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PUJILÍ CAMPUS

EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES, MAJORING IN ENGLISH

MODALITY: RESEARCH REPORT

THEME: “GAME-WORK AS A STRATEGY TO TEACH ENGLISH TO EFL CHILDREN OF THE INITIAL LEVEL”

Research report before obtaining the bachelor degree in National and Foreign language Pedagogy, English Major

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2022**

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In my capacity as a supervisor of the research report entitled “**GAME-WORK AS A STRATEGY TO TEACH ENGLISH TO EFL CHILDREN OF THE INITIAL LEVEL**”, and researched by Lozada Escobar Mónica Daniela, ID number 180497617-1, for obtaining the bachelor's degree in National and Foreign Language Pedagogy, English Major.

I CERTIFY THAT:

This research report has been fully revised and has the requirements and merits to be submitted for evaluation by the assigned revision Committee and its presentation and defense.

Pujilí, August, 2022



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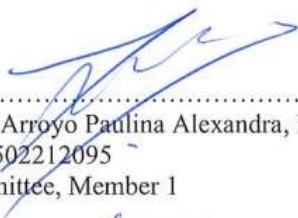
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The research report entitled “**GAME-WORK AS A STRATEGY TO TEACH ENGLISH TO EFL CHILDREN OF THE INITIAL LEVEL**”, has been revised, approved and authorized for printing and binding, before obtaining the bachelor’s degree in National and Foreign Language Pedagogy, English Major; this meets the substantive and formal requirements to hand in for the presentation and defense.

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GRATEFULNES

Firstly, I acknowledge to God, and my mother Monica, who with a lot of effort has supported at all stages of my academic life and she never lets me fall down.

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And lastly, to my grandparents Blanca, Gerardo, Lucrecia y Galo who with their knowledge and wise advice, they allow me to reach my goals. I love you so much. A kiss to heaven!

Daniela.

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to God and “Cisne” Virgin who with their blessings guided my steps. Also, to my dear professors who with a great effort has forging me as a student and professional.

My special acknowledgement to my dear classmates who encouraged me to carry on and overcome the obstacles in order to reach my goal. Also, it is dedicated to those cousins and friends who helped me to improve and practice all the skills this language requires. My respect and admiration for all of them.

Daniela.

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ABSTRACT

Games are useful techniques that contribute to teaching and learning the English language in children. For this reason, the objective of this research was to identify the teachers' perception in the use of games as a strategy for teaching English to children at the "Ernesto Bucheli" School in Ambato. In the present project, a quantitative approach and descriptive methodology were applied; for data collection, the survey as a technique and a questionnaire adapted from Ibrahim (2017) were carried out. The results showed teachers recognize the importance of using games as a technique for teaching English language since they help students to reduce demotivation, develop cooperative learning, practice English language skills, and unconsciously learn grammar and vocabulary. In addition, teachers are conscious that games develop natural communication. Thus, games are an accessible and favorable technique for teaching a foreign language to children at an initial level, since their brain is ready to acquire new knowledge easily and in a fun way. To conclude, based on the results, nine games are suggested to teachers for applying in their classes according to the needs of the students and to reach the objective in each lesson class. Finally, it is important to emphasize that games are easy, fun and practical; so, they allow teachers to develop a great job as facilitators in the acquisition of new knowledge in the English language.

Keywords: English language; Games; Teaching; Strategy.

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI
EXTENSIÓN PUJILÍ
CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN, MENCIÓN INGLÉS

TÍTULO: “EL JUEGO COMO ESTRATEGIA PARA ENSEÑAR INGLÉS A LOS NIÑOS DEL NIVEL INICIAL”

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RESUMEN

Los juegos son técnicas útiles que contribuyen a la enseñanza y aprendizaje del idioma inglés en los niños. Por esta razón, el objetivo de esta investigación fue identificar la percepción de los docentes en el uso de los juegos como estrategia para la enseñanza del idioma inglés a los niños de EFL en la Escuela "Ernesto Bucheli" de Ambato. En el presente proyecto se aplicó una metodología descriptiva y enfoque cuantitativo; para la recolección de datos se realizó la encuesta como técnica y un cuestionario adaptado de Ibrahim (2017). Los resultados mostraron que los profesores reconocen la importancia de utilizar los juegos como técnica para la enseñanza del idioma inglés, ya que ayudan a los estudiantes a reducir la desmotivación, a desarrollar el aprendizaje cooperativo, a practicar las habilidades del idioma inglés y a aprender inconscientemente la gramática y el vocabulario. Además, los profesores son conscientes de que los juegos desarrollan la comunicación natural. Así pues, los juegos son una técnica accesible y favorable para enseñar una lengua extranjera a los niños en un nivel inicial, ya que su cerebro está preparado para adquirir nuevos conocimientos con facilidad y de forma divertida. Para concluir, en base a los resultados, se sugieren nueve juegos para que los profesores los apliquen en sus clases según las necesidades de los alumnos y para alcanzar el objetivo en cada clase. Finalmente, es importante destacar que los juegos son fáciles, divertidos y prácticos; por lo que permiten a los profesores desarrollar una gran labor como facilitadores en la adquisición de nuevos conocimientos en lengua inglesa.

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Palabras clave: Actividades lúdicas; Aprendizaje; Idioma inglés; Estrategia

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Theme:

“Game work as a strategy to teach English to EFL children of the initial level.”

Starting Date:

May 2022

Ending Date:

August 2022

Place of Research:

The present project will be developed in the Ernesto Bucheli” School that is located in Cuatro Esquinas Santa Fe Sector, Ambato, Tungurahua, Ecuador.

Sponsoring Faculty:

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Educational Sciences, Majoring in English.

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Training processes in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in educational institutions in the province of Cotopaxi.

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2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Nowadays, education has taken a very important role in the life of human beings. It involves a teaching-learning process in which the teacher and the student are involved. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that the teacher is responsible for teaching the language through different resources, methodologies and techniques.

According to Abril & Peinado (2018) all these conditions develop to new and complex realities which have a direct impact on the way in which the language teaching and learning process, which aims to quench the students' thirst for knowledge, is properly developed. There are several language learning strategies worldwide, but not all of them are fully developed. Such as in the case of Game work; this type of strategy focuses on providing the learner with the necessary skills in an interactive and highly motivational way to perform the whole process. However, Cantor & Fuentes (2017) mention that it is a subject that is not given huge attention, given that learners can make of this tool an object of play but not as an instrument, whose purpose is not the teaching process.

In Ecuador, the lack of strategies related to improving English teaching by appliance of games are not fully well adopted or even more at some point, it is not as well some people say but, what is the matter. Students or professors are able to develop and carry out their classes as properly as they want (Cárdenas & Inga, 2020). So, it is important to determine what the problem is; game work is not as good as people may think it is, there is something that professors do not do to extract the full potential of this approach or lastly, students do not participate actively during the learning teaching process. The main problem is to identify what the real problem is and to determine how it can be improved in order to teach EFL.

In Tungurahua, it has become evident that teachers have not been able to develop the necessary skills or strategies to cope with the demands of their students. Teaching requires a high motivational commitment and, at the same time, can be considered a high-risk profession. As teachers must be prepared to face a variety of situations, such as student demotivation (increasingly frequent), complaints and pressures from students' parents, lack of support from the institution where they

work, lack of resources and planning, coordination and evaluation in an increasingly convulsive school (Franco et al., 2020).

However, there is no research in the "Ernesto Bucheli" School in Ambato, through the pre-professional practices; it became evident that teachers do not apply games at any time during the class. However, they know some games but do not use them for teaching English as a second language since they only focus on the development of the language skills required. This has allowed classes to become monotonous and, above all, has made the students of the institution feel unmotivated and uninterested in learning the language since only the teacher interacts in class and most students only listen or take notes.

That's the reason why the present research is developed around answering the following question: What is the teachers' perception on the use of games as a strategy to teach English to EFL children of the initial level at "Ernesto Bucheli" School in Ambato? in order to identify why these actions are present during classes and provoke low level of understanding in pupils. In fact, the main objective is to identify teachers' perception on the use of games as a strategy to teach English to EFL children of the initial level at "Ernesto Bucheli" School in Ambato.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1. General Objective

To identify teachers' perception on the use of games as a strategy to teach English to EFL children of the initial level at "Ernesto Bucheli" School in Ambato.

3.2. Specific Objectives

- To determine the theoretical background about games as a strategy to teach English to EFL children of the initial level.
- To determine the teacher's opinions on the use of games as a strategy to teach English to EFL.
- To establish conclusions and recommendations.

4. ACTIVITIES AND TASK SYSTEM IN RELATION TO THE OBJECTIVES PROPOSED.

Table 1.

Activities and Tasks

Specific objective	Activities	Verification Means
To determine the theoretical background about games as a strategy to teach English to EFL children of the initial level.	-To review bibliographic information. -To categorize essential information. -To structure all information based on its relevance.	-Background. -Theoretical framework.
To determine the teacher's opinions on the use of games as a strategy to teach English to EFL.	-Survey design, adaptation and implementation.	-Survey (Google forms).
To establish conclusions and recommendations.	-Analysis and discussion of the results of the instrument applied.	- Discussion of the data obtained. -Conclusions -Recommendations

5. JUSTIFICATION

The use of games as a strategy is closely related with the learning English process in the little kids; In fact, games are considered as an activity of great potential for learning and developing English language skills; the present research project will concretely identify students' major problems while they are learning English as a Foreign Language at the initial level.

Therefore, this research will seek to detail the needs of the students based on a diagnostic observation; determined in this situation, a series of strategies will be established to remedy those needs. Each and every one of the strategies will be based on game work, since this is a support tool that helps to make the classes dynamic and effective, facilitating the children's learning. In this way, the problem can be assessed and remedied.

According to UNICEF (2018) game work is one of the most efficient playful strategies applied in EFL, since through action and experimentation students learn, develop and enhance their skills. For this reason, this project intends as a first step to investigate and demonstrate how through play, as a pedagogical strategy, an effective and significant development can be promoted in this process of learning English in a playful and fun way. Thus, revealing a complete transformation of the teaching of the same, the game as a didactic strategy has multiple benefits, among which is the promotion of sociability, the development of the creative, critical and communicative capacity of the individual, in addition it stimulates action, reflection and expression.

In addition, this strategy allows children to investigate and learn about the world around them, objects, people, animals, plants and even their own possibilities and limitations. Therefore, this project is of great importance, as it offers the opportunity to increase and improve the learning of vocabulary in English, thus benefiting the development of their communication skills, particularly oral.

Additionally, the use of game activities has a significant educational value and should be present in the different stages of the students' learning process. In order to achieve this important fact, the whole project should focus on pupils of the initial level of "Ernesto Bucheli" institution; Ambato, province of Tungurahua, during the year 2021-2022 in order to reinforce teaching methods to EFL.

Thus, educational initiatives have been carried out to promote its teaching and learning for more than three decades. As a result, English as a foreign language was incorporated into the national curriculum at all levels of the educational system. Ministerio de Educación (2016), establishing that the expected level of proficiency will be regulated by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The low learning of English at higher levels is based on the initial levels. This problem has multiple causes that start from the great inconvenience of the lack of a permanent English class, which is included in the curriculum for the primary school. This problem leads to the student presenting a low level of language and difficulties when making use of her communication skills, making the English learning process in the student look more and more behind.

Direct beneficiaries of this project are going to be 13 English teachers: all teachers from "Ernesto Bucheli" Basic Education School. On the other hand, indirect beneficiaries will be 30 children aged between 4 to 6 years and their environment due to the fact that if pupils enhance their level, they will be able to contribute to the country and improve international English levels.

6. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL FOUNDATION

6.1. Background

Several studies have been conducted on the research topic of game-work as a strategy to teach English to EFL children of the initial level. These studies will help us to support our research report by demonstrating the influence of games in teaching English as a foreign language to children at the initial level.

Yolageldili & Arikan (2011) conducted a study of the effectiveness of using games in teaching grammar to young learners. The main aim of this study was to explore the effectiveness of using games in teaching grammar to young learners from the point of view of Turkish EFL teachers working in primary schools. The participants were 15 English teachers. The instrument was a questionnaire. The results of this study showed that Turkish EFL teachers have a number of conceptions about the use of games in grammar teaching similar to those in the current literature. The study suggests that although Turkish EFL teachers accept the effectiveness of using games in grammar teaching, they do not use games as often as expected in their classrooms.

Quidel et al. (2014) conducted this research addressing the issue of English language teaching at an early age. Its objective is to unveil the impact of teaching English as a second language in the first years of school. The participants were elementary school students from four different public schools with high vulnerability indexes. The methodology used is qualitative, since it allows greater flexibility and closeness to reality when analyzing the participants. The analysis plan is framed within the descriptive content analysis. It was concluded that students who begin exposure

to the English language at an early age exposed to the English language at an early age, in a formal manner, achieve better learning, comprehension and motivation, compared to those students who began their learning process at an early age student who began their learning process at a later age.

Sánchez (2018) conducted research aimed at developing an ICT-based gamification strategy for English language vocabulary acquisition. The participants were pre-intermediate level students of Dentistry at UDLA Quito. The methodology was based on a mixed approach with a quasi-experimental design, supported by the collection of bibliographic and documentary information. The technique was direct observation of classes and the instrument was a survey of students and teachers. The analysis of the results obtained allowed to establish the development of the gamification strategy as an alternative to solve the expressed problem. It was concluded that with the application of the strategy significant progress was obtained in the students, since they developed their lexical competence.

6.2. Theoretical Framework

6.2.1 The game

The game is an essential activity in society because it allows people to have fun and to balance their different work activities in a dynamic and creative way, since it awakens in them the interest and freedom to perform them regardless of the different obstacles and challenges. Therefore, Tuni & Cayahuallpa (2017) mention that “the game is a spontaneous and pleasurable activity in which the child recreates and transforms reality, bringing his internal experience and making it dialogue with the outside world in which he participates” (p. 8). Therefore, the game is the tool that allows enhancing the skills and abilities of the human being in an attractive and motivating way, thus making the individual capable of developing critical thinking.

6.2.1.1 Games in child development

The game is an essential tool in childhood because it allows the child to discover a sense of self and inner stability because through the game the child can express his feelings without fear of punishment, as it helps him to learn to control frustrations and impulses. Thus, Gutiérrez (2017) says that “through play children explore and learn, communicate for the first time with adults, develop their personality, foster their social skills, their intellectual abilities, resolve conflicts, etc.” (p. 6). Therefore, game is an important activity because it helps the child to adapt to his environment or culture through various stages, from passive observation to intentional and cooperative activity.

Thus, game is the central activity in the preschool child's cognitive evolution and development, as the structure of the early school years teaches the child to balance work and game activities. So, as the child approaches adolescence, he or she becomes increasingly involved in structured, work-oriented activities.

6.2.1.2 Educational Games

The game is the perfect combination between learning and fun, which is why the game is considered a fundamental element in education since it is a basic need in children as it allows them to be initiated into the world of knowledge and at the same time facilitates the child's learning since through different fun activities the child seeks to strengthen their skills and abilities as well as values of respect, responsibility and companionship.

Felicia (2020) comments that “educational games include subtle mechanisms that make it possible to support learning, in an environment that is both motivating and engaging” (p. 13). Therefore, play allows for the creation of an active and participatory environment where children learn while having fun and relaxing. In addition, through game children adapt to the environment that surrounds them and learn values, thus implementing the game helps children to be aware that rules or norms must be respected and to coordinate actions established in order to achieve a good coexistence.

Importance of educational games

Educational games are a fundamental tool in the classroom regardless of the age of the students, since the game facilitates relationships and socialization among others. Thus, games also allow students to investigate, discover, create and cooperate in an active and dynamic environment. Therefore, Creighton & Szymkowiak (2014) mention that games have remained a good tool for language learning. Some reasons are listed below:

- Games involving visual/spatial intelligence as identifiable usually have a practical element, such as cards, roulette or coins, which incorporate physical/kinetic intelligence.
- Games add interest to something that learners may not find very interesting. So, maintaining interest can be a constant effort since, after all, learning a language is a very complex process.
- Games provide a context for meaningful communication, that is, it occurs as learners try to understand how the game unfolds and how it unfolds throughout the class.
- The variety and intensity offered by the games can reduce anxiety and encourage more timid students to participate, especially when the games are organized for small groups.
- The games develop basic language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, and often several skills are included in the same section.

Types of games

Games according to the activity it promotes in the child:

The child needs time for his creations and for his fantasy to push him to a thousand positive experiments, being so that playing is time to learn and improve different skills of the child. Therefore, Pilla (2014) mentions the games according to the activity that promotes a better development of the child:

Sensory games

They allow the child to fundamentally exercise the visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory senses, since sensory games start from the first weeks of life and are specific exercise games of the sensory-motor period -from the first days until the age of two- although they also continue throughout the entire stage of Early Childhood Education.

Motor games

These have a great evolution in the first two years of life and continue throughout childhood and adolescence. Therefore, they appear spontaneously in children from the first weeks repeating movements and gestures that they initiate involuntarily such as walking, running, jumping, crawling, rolling, pushing, or pulling are movements that are involved in children's favorite games because with them they exercise their motor skills.

Manipulative games

Movements related to hand pressure are involved, such as holding, fastening, squeezing, tying, catching, fitting, threading, twisting, tapping, molding, tracing, emptying and filling.

Imitation games

Children try to reproduce gestures, sounds or actions that they have known before, since the child begins the first imitations around seven months, extending imitation games throughout childhood

Symbolic games

It is a fictional game that consists of the child giving a new meaning to the different objects with which he may be in contact.

Verbal games

They begin from a few months when the educators speak to the babies and later with the imitation of sounds on the part of the child, since these games are intended to favor and enrich the learning of the language.

The logical reasoning games

These games are those that favor logical-mathematical knowledge, since it allows solving problems and drawing conclusions.

6.2.1.3 Games as a strategy to teach English in EFL

Games are an important part of almost all EFL classes, since through different activities the second language can be used over and over again; allowing creating a habit from the structures provided which will not tend to bore the learner. It is important to mention that most EFL classes usually start with a warm-up activity to help learners relax and adapt to the classroom thus being the game a strategic sport, to start in a fun and participative way the class. Piedra (2015) mentions that it is important to offer structured activities to learners during the practice and production phases of the class and, if there is time, a short linguistic game can be used at the end of the class.

The basic idea is to let the class play, laugh and have fun in the beginning, work hard in the middle and end the lesson with fun. By following this process, where the class starts and ends with anxiety-reducing activities or games, we should keep the students more motivated for their next class. Therefore, every experienced EFL teacher has many favorite sports and activities that require minimal preparation to carry out which will allow them to manage the class in an active way. In addition, games and activities are also useful when you are asked to teach a class to someone else when you do not know the students and have not had a chance to prepare but these kinds of surprises are not uncommon in the world of EFL teaching (Petrasek et al., 2018).

Classification

According to the linguistic point of view, games are divided into language learning games based on fluency and accuracy, whereby games require linguistic accuracy and focus on the practice of grammatical and linguistic structures (Ur, 1996).

Classification according to language practice to develop skills.

Games are divided into two groups: control and communication games. Communication games are mainly used to introduce and practice a new language while control games are based on the repetition of linguistic structures and vocabulary, being so that the main objective of this game is the immediate repetition of a sentence in which the appropriate element is added to the pronunciation (Nevařil, 2011).

Classification of the material needed to start the games

Games that do not require any material, paper and pencil games and, finally, games that require more material. The first group includes games that do not require any instruments, so all of them are mainly based on verbal work and listening while paper and pencil games offer the possibility to involve a large number of young learners. Of course, prior to any activity, all materials should be prepared in advance to facilitate the organization of the classroom for the games (Brewster, 1992).

Advantages and disadvantages of using games as a way to learn English.

Molina (2015) indicates that the use of games in the classroom, can present possible advantages and possible disadvantages for English language learning.

The advantages of games-based English language learning are as follows:

- They make the classroom lively and interesting.
- Students keep their motivation high while studying.
- They help to bring the teacher closer to the students in an enjoyable way and thus facilitate the teaching and learning process.
- In addition, students and teachers have a good time, which is an indication that the teacher is also looking for their motivation and, by achieving this, the student can facilitate the learning process.

Possible disadvantages to be taken into account when teaching this type of class may be the following:

- Situations arise where students want to do their best and perform well, but have to face the possibility of failure. This is normal and a failure or mistake is respected.
- In the game, if the learner shows interest and continues to encounter difficulties, he/she should be encouraged and helped to achieve the learning objective.
- There are also important values to instill in students, such as respect for others.
- Teachers should remember that each student has different abilities and therefore not all will learn at the same time.
- Therefore, not everyone will learn at the same time and therefore they should focus on defining an appropriate methodology to meet the needs of each learner.

Teaching through the implementation of games in the classroom provides great advantages since they create a comfortable, interactive and interesting environment for students, making their participation active during class time. However, there are also disadvantages in which inequality may occur at the time of learning since some will do it faster, so methods must be sought to solve this inequality and thus meet the needs of all.

6.2.2. Teaching process

Historically, teaching has been considered in the narrow sense of carrying out activities that lead students to learn, in particular, instructing them to learn activities that lead the student to learn, in particular, instructing him or her and having him or her exercise the application of skills and having them exercise the application of skills.

The teaching process refers to the transmission of information by the teacher as it is who imparts knowledge, assessment and performance to students, because while it is true that the teacher not only seeks to transmit knowledge, but is also the one who promotes values and attitudes in students so that they are able to acquire autonomy in the construction of their own knowledge and thus can better develop their skills and abilities. In this sense, Molina & García (2019) mentions that "the teaching process related to learning groups the acts performed by the teacher with the intention of raising situations that provide students with the possibilities of learning" (p. 396).

Teaching styles

Teaching profession requires intelligence, skills, insights, and diligence in succeeding in different ways to fulfill the challenge of classrooms (Kardia & Wright, 2004). Teaching style is a multitask phenomenon that illuminates how teachers teach knowledge; accomplish classroom work, and supervise students (Sheikh & Mahmood, 2014). In other words, teaching styles are of great importance for the effective development of the teaching and learning process, since they show different methods to solve and confront teachers with the activities to be developed in the classroom.

Grasha (1994) describes that there are 5 teaching styles that will be detailed below:

Expert Style

The teacher has certain knowledge and skills that the student's requirement. Teacher tries to keep status as a specialist among students by exhibiting detailed facts and figures. He also motivates his students to enhance their competence through knowledge sharing. The teacher is generally concerned with passing on information and ensures that students are well prepared.

Formal Authority Style

This style is a teacher-centered methodology where instructors are responsible for provision and control the flow of contents. The "formal authority" type keeps status among some students just because of control over contents and their role as a faculty member. The faculty member is also concerned and tries to get constructive feedback, developing learning objectives, opportunities and rules of business for students.

Role Model style

This type is also a teacher-oriented style where the teacher displays the skills that students should learn. This teaching methodology encourages student's involvement in class and addition of their presentation to include different learning styles. The teacher believes in teaching by personal example and establishes a code of conduct for students on how to think and behave. The teacher supervises, motivates and directs by demonstrating how to do things, cheering students to examine and then to follow the teacher's approach.

Facilitator Style

This is considered a student-centered approach. In this style, the teacher acts as a facilitator and the students are responsible to attain goals for different tasks. This style helps autonomous along with two-way learning. The teachers typically devise group activities which need active learning, student-to-student cooperation and troubleshooting.

Delegator Style

This is also a student-centered style in which the teacher passes on the control and the obligation for learning to students. The teacher is concerned with mounting students' capability to work in a self-directed fashion. In this way the students move autonomously on plans or as part of independent teams.

6.2.2.1 Teaching English as a foreign language

According to Metzler (2018) "Foreign language education (FLE) is the academic discipline concerned with the teaching and learning of second foreign language(s) (L2) in institutional, primarily school contexts" (p. 10). English is considered the most studied language in the world as a foreign language due to the fact that the number of people who speak it as a second language is three times greater than the number of native speakers.

English has been considered the most widely used language in the world, which is why it has become part of the curriculum of many educational institutions. According to Mei (2008) English as a foreign language refers to the learning of a language different from the mother tongue, and which is not the one used in the student's daily life and the environment in which they carry out their activities.

In other words, the student only has the opportunity to develop English language learning during their education, that is, when they are in educational institutions, and perhaps in certain types of activities, thus limiting the occasions in which the student may be able to communicate in this language, given that the number of times the student practices the language outside the classroom is minimal.

6.2.2.2 Teaching English as a foreign language to children

Children have short attention spans and a lot of physical energy. They are very attached to their environment and are more interested in physical and tangible events. It is pertinent to mention that their own understanding comes from their hands, eyes and ears. Teaching English to children is

different from teaching English to adults. According to Asher (2003), young people learn differently from adults. Children get bored easily and lose interest after a short time. To maintain their interest, it is essential to complement the activities with lots of visual elements, toys, puppets or brightly colored objects, for instance some kind of games. And it is through these activities that language teachers can make their lessons more enjoyable and understandable.

For this reason, we try to ensure that children can use the language and develop it in a pleasant, fun and enjoyable way. In order to achieve this goal, the use of games results in a very natural way of teaching English, since play has always been a common learning technique throughout history

Erikson (1982), among others, shares the opinion that children tend to be much more stimulated and motivated in English classes when games are played and resources such as images, real objects, etc. are used instead of traditional materials such as textbooks or worksheets.

6.2.2.3 The use of games in the foreign language classroom

For the learning of second languages in children, it is necessary to apply highly motivating methods, leaving behind boring classes and highlighting interesting activities. Rubio & García, (2013) point out that “the use of games in the classroom and highlight their affective social, linguistic and cognitive values, since the game gives rise to an emotional and above all affective climate based on security, confidence and acceptance” (p. 171). This has led to an increase in the scientific attention given to games as one of the best tools for English language learning in children.

Children enjoy constructive games. In addition to being motivating and fun, they provide good practice that leads to improvement in the pronunciation of English words, grammar and the four language skills. Games are the means to practice vocabulary, verb forms or to relax in class after a test.

Characteristics that children acquire in EFL teaching

When learning a language, children start learning simple expressions. Children often learn abstract rules of the language they hear and even expressions they have never heard before. It is very important that teachers not only teach children the language, but also encourage them to learn in a positive way.

Therefore, in teaching English to children we find some of the features that are introduced. Scott & Ytreberg (1990) state that 8-10 year old are quite mature; they have a special perspective; they are able to describe the difference between fact and fiction; they ask questions; they believe what they say and convey and understand the meaning/message in the real world; they have different opinions about what they like and dislike; they are open to what happens in the classroom and begin to ask for the teacher's judgment; they can collaborate with each other and learn from each other.

Game-based activities for English language learners at the initial level.

Tic-Tac-Toe

It is altered barely to deal with for group play, however the conventional goal of three-in-a-row stays the same. Students need to paintings collectively to efficaciously solution questions to advantage a hazard to location an X or O (primarily based totally on their group) and anyone at the group receives a hazard to reply for his or her group. Questions may be within the shape of pix which suit vocabulary, to grow a sentence, the usage of grammar factors, or anything you pick to check with the scholars (Melo & Hernández, 2014).

Concentration

It is a sport to educate English freshmen that makes use of playing cards to suit vocabulary or grammar factors and is nicely performed in circle-businesses so that everybody can see the playing cards. The college students allow you to use making pairs of playing cards in order that they get more exercise. Once you've shuffled every set of playing cards, they must be laid face-down with inside the center of the circle. Each scholar takes a flip with the aid of using flipping playing cards face-up. If they suit, the scholar wins the one's playing cards. If they do now no longer suit, the scholar needs to turn them face-down once more and keep paying interest as a way to make a suit on their subsequent flip (Tremblay et al., 2012).

The Clothesline

It is a sport to educate English freshmen of constructing sentences in the usage of one-of-a-kind phrases every time. Have many one-of-a-kind alternatives for a part of speech, together with punctuation, in piles. Students take turns (in groups or individually) converting the phrases to create sentences. Students study the sentence they've created upon completion, and factors are provided for proper use of vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. The scholar or group with the maximum factors on the stop of the spherical wins (Melo & Hernández, 2014).

Oral Matching

It may be an amusing manner for English freshmen to mingle and exercise conversation. Each scholar is given a slip of paper with both a query or a solution on it (for greater variety, they could have one in all every, as long as they don't suit!) and they're to study their questions and solutions to their fellow college students to determine which of them pass collectively. For greater amusement, use tale to create your query and solution slips. Once every scholar has discovered his or her matching pair(s), you could have the scholars placed it lower back collectively with inside the authentic order and study it collectively (Tremblay et al., 2012).

Scrambler

It is a puzzle kind of pastime that may be amusing for English freshmen as a smash from conventional worksheets. Create a goal phrase which you desire the scholars to find out (this will be a solution to a key query as properly, in case you desire). Use diverse vocabulary phrases that comprise letters for use with inside the goal phrase. Then, scramble the vocabulary phrases in order that the scholars need to find out from every scrambled phrase the vocabulary to move letter-with the aid of using-letter with inside the containers at the back of it. The goal phrase can then be positioned in a vertical style, in the usage of the one's letters from the vocabulary. If you're the usage of a key query, make sure to go away a clean in order that the scholars can rewrite the goal phrase from the containers as soon as they've determined the solutions to all the scrambled phrases (Melo & Hernández, 2014).

Hangman

It is another whiteboard game to reinforce vocabulary. Think of a word and draw a line for each letter of that word on the whiteboard. Have your students raise their hands and try to answer either by guessing letters or the word itself. For each incorrect answer, draw part of the hangman. The student who guesses correctly before the hangman is drawn completely will be the next person to think of a word (Melo & Hernández, 2014).

Word Bingo

Bingo is an old game that works so well in an ESL classroom. It's incredibly fun to play, and you can award your students prizes for winning. Word Bingo is an excellent activity for reading and listening skills. It will require students to focus on the activity. Students will be given bingo sheets with English words written on them. The teacher will say the words that come out of a hat and the first student to complete a bingo pattern wins (Tremblay et al., 2012).

Simon Says

It is a quick activity that focuses on students' listening skills. The game aims to give your students instructions using the phrase, "Simon says." Students must only follow instructions followed by this phrase, and those who don't are out! The person who is saying the instructions will try to trick students by talking faster. Students will have to focus hard to stay in the game. Organize the class into a circle. Explain the rules of the game. Start the game with an instruction using the phrase, e.g., "Simon says, touch your nose" and do the action. Gradually say the instructions more quickly and catch anyone who does the action without you saying, "Simon says." For example, if you say, "shake your hands," any student who does the action is out. Keep playing until the last few students are left and then give out a small reward (Melo & Hernández, 2014).

What's the time, Mr. Wolf?

This fun game can be an excellent way for students to practice telling the time and take a break from bookwork. This activity is best played in a park or court outside. Select one student to be the wolf and have them turn their backs on everyone. The class will start from a distance away and will ask, "What's the time, Mr. Wolf?" The wolf will then respond with a random time. If the wolf says, "It is six o'clock," everyone will take six steps forward. This process repeats until the wolf responds with "it is dinner time," which is when they will chase the class and catch someone. Students that are caught become wolves themselves, and the last person to survive wins (Melo & Hernández, 2014).

7. METHODOLOGY

7.1 Type of research

The following research was a descriptive project its main objective is to describe the reality of the study and its fundamental characteristics in order to achieve an interpretation of real and correct data. The descriptions of these characteristics were done in two different ways. First the research methodology, where its main characteristics is the analysis and deduction of content from a theoretical framework and second the use of a descriptive method that permits the analysis and discussion of survey.

7.2 Research approach

The approach for this research was quantitative since it uses numerical data and the statistical system of the results to verify the proposed theories. That is the reason Hernández et. al (2014) states that "this approach uses information gathering and also considers that knowledge must be objective, and that it is generated from a deductive process in which, through numerical measurement and inferential statistical analysis, conclusions are drawn" (p. 4). In other words, in the quantitative approach, in terms it chooses an idea that it transforms into one or more relevant research questions, analyzes the measurements obtained using statistical methods and establishes a series of conclusions.

7.3 Research method

Therefore, in this research the deductive method was also applied because it consists of explaining reality from logic, that is, it starts from an idea and through logic the conclusions are established. This method begins with the analysis of postulates, theorems, laws, principles, etc., of universal application and, through deduction, reasoning and assumptions, among other aspects, their validity is checked to apply them in a particular way the general, accepted as valid, to particular applications.

7.4 Data collection technique and instrument

The research technique used for data collection was survey and the instrument used was a questionnaire. The proposed questionnaire was adapted from the questionnaire Ibrahim (2017). It consists of 10 questions adapted to visual processes coming from the natural and social environment of the educational institution, to some extent the guide was channeled to reach the main objective, providing ideas, needs articulated to the solution; they were closed questions. This questionnaire was applied online and sent to 13 teachers of the Basic Education School "Ernesto Bucheli" of the Ambato canton, province of Tungurahua, for the 2021-2022 school year.

8. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The survey was applied to the teachers of the "Ernesto Bucheli" Basic Education School of the Ambato canton, province of Tungurahua, for the 2021-2022 school year. All the teachers have a higher degree in Basic Education and are fluent in English, their average age is mostly between 25 and 38 years old and three of them between 38 and 50 years old. It is important to note that the sample consisted of 3 men and 10 women.

The first section included questions related to the proposed topic and the data obtained are detailed below:

1. Games reduce demotivation learning in the classroom, which helps learners remember things faster and better.

Table 2.

Demotivation Learning

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	6	46.2
Agree	5	38.5
Neutral	1	7.7
Disagree	1	7.7
Strongly disagree	0	0
TOTAL	13	100

In this question 46.2% of the respondents answered strongly agree; about games reducing anxiety and stress in the classroom, which helps students remember things faster and better, followed by 38.5% who agree with the item. Finally, 7.7% are neutral and disagree to the question posed. According to Moncada & Chacón (2012) games are mainly used for fun and leisure; however, they are important in children's development, especially in their learning and brain plasticity as they can reduce stress and concentrate on learning.

2. Games construct a cooperative learning environment in the classroom.

Table 3.

Cooperative Learning Environment

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	8	61.5
Agree	5	38.5
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
TOTAL	13	100

In this question 61.5% of teachers strongly agree that games build a cooperative environment in the classroom and 38.5% agree. It is correct to mention that cooperation is about working together to achieve common goals. Cooperative games influence academic performance, given that there is a high level of collaboration, coordination of efforts to solve a situation, with sharing of responsibilities in the results obtained and excellent interpersonal relationships both among students and with teachers. Galarza (2015), affirmed that through games a suitable environment for learning can be established.

3. Games allow practice skills such as speaking, writing, listening and reading at the same time.

Table 4.

Language Practice

Option	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	5	38.5
Agree	8	61.5
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
TOTAL	13	100

The results show that 61.5% of the teachers agree that games allow students to practice English language skills and 38.5% strongly agree. English teachers understand the importance of using games in the teaching-learning process because of their multiple benefits. For students, the process of learning a foreign language at school is an unnatural and demotivating process. Since they belong to the same linguistic community, the usefulness of learning a foreign language is almost non-existent. It is important to note that the development of a game-oriented model allows students to develop each of their abilities and focus on realizing their full potential (Rubio & García, 2013).

4. Games make students to unconsciously apply grammar and vocabulary to communicate.

Table 5.

Games Apply

Option	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	6	46.2
Agree	5	38.5
Neutral	2	15.4
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
TOTAL	13	100

In this question, 46.2% of the teachers strongly agree that games make students apply grammar and vocabulary unconsciously to communicate. 38.5% of the teachers agree and 15.4% are neutral on the item. Within the educational field it has been shown that learning a language, whether as a second or foreign language, has always brought complications when it comes to being able to express oneself orally; due to the lack of grammar, vocabulary and fluency on the part of the learners of these languages. Therefore, didactic games with the physical and mental development that they provide are linked to learning by giving a series of methodological strategies that can be implemented in the classroom as tools to master the language (Ramirez, 2017).

5. Games create a meaningful, real-life context to communicate.

Table 6.

Games Create

Option	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	8	61.5
Agree	5	38.5
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
TOTAL	13	100

In this question, 61.5% of teachers answered agree that games create a meaningful, real-life context to communicate, but a percentage of 38.5% of teachers strongly agree that the use of games promote a real context to produce communication. Meneses & Monge (2001) mention that "the game results from a natural creative activity, without anticipated learning, which comes from life itself" (p. 113). Therefore, the game is the tool that allows enhancing the skills and abilities of the child in a dynamic and participatory way where the teacher and the child are active axes of the class.

6. Games positively influence the teacher-student relationship.

Table 7.

Positively Influence

Option	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	8	61.5
Agree	3	23.1
Neutral	2	15.4
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
TOTAL	13	100

In this question 61.50% of the teachers surveyed strongly agree that games have a positive influence on the teacher-student relationship, while 23.10% agree with the positive influence. On the other hand, 15.40% of the teachers are neutral. It could be because they do not apply many games due to the short time of English classes. According to Melo (2020), play is of great importance in the infant stage; since it is through play that children develop their learning. However, it was considered a special activity for children, ignoring the playful nature of the human being.

7. Games are a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class.

Table 8.

Break From the Usual Routine

Option	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	2	15.4
Agree	10	76.9
Neutral	1	7.7
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
TOTAL	13	100

In the seventh question, the teachers agree, with 76.90%, that games are a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class. While 15.40% strongly agree and only 7.70% take a neutral position on the proposed item. Gaming is a natural activity for any child so gamification in the classroom aims to use games for educational purposes, increase students' motivation and enhance learning. Motivation is considered a very important aspect in learning, as it motivates students to participate and get involved, which greatly favors the acquisition of knowledge (González, 2017).

8. Games promote a communicative competence.

Table 9.

Communicative Competence

Option	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	4	30.8
Agree	8	61.5
Neutral	1	7.7
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
TOTAL	13	100

The teachers answered that the games promote communicative competence, with 61.5% of them agreeing with this. 30.8% strongly agreed and 7.7% were neutral. In order to develop communicative competence, it is essential that schools and teachers dedicate time, encouragement, strategy and the importance that each of their students need to learn a language. According to Albino (2017), linguistic-communicative games are effective since they deal with tasks that facilitate the creation of meaningful and intentional interaction through language and allow establishing an agile and dynamic relationship between objectives, content, methodology and evaluation.

9. How often do you use games to teach English?

Table 10.

Use of Games to Teach

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	4	30.8
Agree	4	30.8
Neutral	4	30.8
Disagree	1	7.7
Strongly disagree	0	0
TOTAL	13	100

The teachers show 30.80% to be very much in agreement as well as in agreement, but there are those who use it in a neutral way, that is, they do not rule out the use of games in language teaching as a didactic strategy, seeking the students' attention but there are still 7.7% who do not agree with this type of teaching, being a minimum percentage, perhaps it can be understood that they are teachers who apply traditional teaching.

10. Indicate the games that you use with the children at the initial level.

Table 11.

Games for Children at the Initial Level

Option	Frequency	%
Previous answers	3	23.1
Tic tac Toe	2	15.4
Concentration	2	15.4
The Clothesline	2	15.4
Oral Matching	2	15.4
Simon Says	1	7.7
Word Bingo	1	7.7
TOTAL	13	100

In the last research question, question it showed that there are a number of games that can be used for language learning, some of them are tic-tac-toe 15.4%, concentration games 15.4%; clothesline 15.4%; oral correspondence 15.4%; Simon says 7.7% and finally word bingo 7.7%. It is important to note that each type of game requires several skills to master. Gaming plays an important role in the teaching and development of a language learner. Respondents agree with Ledin & Malgren (2012) that teaching should be interesting and varied, as they believe that learners are more motivated to learn new steps.

9. RESEARCH IMPACTS

This research, being of an educational nature, does not have a technical or environmental impact, since it is aimed at knowing the influence that the use of games as a strategy to teach English to EFL children of the initial level at “Ernesto Bucheli” School in Ambato, which makes it has a social and formative impact, since it involves the educational actors, thus allowing to improve the interaction between teachers and students in order to improve the teaching and learning process.

10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Conclusions

- Games in English classes are very important as they allow students to develop their skills, abilities and aptitudes during classes. Thus, games focus on facilitating the teaching-learning process and help them acquire knowledge in a fun and interesting way.
- Teachers consider that the application of educational games during classes is of great benefit for the teaching of a foreign language, in this case English. Since they influence academic development, motivation and concentration in learning.
- In addition, the lack of implementation of game-based activities by teachers in the teaching of a second language at the initial level is evident, since they do not make use of appropriate methods that fit the educational needs of the learners.

10.2 Recommendations

- After the research conducted, it is recommended to take into account the game as a tool to improve the development of classes by building an attractive and participatory environment.
- The implementation of game-based activities is highly recommended, as they prevent students from quickly losing attention to what seems repetitive or does not generate motivation. So, games improve the classroom environment and reduce stress in students.

- Teachers must make effective use of this tool, for which training is recommended, since its application plays an essential role and its correct development prevents classes from becoming monotonous and boring, capturing the children's attention and allowing them to acquire knowledge in a fun way.

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12. ANNEXES

12.1 Annex 1. Teacher Survey


<p style="text-align: center;">TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI</p> <p style="text-align: center;">UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ENGLISH MAJOR</p>		
Questions	Likert Scale	#
<p>1.- Games reduce demotivation for learning English in the classroom, which helps learners remember things faster and better</p>	Strongly agree	1
	Agree	2
	Neutral	3
	Disagree	4
	Strongly disagree	5
<p>2.- Games construct a cooperative learning environment in the classroom</p>	Strongly agree	1
	Agree	2
	Neutral	3
	Disagree	4
	Strongly disagree	5

3.- Games allow practice skills such as speaking, writing, listening and reading at the same time.	Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
4.- Games make students to unconsciously apply grammar and vocabulary to communicate.	Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
5.-Games create a meaningful, real-life context to communicate.	Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
6.- Games positively influence the teacher-student relationship.	Strongly agree Agree Neutral	1 2 3

	Disagree	4
	Strongly disagree	5
7.- Games are a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class.	Strongly agree	1
	Agree	2
	Neutral	3
	Disagree	4
	Strongly disagree	5
8.- Games promote a communicative competence.	Strongly agree	1
	Agree	2
	Neutral	3
	Disagree	4
	Strongly disagree	5
9.- How often do you use games to teach English?	Strongly agree	1
	Agree	2
	Neutral	3
	Disagree	4
	Strongly disagree	5

<p>10.- Indicate the games that you use with the children at the initial level.</p>	<p>Tic-Tac-Toe Concentration The Clothesline Oral Matching Scrambler Hangman Word Bingo</p>	
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12.2 Annex 2. Teacher Survey (Google forms)



GAME- WORK AS A STRATEGY TO TEACH ENGLISH TO EFL CHILDREN OF THE INITIAL LEVEL.

The objective of this instrument is to identify teachers' perceptions on the use of games as a strategy to teach English to EFL children of the initial level at the Basic Education School "Ernesto Bucheli" in the city of Ambato, province of Tungurahua, during the academic period 2021-2022.

Instruction: Read carefully and select the option you consider appropriate.

Correo *

Tu dirección de correo electrónico _____

1.- Games reduce anxiety and stress in the classroom, which helps learners remember * things faster and better.

- Strongly agree 5
- Agree 4
- Neutral 3
- Disagree 2
- Strongly disagree 1

2.- Games construct a cooperative learning environment in the classroom. *

- Strongly agree 5
- Agree 4
- Neutral 3
- Disagree 2
- Strongly disagree 1

3.- Games allow language practice in various skills at the same time (speaking, * writing, listening and reading).

- Strongly agree 5
- Agree 4
- Neutral 3
- Disagree 2
- Strongly disagree 1

4.- Games make students to unconsciously apply grammar and vocabulary to communicate. *

- Strongly agree 5
- Agree 4
- Neutral 3
- Disagree 2
- Strongly disagree 1

5.-Games create a meaningful, real-life context to communicate. *

- Strongly agree 5
- Agree 4
- Neutral 3
- Disagree 2
- Strongly disagree 1

6.- Games positively influence the teacher-student relationship. *

- Strongly agree 5
- Agree 4
- Neutral 3
- Disagree 2
- Strongly disagree 1

7.- Games are a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class. *

- Strongly agree 5
- Agree 4
- Neutral 3
- Disagree 2
- Strongly disagree 1

8.- Games promote a communicative competence. *

- Strongly agree 5
- Agree 4
- Neutral 3
- Disagree 2
- Strongly disagree 1

9.-How often do you use games to teach English. *

Strongly agree 5

Agree 4

Neutral 3

Disagree 2

Strongly disagree 1

10.-Indicate the games that you use with the children at the initial level. *

Tic-Tac-Toe

Concentration

The Clothesline

Oral Matching

Scrambler

Hangman

Word Bingo

Simon Says

What's the time, Mr. Wolf?

all the previous answers

12.3 Annex 3. Teacher's participants of the survey

Preguntas	Respuestas 13	Configuración	Puntos totales: 0
dianapanchi6@yahoo.com	0		27 mar 14:28
mandyd39@hotmail.com	0		27 mar 14:48
eumoreno62@hotmail.com	0		28 mar 10:06
ortiz.soraya4@gmail.com	0		28 mar 10:12
gladisallqu30@gmail.com	0		28 mar 10:19
apofernado@yahoo.es	0		28 mar 10:24
mateoquispe12@gmail.com	0		28 mar 10:26
pmarthac@hotmail.es	0		28 mar 10:26
ceciliaases50@gmail.com	0		28 mar 10:29