creation of a measurable and observable research question. The quantitative data was collected through the application of a pre-test at the beginning and a post-test at the end of the intervention plan to determine students' English grammar levels before and after the implementation of the research proposal. This enables the researcher to verify the effectiveness of gamified teaching to learn the grammar of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Therefore, ninth-year students were chosen to be the participants of this study. The criteria for selecting the subjects were as follows: this group shared the same level of English A1.2 corresponding to the National Curriculum of Ecuador (2019), they have the same geographical proximity and the same age; they are thirteen and fourteen years old. Within this group, there are twelve girls and sixteen boys making a grand total of twenty-eight students. Finally, the researcher protected the privacy of students by giving a code for each one (Creswell, 2012). The researcher followed the procedure of practical action research to give a solution to the teaching-learning process of EFL grammar by using gamification. This model has been suitable for the researcher's purposes because this study has been sequenced in the following stages: diagnosing, action planning, acting and evaluating, and reflecting, which were suggested by Gerald Susman (1983).

Firstly, the researcher identifies issues with the target research group in the EFL grammar learning during this practicum. The researcher applied the pre-test to know their English grammar level. This analysis of these results made it possible to describe and outline a general research problem that was addressed to answer the following question: How can gamified teaching improve EFL grammar learning through technology? Secondly, the teacher reviewed extensive literature about the independent and dependent variable with the aim to find the most useful theories, approaches, strategies, techniques, and activities to create the methodological proposal. Eventually, an action plan was created to give a solution to the previously mentioned general research question.

The lesson plans were constructed in relation to Robert Gagne's (1992) Nine Events of Instruction in order to plan appropriate English lessons to address the gamified teaching and the EFL grammar learning. In addition, during the intervention some gamification tools, such as: Wordwall, Educaplay, BritishCouncil, and Baamboozle. At this point, inside step number three, the intervention plan was put into action as a strategy that was continuously observed, assessed, and altered to establish its efficacy. The researcher gathered data during the application of the proposal by utilizing field notes (one for each lesson), which captured crucial information. Finally, in step number four, the researcher applied the post-test to verify if participants had improved their EFL grammar learning. After reviewing the quantitative data gathered throughout and after the course of the intervention, the results were analysed. The overall results were presented along with the conclusions. The results should be reported because a variety of educators, who are always looking for methods to improve their teaching of English as a Foreign Language may find them useful.

4. Results

The results of this research study after applying the instruments for collecting data are detailed in the upcoming part. The pretest and posttest were used to verify the effectiveness of gamified teaching in the improvement of English grammar learning among ninth-year students at a public institution in Loja City during the 2022–2023 school year; the findings are presented through tables and a comparison analysis.

4.1. Pretest results

Table 1

Pretest scores of the 9th "A" year students of Basic General Education in the use of English grammar.

Score Intervals	Form		Meaning		Use	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
0 - 1	24	85,7	2	7,1	28	100
(1,01 - 2)	4	14,3	8	28,6	0	0
(2,01 - 3)	0	0,0	16	57,1	0	0
(3,01 - 4)	0	0,0	2	7,1	0	0
Total of students	28	100	28	100	28	100
Means	0.59		2.45		0.5	
Total mean	3.09/10					

Note. F = Frequency, % = Percentage

The pretest was applied to the ninth "A" year students from Basic General Education, with the objective to be aware of the level of the English grammar skills of participants. As can be seen from Table 1, the total mean score obtained was 3.09/10 by participants, which was very far from reaching the average level expected. This evidenced that students had difficulties in recognizing the form, meaning and use of some particular grammar structures.

According to the dimension of *form* with a mean of 0.59/4 (14.75%), 85.7% of students achieved scores between 0 – 0.5, and 14.3% of them obtained scores between 1.01 – 2, which are considered low scores. This demonstrated that students presented problems identifying the structure of a phrase or a clause sentence, which required word order and didn't let them build accurate sentences for the right communication.

In a similar way, regarding the dimension of *meaning* with the mean of 2.45/4 (30.75%), the 7.1% of students reached scores between 0-1, the 28.6% between 1.01 – 2, 57.1% between 2.01 – 3 and the 7.1% between 3.01 – 4. That concluded that students showed difficulties choosing the correct English tense to communicate in present tense or in present continuous. The students did not understand the reason or intention of a specific grammatical structure which is indispensable to reach a meaningful meaning.

Finally, the mean of 0.05/2 (2.5%) was obtained in the component of use, the 100% of participants achieved scores between 0 - 1, which demonstrated that students found it complicated to choose the appropriate grammar form for a determined context or setting either spoken, written, formal or informal.

4.2. Posttest results

Table 2

Posttest scores of the 9th "A" year students of Basic General Education in the use of English grammar.

Score Intervals 0-4	Form		Meaning		Use	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
(0 - 1)	3	10,7	0	0	5	17,9
(1,01 - 2)	4	14,3	2	7	3	10,7
(2,01 - 3)	13	46,4	6	21,4	12	43
(3,01 - 4)	8	28,6	20	71	8	28,6
Total of students	28	100	28	100	28	100
Means	2.77		3.52		1.36	
Total mean	7.64/10					

Note. F = Frequency, % = Percentage

A significant positive result for the posttest is shown in table 2, which demonstrates that students overcome their English grammar difficulties in the three grammar dimensions, form, meaning and use. The total mean score was 7.64/10, which demonstrated that students achieved the required learning according to the grading scale of the Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador.

Regarding the dimension of *form*, students got a score mean of (2.77/4) 69.25%, which demonstrated that even though the most appropriate gamification tools were used to practice the dimension of form, the 10.7% of participants with scores between 0 – 1 and the 14.3% with scores between 1.01 – 2 showed few mistakes by developing the grammar activities such as word order and correction of mistakes in sentences. However, the 46.4% of students with scores between 2.01 – 3 and the 28.6% with scores between 3.01 – 4 are able to employ the appropriate function of the word order, to choose the correct verb tense and to apply the most suitable grammatical rules.

According to the dimension of *meaning*, the participants obtained a score mean of (3.52/4) 88%, which showed meaningful progress. Currently, after students practiced grammar with the gamification activities such as quizzes, competition teams, unscramble words, sentence completion and others, the 21.4% of students with scores between (2.01 – 3) and the 71% of them with scores between (3.01-4) are able to match half part of sentences to create a complete whole meaning according to the English grammar tenses. On the other hand, only 7% of participants achieved scores between 1.01 – 2, which means this small group of students needs more English vocabulary training to overcome the difficulties in the dimension of meaning.

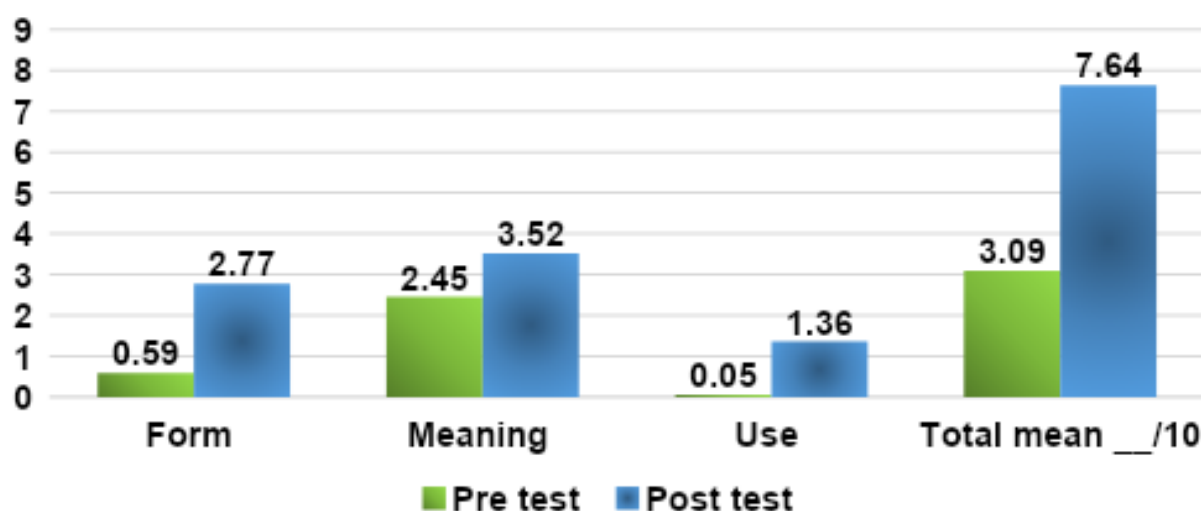
Likewise, another meaningful progress in the majority of students after using games was evidenced in the dimension of use with a mean of (1.35/2) 67.5%. The 43% of them obtained scores in the range of 2.01 to 3, similar to the 28.6% of students who showed the highest scores between 3.01 to 4, this determined that students could employ accurate grammar structures in context. They knew when and why a particular grammar structure should be used either spoken or written and in formal or informal situations. However, a minority of participants got lower scores,

the 17.9% were in the range of (0 – 1) and the 10.7% got scores between (1.01 – 2). This small group of students still presented problems using a specific grammar structure according to a real setting.

4.3. Comparison of the Pretest and Posttest results

Figure 1

Comparison of the Pretest and Posttest means of the 9th "A" year students of Basic General Education in the use of English grammar.



The information presented in Figure 1, shows a comparison between the scores obtained from the pre-test and post-test. The general pre-test mean was 3.07/10, while the post-test was 7.64/10 these results provide important insights into the enhancement of English grammar by using gamified teaching. It seems possible that these results are due to the efficacy of the application of the methodological proposal based on gamification. These results evidence a strong improvement in the three grammar dimensions: form, meaning and use.

The mean achieved for the dimension of *form* in the pretest was 0.59/4 (14.75%) in contrast to the posttest 2.77/4 (69.25%), being the most significant improvement that students reached after applying gamification strategies by using technology during each English lesson. Therefore, currently, students are able to correctly use the word order to form correct grammar structures, verb tenses and spelling grammatical rules.

Similarly, the mean for the dimension of *meaning* was 2.45/4 (61.25%) in the pretest and 3.52/4 (88%) in the posttest, this proves that students understand clearly what meaning a particular grammar structure conveys when it is in a written text and or in a spoken form.

At last, students demonstrated a moderate level of grammatical competence because they had few problems using English grammar appropriately according to real context, in formal or informal situations. It is proved by comparing the means in the dimension of use, which differ from 0.05/2 (2.5%) in the pretest to 1.35/2 (67%) in the posttest.

5. Discussion

Gamified teaching is a useful technological tool to encompass the study of English grammar dimensions: form, meaning and use. According to Word Learning (2017); and Roza (2018), the dimension of form refers to the parts of grammar units such as structure, syntax and choice of nouns or verbs, the dimension of meaning implies making a connection between the form and meaning of the English tenses, and the dimension of use involves choosing the appropriate grammar form for a given situation either formal or informal, written or spoken.

In relation to the research question of this study, the effectiveness of gamified teaching in English grammar was reflected in the comparison of the pre-test mean (3.09/10) with the post-test mean (7.64/10) with a difference of 4.55 points of progress. In addition, results demonstrated that the use of technology for English grammar learning improves classroom dynamics, encourages student autonomy, and enhances the overall learning experience for students, thus, gamification strategies contribute

meaningfully to addressing students' issues. It is corroborated with the research work of Phuong (2020), which evidenced in the results that the majority of students appreciated the concept of learning using this technological approach because it appeared innovative for them. Moreover, the present findings agree with the research work of Mila and Mahbub (2022), the researchers concluded that gamification greatly assisted grammar learning due to the fact that most students demonstrated positive attitudes towards the use of it.

In reviewing the literature, gamification has been described as a helpful instructional strategy that can turn difficult grammatical concepts into enjoyable tasks (Asifayanti et al., 2021). Prior studies have noted the importance of the use of Educaplay, which is perceived by learners as a motivating factor that allows users to easily design and share interactive educational activities (Cuesta, 2020). Similarly, Baamboozle is identified as a flexible tool to be utilized for offline and online learning to encourage learner engagement (Rahayu and Rukmana, 2022). All of these gamification strategies helped students to overcome their English grammar difficulties meaningfully. Currently, participants can use English grammar structures correctly, can use the verb tenses to form sentences following the proper word order and can understand the reason or intention of a specific grammatical structure according to a given situation. In conclusion, the interactive design of the games keeps students motivated to work better in class.

Most probably, this study will bring useful contributions to the educational community, to students and teachers about the most clear and concrete way of how the study of grammar should be carried out. Even though, according to Ardi and Rianita (2022), it is recommendable for further research to include a greater number of participants for better reliability of the results and employ mixed methods to show in a more comprehensive way the influence of gamification on students' engagement. Similarly, it is important to adapt different alternatives of gamification strategies to be applied at different levels of education. It will be helpful for encouraging meaningful competition and collaboration among students. Finally, it is recommended for

teachers to implement gamification teaching in their daily teaching practices with the aim to foment motivational classrooms and positive attitudes in students face to grammar learning. As well as, it is important to address the complete study of the three grammar dimensions for better students understanding: form, meaning and use.

6. Conclusions

Students overcome their difficulties in the dimension of form with the help of gamified teaching. As a positive result, students can differentiate the grammar structure of the simple present tense and present continuous tense. They are familiarized with the correct word order, as well as, with the appropriate spelling and grammar rules.

Students beat their limitations in the dimension of meaning by using gamification tools, which allowed them to make the right connection between the sentence form with the grammar structure of the English tenses to convey a clear and coherent meaning.

The employment of gamified strategies helped students significantly to face the problems presented in the dimension of use. Therefore, students could understand what a specific grammar structure means in a given real context. They were able to choose the most suitable grammar structure to use in a formal or informal language in either written or spoken context.

The use of technology contributed positively to both teacher and students. This facilitated the teacher's daily teaching practices because it was a means to create and design interactive gamification activities, which allowed students to study by using the English grammar structures, rules, uses and tenses in a funny way.

The finding of this study explained that the most favorite gamified strategies for students were Educaplay and Wordwall. Since they ensure motivational and active learning, they make students feel more confident working in groups rather than alone to develop the grammar activities, thus they motivate students' positive participation in competitions.

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Capítulo VII

Impacto de la pandemia del COVID 19 en los sectores del deporte y el turismo

Impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the sports and tourism sectors

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1. Introducción

Referirnos a la industria del turismo y el deporte conlleva a su análisis desde varias perspectivas, en el caso que atañe al presente capítulo, se desea realizar una visión de estas a partir de las acciones que tomaron durante la pandemia ocurrida por el COVID 19 y las restricciones a las que se vieron inmersas frente a la movilidad de los ciudadanos, impidiendo realizar actividades como la práctica deportiva y el turismo.

Como se comportan o se adaptan las organizaciones empresariales a los cambios del mercado siempre será un tema de análisis desde la academia, a partir de imprevistos o contratiempos (Duchek et al., 2020), tomando relevancia el concepto de resiliencia, llevado a este entorno hablaríamos de resiliencia empresarial, en términos de aprendizaje agilidad y capacidad de adaptación (Alday et al., 2020), siendo el anterior un término que se puede cuantificar a partir del análisis de sus acciones y el impacto económico que la misma puede generar en la empresa (Garamendi, 2020).

Dentro del concepto de resiliencia y adaptación no puede alejarse la innovación a un más en un entorno competitivo empresarial, siendo catalizadora de la gestión eficiente de las empresas y generadora de oportunidades en el mercado a partir de la búsqueda de satisfacción de las nuevas necesidades del consumidor.

Por expuesto, la presente investigación se planteó como objetivo identificar las acciones tomadas por las microempresas dedicadas al sector del turismo y el deporte frente a aspectos como la supervivencia empresarial.

2. Materiales y métodos

Para este estudio se utilizó una investigación de índole descriptiva, la cual permite sistematizar datos provenientes de distintas fuentes secundarias, en información manejable y comprensible; describiendo el fenómeno de manera precisa y lo más claro posible (Arandes, J. A. T., 2013).

El enfoque es cuantitativo, basado en la estadística y la medición numérica, estableciendo con exactitud patrones de comportamiento de una población objeto de estudio (Vega-Malagón, et al, 2014).

La muestra se encuentra conformada por 123 empresas del departamento del valle del Cauca, dinamizadoras de la economía local, dedicadas a la industria del turismo y el deporte; de las 78 empresas están dedicadas al turismo y 45 al deporte.

Se establece una muestra por conveniencia, no probabilística ya que la selección de las empresas se realizó con base en las características de la investigación, más no por un criterio estadístico de generalización (Hernández-Sampieri, et al, 2017).

Para el procesamiento de la información se usó el software SPSS versión 26, el análisis de datos se efectuó por medio del método estadístico comparación de proporciones, validando las diferencias en las proporciones (Gart, 1971), como la innovación alrededor de la competencia y las nuevas necesidades del usuario como formas de supervivencia empresarial.

3. Resultados

3.1. Referentes teóricos

El turismo es considerado una actividad económica de gran crecimiento en las últimas décadas, llegando a ser una de las fuerzas motrices esenciales en la generación de empleo y crecimiento de algunas comunidades enfocadas a este. Definiendo a esta actividad como un conjunto de relaciones y de fenómenos que generan como consecuencia el desplazamiento y la estancia temporal de las personas que fuera del lugar de residencia (Santamaria y Bayas, 2020), afectando de forma positiva varios aspectos alrededor de la economía (Castillo et al., 2018), generando la estabilidad económica y social de estas (Mora et al., 2018), desarrollando la actividad emprendimientos con vocación turística (Manchero, 2020).

Sector que en los últimos años ha mostrado resistencia a diversos momentos críticos, mostrando ser un sector resiliente a los cambios de su entorno (Damián, A. G. (2020), lo anterior a la luz de la pandemia generada por el virus SARS – COV – 2 o COVID 19, adicional las medidas como el distanciamiento social y los confinamientos tomadas por los gobiernos, con su consabido impacto a la economía (Paredes et ál., 2020), dentro de lo anterior las más afectadas fueron las microempresas, dinamizadoras de la economía local (Pérez et al., 2020), reflejado en la disminución precipitada del turismo en semanas (Gössling et al., 2020), ocasionando una interrupción nunca antes vista a la actividad turística (Vega et al., 2020)

Dentro de la anterior manifestación se puede ubicar al deporte , desde una perspectiva de la microempresa, se constituye en un generador de pequeñas empresas alrededor de la práctica de forma competitiva y recreativa (David y Cruz, 2020), en este último aspecto constituye una necesidad en personas con enfermedades cardiovasculares (Heffernan, et al., 2020) , ocasionando que el impacto sea no solo en el ambiente empresarial, teniendo presente los efectos que involucra aspectos como el sedentarismo (Grigoletto et al., 2020).

Como se observa industrias como el turismo y el deporte fueron afectadas por las medidas alrededor del COVID 19. El cual genero un cambio radical en el entorno competitivo de las empresas (Pérez et al., 2021), siendo necesario la incorporación de procesos de innovación a partir de las nuevas necesidades de los usuarios y clientes, dentro de un mundo empresarial cada vez más dirigido a la economía de la innovación (Cèspedes et al., 2020), generándose entornos de competición entre empresas y sus stake holders alrededor de esta (Crick y Crick, 2020).

3.2. Caracterización

Para poder interpretar la muestra se realizó una caracterización de la misma permitiendo identificar la participación de las empresas dedicadas al turismo con 63% y empresas del deporte con un 37%.

Dentro de las actividades turísticas se pudo identificar como el turismo ecológico tiene una gran participación, con el 34% de las empresas turísticas participantes, también se identificó el turismo a partir del deporte con una participación del 23%, turismo del clúster de la belleza con 19% y el restante se asoció al turismo de recreación u ocasional.

Por el lado del deporte la mayor participación corresponde a los clubes de fútbol con un 39%. Actividades grupales deportivas como gimnasios y similares con el 48% y un 13% se identificaron emprendimientos de índole unipersonal como lo son los entrenadores personales.

3.3. Impacto COVID 19

Se indagó a las empresas a partir de identificar el impacto en su accionar que le generó la crisis ocasionada por el COVID 19, se nota una gran concentración de los impactos en términos financieros, se observa cómo se concentran las respuestas negativas en los apartados de liquidez y deuda, además en términos de impacto las empresas no encontraron aspectos positivos frente a los indicadores evaluados lo anterior se evidencia en la gráfica 1.

Tabla 1.

Indique cómo impacto la CRISIS COVID-19 en los siguientes indicadores de su empresa

	1. Impacto Negativo alto	2. Impacto Negativo	3. Impacto Medio	4. Impacto Positivo	5. Impacto Positivo alto
Su nivel de facturación	40%	34%	26%	0%	0%
Su rentabilidad	30%	45%	25%	0%	0%
Su productividad	25%	52%	23%	0%	0%
La realización de inversiones	34%	43%	23%	0%	0%

Su nivel de deuda	63%	12%	6%	0%	0%
Su nivel de liquidez	87%	5%	8%	0%	0%

Nota. Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de resultados de la investigación

3.4. Post COVID 19

Al indagar a las empresas acerca de su situación después de terminada la pandemia, se presentan algunos aspectos interesantes frente a la mejora en la calidad de los productos o en la satisfacción de clientes, lo anterior puede ser visto a la luz de las adaptaciones o innovaciones que debieron realizar para su supervivencia, en aspectos como la rentabilidad y el crecimiento de ventas, el panorama continua con una visión negativa.

Tabla 2.

Indique su situación para los siguientes indicadores de rendimiento de su empresa después de pasada la crisis

	1. Mucho peor	2. Peor	3. Igual	4. Mejor	5. Mucho mejor
Calidad de sus productos	0%	2%	23%	48%	27%
Eficiencia de los procesos productivos	0%	0%	10%	54%	36%
Satisfacción de clientes	0%	14%	25%	49%	12%
Rapidez de adaptación a los cambios en el mercado	0%	35%	36%	25%	4%
Rapidez de crecimiento de las ventas	9%	47%	21%	23%	0%
Rentabilidad	0%	12%	78%	10%	0%

Nota. Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de resultados de la investigación

3.5. Innovación en la empresa

La adaptación conlleva a generar cambios en la empresa, por lo anterior se indagó a las empresas participantes acerca de la incorporación de la innovación, obteniendo respuestas positivas en todos los ítems, mostrando como las empresas entienden la necesidad de innovar, lo anterior se ve reflejado en la mejora del producto o servicio, la gráfica 3. Muestra de forma más clara lo anteriormente enunciado.

Tabla 3.

Indique si su empresa ha realizado las siguientes innovaciones y, en caso afirmativo, señale el grado de importancia de cada una de ellas.

	1 Nada Importante	2 Poco Importante	3. Igual a otros procesos	4. Importante	5 Muy importante
Cambios o mejoras en productos/servicios existentes	0%	0%	12%	39%	49%
Lanzamiento al mercado de nuevos productos/servicios	0%	0%	9%	35%	56%
Cambios o mejoras en los procesos productivos	0%	0%	3%	22%	75%
Adquisición de nuevos bienes de equipo	0%	0%	4%	29%	67%
Nuevos cambios o mejoras en organización y/o gestión	0%	0%	3%	19%	78%

Nota. Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de resultados de la investigación

4. Discusión

La investigación concluye en tres grandes aspectos. El primero está relacionado con la afectación causada por el COVID 19 en las empresas intervenidas, dejando impactados en un alto nivel: su liquidez, su deuda y su facturación, y en un impacto negativo: su productividad, su rentabilidad y la realización de inversiones; dejando frágiles las empresas en sus principales indicadores al momento de ver la radiografía empresarial.

El segundo está relacionado con la validación de los indicadores de rendimiento después de pasada la crisis, evidenciando que a pesar que no es contundente una adaptación a los cambios en el mercado, se logra una mejoría en la calidad de los productos, eficiencia en los procesos productivos y satisfacción de los clientes; de manera particular, lo antes mencionado no garantiza el crecimiento de las ventas.

Por último, y como tercer aspecto, al validar la importancia de las innovaciones realizadas por las empresas, se establece que todas son de gran importancia, teniendo mayor relevancia las innovaciones enfocadas a las mejoras en organización y/o gestión, los cambios o mejoras en los procesos productivos y la adquisición de nuevos bienes de equipo.

5. Contribución de los autores

G. S.: Recolección de datos. Análisis de resultados.

L. D.: Fundamentación teórica. Recolección de datos

A. R.: Discusión. Revisión final del artículo

6. Fuentes de financiamiento

La investigación fue financiada por la IU Escuela Nacional del Deporte.

7. Conflictos de interés

Los autores no presentan conflicto de intereses.

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Capítulo VIII

Gestión de la calidad en la educación superior ecuatoriana: Revisión sistemática

Quality Management in Ecuadorian Higher Education: A Systematic Review

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1. Introducción

En el Ecuador, se reconoce que la educación es un derecho de todos y es priorizado por el estado (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, 2008), el cual, garantiza el derecho de las personas a una educación de calidad y calidez, pertinente, adecuada, contextualizada, actualizada y articulada en todo el proceso educativo, en sus sistemas, niveles, subniveles o modalidades; y que incluya evaluaciones permanentes (Presidencia de la República del Ecuador, 2011).

Además, el estado ecuatoriano prioriza el acceso a la educación, de tal manera, que se puede denotar los avances en el ámbito educativo y el incremento de las tasas de matriculación (Consejo nacional de Planificación, 2017), en este sentido, el gobierno de turno busca garantizar la igualdad de oportunidades e inclusión social como respuesta a los cambios y necesidades sociales, siendo, La Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural quien sustenta que la calidad es un principio mismo de la educación ecuatoriana (Secretaría Nacional de Planificación y Desarrollo–Senplades, 2017; Secretaría Nacional de Planificación y Desarrollo, 2009).

La calidad en la educación desde una concepción amplia que puede ser entendida de diferentes maneras dependiendo del contexto y lo específico de cada situación. La calidad en la educación concierne a la medida en que los sistemas educativos, las instituciones, los programas y los procesos educativos cumplen con los estándares y expectativas de los diferentes actores involucrados (estudiantes, padres de familia, docentes, empleadores y sociedad en general). En este contexto, las revisiones sistemáticas de la literatura pueden proporcionar información importante para la toma de decisiones en las instituciones educativas y sus diferentes actores académicos y responsables de la política educativa del Ecuador, acciones que busquen promover el desarrollo sostenible y equitativo.

En este manuscrito, se presenta una revisión sistemática de la literatura (RSL) de las contribuciones sobre la gestión de la calidad en la educación superior publicadas en los últimos 5 años (2017 – 2022), a fin de llenar los vacíos que abarcan

la temática a través de una visión de la realidad que se desarrolla en el territorio ecuatoriano. La investigación profundiza las aportaciones de cada uno de los diferentes autores que abordan la temática, así como las nuevas oportunidades de investigación que surgieran en este ámbito.

2. Materiales y métodos

La RSL es descriptiva con un enfoque cuantitativo, se ha seguido la declaración PRISMA para revisiones sistemáticas de literatura (Kitchenham, 2004, 2007; Moher et al., 2009; Pardal-Refoyo y Pardal-Peláez, 2020).

2.1. Preguntas de Investigación

¿Cuáles son los aportes principales de los estudios que abordan la calidad educativa en la educación superior del territorio ecuatoriano?

¿Qué nuevas oportunidades de investigación se abren sobre la calidad de la educación en la educación superior?

2.2. Criterios de inclusión/exclusión

A continuación, se plantean los criterios de inclusión y exclusión que deben cumplir los documentos para ser incluidos en la revisión sistemática:

- Se considerarán únicamente artículos originales con estudios empíricos y excluirán los artículos de revisión, revisiones sistemáticas, fe de erratas, cartas al editor o documentos que procedan de eventos académicos.
- Se incluirán los documentos publicados en los últimos cinco años (2018 a 2022).
- Se excluirán los artículos que no traten sobre la calidad de la educación en la educación superior.

- Se excluirán los documentos que no aborden la realidad de la educación superior en el territorio ecuatoriano.
- No se consideran para el estudio aquellos artículos que se encuentran en lenguas distintas al español o el inglés.
- Se excluirán los artículos que no sean investigaciones empíricas ni contengan un proceso de validación de contenido por parte de jueces expertos.

2.3. Ecuación de Búsqueda

El estudio se realizó en las bases de datos científicas SCOPUS, Web of Science, Scielo, Redalyc. El 25 enero de 2023, limitando los resultados a los últimos cinco años a fin de obtener información centrada en la temática de estudio. Los términos claves utilizados fueron: "quality management", "University", "higher education", "calidad de la educación", "universidad", "Educación superior"; "Ecuador", "Ecuadorian".

Tabla 1.

Ecuación de búsqueda

Base de datos	Ecuación de búsqueda	Criterios de inclusión y exclusión
SCOPUS	TITLE("quality management") AND TITLE("Universit*" OR "higher education")	Inclusión: Tipo: Artículos originales Tiempo: Publicaciones entre 2018 a 2022 Idioma: inglés y español Acceso: lectura completo País/Región: Ecuador
WoS	TI=("quality management") AND TI=("Universit*" OR "higher education")	Exclusión: Se excluirán los artículos que no traten sobre la calidad de la educación en la educación superior.
Scielo	("quality management" OR "gestión de la calidad") AND ("University" OR "higher education" OR Universidad Or "Educación Superior")	
Redalyc	("quality management" OR "Gestión de la calidad") AND ("University" OR "higher education" OR Universidad OR "Educación Superior")	Se excluirán los documentos que no aborden la realidad de la educación superior en el territorio ecuatoriano.

Fuente: Elaboración propia

2.4. Proceso de selección de publicaciones

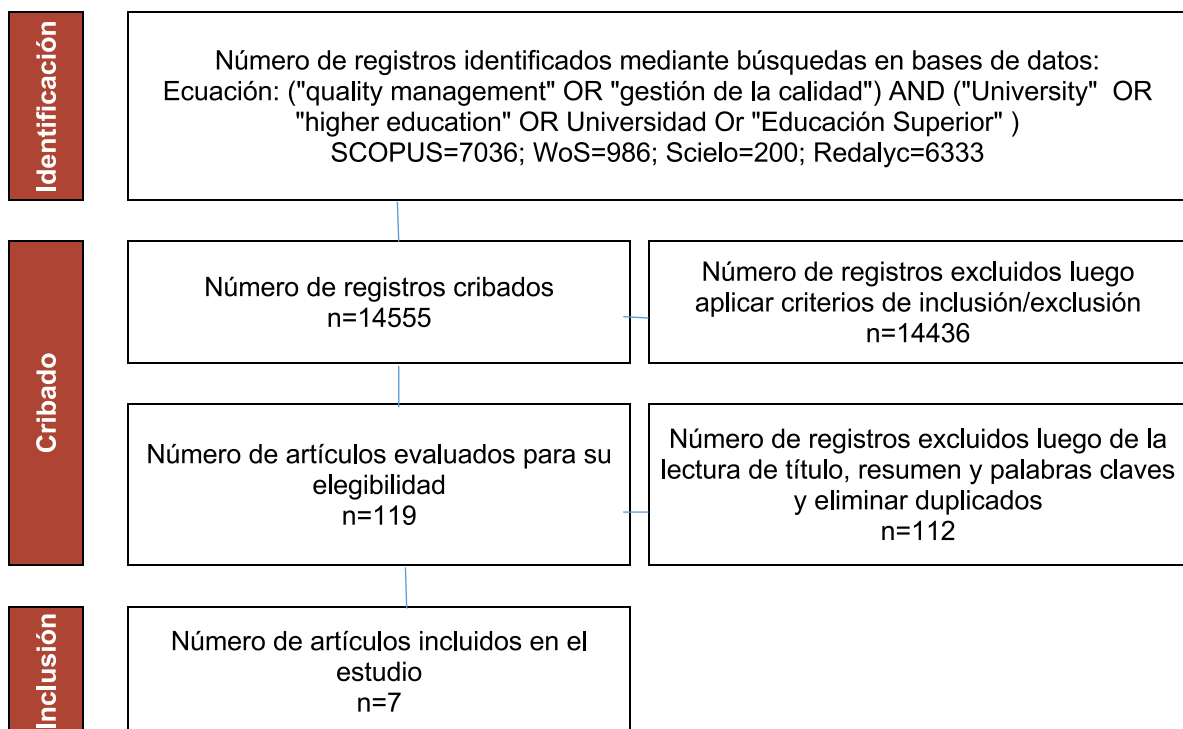
La búsqueda inicial dio como resultado 14555 documentos, a continuación, luego de eliminar los duplicados, se aplicaron los criterios de inclusión y exclusión, obteniendo como resultado 119, luego de revisar los títulos, resumen y palabras claves para garantizar la pertinencia de los artículos, se seleccionaron 7 documentos que se incluirán para el estudio. Los manuscritos fueron revisados y discutidos con un docente experto en la materia y en el desarrollo de estudios de tipo mapping/SLR.

3. Resultados

De acuerdo al análisis realizado en cada fase de la búsqueda sistemática, el número final de documentos científicos aceptados fue de 7 (con una tasa de aceptación del 4,49%). El detalle de la pesquisa se muestra a continuación en la Figura 1:

Figura 1.

Diagrama de flujo de acuerdo a la metodología PRISMA. Fuente: Los autores.



3.1. ¿Cuáles son los aportes principales de los estudios que abordan la calidad educativa en la educación superior del territorio ecuatoriano?

A continuación, en la Tabla 2, se abordan las contribuciones que los autores presentan en sus estudios. Para ello se consideran el modelo y proceso de evaluación realizados en las diferentes situaciones y objetos de estudio y que a su vez aportan a la gestión de la calidad educativa en el entorno universitario del Ecuador.

Tabla 2

Principales aportaciones realizados en los estudios.

Art.	Contribuciones	Autores
1	Las normas ISO 9001 y los modelos de evaluación institucional y de carrera son complementarios y pueden mejorar la efectividad de los procesos de gestión institucional y aseguramiento de la calidad en la educación superior.	(Rojas Preciado et al., 2019)
2	Se destacan dos enfoques principales para el estudio: la gestión de la calidad y la cultura institucional. Además, se sugiere la necesidad de replantear las políticas públicas y fortalecer la agencia de los institutos para mejorar la calidad de la educación superior tecnológica en Ecuador.	(Reinoso-Avecillas y Chicaiza-Aucapiña, 2022)
3	Proporciona información sobre los conceptos, métodos y estándares utilizados en los sistemas de gestión de calidad en instituciones de educación superior. Además, destaca los retos de normalizar las acciones institucionales en un entorno dinámico y competitivo como la educación superior.	(Chiquito, 2022)
4	Destaca la necesidad de establecer la coherencia entre el modelo de gestión de la calidad a nivel nacional y el modelo contextual desarrollado para cada institución educativa. Considerando la adaptación del modelo de gestión institucional según el contexto y realidad de las universidades, a fin de mantener la coherencia con los estándares nacionales e internacionales de gestión de la calidad.	(Intriago et al., 2020)

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- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------|
| 5 | <p>Se propone un modelo que pueda ser utilizado para implementar la gestión de la calidad en las universidades, basada en la mejora continua, el trabajo en equipo, y la presencia de valores predeterminados a alcanzar, donde, la validación de los instrumentos utilizados a través del análisis estadístico, los cuales mostraron alta confiabilidad y validez. Además, identifica como elementos importantes a considerar en la gestión de la calidad: a) la relevancia social, b) la excelencia académica, c) la equidad y d) la eficiencia.</p> | (Salazar et al., 2022) |
| 6 | <p>El estudio desarrolla de un método para medir la implementación de la gestión de la calidad en proyectos institucionales. Este método se basa en números neutrosóficos y utiliza un enfoque multicriterio.</p> | (Intriago et al., 2020) |
| 7 | <p>El trabajo enfatiza la importancia de la gestión interna de la calidad para lograr estándares más altos en la educación y destaca la necesidad de que las instituciones evalúen y mejoren continuamente su desempeño. También se discute el modelo específico de evaluación de los institutos tecnológicos y el proceso de unificación y fortalecimiento de su gestión para convertirse en verdaderas universidades tecnológicas.</p> | (Orozco et al., 2020) |
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Fuente: Elaborado a partir de los resultados de la búsqueda

3.2. ¿Qué nuevas oportunidades de investigación se abren sobre la calidad de la educación en la educación superior?

- Se establece la necesidad de realizar más investigaciones sobre la eficacia de las normas ISO 9001 y los modelos de evaluación para mejorar la gestión institucional y los procesos de garantía de calidad.
- Explorar las perspectivas de los estudiantes, profesores y empleadores, sobre la calidad de la educación superior tecnológica.

- Examinar el impacto de los modelos de evaluación de calidad en el mejoramiento de la educación superior tecnológica en Ecuador y compararlos con los utilizados en otros países para identificar las mejores prácticas y áreas de mejora.
- Realizar investigaciones adicionales para identificar los factores que obstaculizan la implementación de sistemas de gestión de calidad en instituciones de educación superior en Ecuador.
- Explorar como el sistema de proyectos institucionales propuesto por Intriago et al. (2020) pudiera ser replicado en otras universidades o instituciones académicas.
- Comparar los resultados del modelo conceptual propuesto por Salazar et al. (2022) con otros modelos de gestión de la calidad utilizados en otras universidades.
- Analiza los modelos basados en números neutrosóficos y un enfoque multicriterio que pudieran ser utilizados para medir la implementación de la gestión de la calidad.
- Realizar estudios sobre la efectividad del modelo de acreditación actual y su impacto en la calidad de la educación.
- Desarrollar e implementar estrategias para mejorar la calidad de la investigación y su impacto en la sociedad.

4. Discusión

Autores como Orozco et al. (2020) enfatizan la importancia de la gestión interna de la calidad para lograr estándares más altos en la educación y destaca la necesidad de que las instituciones evalúen y mejoren continuamente su desempeño. Para los autores Rojas Preciado et al. (2019) la implementación de principios de gestión de

la calidad, como el ciclo Planificar-Hacer-Verificar-Actuar, la gestión de procesos, el establecimiento de políticas y objetivos, los procedimientos, el control de procesos a través de indicadores y las auditorías internas, entre otros, pueden facilitar la acreditación institucional, la recategorización exitosa y la certificación ISO 9001.

Así también, Rojas Preciado et al. (2019) recomiendan continuar con el seguimiento y evaluación de la eficacia de las normas y modelos de evaluación ISO 9001 en la mejora de los procesos de gestión institucional y aseguramiento de la calidad. Donde, la realidad de los procesos de gestión institucional se organizan, dirigen, controlan y mejoran, con una conciencia colectiva del valor de los sistemas de gestión de la calidad para el desarrollo de la universidad como institución y para asegurar estándares de calidad consistentes para la formación profesional (Intriago et al., 2020).

Reinoso-Avecillas y Chicaiza-Aucapiña (2022) destaca que el concepto de calidad predominante en los modelos de evaluación de los institutos tecnológicos de educación superior en Ecuador se centra en la formación de capacidades de los estudiantes más que en la rendición de cuentas o la gestión institucional, donde, Chiquito (2022), en su estudio encontró que solo un número limitado de instituciones aplicaron la estandarización en el control de calidad, y muchas utilizaron mecanismos no formalizados, por lo cual, resalta los beneficios potenciales de aplicar estándares internacionales en las instituciones educativas, todo ello, encaminado a mejorar la planeación y ejecución de objetivos, políticas y misión y visión de calidad, fomentar una mayor responsabilidad social en la educación y posibilitar el aprendizaje personalizado en las instituciones educativas.

En este contexto, Salazar et al. (2022) propone un modelo conceptual para la gestión de la calidad en las universidades, específicamente en el diseño de planes de estudio considerando la gestión de la calidad, la relevancia social, la excelencia académica, la equidad y la eficiencia. Así también, (Intriago et al., 2020) determina que su método propuesto, basado en números neutrosóficos y un enfoque multicriterio, puede ser utilizado para medir la implementación de la gestión de calidad en proyectos institucionales, obteniendo un Mapa Cognitivo Neutrosófico agregado, el cual representa la base para la inferencia de la operación del método.

5. Conclusiones

Los hallazgos permiten concluir que las principales contribuciones realizadas por los estudios desarrollados en el territorio ecuatoriano convergen en reconocer la complementariedad de las normas ISO 9001 y los modelos de evaluación de las instituciones de educación superior, teniendo como finalidad asegurar la calidad de la educación y efectividad de sus procesos de gestión.

Para ello, es necesario desarrollar programas de capacitación para profesores y personal para mejorar su comprensión y aplicación de los sistemas de gestión de calidad. Así como, alinear los modelos de gestión institucional con las necesidades y problemas de la universidad contemporánea, todo ello, enfocado en las realidades contextuales de las instituciones educativas. Para todo ello, se deben comprender los desafíos de la gestión de la calidad en las instituciones de educación superior en Ecuador y contribuir a los esfuerzos continuos para mejorar la calidad de la educación en el país.

Por otra parte, la mayoría de autores coincide que se deben realizar estudios sobre la efectividad del modelo de acreditación actual y su impacto en la calidad de la educación, así como los modelos de evaluación propuestos en diferentes instituciones de educación superior, todo ello para identificar sus aportes, beneficios y limitaciones dentro del contexto de la universidad ecuatoriana.

6. Contribución de los autores

SMBC: Recolección de datos, análisis de resultados, discusión, revisión final del artículo.

VERV: Recolección de datos, análisis de resultados, discusión, revisión final del artículo.

CXCR: Recolección de datos, análisis de resultados, discusión, revisión final del artículo.

NJBQ: Recolección de datos, análisis de resultados, discusión, revisión final del artículo.

7. Fuentes de financiamiento

La investigación fue realizada con recursos propios.

8. Conflictos de interés

Los autores no presentan conflicto de intereses.

9. Aprobación del comité de ética y consentimiento para participar en el estudio

No se requiere aprobación de los comités de bioética.

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Capítulo IX

Evolución de los derechos de las mujeres en el ámbito laboral

Evolution of women's rights in the labor field

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1. Introducción

Resulta imperioso mantener fresca la memoria cuando se trata de resaltar el protagonismo que alcanza día tras día la mujer en el contexto histórico-cultural, para que las nuevas generaciones valoren el legado de lucha y sufrimiento por las que atravesaron frente al injusto e inhumano sistema patriarcado imperante desde inicios de la humanidad, tal como lo describe el siguiente autor:

Ser varón en la sociedad patriarcal, es ser importante. Este atributo se presenta con un doble sentido: por una parte, muy evidente, ser varón es ser muy importante, porque las mujeres no lo son; en otro aspecto, ser varón es muy importante porque comunica con lo importante, ya que todo lo importante es definido con lo masculino. (Marqués, 1997, p.19)

Por lo expuesto anteriormente, se denota un doble discrimen hacia la importancia y trascendencia que posee la mujer en la sociedad, por el simple hecho de ser masculino lo convierte automáticamente en un ser superior a la mujer; además, al hombre lo relaciona con todo lo importante que pudo existir dentro de su cosmovisión histórica. Por lo tanto, y en honor a la justicia, no podemos dejar de resaltar la importancia y trascendencia de las grandes conquistas logradas por valerosas heroínas frente a situaciones y hechos sociales que las pusieron en condiciones de sometimiento por parte su compañero de vida; de esta manera las nuevas generaciones estarán en condiciones de valorar y comprender toda la grandeza y superación de la mujer a través de los tiempos.

Aunque resulte innegable y admirable el rol protagónico que desempeña la mujer en todos los campos del quehacer humano, sin embargo, en algunas sociedades más que otras, todavía, persiste la creencia arcaica que el varón resulta "más valioso" que la mujer, y las justificaciones son tan absurdas como carentes de validez científica o jurídica, ya que, si pensamos que el hombre es más inteligente que la mujer, toda esa teoría ha sido totalmente descartada, debido a estudios e investigaciones realizadas, donde demuestran que no existe ninguna diferencia en cuanto al género a la hora

de medir el coeficiente intelectual de las personas, en donde tanto hombres como mujeres poseen altos, bajos o intermedios coeficientes intelectuales a la hora de aplicar reactivos para medir el aspecto cognitivo. Para dar mayor sustento a expuesto, refiero lo siguiente: "La inteligencia general no es mejor en un sexo o en otro, pero los perfiles (que reflejan las capacidades relativas en áreas específicas) sí que son diferentes" (Baron-Cohen, 2003, p.25).

El otro gran argumento que ubica, y con todo el merecimiento y el sentido de justicia, es que tanto hombres como mujeres gozamos de los mismos derechos y obligaciones ante la sociedad y la ley, entre algunas declaraciones de igualdad ante la ley entre hombres y mujeres, al respecto se establece:

Decidimos que todas las leyes que impidan que la mujer ocupe en la sociedad la posición que su conciencia le dicte, o que la sitúen en una posición inferior a la del varón, son contrarias al gran precepto de la naturaleza y, por lo tanto, no tienen fuerza y autoridad. (Camps, 2020, p.141)

2. Metodología

Este trabajo de investigación se realizó a través del tipo no experimental, es decir, no se manipularon variables. El enfoque de la investigación es cualitativo basado en evidencias obtenidas a través de la fundamentación teórica y bases de datos científicas como REDALYC, SCIELO, DIALNET, que permitieron obtener información relevante. El nivel de profundidad es descriptivo, puesto que se dan a conocer teorías de diferentes autores que han estudiado el tema, permitiendo dar una posición fundamentada sobre el tema de investigación. Los métodos utilizados fueron el inductivo-deductivo, partiendo de premisas particulares hasta llegar a conclusiones generales. El método dogmático jurídico fue relevante permitiendo la realización de la investigación formal-jurídica respecto a la parte positiva del derecho. la técnica de investigación fue la recolección de información bibliográfica a través de su instrumento el fichaje.

3. Desarrollo

3.1. Antecedentes

Es imperioso resaltar el valor agregado que conlleva el conocimiento y la historia que involucra al mal llamado "sexo débil", llamado de esa manera y dado por hecho entre algunos sectores de la población mundial, que en tiempos de las cavernas se consideraba a la fuerza física como bruta un atributo innato de los varones, colocando a las mujeres en una posición para nada ventajosa frente a esa situación.

Hoy en día aún existe este prejuicio, un muy reducido círculo de la sociedad, la idea de que la mujer mantiene una posición de rezago frente a algunos ámbitos del quehacer cotidiano en un mundo cada vez más diverso y globalizado, como por ejemplo en el campo laboral, ingreso a cargos públicos de relevancia, obtención de títulos profesionales en donde predominan los varones, entre otros aspectos.

A pesar de ciertos pensamientos arcaicos sobre el rol de la mujer, las nuevas generaciones tienen que saber, comprender y vivir en una sociedad en que hombres y mujeres comparten un mismo mundo en donde tienen que aprender a convivir sin discrimen ni prejuicios de género, un mundo donde nadie es el complemento del otro. Esta es la razón de ser de esta investigación, para que sobre todo los niños y jóvenes tomen conciencia sobre la trascendencia de la mujer en la sociedad a través de la historia, misma que no fue nada grata ni justa desde principios de la humanidad y que a pesar de esta desventajosa situación, superó estos obstáculos con base a su coraje y lucha constante por lograr sus ideales de igualdad y superar el machismo por parte del sexo opuesto.

No sería justo que esta labor investigativa quede solamente en el reconocimiento de la equidad de género, conquista que la mujer por sí sola lo ha conseguido, demostrando capacidad, perseverancia y sacrificio constante. Además, es importante desechar por completo actitudes y comportamientos machistas por parte del varón hacia la mujer, poner en práctica la igualdad y equidad de género, la no violencia

contra la mujer, el respeto hacia su manera de ser y de pensar que no necesariamente tiene que coincidir con la del varón, los hombres tienen que saber que la mujer no es su rival de vida por pertenecer al "sexo opuesto", sino, comprender que la batalla no es contra el sexo contrario, la batalla es contra la violencia de género, la discriminación de género y los estereotipos.

Entender que la mujer no existe únicamente para servir al hombre, para ser su compañera, para hacerla feliz y de ser un medio para la procreación humana, a más de todas estas cualidades y atributos que embellecen a su género, la mujer es parte primordial y vital para formación de una familia, conforma un equipo, un todo individual con su propia voz, sus ideales de vida, con libertad de pensamiento y decisión, parte integrante e integradora de una familia y sociedad, a diferencia del concepto de familia que primaba hace algunos siglos atrás donde se definía a la familia, de la siguiente manera:

Este tipo de familia caracterizó a la Europa preindustrial; basaba su economía en la explotación agraria, y en ella participaban todos los miembros de la casa. Los artesanos hacían lo propio en su medio de trabajo familiar. La familia tradicional solía ser muy numerosa y ligada al lugar de residencia, la autoridad del marido y del padre era indiscutible, disponiendo incluso de la vida de sus miembros; por tanto, era patriarcal y monárquica. Los roles estaban claramente diferenciados y asignados a sus distintos integrantes. (Aparicio Gómez, 2010, p.66)

Como se puede apreciar, el autor define a la familia dentro de un régimen monárquico liderado por el padre, quien era dueño y señor tanto de sus hijos como de su esposa, hasta el punto que decidía sobre sus propias vidas, en donde cada uno tenía bien definido su rol a cumplir dentro del hogar, en el cual el hombre cumplía un papel de tirano frente a sus demás miembros.

Por todo lo expuesto, surge inevitablemente una interrogante respecto al tema de investigación sobre la evolución de los derechos de la mujer. Es preciso determinar el beneficio que la mujer incursione en casi todos los ámbitos del quehacer humano,

sobre todo en aquellos que históricamente eran reservados exclusivamente para los hombres, en donde las mujeres no tenían ninguna injerencia ni la más mínima oportunidad para formar parte activa de cierto campo laboral, ya sea porque se la consideraba del sexo débil, o simplemente no poseía las cualidades o destrezas para cumplir ese rol.

El objetivo que pretende alcanzar esta investigación es dar a conocer los cambios que existieron a través de la historia referentes a los derechos de la mujer, para crear conciencia de su importancia y valorar la lucha constante y desigual frente al patriarcado predominante desde la existencia de la humanidad, para comprender que los derechos de la mujer deben ser respetados en aras de lograr una sociedad cada vez más equitativa e incluyente.

El conocimiento sobre la conquista y desarrollo de los derechos de la mujer, se logra gracias a una investigación sistemática, a través de fuentes confiables de la información, y son proporcionados por varios investigadores y expertos en temas relacionados a los derechos de las mujeres y los cambios constantes que sufrieron en el tiempo y cuáles son las perspectivas de cambio para el futuro, se busca indagar sobre la legislación respecto de la mujer en varias épocas y culturas.

En la actualidad todavía existe un discrimen de género, en donde prevalecen argumentos que históricamente ubican al hombre como "un ser superior a la mujer", una persona que está bajo el amparo y protección del varón, y por esta misma razón se ve limitada su autonomía y voluntad, convirtiéndose en un ser dependiente del hombre. Pero esta triste historia tenía que cambiar lentamente, gracias a la decisión y lucha desigual frente al abuso y discrimen del sexo opuesto, el compañero de vida, su protector y apoderado, no hacía más que cometer abusos y atropellos en contra de la dignidad de su semejante. La evolución de los derechos de la mujer no sucede de la noche a la mañana, por simple casualidad o por dádiva de nadie, sino que es el resultado de la lucha por la dignidad femenina, es consecuencia de la intolerancia frente al abuso y arbitrariedad masculina.

3.2. Argumentación jurídica – doctrinaria

Para crear un sustento legal frente a tal acto de discriminación en contra de la mujer, doctrinarios hacen referencia a la exclusión femenina al expresar: "No ocurrió así con las mujeres: sus derechos no quedaron reconocidos igual que los de los hombres; y, de hecho, no fueron consideradas sujetos de derechos. Las mujeres fueron excluidas del pacto social". (Marrades Puig, 2001, p.197)

Esta es evidencia contundente y un claro ejemplo de segregación entre los seres humanos, quedó plasmado en la Declaración de los Derechos del Hombre y del Ciudadano, el 26 de agosto de 1789. Es imprescindible indagar y redundar normativa legal desde las primeras conquistas de los derechos de las mujeres, por ello, la Convención sobre la Eliminación de Todas las Formas de Discriminación contra la Mujer (CEDAW), el 18 de diciembre de 1979 contempla: "Los Estados Partes condenan la discriminación contra la mujer en todas sus formas, convienen en seguir, por todos los medios apropiados y sin dilaciones, una política encaminada a eliminar la discriminación contra la mujer" (Organización de las Naciones Unidas, 1979). Este artículo legal es muy preciso en cuanto a expresa que no solamente sea necesario rechazar toda forma discriminatoria contra la mujer, además obliga a los Estados la promoción de la igualdad de género y sexo puestos de manifiesto dentro de sus respectivas normativas constituciones.

Dentro del sistema interamericano de naciones en materia de derechos humanos, pero en particular en lo relacionado a la mujer, quien, hasta la actualidad, y con mayor frecuencia en unos países que otros, todavía adolecen de maltratos y discrimen por parte del hombre, algunos países forman parte de la Convención Interamericana para Prevenir, Sancionar y Erradicar la Violencia Contra La Mujer "Convención De Belém Do Pará" , en su artículo 3 expresa: "Toda mujer tiene derecho a una vida libre de violencia, tanto en el ámbito público como en el privado".

Esta declaración es prueba fehaciente de que en nuestra región todavía no se practica lo establecido en Convenciones y Tratados internacionales en materia de derechos de la mujer, todavía estamos en un evidente rezago frente a otros países,

donde el machismo y la vulneración de derechos de la mujer son severamente sancionados o son casi nulos. En lo que respecta a la Organización Internacional del Trabajo OIT, existe una visión respecto a la igualdad de género, con la finalidad de que las oportunidades laborales sean en igualdad de condiciones para mujeres y hombres. En este sentido, está formada por cuatro objetivos específicos:

Figura 1

Objetivos de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT)



Fuente: (Organización Internacional del Trabajo OIT, 2023)

Además, la OIT en materia de igualdad de género tiene cuatro convenios importantes como: Convenio núm. 100, 111, 156 y 183. El primero hace alusión a la igualdad respecto a la remuneración; el segundo trata de la discriminación relativa al empleo; el tercer convenio se refiere a las personas trabajadoras que tienen responsabilidades familiares; y, el último convenio mencionado en líneas anteriores establece la protección de la maternidad.

En Ecuador, tierra de mujeres aguerridas y combativas por alcanzar derechos en todos los ámbitos del quehacer social, en esta oportunidad se indaga sobre la participación en el ámbito laboral, no necesariamente en sus labores del hogar y cuidado de sus hijos, tratamos el aspecto de la mujer ecuatoriana que incursiona como fuerza de trabajo, donde es predominado, incluso en la actualidad, por el hombre como proveedor y cabeza de hogar, situación que ha evolucionado paulatinamente, para ilustrar mejor esta afirmación podemos indicar que nuestra carta magna en su artículo 70 establece que:

El estado formulará y ejecutará políticas para alcanzar la igualdad entre mujeres y hombres, a través del mecanismo especializado de acuerdo con la ley e incorporará el enfoque de género en planes y programas, y brindará asistencia técnica para su obligatoria aplicación en el sector público. (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, 2008)

La norma suprema, respecto de las mujeres en el ámbito laboral, en su artículo 43 numeral 1 dispone: "El Estado garantizará a las mujeres embarazadas y en periodo de lactancia los derechos a: 1. No ser discriminadas por su embarazo en los ámbitos educativo, social y laboral" (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, 2008).

Asimismo, en su artículo 33 hace referencia a que "el trabajo es un derecho y un deber social, y un derecho económico..." por lo que en el artículo 284 como parte de la política económica en el numeral 6 contempla: "Impulsar el pleno empleo y valorar todas las formas de trabajo, con respeto a los derechos laborales". Uno de los aspectos que siguen preocupando en la actualidad, es la concepción de igualdad de oportunidades para mujeres y hombres, sobre todo en el ámbito laboral. Si bien en la actualidad la mujer ha logrado inmiscuirse en cargos jerárquicos, todavía no se logra una igualdad real.

El principio de igualdad de trato en el mercado laboral es trascendental, no se puede obviar otras desigualdades o dar la afirmación que el inconveniente de las mujeres en el ámbito laboral es sólo el "techo de cristal" y no la división horizontal sexual del

trabajo. Al respecto se recoge información de analistas económicos ecuatorianos, quienes proporcionan este informe estadístico:

Dentro del mercado laboral ecuatoriano, la población femenina se incrementó dentro de la Población Económicamente Activa (PEA) en un 80% del 2001 al 2010. Mientras del total de establecimientos registrados en el Censo Económico, el 48% tiene a una mujer como dueña o gerente. (Poveda Burgos & Zamora Cobeña, 2016)

Para respaldar lo manifestado en líneas anteriores se establece en el artículo 331 de nuestra norma suprema en el que reza:

El estado garantizará a las mujeres igualdad en el acceso al empleo, a la formación y promoción laboral y profesional, a la remuneración equitativa, y a la iniciativa de trabajo autónomo. Se adoptará todas las medidas necesarias para eliminar desigualdades. Se prohíbe toda forma de discriminación, acoso o acto de violencia de cualquier índole, sea directa o indirecta, que afecte a las mujeres en el trabajo. (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, 2008)

Según los estudios estadísticos realizados, se aprecia un considerable incremento de la mujer ecuatoriana como parte de la fuerza laboral, ya sea en calidad de obrera o empleada. Además, el informe destaca un alto porcentaje de la mujer ecuatoriana desempeñando un rol dentro del mercado laboral en calidad de propietaria o gerente de un negocio o empresa.

Lo expuesto en líneas anteriores demuestra el progreso de la mujer como una persona productiva y emprendedora, cumpliendo papeles que tradicionalmente eran exclusivos del hombre. En este contexto, resulta insensato que el trabajo de todas las ocupaciones y labores hayan estado durante mucho tiempo solamente en manos de los varones, generando una injusticia al prescindir de las mujeres en actividades pecuniarias y la mayor parte de cargos ya sea en el ámbito público como privado, más difícil aún que el sexo femenino puede ocupar cargos jerárquicamente superiores. Entonces se puede dar cuenta, que los derechos de la mujer en todos

sus espacios, sobre todo en el ámbito laboral ha evolucionado; sin embargo, sigue existiendo subordinación, resultando necesario la intervención del Estado.

Respecto a asegurar el acceso equitativo a cargos de responsabilidad, En cuanto al trato digno que se debe observar en el lugar de trabajo, encontramos iniciativas que prohíben el uso de uniformes por las trabajadoras de casa particular e iniciativas para exigir al empleador la elaboración de protocolos de prevención y protección de sus trabajadoras y trabajadores frente al acoso sexual. Finalmente, y como una manera de facilitar el desempeño regular de la mujer en una actividad laboral, existen iniciativas para fortalecer la corresponsabilidad parental en las normas laborales sobre protección de la maternidad y la paternidad, y la extensión a los padres trabajadores del derecho a alimentar a sus hijos. (Sparza Reyes & Ponce de León, 2021, pág. 62)

El aporte de este trabajo de investigación tiene como base dar a conocer que, a pesar de la evolución del derecho respecto al ámbito laboral en lo atinente a la mujer, no ha sido suficiente para mitigar la brecha existente. En la actualidad, todavía es más fácil ingresar al mercado laboral para el hombre. El Estado ecuatoriano debe implementar medidas, políticas, programas, acciones con la finalidad de procurar un derecho laboral justo, con enfoque de género donde se garanticen los derechos. Uno de los desafíos que tiene el derecho respecto de las mujeres en el ámbito laboral es la protección y horizontalización del derecho del trabajo, con la finalidad de fortalecerlo.

4. Conclusiones

Una vez, realizada una amplia búsqueda de información sobre la evolución de los derechos de la mujer a través del tiempo y lugares, concluimos que el título injustamente atribuido a la mujer como “el sexo débil” carece de sustento legal y mucho menos de argumentos convincentes para tal calificativo, muy por el contrario hoy en día la mujer ya no tiene nada que demostrar frente a lo evidente que son las innumerables demostraciones de tenacidad y perseverancia en su lucha desigual por alcanzar mejores días, como producto de tantas batallas se confirma a la mujer

como parte imprescindible dentro del ámbito laboral, porque ha demostrado, aptitud y actitud dentro del mercado laboral.

Como ya lo hemos mencionado, la mujer a lo largo de la historia ha tenido varias épocas de lucha y sufrimiento, con la finalidad de tener un trato igualitario, hoy en día podemos decir que esa lucha por sus derechos ha dado sus frutos, pues las mujeres han ganado una gran influencia en la sociedad actual, pues se las puede ver ejerciendo un tipo de labores que en la antigüedad eran considerados exclusivamente para el sexo masculino creándose una brecha entre ambos géneros.

La evolución de los derechos de la mujer no hubiera sido posible, sin levantar su voz de protesta frente al discrimen y machismo predominante a lo largo de toda la historia de la humanidad, situación que llevó a gobernantes y líderes sociales a tratar y reivindicar derechos para la mujer, que por sí solos corresponden a los derechos humanos, que paulatinamente se promulgaron mediante tratados, convenciones o declaraciones con carácter de vinculantes y sean adoptadas por las constituciones políticas de los países miembros, de esta formase hace justicia grandes mujeres precursoras y lideresas de los derechos de la mujer.

5. Contribución de los autores

M.C.R.V: Revisión, dirección del trabajo de Investigación

L.A.C.R: Redacción de la Introducción, Revisión de las fuentes bibliográficas

L.A.G.G: Redacción del Desarrollo

F.D.D.M: Redacción de la Conclusión

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