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**Vocabulary at Santa Luisa de Marillac High School**

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**Autor:** Ponce Cadena Peter Vicente

**Director de tesis:** PhD. Sandra Mariana Guevara Betancourt

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DATOS DE CONTACTO			
<b>CÉDULA DE IDENTIDAD:</b>	1004727085		
<b>APELLIDOS Y NOMBRES:</b>	Ponce Cadena Peter Vicente		
<b>DIRECCIÓN:</b>	Imbabura, Atuntaqui, Calle Río Amazonas 05-104.		
<b>EMAIL:</b>	pvponcec@utn.edu.ec		
<b>TELÉFONO FIJO:</b>	06-2620045	<b>TELF. MÓVIL:</b>	0996137830

DATOS DE LA OBRA			
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<b>AUTOR:</b>	Ponce Cadena Peter Vicente		
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<b>ASESOR /DIRECTOR:</b>	PhD. Sandra Mariana Guevara Betancourt		

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Ibarra, a los 23 días del mes de enero de 2025

### EL AUTOR:

.....  


*Peter Vicente Ponce Cadena*

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Ibarra, 22 de Enero de 2025

PhD. Sandra Guevara Betancourt

DIRECTORA DEL TRABAJO DE INTEGRACIÓN CURRICULAR

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*PhD. Sandra Mariana Guevara Betancourt*

*C.C.: 1002503520*

## **DEDICATION**

This research is lovingly dedicated to those who have inspired, supported, and guided me throughout this journey. To my parents, Flor and Vicente, for their unwavering love and presence from the beginning. To my brothers, Fernando and Paolo, for being exemplary models of perseverance and professionalism, and for motivating me to strive for excellence. To my beloved girlfriend, Leo, for her unconditional support during my most challenging moments. To my nephews, Jhosua, Isaac, Stefano, and my unborn twin-nephews, for always being in my thoughts and inspiring me to be a better person. Lastly, to my thesis director, Mrs. Guevara, for her invaluable guidance and high standards, which pushed me to achieve my best.

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*“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.”*

*Mahatma Ghandi*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research examines the use of Duolingo as a gamification strategy to strengthen vocabulary learning among tenth-grade students at Santa Luisa de Marillac High School in Atuntaqui. A mixed approach was employed to gather and analyze accurate data, specifically, an interview was applied to two English teachers and surveys administered to two tenth-grade classes, 33 students in total. The findings reveal that students face significant challenges in learning new vocabulary and highlight a discrepancy between the teaching strategies teachers claim to employ and students' perceptions of those methods. Despite these challenges, the results indicate a strong willingness among students to incorporate gamification strategies, such as Duolingo, to enhance their vocabulary learning. In response to these findings, a didactic guide was developed to assist teachers in integrating gamification strategies and Duolingo into their vocabulary instruction.

**Keywords:** gamification, Duolingo, strategies, vocabulary learning, English as a Foreign Language

## **RESUMEN**

Esta investigación analiza el uso de Duolingo como una estrategia de gamificación para fortalecer el aprendizaje de vocabulario entre los estudiantes de décimo grado de la unidad educativa Santa Luisa de Marillac en Atuntaqui. Se utilizó un enfoque mixto para recopilar y analizar datos precisos. Específicamente, se realizó una entrevista a dos docentes del área de inglés y se aplicó una encuesta a dos paralelos de décimo grado, sumando un total de 33 estudiantes. Los resultados revelan que los estudiantes enfrentan desafíos significativos al aprender nuevo vocabulario y destacan una discrepancia entre las estrategias de enseñanza que los docentes afirman utilizar y las percepciones de los estudiantes sobre esos métodos. A pesar de estos desafíos, los resultados indican un gran interés por parte de los estudiantes para incorporar estrategias de gamificación, como Duolingo, con el fin de mejorar su aprendizaje de vocabulario. En respuesta a estos hallazgos, se desarrolló una guía didáctica para ayudar a los docentes a integrar estrategias de gamificación y Duolingo en su enseñanza del vocabulario.

**Palabras clave:** gamificación, Duolingo, estrategias, aprendizaje de vocabulario, inglés como lengua extranjera.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Education Innovation .....	4
1.2 M-learning and Gamification in EFL.....	5
1.2.1. Gamification Elements.....	6
1.3. Gamification taxonomy.....	8
1.3.1. Gamification dimension: Performance.....	8
1.3.2. Gamification dimension: Ecological.....	9
1.3.3. Gamification dimension: Social.....	10
1.3.4. Gamification dimension: Personal.....	11
1.3.5. Gamification dimension: Fictional.....	12
1.4 Gamification as a strategy to improve vocabulary.....	13
1.5 Gamification in English Language Learning Apps.....	14
1.6. Duolingo app.....	16
1.6.1. Duolingo activities .....	17
1.6.2. Advantages and disadvantages of Duolingo .....	18
1.7 The Duolingo method .....	19
1.8 Vocabulary learning.....	20
1.8.1 Duolingo as a gamification strategy to learn vocabulary.....	20
<b>CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>23</b>
2.1. Research and type of research.....	23
2.2. Deductive and inductive methods .....	24
2.3. Techniques and research instruments.....	24
2.4. Research questions .....	25
2.5. Participants .....	25
2.6. Investigation procedure.....	25
<b>CHAPTER III: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>26</b>
3.1. Results from teachers' interviews .....	26

3.2. Results from student surveys .....	32
3.3. Discussion .....	40
<b>CHAPTER IV: ACADEMIC PROPOSAL .....</b>	<b>42</b>
4.1. Rationale .....	42
4.2. Theoretical foundations .....	43
4.3. Objectives.....	43
4.3.1. General Objective.....	43
4.3.2. Specific Objectives.....	43
4.4. Development .....	43
<b>CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>101</b>
5.1. Conclusions .....	101
5.2. Recommendations .....	102
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>ANNEXES.....</b>	<b>112</b>

## ÍNDICE DE FIGURAS

<b>Figure 1</b> .....	8
<b>Figure 2</b> .....	15
<b>Figure 3</b> .....	17
<b>Figure 4</b> .....	19
<b>Figure 5</b> .....	32
<b>Figure 6</b> .....	33
<b>Figure 7</b> .....	34
<b>Figure 8</b> .....	35
<b>Figure 9</b> .....	37
<b>Figure 10</b> .....	38

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English is one of the most relevant languages around the world. It positioned itself as a lingua franca. People from different countries need a communication tool that allows them to interchange information despite the language barriers, English became this mechanism as it is a language that have more non-native English speakers than native speakers (Kopchak, et al., 2022).

Akther (2022) highlights the importance of English as a lingua franca in international education and professional environment. People who are competent in English have more opportunities to get personal and interpersonal benefits such as access to a wider number of academic resources, study materials, courses offered in English, scholarships and international abroad programs.

A varied vocabulary is essential to learn English since it helps people to understand communication better and express themselves accurately. Musa et al., (2022) mentions “If students have extensive vocabulary storage, it will be very helpful for English education in general” (p.470). Therefore, learners with a wide vocabulary are able to explore complex academic content that requires specialized vocabulary and to understand different texts such as books, articles, research works, among others.

There is a correlation between vocabulary learning and the improvement of English skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing (Dermawana, 2021). Words are important in every skill as learners are able to identify or produce them. However, Nasri (2022) suggests a particular connection with reading skills:

Comprehension needs a satisfactory stock of words to have the ability to understand. To identify words, readers need to decode letters to get words and words to get sentences because the more readers understand a language, the more they comprehend what they read. (p.70)

Readers that recognize more words have an advantage because they understand more from written texts, consequently, it is important for English learners to have a varied vocabulary as it will be beneficial for their reading skills enhancement.

Nevertheless, in Ecuador, a country located in south America, young learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) have some difficulties when they are supposed to read a passage. Ochoa Ortega (2021) reported in his research with a sample of 65 teenagers from a private school in Cuenca “(...) for most learners reading in English is a difficult task. The main reasons for this outcome are the lack of or poor vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties” (p.20). Therefore, it is important to teach a wide range of words to teenagers as their reading skills will get enhanced.

A learning strategy is necessary to achieve a varied vocabulary. Díaz Arévalo (2022) considers that the strategies implemented when teaching vocabulary are of great importance for the success of learners and to achieve learning goals. Teachers have to decide cautiously what strategies are suitable for the context of their pupils and how to apply them correctly.

One of these strategies that have called the attention to some educators is gamification. As an example, Jordán Buenaño (2021) hypothesized that gamification strategy influences positively on the learning of new words at Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages students from Universidad Técnica de Ambato. After conducting her research, the findings suggested that students who used gamification to learn new vocabulary, understood a wider range of words in comparison of the control group in which the gamification strategy was not applied, therefore, the reading comprehension skills from the first group improved considerably.

The platform that this research will focus on is Duolingo, a platform that uses gamification strategy as the main component. As Freeman et al. (2023), using gamification in Duolingo results in a good learning tool for those who want to learn English since they will enjoy playing and learning at the same time. Furthermore, teachers can introduce this platform into their classrooms to perform their classes, create tasks, along with providing support to their learners to improve their lexicon. Llumitaxi Quilligana (2022) states after performing her research at Private Educational Unit Jim Irwin in Quito that, it is important for English teachers to receive training focused on gamification and interactive tools to improve the teaching-learning process of English.

Hence, the present research emerges from the need to identify the strategies that teachers use when teaching vocabulary to tenth-grade students at Santa Luisa de Marillac high school. It is important to determine this since the strategies implemented by educators have an impact on the learning results of students. For instance, Salgado Zöllner and Solis Medina (2023) outlined in their research work at an Ecuadorian high school that the teaching strategies implemented for reading skills have a direct influence on the comprehension outcomes of learners, the strategies that resulted more attractive to students were the ones that had better results.

The direct beneficiaries from this research are tenth grade students at Santa Luisa de Marillac High School in Atuntaqui. This Duolingo platform might result interesting and useful for them to learn new words and concepts; thus, they might feel motivated to improve their vocabulary by using Duolingo on their own. Pullupaxi Galora (2023) conducted a research in a high school in Tungurahua with learners from 8 to 9 years old by applying a pre-test and post-test, she acknowledged that students who used Duolingo platform increased their vocabulary knowledge along with their excitement towards learning English.

Teachers who work at Santa Luisa de Marillac High School will be direct beneficiaries as well. They will have the possibility of implementing an innovative and didactic strategy to teach vocabulary by using Duolingo as a gamification strategy. In a previous research work at an Ecuadorian high school, Llumitaxi Quilligana (2022) designed a pedagogical guide that included gamification as the main element, it provided examples of activities for teachers to use in and outside the classroom with young learners. Therefore, the following research will be a useful resource for English teachers at Santa Luisa de Marillac high school.

On the other hand, the indirect beneficiaries from this research are English language teachers from other institutions, cities and even countries around the world; In fact, they will have the opportunity to change the dynamic of the class since they can make use of gamification strategy, but more specifically Duolingo platform to teach new lexicon to their pupils.

With that being said, the following research objectives and research questions are established.

### **General objective**

- Propose Duolingo as a Gamification Strategy to Strengthen Tenth Grade Students' Vocabulary at Santa Luisa de Marillac High School in Atuntaqui.

### **Specific objectives**

- Establish theoretical bases of Duolingo as a gamification strategy to improve vocabulary.
- Determine which strategies are used when teaching vocabulary to tenth grade students at Santa Luisa de Marillac.
- Design a didactic guide that incorporates Duolingo's gamification strategies to enhance vocabulary.

### **Research Questions**

- What are the current strategies used when teaching new vocabulary to tenth grade students at Santa Luisa de Marillac High School in Atuntaqui?
- What are the students' perceptions towards using Duolingo as a gamification strategy to learn vocabulary?

## CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 1.1 Education Innovation

Within the education field, educators, researchers and teachers are always looking for constant improvement to provide students with the best tools and resources to achieve a meaningful learning process. New educational resources have emerged to address different issues and learners' needs and preferences, these innovations have remained in current days since its introduction, for instance, a remarkable enhancement regarding education in recent years is the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into educational contexts. According to Haleem et al. (2022), ever since the COVID-19 pandemic spread throughout the whole world, and no face-to-face classes were available for young learners to prevent infections, teachers had to come up with an innovative solution, they had to use technology to perform their classes among their pupils. PowerPoint Presentations (PPT), videos, e-learning methods, online training, among others are some of the things that teachers used in this period. However, the implementation of these technological resources was not something recently discovered since these resources were already available for everybody. Nonetheless, due to the pandemic, people that were not familiar with these resources started learning about them and these technologies have lasted with them ever since, for instance, these resources are still being used by teachers and the implementation of technological features is well-welcomed by teenagers although online classes are not so popular anymore (Wu et al., 2024).

The use of technological tools has shown some improvement in regards of the teaching-learning processes. To illustrate, Rufaidah et al. (2021) concluded in their study that the utilization of technology in the classroom resulted in a positive outcome by the students since they earned a higher level of independence, they applied a pre-test and post-test to a group of young students to determine how their independence would change when a technology learning environment was implemented in their classes; by doing this, the classroom was no longer teacher-centered, but instead, it became a student-center environment in which learners were the ones who tried to discover their own learning and started to be autonomous, which resulted in a better achievement of their learning objectives established by the teachers at the beginning of the period.

Emerging technologies not only boost students' independence, but they also improve their engagement towards the learning topics. Carstens et al. (2021) conducted a research in which they explored pupils' perceptions towards the use of technology, they reported that students felt more comfortable and were more engaged when technology was used in the classroom; they argued that learners had been surrounded by technology their whole life, so they felt more comfortable when they were supposed to use the same technological devices, applications or features that they have already been using on their own, or with resources that they are familiarized with. To summarize, multiple innovations have been made by educators from all over the world regarding learning tools

and resources, but since the introduction of ICTs, the use of digital technologies is mandatory to be up to date and promote engagement and autonomy among teenagers, hence, there are some approaches that rely completely on technology and that are explained below.

## **1.2 M-learning and Gamification in EFL**

Due to this growing use of technology in education after innovations have been implemented, the fact that learners and educators are looking forward to using technological tools to transmit and acquire knowledge is not surprising, in fact, according to Arkhipova et al. (2024), more and more people are trying to make good use of these resources. Although technological features range from different applications, web pages, slides, documents, audiovisual aids, among others; an education approach that implements all these resources and puts them together is called M-learning, it stands for mobile learning, and it is defined as the type of education in which technological devices and wireless networks are the main components (Peng et al., 2023). Within this approach, smartphones, tablets and other gadgets are used to facilitate the learning process among young learners, they get access to educational content and diversified learning resources by giving them access to learning platforms, syllabus and more educational settings that put all the contents together for students to use. As evidenced by Pratama (2021) in a research article in which 1156 young learners were inquired about their perceptions of m-learning, the results showed that teenagers perceived this learning approach as something useful for them and as something they can work with at their own pace.

Although m-learning has demonstrated significant potential within the education field, its application in language learning is remarkable. For young learners who are trying to learn a different language, mobile technologies offer engaging and interactive activities that allow them to acquire new knowledge and improve their retention, especially when it comes to vocabulary learning. To demonstrate this, Zakian (2022) conducted an inquiry in which multiple tests were applied to different groups of students, the ones who used the m-learning approach by using mobile devices for vocabulary learning had a better performance in the post-tests, on the other hand, the control group which did not use the m-learning approach had a worse performance; this evidence suggests that m-learning can be useful for young learners if used effectively.

Within m-learning, another strategy emerges from this approach and has gained significant attention, gamification. As defined by Su and Cheng (2015), it is a strategy of teaching and learning that uses game elements and mechanics in non-game contexts. This strategy is a direct extension of m-learning since it uses the interactive and technological elements of m-learning to incorporate gaming elements into the learning process. Although gamification can be implemented in multiple academic fields, this strategy has proven to be effective when it comes to language learning for young learners, as they perceive gamification activities not only as games but as engaging and interactive experiences that reinforce their language skills. Calderón Rosero (2023) conducted a research in which she collected some insights about gamification to young learners, she concluded



that gamification leads to unconscious learning and enjoyment among students. Specifically, when applied to vocabulary learning, gamification encourages teenagers to interact with the new words in dynamic ways, which promotes retention and understanding in playful settings. As indicated by Zhang and Hasim (2023) after contrasting different studies from all over the world in which this strategy was implemented, when gamification in EFL learning was used, vocabulary acquisition was the most common learning outcome. These findings suggest that the use of gamification is a highly effective strategy for those young learners who want to enhance their vocabulary knowledge.

### *1.2.1. Gamification Elements*

Since gamification involves the integration of gaming features into non-game tasks, several components that are typically found in video games are particularly attractive to teenagers and can be effectively used to support vocabulary learning. These elements provide a refreshing, immersive experience in which learners feel as if they are playing a game, but they are learning and practicing new vocabulary. The following gamification elements enhance the teaching and learning process of EFL vocabulary for young learners (Flores, 2015).

- **Points:** Numeric accumulation that players earn by completing different tasks or missions. These points display the progress made by users and the amounts of successful activities done in the game. It could also be the indicator of how well young students perform at different stages of the game.
- **Badges:** Representation of accomplishments achieved by the individual and they are visually displayed for other users. Badges are mainly given to players to recognize and show user's abilities and achievements after completing a difficult activity or after getting a long streak. For younger learners, earning badges provides them with a sense of accomplishment that keeps them motivated towards learning.
- **Leaderboards:** Boards on which players are ranked based on their success. These leaderboards allow players to compare their performance to someone else and therefore encourage competitiveness among users. In some cases, the people who are on top of the board would receive a reward for their excellent performance. Regarding vocabulary learning, the results of the leaderboards could mean the number of words that learners have mastered.
- **Progress bars:** They show the status of the player regarding the progress he has accomplished so far. These progress bars not only show how far they have progressed, but they also help users to identify how much they need to complete an activity or a mission. These bars are essential for young learners to keep track of their vocabulary learning journey.

- **Performance graph:** It is mainly displayed to players after completing a task and it shows the performance that the player had along the time. This graph might be useful for players who are looking forward to knowing their weak spots so they can focus on those areas, for example vocabulary categories or word usage. In addition to this, performance graphs show trends and game patterns of the users.
- **Quests:** Tasks, missions or activities that players must accomplish to progress in the game. Quests have specific objectives that indicate what they ought to do next, there are often rewards after completing the quests, for instance, they make vocabulary learning more structured and goal-oriented, which results in better outcomes for students.
- **Levels:** Sections or parts of the game that represent different stages, topics or even difficulties ranging from easy to hard. Levels can also be used for a better structure of the game and for a better sequence of events. In vocabulary learning, levels represent different vocabulary categories, so learners receive more challenging vocabulary in every level.
- **Avatars:** Visual representation of the players or their in-game characters. Avatars allow users to customize their aspect by changing clothing, haircut or even facial structures so they can differentiate from other players. This customization makes vocabulary learning more engaging and interactive for teenagers as they reflect themselves on their characters.
- **Social elements:** Games often provide users with the opportunity to interact with other people through their games. Some of these elements include interaction, cooperation and competitiveness among players. It can also promote socializing since they meet new friends and explore communities with things they have in common.
- **Reward system:** It is a system designed to encourage players to fulfill the quests. Rewards can range from receiving points, badges, virtual items or any other thing that recognizes the effort made by users and their achievements.

### 1.3. Gamification taxonomy

Although the mentioned elements are the main components of gamification, there are some authors that indicate that gamification is divided into more categories, for instance, Toda et al. (2019a) stated that gamification can also be branched into five dimensions by using their taxonomy that was inspired by previous-made gamification taxonomies.

The taxonomy proposed by Toda et al. (2019a) is divided into five dimensions that arrange some pre-defined gamification elements. The elements included within this taxonomy were examined by more than five people with great expertise to organize each element in the corresponding dimension. When experts analyzed the elements of gamification, it was evident that those elements were part of extrinsic motivation, this meant that the elements were present when students would perform different actions with the environment. With this brief introduction of the gamification taxonomy, an overview of the taxonomy explained by Toda et al. (2019a) and its relationship with vocabulary learning for young learners can be seen in the following figure.

**Figure 1**

*Gamification Taxonomy*



*Note:* The picture shows the gamification taxonomy and its elements (Toda et al., 2019a).

#### 1.3.1. Gamification dimension: Performance

Regarding performance, there are some components such as progression, level, point, statistics and acknowledgement that play an important role in gamification. As Toda et al. (2019a) explain, this dimension allows learners to have a sense of progress or enhancement during their journey of gamified learning. These elements are used to give feedback to pupils and therefore, let them know that their efforts in vocabulary learning are being recognized and rewarded.

Even though some of the elements of this dimension were already explored as they are main components of gamification, acknowledgement and stats are components that have not been explained yet. Acknowledgement refers to all the items or rewards that players could receive as an extrinsic motivation (Toda et al., 2019a). Things such as badges, medals, trophies or achievements could be given to young learners to recognize their success after completing vocabulary tasks. On the other hand, stats or statistics are the information given to players on their screen. It can be seen at any moment, and it works as an indicator of the number of vocabulary words mastered, time spent on vocabulary exercises, and performance grades (Sany Morales, 2022). It can also be presented with performance graphs to provide visual benchmarks for players.

If there is not room for this dimension, students might feel stuck and disoriented since they would not receive further information based on their actions. This means that they would not be able to know what their strengths and weaknesses are, and therefore, they would not be able to work on them. Furthermore, without a clear sense of how much vocabulary they have learned or what tasks are still pending, students may become demotivated or confused, making it harder to stay engaged with the learning process.

### ***1.3.2. Gamification dimension: Ecological***

The ecological dimension refers to the settings or the context in which gamification is implemented. Without this dimension, the whole experience for user would not be interesting enough. Things like probability, imposed decision, economy, rarity and time pressure add excitement to the game (Toda et al., 2019a). These features play a crucial role in keeping students motivated, especially when learning vocabulary since they create dynamic and interactive experiences that are different from traditional learning approaches.

Probability is the factor in which luck and fortune are protagonists. It adds uncertainty to players since the chances of knowing the outcome of something are very low. Henno et al. (2018) states that randomness is a fundamental ingredient for videogames as it provides a refreshing sensation to users because the game will never be in essence the same. The number of points after achieving something, the probability of acquiring a specific item or facing different obstacles, are elements that rely exclusively on probability. In the context of vocabulary learning, this could mean varying rewards for correct answers or introducing random vocabulary challenges that keep students with exciting drills. This unpredictability can make the learning of new words more engaging for teenagers since they are always receiving unique content.

Imposed decisions or mandatory choices provide limited alternatives to users to create unique paths. Players have to decide between two or more decisions that will have an impact on the story and on further events, they are obligated to make a decision, otherwise, the game would not continue. For instance, in vocabulary learning, students might have to choose between different word categories or types of challenges, these decisions create a sense of autonomy and importance

in their learning journey. According to Tong et al. (2022), effective decision-making strategies can enhance the experience of users as they give more importance to their participation. Therefore, this element can be particularly effective in education to guide students towards learning objectives or tasks.

Regarding economy, games often have their own currency that can be exchanged to obtain items or in-game advantages. When applied to vocabulary learning, a system where students earn points or coins for mastering new words could encourage active participation by young learners. Hogan-Hennessy et al. (2022) conducted research in which the market of some multiplayer games was analyzed, they concluded that virtual economy encouraged players to participate actively to get items they cannot produce themselves. Therefore, vocabulary games could incorporate these economic elements to motivate students to work harder and earn exclusive rewards based on their language progress.

Another important feature that gives players a refreshing experience is time pressure. Game developers often limit the amount of time that players can spend on certain activities or quests, it forces players to complete tasks with time efficiency so it is granted that they will not be using more time than needed. Time pressure can also be presented as deadlines for users to conclude (Toda et al., 2019b). This factor can add excitement to vocabulary acquisition tasks since it can help young learners stay on track while making vocabulary practice both fun and effective.

### ***1.3.3. Gamification dimension: Social***

The social dimension of gamification focuses on the interaction between learners. Users often exchange learning information with other players thanks to the game elements. Valantiejiene and Girdauskieniė (2021) implies that social interaction can promote motivation to learners as they interact with peers, indeed, if there is no social engagement, the impact of gamification would not be effective. For example, in vocabulary learning activities, interaction between learners is relevant since they can talk, learn and exchange new lexicon.

Competitiveness is vital for social interaction as it encourages individuals to improve their performance. It creates a scenario in which players must face each other and compete against other players to accomplish one goal in common, while they do this frequently, their interest on different tasks increases and therefore, their performance. For instance, Liu et al. (2022) conducted a research study in which the competitive factor was introduced in a vocabulary learning course that used gamification, it was concluded that the learning outcomes and motivation of students were better in the competitive classes than in the ones who were not competitive at all.

Despite competition, cooperation is also implemented when gamification is applied. Things like teamwork, co-op, groups or parties are included within cooperation. Users often join together to accomplish a common objective that requires integration by collaborating with each other. This provides the opportunity for learners to work together on a task and receive positive feedback from peers. Cooperation is mainly used in gamification to engage learners in group tasks, problem solving that requires extensive work and in-class interactions that requires analysis (Riar et al., 2022). In the context of vocabulary learning, students might collaborate to complete tasks that require the collective understanding of new concepts.

#### ***1.3.4. Gamification dimension: Personal***

In this dimension, everything is related to the learner and his experience throughout the gamification process. Personal dimension is used to provide users with a refreshing and personalized experience in which they have meaningful learning experiences. In vocabulary learning, for instance, meaningful and likeable content can be chosen for young learners to get attracted. According to Toda et al. (2019a), some of the things that can shape the insights of learners are sensation, objective, puzzle, freshness and renovation. If there is not a personal connection within users, learners would not feel motivated, consequently, gamification would not be that effective since the first principle of gamification is engagement.

Since gamification needs to engage users, novelty is mandatory to achieve this goal. The incorporation of refreshing and unexpected elements such as challenges, special rewards or updates keep users interested and motivated. When something new is presented to users, they are more likely to be engaged and invest some time to deal with changes. Peng et al. (2021) affirms that users have to recognize when novelty is implemented so they can have a better adaptation to the new settings and perhaps change the approach they use to complete a task. For vocabulary learning, the incorporation of new challenges, unexpected rewards, or updated content can keep learners interested and motivated to their vocabulary learning process.

Objectives are an important part of gamification. Without clear goals for learners to achieve, students may get confused throughout the process. Santos et al. (2021) remarks the importance of well-defined and clear objectives as they are the way in which students can contribute to their learning process by successfully completing smaller tasks that eventually will result in the fulfillment of prior goals. Regarding the puzzle, it is present in all activities or tasks that require a cognitive process from students. Lack of puzzle can lead to students to get bored and therefore, their interest towards learning with gamification will decrease. As Ungau et al. (2023) reported in their research in which gamification puzzles were applied to preschool children, the findings suggested that puzzle tasks motivated students to improve their reading skills.

Apart from the culmination of activities or tasks, renovation is also implemented in gamification as a process of renewing initial objectives, strategies or motivations. This can be achieved through the repetition of quests to give learners a new opportunity to complete it if they were not able to succeed the first time, for example, students who did not completed a vocabulary quiz correctly can get the opportunity to complete it again. Things like difficulty, luckiness or simplified tasks are tools used by game developers to allow users a second chance. For instance, Lozano (2018) conducted a research study in which the repetition and renovation in videogames was analyzed, the findings suggest that repetitive mechanics in game scenarios can positively contribute to the experience of users since they would be able to master the quests.

### ***1.3.5. Gamification dimension: Fictional***

The fictional dimension is one of the most important aspects for gamification to be successful, especially when it is applied to vocabulary learning for young learners. It provides users with the sensation of being part of a story, it is often achieved through narrative and storytelling. If fiction is not part of gamification, the user experience would not be exciting due to the lack of immersion, context or meaning. Schmidt-Kraepelin et al. (2023) conducted a study in which narrative was studied towards gamification with the help of 325 people, they concluded that the presence of narrative congruence made it easier for users to immerse into the story. Therefore, fictional features help to create a captivating environment and allow users to have an emotional connection with gaming.

Within narrative, it refers to the storyline or plot involved in gamification, users often take protagonism in the story since they can make their own decisions that will lead to different situations. As stated by Palomino and Isotani (2024) in a research study which a Narrative Gamification Framework was designed and analyzed, an effective narrative-based gamification can enhance the engagement and motivation of students which can result in better outcomes for them. Furthermore, narrative features create an immersive context in which learners are part of a larger story, users can decide which way to go, which tasks to complete or even the character they will use; This creates a unique storyline that cannot be repeated twice. For vocabulary learning, this means that students can feel more connected to the tasks, seeing them as part of a larger adventure, which adds meaning to the words they are learning.

Storytelling elements are also of great importance for user immersion. Its main objective is to provide context for learners by stablishing the settings, goals and introducing the different characters of the plot for vocabulary learning. Consequently, it refers to the way in which the story is told, it can be achieved through an explicit narrator which would tell the story as if it were a fairy tale, or it can also be told in a first-person perspective in which the protagonist describes the events. Either way, the presence of storytelling elements gives the storyline a deeper meaning which can result more attractive for users. As an illustration, Kazazoğlu (2023) carried out a study in an

elementary school in which the impact of storytelling and gamification was assessed, outcomes demonstrated that storytelling could improve student involvement and engagement.

#### **1.4 Gamification as a strategy to improve vocabulary**

Multiple studies have been conducted regarding gamification and its effectiveness to improve vocabulary in EFL learners. As explained before, gamification consists of including game elements into non-game contexts. Within EFL learning, gamification is a common strategy implemented by teachers when it comes to teach new words, as it provides an engaging way for students to learn new vocabulary. Rofiah and Waluyo (2024) conducted a study in which the impact of gamification towards vocabulary learning was explored, the study indicated that after applying gamification in an English course for young learners in Thailand, students' motivation increased considerably, and their learning anxiety was reduced.

Another study conducted in Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, Ecuador, reached similar conclusions; as stated by Díaz Arévalo (2022) gamification can provide positive outcomes for EFL learners when they are supposed to learn new words, gamification give students the opportunity of interacting with their peers in a learning setting in which they are motivated and immersed. Furthermore, Calderón Rosero (2023) performed an inquiry in an Ecuadorian high school and which insights regarding gamification from teachers and students were collected; although the research was not focused on vocabulary itself but in reading skills, the study indicates that game elements implementation can make reading tasks more interesting for EFL learners as the quests can result engaging for them.

Conclusions drawn from other studies indicate that gamification is, indeed, useful for students when it comes to learning new words. In particular, the research work made by Arévalo Contreras (2024) demonstrates its effectiveness, to reach this conclusion, a pre-test and post-test was applied to second grade students at Master Zoila Online school, results from the test in which gamification was not implemented showed that 47% of the students had gotten low grades in vocabulary tasks, whereas in the second stage of the research in which gamification was used, a 47% of the pupils evidenced a complete understanding of the words, the rest of the students ended up with a partial or minimum understanding, nobody had a no understanding at all. Consequently, multiple research works have been conducted to determine whether gamification is effective to improve vocabulary or not. Evidence from different parts of the world such as Thailand but also numerous studies in Ecuadorian learning institutions came to the same conclusions, gamification motivates and engages students towards vocabulary learning since they experience a non-stressing learning scenario. Besides, the methodology implemented in these investigations showed that students had better outcomes in terms of vocabulary recognition after gamification was applied.



## 1.5 Gamification in English Language Learning Apps

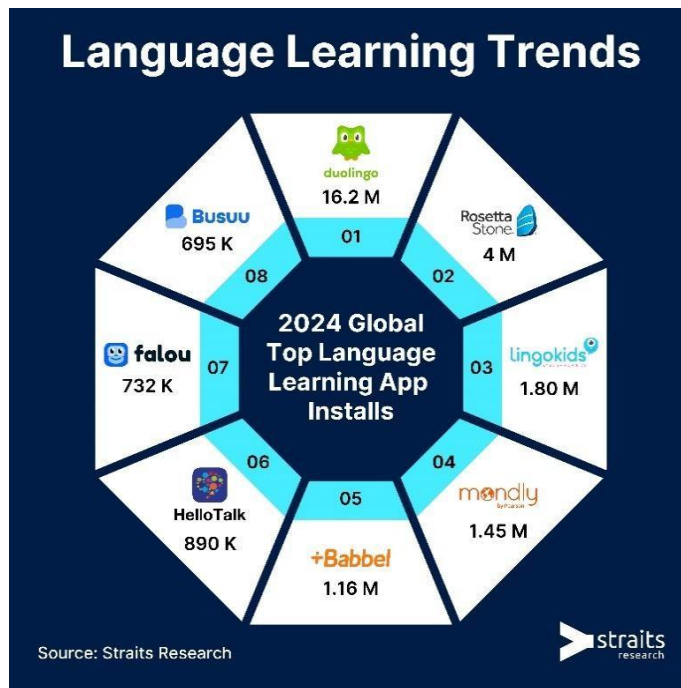
As mentioned before, gamification involves the use of game design elements into non-game scenarios to motivate and engage students, this strategy is used in language learning apps to improve the learning experience of users by including immersive and enjoyable learning tasks. The utilization of gamification strategy in language learning apps is constantly growing as it is widely applied in English learning platforms to boost learners' performance, for instance, Kannan and Meenakshi (2023) recognized that language learning apps are suitable for students and therefore, they are getting popular among young learners. Some of the most popular apps that use gamification strategy are briefly explained:

- **Elsa Speak:** It is an English learning app that impresses users with its user-friendly interface, attractive design, and the innovative and precise speech recognition. Through the use of gamification, its learning method boosts learners' joy and excitement. Elsa has some gamification hallmarks such as a point system, daily challenges, and a leaderboard. Furthermore, the app also provides immediate feedback regarding pronunciation which results in learners improving their language skills. (Elsa Speak, 2024).
- **Rosetta Stone:** It is a paid application that offers study-courses in more than 20 languages, just until April, Rosetta Stone had over 4 million downloads in 2024 (Straits Research, 2024). Its gamification features are similar to the ones which were mentioned before. Rosetta Stone results interactive, fun and dynamic for learners since they feel the necessity of accomplishing different lessons, learning new topics along with competing against learners from all over the world. (Rosetta Stone, 2024).
- **Ling App:** A free app that offers gamified courses in English and other languages. The app uses gamification elements such as points, badges, and leaderboards to motivate learners to complete lessons and practice regularly since they offer short lessons of up to two minutes per day. Ling App's gamification features are designed to make learning fun and engaging. For example, the app rewards users with points and badges for completing lessons and achieving milestones. Users can also compete with friends and other learners on the app's leaderboards. (Ling App, 2024).
- **Memrise:** Another language learning apps that uses gamification strategy, it was founded by three neuroscientists at Oxford university after researching how brain works when it comes to learning a new language. It now has over 70 million learners since its release in September 2010 and has built itself as one of the most popular language learning apps due to its innovative methodology that implements real-life situations (Memrise, 2024).

Although the previous mentioned language learning apps that use gamification strategy are well-known and widely used, another app called Duolingo stands out due to its remarkable user base. According to data taken from Straits Research (2024) in which the number of downloads of different language learning apps was analyzed from January to April 2024, Duolingo led the market with 16.2 million downloads. It is important to consider that Duolingo had four times the number of downloads in comparison to the second most downloaded app which was Rosetta Stone with only 4 million downloads. This immense difference highlighted the relevance of Duolingo app which has established itself as one of the most popular language learning platforms. Therefore, Duolingo app is selected for this research work due to its dominant position in the app market regarding language learning platforms, furthermore, the fact that gamification is used in this application makes this research particularly relevant for exploring the effectiveness of gamification on vocabulary learning.

**Figure 2**

*Downloads and installs of different language learning apps*



*Note:* The picture shows the number of downloads and installs of the most popular language learning apps from 2024, until April (Straits Research, 2024).

## **1.6. Duolingo app**

Duolingo is an online learning platform which was first released by Luis von Ahn and Severin Hacker in November 2011. According to Freeman et al (2023), this platform's main goal was to provide everyone the opportunity to have an integral and quality education by using the emerging technology at that time. Even though Duolingo initially emerged as a vocabulary acquisition language learning website in its early stages, eventually, it shifted to a mobile application that became popular among young learners. The introduction of this dedicated application for mobile devices made it more accessible, which resulted in more learners being able to use Duolingo platform, especially teenagers who often rely on mobile apps for their daily activities. Therefore, it revolutionized the landscape of language education tools and positioned Duolingo as the innovative educational app with the most downloads according to the last Duolingo language report at the end of 2023 (Blanco, 2023).

One of the reasons why this app is very popular is because it is accessible for students since the app is free (Mahfuddin and Uleng, 2023). Although there is a paid version of this platform in which users can pay a monthly subscription for receiving extra lessons per day, the free version has nothing to envy the paid one. Learners can still have access to a considerable number of lessons every day, and there is no need to pay extra money to complete the courses that are offered, unlike other platforms in which there is not a free version, and a subscription is required from the beginning. This accessible resource results in attractiveness for young learners who may not have the resources to get paid programs, but they can still benefit from the wide range of vocabulary lessons offered by Duolingo.

Since then, it has become more popular among language learners due to its learning environment. For young EFL learners, Duolingo's interactive and visually appealing interface is especially beneficial for vocabulary learning. Nowadays, Duolingo has evolve into a free app that offers courses in over 40 languages ranging from widely spoken languages such as English Spanish, and French, to less commonly taught languages like Swahili, Hawaiian or Navajo. Users can have access to this application with phones and tablets, or they can use the official website on their computers, which has the same structure and contents as the mobile version. Therefore, Duolingo app seems suitable for language learners of all ages and levels due to the flexibility and convenience that its cross-platform accessibility offers.

Additionally, something that makes Duolingo highlightable is the fact that it has gamification features that are designed to make learning fun and engaging, things like achievements, daily goals, crown levels and streaks are some of the most relevant gamification components that this app offers. These features are particularly effective for teenagers, as they help maintain motivation and increase retention of new vocabulary. The use of previous knowledge along with visual support in gamification activities result in engaging learning lessons for beginners (Gavarri, 2016). Duolingo focuses on teaching through inferring by using contextualized pictures. Nevertheless, if learners do

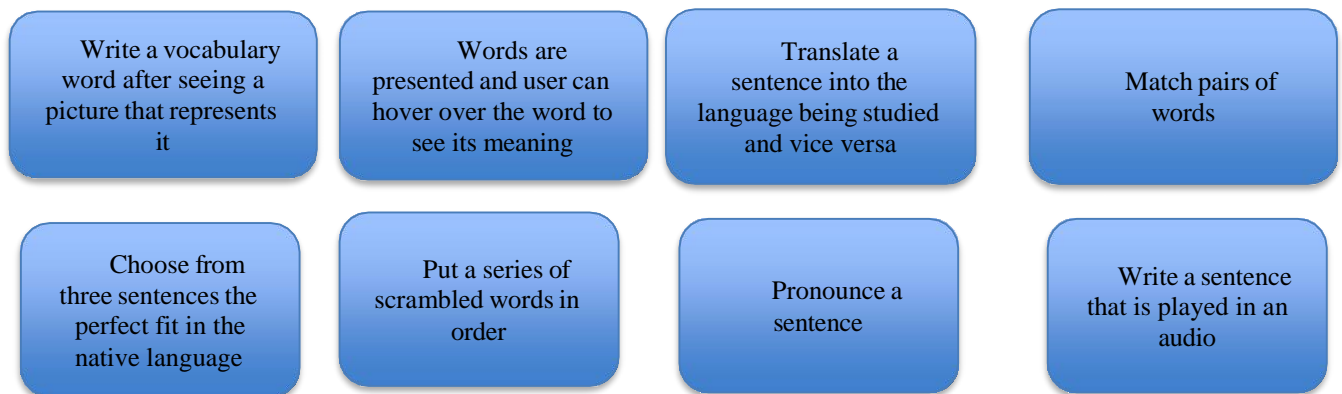
not have previous knowledge regarding a specific word or expression, they can always get to know it by selecting it and the application will provide the actual meaning of the unknown word in the target language. These elements are well received by users from all over the world, and they had led to Duolingo being rewarded for its design. For instance, in 2023 during the Apple Design Awards, Duolingo app managed to win one Design Award, these awards recognize the excellence of innovation and technical excellence in app designs. (Staff, 2023). However, this was not the first time that Duolingo earned a reward, Luis von Ahn, CEO of Duolingo won the Lemelson-MIT prize in 2018, this reward recognizes patented technological products that have had a great impact on modern society. (The Lemelson Foundation, 2018).

### ***1.6.1. Duolingo activities***

Since gamification is used in Duolingo, this application combines both learning and gaming at the same time. Freeman et al. (2023) state that using Duolingo platform feels more like playing a video game rather than the typical learning in which completing books was necessary. Narrow and precise lessons are used to achieve this principle, in fact, the learning contents are not only divided by sections, but they are also divided into smaller topics focused on real-world communication. Within these lessons, there are multiple activities and tasks to be completed when learners use Duolingo platform. Some of the dynamics regarding vocabulary learning are matching pairs of words, choosing from three items and translating words or phrases from the target language and vice versa. Furthermore, images and pictures to help learners depict the concepts are always present.

**Figure 3**

#### *Duolingo activities*



*Note:* The picture shows the most common Duolingo activities (Munday, 2016).

### *1.6.2. Advantages and disadvantages of Duolingo*

As any technological tool, Duolingo has both advantages and disadvantages. One of the most significant benefits of Duolingo is that it offers an extensive number of lessons for free, although there is the option of contributing financially to this project and receiving more perks and lessons, if users refuse to pay, they can still have access to the learning program with daily lessons, this is ideal for EFL learners who want to learn English without spending large amounts of money. To illustrate this point, Sakalauskié and Leonavičiūtié (2022) analyzed Duolingo's strategies that lead it to success, it was claimed that one of the key factors that was mentioned is that Duolingo provides a vast number of free lessons, unlike many other language apps that limit the amount of content they provide or the amount of time that you have to complete a lesson, because they are considered premium features that have to be paid for. Another advantage of Duolingo is that it uses gamification to make language learning fun and engaging. The app offers a variety of game-like activities in which users can compete with their peers, just the way a regular competitive videogame does, this competition along with the reward system make this learning experience attractive for learners to stay motivated and engaged, for instance, Irzawati and Unamo (2023) conducted an inquiry in which primary students' perceptions were assessed, the outcomes suggested that their perception towards Duolingo app was positive since they were engaged, motivated and found it easy to use.

Nonetheless, since there is no digital tool that has no disadvantages, one of the potential drawbacks of Duolingo is that it is primarily focused on reading and writing. Although the app does offer some speaking and listening exercises, it does not provide enough practice in these areas, therefore, people who are interested in producing the language itself, they might get some complications if they rely only on this app to learn a language; therefore, if Duolingo is going to be used to improve productive skills, complementary activities have to be done. Another disadvantage of Duolingo is that it overemphasizes vocabulary and does not provide enough grammar explanations. For instance, Solihah (2024) conducted a research study in which the students' perceptions were analyzed regarding Duolingo to improve vocabulary knowledge, although the findings suggested that it was a great resource, the lack of discussion forums and not enough focus on grammar are potential drawbacks, this can be problematic for young learners who want to achieve a deeper understanding of the language.

In conclusion, Duolingo is a popular language learning app that has been in the market for several years and keeps expanding every day. It offers an extensive number of lessons for free and uses gamification strategies to make language learning fun and engaging to its young users. Furthermore, based on some research made by their team and external inquirers, evidence implies that it can be effective for learning English, more specifically to improve vocabulary in reading contexts. However, it has some potential drawbacks that could result in not so positive outcomes if not used properly, therefore, extra materials and resources ought to be used by EFL learners to improve their English skills.

## 1.7 The Duolingo method

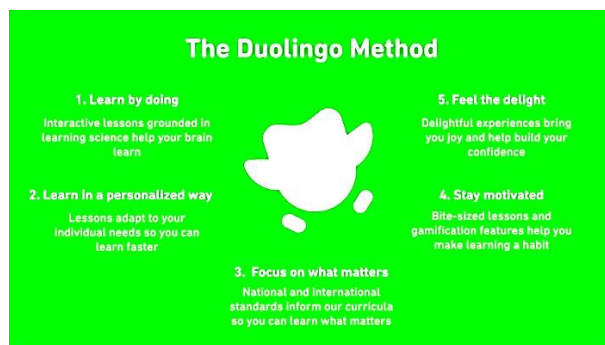
According to Freeman et al (2023), Duolingo Method for App-based Teaching and Learning, which is a set of five principles that guide how they create new learning content, design engaging lessons, and build courses that are as effective as they are fun. The Duolingo Method is grounded in decades of research on teaching and learning, and it combines the team’s experiences as teachers with the results of more than a decade studying how self-guided learners learn best.

The five principles of the Duolingo Method are as follows:

- **Learn by doing:** In every Duolingo lesson, learners work through interactive lessons that put them at the center of their own learning. The app leverages the natural ability of learners to pick up on patterns around them, even if they don’t realize it, with lessons that draw learners’ attention to important patterns, from verb conjugations to spelling rules, to cement those patterns in their brain.
- **Learn in a personalized way:** Personalized lessons help learners learn at their own pace and adapt to their strengths and weaknesses as they progress through their course. Duolingo’s AI model tracks what learners learn and adjusts the order and difficulty of the exercises they see so that they’re always seeing a balance of familiar and more challenging content.
- **Focus on what matters:** Duolingo’s courses teach the most important content and skills, so learners can start using the language right away.
- **Feel the delight:** Duolingo’s courses are designed to entertain and delight learners, so they stay engaged and motivated throughout their language learning journey.
- **Stay motivated:** Duolingo’s courses motivate learners to reach their goals by providing them with a sense of accomplishment and progress as they complete lessons and earn rewards.

**Figure 4**

*The Duolingo Method*



*Note:* The picture shows the five steps regarding the Duolingo method (Freeman et al, 2023).

## **1.8 Vocabulary learning**

Vocabulary learning constitutes an important role when it comes to language acquisition, particularly in the context of EFL education. A wide range of words is necessary for learners to improve the four English skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. To illustrate this, Ali et al. (2023) conducted a research study in which the impact of these four skills was assessed after vocabulary was developed, findings indicated that vocabulary knowledge is crucial for all four skills since it facilitates communication and comprehension in a foreign language. Nevertheless, learning new vocabulary can be a difficult task for EFL learners, especially if they live in a non-English speaking country in which they have no exposure to the target language in their daily basis. This lack of exposure often results in limited opportunities for students to practice new words in real-life situations.

In Ecuador, a country in which English is considered a foreign language, opportunities for real-world language practice are often limited. Due to this, English is mainly restricted to the classroom and students often deal with non-contextualized experiences, this methodology does not provide students with the necessary tools for a meaningful learning, particularly for young learners who are in constant cognitive development. To address this issue, educators and authors have promoted the use of different vocabulary learning strategies. According to a publication by Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja (2024), the coordinator of the masters' degree program of international and foreign languages pedagogy, the methodologies that are currently used do not engage nor motivate students, therefore, she proposes the implementation of new learning strategies such as cooperative learning and gamification as they might result more attractive for students. Another innovative strategy is the use of digital tools that provide young people with immersive and engaging experiences to practice new lexicon in a variety of written context, for instance, Holguín Chalén and León Rodríguez (2021) made a research in an Ecuadorian bilingual high school in which some questions were made to teachers regarding ICT, conclusions drawn that the implementation of technology is received as positive by both teachers and students as adaptations can be made depending on the needs and preferences of the students. Therefore, the use of these digital platforms along with innovative strategies such as gamification can provide students with the exposure to the language that they need and allow them to have a deeper understanding of new words.

### ***1.8.1 Duolingo as a gamification strategy to learn vocabulary***

Since a wide vocabulary is necessary to enhance English skills, and the use of new strategies to achieve this among young students is crucial, the utilization of Duolingo, an app that incorporates the gamification strategy along with contextualized vocabulary learning for students appears to be a viable option for those who are learning EFL. This premise is supported by multiple research works that were conducted to demonstrate Duolingo's effectiveness towards vocabulary learning. For instance, in an inquiry conducted by Anggreny and Astutik (2024) in which a pre-test and a post-test was applied after giving students some lessons using Duolingo app, the results clearly

showed an improvement since the average score raised from 75.71 to 88.33 when vocabulary knowledge was assessed, they concluded that this app is effective for students who are looking forward to learning new words. In another study the findings were similar, however, it was also determined that Duolingo is an effective tool for self-guided language learning, after the questionnaire was applied, students' answers showed that they their interest towards learning independently increased and raised their level of autonomy, which ended up in better outcomes for them (Saniya, 2023). This happens since Duolingo allows students to learn at their own pace and adapt to their strengths and weaknesses as they progress through their course, nevertheless, there are other factors that led Duolingo to its success.

The way Duolingo works to teach new vocabulary is what made it popular among young learners, first of all, it provides students with daily challenges that they have to complete in order to get a streak; by doing this, learners are encouraged to practice regularly every day, even though they would spend just a couple of minutes, they are discovering new words and concepts. For instance, an investigation was made by Devi (2022) which showed Duolingo's effectiveness among young learners with just a few minutes a day, students were supposed to deal with one lesson per day, which consisted of 10 to 15 exercises in total, after doing this, the post-test showed and improvement in terms of vocabulary by the children who participated in this inquiry Besides, the variety of activities that Duolingo offers results attractive for learners who are being taught through short and focused tasks that explore new vocabulary and reinforce previous lexicon. Nonetheless, the factor that is the most relevant for EFL young learners is gamification, the gamification strategy that Duolingo uses to teach new words to its students is based on the principles of interactive courses, personalized learning, extrinsic motivation, competitiveness and entertainment.

In every Duolingo lesson, learners work through interactive lessons that put them at the center of their own learning. The app leverages the natural ability of learners to pick up on patterns around them, even if they do not realize it, with lessons that are relevant and suitable for students' likes and needs, personalized lessons help learners learn at their own pace and adapt to their strengths and weaknesses as they progress through their course, for instance, the app has a mechanism that uses artificial intelligence to identify what learners learn and to adjust the of the exercises they see so students will always receive a balance doses of familiar content with refreshing and challenging material, therefore, even if the same student tries to repeat an activity, it will not be exactly the same (Maris, 2020).

To sum things up, having a solid vocabulary knowledge is of paramount importance for EFL learners who want to become fluent in the target language. However, learning new lexicon might result quite difficult for young learners who do not have enough exposure to the target language because they are not in a native English-speaking country, therefore, not enough contextualized words to use in their daily basis. This is what happens in Ecuador, a country in which English is barely spoken, nonetheless, multiple authors have suggested the implementation of alternative strategies to teach vocabulary in order to address this issue. Gamification, which means including



game-elements into non-game contexts is highly recommended by different authors, whose research works were explained before, they state that this strategy might be effective since it results attractive for young learners who are willing to learn new vocabulary, learners get relief from stress as they are learning while playing a game and having fun. Although there are multiple technological tools that use gamification strategies, the one that is more remarkable is Duolingo, the app that has proven itself to be a useful resource for students to learn new words. This has been proven with scientific research in which learners had better outcomes when this learning app was used to teach fresh lexicon.

## CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Research and type of research

This research was conducted using a mixed approach, which involves using two approaches. For instance, Joshi (2024) stated that the mixed research approach combines qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a deeper understanding of certain research problems. Furthermore, he affirms that using the approach provides researchers with more reliability on their findings since information can be contrasted and validated from different means. Therefore, the mixed approach was chosen for this research to address the research questions that were established by the researcher and to gather richer information on the subject matter.

The qualitative method focuses on subjective data collection in natural and real contexts. According to Pandey (2024), it explores multiple realities using reflexive and communicative techniques. Similarly, Leburic and Vladić-Mandarić (2024) describe qualitative research as a paradigm that studies phenomena through instruments such as content analysis and interviews, offering diverse perspectives to deepen understanding. On the other hand, the quantitative method is characterized by systematic data collection that is quantifiable. Kittur (2023) defines it as an investigative process involving structured tools like surveys and questionnaires, with statistical analysis to ensure accurate and meaningful conclusions.

Consequently, the mixed approach was employed to better understand students' perceptions of the vocabulary learning strategies used and to contrast these with teachers' actual implementations. This approach provided objective insights into the current vocabulary teaching practices at Santa Luisa de Marillac High School and the integration of gamification strategies in vocabulary lessons. Specifically, the qualitative method was applied during the interviews with English teachers, while the quantitative method was used to synthesize the data gathered from the surveys administered to tenth-grade students.

Additionally, this research adopted a descriptive research type. According to Miksza et al. (2023), descriptive research aims to depict phenomena as they exist, without manipulating variables. It relies entirely on observation and seeks to identify relationships among variables to draw further conclusions. In this study, descriptive research was applied to observe, describe, and document the current use of gamification in vocabulary learning without altering any variables. The main goal was to analyze the vocabulary learning strategies implemented and explore both students' and teachers' perceptions of gamification strategies, such as Duolingo. To achieve this, the deductive and inductive methods were essential throughout the investigation, these methods are described below.

## **2.2. Deductive and inductive methods**

This research employed both deductive and inductive methods to achieve its objectives, making it essential to understand the nature of these approaches. The deductive method, as defined by Thomas (2021), is a systematic process that uses logic to draw conclusions from general principles. It begins with established theories and proceeds to analyze specific information through observations or experiments. In this study, the deductive method was applied during the development of the theoretical framework, where foundational concepts and principles of gamification and vocabulary learning were explored to establish a basis for the research. This process moved from general theories to specific applications in the context of vocabulary learning through gamification.

In contrast, the inductive method is based on the idea of deriving general principles from specific observations. It focuses on gathering data and identifying patterns to elaborate and formulate theory; to achieve this, survey data analysis is done by researchers to identify correlations within the variables (Piloto, 2024). This method was utilized in this research during data analysis. For instance, the different responses from teachers and students were examined to determine patterns and similarities and then draw conclusions regarding the utilization of gamification strategies to learn vocabulary within tenth grade classes. As a result, the analysis and discussion section of this research progressed from specific observations to broader generalizations and insights.

## **2.3. Techniques and research instruments**

The implementation of research instruments and techniques is essential for the development of investigations. These tools play a crucial role in data collection, processing, and organization, ensuring the validity and reliability of the information gathered. Research instruments enable researchers to collect data aligned with their objectives and address the established research questions or hypotheses (Sukmawati, 2023).

The techniques and instruments employed in this research included surveys and interviews. According to Prasad et al. (2024), a survey is a systematic research instrument designed to collect structured information through carefully designed closed-ended questions, ensuring reliable and accurate data for subsequent analysis. In this study, a six-question survey was administered to 33 tenth-grade students from Santa Luisa de Marillac High School. The survey aimed to collect quantitative data on students' experiences and perceptions of vocabulary learning strategies and the use of gamification in their lessons.

Additionally, interviews were integral to this research. As noted by Georgescu and Anastasiu (2022), interviews are qualitative research instruments that facilitate the exploration of specific research problems through direct dialogue between the researcher and the interviewee. This approach allows a deeper understanding of personal insights and experiences. According to this, an interview containing six open-ended questions was conducted with two English teachers from

the same institution to gather qualitative data. The interview responses provided valuable insights into the teachers' experiences, perspectives on vocabulary teaching strategies, and their implementation of gamification techniques, offering a basis for contrasting and enriching the findings.

#### **2.4. Research questions**

- What are the current strategies used when teaching new vocabulary to tenth grade students at Santa Luisa de Marillac High School in Atuntaqui?
- What are the students' perceptions towards using Duolingo as a gamification strategy to learn vocabulary

#### **2.5. Participants**

This research was conducted at Santa Luisa de Marillac High School, located in Atuntaqui, Ecuador, which has an approximate student population of over 600. For this study, the target population included 33 students from two tenth-grade classes, specifically classes "A" and "B.". Given the manageable size of the population, a non-probabilistic sampling method was employed. As Xu and Nandram (2024) explain, non-probability sampling is a practical approach that allows researchers to efficiently gather information from available participants, saving both time and resources. In addition to the student survey, an interview was applied to two English teachers from the same institution. The purpose of these interviews was to gain insights into the current vocabulary learning strategies that are being implemented and to explore their experiences with the application of gamification techniques in their teaching practices.

#### **2.6. Investigation procedure**

The research process began with the collection of theoretical foundations on gamification and vocabulary learning from reliable sources. Following this, research instruments were meticulously designed to gather both qualitative and quantitative data related to the variables. These instruments were subsequently reviewed and approved by two professors from the English Major at Universidad Técnica del Norte. The survey was then administered on paper to tenth-grade students in their native language to ensure clarity and minimize inaccuracies in the responses. Additionally, oral interviews were conducted with the English teachers at Santa Luisa de Marillac High School. Once the data was collected, it was analyzed using SPSS software, which facilitated the interpretation of results and the creation of bar graphs and pie charts to visually represent the findings.

## CHAPTER III: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of two research instruments: a survey and an interview which were used to determine which strategies are used in teaching vocabulary and to explore the influence of these strategies on students' learning experiences. First, the interview was conducted with two teachers and consisted of six open-ended questions. The purpose of the interview was to gain deeper insights into the teachers' perspectives on the strategies they use when teaching vocabulary to tenth-grade students. The responses from the interview are analyzed in this section to understand how these educators approach vocabulary instruction and their experiences with it. Additionally, a survey that consisted of six question was distributed to 38 tenth-grade students from classes A and B at Santa Luisa de Marillac. The data collected from the survey are presented using pie charts and bar graphs for better visual understanding.

### 3.1. Results from teachers' interviews

#### Question 1: How do you usually teach vocabulary to your students?

**Teacher A:** I usually teach vocabulary by using flashcards and videos; when it comes to videos, I use the ones that repeat the words or expressions multiple times, I also use songs and rhymes with my younger students since they enjoy it.

**Teacher B:** I use slides and presentations to teach vocabulary about things like objects, skills, places, among others. Those are the things that I use the most.

#### Analysis

The answers from both teachers regarding vocabulary teaching reveal different strategies that are used for this matter. It is evident that both educators utilize ICTs in one way or another to teach new lexicon. Teacher A uses engaging and repetitive strategies by implementing audiovisual aids such as pictures and videos to introduce new vocabulary to her students. She mentioned that these resources work better with the younger students as they are more interactive for them. To support this, Carstens et al. (2021) stated that students tend to feel more comfortable if technological features are used. Teacher B, on the other hand, stated that she relies exclusively on slides and presentations when new words are introduced to her pupils. Her approach is more structured, as she organizes vocabulary into specific categories, which might result in a more organized content presentation. Although this strategy may lack interactive and playful elements, it could be particularly suitable for students who require a more formal and focused approach to learning vocabulary. The use of visual aids such as slides has already proven its success in facilitating understanding and retention of vocabulary among teenagers, the teaching strategies implemented by educators at Genius School were assessed, findings suggested that visual aids and slides were the most effective presentation techniques for vocabulary. (Sotlikova, 2023).

**Question 2: What are the main challenges that your students face when learning new words?**

**Teacher A:** I would say that the main challenge is the short retention time of the kids, they must learn in a short period of time otherwise they do not pay attention anymore. I would say their retention time is no higher than seven minutes. After those minutes, the lack of attention is evident, so the main difficulty would be it.

**Teacher B:** I think pronunciation and the lack of knowledge are the main problems. Especially because students sometimes study for the vocabulary tests, sometimes they do not, not all of them put the same effort, so the outcomes are different from one to another.

**Analysis**

For question number two, which is related to the difficulties that learners experience when they learn new words, the responses from the two teachers highlighted different perspectives. For teacher A, the biggest problem she is aware of is the fact that her pupils have a limited retention time. She explained that younger learners tend to get distracted quickly, making it difficult to introduce and reinforce a significant amount of vocabulary within their short attention span. As a result, engaging and dynamic activities are crucial to keep students focused and maximize their retention during vocabulary lessons. As Saad et al. (2024) concluded in a research paper in which the impact of engaging activities like games or interactive tasks was considered, evidence showed that these activities are of paramount to maintain focus among young learners, something that also enhances motivation and promotes self-regulation.

In contrast, Teacher B identified pronunciation and inconsistent effort as the main obstacles her students face when new words were introduced. She noticed that while some students prepare for vocabulary tests, others do not put in the same amount of effort, leading to differentiated learning outcomes. In conclusion, it is essential to implement strategies that promote consistent engagement and provide focused support to improve the understanding of new words. Furthermore, in a study conducted by Bao in which the students' difficulties in vocabulary learning were analyzed, it was demonstrated by the researcher that inconsistent learning efforts by students are the main factors that complicate vocabulary learning (Bao, 2023).

**Question 3: What is your understanding of gamification in the context of teaching English vocabulary?**

**Teacher A:** I do not have any knowledge related to gamification in the context of teaching English vocabulary. Could you please give me an explanation on what it is?

**Teacher B:** I think that English vocabulary is very important for language learning since it is useful to create sentences, provide context, it is definitely a very important aspect in English learning. However, I do not know what gamification is, would you explain it to me? Please.

**Analysis**

The responses to the question about the understanding that teachers had regarding gamification in the context of teaching English vocabulary revealed that both teachers are not familiarized with this concept. Teacher A openly acknowledged having no previous knowledge of gamification and requested an explanation to understand its application in teaching English lexicon. Similarly, Teacher B, while emphasizing the importance of vocabulary in language learning, also admitted unfamiliarity with gamification and asked for the definition. This lack of awareness in regards of gamification highlights a potential gap in professional development related to innovative teaching strategies like gamification. Despite their willingness to learn, the absence of prior exposure to this strategy suggests a limited or nonexistent implementation of it in their English lessons. Similarly, Zahra et al. (2024) conducted a research in which the challenges faced by EFL teachers when implementing gamification were analyzed. Insights highlighted that lack of training for the educators was one of the most common difficulties among them, which resulted in an inappropriate or non-existent application of gamification.

**Question 4: Have you implemented gamification in your English lessons to teach vocabulary? Yes/ No Why?**

**Teacher A:** Yes, I have implemented gamification, especially things related to competitions, dynamics by rows and the “Duck, duck, goose” game, in which a random student is chosen to complete an activity. The rewards have also been used in my classes, I either give them stickers or reduce the amount of homework for the winners of a task.

**Teacher B:** Yes, I regularly implement gamification. Nevertheless, at this moment it is quite difficult to apply gamification because of the electricity problem that is happening in the whole country. Maybe in three months, if electricity comes back to normal, I will use it again. But in the past, I used to use gamification by using apps such as ESL, Word Wall and Quizizz.

## **Analysis**

Question four refers to the utilization of the gamification strategy by the interviewed educators to teach vocabulary. Even though none of the teachers knew the meaning of gamification at first, after explaining it to them, they both agreed that they indeed have been using this strategy unconsciously, although in different ways and circumstances. Teacher A, for instance, claimed that she implements competitive elements and interactive games such as "Duck, Duck, Goose," a dynamic in which a randomly chosen student completes an activity. Additionally, she employed rewards like stickers and reduced homework as incentives for the winners. These strategies have their foundation in the key aspects of gamification that are explained in the gamification taxonomy proposed by Toda et al. (2019a), which includes aspects such as competition, a reward system, and engagement.

Furthermore, Teacher B claimed that she likes to implement gamification by employing apps such as ESL, Word Wall, and Quizizz. To corroborate this, a study showed that the implementation of gamification strategies had a positive impact on students' motivation and academic performance, suggesting that apps like ESL, Word Wall and Quizizz effectively enhance engagement within students (Huseinović, 2024). However, teacher B concluded by stating that due to the lack of electricity that the country is facing, she has not been able to use these apps as frequently as she would like to. To sum things up, both teachers use gamification in their English lessons, nevertheless, one of them focuses more on physical games and rewards, whereas the other teacher prefers the use of technological tools, which may offer an interactive learning scenario.

### **Question 5: If yes, how was the experience after using gamification with your students?**

**Teacher A:** When I used gamification, I saw them more enthusiastic. For example, when I took them outside to play learning games (although I have not done it so frequently), I realized that they wanted to repeat the activity, they felt excited and interested. So, it is a good experience, however, taking care of the discipline of my students is sometimes difficult.

**Teacher B:** It was a good experience, it is not difficult for them to get knowledge when gamification is implemented, they find it easy to learn. They enjoy and like it since it is not the traditional learning that they are used to.



## **Analysis**

Insights from both teachers were collected with question five regarding their experience after applying gamification within their students. Teacher A and B claimed that they have used gamification, however, the first interviewed teacher stated that her students really enjoyed the outside learning dynamics since they are willing to repeat the activities, yet she affirmed that group management gets complicated when these kind of activities are performed. On the other hand, teacher B did not state any disadvantages when this question was asked, she mentioned however that when she implements gamification, the learning outcomes are better since her students understand things effortlessly, she also claimed that her students enjoy gamification activities due to the fact that is something new that they have not used frequently. A study was conducted in 2024 where the impact of gamification regarding vocabulary learning was assessed, findings suggested that students were motivated to learn words after gamification was implemented in their English lessons (Rofiah & Waluyo, 2024). Consequently, gamification emerges as an innovative strategy in vocabulary learning since it fosters enthusiasm and encourages active participation of the pupils.

**Question 6:** What are the positive and negative aspects of using a gamification strategy like Duolingo to teach English vocabulary?

**Teacher A:** I have not used Duolingo in my English classes, however, the positive thing about those kind of games is that you can encourage union within your students, besides, the use of apps is something that they like as well, they feel captivated. And the negative thing would only be the discipline, it is quite difficult to keep them quiet and still after the activity started, they get too excited and noisy.

**Teacher B:** I think that Duolingo is not a good app for me as a teacher, because it only focuses on vocabulary and it does not cover things like grammatical structures to build sentences, that is the negative thing. The positive thing, on the other hand, is the fact that students can learn a lot of new words, it promotes creativity and expands their mind when gamification is applied, they feel more engaged and motivated.

## **Analysis**

Question six, which intended to retrieve teachers' thoughts about the usage of a gamification strategy like Duolingo for vocabulary teaching, elicited varying responses. For teacher A, although she has not used Duolingo in her English classes, she asserts that those kind of apps result attractive for her student as it promotes union, nonetheless, she insisted that using these kind of resources disturb the control of the group, as her students get agitated and noisy. Conversely, teacher B expresses disconformity with Duolingo app, she explains that this app is not that useful in her classes since there is no a section dedicated exclusively to grammar, something that she states, is

important to develop writing of sentences; regardless of this, she elicited that Duolingo might be useful for learning bunch of vocabulary and it promotes creativity, apart from the fact that students might feel more captivated.

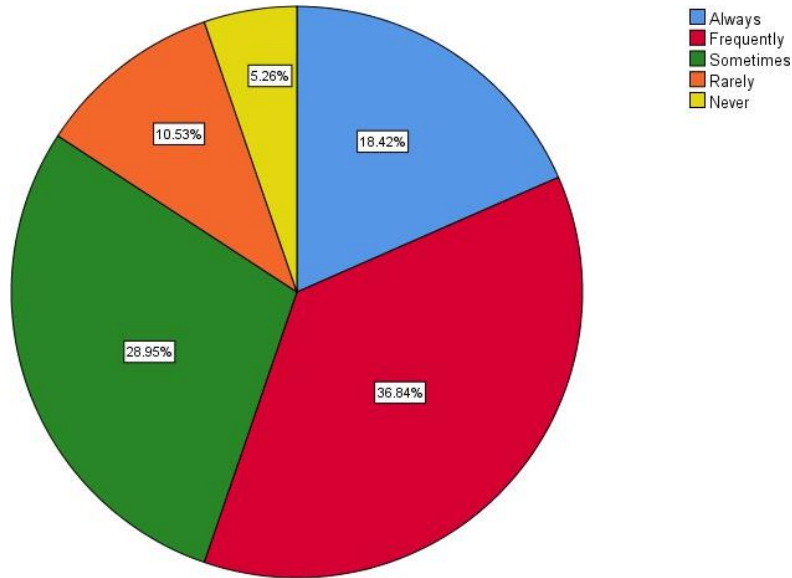
Answers collected from both teachers coincide with what was stated in previous chapters, on the one hand, Duolingo combines gamification strategies to make language learning fun and engaging, just as explained by the interviewed teachers and the inquiry conducted by Irzawati and Unamo (2023) where similar conclusions were reached. On the other hand, teacher B's claim that Duolingo does not focus on grammar was also presented as a disadvantage, for instance, the insights of a group of students were assessed in regard to Duolingo to enhance vocabulary, evidence showed that the lack of grammatical content was something that prevented learners from having a better understanding of EFL (Solihah, 2024).

### 3.2. Results from student surveys

**Question 1:** How often does your English teacher use engaging strategies to teach vocabulary?

**Figure 5**

*Students' perception of teachers' use of engaging vocabulary strategies.*



Source: The author

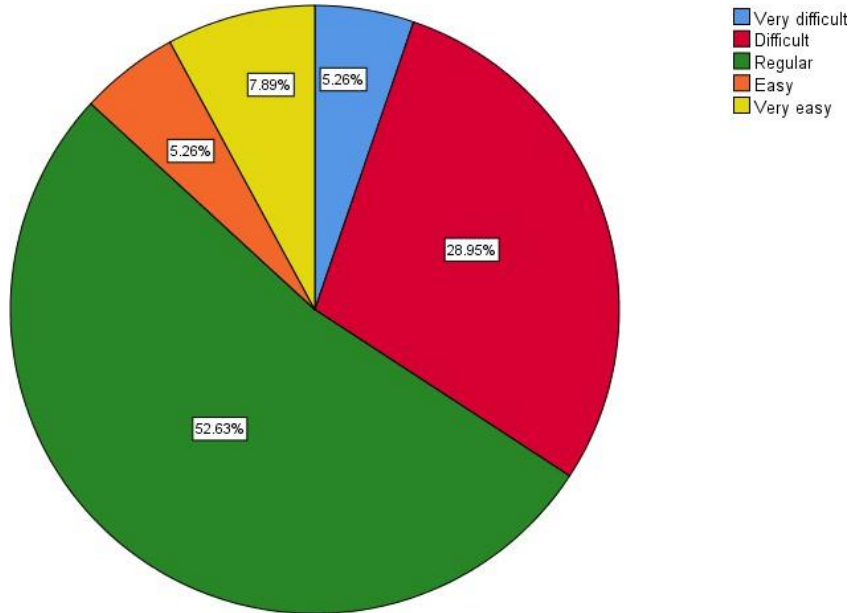
#### **Analysis**

The graph shows students' perceptions towards the frequency in which their English teacher implements engaging strategies to teach vocabulary. Responses reveal different perspectives from pupils, although a significant portion of the students acknowledged frequent and consistent use of interactive methodologies, others indicated a more occasional or even rare application. This suggests variability in how effectively these strategies engage students, as explained by Watts-Taffe et al. (2019), students' engagement is often shaped by teacher's methodology, in which the selection of appropriate activities and the use of accessible language play a crucial role in fostering young learners' interest. For instance, some students perceive their teacher's approach as consistently engaging, which highlights the teacher's effort to create an interactive learning setting. However, the presence of students who feel that those strategies are rarely or never used indicates a potential inconsistency in teaching practices that may affect some students' learning experiences. Therefore, it can be concluded that not all surveyed students find the current vocabulary teaching strategies to be sufficiently engaging or interactive.

**Question 2:** How difficult do you find learning new words in English?

**Figure 6**

*Students' difficulty in learning new words in English.*



Source: The author

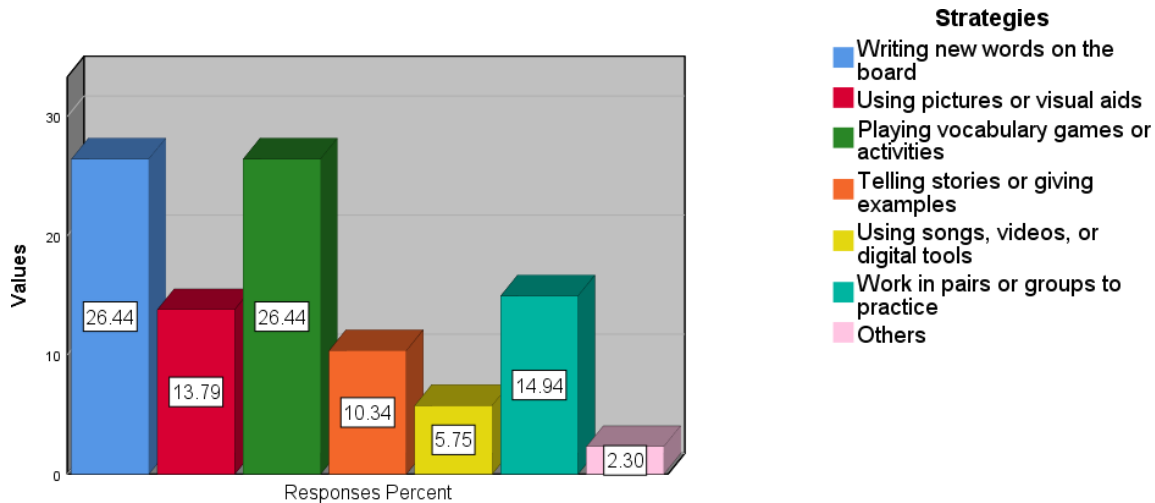
**Analysis**

Figure six illustrates students' perceptions of the level of difficulty they experience when they learn new words in English. Some students reported vocabulary acquisition as relatively manageable, with 5.26% indicating that it is easy, and a slightly bigger proportion rating it as very easy. This suggests that many students feel confident and comfortable with their ability to learn new vocabulary, possibly due to effective teaching strategies implemented by the teacher. However, an important portion of students found the process to be either regular or difficult, for instance, 52.63 % rated this task as regular, neither easy nor difficult; and a considerable 28.95 % rated the same task as something difficult. These findings suggest that although they do not have big challenges in terms of vocabulary learning, they still have some difficulties to handle. Furthermore, a very small group rated the task of learning new words as very difficult, which suggests the need for additional support to improve their vocabulary learning. This aligns with findings by Siregar and Zainuddin (2023), who identified similar struggles among middle school students when learning English vocabulary. Their research pointed to factors such as lack of engagement and limited exposure to the target language as the main reasons for these difficulties. Therefore, the challenges faced by tenth-grade students at Santa Luisa de Marillac High School are not isolated but reflect broader trends observed in other educational contexts.

**Question 3:** Which of the following strategies does your teacher use in class to help you learn English vocabulary?

**Figure 7**

*Students' perception towards the vocabulary strategies implemented by the teacher.*



Source: The author

### Analysis

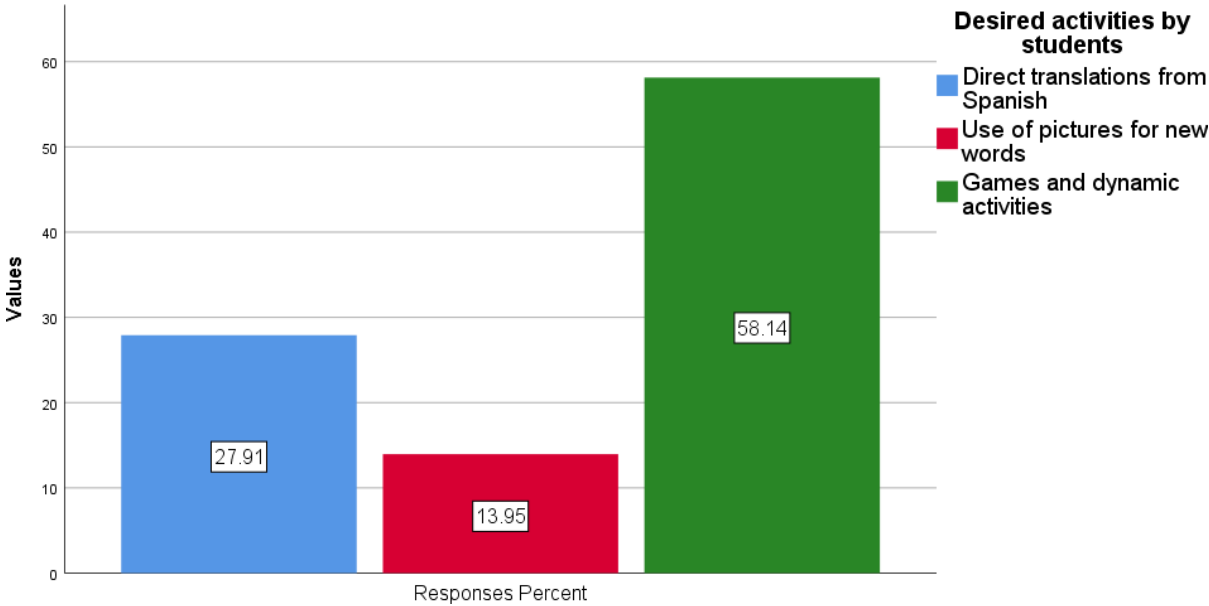
The pie chart illustrates students' perceptions of the vocabulary teaching strategies most used by their teacher. According to the data, over half of the respondents identified two main strategies: writing new words on the board and incorporating vocabulary games or activities. These two strategies have been demonstrated to be effective for vocabulary learning: for instance, Altalhab (2018) indicated that written repetition strategies such as writing words down were effective for vocabulary short-term retention. Furthermore, vocabulary games are also effective strategies as conveyed by Díaz Arevalo (2022), as they provide pupils with interactive opportunities in an engaging learning setting. Both strategies were the most frequently employed, highlighting their importance in the teacher's approach to teaching vocabulary. In addition, working in pairs or groups and using pictures or visual aids were also noted as moderate strategies by a significant portion of students despite their benefits, to illustrate and as asserted by Soper et al. (2022) in their investigation regarding students' vocabulary understanding, results implied that collaborative learning enhances vocabulary acquisition, besides, the use of visual aids also showed an improvement in retention among students.

However, the use of storytelling or providing examples was less relevant, with only 10.34% of students recognizing it as a regular method regardless of their advantages. As an illustration, García-Cañarte and Ocaña (2024) investigated the effectiveness of storytelling for vocabulary learning, the study underscored that the use of stories plays a crucial role since it enhances students' engagement and motivation. On the other hand, strategies like songs, videos, and digital tools are effective for vocabulary learning as demonstrated by Fathoni et al. (2024), in their research, the group in which multimedia was applied showed better results regarding vocabulary knowledge than the control group; nevertheless, this option was selected by only a small percentage of the respondents. Interestingly, a few students mentioned other strategies which were related in a way to the other strategies that were listed on the question, however, these were not widely represented in the survey. This distribution of the replies indicates that although pupils receive the same lessons with the same educator, their insights on the implemented strategies are completely different.

**Question 4:** Which activity would you like your teacher to implement when teaching new vocabulary?

**Figure 8**

*Vocabulary learning strategies desired by students for the teacher to implement.*



Source: The author

## **Analysis**

Figure eight illustrates the activities that students would prefer their teacher to implement when learning new vocabulary. While it is important to understand students' preferences, connecting these to strategies based on evidence offers insights into effective teaching practices. For instance, using pictures to learn new words is widely regarded as an effective strategy in vocabulary acquisition. Research on visual learning conducted by Sumartini (2023) demonstrated that the use of pictures significantly enhanced the vocabulary of elementary students; their vocabulary knowledge improved after applying this method. However, despite its proven benefits, this activity was the least chosen by tenth-grade students at Santa Luisa de Marillac High School. With only 13.95% of them selecting it, evidence suggests that students may not fully recognize or appreciate the advantages of this strategy.

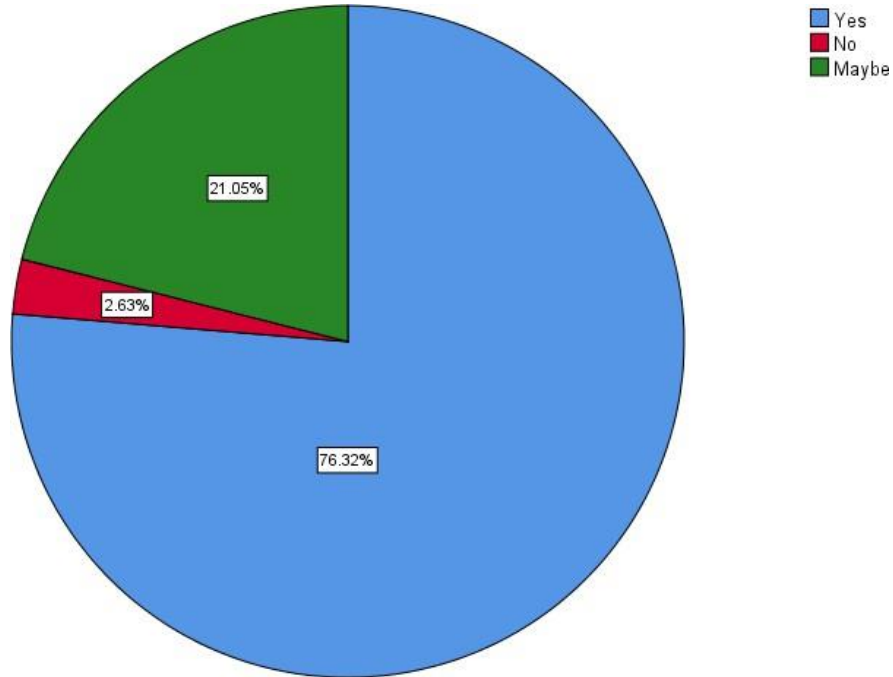
On the other hand, direct translation from Spanish emerged as the second most preferred activity with a total of 27.91%. This reflects a common tendency among EFL learners to rely on their first language when encountering new vocabulary, as translation offers a quick and familiar bridge to understanding. Similar findings were reported by Alsadoon (2021), whose research analyzed various vocabulary tools such as dictionaries, images, concordances, and translations; L1 translation was identified as the most frequently used. Consequently, this strategy is perceived by students as a more practical approach.

The most favored activity, however, was the implementation of games and dynamic activities, chosen by 58.14%, which represents more than half of the respondents. This preference aligns with numerous studies that have shown that games and interactive activities are particularly engaging and motivating for young learners. For instance, Díaz Arevalo (2022) claimed in that games related to vocabulary are attractive and engaging for young learners since active participation is encouraged with these kind of activities; furthermore, in a research conducted by Calderón Rosero (2023), a survey applied to sophomore students evidenced their preference for games and similar activities, the researcher claimed that this is due to the fact that pupils get enthusiastic when games are implemented in the classroom. This suggests that students are likely to respond positively to more interactive and enjoyable methods when learning new vocabulary.

**Question 5:** Do you think that games can help you to learn new words in English?

**Figure 9**

*Students' opinions on the effectiveness of games for learning vocabulary in English.*



Source: The author

### **Analysis**

Regarding figure nine, which illustrates students' responses to whether they think games can help them learn new words in English, the data reveals notable trends. A small minority of students, represented by only 2.63%, claimed that games are not useful for vocabulary learning. Additionally, a larger proportion, 21.05%, expressed uncertainty, indicating they were not sure whether games could positively impact vocabulary acquisition. However, the vast majority of respondents, represented by 76.32%, affirmed their belief that games can indeed enhance vocabulary learning. This data suggests that most students recognize the potential of games as an effective tool for vocabulary learning. The strong preference for games aligns with existing studies that highlight their ability to foster engagement, motivation, and active participation in the learning process; to illustrate, Nordin et al. (2024) concluded in their research about vocabulary games and their effectiveness that vocabulary games has some advantages such as improving vocabulary knowledge, encouraging team work and improving motivation, it was claimed that games provide an enjoyable experience for young learners.

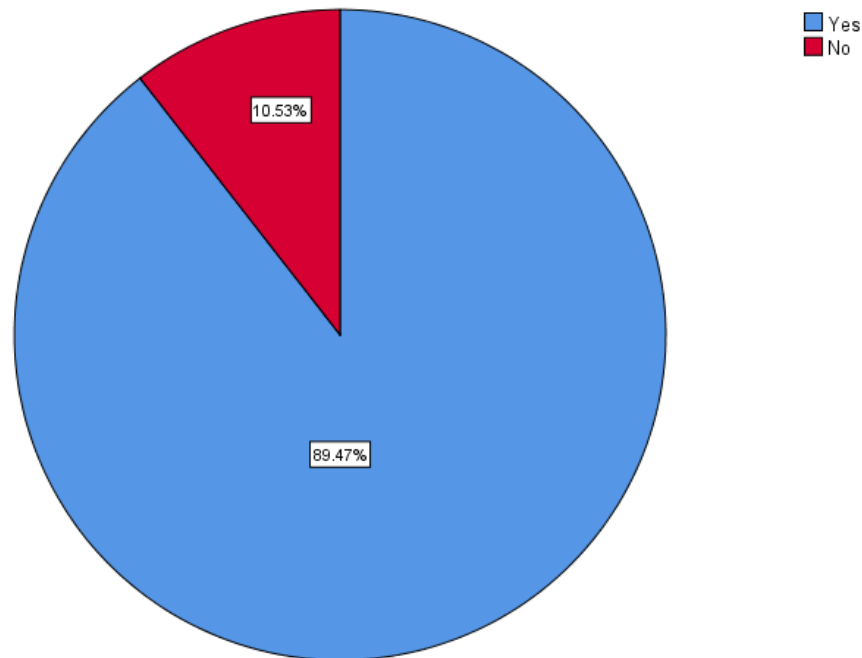


On the other hand, the proportion of students who are unsure could indicate a lack of exposure to well-structured vocabulary games or limited experience with their benefits in the classroom, just as stated by Buchner et al. (2022), explicit explanations are needed when gamification activities are implemented in the classroom since the lack of them could result in pupils with lack of confidence and most of all, without motivation to learn. Similarly, the small number of students who viewed games as unhelpful might reflect personal learning preferences or prior experiences where games were not effectively implemented. In conclusion, the findings suggest that students are generally willing to learn new vocabulary through the use of games in the classroom. This highlights the importance of incorporating well-designed and engaging vocabulary games to create a dynamic and enjoyable learning environment that fosters student enthusiasm and supports language acquisition.

**Question 6:** Would you be interested in learning new words by using a learning-gaming platform called Duolingo, even if you have used it before?

**Figure 10**

*Students' willingness to learn new words by using a learning-gaming platform like Duolingo.*



Source: The author

## **Analysis**

The responses to question six, regarding the willingness of students to learn new words by using a learning-gaming platform like Duolingo, reveal a strong preference of the surveyed pupils. For instance, data indicates that 89.47% of students showed some interest in using Duolingo, whereas only 10.53% of pupils reported that they are not interested in using Duolingo as a vocabulary learning platform. This evidence suggests that most students perceive Duolingo as an attractive and engaging platform, likely due to its well-known gamification features such as rewards, challenges, and interactive exercises. As Ramos et al. (2024) highlights, these gamified elements are effective in increasing motivation and engagement in language learning, in fact, an effective integration of these elements improves retention and academic performance overall. Furthermore, the positive response also reflects students' openness to innovative learning methods that go beyond traditional strategies.

Conversely, the small percentage of students who are not interested in using Duolingo may have had prior experiences with the platform that did not meet their expectations, or it may indicate a preference for other approaches to vocabulary learning. For instance, research suggests that some learners find gamified tools less effective when it comes to achieving a deeper understanding, as demonstrated by Solihah (2024) in her investigation about Duolingo in regards to vocabulary learning, there is not enough focus on grammatical structures or discussions with other users, these two aspects, as claimed by the researcher, are of paramount importance to achieve fluency in a language. In conclusion, findings demonstrate that students are highly receptive to integrate Duolingo into their vocabulary learning process, which indicates a broader willingness to incorporate modern, interactive tools in the classroom despite the possible drawbacks, therefore, results highlight the potential of similar platforms to complement traditional teaching methods and enhance student engagement in EFL lessons.

### 3.3. Discussion

The findings of this research highlight the current strategies implemented by teachers to teach vocabulary and students' perceptions of gamification strategies like Duolingo. These insights provide a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges that students face at Santa Luisa de Marillac High School when gamification is integrated into vocabulary learning among tenth grade learners.

The teachers that were interviewed stated that they use a variety of strategies to teach vocabulary, for instance, flashcards, videos, games, and presentations were mentioned among the two educators. These methods reflect an awareness of the teachers regarding the implementation of different activities, both traditional and interactive to fulfil students' needs. Nonetheless, students' responses reveal a different perspective. Although some students acknowledged the use of interactive strategies such as games and group work by the teacher, others perceived the teaching methods as more occasional or inconsistent. For instance, teachers emphasized the integration of audiovisual aids and interactive tools, however, these strategies were the least reported by the students in the survey.

This evidence suggests a potential gap between the strategies teachers claim to implement and how students perceive or experience them during the EFL lessons, this coincides with the systematic review of the research paper made by Nguyen (2022), which stated that EFL students hold positive attitudes towards some activities implemented by teachers, however, she claimed that there may be a gap between students' perception and the actually applied strategies by teachers, it was then concluded that a better alignment with the used activities is imperative to achieve effectiveness in EFL teaching.

On the other hand, interactive and dynamic methods such as vocabulary games emerged as one of the most frequently used and preferred strategies among pupils, this is in agreement with previous studies, such as the one conducted by Bin-Hady (2021) in which some vocabulary games for EFL learners were analyzed, he concluded that these games enhance lexicon retention since the lessons are more enjoyable, which reduces anxiety among learners, consequently, it was claimed that games are the preferred strategies by young EFL students. In addition, teachers highlighted the importance of gamification in their responses, claiming that it motivates students and promotes enthusiasm for learning. Nevertheless, even though teachers acknowledged the potential of gamification, their responses indicated a limited knowledge about it and the lack of implementation of gamified digital platforms like Duolingo. Conversely, students strongly expressed interest in using Duolingo, with 89.47% willing to incorporate this platform into their English learning process. This difference between the implementation of this platform and the willingness of the pupils suggests an opportunity to integrate students' preferences and teachers' practices by integrating gamification strategies and platforms with more frequency.

Moreover, the reliance on traditional approaches such as direct translation also reinforces the gap between learner preferences and pedagogical practices. Teachers emphasized the use of strategies like storytelling and contextual examples when teaching vocabulary, however, students reported a preference for translations from Spanish as a practical tool for understanding new lexicon. This reliance found at Santa Luisa de Marillac High School aligns with the fact that EFL learners often use their first language to understand new concepts (Alsadoon, 2021). Yet, evidence from other research suggests that excessive reliance on translation might affect long-term language retention and development, as concluded by Huang (2023) in his research article, learners that become overly dependent on translation might interfere with their mastery of the second language since full understanding becomes difficult at a certain point.

Another key finding is the strong interest among students in gamification strategies, particularly Duolingo. Gamification features such as rewards, challenges, and competition appear to be well-received by young learners. These results reinforce the evidence presented by Hanim and Wahyuningsih (2024), who stated that gamification engages and stimulates students' creativity in EFL learning. It is therefore positively received by young learners, who report having good experiences when gamification strategies are implemented. On the other hand, although teachers recognize the potential of gamification for motivation and engagement, they mentioned challenges such as maintaining discipline and using these methods within more structured teaching practices. This suggests the need for resources to support teachers in effectively implementing gamification strategies like Duolingo in a structured way.

To sum up, evidence shows that although current vocabulary teaching strategies implemented at Santa Luisa de Marillac high school include both interactive and traditional methodologies, there is a considerable gap between teachers' intended strategies and students' perceptions. The strong interest in gamification among young pupils emphasizes its capacity to complement existing methods by implementing gamification which might improve students' engagement. Thus, the creation of a pedagogical guide that incorporates gamification strategies along with Duolingo is imperative for teachers to strengthen their students' vocabulary knowledge effectively.

## CHAPTER IV: ACADEMIC PROPOSAL

### “Level up your classroom: A gamification guide to improve vocabulary”

#### 4.1. Rationale

In English language education, vocabulary learning plays a crucial role as it forms the foundation for the effective development of all language skills. However, traditional methods of teaching vocabulary often lack the engagement required to capture students’ attention, particularly in today’s digital age where learners are accustomed to interactive experiences. As stated by Ardi (2022) in his research, students frequently perceive vocabulary learning as a monotonous task; it was also highlighted the need for engaging teaching strategies to enhance students’ motivation towards learning vocabulary. This lack of engagement activities then leads to lack of motivation of learners. It is in this context that gamification emerges as an innovative solution, incorporating gaming elements into non-game settings, such as English vocabulary learning.

The benefits of gamification regarding vocabulary learning have been demonstrated by multiple researchers. For instance, Mitchell (2024) emphasizes that features such as competition, earning points, and other gamified strategies significantly enhance student engagement, retention, and overall learning outcomes. Additionally, evidence suggests that gamification fosters a sense of achievement and satisfaction among learners. Similarly, Kulkova and Nurieva (2024) found that integrating gamification strategies led to improved lexical competence among young learners, further reinforcing its effectiveness in vocabulary instruction. Consequently, the findings highlighted the potential of gamification to address lack of engagement and improve vocabulary instruction.

Based on this scientific evidence, the present academic proposal is designed around the principles of gamification to provide teachers with practical tools for creating more engaging and interactive vocabulary lessons. This guide aims to address the common issue of limited vocabulary among EFL learners, which often affects their progress in mastering more complex language content. Furthermore, the content and topics selected for this guide are carefully aligned with the three pedagogical modules developed by the Ministry of Education for tenth-grade students. With the integration of gamification strategies, including several inspired by Duolingo and analyzed within the theoretical framework, this proposal seeks to transform vocabulary learning into an engaging and interactive academic experience that motivates students and enhances their learning outcomes.

## **4.2. Theoretical foundations**

This academic guide was developed with careful consideration of key principles and strategies that are relevant to vocabulary learning in English as a Foreign Language teaching. The integration of gamification elements throughout the guide aligns with the pedagogical approaches that were explained in this research work. As noted by Mitchell (2024), gamification strategies significantly enhance student retention and improve vocabulary acquisition by making the learning process more dynamic and interactive. To achieve this, a variety of gamification strategies suitable for vocabulary activities were selected for the guide. Among these strategies are storytelling, competitiveness, and reward systems, which have been recognized for their efficacy in previous research. For instance, findings from Kulkova and Nurieva (2024) highlighted the positive impact of gamification on young learners' vocabulary outcomes.

Furthermore, this guide was specifically designed to incorporate gamification features that not only support vocabulary learning but also ensure the activities remain engaging and appealing to students. Strategies such as badges, progression levels, and narrative exercises were carefully chosen to increase students' motivation. According to Toda et al. (2019), these elements provide learners with a sense of achievement and progression, fostering intrinsic motivation and maintaining their interest in vocabulary learning.

Finally, this guide addresses the limitations of traditional vocabulary teaching methods, which are often perceived by young learners as monotonous and repetitive. As previously discussed, such approaches frequently fail to capture students' attention, resulting in lack of motivation and worse learning outcomes. This pedagogical guide offers a practical solution to these challenges by integrating gamification strategies inspired by Duolingo. Consequently, the proposed guide provides teachers with innovative strategies to make vocabulary learning more engaging.

## **4.3. Objectives**

### ***4.3.1. General Objective***

- Design a didactic guide that incorporates Duolingo's gamification strategies to enhance vocabulary.

### ***4.3.2. Specific Objectives***

- Choose the appropriate gamification strategies that align with the goals of vocabulary learning and student engagement.
- Create interactive and engaging vocabulary learning activities grounded in gamification principles inspired by Duolingo.

## **4.4. Development**

# LEVEL UP YOUR CLASSROOM

A GAMIFICATION GUIDE TO IMPROVE VOCABULARY



LOADING...



# → CONTENTS



## 1 Unit 1: Leisure activities and sports

1

### LESSONS

A: SPORTS

B: LEISURE ACTIVITIES

C: COMPETITIONS AND CHAMPIONSHIPS



## 2 Unit 2: Justice and society

2

### LESSONS

A: THE LANGUAGE OF JUSTICE

B: CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

C: SOLVING THE CASE



## 3 Unit 3: The future and beyond

3

### LESSONS

A: PREDICTING THE FUTURE

B: FUTURE INVENTIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES

C: THE WORLD IN 2050



# Unit 1

## Leisure activities and sports



## Strategy

Competitiveness

## Estimated time

45 minutes

## Objective

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to identify, define, and use vocabulary related to sports.



## Warm-up (5 minutes)

Start the lesson by dividing the class into two groups. Draw a division on the board so each team has its own space. Write "Sports" at the top of the board. Explain that they have 2 minutes to write as many words related to sports as they can. Students take turns writing one word at a time. At the end of the two minutes, count the words and check the spelling. Any misspelled words will be eliminated. The team with the most correctly spelled words wins.

## Presentation (10 minutes)

Use flashcards to introduce 7 vocabulary words related to sports. Provide a brief definition and context for each sport. Engage students through competition by dividing the class into the same groups and showing them the flashcard of a sport,

ask the question "What sport is this?". The team that raises their hand first will answer the question, if answered correctly, the team earns 1 point. Bonus points can be given to teams if a student provides a definition and/or an example in a sentence.



**NOTE:**  
A SET OF PRINTABLE  
FLASHCARDS IS AVAILABLE  
AT THE END OF THIS GUIDE  
IN "RESOURCES"

## Practice (10 minutes)

Divide the classroom into pairs and tell them to compete against each other by working individually.

a. Students will complete the blank spaces of the sentences by using the words related to sports provided in the blue chart.

**b.** Students will then check the answers with teacher's support and explanation, students will complete their and their partner's information, then they will count their correct and incorrect answers in the chart and will write who is the winner.



### Production (15 minutes)

Divide the classroom into groups of 4 students, tell them that they have will work individually in their notebooks first.

**a.** Tell students to write 6 sentences in total, 3 true sentences and 3 false sentences related to sports. Provide examples if necessary.

**b.** Make them discuss and share their sentences in their groups. Then students will identify the false sentences and correct them.

### Wrap-up (5 minutes)

Choose a student randomly to think of a sport and do mimics about it. The rest of the students will try to guess what sport is he/she acting out, annotate the number of guesses per student. Then, choose another student to do the mimics of a different sport and so on. The student that gets the most guesses is the winner.

### Answer key

#### Practice

**a. Complete these sentences with the sports from the box.**

1. basketball
2. volleyball
3. swimming
4. baseball
5. soccer
6. tennis
7. football



**Time to practice!**

**a. Complete these sentences with the sports from the box.**

soccer basketball swimming tennis baseball volleyball football



- 1 ..... is played with a ball and a hoop.
- 2 ..... is a game where players hit the ball over a net with their hands.
3. In....., players swim across the water as fast as possible.
- 4..... is a game played with a bat and a ball on a large field.
- 5 ..... is a popular sport played with a round ball and two goals.
- 6 ..... is played by hitting the ball over a net with a racket.
- 7 ..... is a contact sport where players wear helmets and run with the ball.

**b. Check the answers with your teacher, then compare the marks with your partner and complete the following chart.**

	✓	✗



Winner (s):

.....

**Let's produce!**

**a. Write three true and three false sentences about sports.**

**b. In groups, read your sentences. Correct the false sentences.**

**A:** *In swimming, people use a ball and a racket.*

**B:** *No, in swimming, people swim in the water quickly.*

**C:** *Soccer is an individual sport.*

**Strategy**

Earning points

**Estimated time**

45 minutes

**Objective**

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to recognize, recall, and correctly use at least 8 new vocabulary words related to leisure activities.

**Warm-up (5 minutes)**

Start the lesson by explaining that a competition is going to be held between the teacher and the students, then show students some slides of people engaging in the target leisure activities, students will try to guess the activities and they will earn 2 points for each correct guess, however, the teacher will receive 1 point for every wrong guess.

**Presentation (7 minutes)**

Use the provided slides to introduce the 8 target vocabulary words, each slide will contain the name of the leisure activity, a picture and the pronunciation for students to repeat. Give more details about each leisure activity, provide a brief description, use them in a sentence and make mimics or gestures (if applicable).

**Practice (15 minutes)**

- a.** Make students link the leisure activities with sentences describing the target activities. For example:  
"Surfing" ----- "I love riding waves"
- b.** Tell students to categorize the learnt activities by arranging them within outdoor or indoor activities.
- c.** Make students complete the text about "Exploring New Hobbies" by using the learnt leisure activities.
- d.** Check the answers with the students and tell them that they will receive 1 point for each correct answer from activity **a**, **b** and **c**. Then tell them to write the total amount of points in the assigned chart.

**NOTE:**

THE SLIDES FOR THIS LESSON CAN BE FOUND AT THE END OF THIS GUIDE IN "RESOURCES"

**Production (15 minutes)**

**a.** Divide students into small groups. Each group will create a fictional “perfect day” using at least 5 target vocabulary words. For example: “In the morning, we will go surfing. After that, we will do some gardening...” Each group will then share their plans, and the rest of the class will grade each group in a scale from 1 to 10.

**b.** Within the same groups, tell students to take turns to ask themselves questions about leisure activities such as: “Do you enjoy photography or gardening?”, “Which is harder: rock climbing or archery?”. Tell them that they will receive one point for each correct answer, at the end of activity, the student that gets the most points will be the winner.

**Wrap-up (3 minutes)**

Ask rapid fire questions to your students like:

- Which activity involves a camera?
- Which activity involves a horse?
- Which activity involves a bow?

Give students one point per each correct answer and quantify those points in the teacher vs students counter used at the beginning of the lesson.



**Answer key**

**Practice****a. Matching**

1. Surfing - h
2. Horseback riding - a
3. Photography - f
4. Skateboarding - c
5. Rock climbing - g
6. Gardening - e
7. Archery - d
8. Knitting - b

**b. Categorization**

**Outdoor Activities:** Surfing, Horseback riding, Skateboarding, Rock climbing, Gardening, Archery

**Indoor Activities:** Photography, Knitting

**c. Fill in the blanks**

Rock climbing, gardening, surfing, skateboarding, photography, knitting, horseback riding, archery.

**Time to practice!**

**a. Link the following leisure activities with the correct sentences.**

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. Surfing          | a. Riding a horse through the countryside is amazing. |
| 2. Horseback riding | b. I make sweaters with needles and colorful yarn.    |
| 3. Photography      | c. Learning new tricks on my skateboard is exciting.  |
| 4. Skateboarding    | d. Hitting the target with my bow and arrow is tough. |
| 5. Rock climbing    | e. Planting flowers and vegetables is relaxing.       |
| 6. Gardening        | f. I use my camera to capture beautiful landscapes.   |
| 7. Archery          | g. Reaching the top of the mountain requires focus.   |
| 8. Knitting         | h. I love riding waves on my board at the beach.      |

**b. Put the words from the previous activity into the correct category.**

**Outdoor Activities:** .....

**Indoor Activities:** .....

**c. Complete the text using the words in the box.**

horseback riding    knitting    skateboarding    archery    gardening  
 photography    rock climbing    surfing

*Exploring New Hobbies*

Many people enjoy outdoor activities like (1) \_\_\_\_\_, where they climb steep cliffs, or (2) \_\_\_\_\_, planting flowers and vegetables. Sports like (3) \_\_\_\_\_ and (4) \_\_\_\_\_ are perfect for those seeking adventure, while creative minds love (5) \_\_\_\_\_, capturing special moments, or (6) \_\_\_\_\_, crafting scarves and sweaters. Nature lovers often find peace in (7) \_\_\_\_\_, exploring trails on horseback, or precision in (8) \_\_\_\_\_, mastering their aim with a bow and arrow. Hobbies like these not only bring excitement but also help people develop new skills and a sense of accomplishment.

**d. Check the answers from activity a, b and c and register the number of points.**

*Each correct answer = 1 point*

**Earned Points:** .....



**Let's produce!**

**a. In your groups, you will write a plan for a perfect day including the leisure activities that you have learnt so far.**

Use these phrases to help you create your perfect day:

**Start the day:** *"In the morning, I will..."*

**Middle of the day:** *"Later, I plan to..."*

**End the day:** *"In the evening, I will..."*



**b. In the same groups, ask and answer questions to each other about the leisure activities you just have learnt.**

For each correct answer, you will be granted 1 point, make sure to count who earns the most points!

**Here are some sample questions you can use:**

- *"Do you enjoy ..... ?"*
- *"Which do you think is more fun, ..... or ..... ?"*
- *"Have you ever tried ..... ?"*
- *"Why do you like/dislike ..... ?"*

**Sample answers you can use:**

- *"I think .....is more exciting because ....."*
- *"I have never tried ....., but I would like to because ....."*
- *"..... is difficult for me because....."*

**Who earned more points?** .....



**Strategy**

Progression levels

**Estimated time**

45 minutes

**Objective**

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to accurately identify, understand, and use at least 6 target vocabulary words related to competitions and championships

**Warm-up (5 minutes)**

Start the lesson by projecting 6 images related to competitions, ask students to work in pairs to guess the words associated with each image. Then briefly show the correct answers and make them practice the pronunciation of those words.

Tell students that they will be leveling up as they complete quests.

**NOTE:**

THE SLIDES FOR THIS LESSON CAN BE FOUND AT THE END OF THIS GUIDE IN "RESOURCES"

**Presentation (10 minutes)**

Introduce 10 target vocabulary words by using the slides of the words: trophy, medal, tournament, prize, contestant, compete, win, participate, score, tied. Provide some examples of sentences in which those words are used.

**Practice (15 minutes)**

**a. Level 1 (Bronze)** Tell students that this is the first level, they will work in small groups to match 6 words to their definitions. A minimum of 5 correct matches will be required for students to move on to the next level, tell students to check their answers with their teacher to level up.

**b. Level 2 (Silver)** For this level, students will have to complete the blank spaces from some sentences by using the learnt vocabulary. A minimum of 5 correct matches will be required for students to move on to the next level, tell students to check their answers with their teacher to level up.

**c. Level 3 (Gold)** Students will have a sentence with two options of words to be chosen, students will have to choose the correct one. A perfect score will be required to conclude this level.

**Production (15 minutes)**

**Project: Championship Poster.** Divide students into small groups. Each group will have to design a fictional championship poster using at least 6 target vocabulary words. Instruct the students that the poster should include:

- The name of the competition
- The prizes
- Details like participant requirements, scores, or rules



Then, give each group some time for them to present their posters to the class.

**Wrap-up (3 minutes)**

Select 5 random words from the lesson and ask students to use them in short written sentences on the board.

Congratulate students for reaching the “Gold Level” and emphasize the progress they have made.

**Answer key****Practice****a. Matching**

1. Trophy - D
2. Medal - F
3. Tournament - C
4. Prize- A
5. Contestant - B
6. Compete - E

**b. Completing**

trophy, compete, tournament, contestant, prize, medal.

**c. Choosing**

trophy, compete, contestant, score, tied, prize, participate, tournament, medal, tied.

Time to practice!

LEVEL 1



a. Match the description in Column B with the words in Column A. Write the letter.

## Column A

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Trophy
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Medal
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Tournament
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Prize
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Contestant
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Compete

## Column B

- A.** A reward, often money or an item, given for winning a competition.
- B.** A person who takes part in a contest or competition.
- C.** A series of games or matches to determine a winner.
- D.** A large cup-shaped object given as an award for victory.
- E.** To take part in a contest and try to win.
- F.** A small, flat piece of metal awarded for achievement, usually worn around the neck.

Time to practice!

LEVEL 2



b. Complete the blank spaces of the following sentences by using the learnt vocabulary.

medal      compete      prize      trophy      tournament      contestant

1. The winner of the championship received a golden \_to celebrate their victory.
2. Sarah was excited to \_\_\_\_\_ in the annual spelling bee competition.
3. The school organized a basketball \_\_\_\_\_ to find the best team in the district.
4. Every \_\_\_\_\_ in the competition tried their best to answer the challenging questions.
5. The science fair awarded a special \_\_\_\_ to the project with the most innovative idea.
6. After winning the national soccer finals, the players proudly displayed their silver \_\_\_\_\_.

Time to practice!

LEVEL 3



**a. Circle the correct word.**

1. Amanda received a **trophy** / **medal** for winning first place in the tournament.
2. The students will **compete** / **score** against each other in the annual math challenge.
3. Jake was excited to participate as a **contestant** / **prize** in the talent show.
4. The football team was thrilled with their final **score** / **participate**, which secured them the victory.
5. The tennis championship ended with both players **tied** / **prize** at the final point.
6. Maria worked hard to win the grand **trophy** / **prize** for her outstanding project.
7. Everyone wanted to **participate** / **compete** in the relay race during sports day.
8. After months of preparation, the city hosted its annual basketball **tournament** / **medal** with great success.
9. The gold **trophy** / **medal** was awarded to the fastest runner in the competition.
10. Both teams were **tied** / **contestant** at the end of the game, leading to an exciting overtime round.

**Let's produce!**

**a. In your groups, design a fictional championship poster using at least 6 words that you learnt in this lesson. Make sure to include:**

*The name of the competition.*

*The prizes.*

*Details like participants requirements, scores, or rules.*





# Unit 2

Justice and society



## Strategy

Badge system

**Estimated time**

45 minutes

## Objective

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to identify and define at least 6 key terms related to the justice system and use them in context.



## Badge system

There will be three badges throughout this lesson: **Observer Badge**, **Analyst Badge**, and **Communicator Badge**. Tell students that they will receive one badge after successfully completing the tasks.

## Warm-up (4 minutes)

Start the lesson by projecting a short video in which some clips from different movies and tv shows containing the target vocabulary will be displayed. Tell students to imitate the phrases presented on the video while exaggerating the expressions and intonation. Mimics and representations can also be done by them.



### NOTE:

THE VIDEO FOR THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE FOUND AT THE END OF THIS GUIDE AT "RESOURCES"

## Presentation (8 minutes)

Display the second part of the video to present the vocabulary, a picture, an example and a brief meaning will be showed per each target word. Make sure to expand the information by giving some other examples and deeper explanations. Award the **Observer Badge** to students who participate actively.

## Practice (15 minutes)

- Tell students to match the words from the box to their correct pictures.
- Instruct students to complete the phrases with the correct word by choosing and writing one option.
- Tell students to read the sentences of this activity, tell them to write the missing letters to complete the words, some clues will be given in each sentence. After effectively completing this activity, award students the **Analyst Badge**.

**Production (15 minutes)**

**Roleplay:** Divide students into small groups and assign roles from the target vocabulary (judge, lawyer, etc.). Give students some time to prepare a 2-minute scene using at least 5 of the vocabulary words.



After concluding with the roleplays, assign students the **Communicator Badge**.

**Wrap-up (5 minutes)**

Write some questions on the board regarding the target vocabulary, one student will be chosen at a time to answer the question by playing the Goose, Goose, Duck game.

**Ex:**

**Who decides the verdict?** *Jury*

**What do you call someone accused of a crime?** *Defendant*

**Answer key****Practice****a. Matching**

1. Jury
2. Justice
3. Court
4. Judge
5. Lawyer
6. Evidence

**b. Choosing**

1. Jury
2. Lawyer
3. Trial
4. Evidence
5. Defendant
6. Verdict

**c. Completing**

1. lawyer
2. judge
3. defendant
4. evidence
5. verdict
6. jury
7. justice
8. trial



## Time to practice

a. Match the words from the box to with the pictures.

court

judge

evidence

lawyer

justice

jury



1 \_\_\_\_\_



2 \_\_\_\_\_



3 \_\_\_\_\_



4 \_\_\_\_\_



5 \_\_\_\_\_



6 \_\_\_\_\_

b. Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct word.

- 1 The *jury* / *lawyer* listened carefully to the evidence before making a decision.
2. The *defendant* / *lawyer* presented their case to defend the client in court.
3. During the *trial* / *verdict*, the judge asked the witness to share their testimony.
4. The police collected *evidence* / *justice* to prove the suspect's guilt.
5. The *judge* / *defendant* claimed they were innocent of all charges.
6. After reviewing all the facts, the jury reached a *trial* / *verdict* of guilty.



You are almost ready to receive your **Analyst Badge!** Make sure to complete the following activity correctly before asking your teacher for it.



## c. Read the short sentences and complete the missing words.

1. People often hire a l \_\_\_\_\_ to defend them.
2. The j \_\_\_\_\_ decided the sentence after the trial.
3. The d \_\_\_\_\_ stood quietly as the charges were read.
4. The police found crucial e \_\_\_\_\_ to solve the case.
5. A v \_\_\_\_\_ is the decision made by the jury.
6. The j \_\_\_\_\_ listened carefully to all the facts presented in court.
7. The concept of j \_\_\_\_\_ is based on fairness and equality.
8. A t \_\_\_\_\_ is held in court to determine someone's guilt or innocence.



## Let's produce!

a. Work in small groups and prepare a 2-minute roleplay scene in which you use the learnt vocabulary. Assign roles such as a judge, a lawyer, etc.

Here are some sample sentences you can use:

*Order in the court!*

*Please present the evidence*

*Your honor, I would like to call a witness to the stand.*

*I trust my lawyer to prove my innocence.*

*We have reached a unanimous verdict.*

*I saw the defendant at the scene of the crime.*



Congratulations! If you made it this far, you have granted yourself the **Communicator Badge!**

Keep it up!

## Strategies

Quests, Narrative

## Estimated time

45 minutes

## Objective

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to identify and define at least 6 target vocabulary words related to crime and punishment.



## Narrative

Explain students that they will act as detectives by solving a fictional case. As they complete different activities, they will gather “clues” (correct answers) to solve the mystery. The student who gets more points will be the detective who found out about the committed crime.

## Warm-up (5 minutes)

Start the lesson by writing multiple words on the board, some of them have to be related to crime terms, make sure to also include unrelated words.

Students will work on pairs to identify which words are related to crime; students will earn a “clue” per each correct answer.

**Crime related words:** Crime, Theft, Fraud, Criminal, Punishment, Arrest, Law, Sentence.

## Presentation (8 minutes)

Introduce the target vocabulary that was included in the warm-up. Make sure to include simple definitions along with examples and comprehension questions. Try to use visuals or roleplaying if applicable.

## Practice (15 minutes)

- a. Tell students that a crime has occurred within their classmates, tell students to work in pairs to gather “clues” by completing the sentences using the target vocabulary.
- b. Instruct students to keep earning “clues” by arranging the target vocabulary within two groups: *Types of Crimes* and *Legal terms*.

## Production (15 minutes)

**Solve the case:** Divide students into small groups (3-4 students), tell them to solve the mystery of the missing notebook in the class. You can use the following narrative text:

*“Something strange has happened. During the break, the class notebook that was on my desk disappeared. This notebook is very important, and it seems someone in this room knows what happened to it. A few clues were left behind, but we need to figure out who took it and why. Let’s uncover the truth and solve this mystery together.”*

Tell them that they have to create a short investigative report about the case in which they have to include: the suspect(s), what happened, provide evidence and reach a conclusion. Once the groups finish their writing, one student from each group will stand and read the report aloud. Encourage students to compare their conclusions or refute them.

After all the groups presented their reports, reveal that you (the teacher) were the one who took the notebook to review some important notes.

## Wrap-up (5 minutes)

Tell students some words from the target vocabulary that they learn in this lesson, they will have to define the words (mother tongue can be used if necessary) and come up with a sentence which must be said out loud.

### Answer key

## Practice

### a. Completing

1. crime
2. theft
3. criminal
4. fraud
5. law
6. arrest
7. sentence
8. punishment

### b. Sorting

#### Types of Crimes:

- Crime
- Theft
- Fraud

#### Legal Terms:

- Criminal
- Punishment
- Arrest
- Law
- Sentence

## Time to practice

**a. Fill in the blanks by using the words previously explained by your teacher.**

crime

theft

fraud

criminal

punishment

arrest

law

sentence

1. The police officer explained that stealing is a serious \_\_\_ that must be punished.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ occurs when someone takes something that doesn't belong to them.
3. The judge gave the \_\_\_\_\_ a five-year prison sentence for the robbery.
4. Committing \_\_\_\_\_ by lying on official documents can lead to severe consequences.
5. The new \_\_\_\_\_ prohibits smoking in public places.
6. After a long investigation, the police made an \_\_\_\_\_ late last night.
7. The judge announced the \_\_\_\_\_: six months of community service.
8. The teacher reminded the class that honesty is important and should be rewarded, unlike \_\_\_\_\_.

**b. Sort the words from the previous activity into the correct category.**


## Let's produce!

**a. In your groups, you will have to solve the mystery of the missing class notebook. Use the clues provided to write a short investigative report about the case.**

**Your report should include:**

- **Who:** Describe the suspect(s) and their behavior.
- **What:** Explain what happened (e.g., when and where the notebook disappeared).
- **Evidence:** Use the provided clues to support your reasoning.
- **Conclusion:** Identify who you think is responsible for the missing notebook and explain why

**Here are some sentence starters you can use:**

- The missing item is the notebook that was last seen on the teacher's desk.
- The main suspect is            because           .
- The evidence includes           .
- We believe the notebook was taken because           .





**Strategies**

Avatars, Storytelling

**Estimated time**

45 minutes

**Objective**

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to identify, define and use in context at least 6 target vocabulary words related to cases and justice.

**Warm-up (5 minutes)**

Begin the lesson by showing pictures of famous fictional detectives on the board, such as Sherlock Holmes or Nancy Drew. Ask students if they recognize these characters and what their roles might be. Tell them that today they will become detectives and create their own detective characters. Explain that their job is to solve a mystery while learning new words that real detectives use.

**Presentation (8 minutes)**

Introduce the target vocabulary: detective, investigation, clue, suspect, alibi, confession, guilty, innocent, case. Try to use visuals to support each word. Give a short definition and provide a sample sentence for each word. For example, say, "A detective is someone who solves mysteries or crimes.

**Practice (15 minutes)**

- a. Students will match the vocabulary words to their definitions. For example, "A piece of evidence or information that helps solve a crime" matches *clue*.
- b. Students will get scrambled sentences that use the vocabulary words, ask them to arrange the words into correct sentences.

**Production (15 minutes)**

Set the scene for the students with this scenario:

*An expensive painting has gone missing from the school art gallery during a student exhibition. The last time the painting was seen, it was on display near the entrance. Witnesses claim they saw someone acting suspiciously near the gallery, but no one is sure who took it. Some clues have been left behind, and your task is to solve the case!*

Ask students to work in pairs or small groups to write a detective report using the following guiding questions:

1. *What clues were found near the gallery?*
2. *Who is the main suspect, and why?*
3. *What is the suspect's alibi?*
4. *What is your conclusion—are they guilty or innocent?*

Students should use at least six of the target vocabulary words (detective, investigation, clue, suspect, alibi, confession, guilty, innocent, case) in their reports. Encourage them to be creative and detailed in their writing. Afterward, have each group share their findings with the class.

### Wrap-up (5 minutes)

Conclude the lesson with a short quiz that revisits vocabulary from all three lessons in the unit. Write sentences with blanks on the board and ask students to fill them in their notebooks by using the correct words.

- The \_\_\_\_\_ said they were home at the time of the crime.
- The detective found a \_\_\_\_\_ at the crime scene.

- The \_\_\_\_\_ gave a confession to the police.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ interviewed witnesses to gather more information.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ helped prove the suspect's innocence.
- The suspect gave a \_\_\_\_\_ and admitted to the crime.
- The jury found the defendant \_\_\_\_\_ of all charges.

### Answer key

#### Practice

##### a. Matching

1. Detective
2. Clue
3. Suspect
4. Investigation
5. Alibi
6. Confession
7. Guilty
8. Innocent

##### Wrap-up

1. alibi
2. clue
3. suspect
4. detective
5. evidence
6. confession
7. innocent

##### b. Unscrambling

1. The detective found a clue.
2. The investigation started immediately.
3. They solved the case with the alibi.
4. The police arrested a suspect.
5. The suspect was found guilty of theft.
6. The criminal gave a confession to the police.

## Time to practice!

## a. Match each definition to the correct word.

detective      investigation      clue      suspect      alibi      confession  
    guilty      innocent      case

1. A person who solves mysteries or crimes: \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A piece of evidence or information that helps solve a crime: \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A person suspected of being involved in a crime: \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The process of trying to find out what happened: \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Proof that someone was not at the scene of a crime: \_\_\_\_\_.
6. When someone admits to committing a crime: \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Responsible for doing something wrong: \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Not guilty of a crime: \_\_\_\_\_.

## b. Unscramble the words to form the correct sentences.

- detective / found / clue / the / a.  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- investigation / started / an / The / immediately.  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- case / solved / They / the / with / alibi / the.  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- suspect / a / police / arrested / The / the.  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- guilty / found / The / was / suspect / of / theft.  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- confession / gave / to / The / police / the / criminal.  
 \_\_\_\_\_





# Unit 3

The future and beyond



## Strategy

Cooperation Strategy

## Estimated time

45 minutes

## Objective

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to use at least 6 key terms related to making predictions and future trends in written and spoken contexts.



## Warm-up (5 minutes)

Start the lesson by showing a picture of a futuristic cityscape on the board. Ask students to brainstorm ideas about what life might be like in the future, focusing on technology, transportation, or daily activities. Write their ideas on the board and introduce the word **predict** by saying, "When we talk about the future, we predict what might happen."

## Presentation (8 minutes)

Introduce the target vocabulary: *predict, forecast, invent, innovate, discover, trend, envision, progress, possible, futuristic*.

Use visuals and simple definitions to explain each word. After defining each word, use it in a sentence. Also try to encourage students to repeat the words and ask questions.

## Practice (15 minutes)

- In pairs, students will find the 10 words from target vocabulary in the crossword puzzle by looking at the descriptions.
- Students will work on pairs and will have different information; they will have to share their information to complete the forecast.

## Production (15 minutes)

In small groups, students will brainstorm and describe an invention for the year 2050. They will write a short paragraph describing their invention and how it will impact the world, they must use at least 6 target vocabulary words. Then, they will share their invention to the class.

### NOTE:

A SET OF PRINTABLE FLASHCARDS IS AVAILABLE AT THE END OF THIS GUIDE IN "RESOURCES"

**Wrap-up (5 minutes)**

Instruct students to sit in a circle. Then start a prediction by saying something such as: "In the future, people will..."

The first student adds to it by using one vocabulary word, such as: "In the future, people will **invent** robots that..."

The next student continues:

"...**discover** new planets." Continue the chain until every student has contributed. Encourage creativity and proper vocabulary usage.

**Answer key****Practice****a. Crossword****ACROSS**

2. TREND
3. INVENT
8. POSSIBLE
9. FORECAST
10. INNOVATE

**DOWN**

1. FUTURISTIC
4. ENVISION
5. DISCOVER
6. PROGRESS
7. PREDICT

**b. Information Gap****STUDENT A**

flying, trend, invent, possible, innovate

**STUDENT B**

replace, technology, methods, travel, technologies

**Time to practice**

a. Complete the crossword puzzle using the clues provided.

**Down**

1. Related to or resembling the future, especially advanced technology or ideas.
4. To imagine or visualize something in the future.
5. To find something that was not known before.
6. Forward movement or improvement over time.
7. To say what will happen in the future.

**WORDS:**

- Discover • Envision • Forecast •
- Futuristic • Innovate • Invent •
- Possible • Predict • Progress •
- Trend

**Across**

2. A general direction in which something is developing or changing.
3. To create something new.
8. Able to happen or be achieved.
9. A detailed prediction, especially about the weather or trends.
10. To improve something or introduce a new method or idea.

## Time to practice!

### STUDENT A

#### **b. Share your information with Student B so you both have the same information.**

- In 2050, scientists predict that \_\_\_\_\_ cars will replace traditional ones.
  - A new \_\_\_\_\_ in technology will make homes self-sustaining.
  - Scientists will \_\_\_\_\_ new methods for energy storage.
  - It will be \_\_\_\_\_ to travel to other planets regularly.
  - In the next decade, we will \_\_\_\_\_ new technologies.
- 

## Time to practice!

### STUDENT B

#### **b. Share your information with Student A so you both have the same information.**

- In 2050, scientists forecast that flying cars will \_\_\_\_\_ traditional ones.
- A new trend in \_\_\_\_\_ will make homes self-sustaining.
- Researchers will invent new \_\_\_\_\_ for energy storage.
- It will be possible to \_\_\_\_\_ to other planets regularly.
- In the next decade, we will innovate new \_\_\_\_\_.



**Strategy**

Chance and Randomness

**Estimated time**

45 minutes

**Objective**

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to define, categorize, and use at least 6 terms related to future inventions and technologies.

**Warm-up (5 minutes)**

Start the lesson by displaying an image of a futuristic invention, such as a flying car or a robot assistant. Ask students, "What inventions do you think will change the world in the future?" Encourage students to share their ideas with a partner. Write some of their predictions on the board, introducing the theme of future inventions.

**Presentation (8 minutes)**

Prepare a digital spinning wheel with sections named: *robot*, *artificial intelligence*, *virtual reality*, *automation*, *drone*, *renewable*, *sustainable*, *advancement*, *breakthrough*, *robotics*, *artificial intell-*



Then divide the class into two teams, spin the wheel and a word will be randomly selected. The teams have to guess the meanings of the words, if done correctly, they will earn a point. If help is required, give them definitions and examples but no points.

**Practice (15 minutes)**

a. Students will utilize a 2x3 grid on a sheet of paper to write down six target vocabulary words. The teacher will then spin the wheel again, but instead of revealing the word, they will provide clues and definitions. Students must identify and cross off the words they selected. The student(s) who successfully crosses off all the words on their grid will be declared the winner.

b. Divide the students into pairs, then provide them with some cards that they will choose on their own, each card contains a sentence with a blank space where a vocabulary word fits.

**NOTE:**

A SET OF PRINTABLE CARDS IS AVAILABLE AT THE END OF THIS GUIDE IN "RESOURCES"

Use or repeat as many cards as you need depending on the number of students.

- Scientists have made a major \_\_\_\_\_ in renewable energy. (breakthrough)
- A \_\_\_\_\_ can deliver packages quickly and efficiently. (drone)
- \_\_\_\_\_ is the process of machines taking over tasks from humans. (Automation)
- The invention of \_\_\_\_\_ energy sources has reduced pollution. (renewable)
- Many people believe \_\_\_\_\_ will replace manual labor in factories. (robot)
- \_\_\_\_\_ allows people to experience a digital world through headsets. (Virtual reality)
- Using \_\_\_\_\_ methods helps protect the environment for future generations. (sustainable)
- The \_\_\_\_\_ was conducted to test the new vaccine. (experiment)
- Advances in \_\_\_\_\_ are helping us develop better AI systems. (artificial intelligence)
- This year's biggest \_\_\_\_\_ is a robot that cooks meals automatically. (invention)

**Production (10 minutes)**

Students will work in small groups to create a new invention for the year 2050. Instruct them to write a description answering the following:  
*What is the invention?*

*How does it work?*

*What problem does it solve?*

Then, create another spinning wheel containing: *Describe it, Draw it, Act it out* or *Explain it*.

A representative from each group will then spin the wheel and will present their invention by using the option that was randomly chosen by the wheel.

**Wrap-up (5 minutes)**

Tell students that each number of the dice will represent a category. For example:

- 1: Robot
- 2: Artificial intelligence
- 3: Virtual reality
- 4: Automation
- 5: Renewable
- 6: Sustainable

Then choose a student randomly and tell them to roll the dice, they will have to define the selected word and use it in a spoken sentence.

**Strategy**

Progress bar

**Estimated time**

45 minutes

**Objective**

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to identify, define, and use at least 6 terms related to future global changes in context.

**Progress bar dynamic**

Draw an empty progress bar on the board with five segments. Tell students that they will earn a segment each time they complete an activity. An empty progress bar will also be available in students' sheets for a personal track.

**Warm-up (5 minutes)**

Start the lesson by asking questions like "What do you think the world will look like in 2050?" Analyze the answers with students and encourage discussions by asking further questions.

**Presentation (8 minutes)**

Write the target vocabulary on the board (*adapt, transform, urbanize, globalize, scarce, biodiverse, innovative, sustainable, change, impact*), then introduce the words with a guessing game. Provide three clues (definition, example or synonym) and let them guess which is the word you are talking about.

Complete the progress bar incrementally after each correctly guessed word.

**Practice (15 minutes)**

**a.** Tell students to complete the word ladder, each step provides a definition or a synonym, students will fill in the correct word. Earn progress segment after completing the whole ladder.

**b.** Tell students to complete the text about a futuristic scenario by using the target vocabulary. Earn progress segment after completing the activity.

**Production (10 minutes)**

Divide the lesson within small groups, assign each group one of the following categories (*cities, biodiversity, technology*). Each group will write a paragraph predicting how the given category will change by 2050. Students should at least use 6 target words. If done correctly, the progress bar will earn progress.



**Wrap-up (5 minutes)**

Use the following 5 true/false questions about the target vocabulary to assess students' understanding. After completing the whole quiz, tell students that the progress bar has been complete and celebrate by filling the progress bar on the board together as a class.

- *Urbanize means to make cities smaller and less populated.* (False)
- *Scarce resources are those that are hard to find or limited in quantity.* (True)
- *Innovative ideas are usually boring and outdated.* (False)
- *Globalize refers to connecting people and ideas worldwide.* (True)
- *Biodiverse areas have a wide variety of plants and animals.* (True)

**Answer key****Practice****a. Word ladder**

1. Adapt
2. Transform
3. Urbanize
4. Globalize
5. Scarce

**b. Completing**

1. adapt
2. urbanize
3. scarce
4. innovative
5. biodiverse
6. transform
7. sustainable

**Wrap-up**

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. True

**Time to practice**

**Make sure to complete the progress bar by successfully doing the tasks!**



**a. Complete the word ladder by using the clues.**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5. Limited or rare resources.

4. To bring people or businesses, together worldwide.

3. When cities grow larger and more modern.

2. To change something completely to make it better

1. To adjust to a new situation or environment.

**b. Complete the following text using the target vocabulary.**

The world is constantly changing, and people must learn to (1) \_to new environments and situations. Cities are rapidly growing as more people move to urban areas, leading to efforts to (2) \_\_\_\_\_ them in ways that are modern and efficient. However, as resources become (3) \_\_\_\_\_, it is important to find (4) \_\_\_\_\_ solutions to preserve the planet. In addition, maintaining (5) \_\_\_\_\_ ecosystems is key to ensuring the survival of many species. Scientists and leaders around the world are working to (6) \_the way we use energy and build communities to create a more (7) \_\_future for everyone.

# RESOURCES







## UNIT 1: LESSON A







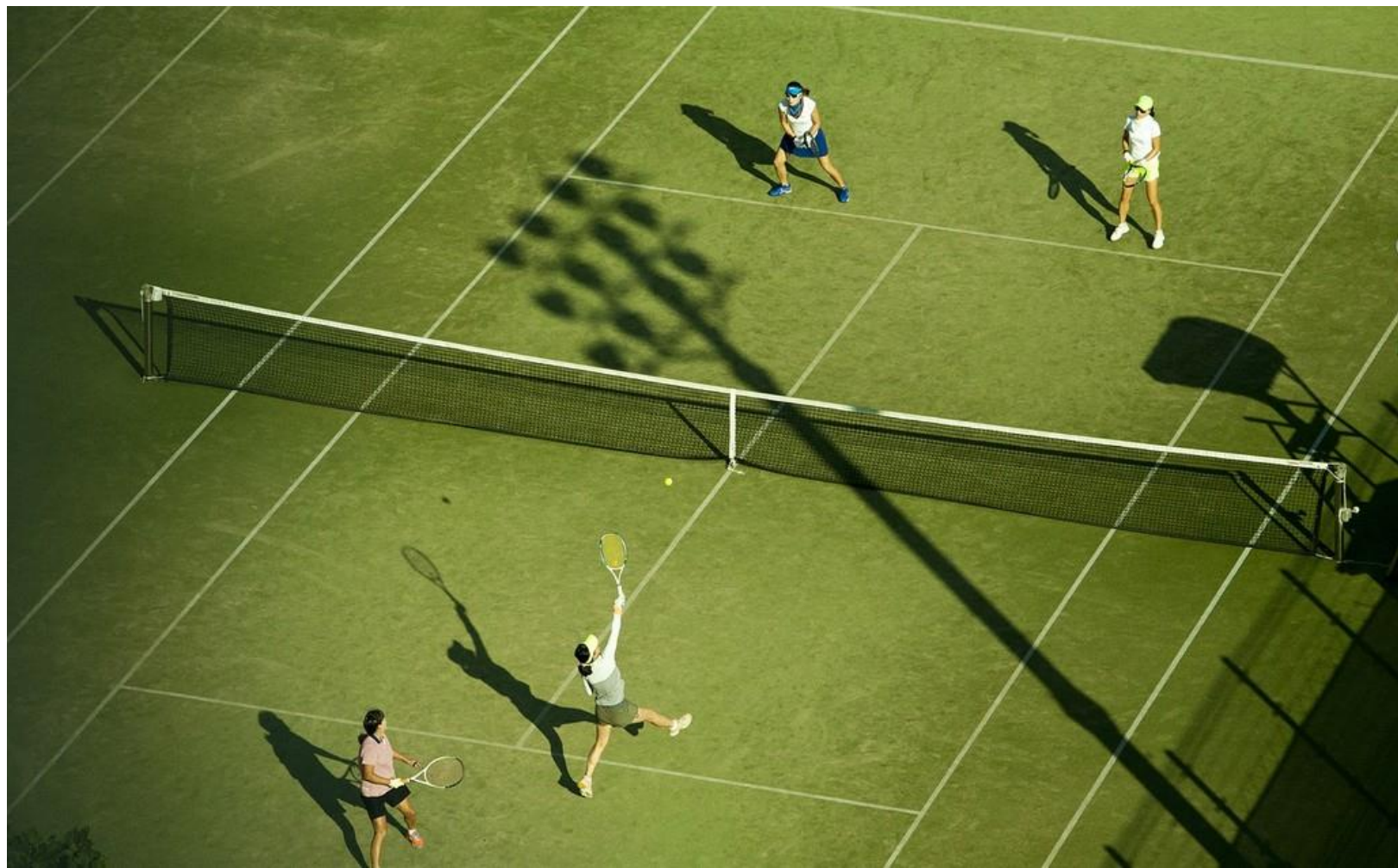
## UNIT 1: LESSON A







## UNIT 1: LESSON A







## **UNIT 1: LESSON A**

# UNIT 1: LESSON B

## Download links:

**Shorten:** <https://shorturl.at/azX3f>

## Permanent:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1FrthzQcDQQ6Vd7Mh8vyH1KUKPRb9pLgR/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=112339023889920114093&rtpof=true&sd=true>

## Preview

### Warm-up



### Presentation

Surfing



Horseback riding



Includes pronunciation



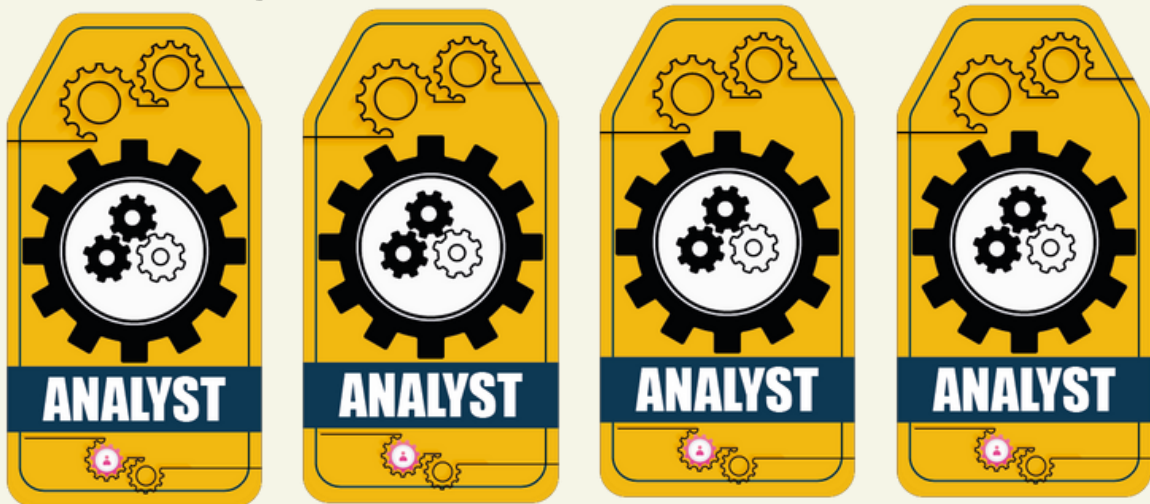


# UNIT 2: LESSON A

## Observer badge



## Analyst badge



## Communicator badge



# UNIT 2: LESSON A

## Video link:

Shorten: <https://youtu.be/NjY6snqsc8Y>

## Warm-up



A collage of short clips in which the target vocabulary is used in different tv shows and movies.

## Presentation

Includes definitions, pronunciations and spoken and easy to understand examples.

### Jury

A group of people sworn to decide the fact of a case and deliver a verdict in the court



The **jury** deliberated for hours before reaching a conclusion.

# ANSWER SHEETS



**Time to practice!**

**a. Complete these sentences with the sports from the box.**

soccer basketball swimming tennis baseball volleyball football



1. .... **basketball** ... is played with a ball and a hoop.
2. .... **volleyball** ..... is a game where players hit the ball over a net with their hands.
3. In ... **swimming** , players swim across the water as fast as possible.
4. .... **baseball** is a game played with a bat and a ball on a large field.
5. .... **soccer** is a popular sport played with a round ball and two goals.
6. .... **tennis** is played by hitting the ball over a net with a racket.
7. .... **football** . is a contact sport where players wear helmets and run with the ball.

**b. Check the answers with your teacher, then compare the marks with your partner and complete the following chart.**

	✓	✗



Winner (s):

.....

**Let's produce!**

**a. Write three true and three false sentences about sports.**

**b. In groups, read your sentences. Correct the false sentences.**

**A:** *In swimming, people use a ball and a racket.*

**B:** *No, in swimming, people swim in the water quickly.*

**C:** *Soccer is an individual sport.*



# Leisure Activities

Time to practice!

a. Link the following leisure activities with the correct sentences.

- |                     |          |   |
|---------------------|----------|---|
| 1. Surfing          | <b>h</b> | a. Riding a horse through the countryside is amazing. |
| 2. Horseback riding | <b>a</b> | b. I make sweaters with needles and colorful yarn.    |
| 3. Photography      | <b>f</b> | c. Learning new tricks on my skateboard is exciting.  |
| 4. Skateboarding    | <b>c</b> | d. Hitting the target with my bow and arrow is tough. |
| 5. Rock climbing    | <b>g</b> | e. Planting flowers and vegetables is relaxing.       |
| 6. Gardening        | <b>e</b> | f. I use my camera to capture beautiful landscapes.   |
| 7. Archery          | <b>d</b> | g. Reaching the top of the mountain requires focus.   |
| 8. Knitting         | <b>b</b> | h. I love riding waves on my board at the beach.      |

b. Put the words from the previous activity into the correct category.

Outdoor Activities: **surfing, horseback, riding, skateboarding, rock climbing, gardening, archery**

Indoor Activities: **photography, knitting**

c. Complete the text using the words in the box.

horseback riding    knitting    skateboarding    archery    gardening  
 photography    rock climbing    surfing

## Exploring New Hobbies

Many people enjoy outdoor activities like (1) **rock climbing** where they climb steep cliffs, or (2) **gardening**, planting flowers and vegetables. Sports like (3) **surfing** and (4) **skateboarding** are perfect for those seeking adventure, while creative minds love (5) **photography**, capturing special moments, or (6) **knitting**, crafting scarves and sweaters. Nature lovers often find peace in (7) **horseback riding**, exploring trails on horseback, or precision in (8) **archery**, mastering their aim with a bow and arrow. Hobbies like these not only bring excitement but also help people develop new skills and a sense of accomplishment.

Time to practice!

LEVEL 1



a. Match the description in Column B with the words in Column A. Write the letter.

## Column A

- D 1. Trophy  
F 2. Medal  
C 3. Tournament  
A 4. Prize  
B 5. Contestant  
E 6. Compete

## Column B

- A. A reward, often money or an item, given for winning a competition.  
 B. A person who takes part in a contest or competition.  
 C. A series of games or matches to determine a winner.  
 D. A large cup-shaped object given as an award for victory.  
 E. To take part in a contest and try to win.  
 F. A small, flat piece of metal awarded for achievement, usually worn around the neck.

Time to practice!

LEVEL 2



b. Complete the blank spaces of the following sentences by using the learnt vocabulary.

medal      compete      prize      trophy      tournament      contestant

- The winner of the championship received a golden trophy to celebrate their victory.
- Sarah was excited to compete in the annual spelling bee competition.
- The school organized a basketball tournament to find the best team in the district.
- Every contestant in the competition tried their best to answer the challenging questions.
- The science fair awarded a special prize to the project with the most innovative idea.
- After winning the national soccer finals, the players proudly displayed their silver medal.

## Time to practice!

LEVEL 3



## a. Circle the correct word.

1. Amanda received a **trophy** / **medal** for winning first place in the tournament.
2. The students will **compete** / **score** against each other in the annual math challenge.
3. Jake was excited to participate as a **contestant** / **prize** in the talent show.
4. The football team was thrilled with their final **score** / **participate**, which secured them the victory.
5. The tennis championship ended with both players **tied** / **prize** at the final point.
6. Maria worked hard to win the grand **trophy** / **prize** for her outstanding project.
7. Everyone wanted to **participate** / **compete** in the relay race during sports day.
8. After months of preparation, the city hosted its annual basketball **tournament** / **medal** with great success.
9. The gold **trophy** / **medal** was awarded to the fastest runner in the competition.
10. Both teams were **tied** / **contestant** at the end of the game, leading to an exciting overtime round.

## Let's produce!

a. In your groups, design a fictional championship poster using at least 6 words that you learnt in this lesson. Make sure to include:

*The name of the competition.*

*The prizes.*

*Details like participants requirements, scores, or rules.*





## Time to practice

## a. Match the words from the box to with the pictures.

court

judge

evidence

lawyer

justice

jury

1 Jury2 Justice3 Court4 Judge5 Lawyer6 Evidence

## b. Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct word.

- 1 The jury / lawyer listened carefully to the evidence before making a decision.
2. The *defendant* / lawyer presented their case to defend the client in court.
3. During the trial / *verdict*, the judge asked the witness to share their testimony.
4. The police collected evidence / *justice* to prove the suspect's guilt.
5. The *judge* / defendant claimed they were innocent of all charges.
6. After reviewing all the facts, the jury reached a *trial* / verdict of guilty.



You are almost ready to receive your **Analyst Badge!** Make sure to complete the following activity correctly before asking your teacher for it.

## c. Read the short sentences and complete the missing words.

1. People often hire a **l\_a\_w\_y\_e\_r\_** to defend them.
2. The judge decided the sentence after the trial.
3. The defendant stood quietly as the charges were read.
4. The police found crucial evidence to solve the case.
5. A **v\_e\_r\_d\_i\_c\_t\_** is the decision made by the jury.
6. The jury listened carefully to all the facts presented in court.
7. The concept of justice is based on fairness and equality.
8. A trial is held in court to determine someone's guilt or innocence.



## Let's produce!

a. Work in small groups and prepare a 2-minute roleplay scene in which you use the learnt vocabulary. Assign roles such as a judge, a lawyer, etc.

Here are some sample sentences you can use:

*Order in the court!*

*Please present the evidence*

*Your honor, I would like to call a witness to the stand.*

*I trust my lawyer to prove my innocence.*

*We have reached a unanimous verdict.*

*I saw the defendant at the scene of the crime.*



Congratulations! If you made it this far, you have granted yourself the **Communicator Badge!**

Keep it up!

## Time to practice

a. Fill in the blanks by using the words previously explained by your teacher.

crime

theft

fraud

criminal

punishment

arrest

law

sentence

1. The police officer explained that stealing is a serious crime that must be punished.
2. theft occurs when someone takes something that doesn't belong to them.
3. The judge gave the criminal a five-year prison sentence for the robbery.
4. Committing fraud by lying on official documents can lead to severe consequences.
5. The new law prohibits smoking in public places.
6. After a long investigation, the police made an arrest late last night.
7. The judge announced the sentence: six months of community service.
8. The teacher reminded the class that honesty is important and should be rewarded, unlike punishment.

b. Sort the words from the previous activity into the correct category.

Crime

Theft

Fraud

Criminal

Punishment

Arrest

Law

Sentence

## Time to practice!

## a. Match each definition to the correct word.

detective      investigation      clue      suspect      alibi      confession  
    guilty      innocent      case

1. A person who solves mysteries or crimes: detective.
2. A piece of evidence or information that helps solve a crime: clue.
3. A person suspected of being involved in a crime: suspect.
4. The process of trying to find out what happened: investigation.
5. Proof that someone was not at the scene of a crime: alibi.
6. When someone admits to committing a crime: confession.
7. Responsible for doing something wrong: guilty.
8. Not guilty of a crime: innocent.

## b. Unscramble the words to form the correct sentences.

- detective / found / clue / the / a.  
The detective found a clue.
- investigation / started / an / The / immediately.  
The investigation started immediately.
- case / solved / They / the / with / alibi / the.  
They solved the case with the alibi.
- suspect / a / police / arrested / The / the.  
The police arrested a suspect.
- guilty / found / The / was / suspect / of / theft.  
The suspect was found guilty of theft.
- confession / gave / to / The / police / the / criminal.  
The criminal gave a confession to the police.



# Predicting the future

## Time to practice

a. Complete the crossword puzzle using the clues provided.

### Down

1. Related to or resembling the future, especially advanced technology or ideas.
4. To imagine or visualize something in the future.
5. To find something that was not known before.
6. Forward movement or improvement over time.
7. To say what will happen in the future.

The crossword puzzle grid is partially filled with the following words:

- Down 1:** FUTURISTIC
- Across 2:** TREND
- Across 3:** INVENT
- Down 4:** ENVISION
- Down 5:** DISCOVER
- Down 6:** PROGRESS
- Down 7:** PREDICT
- Across 8:** POSSIBLE
- Across 9:** FORECAST
- Across 10:** INNOVATE

### WORDS:

- Discover • Envision • Forecast •
- Futuristic • Innovate • Invent •
- Possible • Predict • Progress •
- Trend

### Across

2. A general direction in which something is developing or changing.
3. To create something new.
8. Able to happen or be achieved.
9. A detailed prediction, especially about the weather or trends.
10. To improve something or introduce a new method or idea.

**Time to practice!***STUDENT A***b. Share your information with Student B so you both have the same information.**

- In 2050, scientists predict that   **flying**   cars will replace traditional ones.
  - A new   **trend**   in technology will make homes self-sustaining.
  - Scientists will   **invent**   new methods for energy storage.
  - It will be   **possible**   to travel to other planets regularly.
  - In the next decade, we will   **innovate**   new technologies.
- 

**Time to practice!***STUDENT B***b. Share your information with Student A so you both have the same information.**

- In 2050, scientists forecast that flying cars will   **replace**   traditional ones.
- A new trend in   **technology**   will make homes self-sustaining.
- Researchers will invent new   **methods**   for energy storage.
- It will be possible to   **travel**   to other planets regularly.
- In the next decade, we will innovate new   **technologies**   .

## Time to practice

Make sure to complete the progress bar by successfully doing the tasks!



0%

100%

a. Complete the word ladder by using the clues.

_____	<b>Scarce</b>
_____	<b>Globalize</b>
_____	<b>Urbanize</b>
_____	<b>Transform</b>
_____	<b>A d a p t</b>

5. Limited or rare resources.

4. To bring people or businesses, together worldwide.

3. When cities grow larger and more modern.

2. To change something completely to make it better

1. To adjust to a new situation or environment.

b. Complete the following text using the target vocabulary.

The world is constantly changing, and people must learn to (1) **ad\_a\_pt** to new environments and situations. Cities are rapidly growing as more people move to urban areas, leading to efforts to (2) **urbanize** them in ways that are modern and efficient. However, as resources become (3) **scarce**, it is important to find (4) **innovative** solutions to preserve the planet. In addition, maintaining (5) **biodiverse** ecosystems is key to ensuring the survival of many species. Scientists and leaders around the world are working to (6) **transform** the way we use energy and build communities to create a more (7) **sustainable** future for everyone.

## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1. Conclusions

- Based on the theoretical foundation, it was determined that although vocabulary is essential for English language learning, many students struggle with learning it due to their perception of vocabulary lessons being monotonous and repetitive. This perception is influenced by teachers' implemented methodologies when teaching vocabulary, which often fails to capture students' attention and motivation.
- The research findings revealed a discrepancy between the strategies teachers claim to use in their vocabulary lessons and the strategies their students perceive as being implemented. This difference suggests the need to implement teaching practices that align with students' preferences to improve their vocabulary learning.
- The analysis of the research instruments demonstrated that students hold a positive attitude towards the implementation of gamification in their English vocabulary lessons. They perceive gamification as an innovative and engaging strategy that can significantly improve their learning process and make vocabulary learning more enjoyable.
- The evidence showed that although students expressed a preference for dynamic and interactive activities, the methods currently used by teachers often fail to meet these expectations. This difference highlights the importance of incorporating more engaging teaching strategies. As a response to this need, the didactic guide titled "*Level Up Your Classroom: A Gamification Guide to Improve Vocabulary*" was developed. The guide integrates gamification strategies into vocabulary lessons.



## 5.2. Recommendations

- Vocabulary learning in English does not need to be a monotonous or repetitive task. Therefore, teachers should integrate gamification strategies into their lessons to enhance students' engagement and improve vocabulary learning. The use of gamification strategies can help transform learning into a more enjoyable and effective process.
- It is important for teachers to understand and address students' needs and preferences. Thus, teachers should aim to implement strategies that align with these preferences since pupils' motivation and participation will increase, resulting in better learning outcomes.
- Lastly, EFL should use and implement the proposed didactic guide in their lessons, as it provides engaging activities for vocabulary learning purposes. Besides, the content and topics of the guide are an extension of the pedagogical units developed by Ecuador's Ministry of Education for tenth graders, therefore, this guide could be implemented in any institution, as they are all aligned with the Ecuadorian curriculum.

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# ANNEXES

## Annex 1. Research Instruments Approval



**UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DEL NORTE**  
**FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN CIENCIA Y TECNOLOGÍA – FECYT**  
**PEDAGOGIA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS**

Ibarra, 28 de noviembre del 2024

Magister  
FERNANDO FLORES  
DOCENTE

De mis consideraciones:

Mediante el presente, solicito muy comedidamente se dignen validar los Cuestionarios de Investigación del Proyecto "Duolingo as a gamification strategy to strengthen tenth grade students' vocabulary at Santa Luisa de Marillac high school in Atuntaqui" Previo a la obtención del título de Licenciatura En Pedagogía De Los Idiomas para lo cual, se dignará encontrar adjunto las Entrevistas, el Cuestionario y los instrumentos de validación.

Por la atención que se sirva dar al presente, le anticipo mis debidos agradecimientos.

Atentamente,

Peter Ponce  
1004727085



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DEL NORTE  
FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN CIENCIA Y TECNOLOGÍA – FECYT

CUESTIONARIOS

**PROYECTO:** Duolingo as a gamification strategy to strengthen tenth grade students' vocabulary at Santa Luisa de Marillac high school in Atuntaqui

**Objetivo:** Propose Duolingo as a Gamification Strategy to Strengthen Tenth Grade Students' Vocabulary at Santa Luisa de Marillac High School in Atuntaqui.

<b>UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DEL NORTE</b> <b>FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN CIENCIA Y TECNOLOGÍA – FECYT</b> <b>PEDAGOGIA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS</b>	
<b>INTERVIEW FOR THE ENGLISH TEACHERS</b>	
<b>TITLE OF THE RESEARCH WORK</b> Duolingo as a gamification strategy to strengthen tenth grade students' vocabulary at Santa Luisa de Marillac high school in Atuntaqui	
<b>Date:</b> 28-11-2024	
<b>Objective:</b> Determine which strategies are used when teaching vocabulary to tenth grade students at Santa Luisa de Marillac.	
<b>Question 1.</b> How do you usually teach vocabulary to your students?	
<b>Question 2</b> What are the main challenges that your students face when learning new words?	
<b>Question 3</b> What is your understanding of gamification in the context of teaching English vocabulary?	
<b>Question 4</b> Have you implemented gamification in your English lessons to teach vocabulary? Yes/ No Why?	
<b>Question 5</b> If yes, how was the experience after using gamification with your students?	
<b>Question 6</b> What are the positive and negative aspects of using a gamification strategy like Duolingo to teach English vocabulary?	

<b>Fecha de envío para la evaluación del experto:</b>	28 de noviembre del 2024
<b>Fecha de revisión del experto:</b>	28 de noviembre del 2024

En la siguiente matriz marque con una X el criterio de evaluación según corresponda en cada ítem. De ser necesario realice la observación en el apartado correspondiente.

<b>INSTRUMENTO DE EVALUACIÓN CUALITATIVO</b>			
<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>CRITERIOS DE EVALUACIÓN</b>		
	<b>MUCHO</b>	<b>POCO</b>	<b>NADA</b>
Instrucción breve, clara y completa.	X		
Formulación clara de cada pregunta.	X		
Comprensión de cada pregunta.	X		
Coherencia de las preguntas en relación con el objetivo.	X		
Relevancia del contenido	X		
Orden y secuencia de las preguntas	X		
Número de preguntas óptimo	X		

Observaciones:

Se sugiere hacer las correcciones señaladas en el cuestionario para que sea validado.

**UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DEL NORTE  
FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN CIENCIA Y TECNOLOGÍA – FECYT  
PEDAGOGIA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH WORK**

Duolingo as a gamification strategy to strengthen tenth grade students' vocabulary at Santa Luisa de Marillac high school in Atuntaqui

**Date:** 28-11-2024

**Objective:** Determine the students' perceptions towards using Duolingo as a gamification strategy to learn vocabulary.

**1. How often does your English teacher use engaging strategies to teach vocabulary?**

**Tick the option that best applies:**

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

**2. How difficult do you find learning new words in English? Tick the option that best represents your experience.**

- Very difficult
- Difficult
- Medium
- Easy
- Very easy

**3. Which of the following strategies does your teacher use in class to help you learn English vocabulary? (Tick all that apply)**

- Writing new words on the board
- Using pictures or visual aids
- Encouraging you to repeat and practice new words
- Playing vocabulary games or activities
- Telling stories or giving examples with new words
- Using songs, videos, or digital tools
- Asking you to work in pairs or groups to practice vocabulary
- Others (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Which activity would you like your teacher to implement when teaching new vocabulary? Tick the option that best applies:**  
 Direct translations from Spanish  
 Use of pictures for new words  
 Games and dynamic activities  
 Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Do you think that games can help you to learn new words in English? Tick the option that best applies:**  
 Yes  
 No  
 Maybe

**6. Would you be interested in learning new words by using a learning-gaming platform called Duolingo, even if you have used it before? Tick the option that best applies:**  
 Yes  
 No

A continuación, marque con una X en el criterio de evaluación según el análisis de cada pregunta que conforma el cuestionario, las cuales se encuentran representadas en el siguiente instrumento de evaluación como ítem. De ser necesario realice la observación en el casillero correspondiente.

INSTRUMENTO DE EVALUACIÓN CUANTITATIVO				
CRITERIOS DE EVALUACIÓN				OBSERVACIONES
Ítem	Dejar	Modificar	Eliminar	
1	X			
2	X			
3	X			
4	X			
5	X			
6	X			





DARWIN FERNANDO  
FLORES ALBUJA

Firma del Evaluador

C.C.: 1002188470

Apellidos y nombres completos	Darwin Fernando Flores Albuja
Título académico	Magister
Institución de Educación Superior	UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DEL NORTE
Correo electrónico	dfflores@utn.edu.ec
Teléfono	0986357931



**UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DEL NORTE**  
**FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN CIENCIA Y TECNOLOGÍA – FECYT**  
**PEDAGOGIA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS**

Ibarra, 29 de noviembre del 2024

Dra.

Sandra Guevara Betancourt

DOCENTE

De mis consideraciones:

Mediante el presente, solicito muy comedidamente se digne validar los Cuestionarios de Investigación del Proyecto "Duolingo as a gamification strategy to strengthen tenth grade students' vocabulary at Santa Luisa de Marillac high school in Atuntaqui" Previo a la obtención del título de Licenciatura En Pedagogía De Los Idiomas para lo cual, se dignará encontrar adjunto las Entrevistas, el Cuestionario y los instrumentos de validación.

Por la atención que se sirva dar al presente, le anticipo mis debidos agradecimientos.

Atentamente,

Peter Ponce  
1004727085



.....  
Firma del Evaluador

C.C.: 1002503520

Apellidos y nombres completos	Sandra Mariana Guevara Betancourt
Título académico	Doctor - PhD
Institución de Educación Superior	Universidad Técnica Del Norte
Correo electrónico	smguevara@utn.edu.ec
Teléfono	0992408560

<b>Fecha de envío para la evaluación del experto:</b>	29 de noviembre del 2024
<b>Fecha de revisión del experto:</b>	

## Annex 2. Instruments Application



### Annex 3. Proposal Socialization







Atuntaqui a, 23 enero 2025

RECTORADO

Sor Patricia Arcos

CERTIFICA:

QUE: El Sr. PONCE CADENA PETER VICENTE con C.C. 1004727085, estudiante de la Universidad Técnica del Norte, de la Carrera de PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS, realizó la Socialización de su propuesta titulada "LEVEL UP YOUR CLASSROOM: A GAMIFICATION GUIDE TO IMPROVE VOCABULARY", perteneciente al trabajo de integración curricular "DUOLINGO AS A GAMIFICATION STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN TENTH GRADE STUDENTS' VOCABULARY AT SANTA LUISA DE MARILLAC HIGH SCHOOL IN ATUNTAQUI", en el Área de Inglés de la institución el día jueves 23 de enero de 2025 a las 13H00

Particular que certifico para los fines pertinentes.

Atentamente,

  
Sor Patricia Arcos  
HERMANA RECTORA



## Annex 4. Turnitin Analysis

# Duolingo as a gamification strategy FINAL.docx

Universidad Técnica del Norte

### Detalles del documento

Identificador de la entrega

trn:old:::21463:422733341

Fecha de entrega

22 ene 2025, 7:06 p.m. GMT-5

Fecha de descarga

22 ene 2025, 7:11 p.m. GMT-5

Nombre de archivo

Duolingo as a gamification strategy FINAL.docx

Tamaño de archivo

19.3 MB

102 Páginas

16,040 Palabras

91,486 Caracteres



Página 2 of 106 - Descripción general de integridad

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## 3% Similitud general

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### Filtrado desde el informe

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- Coincidencias menores (menos de 8 palabras)

### Grupos de coincidencias

- 50 Sin cita o referencia 3%  
Coincidencias sin una citación ni comillas en el texto
- 0 Faltan citas 0%  
Coincidencias que siguen siendo muy similar al material fuente
- 0 Falta referencia 0%  
Las coincidencias tienen comillas, pero no una citación correcta en el texto
- 0 Con comillas y referencia 0%  
Coincidencias de citación en el texto, pero sin comillas

### Fuentes principales

- 2% Fuentes de Internet
- 0% Publicaciones
- 2% Trabajos entregados (trabajos del estudiante)

### Marcas de integridad

#### N.º de alertas de integridad para revisión

No se han detectado manipulaciones de texto sospechosas.

Los algoritmos de nuestro sistema analizan un documento en profundidad para buscar inconsistencias que permitirían distinguirlo de una entrega normal. Si advertimos algo extraño, lo marcamos como una alerta para que pueda revisarlo.

Una marca de alerta no es necesariamente un indicador de problemas. Sin embargo, recomendamos que preste atención y la revise.