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Effects of a Gamified Strategy on Communicative Competence through Reading Comprehension in English

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	In contemporary educational systems, there is an increasing emphasis on individuals who possess the requisite skills for the labor, tourism, and education sectors. In this regard, fundamental competencies such as second language proficiency, digital literacy, and collaborative teamwork are cultivated. The objective of this article is to determine the effect of implementing a gamified strategy to strengthen communicative competence through reading comprehension in the area of English as a foreign language among primary school students at the Institución Educativa Comercial de Envigado. The study was framed within the hypothetical-deductive method, in accordance with the positivist paradigm. It employed a quantitative, explanatory approach and a contemporary, univariate, quasi-experimental cross-sectional design. The sample population comprised a total of 80 students, with 40 students assigned to the experimental group and 40 students assigned to the control group. An initial English questionnaire (pre-test) was administered to both groups as a data collection technique and instrument. Subsequently, a gamified strategy was implemented in the experimental group, while the control group did not receive any strategy. Finally, a final English questionnaire (post-test) was administered to both groups to analyze and statistically compare their results in both the pre-test and post-test, after the implementation of the gamified strategy. To analyze the results of the experimental and control groups, normality and non-parametric tests were applied. These tests determined that there was a significant improvement in the final results of the experimental group, while the results of the control group remained constant. In summary, the implementation of a gamification-based strategy has been demonstrated to enhance communicative competence through reading comprehension in English. **Keywords:** *Gamification, communicative competence, reading comprehension, English as a foreign language.*

1 INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, as part of a broader initiative to innovate in education, education systems have increasingly emphasized the promotion of second-language acquisition and the cultivation of digital competencies. Consequently, to circumvent the repetitive and rote learning processes characteristic of conventional educational institutions, and with the objective of preparing students to navigate the challenges of a rapidly evolving society, it is imperative to promote teaching and learning spaces that facilitate knowledge construction through the utilization of active methodologies and strategies (Coaquira, 2020).

In this regard, the findings make a substantial contribution to the current discourse, as foreign language proficiency, such as English, and digital skills are imperative in various domains, including but not limited to the labor, social, and technological sectors. This objective is consistent with the National Development Plan 2022-2026, which aims to transform the lifestyles of individuals through the principles of human security and social justice (Congress of the Republic of Colombia, 2023).

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Conversely, educational institutions are prioritizing the cultivation of students' communicative competence in English from a didactic and pedagogical vantage point, often overlooking fundamental aspects such as motivation, comprehension skills, and language utilization (Ministry of National Education, 2006). In this regard, the curriculum has placed greater emphasis on cultivating production skills (i.e., written activities) that are assessed through grammar and vocabulary exercises. This approach has supplanted the implementation of exercises such as reading, which are known to foster the development of other skills based on students' interests.

The Bilingualism Law (Law 1651 of 2013) was enacted to address this issue by complementing Article 20 of the General Education Law (L.G.E. Law 115 of 1994) with the following paragraph: The development of communication skills entails the ability to comprehend, articulate, compose, and express oneself in a language with precision. The objective of this initiative is to orient the teaching-learning processes towards the English foreign language, in alignment with quantifiable competencies that empower students to function assertively within a gamified milieu. This approach is underpinned by a constructivist and social model that is congruent with the demands and challenges of contemporary society.

In this context, given the substandard results obtained by the majority of students in the English language proficiency area at the national level, as evidenced by the failure to attain a level A- on the SABER 11 tests for five consecutive years (2017-2021) in Colombia (Valencia & Vega, 2022), it is imperative to enhance communicative competence (pragmatic and linguistic) in a foreign language, such as English, commencing with reading comprehension in primary school.

In addition to the aforementioned points, it is crucial to acknowledge the significance of other communication skills, such as listening, writing, and language use, which are equally crucial as reading comprehension. These skills are emphasized in the Basic Standards for Competence in Foreign Languages, as outlined by the Ministry of National Education (2006). English. Nonetheless, while these competencies have been shown to positively impact students' academic performance, it is from reading comprehension skills that a favorable effect can begin to be generated in both standardized test performance and other domains of their social and professional lives.

Conversely, gamification, a strategy that can be integrated into the assessment process, utilizes games as a conduit for learning, and has been demonstrated to support communicative competence in English. This approach is founded on a reward system that assists students in focusing their attention and motivating themselves, enabling self-regulation of their learning process according to their achievements and progress (Rodríguez et al., 2020). In this sense, achieving a balance between intrinsic and extrinsic student motivation processes is crucial. This balance will not only foster students' willingness to engage with a foreign language like English, but also their autonomy in promoting meaningful learning. As Figueroa (2015) asserts, the existence of learner interest directly correlates with the likelihood of successful performance in a new language.

Recognizing English as a prerequisite for confident engagement in educational, occupational, and cultural contexts, it is imperative to integrate gamification, which addresses digital challenges that are aligned with competitiveness, development, and continuous improvement of the individual. This integration involves the incorporation of play elements into non-playful environments. The central inquiry guiding this research was as follows: The present study seeks to examine the impact of a gamified strategy on enhancing communicative competence, with a particular focus on reading comprehension in the context of English as a foreign language, among primary school students at the Institución Educativa Comercial de Envigado.

OBJECTIVES

General objective

Determine the effect of implementing a gamified strategy to strengthen communicative competence through reading comprehension in English as a foreign language among primary school students at the Institución Educativa Comercial de Envigado.

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Specific objectives

Describe the performance level of elementary school students, who constitute the control group and the experimental group, in communicative competence based on reading comprehension in the area of English as a foreign language before the implementation of a gamified strategy.

Determine the structure and dynamics of a gamified strategy for strengthening communicative competence through reading comprehension in the area of English as a foreign language among primary school students at the Institución Educativa Comercial de Envigado.

Implement a gamified strategy to the experimental group to strengthen communicative competence through reading comprehension in English as a foreign language among primary school students at the Institución Educativa Comercial de Envigado.

Compare the level of performance in communicative competence through reading comprehension in English as a foreign language among students in the experimental and control groups after the implementation of a gamified strategy.

Theories that served as the basis for the study

Gamification

With regard to gamification, it should be noted that, although it is a term that has not been prominent in the education sector, it has gradually become linked to it in response to the new dynamics of the digital age. Thus, in order to trace its historical development, we will not only start by recognizing its conceptualization at the beginning of the 21st century, when it was addressed by the programmer Pelling as a commitment in the business sector to optimize its processes (Fernando, 2015), but also from the mid-20th century, when it was more common to refer to it as ludification, which was more articulated in education but did not maintain the elements of current gamification.

In understanding the above, Huizinga (1949), starting from the Latin root "ludus," conceived Homo ludens (man who plays) as a person who, out of his freedom and spontaneity, enjoyed himself, which did not require planning or a learning structure. In contrast, in gamification, the game must revolve around a structure that has goals that are translated into results, which implies that the game should not only be based on the individual's personal decision, but also have a pre-established learning dynamic that is integrated into the solution of everyday problems (Kapp, 2012).

In addition to the above, for Csikszentmihalyi (1990), apart from improving through the experience of play, there are other equally important elements for the individual to maintain a structured process that allows them to improve their learning. Among these, the first is the state called flow, which is a phase that leads the individual to concentrate on what they are doing efficiently. Another important factor is matching the level of challenge to the person's ability to make progress. Finally, constant support must be provided to enable the individual to assess their performance assertively and activate routes for improvement (Aguilera et al., 2014).

In short, for Skinner & Belmont (1993), engagement (flow) in teaching-learning processes allows students to perform more successfully in gamified activities by linking them to their passion. However, for effective gamification in the classroom, teachers must also be aware of students' levels in order to adapt skills to their learning pace and provide effective feedback that allows them to assess weak areas in order to gradually advance toward learning objectives.

Communicative Competence

Among the skills required in the 21st century, proficiency in a foreign language such as English is essential for people to function effectively in a variety of contexts. Now, to take a more technical look at its conceptualization, within the Colombian legal framework, the Ministry of National Education (2006) refers to communicative competence as the ability that an individual develops to deal with different situations in their daily life. This competence in English is subdivided into three parts: linguistic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic competence, which in turn allow the subject to develop comprehension skills, focused on listening and reading, and production skills, which strengthen writing and language use.

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Regarding linguistic competence, it should be noted that Chomsky (1965) was the first to conceptualize it, approaching it from a grammatical function in reference to the linguistic knowledge that a speaker must possess of their language, as well as in terms of performance, which has to do with the appropriate use of grammatical rules in specific situations. Complementing Chomsky's work, Hymes (1972) addressed pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence, which promotes linguistic knowledge as a requirement for effective performance in any communicative act.

Similarly, at the end of the 20th century, other models of communicative competence were developed, which can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Models of Communicative Competence

Communication competency models		
Author	**Competition**	**Components**
Canale and Swain (1980) Canale (1983)	Grammatical competence Sociolinguistic competence Discursive competence Strategic competence	Knowledge of grammatical rules Knowledge governing the use of language Ability to bring texts together Ability to use resources that activate mental processes
Bachman (1990)	Organizational competence Pragmatic competence	Grammar skills Grammar skills Textual skills Illocutionary competence Competencia sociolingüística
Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrel (1995)	Discursive competence	Language proficiency Sociolinguistic competence Action competence Strategic competence
Correa (2001)	Linguistic competence Pragmatic competence Cultural competence Thymic competence Ideological competence	Knowledge of language code Internalized knowledge about how to recognize the intentions behind speech Knowledge about the social world Expression and management of emotions Interviene en la selección, estructuración y purification of cultural elements and social practices

Note: Source: Communicative Competence: A Key Element in Organizations (Bermúdez & González, 2011).

According to the models described, Bermúdez and González (2011) conceive communicative competence as knowledge and know-how in context, in the development of comprehension skills (listening and reading) and production skills (writing and language use). In addition, Moreira and Vanegas (2020) mention other communicative competences such as discursive and strategic competences in the promotion of production skills, such as oral skills, which are necessary in the educational function of a school context.

English Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension in a foreign language such as English requires not only linguistic knowledge but also external conditions. So much so that, although various programs promoting this area have been implemented in Colombia in the educational context, to date, the expected progress has not been seen

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in standardized national tests (Valencia and Vega, 2022). For this reason, the following section will mention factors that must be addressed for a person to perform correctly in a situation that involves reading comprehension skills in English.

In this regard, authors such as Peñaranda (2016) highlight the importance of investing in education, allocating more funds to train teachers with little preparation, promoting strategies that help students improve their reading habits, and offering programs focused on the development of non-native languages. Likewise, Villegas and Escalera (2016) recognize that, in order to improve reading comprehension in English, it is necessary to strengthen programs focused on reading English, as well as to increase the number of hours devoted to this subject.

In particular, for the target population under study, which is in primary school, according to Guarín and Ramírez (2017), English teaching processes must move away from being limited to the acquisition of vocabulary without context, where the student's experience is reduced to rote learning, and start with real texts that invite them to interpret and analyze, using their linguistic knowledge as a basis and not as an end, to solve various problem situations.

2 METHOD

In order to achieve the objectives proposed in this research, Hurtado (2012) believes it is important to define not only the method, but also other elements that address the how of the current study (techniques, tactics, strategies, procedures, among others). In this sense, the epistemic model that declares and justifies the approach of this research is the positivist paradigm, since it is based on the relationship between the researcher and the object of research and allows us to start from generalizations rather than focusing on a specific time or place (Sandoval, 2002).

In consideration of the positivist paradigm, the method chosen is the hypothetical-deductive method, which, according to Bernal (2010), is based "on a procedure that starts from assertions in the form of hypotheses and seeks to refute or falsify those hypotheses, deducing from them conclusions that must be confronted with the facts" (p.60). Now, although we have elements to address the research problem, it is necessary to continue addressing other aspects such as the type and design of the research, as well as the techniques, instruments, population, and sample, which will provide greater operational support. At the same time, according to Baena (2017), both the epistemic model and the method are not sufficient to arrive at the truth.

An explanatory type of research was carried out, in which the researcher seeks to understand the effect of his variables in light of the hypotheses he established (Bernal, 2010). In the case of the present study, the hypotheses are derived from the general objective, which is to determine the effect of implementing a gamified strategy to strengthen communicative competence through reading comprehension in the area of English as a foreign language in elementary school students.

The criteria used to classify the design or work plan are based on field research, which takes place in a natural environment that allows for the validity and control of the hypotheses (Hurtado, 2000). In terms of temporality, the research is cross-sectional in that data collection corresponds to a predetermined time frame. On the other hand, as the research is being carried out on a current issue (gamification and second language learning), another criterion is contemporary design. Similarly, the elements of univariate design are recognized in that a single independent variable is understood and its effect or result on the dependent variable is analyzed.

Finally, the study is quasi-experimental because, unlike pure experiments, it seeks exercise control over the variables, the participants, and the control group (Bernal, 2010). Thus, taking into account the criteria described above, the research can be approached in a contemporary univariate quasi-experimental cross-sectional field design, or as addressed by Hernández et al. (2014), a "quasi-experimental design with pre-test-post-test and control group" (p. 145), in which the researcher is allowed to control the independent variable to observe the effect on the dependent variable.

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Figure 1. Diagram of the "Test-post test and intact groups" design.

$$G_1 \qquad 0_1 \qquad X \qquad 0_2$$
$$G_2 \qquad 0_3 \qquad — \qquad 0_4$$

Note: Design proposed by Hernández et al. (2014).

The figure clearly shows the structure of the research design, applying an initial test focused on communicative competence in English reading comprehension to both intact groups (pre-test). Then, while the stimulus (gamified strategy) is implemented in the experimental group, the control group does not participate. Last but not least, the same test is administered to both groups at the end (post-test).

With regard to the above, the results obtained in the pre-test and post-test can be analyzed and compared to determine their effect on the scores obtained, comparing the performance of each group in communicative competence in English reading comprehension after the implementation of the gamified strategy. In this vein, the techniques and instruments that will be applied to achieve the objectives of this study will focus on the survey as a technique that allows us to address the "how" the information is collected, and the questionnaire as an instrument that is responsible for the "what" will be collected, selected, and systematized (Hurtado, 2000).

As for the population or universe, Hernández et al. (2014) refer to it as a set of cases that must address aspects of content, place, and time. For this research, the population is determined by all fifth-grade students in the public educational institutions Comercial de Envigado and Escuela Normal Superior de Envigado. Therefore, the sample comprises a total of 70 students, of whom 30 are part of the experimental group (Comercial de Envigado Educational Institution) and 40 are part of the control group (Escuela Normal Superior de Envigado), taking into account the pre-test and post-test design with intact groups.

In the case of the experimental group, the group was intentionally selected for the implementation of the gamified strategy to avoid setbacks such as those seen in the probabilistic sample, in which, in the words of Hernández et al. (2014), students have the same chance of being chosen, but with the disadvantage that once the strategy is implemented, they may not be present because they are part of another group.

In this regard, considering the objective of this study, which is to determine the effect of implementing a gamified strategy to strengthen communicative competence through reading comprehension in the area of English as a foreign language, the sample selected above is used insofar as "the choice of elements does not depend on probability, but on causes related to the characteristics of the research or the researcher's purposes" (Hernández et al., 2014, p.176).

For data collection, the following procedure was used as the research method: first, a written request was made to the legal representative of the Comercial de Envigado educational institution and the Escuela Normal Superior de Envigado, in order to carry out the study and, consequently, the intervention with fifth-grade students to conduct the pre-test and post-test in search of strengthening communication through reading comprehension in English.

Second, the experimental group and control group were selected. The control group was chosen from one of the fifth-grade groups at the Escuela Normal Superior de Envigado (there are four groups per grade, and one was chosen), and the experimental group was chosen from one of the fifth-grade groups at the Institución Educativa Comercial de Envigado (there are five groups per grade, and one was chosen). Subsequently, informed consent is sent to parents and guardians, asking them to sign and complete it, provided that the student who is going to take the test (questionnaire) is authorized and that the data can be processed as a contribution to the research.

In addition, clarification is provided on how to present the questionnaire and the estimated time required to complete it, bearing in mind that the selected students will not only have to complete the pre-test but also the post-test. Finally, the experimental group will take the pre-test, as will the

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control group. Both the pre-test and the post-test are the same and consist of a closed questionnaire with 35 multiple-choice questions with a single answer.

The design and construction of the measurement instrument to be used took into account the procedure proposed by Hernández et al. (2014), who proposes eleven phases in the process of constructing an instrument.

PHASE 1: Fundamental redefinitions

The research variables remain the same, with the gamified strategy as the independent variable and the strengthening of communicative competence through reading comprehension in English as the dependent variable. The data will be collected at the Institución Educativa Comercial de Envigado and the Escuela Normal Superior de Envigado. The purpose of the collection is to determine the effect of a gamified strategy on strengthening communicative competence through reading comprehension in English. The students in the experimental and control groups will be assessed once the instrument has been validated by experts.

PHASE 2: Focused review of literature

In the theoretical basis of the research, it was possible to draw on useful tools from previous research that allowed us to address the variables to be investigated.

PHASE 3: Identification of the domain of the variables to be measured and their indicators

To define the variables, their dimensions, and the research indicators, operationalization tables were created for the gamified strategy variable and communicative competence based on English reading comprehension, defining them both conceptually and operationally.

PHASE 4: Key decision-making

For this phase, it was decided to use a measurement tool already developed by the company Instruimos.

PHASE 5: Construction of the instrument

Within the project and editing process, teachers from the Institution for Education, Work, and Human Development "*Instruimos*" develop the English proficiency test for fifth grade. Spelling and grammar review is carried out by the English Department at *Instruimos*. Layout is done by the Publications Department at *Instruimos*.

The *Instruimos* grids are used as a guide for the English tests. These grids are constructed following the guidelines of the Ministry of National Education, proposed in the Basic Standards for Competence in Foreign Languages: English, and the Basic Rights for Learning English. The questions are developed using the Evidence-Based Method, which takes into account the subject matter and develops evidence to support the learning objectives proposed by the Ministry of Education.

PHASE 6: Pilot test

Not applicable.

PHASE 7: Development of the final version of the instrument or system and its application and interpretation procedure

To give greater validity to this questionnaire, at least three experts in education and English will be linked who, based on their professional, research, and academic background, can provide their insights on the variables covered in this study.

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PHASE 8: Training of personnel who will administer and score the instrument

This phase is carried out by the researcher, who applies and systematizes the results expected from the measurement instrument.

PHASE 9: Obtain authorizations to implement the instrument

Se diligencian los consentimientos informados a los acudientes de los estudiantes para poder hacer uso de los datos en el proceso de investigación, así como se busca el permiso y acceso a la prueba de inglés con la empresa Instruimos S.A.S. para aplicarla.

FASE 10: Instrument administration

The measurement instrument (English test) is administered to students. It is a closed questionnaire consisting of 35 multiple-choice questions with a single answer.

PHASE 11: Preparing data for analysis

Once all these phases of the process have been completed, the data collected by the experimental and control groups is analyzed, both in the pre-test and post-test, using the SPSS program.

3 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions were drawn based on the analysis and interpretation of the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental and control groups and are directly related to the general objective and specific objectives of this research. Thus, to demonstrate the scope of the first specific objective, Tables 2 and 3 are shown to support the analyses and conclusions drawn.

Table 2. Overall results of the pre-test experimental group
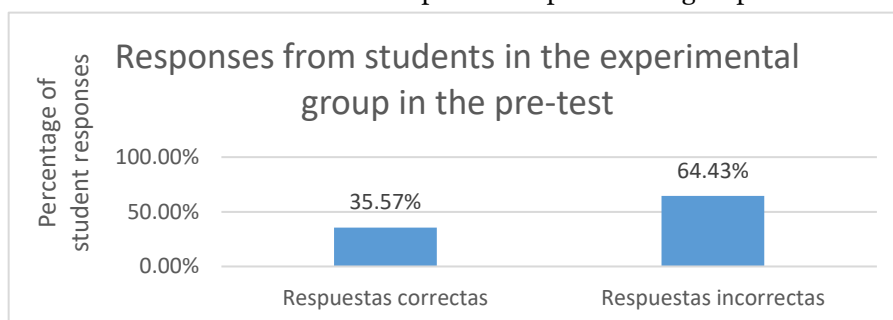
Source: own elaboration.

Table 3. Overall results of the pre-test control group
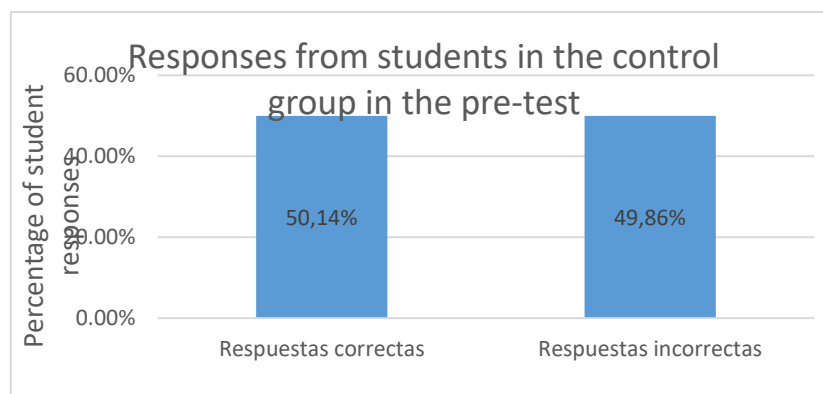
Note: Own elaboration.

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As demonstrated in the preceding tables, the initial objective—which is to describe the performance level of primary school students, constituting both the control and experimental groups, in communicative competence in reading comprehension in the domain of English as a foreign language prior to the implementation of the gamified strategy—can be addressed. It is concluded that a significant proportion of students in the experimental group, and nearly half of the control group, lack the necessary proficiency to respond to questions that evaluate linguistic and pragmatic competence.

A more detailed description of the performance levels obtained by students in linguistic and pragmatic competence is now provided. These performance levels are categorized according to their different components, which include incomplete texts, interpretation of images, incomplete dialogues, and sentence construction. The conclusions reached for each component and competence separately are presented below, as each had a specific purpose.

In this regard, the students in the control group demonstrated a higher level of Beginner (A1) proficiency in image interpretation and linguistic competence than the students in the experimental group. This finding suggests that the former group exhibited a superior ability to relate images to familiar topics in English. As Guarín and Ramírez (2017) observe, when teaching English to children, it is crucial to prioritize visual aids that integrate their daily lives with the language skills being developed. This approach, as the researchers note, is more effective in facilitating the association of new concepts with their immediate environment than a focus solely on vocabulary acquisition.

With respect to the incomplete texts and linguistic competence component, both the control group and the experimental group students obtained a low level of language proficiency (A1), indicating challenges in identifying words in the present or past tense to complete sentences. In this component, although Chomsky (1965) considers prior knowledge of concepts to be important, it is also important to use them in accordance with the specific context or situation (MEN, 2006).

Conversely, in the incomplete dialogues and pragmatic competence component, while the experimental group demonstrated a lower level of Basic 1 (A 2.1) compared to the control group, both exhibited limited proficiency in comprehending brief descriptions and identifying elements such as what, associated with familiar subjects, within a concise narrative text. However, as posited by Villegas and Escalera (2016), this phenomenon can be attributed to two factors. Firstly, the number of hours allocated to this domain is deemed insufficient. Secondly, the promotion of programs designed to enhance reading comprehension in English has been deemed inadequate.

Finally, with regard to the sentence construction and pragmatic competence component, students in both the experimental and control groups demonstrated a very low level of Basic 1 (A 2.1), indicating a limited ability to locate words in a short text according to their basic structure in familiar topics. For this skill, which necessitates fundamental linguistic competence, it has been observed that students do not possess the requisite grammatical knowledge for their respective grade levels. This deficiency significantly hinders their ability to comprehend and produce simple and compound sentences, as well as to identify and interpret linguistic situations within a given context (MEN, 2006).

Regarding the second objective, which sought to ascertain the structure and dynamics of a gamified strategy for enhancing communicative competence through reading comprehension in the domain of English as a foreign language among primary school students at the Institución Educativa Comercial de Envigado, it was determined that the gamification-based strategy Duolingo ABC is an application that fosters the development of reading comprehension in English in children, due to its structure and game dynamics, which incorporate elements suitable for a child population, among which the following stand out: Interactive readings, performance-based levels, incentives to continue improving the level achieved, and permanent support, all without the need for adult supervision or tutoring, are key components of the program.

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With regard to the third objective, which centered on the implementation of a gamified strategy in the experimental group to enhance communicative competence through reading comprehension in the domain of English as a foreign language among primary school students at the Institución Educativa Comercial de Envigado, it was determined that the application of a gamified strategy to the students in the experimental group yielded increased attention and a heightened willingness to learn English. This was facilitated by the utilization of mobile devices to enhance language skills through the Duolingo ABC application, fostering collaborative efforts among peers to overcome challenges.

Adopting a more expansive perspective, the aforementioned factors exerted a favorable influence on the process undertaken by the students in the experimental group, particularly with regard to their communicative competence in English reading comprehension. This outcome was facilitated by the intervention of the strategy, which enabled the adaptation of the classroom dynamics to incorporate elements of play within a non-playful context (Werbach and Hunter, 2012). Consequently, students exhibited a greater propensity to engage with the English language, transitioning from a passive stance wherein they merely read a text and replied in accordance with the instructor's directives to an active role. In this active role, students could, according to their learning pace, performance level, and continuous feedback, become more involved in activities that were now promoted by the instructor in an active learning environment (Gil and Prieto, 2020).

Finally, the fourth objective was to compare the level of performance in communicative competence in English reading comprehension between the students in the experimental and control groups after the implementation of a gamified strategy. As illustrated in Table 4, the results of the statistical tests of normality (Shapiro-Wilk) and non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney U and Wilcoxon signed-rank tests) were used to determine the means and medians of the control and experimental groups, both in the pre-test and post-test (Trujillo Domínguez et al., 2015).

Table 4. Statistics of the results of the experimental and control groups in the pre-test and post-test.

Statistics

		Experimental Pre-test Result	Pre-test Result Control	Post-test experimental result	Post-test result control
N	Valid	40	40	40	40
	Lost	40	40	40	40
Media		12,45	17,55	15,48	17,90
Median		11,50	16,50	14,00	16,50
Standard deviation		5,472	7,075	5,991	6,831

Note: Results obtained from the statistical program SPSS.

In this regard, the results of the pre-test indicated that although the experimental group did not demonstrate a significant enhancement in language proficiency in the post-test when compared to the control group, which did not employ a gamified strategy, a substantial improvement in the median post-test results was observed, indicating an increase in the performance level of the experimental group. In contrast, the median of the control group remained constant.

Therefore, it can be concluded that although the control group exhibited a higher level of performance in the questions assessing linguistic and pragmatic competence from its different components, both in the pre-test and in the post-test, when compared to the experimental group, it is only when gamified strategies are employed that student interest can be activated. This is crucial to helping them exceed their initial level. As was the case with the experimental group, where, although

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the level of performance shown by the control group was not reached, there was a positive change between the results shown in the pre-test and post-test.

In summary, as asserted by Beltrán (2017), the degree of student achievement in English is contingent upon their proactive engagement in enhancing their language proficiency. Consequently, within the context of the classroom, where learning can be characterized as monotonous, the integration of gamified strategies that are predicated on games with clearly defined learning objectives emerges as a pivotal approach to motivate students in their endeavor to not only sustain their current language proficiency but also to enhance it, irrespective of their initial level of knowledge.

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