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Magíster en Innovación de la Enseñanza, Aprendizaje y Evaluación del Inglés

Online Vocabulary Games to Improve Fifth Graders' Descriptive Vocabulary for Oral Communication

Tesis para optar al grado de Magíster en Innovación de la Enseñanza,
Aprendizaje y Evaluación del Inglés

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Concepción-Chile 2021

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	4
List of Tables and Figures	7
List of Acronyms	8
Abstract	9
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	11
1.1. Background Information	12
1.2. Problem Statement	12
1.3. General Objective and Specific Objectives	13
CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	14
2.1. Vocabulary Acquisition.....	15
2.2. Vocabulary Knowledge	16
2.3. Receptive and Productive Vocabularies.....	17
2.4. Semantic Fields	17
2.5. Classification of Words.....	18
2.6. Considerations for Selecting Vocabulary Words	19
2.7. Games	20
2.7.1. Online Games	20
2.8. Image Description	21
CHAPTER III: METHOD	22
3.1. Type of Research	23
3.2. Participants	23
3.3. Research Question	24
3.3.1. General Objective and Specific Objectives	24
3.4. Research Problem	25
3.5. Stages of the Action Research.....	25
3.6. Data Collection Techniques	28
3.6.1. Oral Interview	28
3.6.2. Analytic Rubric	30
3.6.3. Likert Scale.....	30

3.7. Data Analysis Techniques.....	31
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS	32
4.1. Specific Objective 1: To examine the participants' vocabulary knowledge before and after being exposed to the implementation of online game-based vocabulary teaching strategies.....	33
4.2. Findings about the Oral Task and the Analytic Rubric	33
4.2.1. Findings about the Rubric Criteria.....	36
4.2.2. Level of Difficulty of the Games Dimension	41
4.2.3. Games as a Learning Aid Dimension	42
4.2.4. Personal Perception Dimension.....	43
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION	44
5.1. Examining the Results	45
5.1.1. In relation to SO1: To examine the participants' vocabulary knowledge before and after being exposed to the implementation of online game-based vocabulary teaching strategies.	45
5.1.2. In relation to SO2: To explore the participants' views towards the implementation of online vocabulary games as a way to improve their ability to describe an image orally.....	46
5.2. Limitations.....	47
5.3. Implications.....	47
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS	49
6.1. Summary of main findings.....	50
6.2. Personal Reflections	50
6.3. Recommendations	50
CHAPTER VII: REFERENCES	51
ANEXO	58

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Considerations for selecting vocabulary words (Fisher & Frey, 2008, as cited in Calisto, Solís & Ulloa, 2015)	19
Table 2: Action plan details.	28
Table 4 Comparison chart between pre-intervention oral task and	33
post-intervention oral task	33
Table 5: Global (whole group) M and SD of pre and post intervention oral tasks	35
Table 6, Results of the pre and post intervention oral task according to the analytic rubric	36
Table 7, Percentage of approval per criteria of the analytic rubric in the pre and post intervention oral task	37
Table 8 Example of improvement on range and vocabulary control	37
Table 9 Example of improvement on vocabulary accuracy	38
Table 10 Example of Improvement on Appropriacy	38
Table 11 Example of improvement on lexical structures criteria	39
Table 12. Frequency of values from the Likert scale	40
Figure 1 Oral interview Image Sample: Image (YLE sample papers Flyers, 2014, p.18) and Table 3 Interview Questions Example.	29
Figure 2: Participants' scores before and after the intervention	34
Figure 3: Participants' perceptions about level of difficulty dimension after the Intervention	41
Figure 4: Participants' perceptions about games seen as a learning aid after the Intervention	42
Figure 5: Participants' personal perception about the intervention	43

List of Acronyms

1. EFL: English as a Foreign Language
2. ICT: Information and Communication Technology
3. MINEDUC: Ministerio de Educación
4. ELT: English Language Teaching
5. CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference.
6. YLE: Young Learners English Tests
7. PET: Preliminary English Test
8. TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Abstract

This action research study investigates the contribution of online vocabulary games on descriptive vocabulary knowledge. This research study aims to determine whether using online vocabulary games increases fifth grade students' descriptive vocabulary knowledge for oral communication tasks. The participants were nine 5th grade students from a semi-public school. Data was gathered through two oral tasks. First, the participants were assessed based on their performance on a pre-intervention oral task. In order to do this an analytic rubric was used to assess their performance describing an image orally. Secondly, an action plan of four lessons was conducted with the final purpose of improving fifth graders' vocabulary knowledge. Finally, participants went through a post-intervention oral task in which they described the same picture used on the pre-intervention oral task. The same analytic rubric was used in both oral tasks to analyze results on their performance. After analyzing the data, the findings showed that an increase in participants' vocabulary knowledge was observed after the implementation of this online intervention. The use of vocabulary games to improve vocabulary knowledge can be applied as a regular teaching practice in an EFL context to reinforce the Chilean curriculum of the English language.

Key words: Online vocabulary games, descriptive vocabulary, EFL, oral communication, online education

Resumen

Este estudio de investigación-acción investiga la contribución de los juegos de vocabulario online al conocimiento del vocabulario descriptivo. Este estudio de investigación tiene como objetivo determinar si el uso de juegos de vocabulario online aumenta el conocimiento de vocabulario descriptivo de los estudiantes de quinto básico para las tareas de comunicación oral. Los participantes fueron nueve estudiantes de quinto básico de una escuela semi-pública. Los datos se recopilaron a través de dos entrevistas orales. En primer lugar, se evaluó a los participantes en función de su desempeño en una entrevista oral previa a la intervención. Para ello se utilizó una rúbrica analítica para evaluar su desempeño describiendo una imagen oralmente. En segundo lugar, se llevó a cabo un plan de acción de cuatro lecciones con el propósito final de mejorar el conocimiento del vocabulario de los alumnos de quinto grado. Finalmente, los participantes realizaron una entrevista oral posterior a la intervención en la que describieron la misma imagen utilizada en la entrevista oral previa a la intervención. Se utilizó la misma rúbrica analítica en ambas tareas orales para analizar los resultados sobre su desempeño. Después de analizar los datos, los hallazgos mostraron que se observó un aumento en el conocimiento del vocabulario de los participantes después de

la implementación de esta intervención en línea. El uso de juegos de vocabulario para mejorar el conocimiento del vocabulario descriptivo se puede aplicar como una práctica docente regular en un contexto EFL para reforzar el currículo chileno del idioma inglés.

Palabras clave: juegos de vocabulario en línea, vocabulario descriptivo, inglés como lengua extranjera, comunicación oral, educación en línea.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background Information

English has been included as part of the teaching program of public, semi-private and private schools in Chile for many years. However, not all schools are able of providing the same teaching environment and conditions to develop and acquire the English language. Differences in factors such as age, socioeconomic status, access to education and number of hours per week (Matear, 2008) are key to determining success in the development of language skills. In the current pandemic context, these differences have been accentuated. The school selected to conduct the study is a semi-public school following the study programs of the Chilean Ministry of Education for elementary school students, which states that all learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) should develop the four language skills to achieve language proficiency (MINEDUC, 2013). By the end of 11th and 12th grade, all students are expected to achieve a B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in which they are able to demonstrate an understanding of the information they receive and to express themselves in a simple and intentional way with efficiency and fluency, to accomplish effective communication in the various fields in which they interact (CEFR, 2001). Moreover, the programs encourage the use of strategies as well as the use of ICTs skills. Regarding speaking skill development, “in oral expression, language progresses according to the increasing use of vocabulary, morphosyntactic structures and pronunciation” (p.33).

1.2. Problem Statement

Fifth grade students from a semi-private school are expected to acquire the basic level of English which corresponds to a Pre- A1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001). This implies that students should be able to understand and use very frequently-used everyday expressions as well as simple phrases, introduce themselves, ask and answer questions about personal information and interact in a simple way (CEFR, 2001). According to *Programas de Estudio para la Educación Básica* (MINEDUC, 2013), English is perceived mainly as a means to communicate and receive information from the students instead of being an object of study by itself. By fifth grade, students should be able to demonstrate their speaking skill development through the use of common phrases and expressions, elementary morphosyntactic structures and relevant vocabulary acquired and reviewed in previous years. However, it has been observed that fifth grade students have not acquired the necessary skills to perform well in a simple picture description task. Due to the extraordinary circumstances that we are living worldwide because of the COVID-19

pandemic, the modality of the teaching process has changed from on-onsite education to the creation of a virtual learning environment.

Regarding vocabulary knowledge, students' level of vocabulary is lower than what it should be. This is largely due to the fact that students have not been attending online classes regularly or they have been having internet connectivity problems, they have not done the assignments, exercises and homework assigned and they have not been exposed to the language as they had been in previous years. There is also a general lack of motivation that is preventing students from acquiring an expected level of vocabulary. Therefore, students are not able to give a proper description or they are unable to speculate on a situation presented in a picture. They do not have the knowledge to use a variety of idiomatic expressions and descriptive vocabulary to help them accomplish the task successfully. In order to solve the problem previously identified the following study aims at increasing descriptive vocabulary of fifth grade students from a semi-private school, through the use of online vocabulary games to improve their oral performance.

Regarding the use of games in the EFL classroom, Lee (2000) mentions that these are a main component since they help students escape from routine and are important in terms of motivation and challenges. Yip and Kwan (2006, as cited in Ashraf, Motlagh, Salami, 2014) indicate that students playing online vocabulary games tend to learn more appropriately, can retain new words for a longer period of time and retrieve more words compared to those who are not provided with them.

Games help with the reduction of anxiety, improve self-confidence, promote collaborative work and generate positive feelings (Gozcu, 2016) so students can learn in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. Games inside the classroom give our students high levels of engagement. By using meaningful, clear, motivating, challenging tasks or games we can maintain students' interest in vocabulary acquisition.

1.3. General Objective and Specific Objectives

This research has the following objectives.

General Objective: To analyze the contribution of online vocabulary games to improve fifth grade students' descriptive vocabulary when describing images orally in the context of a Chilean semi-private school.

Specific Objectives:

- 1) To examine the participants' vocabulary breadth before and after being exposed to the implementation of online vocabulary game-based teaching strategies.
- 2) To explore the participants' views towards the implementation of online vocabulary games as a way to improve their ability to describe an image orally.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the process of learning any foreign language we need to keep in mind all the different aspects that learning a language involves. We need to consider how to develop all four skills to be proficient in the target language. Syntax, morphology, phonology and pragmatics (Hoque, 2015) are important but we cannot leave aside the semantic or vocabulary development that each learner must manage in order to communicate. Without vocabulary, communication cannot happen as people just cannot understand and send meaningful messages (Schmitt, 2000). A similar idea is stated by Wilkins “. . . while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (1972, pp. 111–112). Over the years, diverse methods have been proposed in order to teach vocabulary, such as teaching isolated words, defining concepts, translating, etc. Even though these are not obsolete practices, learners need a more interactive and compelling way to approach words.

In this section, the theories that are relevant to the study are presented in sequence. Firstly, the theories on vocabulary acquisition are reviewed, then the role of games in the EFL classroom is discussed. Finally, the importance of image description is addressed.

2.1. Vocabulary Acquisition

When learning a language, teachers tend to focus more on the grammatical aspects than on vocabulary. However, words are as important as structures because if people do not acquire vocabulary, people just cannot understand and send meaningful messages (Wilkins, 1972; Schmitt, 2000). Restrepo (2015, p.158) states that “second language learning largely depends on vocabulary, as the building blocks from which learners start their second language (L2) acquisition”.

A great deal of research on language acquisition has been done over the years (Azieb, 2021). However, when talking about vocabulary acquisition and strategies to teach said vocabulary, it needs to be taken into account the different aspects that are present when teaching words and expressions. Coady (1997) proposes four main approaches to L2 vocabulary instruction: context alone, strategy instruction, development plus explicit instruction, and classroom activities.

- Context Alone "proposes that there is actually no need or even justification for direct vocabulary instruction" (Coady, 1997, p. 275).
- Strategy Instruction "proposes the teaching of vocabulary learning strategies as an essential component of acquiring vocabulary" (Coady, 1997, p.277).
- Development plus Explicit Instruction "argues for explicit teaching of certain types of vocabulary using a large number of techniques and even direct memorization of certain highly frequent items" (Coady, 1997, pp. 278-9).
- Classroom Activities, "advocate the teaching of vocabulary words along very traditional lines, these are best exemplified by a number of practical handbooks for teachers which contain generic activities for vocabulary learning to teachers" (Coady, 1997, pp.280-81).

These approaches are useful for teachers who want their students to learn using the direct acquisition method. On the other hand, there are teachers who consider the indirect acquisition method, which states that vocabulary and spelling are developed in second languages as they are in the first language (Krashen, 1989).

Nevertheless, research points out that a combined approach is superior to both direct and indirect alone (Zimmerman, 1998; Paribakht & Wesche, 1997). Therefore, teachers should bear in mind the integration of both methods when teaching vocabulary in the EFL classroom in order to cater for the different needs their learners may have.

2.2. Vocabulary Knowledge

When referring to vocabulary knowledge, there is not a clear consensus at a theoretical level. Richards (1976) highlights seven aspects: syntactic behavior, associations, semantic value, different meanings, underlying form and derivations. These create a well-known framework for vocabulary knowledge. Nation (1990) postulates eight different categories of word knowledge, both receptive and productive. Nation states that vocabulary knowledge is knowledge of words in spoken and written language, that includes syntax, words' collocations, frequency of use, compatibility, meaning, and relationship with other word vocabulary knowledge. Qian (2002) develops four dimensions: (a) vocabulary size; (b) depth of vocabulary knowledge, which includes characteristics of words such as syntactic, semantic, pronunciation, spelling, collocational and phraseological properties; (c) lexical organization, that indicates how words are represented, connected and storage in the mental lexicon; and (d) automaticity of receptive-productive knowledge, which refers to all essential processes that allow people to gain access to word knowledge for both receptive and productive purposes. Schmitt (2014) defines vocabulary knowledge as the understanding of vocabulary components, lexical organization, receptive and productive mastery, and fluency.

Despite a lack of agreement on how to capture the multidimensional nature of vocabulary knowledge, there is consensus on two basic dimensions of vocabulary knowledge, breadth and depth, which appears to be widely accepted (Anderson & Freebody, 1981; Qian, 2002).

When talking about vocabulary breadth knowledge we refer to "the number of words the meaning of which one has at least some superficial knowledge" (Qian, 2002, p.515). Meara (1990) states that a learner's lexical competence can be measured by the dimension of his vocabulary size and emphasized that learners with a larger vocabulary set be more proficient in a language than learners with a smaller one.

The quality of lexical knowledge that indicates how well words are arranged in the learner's lexicon is referred to as vocabulary depth. The level of vocabulary knowledge has been measured in terms of stages or degrees on a scale or continuum. Researchers who have adopted this approach have used a variety of vocabulary tests (e.g., Haastруп

& Henriksen, 2000) or self-assessment scales (e.g., Wesche & Paribakht, 1996) to try to capture degrees of word knowledge with a primary focus on meaning. Despite the fact that depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge are related, they are considered separate elements of vocabulary knowledge (Qian,2002). This action research will put its focus on the participants' vocabulary breadth knowledge.

2.3. Receptive and Productive Vocabularies

If we want to understand the vocabulary learning process, it is important to keep in mind the concepts of receptive and productive vocabulary. In general terms, receptive vocabulary involves the understanding of the meaning of a word encountered in speech or writing. On the other hand, productive vocabulary is the selection of words available within a learner's interlanguage for production (Laufer and Goldstein, 2004).

Laufer and Goldstein (2004) define vocabulary in four different levels:

- active recall: being able to use the target word
- passive recall: understanding the meaning of the target word
- active recognition: recognizing the word when given its meaning
- passive recognition: the ability to recognize meaning when given options.

2.4. Semantic Fields

In the 1930s a group of structuralist linguists creates a new research paradigm. This paradigm studies semantics focusing on the unity of the language system and the influence of contexts (Zhou, 1997).

The term semantic field was first introduced by Jost Trier (1931, as cited in Boran,2018), who defines it as a group of semantically related words whose meanings delimit each other. Trier's semantic field-theory states that words are related to each other and create a full lexical system. A semantic field can be formed under a common concept classifying the correct words (Zhou, 2001). Wu (1988, as cited in Changhong, 2010) summarizes Trier's semantic field theory as follows:

- a. The vocabulary in a language system is semantically related and builds up a complete lexical system. This system is unsteady and changing constantly.
- b. Since the vocabulary of a language is semantically related, we are not supposed to study the semantic change of individual words in isolation, but to study vocabulary as an integrated system.

c. Since lexemes are interrelated in a sense, we can only determine the connotation of a word by analyzing and comparing its semantic relationship with other words. A word is meaningful only in its own semantic field. (p.51)

As Changhong (2010) states, "Trier's semantic field is generally considered paradigmatic. It deals with paradigmatic relations between words such as hyponymy, synonymy and antonymy" (p.51).

For the purpose of this study we will only deal with hyponymy since it corresponds to the most common branch of semantic field theory (Changhong, 2010).

2.5. Classification of Words

Selecting words to teach is not an easy process. Data suggests that students need explicit instruction in word meanings, recurrent exposure to words, opportunities for wide reading, and experiences using the words with their peers (Graves, 2006; Fisher, Blachowicz & Watts-Taffe, 2011).

Moreover, it is important to have in mind that words can be divided into categories. The selection of different words alongside understanding the need of adding a variety of expressions to students' breath of knowledge is crucial. Different categories of words can be found in the three-tiered model of vocabulary development, by Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) in which they classify words in the frequency and applicability.

Tier 1: Common, known words: basic words or words that do not necessarily need instruction. Are typically present in oral conversations and part of most children's vocabulary instruction since they are exposed to them at high frequency from a very early age. Example: *book, run, boy, cat, red, party.*

Tier 2: High-frequency words: Frequently occurring words that appear in various contexts and topics and play an important role in a variety of different content areas. Example: *masterpiece, fortunate, measure.*

Tier 3: Low-frequency, domain-specific words: Limited to specific topics and domains. Frequency of use in this category is quite low. Specialized words that appear in specific fields or content areas. Example: *isotope, epidermis, filibuster, and pantheon.*

2.6. Considerations for Selecting Vocabulary Words

Fisher and Frey (2008, as cited in Calisto, Ulloa & Diaz 2018) propose several questions divided into six categories to be answered when selecting suitable and pertinent vocabulary to be taught. These questions are described in Table 1.

Topic	Question to ask
Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is the word representative of a family of words that students should know? ● Is the concept represented by the word critical to understanding the text? ● Is the word a label for an idea that students need to know? ● Does the word represent an idea that is essential for understanding another concept?
Repeatability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Will the word be used again in this text? o If so, does the word occur often enough to be redundant? ● Will the word be used again during the school year?
Transportable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Will the word be used in group discussions? ● Will the word be used in writing tasks? ● Will the word be used in other content or subject areas?
Contextual analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can students use context clues to determine the correct or intended meaning of the word without instruction?
Structural analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can students use structural analysis to determine the correct or intended meaning of the word without instruction?
Cognitive load	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have I identified too many words for students to successfully integrate?

Table 1: Considerations for selecting vocabulary words (Fisher & Frey, 2008, as cited in Calisto, Ulloa & Diaz 2018)

These categories and questions have proven to be helpful for EFL classrooms. By answering these enquiries, it can be identified if the words being taught are appropriate for students. This is an important consideration for explicit vocabulary instruction.

2.7. Games as a useful resource for vocabulary learning

Games have proven to be a central element in the EFL classroom, as they are considered to help the teacher to create an environment in which the language can be both useful and meaningful. Hadfield (1990, as cited in Deesri, 2002, p.1) describes games as “an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun.”. Additionally, they contribute to encouraging learners’ interest in the class. (Wright, Betteridge and Buckby, 2006).

Lee (2000) mentions that games are a main component since they help escape from routine and are important in terms of motivation and challenges. They also help with the reduction of anxiety, improve self-confidence and generate positive feelings (Gozcu, 2016). Moreover, games become materials that promote motivation and engagement in the class activities (Measles & Abu-dawood, 2015) as well as catering to different learning styles and needs and developing students’ speaking, listening and communicative skills (Shabaneh & Farrah, 2019).

According to Saha and Singh (2016), the learning process becomes more enjoyable when playing games collaboratively. These authors also add that “language learning activities in the form of language games not only help to foster learners’ interest in language learning but also help to teach new items, practice language forms and revise what has been learned before to speed up learners’ pace of language acquisition” (p. 22).

2.7.1. Online Games

During the 21st century, the use of technology in education has taken an important role to reinforce the teaching and learning experience in our classrooms. In our current pandemic context, online games have taken a crucial role. Lessons need to be done synchronically and teachers have to rebuild the way in which they deliver content and engage students into learning. To achieve this, it is necessary to address the concept of gamification. Gamification is a concept that is used when game elements are being used to improve non-gaming environments (Deterding et al., 2011). As specified by Hasram et al (2020), in a learning context, gamification is known to be able to engage and encourage learners. According to Werbach and Hunter (2012, as cited in Figueroa 2015), gamification is the use of game elements and game design techniques in non-game contexts. Figueroa (2015) mentions that the main objective of gamification is “to increase participation and motivate users through the use of game elements such as points, leaderboards, and immediate feedback among other things” (p.37). Through the use of games in the classroom and by using their characteristics we can get our students more involved in the learning process.

To foster engagement from students, teachers have incorporated more ICTS in the classroom. One of these ICTS are online vocabulary games. Yip and Kwan (2006)

indicate that students playing online vocabulary games tend to learn more appropriately and can retain the new words for a longer period of time and retrieve more words compared to those who are not provided with vocabulary games. According to Chapman & Rich (2018), online games in education use game principles and game thinking to solve problems and engage students in interactive learning.

Consequently, the present research on vocabulary acquisition proposes an intervention in which students learn vocabulary through the use of online vocabulary games.

2.8. Image Description in the classroom

The use of images in the classroom is very common, whether it is used with flashcards, for an activity or for image description. The use of images varies from checking comprehension, association of unfamiliar words or stimulating speaking abilities. However, there is not a consensus on what visual literacy is. Nevertheless, Baker (2015) defines it as “the competency to make meaning from what we see and to create images that convey implicit and explicit messages to others” (p.3).

The use of images, especially in an image description task can lead to meaningful interactions. Images can be used as a form of instructional scaffolding, which Bruner (1975) defines as specific support that helps activities that are beyond the students' autonomous capacity. Baker (2015) states that even though students have not mastered sentence patterns or specific language, such as specific vocabulary, they can use images as an intermediary. On the other hand, Brumberger (2011) defines visual literacy as “the ability to analyze and interpret images and other visual material” (p.21). Brumberger (2011) also declares that despite students being digital natives, they are not skilled at assessing and critiquing images, which are considered part of visual literacy.

CHAPTER III: METHOD

3.1. Type of Research

This study follows the model of action research, for it aims at improving the quality of action and practices inside the classroom (Alvarez-Gayou, 2003; Elliot, 1991). According to Given (2008), action research is “uniquely suited to researching and supporting change” (p. 4), since it involves social research with exploratory action and practice (Sandín, 2003) to promote development.

Moreover, action research is a kind of study useful for teachers and other educators to uncover strategies to improve teaching practices (O’Connor, Greene & Anderson, 2006; Sagor, 2004) and, as states by Johnson (2005), action research is a powerful instrument for helping teachers work on the many challenges faced in the teaching-learning process. Among the features of action research, Burns (2015) states the following ones:

- (a) undertake research to bring about positive change and improvement in the participants’ social situation
- (b) generate theoretical as well as practical knowledge about the situation
- (c) enhance collegiality, collaboration and involvement of participants who are actors in the situation and most likely to be affected by changes
- (d) establish an attitudinal stance of continual change, self-development and growth. (pp. 187-188)

Hence, through the implementation of this action research, a change will try to be done on students’ vocabulary knowledge, generating an effect and improving the quality of action in the classroom regarding vocabulary teaching.

3.2. Participants

The sample consisted of nine fifth grade students from a semi public school in Coyhaique. This school is owned by a private educational corporation with funding from the government. The students volunteer in an online workshop, where the main purpose was to bring them closer to the language, through a series of technological activities. Some of the learners’ characteristics were:

- Six girls and three boys (aged 10- 11 years)
- They all have had English lessons since they were in 3rd grade. That meant that they only had one year of face-to-face English classes before switching to online learning. They were going through their second year of online classes together.
- Weekly, they had two English lessons of one hour each (app. 64 hours per year).

This study attempts to positively contribute to the improvement of the students’ vocabulary knowledge and speaking skills. Students are used to having a Spanish-

English code switching teaching methodology for their lessons but they are not used to speaking by using full sentences in the target language or they do not speak at all and keep completely silent during the whole class. That is why the curriculum coordinator of the school considers that the participation of these students could be beneficial for them, the study and the institution. This is the main reason why they allow to take part in the intervention. Thus, the sample chosen fits the category of purposive or theoretical sample (Berg & Lune, 2017) since participants were selected because of their characteristics and they met the requirements to participate in this type of intervention which aims to increase students' vocabulary knowledge.

3.3. Research Question

Vocabulary is essential when learning any language. Finding new methods to teach words is essential in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). One of those methods are games and in this case online games in particular. The current research aims to find answers to the following question:

- To what extent do online vocabulary games help to increase fifth grade students' vocabulary knowledge when describing an image orally?

3.3.1. General Objective and Specific Objectives

This research has the following objectives.

General Objective: To analyze the contribution of online vocabulary games to improve fifth grade students' descriptive vocabulary when describing images orally in the context of a Chilean semi-public school.

Specific Objectives:

1. To examine the participants' vocabulary knowledge before and after being exposed to the implementation of online game-based vocabulary teaching strategies.
2. To explore the participants' views towards the implementation of online vocabulary games as a way to improve their ability to describe an image orally.

3.4. Research Problem

Students from a semi-public school are intended to begin with mandatory lessons of English from fifth grade onwards. However, in this school they start with compulsory English lessons from third grade. Considering The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), students' level of English is a Pre-A1. According to *Programas de Estudio para la Educación Básica* (MINEDUC, 2013, p.35), "the English language is seen mainly as a means to communicate and receive information of relevance for the students instead of being an object of study by itself". In this same document we find learning objectives for 5th grade in which speaking objectives are highlighted. For instance, students should be able to "express oneself orally, either in dialogues, presentations or group activities, with the support of visual ..." and they should be able to "identify and express quantities, describe the position of objects, and demonstrate knowledge and use of vocabulary..." (MINEDUC, 2013, p.48-49). These objectives demonstrate the importance of developing speaking skills.

However, 5th graders at this semi-private school present lack of descriptive vocabulary to express themselves even on an image description task. This problem has been reflected through online classroom observation and assessment analysis, since most students exhibit poor communication skills, which make them have difficulties in communicating when describing an image and its elements.

In response to this problem, the following study aims at improving learners' descriptive vocabulary knowledge by providing them with online vocabulary instruction of words through vocabulary game-based activities.

3.5. Stages of the Action Research

The action plan for the intervention is divided in six sessions. Each session includes different activities, games and online apps. Students practice with one receptive skill game in which they acquire new vocabulary or reinforce their background knowledge. Each session ends with a productive skill game that allows students to produce sentences related to the vocabulary learnt. The aim, actions, instruments to be used and specific objectives are shown in Table 2 below.

N° of session	Aim of the session	Actions	Research instrument	Specific objectives
1	<p>-Collect information about students' previous descriptive vocabulary knowledge on an image description task.</p> <p>-Assess the initial oral performance (teacher assessment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a pre-intervention oral task. on an image description. • Students perform a short image description task. • Students' performance is video recorded. • The teacher assesses the presentations using an analytic rubric. Students will be provided with feedback. 	<p>Oral interview (Video recorded)</p> <p>Analytic Rubric oral assessment</p>	<p>To examine the participants' vocabulary knowledge before and after being exposed to the implementation of online game-based vocabulary teaching strategies.</p>
2	<p>-Identify proper nouns in the context of locations.</p> <p>-Practice image description with a set of proper nouns related to locations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher asks students to brainstorm proper nouns related to places and locations. • Students classify nouns in the correct categories. • Students play Pictionary in groups. • The teacher elicits comments when finishing the task. 		<p>To examine the participants' vocabulary knowledge before and after being exposed to the implementation of online game-based vocabulary teaching strategies.</p>
3	<p>-Practice image description with a set of dynamic verbs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher asks students to brainstorm dynamic verbs to create a word cloud. • Students identify the correct verb based on different images through Quizizz. • Students define the action being performed on an image. 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students play “Where’s Wally?” describing people and actions. ● The teacher elicits comments when finishing the task. 		
4	<p>-Use adjectives and the vocabulary seen in class on an image description task.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students review flashcards (clothes, colors and physical descriptions). ● Students match pairs to practice vocabulary related to clothes, accessories and physical descriptions ● Students will complete sentences related to adjectives using Kahoot. ● Students dress their own character using the vocabulary used in the class. ● The teacher elicits comments when finishing the task. 		
5	<p>-Identify elements through the use of prepositions of place.</p> <p>-Practice image description by using prepositions of place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher asks students to brainstorm prepositions of place and match images. ● Students will complete sentences related to prepositions of place using Kahoot. ● Students follow instructions and locate different items using a webpage. ● The teacher elicits comments when finishing the task. 		

6	<p>-Assess the final oral performance (teacher assessment)</p> <p>-Collect information on students' perceptions regarding the use of vocabulary games to improve their knowledge of descriptive vocabulary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct a post-intervention oral task on an image description task. ● Students perform an image description task. ● Students' performance is video recorded. ● The teacher assesses the presentations using an analytic rubric. ● Students answer a Likert scale instrument about perceptions and benefits they experienced about the use of vocabulary games and their knowledge of descriptive vocabulary. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Oral interview (Video recorded)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Teacher's rubric</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Likert scale</p>	<p>To explore the participants' views towards the implementation of online vocabulary games as a way to improve their ability to describe an image orally.</p>
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Table 2: Action plan

3.6. Data Collection Techniques

In order to gather the data needed for this study, two different tools to collect the data were selected for the purpose of obtaining results that were consistent with the specific objectives of this research.

3.6.1. Oral Interviews

The data collection techniques started with an **oral interview** conducted at the beginning of the intervention as a pre-intervention oral task. This first interview was assessed through an analytic rubric focused mainly on vocabulary aspects. In the last session of the intervention a second oral interview was done as a post-intervention oral task, to assess the participants' oral performance regarding vocabulary knowledge. In both of these oral tasks, students went through an online interview which took approximately 10 minutes per student. Before starting, personal questions were asked to students' registration and to create a relaxed and a friendlier environment with the purpose of lowering students' affective filter and creating a comfortable atmosphere in order to reduce students' anxiety levels (Krashen,1982). After that, they were asked to describe

an image giving as many details as possible. The interview was developed based on questions associated with a specific content, divided in different components to address students' knowledge of descriptive vocabulary.

The image selected contained different elements which made it possible to generate questions. This allowed the researcher to identify if the students had made any progress in relation to their descriptive vocabulary knowledge. This image enabled the researcher to ask about the general context of the image, people present, actions being performed, specific questions about elements in the picture as well as description of items such as number, color and size through the use of adjectives. Questions were asked in the target language and if the researcher did not elicit a response from the participant, the question was repeated in Spanish.

According to the characteristics of the image some of the questions were: what place can you see in the image? /¿Qué lugar ves en la imagen?, How many people can you see? /¿Cuántas personas ves en la imagen? among others. A sample of the interview questions as well as an image extracted from Young Learners English Tests (YLE) sample papers Flyers (2014) from Cambridge University are shown in Figure1 and Table 3 below.

	Pregunta	Questions
1	¿Qué lugar ves en la imagen?	What place can you see in the image?
2	¿Cuántas personas ves en la imagen?	How many people do you see in the image?
3	¿Crees que las personas en la imagen están relacionadas entre ellas?/¿Cuál crees que es la relación?	Do you think the people have a relationship? How do you think they are related?
4	¿Me puedes decir qué están haciendo las personas?	What are the people doing?



Figure 1 Oral interview Image Sample: Image (YLE sample papers Flyers, 2014, p.18) and Table 3 Interview Questions sample.

The same image was shown to the participants during both oral tasks. In addition, similar questions were asked on both occasions to guide students through the tasks.

3.6.2. Analytic Rubric

An analytic rubric was used during the pre-intervention oral task and post intervention oral task in order to assess students' vocabulary knowledge. This rubric was an adaptation from the speaking test assessment scale criteria for the PET (Preliminary English Test) exam and the Pre A1 Starters from Cambridge Assessment. This was done this way to keep the task and rubric aligned with the Common European Framework of References (CEFR) level of performance. Aspects like control and range were taken into consideration. Other criteria, namely grammar, pronunciation, tone or discourse management were left aside since the focus of this study was on vocabulary knowledge. The analytic rubric used to assess the oral tasks had five performance criteria which focused on: (a) range and vocabulary control which focused on the number of words said by the participant; (b) vocabulary accuracy, which assessed the adequacy of the words; (c) appropriacy which focused on the context; and (d) lexical structures which dealt with prepositions of place. It also presented five proficiency levels, each of which was assigned with its corresponding points. This instrument was used to assess Specific Objective 1.

Finally, for the purpose of collecting participants' perceptions regarding the intervention, a Likert scale was used.

3.6.3. Likert Scale

After the six sessions were implemented, a Likert scale was presented to the students. According to Joshi et al. (2015), a Likert scale is an instrument used to measure, at a certain point, the attitudes of study participants, and offers a set of statements with a real or hypothetical situation under study. This instrument aimed at gathering participants' perceptions through three dimensions: level of difficulty of the games, games seen as a learning aid on descriptive vocabulary and their personal appreciation in the intervention. There were three statements for each dimension. It was a symmetric scale (Joshi et al., 2015), since it offered balanced choices for the student to respond without favoring one side or another. Wright and Asmundson (2003, as cited in Mellor and Moore, 2014) indicated that a change in the response format, from the original 5-point to a 3-point format, could be made to make it more easily understood by children. It had three response options represented by smiley faces. For each statement, students had to select among three responses points:

- Happy face: Agrees.
- Neutral face: Does not know or is not sure about the answer.
- Sad face: Disagrees.

This Likert scale was created for the sole purpose of this intervention, considering that it was used to gather participants' perceptions about the effectiveness of online games. This instrument was to was used to assess specific objective number 2.

The data collection instruments described above were validated through a validation protocol format sent by electronic mail to three experts with master's degrees in TESOL. Among the language experts who validated the instruments, only one made a comment on an aspect of the Likert scale regarding the use of icons. His suggestion was to change the smiley faces to hands with thumbs up/down or to add colors similar to a traffic light. He pointed out that it would help children differentiate between the alternatives in a more accurate way. His suggestion was taken into consideration.

3.7. Data Analysis Techniques

In regard to the analysis of data, a quantitative data analysis was implemented. Descriptive statistics such as mean scores and standard deviations were used to compare the data obtained. The techniques used for each instrument are detailed below.

SO1: To examine the participants' vocabulary knowledge before and after being exposed to the implementation of online game-based vocabulary teaching strategies

The results of the oral task before and after the intervention were compared through descriptive statistical analysis. As explained by Dörnyei (2007), "these statistics —help us summarize findings by describing general tendencies in the data and the overall spread of the scores" (p. 213). Descriptive statistics "are only used to summarize information about a sample" (Warner, 2012, p.41). To analyse the results on both intervention oral tasks, measures of central tendency were used, specifically the mean value, which is the average of the scores to analyze the total scores and determine if the intervention had been useful for the participants. In addition, the scores were analyzed through standard deviation as a measure of variability.

SO2: To explore the participants' views towards the implementation of online vocabulary games as a way to improve their ability to describe an image orally.

Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the Likert scale results specifically through the frequency of answers shown through percentages.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

In this chapter, the data collected through the intervention will be presented. The data collected at the beginning and at the end of the teaching strategy implementation is presented according to each specific objective.

4.1. Specific Objective 1: To examine the participants’ vocabulary knowledge before and after being exposed to the implementation of online game-based vocabulary teaching strategies.

In order to address Specific Objective 1, first, it is necessary to report any changes in vocabulary knowledge among the participants before and after the implementation of the online game-based vocabulary teaching strategies. This will be done through the comparison of quantitative data corresponding to the pre and post-intervention oral tasks. Furthermore, an analysis of the participants’ vocabulary knowledge before and after the intervention will be done reporting on the analytic rubric criteria used to assess the intervention tasks. Qualitative comments will be given about the participants’ performance.

4.2. Findings about the Oral Task and the Analytic Rubric

In order to examine the participants’ vocabulary knowledge before and after the implementation of an online vocabulary game teaching strategy, participants’ scores can be compared during the pre-intervention oral task versus the post- intervention oral task based on the scores of the analytic rubric. The scores are shown in Table 4 below.

Participants	Pre-Intervention oral task		Post-Intervention oral task	
	Points obtained (Out of 20)	Percentage of achievement (Out of 100%)	Points obtained (Out of 20)	Percentage of achievement (Out of 100%)
Participant 1	6	30%	19	95%
Participant 2	0	0%	6	30%
Participant 3	0	0%	6	30%
Participant 4	0	0%	8	40%
Participant 5	3	15%	15	75%
Participant 6	6	30%	15	75%
Participant 7	3	15%	7	35%
Participant 8	6	30%	19	95%
Participant 9	0	0%	20	100%

Table 4 Comparison of scores between pre-intervention oral task and post-intervention oral task

As shown in Table 4, it can be stated that an increase in the vocabulary knowledge can be seen at the end of the intervention process, where it was possible to obtain up to 100% achievement of the objective. The main finding of this study is that the students' descriptive vocabulary knowledge- as analyzed with the analytic rubric used to assess the participants' performance in the pre and post-intervention oral tasks - did show a consistent improvement throughout the four-week intervention. It can be inferred that the strategies applied during the development of the intervention made it possible to enhance the participants' vocabulary knowledge.

It can be noticed that in the pre-intervention oral task there were 44% of the participants who were not able to obtain the minimum score (zero points) compared to 55% who managed to obtain more than 10 points in the post-intervention task.

Figure 2 below shows the comparative results of the pre and post intervention oral tasks in a graph. As evidenced, one of the students reached the maximum expected score (20) in the post-intervention task. It can be seen that 100% of participants improved their scores in the post-intervention oral task. The online vocabulary games teaching methodology applied revealed a high degree of success in all five criteria of the analytic rubric, namely: *range and vocabulary control, vocabulary accuracy, appropriacy and lexical structures*. The situation before and after the intervention is displayed in the graph in Figure 2 below.

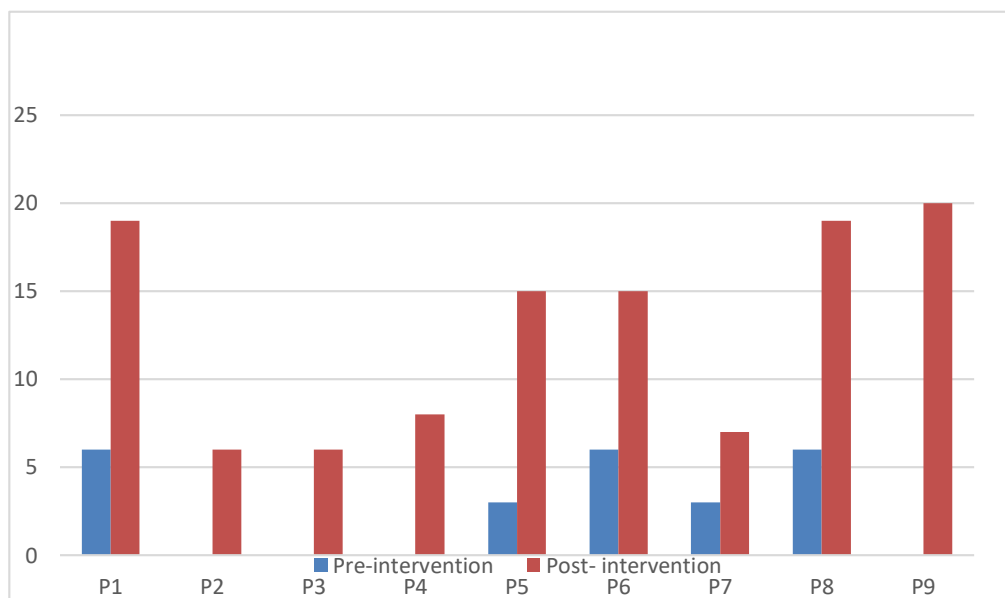


Figure 2: Participants' scores before and after the intervention

There was a clear improvement tendency from the pre to the post-intervention oral task. This happened especially on criteria related to lexical structures such as prepositions of places. This tendency could be explained by the intervention itself. Lexical structures were dealt with in a way that allowed participants to remember words and structures to

describe prepositions that they already knew. This was done through collaborative work in which participants observed an image, brainstormed prepositions of place and then matched images with the correct lexical structure. They practiced with a multiple choice game on Kahoot which helped them reinforce the content of that session.

Another example was the criterion related to *range and vocabulary control* where the number of nouns used by the participants in the post-intervention oral task was significantly higher than the ones they used in the pre-intervention oral task.

As it can be observed in Figure 2, in the post-intervention oral task, the minimum score reached 3 points compared to the pre-intervention oral task (zero points). Five participants, representing 56% of the sample, obtained more than 15 points, one of them even reached the maximum score (20).

Participant 9 achieved not only the highest score but was also the one that made more progress from having 0 point in the pre-intervention oral task to 20 points in the post-intervention oral task. In contrast to participant 7 who scored four extra points in the post-intervention oral task.

The global mean scores (M) and standard deviations (SD) for the pre and post intervention oral tasks are presented in Table 5. In the pre-intervention oral task and the post-intervention oral task the same image was presented to be described by the participants and the same questions were asked while conducting the interview. This was done by examining the results and their possible differences between both oral tasks.

Oral task	Mean Score (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Pre-intervention	2,67	2,784
Post-intervention	12,78	5,995
Overall	15,45	8.779

Table 5: Global comparison of Pre oral and post intervention

oral tasks interview results

Table 5 above shows noticeable differences in both oral tasks. The global mean score in the pre-intervention oral task was 2,67 and the standard deviation was 2,784. This explains that there was not a high difference in the participants' performance, which indicates that the participants' vocabulary knowledge was low. This is reflected in the pre-intervention oral task minimum scores where only three participants obtained 6 points, two participants achieved 3 points and 4 participants did not get the minimum score. Nevertheless, it can be noticed an increment in the post-intervention oral task where the global mean score was 12,78 and the standard deviation rose to 5,995 which suggests that the participants' vocabulary knowledge increased since they were able to provide different answers for the description of the same image. Therefore, there was a progress of all the participants after the implementation of the intervention.

4.2.1. Findings about the Rubric Criteria

In order to determine changes in the vocabulary knowledge of the participants' an analytic rubric was applied on two different occasions: pre and post intervention oral tasks. The possible scores were classified on a scale from 1 to 5.

- Poor (1)
- Fair (2)
- Good (3)
- Very Good (4)
- Excellent (5)

The evaluation criteria descriptors for the analytic rubric were the following:

- Range & Vocabulary Control
- Vocabulary Accuracy
- Appropriacy
- Lexical Structures

In order to protect the confidentiality of all participants in this action research study, they will remain anonymous and they will be designated by their number instead of their names. Nevertheless, the data collected in terms of answers given by the participants has not otherwise been altered to ensure the validity of the information collected.

Table 6 below indicates the score differences between both intervention oral tasks by each one of the nine participants.

Parti- pants	Pre-intervention oral task					Post-intervention oral task				
	Range & Vocab. Control	Vocab. Accuracy	Appro- priacy	Lexical Structures	Total	Range & Vocab. Control	Vocab. Accuracy	Appro- priacy	Lexical Structures	Total
P1	2	2	2	0	6	5	5	5	4	19
P2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	6
P3	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	6
P4	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	8
P5	1	1	1	0	3	4	4	4	3	15
P6	2	2	2	0	6	4	4	4	3	15
P7	1	1	1	0	3	2	2	2	1	7
P8	2	2	2	0	6	5	5	5	4	19
P9	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	5	20

Table 6: analytic rubric scores of the pre and post oral tasks

It can be noticed an increment on the participants' scores on each criterion of the analytic rubric used to assess both oral tasks. This means a rise in the final score in the post-

intervention task. It can be observed that all the participants obtained the minimum score (zero points) at the criterion related to lexical structures in the pre-intervention oral task. This means that none was able to comply with the rubric indicators for them to be assigned with a score. However, this situation was reversed in the post-intervention oral task. Seven participants managed to score a good number of points in the criterion.

When analyzing the four criteria present in the analytic rubric used to assess the participants, it can be noticed that the percentage of approval per each criterion in the pre and post intervention task increased significantly. Table 7 below shows each percentage.

%	Percentage of approval (%)			
	Range & Vocab. Control	Vocabulary Accuracy	Appropriacy	Lexical Structures
Pre-intervention oral task	18%	18%	18%	0%
Post-intervention oral task	69%	69%	69%	49%

Table 7, Percentage of approval per criteria of the analytic rubric in the pre and post intervention oral task

The percentage of approval on the range and vocabulary control, vocabulary accuracy and appropriacy increased almost three times in the post-intervention oral task. On the lexical structure criteria improved almost 50%.

Regarding range and vocabulary control criterion it can be seen some changes between the pre and post intervention oral task. Table 8 below indicates examples of this criterion.

		Pre-intervention oral task	Post-intervention oral task
Range and vocabulary control	Participant 2	T: How many people can you see in the image? P: Mmm no T: ¿Cuántas personas ves en la imagen? P: Mother, father , hermanos, no me acuerdo	T: How many people can you see in the image? P: Cinco... five T: Name them P: Mother, father, brother, two sisters.

Table 8 Example of improvement on range and vocabulary control

It can be seen that during the pre-intervention oral task there was code switching when trying to name people in the image. Meanwhile, during the post-intervention oral task can be seen that the participant can name the people present in the image without difficulties increasing the number of words given.

Some changes can be observed with respect to the second criterion related to vocabulary accuracy. An example is shown in table 9 below.

		Pre-intervention oral task	Post-intervention oral task
Vocabulary accuracy	Participant 1	T: What are they doing? P: What are.... T: What are the people doing? P: Eeeh play ... play recorder, play a book	T: Can you tell me what the people are doing? P: (Silencio) T: ¿Qué está haciendo la gente? P: Ahh dancing, play the guitar

Table 9 Example of improvement on vocabulary accuracy

It can be seen how the word *recorder* used in the pre-intervention oral task was changed by *guitar* which was the correct and adequate word to be used according to the image. As to criterion related to appropriacy, Table 10 below indicates an example.

		Pre-intervention oral task	Post-intervention oral task
Appropriacy	Participant 1	T: Do you think they are related? Is there a relationship? P: (Silencio) T; ¿Crees que las personas tienen una relación? P: Mmm si T: ¿Cuál? P: Friends	T: Do you think they have a relationship? P: (Silencio) T; ¿Crees que las personas tienen una relación? P: Ahhh si, family, son una family

Table 10 Example of Improvement on Appropriacy

As it is observed in Table 10 above when we talk about appropriacy, the word *family* is more context-based appropriate based on the context of the image which showed a family.

The most significant improvement can be observed in the lexical structures criterion as the number of words referring to the position of elements increased significantly in the post-intervention task. Table 11 below shows clear examples of participants' answers when asked about the location of elements in the image.

		Pre-intervention oral task	Post-intervention oral task
Lexical structures	Participant 1	T: Can you see a cat? P: Cat? T: Si, ¿Puedes ver un gato? P: Si T: Where? ¿Dónde? P: ¿Debajo del sofá? T: How can you say that in English? ¿Cómo se dice eso en inglés? P: No, no sé	T: Can you see a cat? P: Yes, the cat is under the sofa. T: Ok, and where is the plant? P: The plant is on the table T: Can you see a balloon? P: The balloon is behind the sofa T: And the lamp? P: The lamp is on the bookcase
	Participant 2	T: Can you see a cat? P: (Silencio) T: ¿Puedes ver un gato? P: (Silencio)	T: Can you see a cat? P: Cat no, no sé T: Can you see a plant? P: Arbustos
	Participant 3	T: Can you see a lamp? P: (Silencio) T: ¿Puedes ver una lámpara? P: Encima de la repisa de libros.	T: Can you see a plant? P: Encima de la mesa T: How can you say that in English? ¿Cómo se dice eso en inglés? P: No sé no me acuerdo.
	Participant 8	T: Can you see a plant? P: Yes T: Where? P: Estante	T: Can you see a cat? P: Yes, the cat is under the armchair T: Where is the plant? P: The plant is on the table T: Can you see a cat? P: Yes, under armchair T: Can you see a lamp? P: On the bookcase T: And can you see a balloon? P: Yes, next to the lamp
	Participant 9	T: Can you see a plant? P: Yes T: Where? P: (Silence) T: Can you tell me where is the plant? P: (Silence)	T: Can you see a plant? P: Yes T: Where is the plant? P: The plant is on the table T: Can you see a cat? P: Yes, under armchair T: Can you see a lamp? P: On the bookcase T: And can you see a balloon? P: Yes, next to the lamp

Table 11 Example of improvement on lexical structures criteria

Participants 1, 8 and 9 showed clear examples of significant improvements in the use of lexical structures, prepositions of place in this case, to describe images orally. Even though it was not necessary to give full answers and the aim was for the participants to use words to refer to the position of elements, it can be observed that some participants were able to form full sentences. On the other hand, participants 2 and 3 answered in Spanish and decided to remain silent or express that they did not remember how to say what they wanted to say or what they thought was the expected answer. The ability of some participants to reply with full sentences in the post-intervention task in contrast to the same participants' answers during the pre-intervention task, demonstrates that the activities used during the intervention helped them to remember words, increasing their vocabulary knowledge.

4.2. Specific Objective 2: To explore the participants' views towards the implementation of online vocabulary games as a way to improve their ability to describe an image.

With regards to specific objective 2, results from the Likert scale were analyzed based on the frequency of answers shown through percentages. Three dimensions and their corresponding statements are analyzed. In Table 12, the results from each statement are shown in detail.

	Statement	Agrees %	Does not know or is not sure about the answer %	Disagrees %
Level of difficulty of the games	1.The games were easy to understand.	67	33	
	2.The games' instructions were easy to follow.	100		
	3.I was able to finish the activities within the established times.	44	56	
Games as a learning aid	4.Online games helped me to learn new words.	100		
	5.Online games helped me to remember words and expressions.	78	22	
	6. Now I can describe images more easily.	89	11	
Personal Perception	7. The games motivated me to want to learn English.	67	33	
	8. The games were dynamic and I was entertained in class.	89	11	
	9. I think the workshop was useful for my learning.	100		

Table 12. Survey results

With the intention of exploring participants' views towards the implementation of online vocabulary games as a way to improve their ability to describe an image orally, a Likert scale was used, in which nine statements were included and presented in Spanish. The three dimensions were: (1) Level of difficulty of the games (2) Games as a learning aid and (3) Personal perception. The participants had to select among three response points on how they perceived each statement: (1) happy face: agrees (2) neutral face: Does not know or is not sure about the answer (3) sad face: disagrees.

4.2.2. Level of Difficulty of the Games Dimension

When being asked if games were easy to understand, 3 of the participants (33%) were not sure about the affirmation, meaning they were doubtful of how games worked especially at the beginning. In statement 2, all the participants considered that the instructions for each game were easy to follow.

Regarding the time provided to work on each activity, a significant part of the participants (56%) was not sure about the statement and only 44% declared being able to finish the activities within the set times.

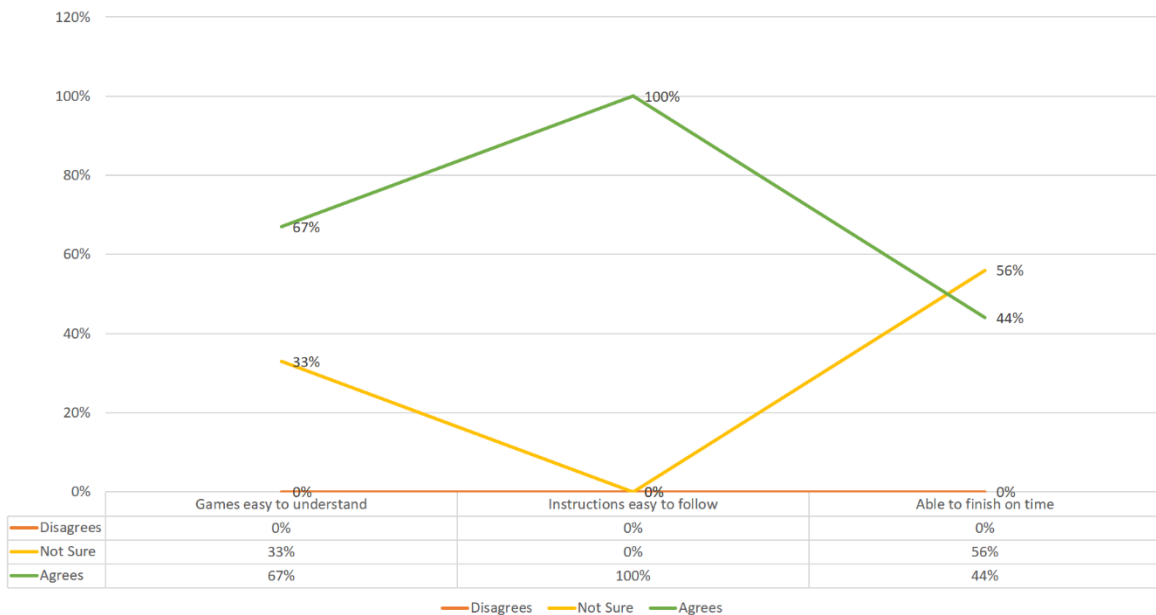


Figure 3: Participants' perceptions about level of difficulty dimension after the intervention

As represented in Figure 3, the dimension had three statements in which there was no disagreement on how easy to understand games were. The participants' considered that

the instructions were easy to follow and they agreed up to a point that the established time for each of the activities was correct.

4.2.3. Games as a Learning Aid Dimension

Figure 3 below shows the results of the dimension related to games seen as an advantage for their learning. Once again, none of the participants disagreed with any of the statements.

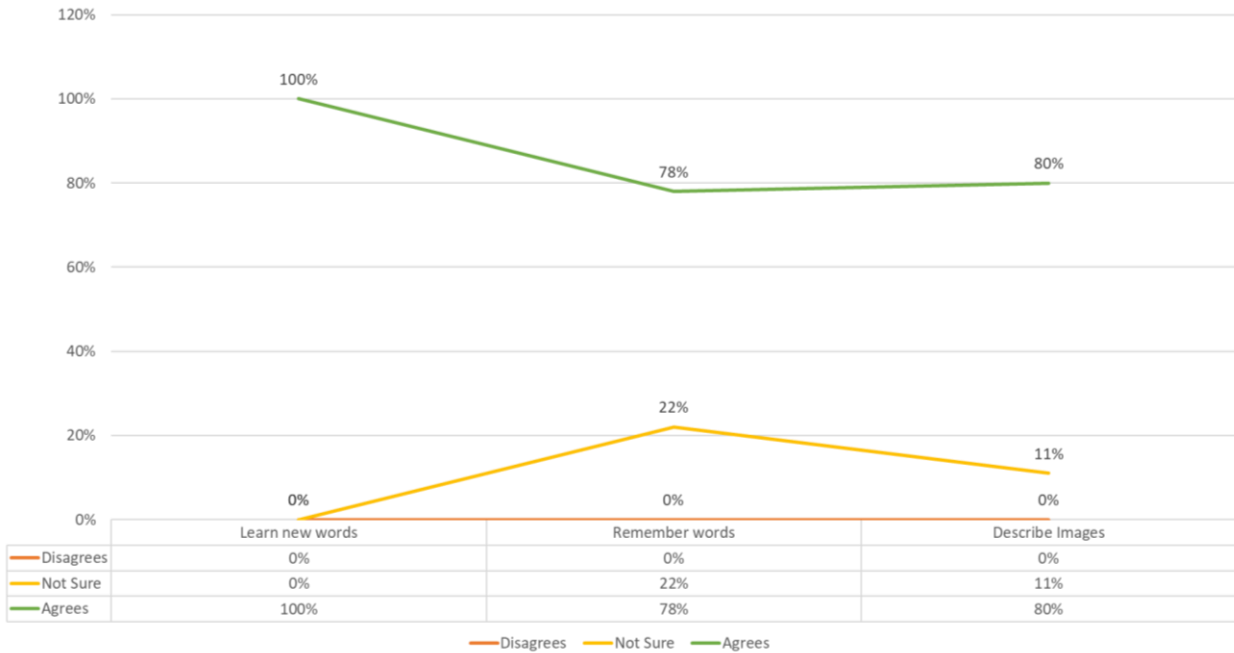


Figure 4: Participants’ perceptions about games seen as a learning aid after the Intervention

All of the students agreed that the teaching methodology helped them to learn new words. Only 2 participants were not sure about the use of online games to help them remember words and expressions. On the contrary, 78% of the participants agreed with this statement. Almost the entire sample agreed that after the implementation of online games, they were able to describe images more easily.

4.2.4. Personal Perception Dimension

As represented in Figure 5 below, the dimension had three statements in which once more, participants did not show disagreement with any of them. It can be seen that all of the participants agreed with statement 9 which reflects their personal perception regarding the usefulness of the teaching strategy.

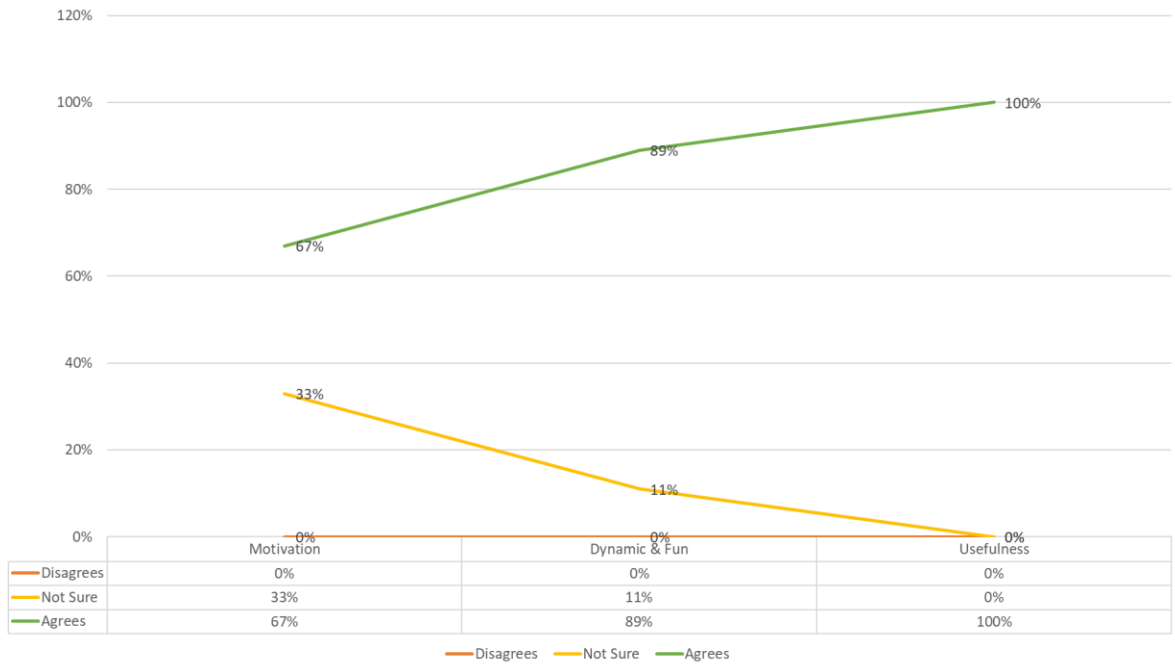


Figure 5: Participants' personal perception about the intervention

In regards to statement 7, six participants (67%) agreed with the statement and considered that games motivated them to learn English. Only one participant (11%) did not know or was not sure if he was entertained, however 89% of the participants agreed that the games were dynamic and entertaining.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

5.1. Examining the Results

The data from this research will be discussed according to each specific objective.

5.1.1. In relation to SO1: To examine the participants' vocabulary knowledge before and after being exposed to the implementation of online game-based vocabulary teaching strategies.

The first specific objective aimed at examining participants' vocabulary knowledge by running a pre and post-intervention task. The findings showed that before the intervention the lowest scores corresponded to criterion 4, **lexical structures**. This may be due to the participants' level of English since they were able to identify the items they were being asked about in the picture but did not have the lexical knowledge to express the exact position of the elements (prepositions of place). According to Abualzain (2017), prepositions are challenging not only to ESL learners but also to ESL teachers. Therefore, the participants lacked the knowledge on how to use the prepositions that were needed. After the intervention, participants were not only able to identify and use the correct preposition of place but to form full sentences describing elements present in the image. Some of the games used during the intervention such as Kahoot, helped participants remember lexical structures which allowed them to perform the task as it was expected. The ability of some participants to reply with full sentences in the post-intervention task in contrast to the same participants' answers during the pre-intervention task, demonstrated that the activities used during the intervention helped them to remember words, increasing their vocabulary knowledge.

After the post-intervention task, participants' vocabulary knowledge expanded, especially in the criterion 1, **vocabulary control**, criterion 2, **vocabulary accuracy** and criterion 3 **appropriacy**. This expansion might have been because the participants were enthusiastic and interested in using vocabulary games to learn or remember words. The intervention generated spaces for them to recall words and structures by putting them into practice. The first session was fundamental since they were faced with this new teaching strategy which was well received. According to Klimova & Kacetyl (2018), a computer game-based teaching strategy especially of a foreign language is beneficial in the vocabulary acquisition process. Ashraf, Motlagh, Salami, (2014, p.287) states that games "create a fun environment in which learners and even the teacher become more interested in the learning and teaching process.". According to Yip and Kwan (2006) and Sarkar's study (2017), compared to traditional learning lessons, students prefer online games as an educational assistance.

In relation to online games, in the first session, (nouns) the participants worked with five different apps: Padlet, Genially, Wordwall, Gartic.io and Jamboard. The participants put into practice what they had learned through the identification of words and images presented in the activities. The app that was better received in this session was Wordwall since they practiced classifying nouns through a maze chase activity in which they were

visually stimulated. Schmitt (2000) states that the learning process can benefit from an appropriate use of sensory stimuli. The more students were exposed to sensory stimuli in a learning process, the higher the chances of learning successfully (Allen, 1983). In the following sessions (adjectives and preposition of place) one of the apps that was well accepted and participants were eager to use was Kahoot.

Wang and Tahir (2020, as cited in Almusharraf, 2021) explain that Kahoot had a positive effect on students' learning experiences, such as increasing students' enthusiasm, understanding of the subject, encouraging inquisitiveness and contributing to the identification of knowledge gaps. Plump and La Rosa (2017) stated that games like Kahoot helped students get engaged in the class along with providing immediate feedback. These characteristics made of Kahoot a popular tool to be used among teachers and students.

5.1.2. In relation to SO2: To explore the participants' views towards the implementation of online vocabulary games as a way to improve their ability to describe an image orally.

The second specific objective aimed at exploring participants' views towards the implementation of a vocabulary game-based strategy. The Likert scale results expressed how significant this intervention was for the participants. According to their perceptions, online vocabulary games played a key role in the improvement of their vocabulary knowledge.

When analyzing the results obtained in the post-intervention oral task and participants' perceptions of the intervention, it can be stated that there was an improvement between them. The progress of the results matched the participants' views on how online games helped them learn new words and how the intervention was useful for their learning. All of the participants reported that the intervention had been beneficial for them in terms of learning new words and some of them were not sure about the idea that the intervention had been helpful for them in describing images more easily and remembering words that they had forgotten. According to Yip and Kwan (2006) "learning with the vocabulary websites which included games is more effective than activity-based learning" (p.242). This, due to the positive response that participants had towards online games because of the audio-visual effects, the use of animation, sounds and music that online games contained helped them in the learning process. The findings in this study reflect similar results to those seen in Yip and Kwan's (2006) investigation which indicated that vocabulary learning can be significantly improved by the use of online vocabulary games and were also considered by students to be great vocabulary learning tools.

5.2. Limitations

Some limitations were found during the implementation of this action research. It is crucial to remember that the results could have been different if the intervention had been applied for a longer period of time or to a larger sample of participants. When working with online apps, in this particular case online games, you need to have technological support. For instance, a good internet connection that supports the platform in which you are teaching (zoom) and the game you will use, a cell phone or computer. One problem that arose was that some of the initial participants lived outside the city and did not have a good internet connection or were connected through their cell phones. This did not let them participate in the class and use the game at the same time so they had to drop the workshop and could not be part of the investigation. Another limitation was the use of certain apps which require you to pay a subscription to use all its features such as Wordwall and in some cases Kahoot. Resources may be requested through department projects to implement this idea permanently in English classes and other subjects.

One of the main problems when taking the pre and post-intervention oral tasks was the support offered by the two participants' grandmother. She insisted on pointing out elements in the image or giving them the answers to the questions. Their oral tasks were completely influenced by the adult not allowing the two students to give their own answers. The answers of these two participants were not considered in the study.

5.3. Implications

This investigation might be useful to other researchers who are investigating the topic of vocabulary knowledge or the use of online-games teaching strategies. Online learning has been present for a long time, whether combined with face-to-face teaching or by itself (Sun & Chen, 2016). On account of the existing pandemic situation, online learning has taken mayor importance and has progressed rapidly. The topic of this research is of importance because it involves teaching strategies that are useful in the pandemic teaching context that we are living in. Our global teaching context is far from returning to normal and we, as teachers, need to adapt the way our teaching is being done.

Through this action research, I was able to put into practice a more dynamic, attractive, and playful process in the delivery of a foreign language for the participants. According to Jabara et al. (2016), the use of online games in education “provides an improved teaching methodology and helps as a learning encouragement” (p.527). The motivation and desire to participate are increased when using a digital game-based learning approach (Marina, 2008).

Considering that while being on a face-to-face teaching environment, we usually generate a playful atmosphere with the use of different games and activities, the tools provided by the internet through image sequences, music, and display of content represents a major

advantage that makes learning a new language more appealing for digital native students. Therefore, we can take this opportunity in which they are involved with technology to get them closer to the English language.

Yong et al. (2012) establishes the positive impact and the effectiveness in students' lessons after using interactive games in different subjects such as language, history and physical education. Hence, we can establish that this action research also has a positive impact.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Summary of main findings

In relation to the first specific objective, the findings gathered from the analytic rubric to assess the oral performance of an oral task indicated that the participants expanded their vocabulary knowledge after the intervention, especially in the criterion related to lexical structures. All nine participants were able to improve their scores compared to the ones from the intervention oral task conducted before the implementation of this teaching methodology. The majority of the participants who were able to improve their scores, contributed actively during the sessions. They participated enthusiastically and seemed to be engaged with the games and activities in each lesson.

Regarding the second specific objective, to explore the participants' views towards the implementation of online vocabulary games as a way to improve their ability to describe an image orally, it can be pointed out that the vast majority of the students who participated in this action research felt pleased with the intervention process. As expressed through the Likert scale, the participants felt that the teaching strategy had helped them learn and remember words.

6.2. Personal Reflections

When analyzing the findings of this research, it is worth mentioning how useful it was as a teacher to identify students' improvement on vocabulary thanks to the teaching methodology implementation. When analyzing the results, what caught my attention was that, by the end of the implementation, participants were able to form full sentences regarding the placement of elements when the objective of the intervention was for them to identify and produce only the adequate preposition in each case. I realized that students were able to create more connections using the language than the ones I had proposed to them.

6.3. Recommendations

As recommendations for further research, I can conclude that the implementation of this teaching-methodology would be helpful if used as a way to improve and develop speaking abilities in our students in earlier stages of their learning process. To use online games as a way to introduce and practice vocabulary from earlier school years would help them to associate from an early age. I also consider that by applying this methodology on a regular basis as part of the school curriculum could be more beneficial for students.

CHAPTER VII: REFERENCES

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ANEXO

Image



Questions

	Pregunta	Dimensión
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¿Qué lugar ves en la imagen? what place can you see in the image? 	Knowledge of vocabulary related to general description
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¿Cuántas personas ves en la imagen? How many people can you see in the image? 	Knowledge of vocabulary related to adjectives.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¿Cuántos elementos puedes ver en la habitación? / Nombra los elementos. How many things/elements can you see in the image? Name them 	Knowledge of vocabulary related to adjectives.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¿Cuántos elementos puedes ver en la habitación? / Nombra los elementos. How many elements can you see in the room? 	Knowledge of vocabulary related to positions
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¿Puedes decirme si ves ...? ¿dónde? Can you tell me if you see a ...? / where? 	Knowledge of vocabulary related to positions
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¿Qué ropa están usando las personas? / ¿Puedes darme más detalles de algunas prendas? What can you tell me about the clothes? / Can you give me some details? 	Knowledge of vocabulary related to adjectives.
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¿Qué color se repite? ¿Dónde? What colors do you see? 	Knowledge of vocabulary related to adjectives.
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¿Me puedes decir qué están haciendo las personas? What are they doing? 	Knowledge of vocabulary related to actions
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¿Crees que las personas en la imagen están relacionadas entre ellas? / ¿Cuál crees que es la relación? Do you think the people has a relationship? How do you think they are related? 	Knowledge of vocabulary related to people






















Vocabulary use for oral description rubric

	No description 0	Partial Description 1	Full Description 2
Knowledge of vocabulary related to General Description	Student appears to have no understanding of the vocabulary words needed to give a general description of the image.	Student appears to have partial understanding of the vocabulary words. Student mentions 2-3 words and gives a general description of the image.	Student appears to have full understanding of the vocabulary words. Student mentions 4 or more words and contextualizes the image by giving a general description.
Knowledge of vocabulary related to people on the image	Student appears to have no understanding of the vocabulary words needed to give a description of the people on the image.	Student appears to have partial understanding of the vocabulary words. Student mentions 2-3 words referring to the people present on the image.	Student appears to have full understanding of the vocabulary words. Student mentions 4 or more words referring to the people present on the image.
Knowledge of vocabulary related to actions	Student appears to have no understanding of the vocabulary words needed to give a description of the actions on the image.	Student appears to have partial understanding of the vocabulary words. Student mentions 2-3 words referring to the actions that people are doing on the image.	Student appears to have full understanding of the vocabulary words. Student mentions 4 or more words referring to the actions that people are doing on the image.
Knowledge of vocabulary related to positions	Student appears to have no understanding of the vocabulary words needed to indicate position of elements on the image.	Student appears to have partial understanding of the vocabulary words. Student mentions 2-3 words referring to the position of elements on the image.	Student appears to have full understanding of the vocabulary words. Student mentions 4 or more words referring to the position of elements on the image.
Knowledge of vocabulary related to adjectives	Student appears to have no understanding of the vocabulary words needed to give details about the color, size, number of elements present on the image.	Student appears to have partial understanding of the vocabulary words. Student mentions 2-3 words referring to the details about the color, size, number of elements present on the image.	Student appears to have full understanding of the vocabulary words. Student mentions 4 or more words referring to the details about the color, size, number of elements present on the image.

Likert Scale

ENCUESTA SOBRE JUEGOS ONLINE

Por favor selecciona la carita que mejor represente cómo te sientes con respecto al uso de juegos online para cada oración. La cara sonriente (3) significa que estás de acuerdo con lo que dice la afirmación. La cara ni sonriente ni triste (2) no sabes o no estás seguro a cerca de lo que dice la afirmación. Por último, la cara triste (1) representa que estás en desacuerdo con lo que dice cada oración.

	1	2	3
Los juegos fueron fáciles de entender.			
Las instrucciones para los juegos fueron fáciles de seguir.			
Los juegos estaban relacionados al tema de la clase.			
Fui capaz de terminar las actividades dentro de los tiempos establecidos.			
Los juegos online me ayudaron a aprender palabras nuevas.			
Los juegos online me ayudaron a recordar palabras y expresiones.			
Ahora puedo describir imágenes con mayor facilidad.			

¡Gracias por tu participación!