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Facultad de la Educación, el Arte y la Comunicación

Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros

Gamification to improve English writing skills among superior basic education students at a public institution in Loja, academic year 2023-2024

Gamificación para mejorar las habilidades de escritura en inglés en estudiantes de educación básica superior de una institución pública de Loja, año académico 2023-2024

> **Trabajo de Integración Curricular, previo a la obtención del título de Licenciada en Pedagogía del Idioma Inglés.**

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Dedication

Throughout this academic journey, I have been guided by the wisdom that God has given me, to my beautiful and admirable mother Jessennia Ramírez who with her support and unconditional love motivated me during this path and was with me at all times, to my dear father Javier Rivera who from a distance encouraged me every day, to my Nonnita who since I was little taught me values and to always be in the hand of God.

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Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez

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Gamification to improve English writing skills among superior basic education students at a public institution in Loja, academic year 2023-2024

2. Resumen

El Ministerio de Educación de Ecuador reconoce la importancia del dominio del inglés en el mundo globalizado, pero enfrenta desafíos para mejorar las habilidades de escritura, como señaló Angelis. Para abordar esto, se propone un enfoque de gamificación para mejorar las habilidades de escritura en inglés en Loja, Ecuador. A pesar de los esfuerzos, los métodos de enseñanza tradicionales obstaculizan el desarrollo de habilidades y requieren soluciones innovadoras. Este estudio explora el impacto de la gamificación en la motivación y el compromiso en las tareas de escritura, basándose en investigaciones anteriores. Se empleó un enfoque de métodos mixtos, que incluía pruebas previas y posteriores, observaciones y encuestas, con estudiantes de noveno grado de la Unidad Educativa "Padre Julián Lorente" en Loja. La intervención mejoró significativamente la gramática, el vocabulario y la ortografía de los estudiantes, con un aumento notable en los niveles de dominio. Los comentarios de los estudiantes destacaron un mayor compromiso y motivación, lo que respalda la eficacia de la gamificación para mejorar las habilidades de escritura. Este estudio investiga la eficacia de la gamificación para mejorar las habilidades de escritura en inglés entre los estudiantes. La investigación demuestra que la gamificación, a través de sus elementos motivadores y atractivos, mejora significativamente el compromiso y la participación de los estudiantes en el proceso de aprendizaje. La retroalimentación inmediata de las actividades gamificadas permite a los estudiantes rectificar errores rápidamente, acelerando así el dominio del idioma. Además, la gamificación ayuda a contextualizar las habilidades lingüísticas para aplicaciones del mundo real. El análisis de las puntuaciones de las pruebas previas y posteriores revela una mejora sustancial en las habilidades de escritura de los estudiantes después de la implementación de la gamificación, afirmando su efectividad en varias subdestrezas de escritura. Además, los estudiantes exhiben percepciones abrumadoramente positivas hacia las actividades de escritura gamificada, considerándolas agradables y propicias para el aprendizaje. Esta percepción positiva fomenta actitudes favorables hacia el proceso de aprendizaje, abogando por la integración continua de la gamificación en contextos educativos para reforzar el dominio de la escritura en inglés.

Palabras clave: motivación, compromiso, gramática, vocabulario, ortografía, dominio del idioma.

Abstract

The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education recognizes the importance of English proficiency in the globalized world but faces challenges in improving writing skills, as noted by Angelis. To address this, a gamification approach is proposed to enhance English writing skills in Loja, Ecuador. Despite efforts, traditional teaching methods hinder skill development, necessitating innovative solutions. This study explores gamification's impact on motivation and engagement in writing tasks, building on previous research. A mixed-method approach, including pre-and post-tests, observations, and surveys, was employed with ninth-grade students at Unidad Educativa "Padre Julián Lorente" in Loja. The intervention significantly improved students' grammar, vocabulary, and spelling, with a notable increase in mastery levels. Student feedback highlighted increased engagement and motivation, supporting the efficacy of gamification in enhancing writing skills, this study investigates the efficacy of gamification in enhancing English writing skills among students. The research demonstrates that gamification, through its motivational and engaging elements, significantly improves student engagement and participation in the learning process. Immediate feedback from gamified activities enables students to rectify errors promptly, thereby accelerating language proficiency. Furthermore, gamification aids in contextualizing language skills for real-world applications. Analysis of pretest and post-test scores reveals a substantial enhancement in students' writing abilities post-gamification implementation, affirming its effectiveness across various writing subskills. Moreover, students exhibit overwhelmingly positive perceptions towards gamified writing activities, considering them enjoyable and conducive to learning. This positive perception fosters favorable attitudes towards the learning process, advocating for the continued integration of gamification in educational contexts to bolster English writing proficiency.

Keywords: *motivation, engagement, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, language proficiency*

3. Introduction

English is recognized as the most widely spoken language across the globe. Learning English is not an additional skill but essential knowledge to function in a globalized society. The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education strives to improve the English proficiency of its students in English schools and high schools, as the language plays a vital role in society, as it is used in political contexts, economic, social, and cultural so that people communicate effectively. According to Angelis (2022), it has become normal to talk about English learning in Ecuador in terms of the low level of English proficiency as measured by the EF English Proficiency Index.

Unfortunately, there are a variety of factors that contribute to students' difficulties learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). These problems include the low mastery of the writing skill in the students and the traditionalism of the teachers, it is important to know that these traditional methods of teaching writing often lack engagement and fail to motivate students effectively, without sufficient mastery of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, which are important factors of writing, students cannot make a good product like texts, articles, essay and at the same time these students might also find it difficult to communicate effectively, when expressing their ideas, in this case, in writing. Writing has significance since it necessitates the acquisition of numerous subskills in order to achieve a certain learning goal. In addition, Cuesta (2020) established using multiple methods of writing can help students understand language by making good use of their resources, which will help them increase their vocabulary, construct coherent sentences, and interact with the language they are learning.

A possible solution for these problems is gamification, that is, the use of game design characteristics in non-game contexts, which is gaining attention as an effective way for improving student engagement and motivation in a variety of educational fields. Digital games are the latest iteration of game-based learning that teachers apply to include students in enjoyable and meaningful activities. They are efficient, entertaining, active, and motivating ways to learn while providing feedback (Cuesta, 2020).

This research aims to explore the potential of gamification to improve students' writing skills, to assess the impact of gamification on students' motivation and engagement in writing activities. and to examine the effects of gamified writing tasks on the accuracy and complexity of students' writing. Although many studies have contributed to discovering the effect of Gamification

to improve writing skills, a big gap must be investigated. For this reason, to achieve this purpose it is necessary to answer the following questions: How does the use of gamification improve English writing skills among superior basic education students at a public institution in Loja, academic year 2023-2024? In addition, this general research question has been divided into two sub-questions: What is the effectiveness of gamification strategies to improve English writing skills? What are students' perceptions toward gamified writing activities?

This study is important because demonstrated the benefits of gamification to improve grammar, vocabulary, and spelling, which are significant indicators of English writing skills. The development of this project is essential for students because English writing skills can be enhanced through gamification by encouraging dedication, motivation, participation, personalization, teamwork, risk-free practice, and interaction. By harnessing the power of games, educators can create an immersive and effective learning environment that supports students' development as proficient writers. Without a doubt, gamification has a significant impact on EFL classrooms.

The problem observed by the researcher solved through the application of a strategy such as gamification based on applications and digital games. The beneficiaries of this research are the superior basic education students of a public institution in Loja, academic period 2023- 2024. This study will allow students to experience teaching in a dynamic way, different from traditional education, which will cover grammar, vocabulary, and spelling. Likewise, a teaching environment that is outstanding in effectiveness and perfectly adapted to the characteristics mentioned above is one of the contributions to solving this problem.

The purpose of this research study was to determine the improvement of English writing skills by using gamification among superior basic education students at a public institution in Loja, in the academic year 2023-2024. Therefore, two specific objectives were determined: To demonstrate the effectiveness of gamification in the development of English writing skills among superior basic education students at a public institution in Loja, in the academic year 2023-2024, and To find out the students' perceptions about the implementation of gamification to improve their English writing skills among superior basic education students, in the academic year 2023-2024.

This study demonstrated how gamification improved students' writing abilities in English, resulting in gains in spelling, vocabulary usage, and grammar (word order). The creation of this study

has not only helped students become better writers, but it has also made them feel more engaged in the educational process and inspired to learn new things every day. Additionally, by enforcing discipline in gamified activities, preservice teachers might enhance their management and teaching abilities during the study's development. This was particularly beneficial for classroom management. Additionally, the data included in this research project enhanced the analysis, demonstrating the potential benefits of the gamified approach that was used.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1. Gamification

4.1.1. Definition

Gamification is an instructional method that uses game mechanics in the educational and professional domain with the goals of enhancing knowledge retention, developing one or more new skills, or, in the end, rewarding particular behaviors. (Redjek & Muhajir, 2021). Gamification is the use of games to improve English language learning in the classroom. This approach is both inventive and engaging, demonstrating its potential to boost students' enthusiasm and drive when striving to enhance their English proficiency.

Cuesta (2020) claims that by integrating motivational skills which are crucial for students studying English as a foreign language (EFL), gamification enhances the process of teaching and learning a language. This method improves students' overall learning experience and gives them more control. In addition, gamification uses game elements in a non-game context to increase engagement between humans and computers (Khalee et al., 2020).

4.1.2. Importance of Gamification

Barghani (2020) mentions that the integration of gamification in the classroom is based on the belief that the inherent nature of games and their enjoyable elements significantly heightens students' internal drive to actively participate in educational tasks. Gamification has become increasingly important in the classroom since it can help students learn more by combining enjoyable activities with academic content, therefore improving their abilities.

As described by Rahmani (2020), the introduction of gamified activities bridged the gap between passive and active learners, reducing learners' anxiety and increasing their willingness to actively participate in the learning process. In those centers where gamification has been opted for, greater interactivity has been observed in the students, who are more prepared to achieve their academic objectives. Thus, it corresponds to an effective methodology that improves the educational experience of individuals. Bal (2019) establishes that for students to feel confident throughout the learning process and to be involved in writing activities both within and outside of the classroom. It is said to be beneficial for the comfortable development of writing skills. Likewise, it is anticipated

that gamification would help students experience a sense of ownership over the class while honing their skills in writing.

4.1.3.   Elements of Gamification

In its implementation, gamification or game-based learning adapts game elements to engage learners to take part in learning to build learners' problem-solving skills (Rahmani, 2020).

As stated by Toda et al. (2019), gamification, for instance, has a lot of different factors.

4.1.3.1.   Performance/measurement. These factors relate to how the environment reacts and can be used to provide the learner with feedback. Points, Progression, Levels, Statistics, and Acknowledgement are some of the elements that make up this facet. Students may feel disoriented if this dimension is missing because there is no feedback for their actions.

- **Recognition:** Referred to as badges, medals, trophies, and achievements, this form of extrinsic feedback commends players for their specific actions within the context of the game.
- **Levels:** This pertains to an extrinsic hierarchical system that confers new advantages to users as they progress through the game.
- **Advancement:** Offers extrinsic guidance to users, enabling them to track their progress within the game and determine their current position.
- **Points:** A direct method of providing extrinsic feedback to users based on their actions.
- **Statistics:** This includes information on the number of tasks completed or overall performance within the environment. In virtual settings, this could also manifest as interactive dashboards (Toda et al., 2019).

4.1.3.2. Social. This component relates to how students interact with one another in the setting. Competition, cooperation, reputation, and social pressure are all aspects in this setting. Lack of social components can make students feel isolated because they can't interact with their peers.

- **Competition:** Involves an inherent concept where users face each other in challenges to achieve a common goal.

- **Cooperation**: Is a concept that is directly tied to tasks and calls for users to work closely together in order to accomplish a common goal. Contrary to competition, it can be used in conjunction with the other.

- **Reputation**: distinct from levels, represents more of a social status that doesn't necessarily reflect the learners' skills. These titles are commonly used within communities to establish a hierarchy in the environment.

- **Social Pressure**: This is an intrinsic concept associated with social interactions that place pressure on the learner (Toda et al., 2019).

4.1.3.3.Personal. This dimension is connected to the learner who is using the environment. The elements utilized in this dimension include Sensation, Objective, Puzzle, Novelty, and Renovation. The lack of Personal components can make the user feel demotivated because the system doesn't provide them a sense of significance or purpose.

- **Novelty:** Is permanently connected to changes that are made to the circumstances, such as the introduction of new facts, content, or even game functions. This tactic is successful at keeping users in the area and avoiding monotony.

- **Objectives:** Represent a fundamental idea in relation to objectives, giving gamers a reason or goal for completing the necessary activities.

- **Puzzle:** This is a fundamental idea concerning to the environment's implemented activities, which are frequently seen as educational pursuits since they present users with issues with thinking.

- **Renovation**: Provides students with an additional opportunity after missing a task, contributing to the fun of games.

- **Sensation:** Uses learners' senses to improve their experience, for as through stimulating their sense of sight or hearing (Toda et al., 2019).

4.1.3.4. Fictional. The perspective of the students, as represented by the narrative, and the environment's aspect are combined in the fictional dimension, intertwining their experiences inside the setting. The absence of fictional components might result in a lack of context and meaning, which can negatively affect users' comprehension of why they must carry out particular tasks in the immersive environment and negatively affect their overall user experience.

- **Narrative:** The fundamental idea that determines how events unfold in a game, influenced by implicit decisions the player makes throughout the experience.
- **Storytelling:** Consists of components such as audio cues, text narrative, etc., and conveys the environment's story in a script-like manner (Toda et al., 2019).

4.1.4. Gamification as an Innovative Strategy

As declared by Samosa et al. (2021), gamification is a method of teaching used by teachers and homeschooling parents that involves incorporating elements of games into routine tasks.

These components include engagement, leaderboards, points, emblems, character building, and more. The underlying rationale behind gamification is quite straightforward - many games possess addictive qualities that captivate and fully engage players, regardless of their age. By incorporating game mechanics, learners are allowed to experience both success and failure, as well as cultivate perseverance. They gain a sense of agency, as they have control over the decisions and actions they take within the games. Clear rewards and quick affirmation act as obvious motivators that encourage student engagement.

In the words of Samosa et al. (2021), an introduction game or objective is the key to unlocking a learner's intrinsic interest in and engagement with a subject, and this is where gamification happens, especially in enhancing the students' writing skills. By engaging in activities that clarify new ideas, teachers can aid a child's development and facilitate their transition from solitary learning to a holistic learning environment that involves both academic success and personal development.

4.1.4.1. Advantages of Using Gamification in Education. Samosa et al. (2021) established even if the assignments are boring, gamification can be a powerful approach for encouraging and altering the traditional aspects to finish them.

- **Gamification increases motivation for learning.** Rana (2022) says the trainees are more motivated to engage in any enjoyable activity while they are having fun. Although there isn't a

direct link between motivation and learning, it is clear that these tools boost their readiness to study and don't contribute to the idea of traditional learning being rejected.

- **The difficulty is increasing.** According to Rana (2022), each game has objectives and challenges that players must complete. The fundamentals of gamification are comparable to those of a video game, where the level of difficulty rises as the player moves through the levels. This could involve, for instance, assimilating more abstract concepts or finding solutions to difficult problems. There is no limit to the degree of difficulty, and it can be used throughout the entire educational process, from early childhood education through secondary education.

- **It makes the subjects more fun.** As demonstrated by Rana (2022), with the typical classroom setting of books and notebooks, pupils may get bored. They frequently don't grasp the things being taught in class, which demotivates them or makes them feel that their studies are pointless. Gamification can be used in all subjects, including math, the social sciences, and music, to help students understand abstract concepts in more concrete ways.

- **It favors the acquisition of knowledge.** As Rana (2022) mentions the learning process is greatly influenced by the students' interest in and comprehension of the subject. Some complex topics may be difficult for students to understand, which makes it difficult for them to digest knowledge during their studies. Gamification offers a solution by improving the assimilation of both simple and complex information, making it easier for children to understand and remember them.

- **Increases attention and concentration.** In the words by Rana (2022), the elements that affect learning are motivation, attention, and concentration. Children will concentrate their whole attention and concentration to the learning activity if they are motivated, believe they can understand the topics, and see it as a challenge they love. They put their time, energy, and resources into the game as a result, which enhances their learning.

- **Improves academic performance.** As Rana (2022) argues the most logical result is the one that stems from all the others. When compared to a learning strategy based on memory, students do noticeably better on performance exams due to their ability to absorb concepts and understand them.

- **Stimulates social relationships.** Rana (2022) states that many gamification systems need group participation, creating a setting where students must practice speaking and cooperating to accomplish the shared objective. Such activities foster classmate equality and camaraderie while encouraging each kid to take on a role within the group.

- **Encourage the use of new technologies.** Gamification is able to be utilized with or without the use of modern technology, but outstanding technological tools like instructional robots or the development and design of video games inspire students to begin utilizing new technologies and integrating them into their daily life as mention Rana (2022).

- **Promotes the good use of video games.** Rana (2022) says video games are one of the most exciting gamification tools, and using them for education teaches students that they can be used properly and in moderation as more than just a simple source of amusement.

- **Improves the use of logic and strategy for problem-solving.** According to Rana (2022), this is a fundamental component that every educational game must have. The children are given issues to solve, which calls for thoughtfulness. Any trivia question, mathematical conundrum, or physics approach requires logical reasoning in addition to learning by inference and trial and error. Gamification has many benefits, and it's clear that both boys and girls may use it in the classroom to develop new technological skills or enhance their social and behavioral skills.

4.1.5. Technology and Gamification in the EFL Teaching

Castillo (2020) mentions that recently, technology has become an inseparable component of our daily lives, and it holds significant importance in the teaching and learning process. Undoubtedly, it has influenced education by prompting teachers to reconsider their approaches and methodologies. Moreover, technology has brought about beneficial transformations in the roles of teachers, allowing for more learner-centered activities to be implemented. In the realm of language learning, the utilization of various technological tools enables both teachers and students to attain favorable outcomes.

The integration of technology in the English language classroom offers numerous advantages, including the enhancement of linguistic skills, fostering a positive learning attitude, and the developing self-directed learning strategies and self-confidence for foreign language students (Castillo, 2020). Modern technology also makes it easier to combine theory and practice effectively when learning a language. It is important to note the close connection between gamification and developing technology. Technology has the ability to improve the learning environment in the classroom, but it's important to lay a strong pedagogical foundation first, for example by implementing gamification strategies. Gamification is the use of game mechanics in an educational setting. It incorporates several elements from video games to enhance user experience and

engagement. Therefore, by providing students with a competitive setting that fully immerses them in the learning process, games aid in education.

4.1.5.1. Digital Games. The modern iteration of game-based learning that teachers utilize to include students in worthwhile and enjoyable activities is based on digital games, which are efficient, enjoyable, active, and motivating ways to learn and deliver feedback (Cuesta, 2020). The participants' proficiency with grammar, vocabulary, and spelling was enhanced by digital games as they outperformed the students in matching games intended to help them develop these subskills, which is evident when students write better in English as a foreign language.

Digital games and gamification strategies serve to keep players' attention and help them solve problems, acquire new knowledge, and learn new skills. Despite the considerable emotional investment, including frustration, gamers persist, and educators have realized that they, too, learn from gaming and use its principles to perform "gamified" activities.

As technology becomes increasingly prevalent in classrooms, there is a growing trend of teachers and students utilizing digital learning games more than ever. The purpose of these digital learning games is to augment teachers' instruction and assist students in grappling with essential concepts, knowledge, and content comprehension. Many of these tools offer simplified lesson creation and management, foster improved engagement and discussion among students, and enable clear communication between instructors, students, and caregivers. The utilization of digital learning tools can enhance students' learning time and prove highly effective in the educational setting.

4.1.5.2. Advantages of Using Digital Games. In the words of Lim (2021), the advantages of technology in the classroom continue to evolve, and some positive developments include:

- **Enhancing Communication Skills and Performance:** Learning to communicate successfully with technology helps students become better communicators. This not only enhances their academic achievement but also equips them with the necessary communication skills to succeed in professional situations.

- **Offering Students an Interesting and Fun Learning Environment:** Using technology in the classroom creates an engaging and enjoyable learning environment for students. It allows children to enjoy themselves while learning, which enhances their motivation and excitement for the subject content.

- **Facilitating Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Expansion:** Using educational technology, students can obtain fresh skills and knowledge necessary for both personal and professional development. They can broaden their knowledge and pick up useful skills thanks to the variety and interesting topics offered by online programs that are pertinent to their fields of study or employment.

- **It enables students to enhance their mental and physical well-being:** The enhancement of students' physical and mental well-being is another advantage of using technology in teaching. Students can improve their learning and cognitive abilities by utilizing these resources (Lim, 2021).

4.2. English writing skills

4.2.1. Definition of Writing Skills

Writing skills encompass distinct abilities that enable writers to articulate their thoughts in a coherent manner and mentally engage with the message. These skills involve various techniques and tools employed during the writing process to effectively convey written messages (Mujahidah, 2019). Among these skills, good spelling holds significant importance, as overlooking this aspect can create a negative impression on colleagues and clients. Similar to enhancing reading comprehension, improving spelling can be achieved through reading and transcribing sentences.

Conversely, writing involves expressing language through the use of written symbols or signs. It is often perceived as a challenging skill by some individuals. Writing requires the capacity to generate thoughts and ideas, while also necessitating the ability to evaluate and choose the appropriate words for effective expression.

4.2.2. Teaching Writing

In the context of teaching writing, it is vital to provide students with guidance on the essential mechanics of effective writing. Placing emphasis on writing as a process of exploration means giving priority to the act of revision throughout the course. In this approach, the teacher actively intervenes and guides students through the writing process, rather than providing feedback only after the completion of a writing task.

Despite the abundance of various genres of written texts, classroom writing performance remains relatively restricted. As outlined by Mujahidah (2019), there are five significant categories of classroom writing performance to consider.

- **Imitative, or writing down:** In the initial stages of learning to write, students engage in "writing down" English letters, words, and possibly sentences to familiarize themselves with the conventions of the orthographic code.

- **Intensive, or controlled:** This form of writing usually emerges in controlled grammar exercises where students practice writing under specific guidelines.

- **Self-Writing:** A significant portion of classroom writing involves self-writing, where students write with the intention of addressing only themselves as the audience. Note-taking during lectures is a prominent example of this category.

- **Display Writing:** Is a component of many language activities, including short answer questions, essay tests, and research projects.

- **Real Writing:** While the majority of writing assignments in the classroom include components of showcase writing, others try to effectively convey ideas to a readership that is in need of them (Mujahidah, 2019).

4.2.3. *Writing Subskills*

4.2.3.1.   Grammar. According to Castillo (2020), grammar has also been seen as a crucial component of language training. In this way, it has been argued that words and word groups that constitute sentences in any language are referred to as grammar. Considering the importance of vocabulary and grammar in EFL learning, it is proposed that digital games work well at supplying context for grammar usage. The meanings of language expressions, including word structure, phrases, clauses, sentences, and complete texts, are encoded by English grammar. It consists of the composition and syntactic organization of sentences, as well as the rules governing the use of a certain language. Another name for grammar is the science of language, which is devoted to the thorough analysis of various linguistic components.

4.2.3.1.1. Importance of Grammar. Rossiter (2021) mentions that Grammar plays a crucial role in written communication. Since written communication is unidirectional and postponed or indirect, the recipient cannot, in most cases, demand proof. Therefore, the use of language, grammar, syntax, and spelling is essential in written communication and any other indirect communication method to guarantee that messages are understood by the reader right away and are not unclear or nonsensical.

4.2.3.1.2. Word Order. According to Braine (1963), word order in grammar refers to the arrangement or sequence of words in a sentence. Word order is crucial because it can affect the meaning and clarity of a sentence. Each language has its own rules and conventions for word order. Here are some examples of how word order can vary in different languages.

In English, changing the order of words can completely change the meaning of the sentence:

"The dog bites the man."

"The man bites the dog."

In summary, "word order" is fundamental for the construction and understanding of sentences in any language, and its rules and flexibility vary from one language to another (Braine, 1963).

4.2.3.2.   Vocabulary. Castillo (2020) establishes since students' success typically depends on how much vocabulary they can employ in conversation, vocabulary knowledge is widely regarded as the foundation of language learning

The development of strong reading, listening, writing, and speaking language abilities depends heavily on one's vocabulary. It stands for the vocabulary that a person has mastered or frequently uses in casual talks. If a language has 100,000 words, for example, a person may be familiar with 60,000 of them. As a result, as compared to the language's general vocabulary, the subject's vocabulary would be significantly less.

In this context, it is crucial to establish that everybody who is motivated to learn a language other than their home tongue finds it necessary to invest a lot of time in learning vocabulary. And managing in that other language is made possible by the fact that it is a vital key.

4.2.3.2.1.   Kinds of Vocabulary. At least five different types of vocabulary exist as described by Izzah (2015).

- **Word Classes:** These are linguistic categories that include nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, pronouns, conjunctions, and prepositions.

- **Word Families**: This idea clarifies affixes and word change.

- **Word Formation:** It may relate to a state or a process, and the analysis of it may be synchronic or diachronic.

- **Collocation:** It is two words that are frequently used together.

- **Homonyms:** Although it has the identical structure, its meaning is different. (Izzah, 2015).

4.2.3.2.2.   Aspects of Vocabulary. As pointed out by Izzah (2015), there are three aspects to teaching vocabulary

- **Meaning**: The strategy of teachers should comprise explaining concepts to the class without the use of translation. This is advised since a translation could not always provide a precise and accurate understanding of the word. It is recommended since it enables the class to move on without exclusively using translation, allowing the students to learn how to pronounce words while directly understanding their meaning.

- **Spelling**: Pupils should be able to spell the word correctly and understand how it differs from terms with similar pronunciations.

- **Pronouncing:** The term helps learners retain it for a longer period of time and recognize it more easily when they hear or see it. These are the key elements that ought to be used when teaching vocabulary. The word chain game emphasizes correct pronunciation and spelling (Izzah, 2015).

4.2.3.2.3.   Teaching Vocabulary. Izzah (2015) In order to increase efficacy and efficiency, teachers must not only recognize that word study presents challenges for their pupils, but also employ certain practical ideas and methods. They can only assist the learner in improving their language proficiency and ability to communicate freely in English in this way. Given that vocabulary is so important to language learners' success, teaching vocabulary is an essential technique for improving English competence. Teaching the definitions of technical or obscure words that appear in literature is only one aspect of vocabulary development instruction. Understanding how words are organically learned through discussions and reading outside of formal education is vital. Students require several opportunities to interact with words in meaningful situations in order to properly acquire them.

As asserted by Izzah (2015), strategies for learning vocabulary fall into five essential steps:

- Five key steps can be used to organize vocabulary learning strategies:

- Possessing resources for learning unfamiliar terms.

- Adopting the new word's meanings.

- Finding the meanings of the terminologies.

- Retaining the expression accurately in memory.

- Employing the conditions of use (Izzah, 2015)

In order to effectively teach vocabulary, teachers must consider the three key components of vocabulary learning: word form, word meaning, and word use (Izzah, 2015). In other words, when teaching vocabulary, it is important to cover both the main characteristics of lexical items and how they relate to other words.

4.2.3.3. Spelling. Spelling involves the composition of words using letters and diacritics. Early-stage learning of spelling lays the groundwork for language acquisition (Bakshi, 2021). Spelling holds significance as it establishes connections between letters and sounds, as well as between words and sentences (Bakshi, 2014). Consequently, it plays a pivotal role in developing reading and writing skills, thereby enhancing language proficiency. Properly spelling a word serves as the initial step in building vocabulary.

Bakshi (2014) establishes correct spelling is essential for effective communication. Additionally, for written expression, spelling correctly is crucial. The incorrect spelling of a sentence, paragraph, letter, or essay indicates a lack of English proficiency. In English, words are not spelled in accordance with how they are spoken, and regulations are frequently broken. The correct way to use letters to express a language's sounds or phonemes is determined by a set of rules called spelling. There is no linguistic rationale that governs the link between a phoneme and a letter, hence it is in theory by chance.

4.2.4. Improve Writing Skills

4.2.4.1.   Gamification to Improve Writing Skills. In the words of Samosa et al., (2021) Game mechanics are used in gamification to engage and inspire students while they learn. It is thought to be advantageous for improving writing abilities and is anticipated to increase students' engagement with the classes while extending and enriching their writing abilities.

As declared by Rahmani (2020) The use of designed effectively non-digital and digital games that include game-like features into the learning environment to increase engagement and participation is known as gamification. The very nature of gamification is anticipated to improve students' enthusiasm and dedication while also fostering friendly rivalry among them.

Students will be more inclined to study as a result of this gamification technique, giving their whole focus to comprehending what the teacher is attempting to convey. Furthermore, students will participate actively in their education, which will promote their independence and accountability.

Take into consideration the following tactics to improve writing skills gamification:

- **Clear Objectives:** Define specific objectives and goals for the gamified writing activities. Communicate to students what they are expected to achieve through the writing tasks.

- **Progression and Levels:** Implement a system where students can progress through different levels or stages based on their writing skills. Each level can present new challenges or higher proficiency requirements, keeping students motivated to improve.

- **Rewards and Points:** Implement a reward system that grants points, badges, or other incentives to students as they reach milestones or display advancement in their writing. This fosters a feeling of accomplishment and motivates them to remain actively engaged in their writing endeavors.

- **Peer Collaboration:** Include cooperative writing exercises in which students produce written works as a group. Students are able to learn from each other's talents and collaborate and be creative as a result of this.

- **Storytelling Elements:** Integrate storytelling elements into writing tasks, encouraging students to craft narratives or engaging storylines. This adds an element of fun and creativity, making writing more enjoyable and immersive.

- **Real-World Relevance:** Connect writing tasks to real-world scenarios or authentic purposes, such as writing letters, articles, or blog posts. This helps students see the practical application of their writing skills and boosts motivation.

- **Timed Challenges:** Set time-based challenges or writing sprints to encourage students to write within a specific timeframe. This can improve their ability to write under pressure and enhance their time management skills.

- **Feedback and Progress Tracking:** Provide timely and constructive feedback on students' writing, highlighting their strengths and areas for improvement. Use technology tools or platforms that allow for progress tracking, giving students a visual representation of their growth over time.

- **Gamified Writing Prompts:** Design writing prompts in a gamified format, incorporating elements such as multiple-choice options, branching narratives, or interactive scenarios. This adds an element of choice and engagement to the writing process.

- **Gamified Writing Contests:** Organize writing contests or competitions with specific themes or criteria. Offer rewards or recognition to students who demonstrate exceptional writing skills or creativity.

By implementing these strategies, you can effectively improve gamification in writing skills, making the learning process more engaging, enjoyable, and effective for students. (Rahmani, 2020)

4.3. Previous Studies

A 2021 study by Resty C. Samosa titled "Gamification as an Innovative Strategy to Improve Learners' Writing Skills" highlights the challenges that many students face when attempting to comprehend and interpret written symbols in addition to handling difficult oral and written assignments. Furthermore, even when students are capable writers, their work usually lacks the necessary nuance, skill, and depth. Installing gamification systems and assessing their effectiveness, especially in terms of enhancing students' overall writing abilities and talents, is the main objective of this research project. Furthermore, the study attempts to identify and explore the positive aspects of modern teaching methods while keeping in mind their varied uses and goals. In all, thirty people, mostly third-graders, will take part in the research. To gather pertinent information and data on the main topic and objectives, interviews with the participants will be conducted. Through controlled questioning, the researchers will assess the effectiveness of gamification as a cutting-edge and successful way to enhance writing skills in Grade 3 pupils as well as their varied points of view. The study's findings will shed light on how gamification may be a helpful technique for improving students' writing abilities and educational experiences.

Mazhar Bal did a study in 2021 titled "Use of Digital Games in Writing Education: An Action Research on Gamification" to look at how gamification affected middle school pupils' writing abilities. A thorough lesson plan integrating Writing and Authorship Skills with Gamification for Middle School Students was created to accomplish this goal. Seventh-grade children that were chosen using the criteria sampling technique made up the research group for the project, which was planned as action research. Student diaries, semi-structured interview forms, semi-structured observation forms, and digital content produced by the students were some of the data gathering instruments used. While other data were studied descriptively, the data from the semi-structured interview forms were subjected to content analysis. By including the Turkish Language Teaching

Program (2018) in the action plan for gamification and writing skills, the study built a link between the two concepts. The findings showed that gamification considerably raised the interest of the students in the course and that all participants actively participated in the implementation process. Additionally, gamification helped pupils develop their creativity, improved classroom management, and bridged the gap between education and life outside of it. The findings of this study lead to the recommendation that gamified digital games be used as a text format in Turkish language classes to increase middle school students' motivation for writing instruction. The present investigation shows the potential advantages of gamification in developing middle school pupils' writing abilities and enriching their entire educational experience.

Mustafa Sevik looked into how games affected young English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' writing abilities in his 2019 study. Turkish and English have differing orthographies, with English being seen as being more complex because many of the letters in English represent numerous sounds, and vice versa. On the other side, Turkish spelling is an example of a shallow orthography, with each letter denoting only one phoneme. Turkish EFL learners may experience difficulty with writing assignments due to the diversity of their linguistic origins. Therefore, the experimental study sought to discover how games can improve the writing abilities of EFL students in primary schools. 42 EFL students from primary schools participated in the study willingly and were split into control and experimental groups. The research study crashed for nine weeks, with a dictation exercise in the final week for both groups to see if there were any noticeable differences. The results showed that playing games helped EFL students in primary schools improve their writing skills. As a result, it is suggested that include games in the teaching of writing skills in EFL settings in primary schools might be beneficial. This study highlights the potential advantages of using games as a useful tool for improving young EFL learners' writing skills.

In 2020, Luz Castillo Cuesta conducted research at the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja in southern Ecuador. The study's main focus was on the effectiveness of using digital games to help English Major students' vocabulary and grammar as a Foreign Language (EFL). The study included 68 B1-level students who were enrolled in two different sections of a Communicative Grammar course, per the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In the study's mixed-method approach, pre- and post-questionnaires, in addition to writing rubrics, were employed as data collection instruments. Over the course of five months, digital games were

incorporated into the curriculum, and students received continuous feedback. The results demonstrated that students' grammar improved when they played digital games, particularly in the areas of modals, gerunds, and infinitives. Furthermore, there was a discernible enhancement in the student's vocabulary, particularly with regard to topics related to school and careers. The study's findings demonstrate how effective online games can be in helping EFL students in higher education improve their vocabulary and grammar.

In 2022, Berrin Genç-Ersoy and Derya Göl-Dede conducted a study with the goal of boosting elementary school pupils' writing abilities, motivation, and attitudes about writing through the use of educational games. The sample group was chosen using criteria sampling, and the study was carried out utilizing cooperative action research. The Writing Attitude Scale, Writing Motivation Scale, Analytical Rubric for Assessing Writing, interview forms, instructional activities, and action plans were used as data gathering tools. With the aid of several data analysis tools, both qualitative and quantitative data were examined. The quantitative analysis showed that the participants' attitude, motivation, and writing skill development post-test means scores were greater than their pre-test means scores following participation in the writing training process utilizing educational games. Additionally, the qualitative results showed that educational games were a successful method for teaching writing, resulting in the participants' positive attitudes toward writing, increased motivation, improved writing abilities, and the resolution of writing issues. Taking into account the affective aspects that affect students' learning experiences, the study emphasizes the importance of combining a variety of strategies, including educational games, in the teaching of writing in light of these encouraging results. According to this study, educational games should be used more widely to create an environment where children may learn to write while also developing good attitudes toward the process.

Atik Umamah conducted a study on digital game-based learning (DGBL) in 2022 to find out what teachers and students at EFL universities thought about it. Student gamers' extensive use of digital games has prompted their incorporation into the teaching and learning process. To increase student involvement and interest in the classroom, video games are included into the curriculum. This study set out to determine whether there were any perceived gaps connected to gender or interest, as well as to characterize how EFL university students felt about the introduction of DGBL. The study also aimed to comprehend how instructors felt about the topic. A total of 86 second-year

English students responded to a survey on gamification acceptance. Four English teachers and four English students were interviewed in-depth to gain additional insight into their viewpoints on the implementation of DGBL. Quantitative data were evaluated using descriptive statistics and an independent sample t-test, and qualitative data were evaluated using content analysis. The results demonstrated that EFL students had a favorable assessment of the adoption of DGBL, particularly in terms of how user-friendly they thought it to be. It's crucial to note that while students' interest in playing video games did influence their viewpoint, gender did not have a substantial impact on it. Thematic research revealed that EFL students and teachers shared comparable perspectives on the advantages, challenges, and requirements of effective digital games for learning. By providing analytical data on the acceptance of and potential benefits of DGBL in the context of EFL instruction, the study encourages a fuller understanding of the perspectives of both students and teachers on this unique method.

5. Methodology

5.1. Research Design

To investigate the sub-questions stated in the research topic, the study employed a mixed-method approach, involving the gathering of both quantitative and qualitative data. Mills (2016) mentions that the utilization of mixed methodology is valuable when assessing the effects of a program or event, particularly when it is not possible or ethical to randomly assign participants.

The aforementioned principles were applied to an action research framework, which involved various stages such as identifying issues, gathering information, and developing an intervention plan (proposal). As educators, it is crucial for us to continuously explore means of enhancing our teaching and learning methodologies. In this aspect, action research is a useful strategy. As stated by (Llego, 2022), action research allows researchers to use proactive strategies to improve educational results while also enabling the data gathering to assess the effects of these efforts.

5.2. Data Collection Sources and Techniques

The researcher used several techniques and instruments to gather information throughout the research endeavor. One of these approaches involved a testing technique that incorporated a **pre-test** and **post-test** instrument. This instrument consisted of various question types such as multiple-choice, jumble questions, and matching questions. Its purpose is to collected quantitative data, which helped the researcher in assessing the extent to which students' writing skills have improved through the implementation of gamification.

Additionally, the second one was the observation technique with **field notes** as an instrument that will be used to document observations during each lesson. These notes served as a valuable tool for capturing noteworthy findings, events, or specific situations that may arise during the observation process. This approach enabled the researcher to gather qualitative data that complements the quantitative analysis conducted in the research.

The third technique involved employing a survey technique through the use of a **questionnaire**. This instrument will be utilized to collect data about students' perceptions regarding the utilization of gamification, for enhancing their English writing skills.

5.3. Data Analysis

The researcher processed and analyzed quantitative data through the use of descriptive

statistics. To facilitate data tabulation, the researcher used the Excel program to calculate the central tendency and analyze the results obtained in the pre- and post-tests. The quantitative data collected was processed and analyzed and subsequently presented in the form of tables and graphs.

The results were presented in tables, accompanied by graphical representations that illustrated the impact of gamification as a resource to improve English writing skills. Instead, qualitative data was examined through an analysis of students' perceptions, as demonstrated by the survey. This analysis served to corroborate the findings of the research on the influence of gamification.

5.4. Research participants

The participants of the following research work were the researcher, who was a preservice teacher, and a group of ninth-grade students from the Unidad Educativa "Padre Julián Lorente", institution of Loja city with an average age between 12 and 13 years old, who have an A1.2 level of English Language proficiency.

5.5. Timing

The development of the intervention plan will lasted eight weeks (two months) divided into three meetings per week of English classes during the school year 2023-2024. In this intervention proposal, the pre-service teacher used Gamification to improve the student's English writing skills.

5.6. Procedure

The study addressed the primary research question: How does the implementation of gamification enhance English writing skills among eighth-grade students at a public institution in Loja during the academic year 2023-2024? To conduct this research, the action research cycle model proposed by Susman (1978) were employed, encompassing the phases of diagnosis, action planning, implementation, and evaluation with reflection.

5.6.1. Diagnosing

The initial phase involved acknowledging the problem at hand. Initially, the researcher sought permission from the institution's rector to conduct the research. Subsequently, with proper authorization, the researcher engaged with a group of eighth-grade students selected for convenience. During the internship period, a prevalent issue emerged, as the majority of students at that level displayed difficulties with their English writing skills. Once familiarized with the participants, the

researcher administered a pre-test specifically designed to assess their English writing skills. Based on the test results, an action plan was developed to tackle these challenges.

5.6.2. *Action Plan.*

Once the primary issue of English writing skills is identified, the researcher proceed to carefully select and gather relevant information on the gamification strategy as a viable solution to address the problem. Subsequently, an innovative action plan devised, aimed at enhancing the English writing skills of the target group. This plan will be structured in a manner that facilitates addressing the main research question and the two sub-problems: (1) How does the implementation of gamification enhance English writing skills among eighth-grade students at a public institution in Loja during the academic year 2023-2024? (2) What is the effectiveness of gamification strategies in improving English writing skills? (3) What are the students' perceptions regarding gamified writing activities?

To effectively execute the action plan, the researcher designed eight lesson plans based on the PPP model. These plans will be instrumental in guiding the implementation of gamification strategies during the research study.

5.6.3. *Evaluation & Reflection*

Following the intervention, a post-test was administered to assess the student's English writing skills after the implementation of the treatment. This assessment will serve to determine the effectiveness of gamification in improving English writing abilities. Additionally, a questionnaire was conducted to gather insights into the students' perceptions regarding the use of gamification for enhancing their English writing skills. The researcher then analyzed the intervention's outcomes by interpreting both the quantitative data from the questionnaire and the pre-test and post-test results, as well as qualitative data gathered from field notes. Consequently, the overall findings was presented by drawing conclusions and providing recommendations based on the results.

5.7. Intervention Proposal

For the proposed intervention the researcher created a lesson plan specifically for this intervention, outlining the subjects to be covered in class, the objectives, the planned activities to be completed within a limited timeframe, and the resources to be utilized. The researcher employed the PPP model as the basis for the intervention approach. It is worth Kostoulas mentions that PPP, which stands for Presentation – Practice – Production, is a technique used to teach structures like grammar or vocabulary in a foreign language. The PPP model is divided into three phases, progressing from

strong teacher control to increased learner autonomy.

In the presentation phase, the teacher assumes control and introduces the language to the learners by offering contextual or situational illustrations. Following that, during the practice phase, learners engage in writing exercises with the goal of precisely practicing the language structure. Common practice activities include drills, multiple-choice exercises, gap-and-cue exercises, and transformations.

The production phase occurs once learners have thoroughly mastered the language structure and can use it flawlessly in controlled exercises. In this phase, they utilize the newly acquired language structure to produce written texts. Typical production activities include dialogues, presentations, and creating sentences, paragraphs, or longer texts. The teacher's role in this phase is typically less interventionist, as learners are expected to avoid mistakes by this point. If mistakes do occur, they are addressed after the exercise has concluded.

The following table provides a sample lesson plan that will be implemented in the intervention process.

6. Results

In this section, the results obtained from the pretest and posttest are discussed. These instruments were used to measure students' proficiency levels associated with writing skills, specifically grammar, vocabulary, and spelling. In addition, the survey was applied to collect students' perceptions about the use of gamification to improve writing skills.

6.1. Pretest and Posttest Results

Objective 1. To demonstrate the effectiveness of gamification in the development of English writing skills among superior basic education students at a public institution in Loja, in the academic year 2023-2024.

Sub question 1. What is the effectiveness of gamification strategies to improve English writing skills?

Table 1. Mean score differences on the performance of ninth graders' listening skills between the pretest and posttest.

	N	Grammar	Vocabulary	Spelling
	Students	(2/2)	(4/4)	(4/4)
Pretest	**13**	1,35	3,42	1,19
Posttest	**13**	1,73	3,62	3,58
Difference	**0**	0,38	0.20	2,39

Table 1 shows the results collected from the pretest and posttest administered to ninth grade students before developing the intervention plan to have a basis for the student's prior knowledge. It illustrates that the initial level of writing skills was low in the indicators.

Regarding "word order in grammar," participants demonstrated a moderate level of proficiency with an average score of 1.35 out of 2, indicating their ability to create sentences by correctly ordering words. However, after implementing the intervention plans, the results showed a

considerable improvement. The average score increased to 1.73, indicating that students have improved their performance on this indicator by 0.38 points. Regarding "vocabulary use", participants initially obtained a score of 3.42 out of 4, indicating a limited ability to grasp the meaning of words according to their use. However, after the implementation of the intervention plans, the results demonstrated a notable relationship between the scores. The mean score increased to 3.62, indicating a 0,20 points improvement in student performance on this indicator. Also, the "spelling" subskill, the participants initially scored 1.19 out of 4, demonstrating a low ability to correctly write words. However, the score changed to 3.58 demonstrating the result of the impact of the interventions and presenting an increase of 2.39 points in student performance related to this indicator. This incremental progress shows the effectiveness of the intervention, highlighting the students' greater ability to foresee possible results.

6.2. Comparison with the National Rating Scale

The bar graph, along with the comparison made using the National Rating Scale, vividly demonstrates and emphasizes the notable influence that incorporating gamification strategies through gamified activities has on student learning outcomes.

Figure 1. Writing skill pretest and posttest scores compared to the Ecuadorian National Grading Scale
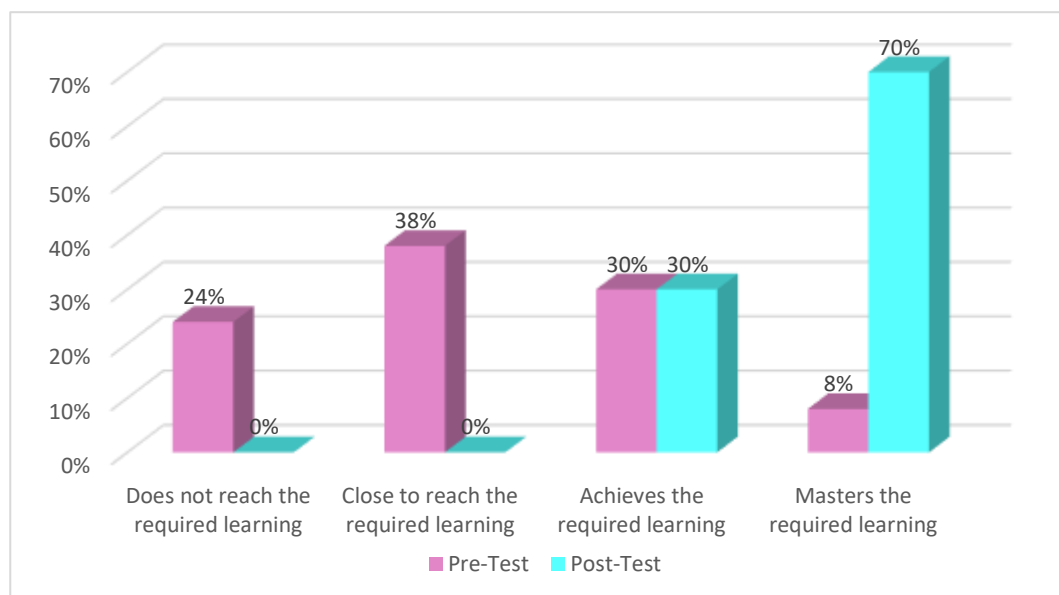
In comparison with the pretest, it is important to mention that 30% of the students achieved the required learning; in the posttest, this 30% is maintained but as a minimum percentage. It should be noted that there was a significant increase in mastery of the required learning, because it rose from 8% to 70%, which is a good result. Likewise, there was a very notable decrease in the students who did not achieve the required learning from 24% to 0% and the students who were close to achieving the learning from 38 to 0%, this means that the interventions did help and applying the strategy of gamification to improve writing skills was very useful and motivated the students to improve their mastery. In conclusion, as shown, there was a high increase in students who mastered the required learning after applying the post-test and a very significant decrease in students who did not achieve the required learning. These data were validated with the information extracted from the field notes. The responses of these instruments clarify the results by emphasizing the effectiveness of the intervention plan using gamification to improve English writing skills.

6.3. Questionnaire results

Objective 2. To find out the students' perceptions about the implementation of gamification to improve their English writing skills among superior basic education students, in the academic year 2023-2024.

Sub question 2. What are students' perceptions toward gamified writing activities?

Figure 2 Representation of students' perceptions of using gamification for writing skills
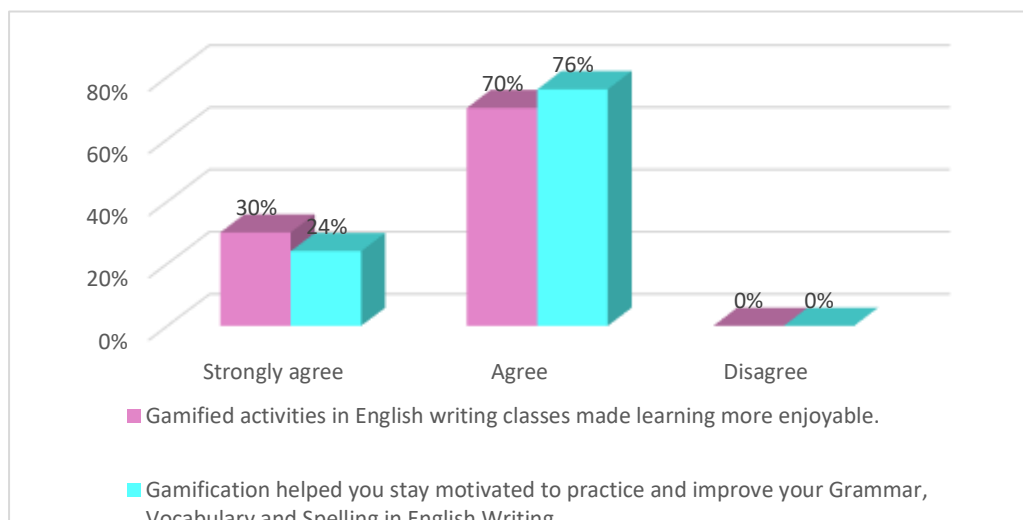
As Figure 2 shows, gamification creates a more fun environment in English classes. A substantial majority of students (70%) "agreed," while a smaller proportion (30%) "strongly agreed" with the statement. In the open question of the survey, students mentioned that the inclusion of gamification motivated them to participate in classes actively. Likewise, it is important to mention that (0%) of the students were in "disagreement" and this was because all the classes were dynamic and interactive. Additionally, field notes showed that students are more likely to pay attention when the class is more interactive. Additionally, these results provide an overview of the improvement in writing skills through gamification strategies.

Regarding the grammar, vocabulary, and spelling skills that improved through gamified activities (76%) mentioned agreeing, and (24%) of the students agreed with the statement. In the open question, students pointed out the importance of using gamified activities and this helped them feel motivated and have the desire to improve. Likewise, it is necessary to mention that 0% disagreed. Finally, these results indicated that a significant majority of students agreed with the statement since they think that classes are more fun and motivating if gamification is used, depending on what type of gamified activities are used.

Figure 3Representation of students' perceptions of using gamification for writing skills
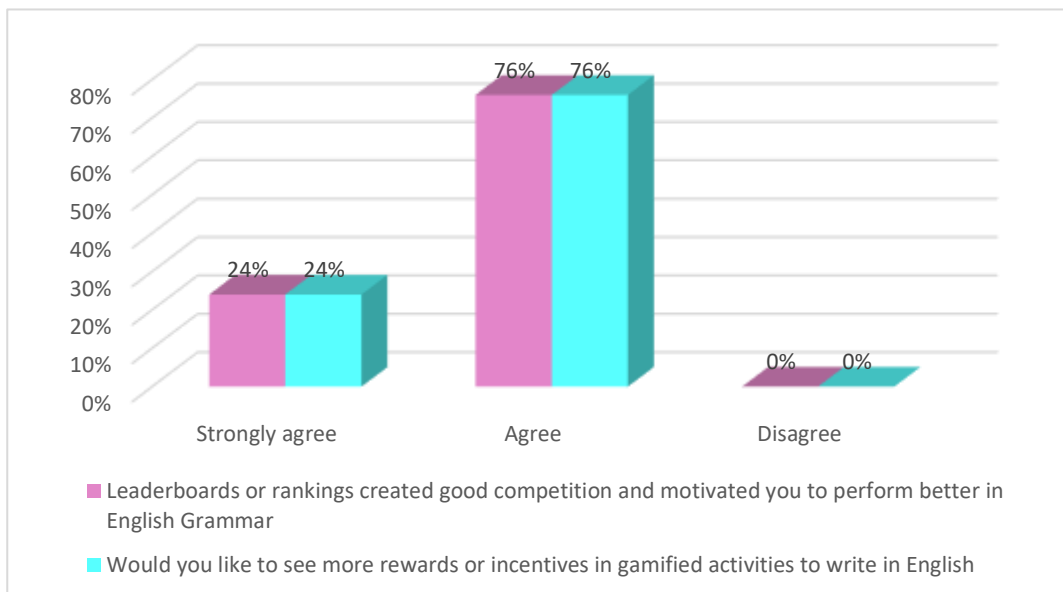
Figure 3 demonstrates students' perceptions regarding the gamified competition strategy to concentrate more in class, the findings indicate a positive response from the majority of students. Just over half of the students (61%) "agreed", while (39%) "strongly agreed" with the statement. In the open question, they expressed that the competition strategy was a fundamental pillar to concentrate and obtain a better ranking in the next gamified activities. It is important to mention that none of the students indicated that they disagreed with this statement. This suggests that the integration of gamification in the classroom effectively supported their progress and contributed to the successful fulfillment of their educational objectives. In terms of improving word order in grammar through the gamified cooperation strategy, the majority of students (70%) "agreed" and approximately (30%) "strongly agreed" with the statement. They mentioned in the open question that teamwork encourages cooperation in games and this makes them improve grammar skills, in this case word order. These results suggest that this element of gamification had a notable impact on the active participation of students. It is important to recognize and address that there were limitations when working as a team due to class management, but it is worth mentioning that everything went very well.

In summary, a substantial majority of students expressed their enjoyment of incorporating competition and cooperation strategies in English classes, which consequently led to increased participation during the learning process. Their positive experiences with gamified activities pointed to the potential benefits of using them in educational settings. However, it is essential to always consider individual preferences and adapt strategies to students' interests.

Figure 4 Representation of students' perceptions of using gamification for writing skills
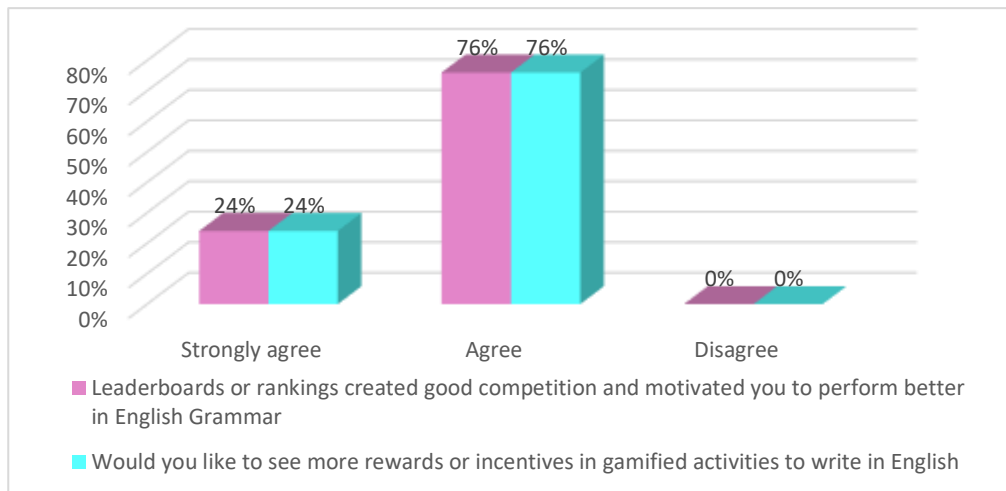
Figure 4 shows students' perceptions of using points or scores in gamified activities to assist progress in English vocabulary use. It can be said that a significant percentage of the student population (76%) "agreed," while another (24%) "strongly agreed" with the implementation of earning points in activities. Some of the students made sure to show their agreement in the open-ended questions, adding that the points motivated them to improve so they could earn more next time. However, most students demonstrated that badges or achievements in gamification motivated them to improve their English spelling. It is observed that (54%) "agree" and (38%) "strongly agree." However, a slight minority of students (8%) indicated that they disagreed with this statement because for them the badges were not necessary when scoring the games. After all, they felt unmotivated. suppose they did not receive one. On the other hand, the field notes support this information and add that some of the students did not feel very motivated when they saw that other students received first-second- third-place badges. In conclusion, the use of badges has advantages and disadvantages for some of the students since those who did receive them feel motivated to continue improving. Still, it is also important to take into account the opinions of other students and find a way to solve it, which can be, giving badges to everyone for their participation.

Figure 5 Representation of students' perceptions of using gamification for writing skills
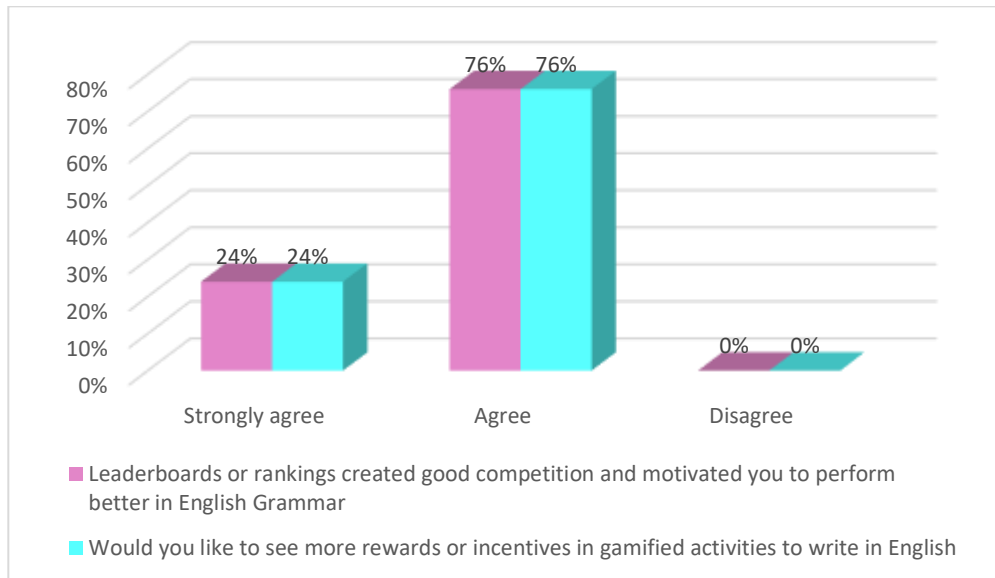
Figure 5 represents the results obtained with the use of classification tables to commit and improve word order in grammar (76%) "agreed" and (24%) "strongly agreed" with the statement, it is important to mention that in the open question, the students stated that the tables encouraged them to study and practice more to achieve a better position in the classification next time. The students indicated that it was the first time that this strategy was implemented in the classroom, in English classes, and that they found it very interesting.

On the other hand, the results obtained regarding whether students would like the reward and gift strategy to be implemented more often in gamified activities indicated that (76%) agreed and (24%) strongly agreed. In the open questions, they indicated that this motivates them to continue practicing, learn dynamically, and obtain better results in their learning. This was evidenced by the field notes where the classes ended successfully if there was a reward for the effort in each gamified activity.

In conclusion, a notable number of students who agreed with each statement reported that there was a good impact using gamification and its elements to improve writing skills in English, and this could be evidenced by the field notes where it was observed motivation and the feeling of competition in each activity, these results also reinforce the effectiveness of using these strategies in English classes, improving, motivating and making the class more fun, moving from the traditional

method to a dynamic education where students They practice and work harder to achieve their learning goals.

7. Discussion

The following section presents an analysis of the findings of this investigation, comparing the outcomes of this research with those of prior studies. The present study was developed to improve English writing skills using gamification, among superior basic education students.

Consequently, to guide this research one main question and two sub-questions were formulated. How does the use of gamification improve English writing skills among superior basic education students at a public institution in Loja, academic year 2023-2024? To answer this question, contrasting with other studies, Bal (2019) establishes that include games in the teaching of writing skills in EFL settings in primary schools might be beneficial. This study highlights the potential advantages of using games as a useful tool for improving young EFL learners' writing skills. With the application of the intervention plan and the gamification strategies, students can produce coherent texts.

The use of gamification can significantly improve English writing skills through various mechanisms. First, by increasing students' motivation and engagement, game elements such as challenges and rewards keep them more engaged in the learning process. Additionally, the repetitive practice facilitated by games allows students to become familiar with grammatical rules and sentence structure in a less monotonous way. Likewise, the immediate feedback offered by games allows students to correct errors quickly and effectively. By placing students in meaningful contexts that require the use of written English, gamification helps show the practical relevance of these language skills. Finally, by encouraging collaboration and competition among students, games promote mutual and continuous learning, which further contributes to improving English writing skills effectively.

Additionally, the first sub-question in this research was What is the effectiveness of gamification strategies to improve English writing skills? The results of the pretest and posttest indicated a significant improvement in students' English writing skills when the researcher implemented the gamification. The students obtained an average score of 5.96 points in the pretest, which increased to 8,9 points in the posttest. This is an improvement of 2,94 points.

After obtaining these results, it can be said that the effectiveness of using gamification to improve writing skills could be demonstrated, because these strategies helped students have a better mastery of each subskill evaluated. These findings are related to the result of Şevik (2019), who also observed that gamification has benefits in teaching and improving writing skills; by using different elements of this strategy, students improved, also Samosa et al., (2021), who evaluated the effectiveness of this strategy, mentions that gamification has many advantages when used in the classroom, since the teacher teaches more interactively and dynamically.

Therefore, by introducing elements of healthy competition among students, games stimulate greater effort and dedication in writing practice, leading to faster and more significant progress. Additionally, gamification offers a variety of personalized activities and challenges that adapt to the individual needs of students, allowing them to develop their skills at their own pace. Integrating technology into games is also beneficial as it provides access to a wide range of online resources and self-correction tools, facilitating self-directed learning and continuous improvement. Finally, these aspects make gamification a highly effective strategy for developing English writing skills.

The second sub-question in this research was What are students' perceptions toward gamified writing activities? The results of the questionnaire applied to the students showed that they could improve their writing skills thanks to the use of the gamification strategy. The vast majority of students mentioned that these are an excellent way to study since they can have fun while learning, and these findings are supported by the previous study by Genç-Ersoy & Göl-Dede (2022), showing that educational games were a successful method of teaching writing, resulting in participants' positive attitudes toward writing, increased motivation, improved writing skills, and writing problem-solving. Taking into account the affective aspects that influence students' learning experiences, the study emphasized the importance of combining a variety of strategies, including educational games, in teaching writing in light of these encouraging results. According to this study, educational games should be used more widely to create an environment in which students can learn to write and at the same time develop good attitudes towards the process.

Many students find that gamification gives them a sense of achievement and measured progression as they progress through the game's levels or challenges, motivating them to stay engaged in the learning process. Likewise, gamification can create a more inclusive learning environment by adapting to different learning styles and skill levels, allowing students to progress at

their own pace and feel more comfortable and confident while practicing English writing skills. Additionally, gamification often encourages collaboration and teamwork among students, which not only improves their writing skills but also their English communication and social skills. Lastly, the playful nature of gamification can help reduce the stress and anxiety associated with learning a new skill, contributing to a more relaxed and positive learning environment for students. In summary, these additional reasons reinforce the positive perception of gamification among most students as an effective and beneficial tool to improve their English writing skills.

8. Conclusions

The use of gamification proves to be highly beneficial in improving English writing skills through various mechanisms such as motivation and student engagement, and with game elements, students remain more involved in the learning process. Additionally, the immediate feedback offered by games allows students to correct errors quickly and efficiently, thus accelerating their progress in language proficiency. Gamification also helps students understand the practical application of language skills in real-world situations.

Using gamification to improve English writing skills is manifested in the notable progress achieved by students, as the average scores obtained in the pretest and posttest indicated a significant improvement in the students' English writing skills after the implementation of gamification, this improvement reflects the effectiveness of gamification strategies in improving each subskill of writing ability. Gamification can be an effective tool to improve English writing skills, as demonstrated by the positive results obtained in this research and previous studies.

Students' perception of the use of gamification to improve English writing skills is mostly positive. Students find gamified writing activities to be a great way to study as they allow them to have fun while learning. Gamification not only helps students improve their English writing skills but also contributes to developing positive attitudes toward the learning process. Students' positive perception of gamification as an effective and motivating tool to improve English writing skills supports its continued use in educational settings.

9. Recommendations

It is suggested to explore in greater depth how gamification elements can adapt to different learning styles and individual needs of students. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to specifically investigate which aspects of gamification are most effective in motivating students and increasing their engagement in the English writing learning process.

Future researchers could focus on more closely tracking student progress over time after gamification implementation. This could include observing how students apply acquired skills in different contexts and identifying specific gamification strategies that contribute most significantly to students' progress in English writing skills.

For future research, it would be useful to delve deeper into the factors that influence students' perception of gamification and how these factors may vary between different groups of students for example, depending on the level of English proficiency, age, or educational environment. Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate how specific gamification strategies can be designed to maximize students' positive perception and motivation to participate in English writing activities.

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11. Annexes

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

DEPARTMENT OF PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT: PRE-TEST

Dear student, answer the following test with sincerity and honesty. Your answers will be anonymous and confidential.

Student's code: _____

Date: _____

Time: 30 minutes

TEST TO EVALUATE ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS

- **GRAMMAR (word order)**

1. **Order the following words to form a grammatically correct sentence.** *2 points: (0,50 point each item)*

A)

now	to	the	I	go	park

    a) I the park go to now.
    b) I go to the park now
    c) Now go to the park I

B)

sleeps	on	the	chair	the	cat

    a) The cat sleeps on the chair.
    b) In the chair sleeps the cat.

c) The cat the chair sleeps

for	the	exam	study	Mary and Joseph

a) Mary and Joseph study for the exam.
b) exam Mary and Joseph for the study.
c) Mary and Joseph for the exam study.

go	the	to	every-day	I	school

a) I every day to the school go.
b) I go to the school every day.
c) Every day go the school I to.

- **VOCABULARY**

2. Match the word with its corresponding picture. *2 points (0.40 points each item)*

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

1. BOX

2. BED

3. BAG

4. SAD

5. FISH

3. Choose the correct answer to complete the sentences. *2 points (0.50 points each item)*

a) The mum of Julia does the dishes.
Her mum is asking for help. What does her mum say?

Can you help me, please?

Sorry

Help me

b) She gets up. What does she say?

Good afternoon!

Good morning!

Excuse me

D)

Hello! I'm Mike. I play..

tennis   football
basketball   voleyball

Hello! I'm Beth. I play...

voleyball   football
tennis   golf

C)

- **SPELLING**

4. **Write the correct spelling of the following words.** *2 points (0,50 each item)*

a) T - T I R S H	_ - _ _ _ _ _	b) T I R K S	_ _ _ _ _
c) K C S O S	_ _ _ _ _	d) C F R S A	_ _ _ _ _

5. Put the letters in order to write the number on their t-shirts. *2 points (0,50 each item)*

g i t
e
h n
18
_ _ _ _ _ _ ee_

t _ _ _ _ _ -_e_en
v n
y e w
27
s t

e r
h y
i t
33
t _ _ _ t _-_hr_e

e t
v
n s
17
_e_e_ _e_n

Annex 2. Posttest.

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

DEPARTMENT OF PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT: POSTTEST

Dear student, answer the following test with sincerity and honesty. Your answers will be anonymous and confidential.

Student's code: _____

Date: _____

Time: 30 minutes

TEST TO EVALUATE ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS

● **GRAMMAR (word order)**

1. **Order the following words to form a grammatically correct sentence.** *2 points: (0,50 point each item)*

A)

her	birthday	a	surprise	for	planning	I'm	big

a) I'm planning a birthday for her surprise.
b) I'm planning a surprise for her birthday.
c) I'm a surprise for her birthday planning.

B)

at	he	studying	the	moment	is

a) He is studying at the moment.
b) Studying at the moment he is.
c) He at the moment is studying.

C)

flower	in	vase	red	is

a) The flower in the vase is red.
b) In the vase the red is flower.
c) The red in the vase is flower.

D)

room	the	is	girl	in	the

a) The room is in the girl.
b) The girl is in the room.
c) The girl in is room.

- **VOCABULARY**

2. **Match the word with its corresponding picture.** *2 points (0.40 points each item)*

a.

b.

c.

1. BOX

2. BED

3. BAG

4. SAD

5. FISH

d.

e.

3. Choose the correct answer to complete the sentences. *2 points (0.50 points each item)*
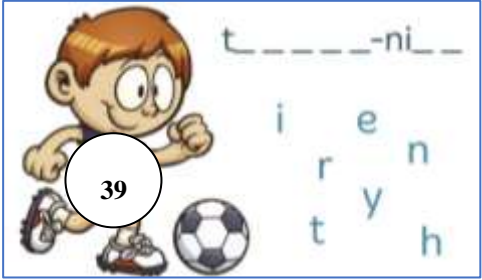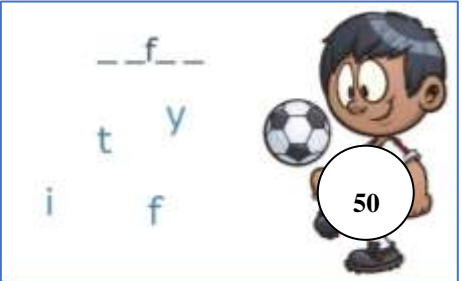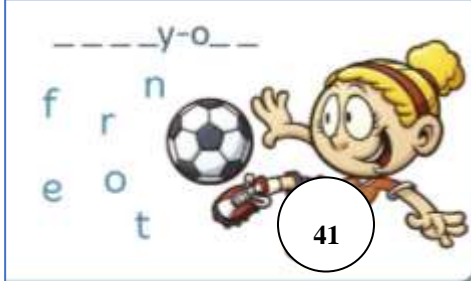
Hello! I'm Peter. I like...

skating	skipping
jumping	athletics

Hello! I'm Thais. I like...

spinning	basketball
skipping	skating

Hello! I'm John I play..

skating	waterpolo
football	ping pong

Hello! I'm Matt. I play....

skating	tennis
surfing	hockey

- **SPELLING**

4. **Write the correct spelling of the following words.** *2 points (0,50 each item)*

a) O M R T O L Y C C E	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	b) A O T B	_ _ _ _
c) L C Y I B E C	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	d) R C A	_ _ _

5. **Put the letters in order to write the number on their t-shirts.** *2 points (0,50 each item)*

24   r u n e y w f o t   _ _ _ _ t _ _ _ _ _

39   t _ _ _ _ _ -ni _ _   i e r n y t h

50   _ _ f _ _   t y i f

41   _ _ _ _ y-o _ _   f n r e o t

THANKS FOR YOUR COLLABORATION!

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UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

DEPARTMENT OF PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT: TEST SCORING GUIDE PRE-TEST

1. **Rearrange the following words to form a grammatically correct sentence. (2 points)**

a) I went to the park yesterday**.** (0,50)

b) The cat is sleeping in the chair (0,50)

c) The student is studying for the exam. (0,50)

d) I go to school every day. (0,50)

2. **Match the word with its corresponding picture. (Vocabulary 2 points)**

a) 4. SAD (0,50)

b) 3. BAG (0,50)

c) 2. BED (0,50)

d) 5. FISH (0.50)

3. **Choose the correct answer to complete the sentence. (2 points)**

a) Can you help me please? (0,50)
b) Good morning (0,50)
c) Football (0,50)
d) Tennis (0,50)

4. **Write the correct spelling of the following words. (2 points)**

a) T- shirt (0.50)

b) Skirt (0.50)

c) Socks (0.50)

d) Scarf (0,50)

5. **Put the letters in order to write the number on their t-shirts. (2 points)**

a) eighteen (0,50)

b) twenty-seven (0,50)

c) thirty-three (0,50)

d) seventeen (0,50)

Annex 4. Posttest Scoring guide

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

DEPARTMENT OF PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT: TEST SCORING GUIDE POS-TEST

1. Rearrange the following words to form a grammatically correct sentence. (2 points)

a) I'm planning a surprise for her birthday**.** (0,50)

b) He is studying at the moment. (0,50)

c) The flower in the vase is red. (0,50)

d) The girl is in the room. (0,50)

2. Match the word with its corresponding picture. (Vocabulary 2 points)

a) 4. SAD (0,40)

b) 3. BAG (0,40)

c) 2. BED (0,40)

d) 5. FISH (0.40)

e) 1. BOX (0,40)

3. Choose the correct answer to complete the sentence. (2 points)

a) skating (0,50)

b) skipping (0,50)

c) water polo (0,50)

d) hockey (0,50)

4. Write the correct spelling of the following words. (2 points)

a) motorcycle (0.50)

b) boat (0.50)

c) bicycle (0.50)

d) car (0,50)

5. Put the letters in order to write the number on their t-shirts. (2 points)
a) twenty-four (0,50)

b) thirty-nine (0,50)

c) fifty (0,50)

d) forty-one (0,50)

Annex 5. Grading Scale

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

DEPARTMENT OF PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS

NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

Grading Scale provided by the Ministry of Education

Qualitative Scale	Quantitative Scale
Masters the necessary learning components	9,00-10,00
Reaches the necessary learning components	7,00-8,99
Almost reaches the necessary learning components	4,01-6.99
Does not reach the necessary learning components	< 4

Annex 6. Questionnaire

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

DEPARTMENT OF PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

Dear student, answer the following test with sincerity and honesty. Your answers will be anonymous and confidential.

Student's code: _____

Date: _____

1. **Gamified activities in English writing classes made learning more enjoyable.**

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

Why? _____

2. **Gamification helped you stay motivated to practice and improve your Grammar, Vocabulary and Spelling in English Writing.**

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

Why? _____

3. **The competitive gamification strategy helped you be more engaged and focused in class.**
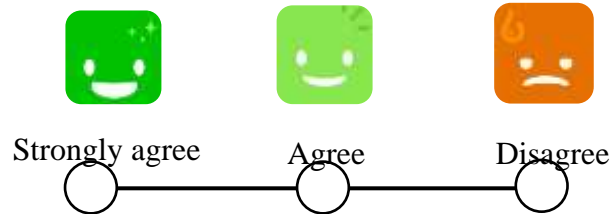
Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree
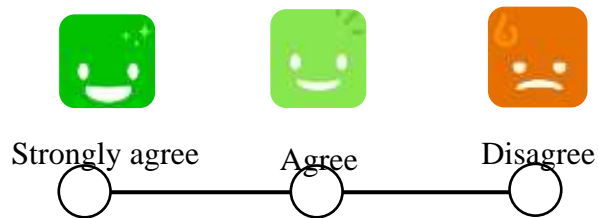
Why _____

**4. The cooperation gamification strategy through gamify activities improved your grammar (word order).**

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

Why? _____

5. The use of points or scores in gamified activities helped you track your progress in English Vocabulary.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

Why? _____

6. Badges or achievements in gamification motivated you to improve your English Spelling.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree
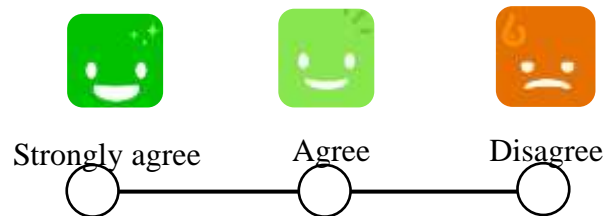
Why? _____

7. Leaderboards or rankings created good competition and motivated you to perform better in English Grammar.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

Why? _____

8. Would like to see more rewards or incentives in gamified activities to write in English.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree

Why? _____

THANKS FOR YOUR COLLABORATION!

Annex 7. Informed consent form

DECLARACIÓN DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Yo, _____, con cédula de identidad _____ representante legal de la estudiante _____ autorizo que mi representado sea partícipe en **la aplicación de una prueba previa y una posterior, además de un cuestionario** como parte del proyecto de investigación de Integración Curricular titulado **Gamificación para mejorar las habilidades de escritura en Inglés entre estudiantes de educación superior básica en una institución pública en Loja, periodo académico 2023-2024,** llevado a cabo por **Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez**, estudiante de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, de la Universidad Nacional de Loja. Comprendo que la participación de los niños y niñas en el desarrollo del presente proyecto no tendrá repercusiones en sus actividades escolares, evaluaciones o calificaciones. Además, la identidad de los niños y niñas no será publicada, y las imágenes registradas durante la propuesta de intervención, se utilizarán únicamente para fines investigativos y de aprendizaje.

Declaro haber sido informado/a que mis datos personales y de mi representado/a, serán protegidos por el anonimato y la confidencialidad. Tomado ello en consideración, otorgo mi consentimiento para que se realice **la aplicación de la prueba previa y posterior, así también como el cuestionario** de las clases de inglés.

Firma: _____

Nombres y Apellidos: _____

C.I: _____

Representante legal

Annex 8. Field Notes

OBSERVATION #1	
Observer involvement	Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez
Setting	9th "A"
Date	December 4th – 8th 2023
Duration of the observation	45 minutes

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
• The objective of the pre-test was to assess ninth-grade students' mastery of writing skills, specifically focusing on grammar (word order), vocabulary (usage), and spelling, facilitating strategy planning to be followed. is going to implement. • The pre-test consisted of sections covering various subskills of writing: grammar (word order) vocabulary (usage) and a spelling section. • Students have confusion while developing the pre-test. • A 10-point scale was used for scoring, allowing for detailed evaluation. Points were awarded based on correct answers.	• Pre-test serves as a diagnostic tool that informs the development of instructional strategies. Reflective analysis generates thoughtful consideration about how to address challenges, leverage strengths, and implement an environment with gamified strategies that encourage continuous improvement in language proficiency throughout the academic year. • When analyzing the results, it was observed that most ninth-grade students obtained 5 out of 10 points in the final grade. This indicates poor performance in English writing skills and it was identified that in spelling subskill have more difficulty demonstrating their mastery. • The prevalence of scores of 5/10 suggests a collective need to improve writing skills.

OBSERVATION #2	
Observer involvement	Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez
Setting	9th "A"
Date	December 11th – 15th 2023
Duration of the observation	90 minutes

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
• The objective was to improve students' understanding of word order in sentences through a competitive gamification strategy. The game format chosen was a scrambled word game, in which students were asked to unscramble words to form coherent sentences and answer yes or no questions. • Students were divided into teams and presented with a set of scrambled words that, when arranged correctly, formed sentences that answered yes or no questions. Each team competed to unscramble the words accurately and provide grammatically correct answers within a time limit. The gamified approach aimed to actively engage students in the learning process and at the same time reinforce the concept of word order in sentences. • Teams received points for creativity and clarity in their answers. The scoring system provided a quantifiable measure of each team's proficiency in arranging words to form grammatically correct sentences	• The competitive element fostered active participation that was observed among the students as they enthusiastically participated in the word scramble game. • Students immediately reflect on their performance. Recognizing strengths and addressing areas for improvement can guide future lessons and ensure that subsequent activities effectively build on the skills developed during the scramble word game. This continuous feedback loop supports continuous improvement and learning. • The integration of a competitive gamification strategy using word games turned out to be a dynamic and effective method to improve word order skills. The reflective analysis highlights the positive impact on engagement, collaboration, and language proficiency assessment, providing valuable information to refine and expand gamified English teaching in the future.

OBSERVATION #3	
Observer involvement	Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez
Setting	9th "A"
Date	December 18th – 22th 2023
Duration of the observation	90 minutes
Descriptive Notes	**Reflective Notes**
• The objective was to reinforce the understanding and use of the present continuous tense in sentence construction, specifically focusing on vocabulary enrichment. A competitive gamification strategy was implemented, using the game of Hangman, to actively involve students in the learning process. • Students were organized into teams and presented with vocabulary words related to various topics. The challenge was to construct sentences in the present continuous tense using the given vocabulary. The Hangman game format was used, in which teams guessed letters to complete the sentences. The competitive nature of the game was intended to improve vocabulary retention and promote accurate application of the present continuous tense.	• The Hangman game demonstrated to be an effective tool to reinforce the use of vocabulary in creating sentences. The competitive context forced students to think critically about the selection and application of vocabulary in the construction of sentences in the present continuous tense. This suggests that gamification can be a powerful strategy for vocabulary enrichment. • Exploring variations of the Hangman game or incorporating additional vocabulary topics can maintain student interest and motivation, implementing a competitive gamification strategy using the Hangman game effectively improved students' use of present continuous tense and It enriched their vocabulary, but not before mentioning that due to lack of time we had to carry out the intervention faster but we successfully finished the class.

OBSERVATION #4	
Observer involvement	Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez
Setting	9th "A"
Date	January 8th – 12th 2024
Duration of the observation	90 minutes

Descriptive Notes	**Reflective Notes**
• The goal was to reinforce understanding and appropriate use of the "like+ing" structure in sentence formation, with a specific focus on improving word order. A cooperative gamification strategy was employed through the "Order Sentences" game, encouraging students to collaboratively organize words to form grammatically correct sentences related to the topic "like+ing." • Due to the decree granted by the Ministry of Education on the change to virtual classes, the intervention plan had to be adapted to be developed via Zoom. Students entered the break-up rooms forming cooperative teams and each team was given a set of words related to activities using the "like+ing" structure. The challenge was to collaboratively arrange the words to create coherent sentences. The game format facilitated teamwork and promoted discussion among team members to construct sentences that accurately reflected the "liking+ing" concept.	• Active and collaborative participation was observed as students worked within their teams to organize words and create sentences. The cooperative nature of the students encouraged them to share ideas, discuss word order, and collectively develop sentences that appropriately used the "like+ing" structure. • The activity provided information about students' proficiency in organizing words to form grammatically correct sentences. Observing their collaborative efforts and resulting sentences allowed for a nuanced assessment of individual and team word order skills. This evaluation is crucial for adapting future instruction to address specific areas of improvement. • Because the intervention was through the Zoom platform, some students had problems with their internet connection and others with their technological devices, which made the activity last longer.

OBSERVATION #5	
Observer involvement	Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez
Setting	9th "A"
Date	January 15th – 19th 2024
Duration of the observation	90 minutes

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
• The aim was to reinforce understanding and correct use of the past simple, with a specific focus on improving spelling skills. Students participated through the Zoom platform. The game "Scrambled Word" was adapted to the virtual environment, a gamification strategy based on rewards was implemented through the game "Scrambled Word", where students were presented with scrambled words related to verbs in the simple past through shared screen. They collaboratively unscrambled words by typing their answers in the Zoom chat, ensuring active participation. • Students were organized into virtual teams using breakout rooms on Zoom. Each team collaborated via video conference and used the chat function to discuss and decide on the correct spelling of the past tense verbs. • A point-based scoring system was implemented, with teams earning points for correctly decoding words and forming accurately spelled past tense verbs.	• The successful implementation of the "Scrambled Word" game on Zoom highlights the adaptability of gamification strategies to virtual environments. The use of screen sharing to present scrambled words and breakout rooms for virtual team collaboration effectively translated the interactive elements of the activity to an online platform. • While the virtual environment presented challenges, such as potential technical issues and the lack of physical interaction, it also offered unique opportunities. Using the chat feature for responses and the ability to quickly organize virtual teams allowed for efficient communication and collaboration. • Observing student engagement through the Zoom platform provided insight into the effectiveness of virtual gamification. The successful participation of teams in decoding words and constructing sentences indicated that virtual platforms can effectively support interactive.

OBSERVATION #6	
Observer involvement	Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez
Setting	9th "A"
Date	January 22nd – 26th 2024
Duration of the observation	90 minutes

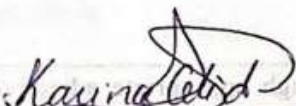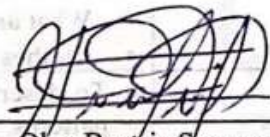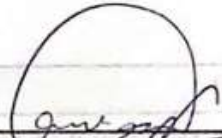| **Descriptive Notes**	**Reflective Notes**
• The goal was to reinforce understanding and appropriate use of the "like+ing" structure in sentence formation, with a specific focus on improving word order. A cooperative gamification strategy was employed through the "Order Sentences" game, encouraging students to collaboratively organize words to form grammatically correct sentences related to the topic "like+ing." • Due to the decree granted by the Ministry of Education on the change to virtual classes, the intervention plan had to be adapted to be developed via Zoom. Students entered the break-up rooms forming cooperative teams and each team was given a set of words related to activities using the "like+ing" structure. The challenge was to collaboratively arrange the words to create coherent sentences. The game format facilitated teamwork and promoted discussion about "liking+ing" concept.	• Active and collaborative participationwas observed as students worked within their teams to organize words and create sentences. The cooperative nature of the students encouraged them to share ideas, discuss word order, and collectively develop sentences that appropriately used the "like+ing" structure. • The activity provided information about students' proficiency in organizing words to form grammatically correct sentences. Observing their collaborative efforts and resulting sentences allowed for a nuanced assessment of individual and team word order skills. This evaluation is crucial for adapting future instruction to address specific areas of improvement. • Because the intervention was through the Zoom platform, some students had problems with their internet connection and others with their technological devices, which made the activity last longer.

OBSERVATION #7	
Observer involvement	Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez
Setting	9th "A"
Date	January 29nd – 02nd 2024
Duration of the observation	90 minutes

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
• The goal was to reinforce understanding and appropriate use of the structure related to favorite sports in sentence formation, with a specific focus on improving word order. A cooperative gamification strategy was employed through the "Order Sentences" game, encouraging students to collaboratively organize words to form grammatically correct sentences related to the topic of their favorite sports. • Through the act of spelling out their favorite sports, participants not only showcase their linguistic skills but also articulate the underlying reasons behind their passion. This process invites reflection on the multifaceted nature of sports fandom, encompassing elements of physical enjoyment, emotional fulfillment, and social connection.	• The spelling bee game offers a playful yet insightful lens through which to explore the concept of favorite sports. It highlights the diversity of sporting preferences and the deeply personal connections individuals have with their chosen activities. • Through the act of spelling out their favorite sports, participants not only showcase their linguistic skills but also articulate the underlying reasons behind their passion. This process invites reflection on the multifaceted nature of sports fandom, encompassing elements of physical enjoyment, emotional fulfillment, and social connection. • Moreover, the spelling bee format underscores the universality of sports as a cultural phenomenon. Regardless of the specific sport being spelled out, each contestant's enthusiasm resonates with the audience, fostering a sense of shared appreciation for the role of sports in our lives.

OBSERVATION #8	
Observer involvement	Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez
Setting	9th "A"
Date	January 29nd – 02nd 2024
Duration of the observation	90 minutes

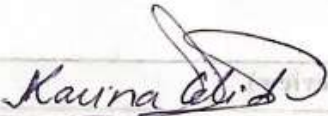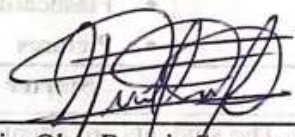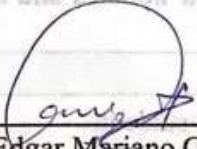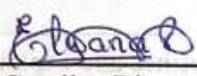| Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
• The objective of the post-test was to assess ninth-grade students' mastery of writing skills, specifically focusing on grammar (word order), vocabulary (usage), and spelling, facilitating strategy planning to be followed. is going to implement. • The post-test consisted of sections covering various subskills of writing: grammar (word order) vocabulary (usage) and a spelling section. • Students have confusion while developing the pre-test. • A 10-point scale was used for scoring, allowing for detailed evaluation. Points were awarded based on correct answers. • The questionnaire was implemented to the students, with the objective to know the students' perceptions.	• Post-test serves as a testing tool that informs the development of instructional strategies. Reflective analysis generates thoughtful consideration about how to address challenges, leverage strengths, and implement an environment with gamified strategies that encourage continuous improvement in language proficiency throughout the academic year. • When analyzing the results, it was observed that most ninth-grade students obtained 9 out of 10 points in the final grade. This indicates poor performance in English writing skills and it was identified that in spelling subskill have more difficulty demonstrating their mastery. • The prevalence of scores of 9/10 demonstrate that the strategy was effective.

Annex 9. Lesson Plan

LESSON PLAN #1			
Institution Name:	Unidad Educativa "Padre Julián Lorente"		
Date:	December 4ᵗʰ – 7ᵗʰ	**School Year:**	2023-2024
Type of Instituttion	Public (X) Private ( ) Fisco-Misional ( )		
Institutional Tutor:	Lic. Olga Beatriz Sarango Jimbo		
Academic Tutor:	Mgtr. Edgar Mariano Castillo Cuesta		
Preservice Teacher:	Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez		
Thesis Director	Mgtr. Karina Alexandra Celi Jaramillo		
Schedule:	9ᵗʰ "A" – Monday – 13:15–14:00		
Time per lesson:	45 minutes	**Language level:**	A1.2
Class / Number of Students:	9ᵗʰ "A": 19 9ᵗʰ "B": 14		
Topic: Contents:	Pre-Test • Grammar (word order) • Vocabulary (usage) • Spelling (order)		
Lesson Objectives:	• To evaluate, identify and understand students' strengths, knowledge and previous mastery of English writing skills to proceed to apply a strategy to improve them.		
Materials	• Markers • Pen • Paper		

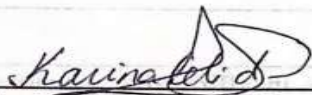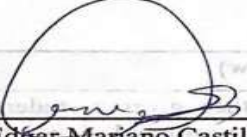| Starter (warmer, lead in, review)	Time
Warm-up: Teacher plays animal sounds and students close their eyes and try to guess what sound is it.	3 minutes
Presentation	**Time**
• Teacher presents the pre-test to the students and explains each question in order to students develop it.	2 minutes
Practice	**Time**

• Students answer the questions about Grammar.
  • Order the words to form a grammatically correct sentence.
• Students answer the questions about Vocabulary.
  • Match the word with its corresponding picture.
  • Choose the correct answer to complete the sentences
	30 minutes

Production	Time
• Students answer the question about Spelling. • Create words by ordering letters.	5 minutes

Assessment	Time
Teacher sends to review the topics evaluated in the pre-test so that students recognize that they must improve.	3 minutes

Feedback / Closure	Time
Teacher provides constructive feedback for each topic evaluated.	2 minutes

Observations

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Signatures:

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Mgtr. Edgar Mariano Castillo Cuesta
Academic Tutor

Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez
Preservice Teacher

LESSON PLAN #2			
Institution Name:	Unidad Educativa "Padre Julián Lorente"		
Date:	December 11th – 15h	**School Year:**	2023-2024
Type of Instituttion	Public (X) Private ( ) Fisco-Misional ( )		
Institutional Tutor:	Lic. Olga Beatriz Sarango Jimbo		
Academic Tutor:	Mgtr. Edgar Mariano Castillo Cuesta		
Preservice Teacher:	Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez		
Thesis Director	Mgtr. Karina Alexandra Celi Jaramillo		
Schedule:	9th "A" – Friday – 16:00–17:30		
Time per lesson:	90 minutes	**Language level:**	A1.2
Class / Number of Students:	9th "A": 13		
Topic: Contents:	• Past Simple		
Lesson Objectives:	• To communicate past events in affirmative, negative, and interrogative forms using past simple tense • To improve word order through reward strategy in gamified activities.		
Materials	• Cards • Pictures		

Starter (warmer, lead in, review)	Time
Warm-up: Teacher divides the class into three groups, then gives a student in each group a paper with an action, the student goes to the blackboard and gives clues to his classmates to guess the action, the group that has guessed in the least time wins. **Review:** Teacher presents a review about verb tenses and the distinction between present and past.	7 minutes

Presentation	Time
• Teacher explains the usage and examples of past simple • Teacher presents the structure of past simple in affirmative and negative way. • Teachers presents some examples about past simple. • Teacher presents some questions to students answer using past simple	20 minutes

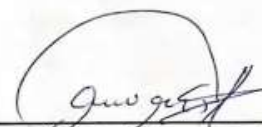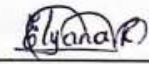| Practice	Time
• The teacher divides the class into pairs and provides cubes with different part of speech to form sentences in the simple past.	

• Students have to place the cubes correctly to form sentences. • The students go to the board to compete between pairs and the pair that completes the sentence the fastest wins the game. • All winning pairs will receive a reward (chocolate and a first-place badge) which will motivate all students to continue improving their word order.	35 minutes

Production	Time
• Students create a paragraph using past simple. • Students read their paragraphs to the classs	15 minutes

Assessment	Time
• Students choose the correct verb to complete a text on Student's book page 25.	10 minutes

Feedback / Closure	Time
Teacher summarizes the key points learned in the class. Teacher gives online exercise to students practice at home: https://agendaweb.org/exercises/verbs/past-simple/regular-forms.htm	3 minutes

Observations

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Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez
Preservice Teacher

LESSON PLAN #3			
Institution Name:	Unidad Educativa "Padre Julián Lorente"		
Date:	December 18ᵗʰ – 22ᵗʰ	**School Year:**	2023-2024
Type of Instituttion	Public (X) Private ( ) Fisco-Misional ( )		
Institutional Tutor:	Lic. Olga Beatriz Sarango Jimbo		
Academic Tutor:	Mgtr. Edgar Mariano Castillo Cuesta		
Preservice Teacher:	Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez		
Thesis Director	Mgtr. Karina Alexandra Celi Jaramillo		
Schedule:	9ᵗʰ "A" – Friday – 16:00 –17:30		
Time per lesson:	90 minutes	**Language level:**	A1.2
Class / Number of Students:	9ᵗʰ "A": 13		
Topic: Contents:	Present Continuous • Usage • Structure • Affirmative / Negative		
Lesson Objectives:	• To describe actions that happen at that moment and temporary situations through a fun and interactive gamification activity. • To improve the use of vocabulary through the competition gamification strategy using the hangman game.		
Materials	• Flashcards • Cards • Pictures		

Starter (warmer, lead in, review)	Time
Warm up / Review: The teacher divides the class into two groups and places incomplete sentences on the board with spaces for gerunds. Students go to the board and complete the sentences by adding the appropriate gerunds. Example: "She was _____ (swim)." The group that completes all the sentences in the least time wins.	7 minutes
Presentation	**Time**
• Teacher explains the usage of present continuous with examples. • Teacher presents the structure about affirmative and negative way. • Teacher creates sentences using present continuous structure.	20 minutes
Practice	**Time**
• Teacher divides the class into 4 teams and draws a hangman's scaffold on the	

board with the rules: - 10 points for correctly guessing a letter. - 20 points for correctly guessing the entire present continuous phrase. - If Hangman is completed, the other team has a chance to guess the phrase for extra points to motivate students to compete and thus improve the use of vocabulary to create texts. • Teacher chooses verbs or phrases in the present continuous tense related to everyday activities. For example, "she is playing soccer", or "she is studying for exams." • Teacher starts with Team 1. Each team member chooses a letter. If the letter is in the word or phrase, write it in its correct position. If not, teacher begins to draw the figure of the man. • After each correct letter, give teams a chance to guess the complete present continuous phrase. If they guess correctly, they will earn extra points. • The teams alternate until they guess the entire phrase or complete the hanging man. • After each correct guess, discuss as a class how the present continuous tense is used in the guessed phrase. • Teacher emphasizes the connection between activity and time.	35 minutes
Production	**Time**
• Teacher gives a list of infinitive verbs and students change to the gerund and choose one verb to create a sentence in affirmative and negative way.	15 minutes
Assessment	**Time**
• Students create the sentences using the verbs on the chart on the students' book, page number 21	10 minutes
Feedback / Closure	**Time**
Teacher asks question about the topic and summarizes the key points learned in the class to provide a feedback.	3 minutes

Observations

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Signatures:

Karina Celi

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Mgtr. Edgar Mariano Castillo Cuesta
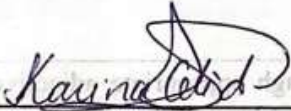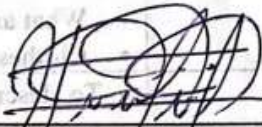**Academic Tutor**

Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez
Preservice Teacher

LESSON PLAN #4			
Institution Name:	Unidad Educativa "Padre Julián Lorente"		
Date:	December 11th – 15th	**School Year:**	2023-2024
Type of Instituttion	Public (X) Private ( ) Fisco-Misional ( )		
Institutional Tutor:	Lic. Olga Beatriz Sarango Jimbo		
Academic Tutor:	Mgtr. Edgar Mariano Castillo Cuesta		
Preservice Teacher:	Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez		
Thesis Director	Mgtr. Karina Alexandra Celi Jaramillo		
Schedule:	9th "A" – Monday – 13:15–14:00		
Time per lesson:	90 minutes	**Language level:**	A1.2
Class / Number of Students:	9th "A": 15		
Topic: Contents:	• Like+ ing		
Lesson Objectives:	• To use the structure "like + -ing" to express preferences and enjoyment for various activities.		
Materials	• Flashcards • Markers		

Starter (warmer, lead in, review)	Time
Warm-up: The students are attentive to the teacher's orders. If the teacher says "change places, those who have short hair," the students with that description change places, the student who does not reach any seat loses. **Review:** Teacher gives a review starting a discussion about their hobbies and activities they enjoy.	7 minutes

Presentation	Time
• Teacher defines and explains the structure "like + -ing" to the students. • Teacher provides examples and clarifies the difference between "like + -ing" and other structures. • Teacher presents sentences using the structure "like + ing" • Teacher presents a list of verbs that students can use to create sentences.	20 minutes

Practice	Time
• Students are divided into groups of 4.	

• The teacher hands out flashcards with images and words for the students to order and create sentences using "like + ing". • Students must create their sentences per round, each round will have a time of 30 seconds. • Teacher clarifies how students can earn points. For example, correct answers can earn points. • The teacher begins the game by encouraging enthusiasm and friendly competition. • The teacher introduces bonus rounds and challenges (a student repeats the sentence she created without seeing the group) or (10-second rounds) to keep the excitement level high. • The group with the most points wins.	35 minutes
Production	**Time**
• The teacher gives a list of activities and students must create sentences expressing their preferences using "like + -ing." • Students take turns and repeat their sentences on the board.	15 minutes
Assessment	**Time**

• Students complete the students' book in the page number 19.
    • Students complete the phrases.
    I love_____   I like_____   I hate_____
	10 minutes

Feedback / Closure	**Time**
Teacher summarizes the key points learned in the class. Teacher provides constructive feedback asking question about the topic.	3 minutes

Observations

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Preservice Teacher

LESSON PLAN #5		
Institution Name:	Unidad Educativa "Padre Julián Lorente"	
Date:	January 22nd – 26th	**School Year:** 2023-2024
Type of Instituttion	Public (X) Private ( ) Fisco-Misional ( )	
Institutional Tutor:	Lic. Olga Beatriz Sarango Jimbo	
Academic Tutor:	Mgtr. Edgar Mariano Castillo Cuesta	
Preservice Teacher:	Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez	
Thesis Director	Mgtr. Karina Alexandra Celi Jaramillo	
Schedule:	9th "A" – Monday – 13:15 –14:00	
Time per lesson:	90 minutes	**Language level:** A1.2
Class / Number of Students:	9th "A": 13	
Topic: Contents:	• What are in your wardrobe? • Clothes	
Lesson Objectives:	• To describe clothing items through appropriate adjectives such as colors, patterns, and textures. • To improve spelling through points gamification strategy using Spelling Bee game.	
Materials	• Cards • Pictures	

Starter (warmer, lead in, review)	Time
Warm-up: The students are divided into pairs; the teacher gives them a piece of paper with a movie name and the students has to make mimes so that the others can guess what movie it is about. **Review:** Teacher provides a review about weather and colors.	5 minutes

Presentation	Time
• Teacher introduces the topic "Describing your wardrobe". • Teacher explains adjectives to describe textures, colors, and print. • Teacher presents vocabulary of clothes. • Teacher explains the structure about "how to describe the clothes".	7 minutes

Practice	Time
• The teacher prepares flashcards or pieces of paper with the names of different	

items of clothing. • She shuffles the flashcards and places them face down. • Each student takes turns choosing a card and trying to spell the word correctly. • If the player spells the word correctly, they get a point. If not, the card goes back to the pile. • Students continue taking turns until all cards have been used. • The student with the most points at the end wins.	15 minutes
Production	**Time**
• Students create a paragraph describing their favorite outfit. • Students read their paragraphs to the class.	7 minutes
Assessment	**Time**
• Students describe the clothes according to the pictures on a worksheet.	8 minutes
Feedback / Closure	**Time**
Teacher summarizes the key points learned in the class. Teacher provides constructive feedback about "How to describe the wardrobe" through questions about the topic.	3 minutes

Observations

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Signatures:

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Eliana Carolina Rivera Ramírez
Preservice Teacher

Annex 10. Research Matrix

Theme	Gamification to improve English writing skills among superior basic education students at a public institution in Loja, academic year 2023-2024			
Problem	**Objectives**	**5. Theoretical Framework**	**Methodological design. Action Research**	**Techniques/Instruments**
General problem How does the use of gamification improve English writing skills among superior basic education students at a public institution in Loja, academic year 2023-2024? **Subproblems** What is the effectiveness of gamification strategies to improve English writing skills? What are students' perceptions and attitudes toward gamified writing activities?	**General Objective** To determine the improvement of the English writing skills domain by using gamification among superior basic education students at a public institution in Loja, in the academic year 2023-2024 **Specific Objectives** To demonstrate the effectiveness of gamification in the development of English writing skills among superior basic education students at a public institution in Loja, in the academic year 2023-2024. To find out the students' perceptions about the implementation of gamification to improve their English writing skills among superior basic education students, in the academic year 2023-2024.	**Independent Variable** **4.1. Gamification** **4.1.1.** Definition **4.1.2.** Importance of Gamification **4.1.3.** Elements of Gamification **4.1.4.** Gamification as an Innovative Strategy **4.1.4.1.** Advantages of Use Gamification in Education **4.1.5.** Technology and Gamification in the EFL Teaching **4.1.5.1.** Digital Games **4.1.5.2.** Advantages of Using Digital Games **4.2. English writing skills** **4.2.1.** Definition of Writing skills **4.2.2.** Teaching Writing **4.2.3.** Writing Sub Skills **4.2.3.1.** Grammar **4.2.3.1.1.** Importance of Grammar **4.2.3.1.2.** Word Order **4.2.3.2.** Vocabulary	**Preliminary Investigation** Mixed action research model. ● Quantitative ● Qualitative **Intervention** Lesson Plan PPP model • Presentation • Practice • Production	**Testing Technique** **Instrument:** pre-test and **post-test** **Observation Technique** **Instrument:** Field Notes **Survey Technique:** Questionnaire

4.2.3.2.1 Kinds of Vocabulary
4.2.3.2.2 Aspects of Vocabulary
4.2.3.2.3 Teaching Vocabulary
4.2.3.3. Spelling
4.2.4. Improve Writing Skills
4.2.4.1. Gamification to Improve
Writing Skills

Annex 11. Copyleaks Report

Copyleaks

Plagiarism and AI Content Detection Report
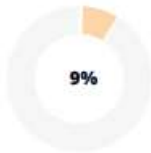
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Text coverage		Words
AI text	4.2%	457
Human text	95.8%	9546

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