

## Gamification to Engage Young Learners in the English Class\*

### Gamificación para captar la atención de niños aprendices en la clase de inglés

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\* Original Research Article

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**Reception:** June 20, 2022

**Approval:** July 29, 2022


 <https://doi.org/10.19053/2011835X.15380>


#### How to cite this article:


Barbosa, L.F., Dueñez, J., Patiño, D., & Castellanos, J. (2022). Gamification to Engage Young Learners in the English Class. *ENLETAWA Journal*, 15(1), 1-25.

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## Abstract

In this action research, our purpose was to carry out a pedagogical intervention in the English class using the Gamification method with first grade children in a private bilingual school. In the needs analysis we identify aspects that emerge from learning such as lack of motivation or disinterest and low development in listening and speaking skills. The study is based on the questions, How does gamification support children's English skills? And What is the role of gamification in student engagement? We focus on three theoretical constructs: significant learning, young learners and gamification, taking into account authors such as Rieber (1996); Delgado and Breña, (2022), Ospina (2006), among others. When analyzing field notes and video transcripts, the results show that there was active participation, continuous student learning, greater interest in exploring, and confidence to ask unknown topics without fear. The development of listening and speaking skills was evidenced when recognizing, pronouncing and associating meanings in English and Spanish. The children expressed their knowledge, worked as a team with their peers, and there was commitment from the students

**Keywords:** Gamification, motivation, meaningful learning, young learners, speaking, listening, pedagogical intervention, action research.

## Resumen

En esta investigación- acción, nuestro propósito fue realizar una intervención pedagógica en la clase de inglés utilizando el método de Gamificación con niños de grado primero en un colegio bilingüe de educación privada. En el análisis de necesidades identificamos aspectos que afectan el aprendizaje como falta de motivación o desinterés y bajo desarrollo en habilidades de escucha y habla. El estudio se basa en las preguntas ¿Cómo apoya la Gamificación las habilidades de inglés de los niños? y ¿Cuál es el papel de la gamificación en el compromiso de los estudiantes? Nos centramos en tres constructos teóricos: aprendizaje significativo, niños aprendices y gamificación, teniendo en cuenta autores como Rieber (1996); Delgado y Breña, (2022), Ospina (2006), entre otros. Al analizar notas de campo y transcripciones de videos, los resultados muestran que hubo participación activa, aprendizaje continuo de los estudiantes, mayor interés por explorar, y seguridad para preguntar temas desconocidos sin temor. Se evidenció el desarrollo de las habilidades de escucha y habla al reconocer, pronunciar y asociar significados en inglés y español. Los niños expresaron sus conocimientos, trabajaron en equipo con sus compañeros y hubo compromiso por parte de los estudiantes.

**Palabras clave:** Gamificación, motivación, aprendizaje significativo, niños aprendices, habla, escucha, intervención pedagógica, investigación- acción

## **Introduction**

In this study, we describe the implementation of playful activities through the gamification method with a focus on listening and speaking to develop the student's skills in learning a second language (English). Furthermore, our participants were a group of 1st grade primary school students in a bilingual private school in Chía, between 6 and 7 years old. In this article, first we state the research problem related to the weakness and needs of the majority of the population and how we found out about it. Second, we present the literature review in light of different authors through three main constructs. Next, we explain the research design and the pedagogical intervention through face-to-face sessions in which we applied several lesson plans. Finally, we discuss and reflect on the findings and conclusions.

## **Statement of the problem**

In the first place, we carried out a detailed analysis of the needs of the English class in primary school through an interview with the school coordinator. In that order of ideas, the coordinator said that there were three factors that influenced the children's performance such as personal, social, and institutional factors. Regarding the institutional factor, the coordinator highlighted that teachers must be prepared to guarantee that students can learn in a meaningful way everything that is taught. On the other hand, the social factor involves age, gender, and population, and these may influence the quality of the educational level and the achievement of meaningful learning. Other variables such as the family's economic resources, the family environment, the children's skills and experiences, among others, would go along with the personal factor. In addition, the coordinator highlighted that it was important for the children to be interested in learning, be safe and be calm to increase their motivation and achieve their learning goals. For that reason, the coordinator became interested in and supported the pedagogical intervention by involving the method of gamification, which may encourage the students and help them improve their knowledge in the second language (English) through games and interactive activities. We chose first grade for our intervention because it was important to know the reasons for the lack of interest and motivation on the part of these students. Due to the fact that these young learners start learning a second language at an early age, this can be a bit complicated for them since it is a new language that they are beginning to learn and know. In some cases, some of the methods that their teachers use to teach the second language (English) can become complex and tedious for them or not suitable for their learning style, which may result in low levels of motivation to learn something new during their school process. In this regard, Ospina (2006) contends, "Contributing to students feeling motivated to learn implies the

existence in them of total clarity and coherence regarding the objective of the learning process, that they find it interesting and that they feel competent to solve the challenge" (p,160).

Thus, we decided to carry out our pedagogical intervention involving the gamification method, focusing on speaking and listening, to work hand in hand with dynamic activities and generate first graders' engagement and interest in the second language (English ). In this way, they may feel confident to participate and interact with each other and so they may become more involved and interested in learning and may experience meaningful learning.

Wherefore, at the time of teaching a new language, we know that not all students learn in the same way; that is why our purpose is to reduce first grader's difficulties and above all potentiate two of their four skills (listening, and speaking) in the second language, through of the gamification method. This method may allow us to interact with the students in a more dynamic way involving kinesthetic games that may cater for meaningful learning. Our pedagogical intervention may make possible different benefits for the students, like strengthening their abilities and qualities, increase participation and interaction with others, spark motivation and interest for different topics, engage in exploration and progressive use of the second language in different everyday spaces. Likewise, this study may have important outcomes for us; for example, it may allow us to generate different innovative strategies, create effective environments away from traditional education, and enhance our role and experience in the classroom. Additionally, the Biopsychosocial and Cultural Approach (Pillar of our university) deals with these different dimensions of children. The biological dimension involves biological evolution and the relation with the environment, which we took into account in this study. In the second place, the psychological part is closely related to behaviors, skills, and cognitive processes depending on the different learning styles of the students. Finally, a social and cultural approach aims to develop in the face of different activities, positive inter/intrapersonal relationships, and knowledge about society and culture.

### **Research Questions**

- How does gamification support children's English speaking and listening skills?
- What is the role of gamification in students' engagement?

## Research Objectives

- To describe how children's English speaking and listening skills develop with the implementation of gamification.
- To describe the role of gamification in the students' engagement.

## Theoretical Framework

Following, we present the main constructs of the literature review that support our study: Gamification, young learners, and meaningful learning. From now on, we affirm that students learn in different ways since "This is due to extrinsic and intrinsic elements thanks to the level of maturity, experiences, and personality" (Lynch, 2017, Para. 1). For this reason, it can be said that before applying any learning method, it is important to know the needs of the students, in addition to applying not one but several tools that adapt to the learning of each student, and in this way motivate them to learn English and get good results. Therefore, in line with Deterding, et al (2011):

*Gamification is then a didactic tool that is based on the general characteristic aspects of games to achieve the immersion of the student in a learning process that motivates to achieve a progressive mastery of a skill, in this specific case of the English language. (p 9)*

As for the second construct, young learners, it can be stated that young people learn better by playing, while adults feel comfortable with abstract learning. In regards to this, we are guided by Piaget's theory of cognitive development that considers that young learners are still developing; that is, they are still working to move from concrete to abstract thinking. Finally, for our third construct, meaningful learning, we draw from Ausubel's ideas on taking advantage of children's previous knowledge. He states, "...consolidation is consistent with its basic premise that the single most important factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows" (Ausubel, n.d., p.20). That is, learning occurs when new information connects with a previous relevant knowledge mainly through experience.

## **Gamification**

Gamification is an evolving method whose benefits range from increasing learners' motivation to allowing their engagement by incorporating game design elements in educational environments. Because students learn in different ways due to extrinsic

and intrinsic elements according to their level of maturity, experiences, and personality, they can explore and use their full potential in the classroom to develop their skills such as listening and speaking. To do this, gamification helps students learn by means of eye-catching tools that allow the children to be interested in learning. Regarding this aspect, Rieber (1996) states that "playing a game successfully may require extensive critical thinking and problem-solving skills" (p.51).

In this way, with the implementation of the gamification method, and in some cases with the help of technology, it is possible to maintain the students' interest in the learning process due to the fact that these activities will allow them to interact with other children and achieve a socio-cultural exchange; that is to say that "Gamification is perceived by both teachers and students as a teaching strategy that develops soft and cognitive skills" (Delgado and Breña, 2022, p.5). In the same line of thought, Smirdele (2020) states that "The main goals of gamification are to enhance certain abilities, introduce objectives that give learning a purpose, engage students, optimize learning, support behavior change, and socialize" (p.1). As a result, this learning technique offers us an effective and attractive source from a comprehensive perspective for the students facilitating the teaching-learning process and therefore, obtaining satisfactory results especially, in listening and speaking skills.

To conclude, gamification allows the playful element to be used as a generator of motivation and interest in the participants, and make it a pleasant experience.

### ***Young Learners***

According to the international environment, the population between 6 and 12 years of age is called *young learners*. Thanks to determining factors of a biological and psychological nature, their surrounding context, age, and even experiences, young learners have various particular features. For them, it is difficult to be motivated to learn languages without first exploring or learning through different and innovative learning methods. Moreover, since young people are actively developing their skills, they learn more efficiently through play.

Second, young learners get bored more easily and generally lose interest after a short period of time, and show self-centered attitudes and a need for individual attention most of the time. On the other hand, and not least, young students like to discover things characterized by curiosity and enthusiasm. They like to make sense of the world around them through engaging, experiential, and motivational activities that they engage in themselves. They also tend to learn indirectly from everything

that surrounds them, without necessarily focusing on the subject that is being taught, which is why it is important to keep in mind that they prefer specific activities, as Ospina (2006) states:

*...students hardly learn. There is not always an absence of motivation; sometimes, what occurs is an inconsistency between the motives of the teacher and those of the student, or the fact that they are not motivated because they do not learn becomes a vicious circle...(p,1)*

Oftentimes, the lack of interest on the part of the young students, may be triggered by a teacher who does not present adequate materials for their learning, and this can become conflictive during their process of acquiring knowledge. According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, young students are still developing. That is, they are still working their way from concrete to abstract thinking. Also, the idea is to take into account all the aforementioned and other vital factors such as the context in which the young learners are, and previous knowledge, among others; as Belén (2018) affirms, "Learning contexts are fundamental, and it is important for children that everything they learn is contextualized, has a reason for being and can become meaningful learning" (p,9). Indeed, taking all this into account allows us to implement successful strategies and tools based on the students' context for their knowledge to be increased and their learning to be more pleasant, resulting in compliance with each of the proposed objectives and yielding effective results. To summarize, it is important to focus on this construct and according to the context of the students, it is the engagement that they have to learn something new or in this case acquire a new language since it is important to always have a good disposition, be motivated and always have a good attitude for the activities that the teacher proposes during his classes, in this way the students can obtain favorable results.

### ***Meaningful learning***

One of our main objectives in this study is to allow for meaningful learning. Indeed, children experience meaningful learning when they feel that all the pieces of a concept, idea, theory, formula, or argument fit together. According to Ausubel (n.d.), "Meaningful learning is the human mechanism, par excellence, to acquire and store the immense amount of ideas and information represented in any field of knowledge" (p,2). In this study, we actually involve interactive tools to enable the student to interact with their peers so that they can improve their knowledge, obtain good results, and be more interested in learning everything related to the subject of English.

Moreover, meaningful learning involves careful planning. In that sense, Ausubel affirms (2012), "...the teacher performs his work based on well-established learning principles, he will be able to rationally choose new teaching techniques and improve the effectiveness of his work" (p, 1). Therefore, it is paramount that the teacher chooses appropriate strategies and tools that allow the students to improve their knowledge in a meaningful way, and thus, the student can be motivated and interested in acquiring new knowledge. In fact, the literature points out social and academic benefits for the children. On the one hand, children's self-esteem increases when the teacher values the effort of what they have learned, also using their previous knowledge; on the other hand, meaningful learning helps students increase their academic results.

Finally, it is essential to take into account the relevance to promote engagement in the learning process. In this respect, Schlechty (2011) states, "The engaged student finds meaning and value in the tasks that make up the work" (p,3). This means that the teacher has created learning activities that make the students feel confident to complete them and when they are able to share them with their classmates, meaning learning happens. Only then, everything that the teacher implemented has been effective.

Learning styles is another aspect of paramount importance in our study, which is closely related to meaningful learning. There are five learning styles: visual, auditory, written, kinesthetic, and multimodal. Research has shown that visual learners learn by reading or seeing images, pictures, any kind of visual material, and they understand and remember things by sight. The auditory learners learn by hearing and listening, and they understand and remember things they have heard (What's Your Learning Style? The Learning Styles, n.d.). The written style refers to learning by writing, kinesthetic learners have to do something to get it, while multimodal learners switch between different techniques. In this way, it depends on how the teachers facilitate students' learning using diverse activities involving all these styles, also helping them to explore which is the most effective learning style for them and so reach meaningful learning.

## **Research Design**

For our study, we decided to use qualitative research since it allows us to observe how the activities focused on gamification help the student learn, focused on only two of the four skills (Speaking and Listening). Indeed, qualitative research helps us obtain a deeper understanding of the results of our pedagogical intervention. It is also important to mention that the qualitative approach is consistent with the



development of this study because it allows us to perceive and approach social reality. In that respect, Hernández (2014) defines the qualitative approach as a set of interpretive practices that make the world "visible", transform it and turn it into a series of representations in the form of observations, annotations, records, and documents. This qualitative approach allows us to include the experiences, behaviors, and motivations that the students came to demonstrate in each of the gamification activities that were used in order to know and share the favorable results.

The specific research design we chose for this study is Action Research. It is a method of systematic inquiry that teachers undertake as researchers of their own practice (University of Bristol, 2021). With this method, we seek to investigate a specific problem, for this, it is important to investigate and take action that can seek possible solutions. Each cycle has four steps: plan, act, observe and reflect. Kemmis and McTaggart's Model (1988) shows how each stage leads to the next planning step and is also integrated into action and reflection, guaranteeing a good final result. In our study, first we identified a research problem: lack of interest and motivation in the English class; for this reason, we planned to implement the gamification method with activities that would help motivate the student to learn the second language (English). The action stage started when we met the students and compiled what the most common needs of each of the students were and so on. This information allowed us to involve the right tools in the lessons. Next, we carried out 4 activities in each class, for a total of 20. We complemented our lessons with conversations, thus involving listening and speaking to increase students' interest in pronunciation and vocabulary around different topics. We took care of creating students' peace of mind when learning new skills and not focusing on obtaining a grade.

### **Research Setting and Participants**

The study took place in a private bilingual school that has 25 years of experience in the educational sector. It is located in a large rural campus in Chia, Cundinamarca. The school has availability of technological resources. It is certified as a bilingual school and supported by an international curriculum, enhancing the communicative skills of students in the English and French languages.

Furthermore, the number of participants was 17 (4 girls and 13 boys) from grade 1, between 6 and 7 years old, positioned in families of a socio-economic stratum of 4 and 5 levels. The results of the Cambridge International Tests presented by the students at the beginning of 2021 show the following: 45% of the students have better English development, while 55% had some difficulties and needs with the

second language at a general level. Also, the skill with the greatest complexity and low percentage of development is speaking with only 30% of performance, compared to 65% of listening skills.

Based on this, we planned the gamification activities, which are dynamic activities, to allow the student to become interested in and better understand English since they saw the second language as complicated and boring.

### **Ethical considerations**

For our study, we presented the proposal to the school and obtained permission to develop the pedagogical intervention. Likewise, we obtained the permission to conduct an interview to identify the opportunities and plans of the school. We also obtained consent from the parents of our participants explaining that the anonymity of the students was ensured so as not to share any data in video or audio. The consent also specified that in each session they would have our accompaniment without affecting their grades in the institution. Likewise, we make it clear that the results and data collected were going to be part of an article. Finally, it is important to mention that for the realization of this study, total privacy was maintained in data gathering and processing; that is to say, the names of the students are not revealed for any reason. We decided to name the students as follows: student 1, student 2, student 3, and so on.

### **Data collection**

During the data collection of this study, we used two instruments for data collection. The first one was field notes, which we used to write the most essential points of each class and make observations that allowed knowing how gamification played an essential role during the learning process of each student. According to Sacred Heart University (n.d), they are “...notes created by the researcher during the act of qualitative fieldwork to recall and record behaviors, activities, events, and other characteristics of an observation environment” (Para,1). The good disposition and interaction of the students gave us support so that note taking was easy and thus in this way we were able to categorize the different moments of each class.

Another instrument for data collection was transcriptions of video recordings. As stated by the IRC Research Toolkit (n.d), “...Transcription is the action of providing a written account of spoken words” (p.1). The purpose of the transcriptions was to know the opinions and ideas of the students and how they acquired knowledge

through the strategies used in each class. During our study, we recorded these videos and kept the students' identity confidentially.

### **Pedagogical intervention**

In this study, we intentionally planned an action for the students based on pedagogy, which is why we refer to the application of a pedagogical intervention. The main objective is to transform the learning environment by the use of gamification to support students' English listening and speaking skills.

According to (Ceballos, et al, 2015) "... the strengthening of the ability to speak in the teaching of English involves the appropriation of the general linguistic regularities of the English language system to achieve an intelligible communication of ideas efficiently and effectively" (p. 290). Therefore, potentiating this skill from an early age will ensure the student to be able to solve any type of linguistic difficulty typical of the second language and thus, will always allow assertive communication, which of course, is the basis of relationships and human development in society.

On the other hand, significantly influencing listening skills in children turns out to be decisive in achieving significant learning in the acquisition of the English language, since it notably improves pronunciation, allows easy vocabulary expansion, strengthens comprehension processes, and improves phonetics, among others.

As stated by Ceballos, et al, (2015):

*... listening has to do with pragmatic elements such as the recognition of the speaker's intention, the recognition of the social, cultural, and ideological context from which one speaks. In this way, developing the ability to listen also requires complex cognitive processes, which implies weaving the meaning immediately, with few possibilities of going back in the interpretive process of the meanings (p.290).*

Finally, we carried out a total of five (4) lesson plans, each class lasted 2 hours and each of the topics was based on their study programs. The activities in each lesson plan involved permanently the use of the gamification method and materials like board games, online games, videos, worksheets, and the sort. 1 class per week was held; in addition, 1 of those classes was feedback where we were able to listen in a general way to the opinions of the students about how they felt during this process.

DATE	TOPIC	OBJECTIVE
Week 1	Shapes and Colors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To recognize the different vocabulary related to shapes and colors used in daily life.</li> <li>● To improve the skills of listening and speaking with different activities to learn the shapes and colors with gamification.</li> </ul>
Week 2	Moments of the Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To improve the vocabulary of the moments of the day with different activities of gamification</li> <li>● To develop the students' knowledge about the moments of the day through skills in listening and speaking</li> </ul>
Week 3	Animals and Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To classify and listen to the types of animals between wild or domestic.</li> <li>● To practice the vocabulary</li> <li>● To Identify through images the type of food.</li> </ul>
Week 4	Physical Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To identify the vocabulary of physical appearance.</li> <li>● To use correctly of physical appearance to describe people.</li> <li>● To practice the pronunciation of physical appearance.</li> </ul>

## Data Analysis and Findings

To collect the data, we carried out a detailed process of data analysis in which, firstly, we used the Grounded theory Approach. According to Charmaz (1995), “it allows us to explicitly join the research process with theoretical development” (p.28). This process consisted of examining the qualitative data that we collected in the field notes and transcriptions to obtain assertive information because of the application of the pedagogical intervention.

**Table 1.** Abbreviations of data Instruments

Instrument	Abbreviation
Students	S1, S2, S3...
Field Notes	FN1, FN2, FN3...
Video Transcripts	VT1, VT2...

Second, we used the coding technique that consisted of naming the data with codes that were listed and reduced as we progressively named all the field notes and transcriptions. This is what Bryman (2016) describes as “...Coding in qualitative data analysis tends to be in a constant state of potential revision and fluidity” (p,568). This process allowed us to rigorously define final categories of the analysis. That is, it allows us to reduce data contained in the field notes and transcripts until we reached two main categories: *Instilling Pedagogical Dynamism* and *Nurturing Interactive Learning*, each one encompassing two related subcategories: *practicing skills with different tools*, *using attractive plan of actions*, *opening the way for integration strategies* and *getting the picture of how each student learns*.

Through the triangulation method understood by Heale, 2013 as “...Triangulation may be the use of multiple theories, data sources, methods or investigators within the study of a single phenomenon...” (p.2) we compared information through the collection of data with approximate similarities of the study to validate the learning results.

In summary, the information collected allowed us to identify some results, reach conclusions and suggest some innovative strategies to implement in classes. The data collected resulted in the categories and subcategories that we analyze below.

**Table 2.** Questions, Categories, and subcategories.

Research Questions	Categories	Subcategories
How does gamification support children`s English speaking and listening skills?	Instilling Pedagogical Dynamism	- Practicing skills with different tools - Using an attractive plan of actions
What is the role of gamification in students` engagement?	Nurturing Interactive Learning	-Opening the way for integration strategies - Getting the picture of how each student learns

From the research questions, we were able to identify two subcategories for each question, which prevailed in the reduction process and thus allowed us to define the main categories of the study as shown below.

In our applications, the first two subcategories focused on the practice of skills (listening and speaking) through different attractive tools that allow the student to be motivated and interested in learning the second language. According to what was expressed by Chacòn and Pèrez (2011):

*Those who consider the use of ICT in the teaching of English are conceived as a resource that mediates learning and stimulates the necessary motivation for this language, as well as the improvement of all linguistic skills within it...(p, 15).*

As we well know, in the use of the gamification method we use didactic support tools, especially with technological resources such as songs, videos, interactive games, and dynamic activities that allow students to be more motivated and active in their process, thus facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and language skills.

### ***Instilling Pedagogical Dynamism***

The first category we deal with is Instilling Pedagogical Dynamism, which synthesizes the learning method on which we based our study. It was developed through different didactic activities implemented in the classroom to achieve greater interest, motivation, and activation; therefore, achieving significant learning in the second language.

**Practicing skills with different tools.** It is important to mention we focused on students' speaking and listening skills, and to do so, we used different gamification activities in our lessons. We could say that this subcategory explains the role of the gamification in supporting the development of such skills. First, the data showed that there was increased motivation as students engaged in sharing previous knowledge, which was usually done in their first language. During the lessons, students learnt words and progressively pronounced them well and used them; for example, to answer questions or identify images. In this respect, Deterding, et al (2011) say:

*Gamification is then a didactic tool that is based on the general characteristic aspects of games to achieve the immersion of the student in a learning process that motivates him to achieve a progressive mastery of a skill, in this specific case of the English language. (p. 9)*

The following excerpts illustrate students' engagement and progression of the speaking skill.

**Image 1.** Video Transcript 1(VT1).

April 26th, 2022	#2	20 minutes	All the students	<p>Student: los domésticos son los que son educados y los salvajes no son educados.</p> <p>Teacher: Yes, excellent. ok, now my friends; pay attention with this activity ok. We are going to do an activity about animals. The idea in this activity is see and select the name of animals</p> <p>What is this picture? Students: Dog Teacher: Very good.</p>	<p>6 Minute: We are going to start with the following next activity that you are going to do about animals. The idea in this activity is to select the names of the animals and classify them.</p> <p>First Dog and it's domestic (children repeat to practice the pronunciation with each of the animals)</p> <p>student #7: say the domestic ones are the ones that are educated and the savages are not educated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous knowledge</li> <li>• Interaction with other children</li> <li>• Pronunciati on practice</li> </ul>
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**Image 2.** Video Transcript 2 (VT2).

<p>dog.</p> <p>Students: Dog</p> <p>Teacher: Next</p> <p>Students: Tiger</p> <p>Teacher: In spanish is?</p> <p>Students: Tigre</p> <p>Teacher: ok, and remember what is the classification of animals is?. there are two options: wild or domestic</p> <p>Teacher: What do you think is dog?</p> <p>Students: Domestic</p> <p>Teacher: Very good, thank you.</p> <p>and the next wild or domestic</p> <p>Students: Wild</p> <p>Teacher: Es</p>	<p>Cow: Domestic</p> <p>Bear: Wild</p> <p>Duck: Domestic</p> <p>Shark: Wild</p> <p>Rabbit: Wild</p> <p>Snake: Wild</p> <p>Participate and repeat the pronunciation much more, have greater knowledge for classifying animals and have greater participation in the activities.</p> <p>She wonders if the information is clear, all the students say yes</p>	
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**Image 3.** Video Transcript 3 (VT3).



		<p>es conejo; radish es rábano.</p> <p>Next: grapes Teacher: Do you like grapes? Students: Yes, las uvas.</p> <p>Teacher: Next apple: Students: Manzana. Teacher: Do you like green apples or red apples? Students: Green apple.</p>	<p>Explaining the difference between a radish and a rabbit. (same pronunciation for him)</p> <p>When we ask about grapes, students #3 and 6 commented that they liked this fruit.</p> <p>Student #12 is the only one who answers about the meaning of pineapple.</p> <p>Throughout the class all the students were very active with the pronunciation, interested in knowing some fruits and vegetables that they did not know.</p>	
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**Using an attractive plan of actions.**

Our lessons followed an organization that included warm-up, development and final activity. In all these stages, we involved gamification to make the lessons attractive and appealing for our students. We could evidence that some of them were always attentive and willing to participate in the activities. Despite the fact that for others it was complicated, since they did not know the words in English, or did not have enough confidence to participate, the different gamification activities supported their learning because the students became motivated and interested in the topics of the class, and eventually, began to improve the two main skills of the study (Speaking and listening).

**Image 4.** Field note 1 (FN1).

<p><b>Final Activity:</b> Feedback of development within the classroom in a playful and didactic way, demonstrating more efficient group work, the use of English language and the application of vocabulary about the topic. The audios were resources that caught the attention of the students.</p>	<p>This activity was able to enhance the knowledge worked on during the session. The presentations by children were very good, the listening and speaking skills were strengthened. The creativity and specially, oral aptitudes were improved.</p>
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**Image 5.** Field note 2 (FN2).

Time	Notes	Comments
2 hours in total	<p><b>Warm up:</b> It begins by presenting the video, on the classification of wild and domestic animals. After that, in the activity they manage to remember and mention the name and the classification. This first exercise is done with the whole group.</p>	<p>In the first activity the children were very aware of the video, likewise, they were practicing the pronunciation.</p> <p>At this point, listening was developed in order to practice oral skills.</p>

The two subcategories that have been explained relate to the concept of interaction strategies and their relationship with the knowledge of the student's learning style. According to Corrales (2012), "The interaction strategies were forms of teaching, where the student with the intervention of the teacher, was constituted as a subject that socialized, discussed, narrated, expressed, apprehended, practiced, explained, conceptualized, enriched, produced, built, generated points of view regarding certain topics" (p,128). As shown in the excerpts, interaction, and active participation individually and in groups played a decisive and important role in the development of the skills. Likewise, different ways of teaching focused on the ways of learning according to the potentiation of the skills and the integration of students in favor of the development of communication, and in this way, the fulfillment of the proposed goals evidencing a progressive advance.

### Nurturing Interactive Learning

The second category resulting from the analysis of our data is Nurturing Interactive Learning. Our participants in our study were young learners; therefore, we sought to innovate and avoid the use of traditional methods, which allowed us to create different and pleasant pedagogical environments of communication, interaction, and active participation in an increasingly effective way.

**Opening the way for integration strategies.** By considering the different learning styles of our participants, we could achieve integration. As reiterated by Ausubel (2012), "...the teacher performs his [her] work based on well-established learning principles, he [she] will be able to rationally choose new teaching techniques and improve the effectiveness of his work" (p, 1). For this reason, we cannot ignore the teaching role as the main guarantor of meaningful learning through interaction.

The following video transcript excerpt shows the final product of a short and simple conversation between two students. The students interact and display a fluent use

of new vocabulary as well as correct pronunciation about hobbies. They interact in the construction of dialogue.

**Image 5.** Video transcript 5 (VT5).

May 18th, 2022	#5	2 minutes	Student #4 and student #10	St. 4: "I would like to play with you, but I don't know your favorite activities." St. 10: "...I love practicing activities in my free time. For example, singing, reading, playing Pokemon, and dancing..." St. 4: "(Laugh)... Can we play together?" St. 10: "Yeah!" St. 4: "Oh, wait! and your friends?" St. 10: "They play basketball" St. 4: "I have a great idea! If we play basketball and then play Pokemon?" St. 10: "Amazing! Let's go!"	At the beginning, the classroom is set and a communicative environment is generated in which they have the mission of dialoguing among classmates on the topics that they like the most. We watch an interactive video of children as an example and then, we form pairs, randomly selecting a specific topic and we begin with the communicative dynamics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New vocabulary</li> <li>• Interaction</li> <li>• Development of listening and speaking skills</li> </ul>
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**Getting the picture of how each student learns.** We evidenced interactive relationships through the creation of different and striking environments or activities such as games of pairs and interactive crossword puzzles with auditory and visual aids for students, which allowed increased participation and integration in the classroom. From the following excerpts from field notes, we illustrate the continuous strengthening of the two skills and the permanent search for communication in the second language.

**Image 6.** Field note 2 (FN2).

	NOTES:	COMMENTS
	<p><b>Development:</b> In the moment of exploration Listen and be able to identify the meaning of each image; then on the board place the name along with the correct classification.</p> <p>Also, to practice exercise they can strengthen the listening skills related to different instructions by the teachers and speaking skills.</p>	<p>In the activity they correctly identified and <b>classified the animals</b> and made the correct <b>pronunciation</b>. Only in one animal they tried to <b>confuse but clarification was made</b> that it could be taken in both ways.</p> <p>In the fruit and vegetable activity, they also had a lot of active participation and curiosity to know the pronunciation and meaning of not so common fruits or vegetables. Everyone went to the board to choose the fruit and say its name in English and its meaning in Spanish.</p>

**Image 7.** *Field note 3 (FN3).*

Time	Notes	Comments
2 hours in total	<p><b>Warm up:</b> The teachers said hello to the students, then they explained the dynamic of the class. The teachers started the class with the activity of the crossword, the students tried to guess through the clues and some examples that the teachers gave them, so this way was easier for them to guess the words.</p>	<p>The students were very active during this activity, when they did not understand they asked questions and the teachers explained again, among all of us we discussed the answers, the spelling, the pronunciation, when this activity the warm up, the rest of the topic was easy for them.</p> <p>At the beginning of the class, 90% of the students were active with the activities and interactions, while 10% were shy, but when a question was asked of them, they answered it correctly with the support of the teacher.</p>

To answer the questions, How does gamification support children`s English speaking and listening skills? and What is the role of gamification in students` engagement? We found that when putting non-traditional activities into practice, active participation was evidenced.

Also, we observed students` continuous learning. In fact, they obtained significant results such as interest in exploring activities, security to ask unknown topics without fear, and development of listening and speaking skills by recognizing, pronouncing, associating their meanings in English and Spanish, expressing their knowledge, and working as a team with their peers. All this generated commitment on the part of the students.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the activities developed in our lessons, and the support that gamification gave the young learners' English listening and speaking skills, we identified that teachers have a very important role since we oversee creating different strategies and tools that allow young learners to significantly improve their learning processes. Likewise, we have to encourage them to become interested and committed to everything they wish to learn.

In the same way, we can affirm the importance and advantages that can be had on the development of speaking and listening skills at an early age for learning a second language, since children may achieve significant learning when non-traditional activities and opportunities are strengthened. Further, it is through our pedagogical actions that young learners' cognitive skills are put into practice in any context.

Moreover, we identified that putting into practice dynamic activities allow young learners to share ideas and socialize with their peers. This also generated a safer environment for integration, interaction and communication as they felt accompanied by the teachers, gained confidence to ask any questions without fear of negative grades because we only focused our attention on learning and motivation of the students according to their abilities.

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