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Interacting Among Us: Promoting English Oral Interaction Through the Use of a Video

Game in an Online Class

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Abstract

This action research project was developed during the transition between online and face-to-face classes in a public school in Medellín. Due to the health situation and the restrictions established by the Colombian government, during most of the current year online classes were given in the public institution INEM José Félix de Restrepo, where this study was conducted. Its main objective was to use video games to improve online interaction among students during class time, using a Game-based teaching approach. The methods to gather data include a survey, online class recordings and interviews for a subsequent analysis. The results show how with the video game students had more opportunities to interact in a comfortable environment during online classes.

Keywords: English interaction, Game-based teaching, online classes, video games, public school.

Título en Español: Promocionando la interacción oral en inglés a través de un videojuego en clases en línea.

Degree Requirement

This action research project is submitted as a requirement of the Bachelor of Education in Teaching Foreign Languages (English-French) at the Escuela de Idiomas, Universidad de Antioquia, in Medellín, Colombia.

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Table of Contents

Preface

When I was at school, English became one of my favorite assignments, because I could understand its structure and, most of the time, pronunciation. I also liked to help my classmates with their English duties, as I really enjoyed explaining to them how a language is composed of. These were the basis to look at myself as a teacher, which later became a reality when I started to study foreign languages, where I have had the opportunity to teach English as well as understanding how important it is for society to be multilingual.

Nevertheless, grasping new vocabulary, phonetics, grammar and even idioms along my life was not an easy task and I have had a lot of help from my teachers and also, from my own empirical learning. One of the methods to learn was by playing video games, which, in those times, were exclusively in English. Therefore, it was necessary to have a certain English knowledge to access further information in the game with means to completely comprehend its objectives. This is an activity in which learning and playing are together, resulting in a serious practice of the language in order to have a better performance at reading, listening and speaking.

I really enjoy teaching and playing and I consider both to be fundamental actions in everybody's life. Thus, learning how to transfer video games to a classroom was something I really wanted to do, once I started understanding the principles of education. As I have a profound respect for both to culminate the foreign language teaching program, I wanted to mix them by using action research. This study can be just the initiation to a life of researching how these video games can be used as educational tools to improve the learning process of those students who want to transform language into a delightful experience.

Description of the Context

The educational institution INEM José Félix de Restrepo is a public high school located in El Poblado, Medellin. It was founded in 1970 by the then Colombian president Carlos Lleras Restrepo and the Minister of education Gabriel Betancur Mejía. The official institution is dedicated to the provision of formal education services in kindergarten, basic levels such as primary, secondary basic, technical and academic media. It undertakes to maintain its diversified character, have competent human resources, have an adequate infrastructure and constantly assess its quality management system. Through a diversified, flexible and open educational proposal for educational innovation, the institution promotes the integral training of its students based on values, environmental conservation, learning to be, to know, to do, and to live, together in a context of democratic participation and collaborative work (Institución Educativa INEM José Félix de Restrepo, 2018, p. 6). In the future years, the educational institution INEM José Félix de Restrepo, will be presented as a high educational scenario and center of quality in technical and technological appropriation of the Aburrá Valley (Institución Educativa INEM José Félix de Restrepo, 2018, p. 6).

The INEM José Félix de Restrepo has high school grades, from VI to XI. During VI and VII grades, students discover in each of the four semesters the academic, commercial, industrial and social promotion branches. At the end of this rotation cycle, students choose the branch to which they wish to belong and are promoted to it. During the cycle of vocational exploration, the students, already divided by branches, attend specialized classes before starting the cycle of vocational orientation, which is a specific specialization varying in multiple sciences.

The current INEM English program seeks to develop communicative skills to read, comprehend, write, listen and express correctly in the target language. It also carries out the

conversation, lecture and writing skills in the target language, based on the objectives set down in the Education Law 115 of 1994. Likewise, in 2019, the institution created the specialization on Human Sciences with Emphasis on English, dedicated to the study of English from a more cultural, formal, literary and pragmatic way, from which students in the future can study foreign languages or translation.

Due to the current Covid-19 health situation in the country, all classes during the first semester of the school year were online, taught via Google Meet, a platform, which means students interacted with the teacher and their peers through a screen using their camera and microphone. The classes were on Wednesdays and Thursdays, one hour each day . Nonetheless, during July until October the school implemented a rotation modality where half of the students had face-to-face sessions four days a week, while the other half had online sessions. The classroom was divided into two groups of 15-17 students, that changed each two weeks, which used to go to the institution for face-to-face sessions. This situation led half of the group to have face-to-face classes on Wednesdays and Thursdays while the other half had online sessions during the same days in a hybrid model. This model completely changed the class pace, because those students in the face-to-face classes were more active than those in the online class. At the end of October and the rest of the last term, the whole group started to have face-to-face classes on the same days, changing again the behavior of the class towards the lessons.

The selected group to carry out this research project is XI – 4, a 35-student group from the Mathematical Processes specialization. The students selected this specialization because the majority of them were greatly interested in exact sciences. However, most of them had a good performance in English, especially in writing and reading, as they liked to

send messages in English to their peers and the performance of their reading projects was outstanding.

The Cooperating Teacher (CT) of this course has been an English teacher for over 19 years and has been for 6 years in the institution. Her classes were mainly guided by learning through textbooks such as *Impact 2* or *English Please*. Based on the topics of these books, the teacher plans classes taking into account the grammatical aspects and the content of the units. The teacher relies on a few activities of the book per class, generally one and the others are created by herself. She asks critical questions (usually based on the topics of the book) and expects students' answers in English. The CT also uses ludic platforms such as Kahoot, Mentimeter or the game Who wants to be millionaire to modify the pace of the classes and other academic platforms such as Classroom, where she uploaded all of the information related to the class sessions, like recordings or presentations.

Statement of the Problem

From the observations conducted during the first month of my student-teacher process, in the XI-4 grade in the CT's online English classes, it was possible to collect and analyze information regarding the development of the communicative language skills, writing and reading, in which the students displayed a balanced and appropriate performance while developing classwork and homework. Likewise, listening did not show great impediment on their part either, since more than 90% of the English classes were in the target language and the vast majority of the students understood the instructions and responsibilities given by the CT. Nevertheless, speech did not develop naturally in this specific online context, as more

than 85% of students did not talk in English at all, even when they knew a possible answer or had a relevant opinion.

From further observation and by examining class recordings, it was possible to identify a pattern, manifesting students' absence to interact in English with the teacher and their peers. This happened when the teacher asked questions about general topics and students did not answer or, in rare cases, answered, but in Spanish.

This lack of real interaction between teachers and students and among students hinders fluent conversations in English during the class, missing opportunities for talking or discussing in English about students' interests and tasks proposed by the CT. Speaking is one of the core elements in successful language learning, being interaction among students one of its main pieces (Defrioka, 2009). In a conversation with the CT, she manifested how students are quiet during class time and seldom react orally to questions which obstructs social conversation in attempts to normalize English in their daily lives, losing chances to construct peer knowledge (Gómez, 2011). Moreover, this lack of interaction impedes students from constructing relationships that contribute to their interests, values, social and academic competences and even psychological health (Johnson, 1981).

A factor that makes this interaction less likely to occur is the implication of online classes, as it blocks face-to-face possibilities for students to talk in the English class. In a conversation with students, they mentioned how awkward they feel talking to the whole group when addressing only the teacher, and how they end up opting to speak with her once the class has finished, as they do not feel confident with others listening. Besides, they mentioned that when students want to talk to a peer, they use their own social media to do it privately. The answers from the students evidence how complicated it has been for them to adapt interaction to online class sessions and it is a reason why the teacher does not propose

real-time peer interaction. Notwithstanding, teacher-student interaction properly worked on a couple of games proposed by the CT during online sessions in which the students participated actively, though not speaking constantly in the target language.

Theoretical Background

Interaction is a subcomponent of the speaking skill constituting an exploration of a target language among learners and it is essential in the language learning process (Defrioka, 2011). Nevertheless, interaction, particularly peer interaction, is difficult to channel during online class sessions where students feel more restricted to speak among them, as asserted in the problem statement. Therefore, it is significant to comprehend how interaction can be enhanced in the classroom through online means with an approach in which students can feel more confident to speak. For that reason, the employment of a Game-Based teaching Approach using videogames is presented as an alternative to developing interaction in the target language among students, seeking primarily peer interaction during the English class, broadening students' knowledge and ability to speak with others while having fun (Hanghøj, 2013). This section discusses the concepts of Foreign Language Classroom Interaction, specifically Peer Interaction, and the Game-Based Teaching Approach, with their respective importance bound to foreign language teaching.

Foreign Language Classroom Interaction

In order to practice a foreign language based on a context established in class or simply daily life situations, a proper conversation requiring statements from the speakers is needed. Adams (2018) highlights how interaction in the foreign language classroom allows

students to produce language by communicating their own thoughts. That is, connecting their understanding from their cognitive capacity to construct oral meaning by exchanging ideas among active participants. As a result, students are able to think aloud and exchange their ideas with their teacher and peers. In order to interact, it is required that at least two interlocutors share their points of view or emotional setups, not being reduced to answer teachers' questions (Couniham, 1998). This means that, in order to interact, students need to feel free to share and evaluate opinions from their teacher and peers.

Thus, thriving classroom interaction is guided when teachers create an atmosphere where students may ask any class participant a question and feel confident to provide any answer (Defrioka, 2011). For this proposal, the main interactive focus will be the one conducted exclusively among students, called peer interaction or, as Thi & Thuy describe, learner-learner interaction (2021), where students can talk to their classmates and listen to their points of view using the target language in a trustworthy environment.

Peer Interaction. Peer interaction "is understood as the relationships and roles developed by students in the classroom environment when undertaking any kind of task or activity" (Gómez, 2010, p.190), which means the teacher addresses and instructs students to work in couples or small groups to carry out a specific task. Thus, peer interaction goes beyond learning exclusively from the teacher but the same community of learners by contributing to each students' process.

Nonetheless, it is common to find that teachers usually implement other types of oral activities such as group reading. For example, students are asked to read a text for the whole class, leaving behind exclusive students' interaction in the target language. Adams (2018) points out how some teachers understand peer interaction as a way for students to practice instead of learning the target language due to their linguistic level or panic to be mistaken.

Moreover, Adams (2018) rejects this misconception and supports peer interaction practices by explaining how it increases students' chances to talk, experiment with language, show their understanding, and socialize with other classmates, making these elements part of the language learning process. Thus, peer interaction in the English class lets students explore their own world and positions at the same time they are learning conjointly, a process that XI – 4 students at INEM have missed during the time they have had online lessons.

Game-Based Teaching

Game-based teaching is essentially an approach where games are used in an educational context to reach different pedagogical purposes, providing an appealing ambiance where students are able to be focused and learn willingly (Stiller and Schworm, 2019; Cheng and Su, 2012). Nowadays, kids and adolescents have grown up in a generation where games are leisure activities provided in numerous contexts, becoming a significant piece of their culture (Fromme, 2003), and this situation has facilitated its implementation in the classroom. Therefore, students are more likely to be identified with games in their learning process and the relationship both have would make students show interest in learning with games implementation. Likewise, video games used in foreign language teaching have shown a significant increase in students' motivation, positive attitudes, vocabulary knowledge, listening and writing skills, grammar, fluency, pronunciation (Alyaz & Genc, 2016) and social skills (Bailey et al., 2006).

Video games for English Language Learning. Video games have been employed for English language learning in different contexts, as they "allow people to recreate themselves in new worlds and achieve recreation and deep learning at the same time" (Cheng and Su, 2012, p. 2). Learners of the current generation are more guided through interactive

technology, in which video games, among other tools, are included because they are part of their culture (Cózar and Saéz, 2016; Widitiarsa, 2018). That is, video games represent an altered reality where a player can experiment through choices, different outcomes and its proper transfer to an educational process, having considerable learning effects (Martin, 2008). Due to the Covid-19 health crisis, education was transformed to digital means and the use of video games in a game-based approach links naturally learners with authentic practice and knowledge. Additionally, at the same time, video games open up a space for interaction through virtual means, which may result in cooperative language learning in online settings.

Research question

How can the use of a video game through Game-based teaching in online classes promote English oral interaction among students in 11th grade at INEM José Félix de Restrepo school?

Objectives

General objective

The main objective is to establish how the use of a video game through Game-based approach promotes English oral interaction among students in the online English class.

Specific objectives

- To analyze the possible interaction patterns occurring among students while playing a video game during online class sessions.
- To explore how the implementation of a video game can increase the possibilities of interaction in the online classes.

- To analyze how the use of a video game can develop confidence in students while interacting.

Action Plan

The actions for the data-gathering process of this project, in order to achieve the objectives previously mentioned, will take place during September and will finish during the last week of October.

The following table summarizes the actions planned in this study:

Table 1: Action Plan

Activity	Length	Participants
Preparation of content	2 weeks	Student-teacher
Implementation of the video game in different lessons	5 weeks	Students, CT, Student-teacher
Surveys	1 day	Students, Student-teacher
Interviews	1 day	CT, Student-teacher

The video game selected for promoting interaction among peers was Among Us (AU) (Innersloth, 2018), a popular game in which the players need to interact in order to discover an impostor in a spaceship. To do so, there will be two teams, one composed of crew members who must do simple tasks in the spaceship, and the other with at least one impostor, who would dispose of the crew members to win. When a player discovers a no longer alive character, a debate to find the guilty member must be conducted and all players must discuss what their actions were before the discovery of the body. After the discussion, voting would take place and the elected player would be expelled from the ship. If the person being

expelled is the impostor, the crew wins while the impostor must eliminate the whole crew to take victory.

The reasons behind the selection of AU include the great amount of interaction needed to be played which is the focus of this study. It is completely necessary for players to talk when deciding on the voting section. Then, if the players want to win, they have to mention what their actions were, requiring the use of speaking with others to provide an alibi. As a result, interaction is crucial to play rather than mechanical skills. AU permits to keep a conversation in a situated context, where students are able to have opportunities to practice their language with their classmates with communicational purposes (Adams 2018). At the same time, the video game allows participants to interact, not only by oral means, but also, writing their thoughts. That is, a process in which two or more players can feel free to ask questions, state their actions and make assumptions written or orally (Defrioka, 2009) on who is the impostor during the matches. Besides, the game demands low system technical requirements for both computers and cellphones, which are the tools students use to attend online sessions and this facilitates each student the possibility to play.

Development of Actions

Once the video game was chosen, a preparation of the sessions was planned, regarding useful content to get started with the video game. In this preparation, the different methods that the students had to download AU were added, taking into account the different technical limitations that it could present. In addition, important characteristics were also added within AU, with the aim of students getting familiar with it.

As previously mentioned, at the start of the year, students were having online sessions due to the health situation regarding the COVID-19, in which it was impossible to have face-

to-face sessions. Nonetheless, during the second semester, the hybrid model, in which half of the students were attending school and the other half in online classes, hindered the process of the project implementation to a certain degree. It is worth noting that the number of sessions dedicated to the project were very limited due to multiple events in which students were not involved online, such as school conferences or sports events.

Thus, the project implementation was carried out with half of the students, the ones that were in online sessions, starting on September 2nd in which an explanation of how the video game was going to be played, signing up the consent form for participating in this study, and downloading of the game as such took place.

In the second session, on September 8th, the online students had the opportunity to start the video game and played the first match with me, as the student-researcher, and their peers. I was in charge of creating the virtual room, setting of rules and instructions to play. It was also possible to introduce students to basic concepts of the game, for instance, the rules of the matches, the variety of characters identified by colors, the parts of the map (spaceship), and the tasks for the type of players. The CT was also involved, making sure students were active during the process and also taking the attendance. During this session, it was also possible to carry out a survey involving students' prior experience, learning and interaction using video games in English (See Appendix A). The survey contained behavioral and attitudinal closed and open-ended questions (Burns, 2015) and was redacted in Spanish, the students' mother tongue, with the purpose of being clear enough for all the participants to answer. This survey was answered by 20 students out of 35.

Each of the sessions where students played the video game was recorded using Google Meet, the same platform in which students attended classes. This platform allows recording not only audio and video, but also the written interventions of the chat. Nonetheless, as students did not have an active video device, it was only possible to record

their voice and chat messages. This data collection method was selected as it provides accurate and reliable information as it is possible to check all students' actions during the implementation (Burns, 2015). Moreover, the recorded file allows me, as the researcher, to go back to any specific point of the class to analyze the involvement of students during the project and their interaction patterns. It is also worth noting how the class chat was also recorded in each of the sessions, unveiling, with a written timeline, students' interaction, perspectives and emotions while playing with their peers.

Once all the sessions were conducted, subsequent interviews with two students who participated in all the sessions and the CT were executed, with the purpose of adding accurate responses for the findings (Bell, 2010) from the observations and the survey. These interviews allowed me to inquire on the perception, attitude, interest and experiences in the online class regarding the use of video games for the promotion of interaction in the case of students (see Appendix B1). For the CT, she was asked about her perspective regarding the project, possible improvements in the online sessions and how it could be modified for better results (see Appendix B2).

Data Analysis

The method followed in this study is action research. Action research inquires into the identification of diverse problems present in educational contexts with the purpose of creating meaningful solutions, generating social and academic improvement (Burns, 2015; Nicodemus & Swabey, 2015). Once all the data was gathered through class recordings, a survey and some interviews, I followed the validating-the-accuracy steps proposed by Creswell (2009) in order to organize, compare, categorize and analyze the evidence, thus, resulting in the interpretations of the outcomes.

I accomplished this process by initially organizing the raw data from all the sources carried out and then transcribing it for easy reading access. Since there were multiple students in the sessions, I used numbers to identify them and keep their identity safe. Then, I conducted a detailed reading on the information from the gathered data in order to code it with specific terms. From these terms I was able to lay out different categories, highlighted by colors, representing the perspectives noted in the recordings and set out by the students and the CT. This was done through the triangulation approach (Bell, 2010), comparing the information of the different sources about video games, virtual classes and interaction, finding similar outcomes. Finally, interpretations were made in order to answer the research question and achieve the objectives proposed.

Findings and Interpretations

In this section, the categories and its subsequent subcategories are analyzed, interrelated and interpreted with the evidence from the data collection. From the data analysis, it was possible to state the following categories: Students Interaction in Online Classes, Motivation, Contexts and Enjoyment, in relationship with the use of video games to promote interaction in online classes.

Students Interaction in Online Classes

To understand how the video game AU promoted English oral interaction in the online sessions, it was necessary to divide this category into 3 related ones: Improvement, Interaction Patterns and Interaction Online Opportunities.

Improvement. During the research cycle and after analyzing the video recordings and chat fragments, it was possible to notice how students were interacting among themselves

in English, as a result of the task. It is worth noticing that video games as such strengthen communication among peers and, if their objective is focused in working collaboratively, they generate a considerable amount of teamwork during its development (Bailey et al., 2006). This can be noticed during the sessions, as students showed a consistent improvement of interaction in the online class while playing AU, in cases where they needed to communicate with their classmates to uncover the impostor and win a match. Students had to address all players present, which was part of the problem identified at the beginning of the school year, because they preferred to wait until all students were out of the Google Meeting to talk to the teacher, for instance. In this fragment, it is possible to check how they were talking among them while playing the game:

- *Student 2: I have my suspicions for Ana, because I saw her.*

- *Student 3: You will regret. [sic]*

- *Student 6: I think it is Student 7*

- *Student 2: No, I don't think is Student 7 [sic]*

- *Student 7: No, I don't the impostor* [sic] (Class recordings, Oct. 7th, 2021).

In the sessions, during the discussion time, students repeatedly mentioned who was the impostor and stated their reasons to blame or just made assumptions on who was the impostor, as the main objective of the game is to discuss the actions someone was doing in order to find out who was lying.

- *Student 1: Student 3 is not the impostor, I saw her close to me.*

- *Student 3: I do not. Is Student 4. [sic]*

- *Student 5: Excelent [sic] job Student 3 impostor.* (Class recordings, Oct. 7th, 2021).

All this communicative practice in online sessions represents an evident improvement, as students were stating their own understanding which is vital to the language

learning process (Adams, 2018), making the class a space to share their thoughts with their

peers by playing.

Interaction patterns. Interaction patterns were present in the sessions, such as

interaction between the instructor and learners, and also, among learners, as those proposed

by Thi & Thuy (2021). Interaction between learners was constant as they always referred to

the whole group when speaking or writing, and from these statements, the rest of the players

had to decide for whom to vote. This interaction pattern, represented in Figure 1, was seen

during each match depending on the duration of it, with a minimum of 3 students talking to

the whole group to tell what they saw during the game. Likewise, there were some students

(codes 1, 2, 5, 6 and 8) who constantly interacted with the other students and, as a

consequence, the other students responded, creating an atmosphere where talking developed

naturally.
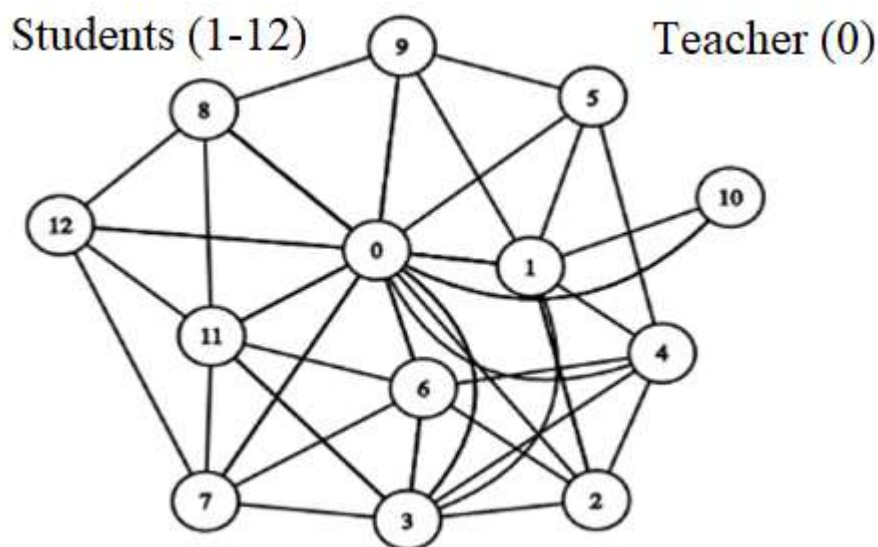
Figure 1: Interaction pattern during a match, October 7th, 2021.

Regarding this finding, Gómez (2010) mentions how interaction can be promoted by

constructing knowledge, and learning in community, not only by the teacher lesson. During

the discussions, I was also involved to guide, organize and help with students' statements while they played, leading them to also interact with me, as I looked out for the group. I also proposed some steering questions when students did not know where to start discussing:

- *Teacher: Student 1, you reported the body. What happened?*

- *Student 1: I saw it in the, I don't remember how is it called [sic] but, it was there.*

- *Teacher: Where? Cafeteria?*

- *Student 1: Como donde está el admin. [sic]*

- *Teacher: Administration*

- *Student 1: Ah yes*

- *Student 8: I was with Student 1.* (Class recordings, Oct. 28th, 2021)

Furthermore, a peer interaction pattern was also noticeable in students' efforts to speak in English, alongside in teamwork, as mentioned by the CT in the interview:

"*Hubo interacción al ver cómo los estudiantes podían practicar su inglés además de ver cómo trabajaban en equipo, exploraban, utilizaban otras herramientas inclusive estaban leyendo situaciones que debían seguir*" (CT's interview, November 10th, 2021). Interaction among students or with me provided them a space to ask questions, direct their thoughts to their peers and even disagree with other students' statements that supported the promotion of oral and textual interaction. This is supported by Couniham (1998) when he mentions that interaction works when students communicate through each other, differ from others' statements or feel free to speak using exclamations or gestures. As described in the Statement of the Problem, students' interaction was rare in the online sessions observed; being aware of how they addressed their peers and their instructor and how they applied teamwork while playing the video game shows students' capacities to interact, despite the difficulties of the online sessions to do so.

Online interaction opportunities. This last subcategory is related to how the students and the CT believed the video game was a good opportunity to communicate in the online class, as both considered participation and communication were low in the online classes during the first semester:*"Creo que el nivel de interacción es mucho mayor en la presencialidad porque está frente a frente mientras que virtual tienen muchos distractores como el celular o el mismo computador, o diferentes medios que tengan en la casa"* (Student 2, Students' Interview, November 10th, 2021). The reason behind this consideration is that during online classes there may be multiple distractions like video games, but, in this case, the evidence shows that the game becomes the teaching tool and requires students to speak in order to progress, changing distraction for learning and practicing opportunities.

Regarding this finding, Cheng and Su (2012) affirm how video games put students in the center of learning, transforming them into active actors which permits the learning process to derive. This is evidenced by the testimony of one of the students by expressing that most of their classmates enjoy playing, which was a good way to interact in the language: "*La mayoría de mis compañeros disfruta mucho jugar. Yo creo que sí fue una buena forma de hacer que interactúen y aprendan inglés virtualmente"* (Student 1, Students' Interview, November 10th, 2021). Similarly, the CT affirmed that the use the video game is a strategy to interact online: *"En las clases virtuales me parece y considero que es una estrategia significativa para que haya interacción porque el estudiante sólo respondiendo preguntas en clase no interactúa"* (CT's interview, November 10th 2021). This suggests that AU brings up opportunities to the online class to interact by being something students enjoy, compared to other activities that the CT tried before.

Motivation

Motivation is a key component when it comes to practicing a language and games rely on enjoyment, structure and motivation (Prensky, 2011). This category refers to a force that

moves a person to initiate an action and to keep on until the goals are achieved (Ollero, 2014, p. 698). In this study, it was possible to observe how students felt motivated from the first day, in which they expressed their satisfaction to use a video game in class because they never had experienced something similar. That is, they wanted to commence the project and fulfill its purpose. Students were also motivated to play the video game, as they sometimes asked to play it instead of having a normal class session as expressed by this student: Student 12: *Dónde quedó Amoung US? (Pregunta que no tiene nada que ver, pero no sé que pasó con ese proyecto magistral* :((Class recordings, September 30th, 2021). This was also expressed when the students manifested their opinions regarding the video game mentioning their perception regarding the project:

> *A mí me gusta mucho por lo general el tema de los videojuegos, además que noté que hubo más entusiasmo y participación en la parte virtual por parte de todo el grupo y noté que se soltaron la pena al hablar entre ellos en inglés* (Student 2, Students' Interview, November 10th, 2021).

These fragments show the interest of the students to have an alternative resource, in this case a video game, which motivates them to be active participants of the English class.

Another noticeable outcome was the determination in which the students supported to deliberately speak. That is, from the analysis of the recordings, it is possible to see that the students were not forced to talk to their classmates or to work collaboratively, instead, they talked or wrote as they were willing to do it comfortably while playing in the online sessions, which are characteristics of motivated learners (Stiller & Schworm 2019). In addition, the CT manifested a sense of comfortability while watching students interact by playing: "*el estudiante estaba tranquilo, disfrutando y emocionado al expresar sus opiniones, sus respuestas, lo que él creía, su punto de vista para encontrar la respuesta y llegar al final*" (CT's Interview). This finding suggests that students were in an environment where they

were comfortable and willing to play which, in this specific case, means that they were also interacting with the participants of the class.

Contexts

This category refers to both the digital context in which a video game situates a player in certain circumstances and the familiar environment for students, as video games are one of their leisure activities. Therefore, this was divided into those two subcategories.

Digital Context. Digital contexts refer to how video games transport the players into a scenario where they represent a fictional character. That is, **"**video games present players with simulated worlds, which if well-constructed embody particular social practices" (Bailey et al., 2006, p.3). In this particular case, the video game allows students to be involved in a mystery to be solved, similar to the study conducted by Martin (2008). This means, in AU students take the role of an astronaut doing certain tasks, and their goal is to find out who is responsible for murders in the ship through interaction with their peers. After analyzing the class recordings, it was possible to detail the involvement of students while playing, by taking certain roles like the survivor, the cameras' inspector or the lying impostor. Hence, it is possible to affirm that students felt part of the game structure and were able to use this strategy to easily interact among themselves.

In addition, one of the students mentioned that, from the role they obtained from AU's objective, the game provided them with clear opportunities to speak or manifest their feelings, in comparison to the observations made at the beginning of the year in which silence predominated when questions were addressed to them in class:

> *"Yo creo que la elección del juego fue buena porque las partes de las discusiones*
>
> *permiten que los estudiantes, les obliguen de alguna forma a hablar y expresar lo*

que han visto o piensan que pudo haber pasado, por ende, es necesario el uso de la

voz" (Student 2, Students' Interview, November 10th, 2021)

This digital context that AU provided a space in which students can interact in a variety of ways, as it has elements most students recognize, such as colors or parts of a building. Besides, the results show that having the role of an astronaut, part of a crew, helped them feel free to interact with their partners, transforming the game time into a very productive one in terms of practicing their English.

Familiar environment. This second subcategory refers to the environment provided by the video game, this being a very familiar one. As Widitiarsa (2018) and Fromme (2003) mention, video games are a fundamental part of the new multimedia culture, whose influence can be used as a digital environment to motivate students. In the survey carried out at the beginning of the development of the actions, it showed that 70% of the respondents (14 students) had had contact with a video game in English, showing that they are not strangers in using this kind of software. As the survey results suggest that this tool is something that students have experience in, it results in greater comfort, confidence and even motivation to interact in English during class. This is claimed by Alyaz & Genc, (2016) by noting how applying video games positively affects learners, by being new foreign language experiences for students. In the same way that the CT expressed that this resource is present within students' lives:

"Ese tipo de estrategias hacen parte del contexto del estudiante, entonces ese tipo de

herramientas tecnológicas, en este caso los videojuegos, llama mucho la atención al

estudiante porque muchos de ellos tienen interacción con ese tipo de herramientas.

Entonces a un estudiante le va a llamar mucho más la atención algo que utiliza

diariamente o con constancia a un papel lleno de oraciones gramaticales o a un

papel de una lectura que no le vea relevancia al contexto o vida diaria entonces

considero que estas herramientas ayudan mucho su competencia en inglés." (CT's

interview, November 10th, 2021).

On their side, five students (out of 20) in the recordings of the sessions also expressed

their relationship with the game AU and that many already knew its mechanics very well

(Class recordings, September 8th, 2021). Other three students manifested that they had never

played it, but they quickly adapted to its playability and thus interacted with their peers, as

they had previous experiences playing video games. This suggests that students do not have

big problems adapting themselves to these learning resources and therefore, it makes it easy

for both teachers and students to use them in class.

Enjoyment

This last category refers to how the students relished being part of the project, the

experience of playing video games in the English class and the fun they had during the

sessions. Enjoyment is an element present in active classes, which helps students to be more

engaged while always doing and experiencing (Hernik & Jaworska, 2018). The game as such

has the main characteristic of being fun and enjoyable, resulting in increased motivation and

task commitment (Cózar & Saez, 2016). Additionally, Prensky (2011) considers how learning

can be configured from fun, relaxation and comfort. During the implementation, in each of

the recorded sessions students demonstrated feeling these same sensations, as they felt no

pressure to participate in the games and were all the time with their classmates having fun:

"Me pareció muy divertido y cómodo porque está uno con gente que debería de ver todos los

días" (Student 1, Students' Interview, November 10th, 2021). In the same sense, the

interviewed students consider it when expressing: *"Yo creo que utilizar videojuegos como*

medio de aprendizaje es una de las mejores formas ya que la persona se concentra mucho

más porque está haciendo algo que le gusta y que de pronto no le gusta estudiar

normalmente" (Student 2, Students' interview, November 10th, 2021). This shows how

students enjoying their tasks plays an important role when learning. In this case, as it is a

video game and, in the survey, 65% of the students (13) expressed that there is so much

interest in learning English when playing, it seems that there is a lot of convenience for

students to speak freely, resulting in interaction while enjoying their practices.

Conclusion

Despite the different constraints to conduct this project, due to the specific situations

derived from the Covid-19 pandemic, such as returning to face-to-face classes or moments

when students could not attend the virtual class, the project was very well received, both by

students and by the CT. From the different sources, it was possible to evidence that the

students felt very comfortable while playing AU and during the moments in which they could

interact online. That is, as students had previous experiences with video games and they felt

relaxed and confident while playing with their classmates in a familiar environment, students

were able to talk without pressure, in comparison to the direct questions they faced in regular

online classes. Therefore, by playing AU, students were able to interact orally and textually

with their peers and the teacher, evidencing the interaction patterns student-student and

teacher-student. This made the proposed activities around the video game more admissible

for them and helped them to be aware of the resource usefulness to interact with others in

order to improve their language level.

Furthermore, online students' interaction using the video game AU was also possible

because it provided students with a simulated context in which they could present themselves,

take varied roles and immerse themselves in, while at the same time, they were having fun

with a resource that makes part of their culture. That is, students consider video games as a leisure activity and not necessarily as a tool to strengthen their knowledge towards a language, and games like this, provide them with opportunities to talk with minimal-to-none pressure to speak, consequently practicing their interaction and language skills.

Even though the results were positive in terms of promoting interaction among learners, this strategy is not meant to be taken as a total replacement for the language classroom since it is also necessary to develop the other language skills with other materials, with the purpose of not hindering the students' learning process.

Finally, further studies are required regarding the use of video games in English classes, since the possibilities of using them can be abundant in online classroom activities. Thus, an adequate knowledge of how video games work and what impact they can have on the students' language learning process is essential to bring forth similar projects. Similarly, teacher training, improvement in technological equipment in the public-school classrooms can be a good start in Colombia, if this cultural phenomenon is to be given way to improve the bilingual education processes in the country.

Reflections

Having the possibility of teaching constantly in a public school was always something I wanted to do since I started studying Foreign Languages Teaching, because that is where education needs constant improvements to be able to provide a better future for students with great expectations. This experience allowed me to delve further into how these students struggle to learn, to continue growing and to continue learning, not only in the target language but also for their daily lives. From all this, I also learned greatly about my own existence and how I can be one of so many beacons for students to form their own pathway,

so that in the future, they can guide others as well. There is collective learning in every class, in every student, in every assignment and every assessment, which shapes the daily life of an educational process. As a future teacher, I understand sensitively the lives of these boys and girls, which makes me remember of myself years ago when I was only completing that academic cycle. Being able to guide them in the way other teachers guided me is a very pleasant experience for me and, with great expectations, I want to repeat it. Moreover, I am very motivated to be able to finish this practice, considering all the time I spent with the students, teaching them something new in each class, something they could take to their own learning, that would make them mature and be citizens who build a better society. After going all this way, it only remains to continue improving so as to improve the performance of students by teaching them, as a sign of total gratitude for what they teach me every day.

Regarding the research process, it was a complete pleasure to bring up one of the activities I enjoy the most, playing video games, and adapt it to the teaching practicum. Being able to perceive and use these resources as alternative ways of teaching or, in this case, practicing a language, was for me a challenge that I would like to face again in the future. Technological education is constantly evolving and it would be a great advance, both professionally and personally, to be able to contribute to its construction. Though research is capricious, strict and complex, I am enthusiastic about understanding how this educational process constantly evolves. Therefore, I will be more prepared eventually on how to use these strategies for posterior application with, I hope, public high school students and motivate them to learn English for the sake of a better formation.

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Appendix A

Students' Survey

Encuesta sobre Videojuegos, Interacción e Inglés

Querid@ estudiante,

Por favor responde esta encuesta relacionada al uso de inglés en los videojuegos y la interacción al usar éstos. Las respuestas de este cuestionario serán usadas en el proyecto "Promoción de la Interacción Oral en Inglés mediante el Uso de Videojuegos en Clases Virtuales de Undécimo Grado" y serán tratadas con total confidencialidad.

Nombre _____

Correo Electrónico _____

1. ¿Has jugado alguna vez un videojuego en inglés? Si __ No __
2. En caso de ser sí la respuesta a la pregunta anterior, ¿Cómo fue tu experiencia comprendiendo las instrucciones, objetivos y objetos del juego en inglés?
3. El tener las instrucciones de éste/éstos videojuego(s) en inglés ¿te ayudó/impidió jugar?
4. ¿Consideras que has aprendido algo de inglés al jugar videojuegos en ese idioma?
   Si __ No __
5. En caso de ser sí la respuesta a la pregunta anterior, ¿Qué elementos relacionados al inglés consideras que has aprendido?
   Vocabulario __ Gramática __ Habilidades de escucha __ Habilidades de lectura __
   Interacción en el idioma __ Otra __
6. ¿Has alguna vez interactuado con jugadores en línea usando como lengua de comunicación el inglés?
   Sí, muchas veces __ Sí, algunas veces __ Sí, pocas veces __ Nunca __
7. En caso de ser sí la respuesta a la pregunta anterior ¿Cómo ha sido esa experiencia de interacción en inglés con otros jugadores?
8. ¿Has necesitado de herramientas que te permitan ayudar a interactuar con estos jugadores? (puedes seleccionar varias respuestas)
   Diccionario __ Tradutor __ Ayuda de alguien más __ Otra __

Appendix B: Interviews

Appendix B1: Students' Interview

1. ¿Cómo consideras el nivel de cantidad de interacción (alto, medio, bajo) entre estudiantes en clases de inglés virtuales con respecto a las clases presenciales? ¿Por qué?

2. ¿Cómo fue tu experiencia al utilizar un videojuego como parte de una clase?

3. ¿Cómo te sentiste interactuando en inglés con tus compañeros a la hora de jugar Among Us?

4. Piensa que el videojuego Among Us fue adecuado para que los estudiantes se sintieran más cómodos a la hora de interactuar entre ellos en clase de inglés? ¿Por qué?

5. ¿Te gustaría utilizar videojuegos en el futuro para mejorar tus conocimientos generales en inglés? ¿Por qué?

Appendix B2: Teacher's Interview

1. ¿Cómo consideras el nivel de cantidad de interacción (alto, medio, bajo) entre estudiantes en clases de inglés virtuales con respecto a las clases presenciales? ¿Por qué?

2. ¿Considera que el uso de estrategias tecnológicas didácticas (como en este caso el uso de los videojuegos) tuvo un impacto positivo en la interacción entre estudiantes en clase? ¿Por qué?

3. ¿Piensa que el videojuego Among Us fue pertinente para que tanto entre estudiantes-estudiantes como entre estudiantes-profesor pudieran interactuar de forma constante y natural? ¿Por qué?

4. ¿Piensa que los estudiantes se sintieron cómodos para hablar entre ellos al estar jugando Among Us en clase de inglés?

5. ¿Qué cree que es necesario que sea enseñado previamente para lograr mayor interacción al usar el juego?

6. ¿Utilizaría esta estrategia para fomentar la interacción en inglés entre estudiantes en clase (tanto presencial como virtual)