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Gamification a way to Improve Social Management and Self-efficacy

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Abstract

This action-research aimed improving student's self-efficacy and social management thought the gamification approach. It was conducted in a public school in La Ceja del Tambo in Antioquia with 34 seven graders. Action strategies included the implementation of a gamification system with games, points and rewards, visual marks, and a leaderboard. Data gathering instruments included teacher's journal, questionnaires, surveys, teachers' reflections, and video recordings, Findings referred to playing an assuming roles help students to solve conflicts and the reflection process helps students become aware of their abilities.

Keywords: Gamification, self-efficacy, social management, solving conflicts, students' abilities.

Título en español: La gamificación, una forma de mejorar la gestión social y la autoeficacia.

Degree requirement

This action research project is submitted as a requirement to obtain a bachelor's degree in foreign language education (English- French) at the Escuela de Idiomas, Universidad de Antioquia, El Carmen de Viboral, Colombia.

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First, I want to thank me for believing in myself, I want to thank me for doing all this hard work. I want to thank me for not quitting. I want to thank me for always trying different things. I want to thank me for never giving up.

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Finally, I want to thank the institution, my school, for giving me the opportunity to develop my teacher's skill inside its classroom. Furthermore, I want to express my gratitude to the students who participated in this research project for being part of this process that contributed to my personal and professional growth.

Table of Contents

Preface

I am a student in the foreign language teaching program at a public university in Antioquia, Colombia. I am a teacher interested in learning about the diverse ways of integrating technology in language classes. The desire to conduct this research has originally arisen from my interest and willingness to address social issues and at the same time combine some digital tools and strategies within an EFL classroom. This research study was conducted from August 2022 to June 2023. As pre-service teacher, I conducted the project in a public school in La Ceja, Antioquia, and I was assigned to observe a group of 34 seventh grade students. This research project is aimed primarily at educators, who are interested in addressing social issues using digital strategies and at the same time having students focus on learning a foreign language.

Kevin Eduardo Ríos Ramírez

La Ceja del Tambo, Antioquia, June 20, 2023

Description of the Context

The institution where this action research project took place is a public school located in the municipality of La Ceja, Antioquia (Colombia). The school's mission is to educate children and young people following a Humanistic Approach, promoting respect for the difference to be competent for society. As for the vision, the school wanted to be recognized for its high commitment to educational innovation, generating participative processes to the integral formation of the students, considering the knowledge that characterized the new citizens by 2020. Finally, the pedagogical model adopted at this institution was a social humanistic model where the student is the center of the educational process and through coexistence acquires levels of socialization tending to a community coexistence (Manual de Convivencia, 2018).

Concerning the class, it was a 7th grade English class taught three times a week in sixty-minutes periods. The class syllabus was under construction, but it was based upon the Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras from the Ministry of Education (MEN, 2006). The methodology that the teacher followed was grammar and translation based, which involved activities such as filling in the blanks, translation of words and sentences into Spanish, and the recognition of simple sentence structures. The

assessment was done through quizzes and tests with the same items of the activities the students did in the classroom.

Participants in this study were 34 students: 16 girls and 18 boys, whose ages range between 10 and 14. Most of them lived in families where the biological father or mother was missing and was replaced by a stepfather or stepmother. There were some students from Venezuela and others come from other cities and departments of Colombia. Students' English proficiency level was basic and their exposure to English was limited to the classes they have at school (Students' Questionnaire, September 14, 2022). The Cooperating Teacher (CT) holds a bachelor's degree in foreign languages, a specialization in Pedagogy and Didactics, and a master's degree in education (CT' Interview, September 23, 2022).

Some of the problems I observed in this class was the lack of peaceful coexistence among the students that caused the classes not to be developed with a good atmosphere. This coexistence problem made the students not to participate in the English class because of the teasing that a mistake could cause. In addition, the few hours of English they received per week meant that the topics must be seen in several sessions to be understood.

Statement of the Problem

The confinement taken as a measurement to stop the spread of the virus COVID-19 triggered some problems that have hindered students' abilities to make safe and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions, as well as to engage in respectful and healthy relationships with other individuals. Likewise, students, after returning to school, had demonstrated hardship to motivate themselves, persevere, and see

themselves as capable. Julian de Zubiria, (2022) a Colombian educator, stated that "the young people suffered a lot because in the pandemic you can't build deep friendships" (de Zubiria, 2022 as cited in Padilla, 2022). The little social contact school students had during the quarantine, coupled with Distance Learning, intensified the problems and the way they understand learning and living in society. The results obtained by a census of the Colombian Institute of Neurosciences during the pandemic in 2020, showed that children began to show aggressive behavior, frustration and irritability when performing school tasks that in the end did not contribute to their mental development because they did not remember what they learned (Emergencia Sanitaria y su Impacto Sobre Nuestros Niños, 2020).

During informal talks with the students, I could testify that one of the problems they constantly talked about was the lack of confidence in their knowledge. They stated that this problem was mainly developed three years ago during the confinement. Furthermore, upon returning to the classroom, problems such as physical aggression, taunting, and depression were continuously presented. In different classes, children had conflicts with their peers and did not know how to initiate a conversation and, instead, resorted to confrontation and fighting. De Zubiria (2022) affirms that "the problem is not conflicts because coexistence generates conflict, the problem is not knowing how to resolve conflicts. Conflicts generate development when they are well channeled" (Zubiria, 2022). In like manner, conflicts that developed between students, such as verbal or physical aggression, have a "ripple effect" on students (Chandra, 2015, p. 14), causing a single person to influence the good or bad behavior of the entire classroom. Consequently, there was an atmosphere of discomfort

among students (Personal Communication with Students, 2022) and the time of the class was reduced to "solving" conflicts that did not seem to have long-term solutions.

The teachers' efforts to get students to work in teams were overshadowed by the constant complaints that arose when students were forming teams. Students had little empathy for difference and when teamwork was required, many students with special needs were left out completely (Observation excerpt, October 4, 2022). In other cases, students were reluctant to work with certain students, making teamwork even more difficult. Teamwork is a strategy highly used by second and foreign language teachers since, as Krasen (1985) states, the acquisition of a foreign language occurs when the exposure to the language is at a level comparable to the one that one has. In this sense, the best teachers are the students themselves who have the possibility of communicating with the same level of performance of the language.

In conclusion, the confinement caused by the pandemic significantly affected the way students relate to others, especially in school settings. Therefore, I proposed to implement Gamification to teach students to live together again. Gamification encourage students to work as a team and in most cases, they did not look at differences but were only interested in having fun (Texas Woman's University, 2015). At the same time, turning the classroom into a game could motivate students to surpass themselves through a system of achievements.

Theoretical Background

In this section, I present the elements and the theoretical bases that guide this action research. The first aspect to mention is the definition of gamification and the concepts that describe it. The second aspect to explain is the definition of social management and the benchmarks to implement it. Finally, I will point out the definition of self-efficacy and a Learning Form to analyze the process, I include a chart with the elements I took into consideration to analyze self-efficacy and social management in the EFL class.

Gamification is defined by Kapp (2012) as "using game-based mechanics, aesthetics and game thinking to engage people, motivate action, promote learning, and solve problems" (p. 10). These mechanics might include the creation of avatars, game rules, challenges, visual performance markers (leaderboards), obstacles, and rewards. This is not to say that 'Gamification' is a game, in essence it is using the elements that compose the game and taking them to a place that is transformed into a video game scenario and the participants become the players. In this sense, 'gamification' in the classroom uses different stimuli so that the student does not feel that they are part of a classroom, but of a game. In other words, Gamification refers to the technique of making something interesting and enjoyable (Mohandas et al., 2020). For the gamification process to be possible it is necessary to follow 6 concepts that are inspired by the experience of a game environment (Nicolson, 2013):

'Play' defined by Sutton-Smith (1997) is a voluntary activity that motivates in the player a sense of fun and joy. Play is characterized by its ability to stimulate curiosity, creativity and challenge some physical and/or cognitive ability. With the school context this

concept of "voluntariness" causes conflicts as students are forced to participate in the system. For this it is necessary that the gamification system allows the student to choose what to play with.

'Exposition' is the creation of a narrative that allows the player to form a relationship between the real world and the game space. The narrative process is divided into two parts (Nicholson, 2013), namely: The development of the narrative elements, which allow the player to see the relationship between the game and real life, noting that decisions made can affect the final narrative; and the presentation of the narrative elements to the player, which can be through movies, books, or simulations of real life acts keeping in mind that these can be given sporadically or by having the player himself be responsible for the narrative.

'Choice' is about the player deciding how to participate in the game (Nicholson, 2013). Gamification in this case is aided by the theory of Universal Design for Learning, where students are given the possibility to learn and show their handling of the content in different ways (Burgstahler, 2008). This makes the learner feel more autonomous, while creating a playful environment. To help players not to feel overwhelmed with decision making, it is necessary to set limits and let players choose a goal.

'Information' refers to using game elements to inform the player about the real world (Nicholson, 2013). More than giving specific information, it is to show the player the 'why' and the 'how' of the information. That is to prevent players from focusing only on earning points, it is necessary to create a system where they are shown that they are gaining experience in a specific subject. If the player only sees that he is given points for certain

behavior, he will only act in a specific way and learning will remain in the background (Kramlinger & Huberty, 1990). For this reason, it is necessary to relate and explain the concepts that are seen in the game with the real world.

'Engagement' refers to encourage students to learn from others. Nicholson (2013) suggests the use of social engagement, which refers to the creation of opportunities for the player to share with others, since people perform better when they share their experience with others (Deci & Ryan, 2004). Similarly, the creation of an engaging gameplay experience, which refers to the fact that participants must face challenges that are at the same level as their skills. For these two actions to complement each other, it is necessary to know when to carry out group work. This can be achieved by creating a system where players can see the progress they are making, while at the same time providing spaces to share experiences and skills.

'Reflection' gets the player to reflect and connect their play experience to the real world, it involves getting players to reflect on their experience playing in the game space (Nicholson, 2013). This activity has a more powerful focus when done in a group setting as each player learns differently and by making the activity social there is a greater connection in both self and group learning.

Moving on to a different concept, social management, according to Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning – CASEL- (n.d) Social and Emotional Management is the ability or capacity in which a person applies and uses his or her knowledge and skills to achieve collective and personal goals, show empathy and maintain good relationships by making responsible decisions. To gather information on students'

social management process, I used the following benchmarks from the Washington State's Social Emotional Learning Standards and Benchmarks (2019):

- A range of communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.

- The ability to identify and take steps to resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.

- The ability to engage in respectful and healthy relationships with individuals of diverse perspectives, cultures, language, history, identity, and ability.

By dividing the concept of social management into benchmarks I was able to establish the characteristics in which the gamification process helped students to improve their relationships with their peers.

Finally, another important concept that guided this action research is 'Self-efficacy'; it refers to the belief that one's capabilities are sufficient to achieve a goal (Bandura, 1997). These beliefs determine motivation to certain types of tasks. To observe and register students' Self-efficacy improvement, I used the two benchmarks from the Washington State's Social Emotional Learning Standards and Benchmarks (2019). According to these benchmarks the students should demonstrate the following:

- The skills to set, monitor, adapt, persevere, achieve, and evaluate goals

- Problem-solving skills to engage responsibly in a variety of situations. This concept, as well as the characteristics that compose it, helped me to identify how the gamification process was changing the students' self-efficacy.

In addition, I used some of the elements or criteria proposed in the Self-efficacy for

Learning Form suggested by Zimmerman, et al., (2005). Table 1 presents the elements

selected to gathered information about students' self-efficacy.

Table 1

Self-efficacy for Learning Form

Elements / Scale	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
When you feel very anxious before taking a test, can you remember all the material you studied?					
When you have tried unsuccessfully to study for an hour, can you set and attain an important study goal during your remaining time?					
When you don't understand your teacher, can you ask the right question to clarify matters?					
When another student asks you to study together for a course in which you are having trouble, can you be an effective study partner?					
When you miss a class, can you find another student who can explain the lecture notes as clearly as your teacher did?					
When problems with friends and peers' conflict with schoolwork, can you keep up with your assignments?					
When a homework assignment, such as learning vocabulary words, is repetitive and uninteresting, can you make it into an exciting challenge?					
When you are having trouble understanding assigned reading material, can you find a classmate who can explain everything clearly to you?					
When you have time available between classes, can you motivate yourself to use it for studying?					
When you suddenly realize that you can't remember any material you have read during the last half hour, can you create self-questions to help you review the material successfully?					
When your last test results were poor, can you figure out potential questions before the next test that will improve your score greatly?					

Note. This chart includes some elements selected from a list of criteria presented in the
original Self-efficacy for Learning Form.

In conclusion, gamification can be an effective tool for students to improve social

management and self-efficacy in the EFL classroom. By incorporating game elements in

the activities that are carried out in the EFL class, teamwork could be promoted, in addition

to the improvement of problem-solving skills, while students are able to feel a sense of

accomplishment and motivation that may help them to improve their social skills and self-

efficacy.

Research Question

How can Gamification in an EFL classroom help to improve six graders' Social

Management and Self-efficacy at a public institution in La Ceja?

Objectives

General Objective

To evaluate how Gamification can improve Social Management and Self-efficacy in an

EFL classroom.

Specific Objectives

1. To develop students' Social Management and Self-efficacy skills through

   gamification.

2. To analyze students' responses to the proposed Gamification system.

Action Plan

To answer the research question stated for this project, some actions were developed

during a period of four academic months. The first action was to apply a diagnostic

questionnaire (See the questionnaire here) in three different moments of the process to have

an initial, middle, and final point of understanding on how students' relationships are,

questioning their perception about the different links among them. The second action was

the creation of a game environment setting (See guidelines for game environment here)

using a mechanism of points, in which they helped to create the rules to obtain and to lose

points. At the same time, they created a character with personal objectives, the ones that

they would be achieving throughout the entire game process. The creation of cards and a

leaderboard were the final steps to generate the game environment, those with the objective

of having visual marks to have the game always present or in mind when doing class activities. The third action was the creation of three different games in which students were required to work in groups with different peers, creating moments of competence where they showed different personal abilities, created, and solved conflicts and they reflected on their performance individually and as group.

Data was collected through memos, video recordings, interviews, questionnaires, and surveys. These aimed to evidence not only students' abilities, reactions, and attitudes to work in groups with different people but also to evidence students' personal capacities to adapt, persevere, achieve, and evaluate goals. Additionally, to test the use of a game system to teach other languages and see how the students' responses to it were.

Development of Actions

The implemented actions were adapted having in mind the principles of gamification, I used different elements such as points in terms of participation and behavior, goals and playing, leaderboards refer to keeping track of the best performance; objectives and rewards to structure the points system; avatars to allow students represent themselves; and a cards system to visually represent the points.

As part of the first action, I evaluated how students perceived their relationships with their peers while exploring assumptions about working and problem-solving when working in teams. This strategy was carried out in three specific moments, at the beginning to have a starting point, in the middle of the research to notice if there was any change when working with gamification, and at the end of the implementation to analyze the

evolution on how the change developed according to the relationships that took place in the classroom.

The second action was the implementation of a gamification system. Throughout the project, three different instances were carried out where students were exposed to language content. They were allowed to choose their partners to play in two of these instances, and in the final one, they had the freedom to choose how to play, taking on the responsibility of creating the games themselves. At the end of each instance, a reflection session was provided, allowing them to analyze their performance in the activities. The other classes were transformed into activities where the focus shifted to winning or losing points based on various factors like participation, problem-solving, negotiation, and discipline within the English activities. These factors were chosen by the students after creating a list of possible actions that would earn or lose points. At the same time, a book was created in which the students drew their own avatar, the same one that would be displayed on a podium at the end of the week, with its own objectives that would award even more points if completed. This book served to keep track of the rewards that students earned each time they reached a certain number of points. In addition, visual aids were created using a system of cards that showed how many points were earned or lost at each opportunity and contained challenges for teamwork that also gave points.

The third action was the creation of different games in which students had the opportunity to work in teams and demonstrate different skills, both idiomatic and physical. These games provided a challenge for the students to complete and create some conflicts among them, conflicts that were solved in different ways. Throughout the process, it

showed how the students demonstrated their abilities to lead, divide the work, accomplish

the task before the others, or even give up when the time and the difficulty of the activity

proposed it.

Finally, the students had to create their own games, at this stage they had to teach

their classmates a topic and achieved the goal of becoming the protagonists of the class

themselves. This proposal helped many students to feel more confident with what they

knew and to teach their classmates who had difficulty learning this subject. At the same

time, it helped them to share more with their classmates, although it also created a division

among other students with whom they were able to work as a team.

Data analysis

The data analysis followed the five stages proposed by Burns (2010): data assembly,

data coding, data comparison, interpretation building, and reporting of outcomes. Firstly, as

part of the data assembly stage, research memos, teacher interviews, student questionnaires,

and student reflections, were brought together. Next, codes and categories were generated,

and the data were organized based on these codes, followed by data comparison to develop

interpretations. Finally, a report was presented, encompassing all the findings and

conclusions.

Findings and Interpretations

This study aimed at improving Social Management and Self-efficacy through

Gamification. This section presents the results of the implementation of the Gamification

approach. Analysis revealed two findings, namely, Playing and Assuming Roles Helped

Students to Solve Conflicts through dialogue, and Reflection Aided in the Improvement of Students' Self-Efficacy. In the following paragraphs I provide an in-depth elaboration on these two findings.

Playing and Assuming Roles Helped Students to Solve Conflicts

Data analysis demonstrated that while students were playing the games, they showed themselves as capable of assigning different roles and assuming a responsible attitude when working as a team, which resulted in boosting their creativity to come up with strategies to solve conflicts. The following figures indicate the strategies students used in two different games and it hints, as well, how the conflicts diminished over time.
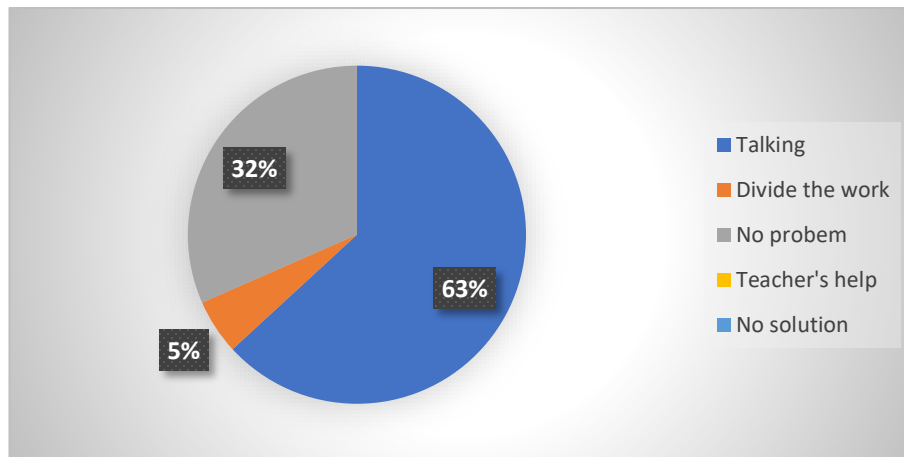
Figure 1

Results of a Survey to the Question: How did you solve the problems by working as a team?
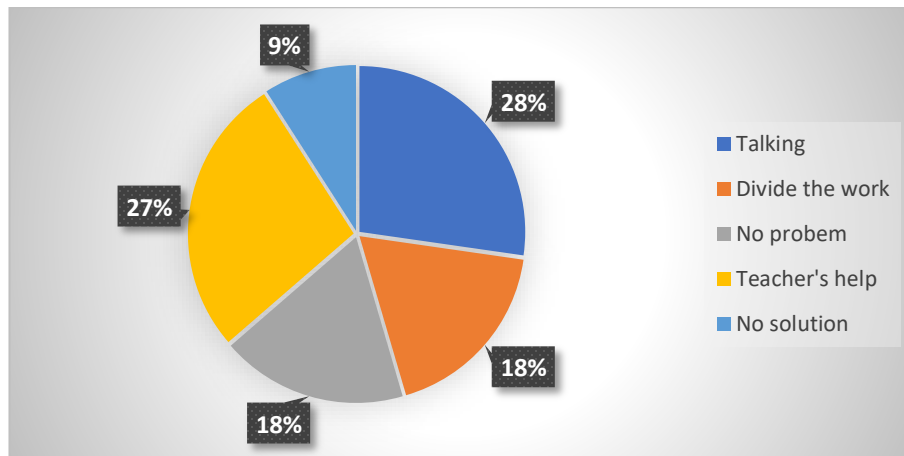
Note. Survey conducted at the end of the first game where students stated the ways they resolved conflicts. March 27th, 2023.

Figure 2

Results of a Survey to the Question: How did you solve the problems by working as a team?

Note. Survey conducted at the end of the second game where students stated the ways they resolved conflicts. April 19th, 2023.

The figures display that, at playing time, when a problem arose, the students took a position of dialogue. Figure 1 shows that students resorted to teacher's help more often at the beginning of the implementation to solve the problems. In contrast, it can be observed, on figure 2, that students had less problems and did not request the teacher's help as often as at the beginning. Finally, it could also be observed that there was an increase in communication, talking moved from 28% to 63%, which indicates that students acquired and developed conflict-resolution skills. This analysis demonstrated that the quality of communication played an important tole when performing the games. Possibly this change was possible because playing games allowed students to improve their ability to articulate their thoughts, actively listen to others, and engage in dialogue, which may have allowed for conflict resolution.

As for playing, the reflection from one of the teachers who took part in the games, revealed how the use of games triggered motivation and teamwork, which contributed to conflict resolution:
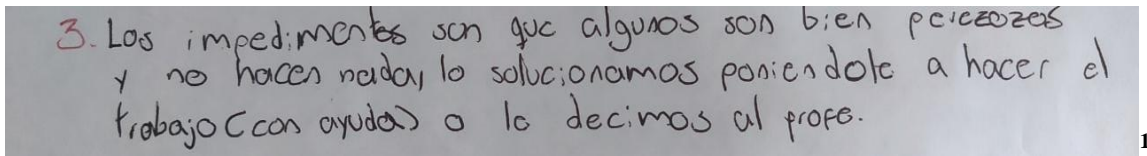
The first group was highly motivated and followed the instructions of their group

leader, resulting in three different drawings. The second group worked well

together, but their drawings sometimes appeared as individual efforts. However,

they managed to produce three related drawings by following their leader's

instructions. The last group initially worked independently, but eventually began

working as a cohesive team […] (Teacher Reflection, April 14th, 2023)

In the teacher's reflection, it can be noted that the first group was highly motivated

and followed the instructions of their group leader, which means that playing the game and

assuming some roles inside a group helped them work together effectively and overcome

any conflicts or challenges that may have arisen. The second group worked well together,

although their drawings sometimes looked like individual efforts, they were able to work as

a team and achieve cohesive results. The last group started out working independently but

then became a cohesive team and they were able to resolve these conflicts and work

together as a unified team. The game required students to communicate and understand

each other to achieve a common goal. It was this collaborative aspect of playing that may

have created conflict resolution because it allowed students to empathize and understand

their peers.

The students' reflections at the end of the third activity provided additional

evidence, as students identified a conflict with the groups they worked with, and they

resorted to dialogue and division of work to solve it. In the reflections, students answered

the question: What problems were encountered when working as a team and how did you

solve them?

Figure 3

Student's Reflection Answering the Question: What problems were encountered when
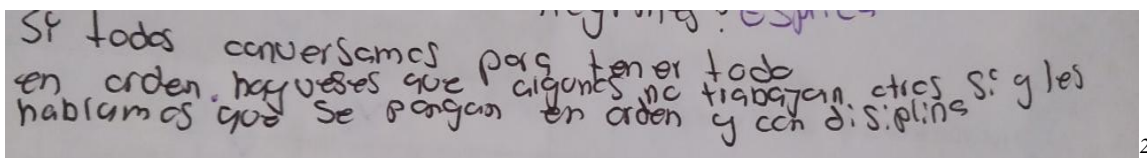
working as a team and how did you solve them?

Note. Survey conducted at the end of the third game where a student reflects on the problems and solutions working in group. May 5th, 2023.

The student in the reflection exhibited how they had the ability to identify both, the

individuals who were apathetic and those who were granted special abilities to perform

specific activities. This reflection exemplifies that students could solve difficulties that

arose in group settings by assuming and giving roles. The following piece of data was a

reflection after the third activity where the students answered the question: In the activities

(games) that you have carried out in groups, have all the participants worked?

Figure 4

Student's Reflection Answering the Question: In the activities (games) that you have

carried out in groups, have all the participants worked?

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[1] The impediments are that some of us are very lazy and don't do anything. We solved it by getting them to do the work (with help) or we talked to the teacher. (My own translation)

[2] Yes, we all talk to have everything in order. There are times when some people don't work, others do, and we talk with them to get them in order and disciplined. (My own translation)

Note. Survey conducted at the end of the third game where a student reflects team's agreements. May 5th, 2023.

The previous reflection highlights that during the game, the teams had to agree on the activities to be performed. When this agreement was not fulfilled, the students talked to their teammates so that they could make a commitment to perform the activity. The game involves communication and negotiation among the players to achieve an objective, in the reflection just presented this behavior was evident. One reason could be that it was communication that led students to being able to express their points of view within the group and find a mutually agreeable solution.

Reflecting Aided in the Improvement of Students' Self-efficacy

Data revealed that reflecting by means of the questionnaires and surveys helped students identify abilities, assume roles, acknowledge, and overcome challenges, and seek help and admit shortcomings, components of Self-efficacy. Figure 5 shows how students' scores, regarding skills, slightly increased over time.
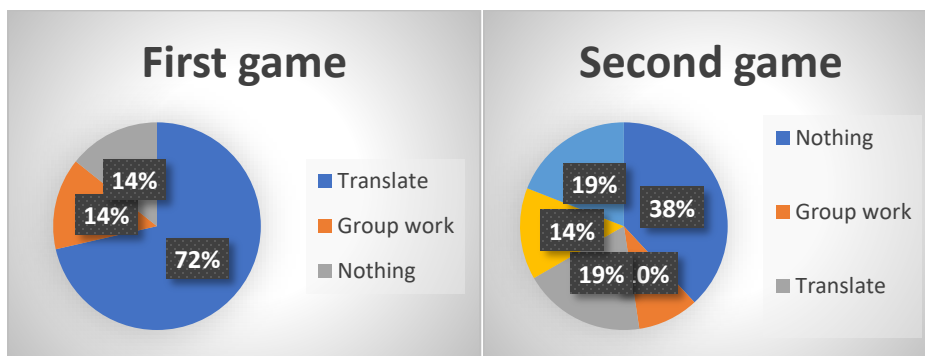
Figure 5

Results of the Analysis of Different Skills in the Questionnaires
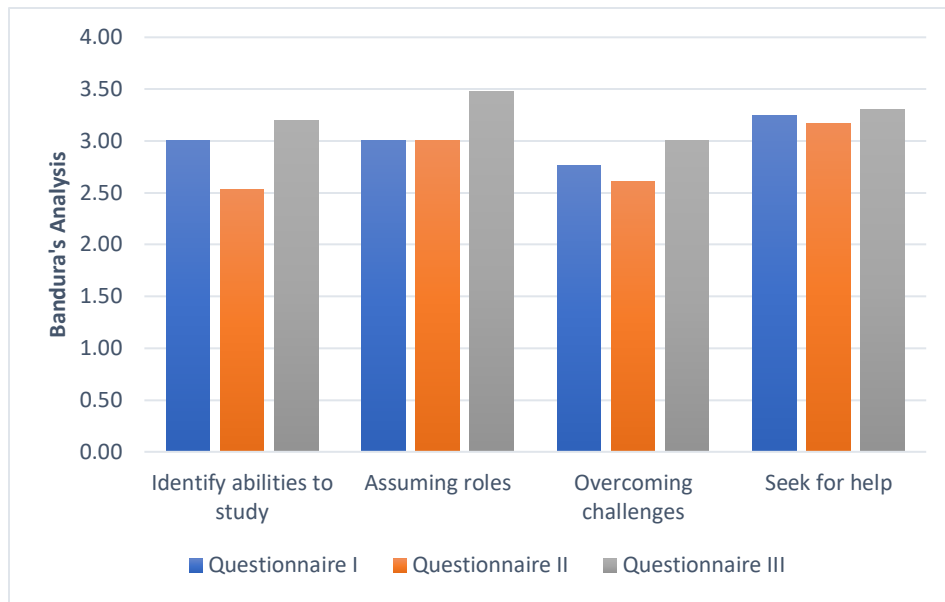
Note. The values in the table correspond to the group average on different statements related to skills during the three different applications of the questionnaire.

Figure 6

Identification of Different Problems and Skills in Different Activities.

Note. After each activity there was a reflection on students' performance, they responded to the question: What was the most difficult thing to do in the activity?

Figure 6 displayed the different difficulties students encountered doing the first two games. The analysis showed that after the first activity the students had less problems with translation and group work. Contrastingly, the option of 'nothing' had a considerable increment, from 14% to 38%. Reflecting after playing games seemed to be a good instrument for students to find the connection to the skills they have and can improve. This significance reflection in the learning process was explored by Rogers (2002), who emphasized that without reflection following action, individuals fail to find meaning in their learning. By encouraging students to reflect upon their experiences, they could deepen their understanding and derive valuable insights from their actions, fostering personal growth and enhanced learning outcomes.

The following excerpt shows that students, through reflection, were able to recognize how the roles assigned allowed them to acknowledge abilities and drawbacks. The reflection of a student answering the question: What challenges did you face in playing your role? at the end of the first game represents this observation.

Figure 7

Student's Reflection Answering the Question: What challenges did you face in playing your role?

[3]

Note. Survey conducted at the end of the first game where a student reflects on the challenges presented in her role. March 27th, 2023.

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[3] Being a leader, I would say, the hardest thing to do in the activity, is to keep the group calm, working. (My own translation)

The student's reflection demonstrated that students were able to pinpoint, up to a certain level, that assuming the role of a leader implies challenges and responsibilities. The student exposed that effective leadership involved not only guiding and directing the group but also ensuring that all members were actively engaged in the tasks and working collaboratively.

Similarly, another reflection showed that students admitted and overcame the challenges faced by performing the activities. In the third game which was created by the students, one student responded to the question: What was the hardest thing to do in the stations?

Figure 8

Student's Reflection Answering the Question: What was the hardest thing to do in the stations?

RI=3 es mucho la dificultad por que casi no etendia y ya de prestar vastante. atención [4]

Note. Survey conducted at the end of the third game where a student reflects on the challenges presented in the stations. May 5th, 2023.

Data indicated that the student, for instance, was able to acknowledge that in order to participate in each station, he had to pay close attention, which indicated that he was able to identify a solution to the problem he faced, which was paying attention.

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[4] It is very difficult (to do the activity) because I almost didn't understand and [I had] to pay a lot of attention. (My own translation)

Another piece of evidence came from the research memo, after having a discussion with students about their performance on an exam, which turned into a reflection, the students sought help from peers to understand the mistakes they made on a test presentation. "Students who had failed looked for the people who had passed the exam. I saw that they not only corrected them but also explained the grammar rule that was used in the exam" (Research Memo, April 24th, 2023). After the reflection process, the students who had failed were willing to ask their peers for help, showing that they understood that they did not have the skills to meet the test goal, while the students who had succeeded took on the role of mentors, guiding their peers to understand and correct their mistakes, showing that they have the ability and willingness to help others. Both cases show that students were aware of their abilities. This could be proven by gamification theory which says that the creation of gamified systems can create very powerful learning relationships between those who are more experienced in a subject and those who are not (Nicholson, 2015, p. 14).

After analyzing the surveys, the reflection after each activity could contribute to students' self-awareness and understanding of their own performance. By answering specific open-ended questions, students were prompted to contemplate aspects that they might have overlooked during the games. This aligns with the theory of Gamification, which emphasizes the inclusion of reflection as a crucial component for fostering meaningful learning and enhancing participants' skills (Craven, 2015, p. 434).

Conclusions and Implications

In conclusion, data analysis confirmed that the implementation of the Gamification approach resulted in notable improvements in students' levels of Self-efficacy and Social Management. Specifically, significant advancements were observed as students actively engaged with the games and assumed different roles, which effectively facilitated conflict resolution through the dialogue. Additionally, the incorporation of reflection activities several times during the project helped students develop awareness of their abilities. Nevertheless, it is important to consider that Gamification approach was a very new approach to language teaching when conducting this study, therefore, it lacked much more theoretical support, which meant that despite an intensive search for theory and studies, no similar projects were found with which to compare the results obtained.

As an implication to develop and recreate the similar study, it should be noted that the project was executed in an environment lacking technological resources, meaning that all visual information had to be manually created and presented to the students in physical formats. This added complexity and required additional time and effort to create and develop the game system. In the same way, the available time for implementing the Gamification approach was considerably reduced, placing additional pressure to deliver results within a compressed time frame. The availability of resources and time allocation for a research project involving Gamification should be highly considered and reviewed before implementing any action.

For teachers or researchers who wish to implement the Gamification approach, it is necessary to take into account the tools that are taken from games to implement in class. As the case of points and rewards, which in this study created a very marked extrinsic

motivation and generated competition among students. In other words, the ones with more points wanted to get more and get recognition; the ones with less, did not feel they could reach the others. Keeping in mind that competition can take place could help teachers anticipate problems and come up with solutions to harsh class environments.

The use of this novel approaches urges us, teachers and researchers, to cultivate dynamic learning environments that nurture a genuine passion for learning and, at the same time, empower learners to take responsibility for their own education. Adopting this innovative approach, not only does the learning experience become more engaging and immersive, but it also strengthens vital skills like problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity. Further research could focus on the use of Gamification to create healthy competition and at the same time meaningful learning in the EFL classroom. Even so, research could focus on the impact of Gamification to improve academic achievement and student motivation.

Reflection

My time at the university was an incredible experience, although it presented numerous challenges. There were moments when I contemplated giving up because I doubted my ability to effectively teach others, despite possessing the necessary tools and knowledge. Accepting this limitation was difficult, especially considering my mentors' expectations for me to test their teachings and my desire to please them. However, through deep reflection and engaging in conversations unrelated to education with my mentors, I discovered a hidden aspect of myself and embarked on a personal journey of teaching experimentation.

By blending their teachings with my own learning style, I gradually developed a passion for teaching. This newfound love transformed me into the person I am today. I came to realize that teaching encompasses more than simply imparting knowledge; it involves truly knowing, understanding, and connecting with lots of people. I understood that teaching breaks the barriers of a classroom and that you get to teach even when you are not explicitly doing it. This, I believe, is the enchantment of teaching because it reshapes one's worldview and thinking patterns. It extends beyond theoretical knowledge, using knowledge to forge connections with others, as I have done through teaching a new language.

The research process revealed a deep connection between teaching and my personal interests. Undertaking an ambitious research project often brought me to the brink of mental exhaustion. However, it also fostered my ability to think on the fly (an essential skill in teaching) despite the occasional barriers it posed to my instructional methods. The research process taught me the importance of adaptability and improvisation, which have become integral aspects of my teaching style.

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