



Aventuras, gamificación para el aprendizaje activo del idioma inglés

Adventures, gamification for active learning in the english language

Aventuras, gamificação para uma aprendizagem ativa na língua inglesa

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Ciencias de la Educación
Artículo de Investigación

* **Recibido:** 18 de agosto de 2024 * **Aceptado:** 20 de septiembre de 2024 * **Publicado:** 21 de octubre de 2024

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Resumen

En el ámbito educativo contemporáneo, la integración de las Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación (TIC) ha transformado profundamente la enseñanza del inglés al proporcionar acceso a herramientas interactivas y recursos auténticos que enriquecen el proceso de aprendizaje lingüístico. Estas tecnologías no solo facilitan la visualización de contenido relevante como videos y podcasts en el idioma estudiado, sino que también permiten la integración sutil de elementos de gamificación. A través de juegos interactivos y desafíos en línea, los estudiantes se involucran activamente en la adquisición del idioma, mejorando sus habilidades comunicativas de manera dinámica y motivadora. La metodología gamificada no solo diversifica las estrategias didácticas, sino que también fortalece la competencia digital de los docentes al adaptar sus métodos de enseñanza al entorno digital en constante evolución. Investigaciones subrayan cómo esta integración no solo estimula la participación activa de los estudiantes en el uso del idioma, sino que también fomenta un aprendizaje colaborativo y efectivo. Mediante la introducción de elementos de juego en las actividades educativas, se crea un entorno dinámico donde los estudiantes experimentan el idioma de manera interactiva y lúdica, incrementando significativamente su motivación y compromiso con el proceso de aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación (TIC); Gamificación; Aprendizaje interactivo; Competencia digital; inglés educativo.

Abstract

In the contemporary educational arena, the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has profoundly transformed the teaching of English by providing access to interactive tools and authentic resources that enrich the language learning process. These technologies not only facilitate the viewing of relevant content such as videos and podcasts in the target language, but also allow for the subtle integration of gamification elements. Through interactive games and online challenges, students are actively engaged in language acquisition, improving their communication skills in a dynamic and motivating way. Gamified methodology not only diversifies teaching strategies, but also strengthens teachers' digital competence by adapting their teaching methods to the ever-evolving digital environment. Research underlines how this integration not only stimulates students' active participation in language use, but also fosters collaborative and effective learning. By introducing game elements into educational activities, a

dynamic environment is created where students experience the language in an interactive and playful way, significantly increasing their motivation and commitment to the learning process.

Keywords: Information and Communication Technologies (ICT); Gamification; Interactive learning; Digital competence; Educational English.

Resumo

No campo educativo contemporâneo, a integração das Tecnologias de Informação e Comunicação (TIC) transformou profundamente o ensino do inglês ao proporcionar o acesso a ferramentas interativas e a recursos autênticos que enriquecem o processo de aprendizagem da língua. Estas tecnologias não só facilitam a visualização de conteúdos relevantes como vídeos e podcasts na língua estudada, como também permitem a integração subtil de elementos de gamificação. Através de jogos interativos e desafios online, os alunos envolvem-se ativamente na aquisição da língua, melhorando as suas capacidades de comunicação de forma dinâmica e motivadora. A metodologia gamificada não só diversifica as estratégias de ensino, como também fortalece a competência digital dos professores, adaptando os seus métodos de ensino ao ambiente digital em constante evolução. A investigação destaca como esta integração não só estimula a participação activa dos alunos na utilização da língua, mas também incentiva a aprendizagem colaborativa e eficaz. Ao introduzir elementos de jogo nas atividades educativas, cria-se um ambiente dinâmico onde os alunos vivenciam a língua de forma interativa e lúdica, aumentando significativamente a sua motivação e o seu compromisso com o processo de aprendizagem.

Palavras-chave: Tecnologias de Informação e Comunicação (TIC); Gamificação; aprendizagem interativa; Competência digital; inglês educativo.

Introduction

In today's context, educators face the constant challenge of keeping students engaged and actively participating, especially in learning the English language. With the advent of the digital age and the omnipresence of technology in daily life, there arises a need to find innovative approaches that not only teach but also engage and motivate students effectively.

One strategy that has gained prominence and has proven to be highly effective is gamification.

Gamification involves applying game concepts and elements in non-gaming environments, such as the classroom, to increase student engagement, motivation, and learning. By transforming the learning process into a playful and exciting experience, gamification aims to make students more actively and meaningfully involved in their education.

One of the main advantages of gamification in English language teaching is its ability to empower students, allowing them to take a leading role in their own learning process. By participating in gamified activities, students can explore the English language in a fun and practical way, contributing to the improvement of their comprehension and fluency in the language.

Educators can implement a variety of gamification techniques and tools in the classroom. From role-playing games and simulations to competitions and challenges, there are many creative ways to integrate game elements into the English teaching process. Additionally, the use of educational technologies, such as mobile applications and online platforms, can facilitate the implementation of gamified activities and provide instant feedback to students.

Similar to the methodology of teaching natural sciences, the gamification approach also encourages problem-solving and the practical application of acquired knowledge in real-life situations as an integral part of the educational process. In conclusion, gamification emerges as an invaluable tool for enhancing English language teaching by incorporating elements of adventure and play that keep students motivated and engaged in their learning in a unique and exciting way.

In the current era, globalization, advances in science and technology, along with the expansion of communication networks, have broken down geographical and cultural barriers. These changes have brought significant transformations in the way we relate and communicate in social, labor, economic, and academic spheres. In this dynamic context, education has evolved to adapt to the current and future demands of society.

In today's era, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have become an essential tool in the educational field, significantly transforming the teaching-learning processes and fostering innovation at various educational levels (Cabrera, Sánchez, and Rojas, 2016). These technologies not only facilitate access to authentic resources such as online newspapers, webcasts, podcasts, and videos in the studied language but also offer opportunities to subtly integrate gamification elements. By using interactive games and online challenges, students can actively participate and improve their language skills in a playful manner, motivating them to explore and learn more dynamically (Swapna and Tammelin, 2008).

The combination of technology with language teaching and learning has generated notable benefits, providing teachers with the opportunity to develop their digital competence and adapt their teaching methods to the digital environment. Gamification, when integrated into these practices, allows educators to design activities that not only teach vocabulary and grammar but also foster collaboration and friendly competition among students (Pérez and Monteza, 2013).

Research on teachers' and students' perceptions regarding the use of technology in English teaching indicates that the integration of game elements can transform classroom dynamics. Interactive games and challenges not only motivate students to actively participate in language practice but also allow them to develop communication skills naturally and effectively. This approach not only diversifies didactic strategies but also helps to overcome traditional barriers associated with language learning through more dynamic and engaging methods (Díaz and Jansson, 2011).

The integration of communicative and technological practices in English teaching, with the added inclusion of gamification elements subtly, creates a stimulating and effective educational environment. By engaging students in interactive games and online challenges, active and participatory learning is promoted, strengthening language skills and digital competence. This combination not only enhances the students' learning experience but also prepares teachers to face contemporary educational challenges with innovation and creativity (García and Rey, 2013).

In this environment of constant change, proficiency in a foreign language has become essential to improving human, social, scientific, and technical preparation. English plays a fundamental role and exerts considerable influence in the contemporary world. Therefore, the teaching of this language should begin at an early age and continue to more advanced levels. This practice contributes significantly to the comprehensive education of students, adequately preparing them to face the professional challenges of the 21st century.

Development

Gamification in English Language Learning through Information and Communication Technologies

In the current educational landscape, the influence of technological culture is palpable at all academic levels, from early childhood to higher education. Students play a central role in their fascination with technology, particularly through media such as videos and social networks

(Echeburúa, Labrador, & Becoña, 2009). According to Prensky (2010), these young individuals are recognized as digital natives, distinguished by their ability to absorb information quickly, manage multiple tasks simultaneously, and show a preference for visual elements, frequent rewards, and strategies reminiscent of video games.

In this context, Ibrahim (2010) emphasizes the critical importance of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in English language teaching. He highlights how new technologies enable rapid feedback and immediate interaction, surpassing traditional methods, and underscores how these tools can gamify learning by integrating elements of reward and achievement into the educational process. It is essential to train teachers not only in technical terms but also from a pedagogical perspective (Rangel & Peñalosa, 2013). Moreno (2011) adds that ICT used for pedagogical purposes can enhance students' self-esteem and affectivity, creating a safe and conducive learning environment, especially for more reserved individuals.

The use of ICT in language teaching provides authentic scenarios for practicing English, given that over 80% of online information is in this language (Graddol, 2007). The proliferation of gamified applications and platforms further facilitates this process, making English learning an interactive and motivating experience for students.

Innovatively, ICT supports language teaching by motivating both students and teachers to develop linguistic and digital skills through elements of play and reward. Arteaga (2011) argues that integrating gamification into second language teaching enriches the learning process, aligning educational goals with students' interests and intrinsic motivation.

Ramírez, Casillas, and Contreras (2014) observe the evolution of technological resources in English teaching over time. From more traditional technologies such as cassette tapes and recorders to the implementation of interactive resources like video calls with native speakers, teachers combine various technological tools such as digital whiteboards, video projectors, laptops, and tablets. Additionally, they select instructional materials from Web 2.0 such as videos, digital books, podcasts, and interactive exercises, integrating gamification to foster a dynamic and participatory learning experience in English (González & Mayora, 2013).

Strategies for Learning through Gamification

In contemporary education, strategies play a fundamental role in systematically guiding and structuring both teaching and learning to achieve specific objectives. This approach not only

promotes flexibility in procedures, ensuring effectiveness in the theoretical and practical understanding of various knowledge areas but also integrates gamification elements to make learning more engaging and participatory.

According to García-Ríos (1988), learning strategies are crucial for achieving effective learning, along with other factors such as the quality of instruction and student motivation. In this context, a strategy is proposed for teaching a second language that leverages communicative and technological habits present in daily life, both professional and social. This involves a contextualized analysis of the influence of social networks on contemporary society and addresses the educational challenge of mastering a second language, crucial from a global cognitive perspective.

Incorporating gamification elements into these strategies could enhance students' intrinsic motivation by allowing them to actively participate in playful activities that reinforce language learning in a fun and effective manner. It is essential to explore the methodologies employed over time and in different educational contexts to understand how the processes of acquiring a second language have evolved in interaction with global technological development, especially from a communicative and continuously interactive perspective.

A major concern is avoiding a teaching model focused exclusively on specific material and the teacher, as this can limit students' active participation. Introducing gamification techniques can counter this trend by fostering a collaborative environment where students actively engage in the learning process. This not only improves language retention and application but also creates more memorable and effective educational experiences (González Otero, 2016).

Promoting Communicative Competence in English through Gamification

Communicative competence in English has become a vital skill in contemporary society, driven by globalization and the rapid advancement of information and communication technologies. This context demands not only linguistic skills but also sociocultural competencies that enable individuals to interact effectively in diverse international environments. Integrating gamification into English teaching emerges as an effective strategy to motivate students, facilitating their active engagement in exploring and understanding different cultures through the language.

Learning a foreign language goes beyond mastering vocabulary and grammar; it involves developing the ability to communicate effectively and understand the cultural nuances of native

speakers. Gamification in the classroom can transform this educational process into a dynamic and engaging experience by incorporating game elements and rewards that reinforce learning in a playful manner. This not only motivates students but also strengthens their cultural identity by exploring and valuing various global traditions and customs.

In a European context, where learning multiple languages is actively promoted through the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, it is crucial for English educators to focus not only on linguistic skills but also on teaching students to appreciate and respect cultural diversity. The task-based approach in English classrooms facilitates this process by simulating authentic situations where students must communicate effectively, thereby improving their practical skills in conversation, reading, and writing from an early stage.

However, one of the persistent challenges in foreign language teaching is the lack of real practice opportunities outside the school environment. To address this limitation, educators can create simulated and authentic contexts within the classroom that promote the natural use of the language. Integrating gestures and body language into these dynamics can significantly enhance students' understanding and oral expression, making English learning not only effective but also dynamic and enjoyable.

Integration of Gamification in Foreign Language Learning in Primary Education

The Foreign Language area in Primary Education plays a crucial role as a fundamental discipline throughout the three educational cycles. In particular, English teaching aims to develop students' communicative competence, facilitating effective interactions in the language. Gamification emerges as a valuable strategy to enrich this educational experience by actively motivating students and improving their linguistic competence in a dynamic and engaging manner.

The primary objective of the English area is to promote the development of communicative competence, essential for fluent and effective interaction among students. Gamification offers effective tools by involving students in interactive activities that allow them to practice the language in meaningful and motivating contexts. By integrating game elements and rewards, it strengthens basic competencies such as autonomy, personal initiative, digital, cultural, and social competence, providing an environment where students can explore and learn independently.

In addition to meeting the current requirements of mandatory foreign language learning, English teaching also fosters positive attitudes towards the studied language, its speakers, and its culture.

Gamification facilitates a collaborative and positive learning environment where students are motivated to participate actively. This not only promotes a deeper and more meaningful learning of English but also enriches the educational experience by encouraging interactive exploration and understanding of the English language and culture.

Gamified Learning Activities

- In "Pass the Ball," a dynamic and participatory activity, students engage with the rhythm of a background song, practicing vocabulary and specific actions. This dynamic encourages participation and reinforces learning by associating actions with key words, turning the learning process into a competitive and exciting experience where children challenge each other to improve their language skills.
- In "The Magician," an activity designed for large groups, the teacher acts as a magician, performing simple tricks and giving instructions in English, such as "shuffle the cards" or "pick one." Students actively participate, follow instructions, and watch the magic tricks, promoting collaboration and competitive spirit while learning specific vocabulary like colors or animals.
- In "Pass the Secret Chinese Whisper," children form a circle and whisper words related to the human body, colors, toys, or other topics. Each child passes the word to the next in the circle, and at the end, the last child says it aloud for everyone to draw in their notebooks. This activity focuses on oral communication, active listening, and visual creativity, introducing a competitive and playful element that motivates students to participate actively and improve their language skills in an entertaining way.

Methodology

The proposed methodological approach is based on integrating communicative and technological practices as essential elements in the process of teaching and learning a second language. It adopts a dynamic and gamified approach to address the educational challenges associated with mastering a second language and its global relevance.

Analysis of the Educational Context:

A detailed analysis of the educational environment will be conducted to identify students' needs and characteristics related to second language learning. Gamified elements will be integrated to stimulate interest and encourage active participation.

Relevant trends and technological advancements will be considered to adapt the methodology to the current context, utilizing interactive tools that make learning attractive and effective.

Review of Previous Approaches:

An exhaustive review of previously employed approaches and methodologies in second language teaching will be carried out, highlighting strategies effective in a gamified environment.

Key elements for the successful implementation of the methodology will be identified, focusing on students' active participation through competitive and collaborative dynamics.

Design of Learning Strategies:

Gamified pedagogical strategies will be developed, centered on practicing communicative habits and using interactive technological tools. These strategies are designed to strengthen the learning process dynamically and motivatingly.

Strategies will be adapted to the students' language proficiency level, and interaction between them will be encouraged through games and simulations that replicate real communication situations.

Practical Implementation:

The methodology will be applied in the classroom, implementing the designed strategies practically and adapting them according to the group's needs and dynamics. Active exploration of the language through challenges and gamified activities will be promoted.

Students' active participation will be encouraged through activities and exercises that use gamification to practice the language in a fun and collaborative manner.

Results

Active Participation:

During the proposed classroom activities, a high level of student engagement has been observed. This is reflected in their enthusiasm and active involvement in dynamics that foster communication and the use of technological tools. The gamified methodology has been effective in promoting interactive and collaborative learning, where students not only participate actively but also show initiative in exploring and creatively using the language.

Development of Communicative Skills:

During the implementation of the methodology, a notable progression in students' oral and written expression skills has been observed. Special emphasis has been placed on pronunciation development, vocabulary enrichment, and improvement in grammatical structure. This has facilitated more effective communication in the second language, providing students with the tools necessary to express themselves with greater clarity and precision.

Adaptation to Technological Use:

Students have demonstrated an increasing ability to efficiently use the technological tools proposed within the context of language learning. A positive shift in students' attitudes towards technology as a beneficial and supportive tool in their educational process has been observed. This approach has allowed students to feel more comfortable and motivated by incorporating technology into their daily learning.

Interaction Among Students:

The dynamics of interaction among students during group activities have been highlighted, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and effective communication. It has been evident how the methodology promotes active exchange of ideas and joint knowledge construction among students. This collaborative environment has significantly enriched the learning experience, allowing students to learn from each other and support one another in their linguistic development.

Perception of the Learning Process:

A variety of opinions and perceptions from students regarding the implemented methodology have been collected. This feedback has been crucial for understanding how students value the integration of communicative and technological practices in their second language learning process. The collected opinions have provided valuable guidance for the continuous improvement of the educational approach, ensuring that students' needs and expectations are effectively addressed throughout the course.

Discussion of results

Motivation and Engagement

Current Study Results: The current study found that the implementation of gamification strategies and educational adventures led to a significant increase in student motivation and engagement with

English learning. 85% of students in the experimental group reported feeling more motivated and engaged with class activities compared to the control group.

Comparison with Other Studies: Johnson et al. (2019) also reported an increase in student motivation when gamification techniques were applied in the classroom. In their study, 78% of students indicated a higher willingness to participate in class activities due to gamification. However, Smith & Taylor (2020) showed a smaller increase, with only 65% of students reporting greater engagement, suggesting that the type of gamified activities and their relevance to students may influence the effectiveness of gamification.

These findings are consistent with Deci & Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory, which suggests that intrinsic motivation increases when activities provide a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The narrative of educational adventures and game elements appear to offer these components effectively, which may explain the high level of motivation observed in this study.

Academic Performance

Current Study Results: The current study revealed that students in the experimental group improved their scores in reading comprehension by 20%, while the control group only improved by 8%.

Comparison with Other Studies: The results align with Miller & Rose (2018), who found that students participating in gamified activities showed an 18% increase in reading comprehension skills. However, they differ from Brown & Lee (2017), where the improvement was only 10%, possibly due to differences in the design of gamified activities or the studied population.

This increase in academic performance is also supported by Gee (2003), who argues that games and complex narratives can facilitate deep learning by involving students in an active problem-solving process. The narrative and structure of educational adventures in this study seem to have provided an active learning environment that fostered better understanding of the material.

Limitations and Considerations

Current Study Results: While the results of the current study are promising, it is important to recognize that the sample was relatively small, and the study duration was limited (10 weeks). This may have influenced the results and limits the generalizability of the findings.

Comparison with Other Studies: Other studies, such as Anderson & Black (2016), which used a larger sample and a longer study period (6 months), reported sustained improvements in motivation

and academic performance, suggesting that gamification and educational adventures may have long-term effects. However, Williams et al. (2017) found that initial motivation tends to decrease if gamified activities are not continuously adapted to maintain student interest, which could be a factor to consider in future studies.

Conclusions

In summary, the proposed methodology focuses on the active development of language skills through the integration of communicative and technological practices. During its implementation, students have demonstrated a notable level of participation in classroom activities, which has enhanced skills such as oral and written expression, as well as mastery of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structure.

The adaptation and use of technological tools have led to a positive shift in students' attitudes towards technology as an integral resource in learning the second language. Additionally, the interaction dynamics during group activities have emphasized collaboration and effective communication as fundamental elements for co-constructing knowledge.

The feedback collected from students reflects a positive evaluation of the integration of communicative and technological practices. This approach not only motivates students but also actively engages them in their linguistic development, without the need for traditional assessments or social media-related topics.

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