



Universidad de Concepción

Dirección de Postgrado Facultad de Educación

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

## **Using online platforms to increase Chilean EFL learners' levels of participation in online lessons**

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

Nancy Valdés Iribarra

Concepción-Chile 2021

Profesora Guía: Dra. María Jesús Inostroza Araos

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

To God, my family, friends and teachers. Simply and forever thank you.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Conducted in a secondary public school in Chile, this research study aims to explore the use of two online gamification platforms (Kahoot! and Quizizz) to increase first year high school students' levels of participation in online lessons. This study was conducted within the COVID-19 pandemic during the year 2021, when most schools and Universities were forced to cancel on-site lessons and to give online lessons. As a consequence of this shift, low levels of participation among students were identified. Through an observation schedule, students' perceptions toward online games were collected and analyzed through frequency and thematic analysis. In addition, a Likert scale was applied in order to determine students' response towards the implementation of online platforms. The data obtained from the Likert scale were analyzed through frequency analysis. Findings show that although there was a positive attitude towards games among students, no major change in students' levels of participation was found.

Key words: online lessons, online platforms, participation,

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

When thinking about an ideal class, participation becomes a requirement. Optimum class management and effectiveness rely on students being actively engaged in the class and supporting each other (Petress, 2006). Class participation has become such a relevant factor that it is often included in syllabi and it is usually graded. It seems that class participation provides teachers a sense that learning is taking place within the classroom (Czekanski and Robinson, 2013).

Currently, due to Coronavirus, teaching has changed dramatically and online classes have taken over. Online learning presents a series of advantages over face-to-face learning. However, there are also disadvantages, such as the lack of real interactions between the teacher and students. Promoting and maintaining interaction within online classes has always been and continues to be a concern among distance teachers (Muirhead and Juwah, 2004). Undoubtedly, COVID-19 has had an impact on education around the world. Lockdowns interrupted regular schooling and although there has been a collective effort for maintaining the learning process as normal as possible, there are still some problems, such as access to digital resources or lack of engagement to the class. (Schleicher, 2020). The necessity to maintain education has led to exploring new alternatives, and the use of virtual learning platforms has become a usual practice. Most countries around the world are implementing the use of digital resources and platforms as a response to the pandemic (ECLAC-UNESCO, 2020).

Due to the pandemic, in most schools in Chile, on-site lessons were replaced by online lessons. In a secondary school located in a small town in Ñuble, Chile, the EFL number of hours were reduced from 6 to 4 hours per week. In addition, the lack of interaction and participation from students during the EFL online classes were issues that emerged from the pandemic, and concerned the teacher-researcher the most. In this context, the idea of implementing the use of online platforms to increase participation arose, as most students are familiar with technology and online games and platforms have been gaining acceptance. Thus, this action research study aims to explore the contribution of using online games or platforms on students' levels of participation in English lessons. In particular, this study intends to identify students' response regarding participation to the implementation of online games or platforms within the English lesson and to identify students' perception towards the implementation of online games or platforms in the English lessons.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, literature concerning topics such as the English subject in Chile, participation in class, participation in online settings, games in ESL, online games in the classroom, gamification and online lessons in COVID-19 context will be reviewed. Moreover, their relevance to the study and to the current context will be analyzed.

### **2.1 English subject in Chile**

The English language is essential in today's world. It is nowadays, one of the most predominant languages and it is considered the language of science and diplomacy. (Mahu, 2012). English is often denominated "a world language." Currently, the English language is considered one of the most important languages in the world, and this is expected to keep the same as the number of speakers is continually growing (Viney, 2008, p.5). Therefore, English is a language studied all around the globe. In Chile, the instruction of English is not mandatory until fifth grade, nonetheless, it is considered in most of the schools' curricula (Díaz & Morales, 2015).

As English expands, and becomes more and more essential, the Ministry of Education has developed different strategies with the intent to develop and straighten students' competences regarding the English language. (Ministerio de Educación, 2016). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic most schools had to adjust their curricula and the number of hours assigned for each subject. Consequently, in most cases, the number of hours assigned to the English subject decreased. This reduction in hours has led to teachers to prioritize the learning objectives expected from the students to achieve. Consequently, the time spent practicing the 4 skills has been reduced, which provides students with less opportunities to interact with the language (Ministerio de Educación, 2020). This shift in the way that the world and education worked, has undoubtedly brought negative consequences for students and teachers, such as lack of motivation (Galindo and Vela, 2020) which can be related and have an impact on participation (Tasgin and Tunc, 2018)

### **2.2 Participation in class**

If we think about an ideal class, there are some elements that become essential. Participation is among them. If we try to find a definition for the concept of participation, we can find a wide range of them, and in a number of these definitions a common factor is that participation is difficult to define (Aziz et al. 2018). Participation can be observed in different ways, for example, on students exchanging ideas, asking and answering questions, completing tasks, and so on. Moreover, participation also involves "behavioral indicators of involvement" such as listening, watching and even "thinking" (Turner and Patrick, 2004 p. 1760).

However, in simple words, the general understanding of class participation relates to students being actively engaged in the class. Sanchez-Rosas, Takaya, and Molinari (2016) define class participation as student engagement behaviors that involve interacting with their classmates and teacher. Participation in class involves different activities and is

not restricted to students exchanging opinions about a topic, but instead has different forms (Aziz et al. 2018).

Although participation is an essential part of a lesson for many scholars, it could be questioned to what extent is class participation a relevant factor for the development of a successful class. Tasgin & Tunc (2018) regard effective participation as one of the most critical components of a class, to the degree that it can affect the quality of the teaching process. Moreover, research shows that students that are active participants of the class and are engaged with their own learning process, learn more than those students who do not engage in it.

Participation is such an important component of a class, that it is regarded as intrinsic to learning. Furthermore, class participation contributes to students to feel more motivated, to improve their communicative skills, makes learning meaningful and promotes higher order skills. (Aziz, 2018). Simply put participation facilitates the learning process (Turner and Patrick, 2004) Therefore, the importance of promoting class participation (Wenger 1998). If we think about our own context, The Ministry of Education (2016) establishes participation and interaction as key elements on students' development and emphasizes the relevance of promoting participation within the classroom.

Although the importance of class participation is evident, it becomes relevant to identify which factors influence students' participation in class. Some scholars, such as Turner and Patrick (2004), argue that students in-class participation is not exclusively related to one aspect for example the teacher behavior or students' characteristics, instead, participation is the outcome of different factors. Students' characteristics, classroom environment, respect, feedback and relatability to the contents are factors that directly influence participation (Susak, 2016). Getting students to participate in the class is a constant challenge for instructors, and nowadays, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this challenge becomes even bigger.

### **2.2.1 Participation in online settings.**

When it comes to online environments, participation has always been an aspect to be addressed and improved. Online lessons have become more and more common due to the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore, bridging the gap of participation becomes even more challenging. However, online lessons have been present in education long before the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools and Universities all around the world to shut down and give online instruction. In fact, the issue of participation within online lessons has been argued for a long time (Hrastinski, 2008), but has become even more urgent now, due to the pandemic.

The radical shift in the way lessons are given and taken has created considerable challenges for teachers, such as maintaining and promoting class participation.

Regardless that online lessons might have disadvantages, there are also some advantages. For example, online settings promote collaborative and peer work. Moreover, online teaching and learning has also created new opportunities for teachers to review, explore and improve their practices by incorporating new elements such as online tools and platforms and making them a regular part of their lessons (Kabir & Abul Hasnat, 2021).

## **2.3 Games in ESL lessons**

The transition to remote teaching has caused profound disruption to classroom instruction and has led to teachers looking for different approaches to tackle online classes (Dubreil, 2020). When it comes to elements included in online and also in face-to-face lessons; games emerge as an alternative, as they are regarded as central in ESL classes.

Games are considered to have an important role in adolescents' and young adults' everyday lives; therefore, they have gained recognition and interest among teachers, which have begun to incorporate them into their lessons (Godwin-Jones, 2014). Additionally, games are considered to be beneficial for the classroom as they attract students' attention. Moreover, games stimulate and allow learners to practice the contents that they have just learned and to check if they are able to understand them and use them.

Games are ideal to carry out a student-centered class (Tulqunovna, 2021). Moreover, they contribute to encouraging and maintaining learners' interest in the class. (Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby, 2006). Additionally, games promote both collaborative and individual learning and also the development of collaborative skills (Kumar & Singh, 2016).

Particularly to EFL, games help the teacher to create an environment in which the language can be both useful and meaningful for language learners. Although games have been used for language learning for quite a long time now, in recent years, games have become an essential part of the EFL classroom as they provide goals and allow students to enjoy learning (Gozcu, 2016). Furthermore, Zemach (2019) argues that games are particularly useful for the EFL class as they bring a number of advantages, such as ensuring and providing students an equal amount of practice of the language. Another highlight of games is that they lower anxiety levels if chosen rightly. Furthermore, they can be adapted, depending on the language goal that it is expected to achieve. Different studies support the use of games within the ESL lesson. For instance, a study conducted by Fei et al., (2021) in which the role of games in promoting students' willingness to communicate and teachers' attitudes on the use of games was investigated, showed that most of the teachers that participated in the study had a positive attitude towards the use of games and believe that that they contributed to the learning of the English language in the class. Moreover, this study showed that games contributed to improving students' willingness to communicate in games played a significant role in improving the EFL

learners' willingness to communicate. Therefore, the importance of implementing and investigating the use of games in the EFL class.

On the other hand, digital games are becoming more and more popular, and they have become common tools in second language classrooms (Anastasiadis et al., 2018). Additionally, taking into consideration that online lessons have become more common nowadays, it becomes necessary to find an alternative to games as we would usually use them in a face-to-face class and explore digital games and platforms.

## **2.4 Online classes in the COVID-19 context**

Although online lessons have become widely popular in recent years, they have been a part of education for quite a long time now. Online lessons are a type of distance education in which students are geographically separated from teachers, and the information is delivered totally through the computer (Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications, 2004). It is evident that, when it comes to online classes, there are of course, both advantages and disadvantages. Regarding the advantages of working in an online setting, the opportunity to instantly share information and collaborate on different topics, tasks, and projects can be mentioned. Moreover, students can engage in peer-based activities and receive instant feedback (Zounek and Sudický, 2013). However, there are also disadvantages. For example, in an online setting it becomes more difficult to deliver information and get across the message. Besides, in an online environment, it is harder for the teacher to monitor students' understanding of the topics and contents covered through the class. (Mansour and Mupinga, 2007).

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, a never seen before crisis has unfolded in different areas. In education, the spread of Coronavirus has led to schools and universities to shut-down and rely on students' online learning (Martin, 2020), in more than 190 countries, in order to prevent the spread of the virus (ECLAC-UNESCO, 2020). Thus, different alternatives have been explored by teachers and online games and gamification tools have become an essential part of the teaching resources.

## **2.5 Online games in the classroom**

Online games have rapidly become popular around the world, especially among young people. Games have become popular, due to the fact that they are easy to access, as they can be stored in computers, laptops or cellphones. New generations, who are almost digital natives, seem to be very comfortable with the use of online games. (Jabar et al. 2016). This can be very beneficial for teaching, as it creates the perfect opportunity for teachers to take advantage of it and create a meaningful learning environment for students.

Although not long ago teachers' attitude towards technology in some schools tended to be negative (Li, 2007) this has gradually changed and teachers are incorporating it more and more into their classes (Vassallo and Warren, 2018). The ministry of Education (2016) establishes the importance of incorporating technology and different subjects into the classroom. Not only that but it is also expected that students become proficient in their use.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also had an impact on the way technology, and especially online games, are viewed and perceived by people. As most of the world went into lock down, the way in which people distributed their time and the activities they carried out changed. Reports suggest that the use of online and video games has increased. Games are also perceived by their users to bring several benefits such as reducing anxiety and stress (Barr and Copeland-Stewart, 2022). The ministry of education (2016) on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of creating learning environments where students can evoke positive emotions, in order to make learning meaningful.

In recent years, online games and platforms have become widely popular in the classroom. As technology develops, teachers have been compelled to include virtual tools such as games into their lessons. The incorporation of digital games has contributed to support learning and at the same time contributes to engaging students in the class. (Vlachopoulos and Makr , 2017)

When we think about online games, we can encounter an important number of them, however, Gros (2017) summarized them into 7 categories which are listed below:

1. Action games
2. Adventure games
3. Fighting games
4. Role-playing games
5. Simulations
6. Sports games
7. Strategy games

As seen, there are different types of games, which can be used for different purposes and to tackle different contents and abilities. However, when used in the classroom they all share a common goal, which is to contribute to students' learning process and make this a more meaningful and engaging process. (Vlachopoulos and Makr, 2017).

The use of online games in the classroom is currently increasing, and as technology evolves, online games and their features also evolve. As games and online games are becoming an essential part of teaching, new features are being added in order to make them more pedagogical and include features such as feedback or assessment to make them more student and teacher friendly (Moreno-Ger et al, 2008).

Ashraf et al., (2014) state that online games contribute to creating a fun, relaxing and motivating learning environment and experience for students in order to make learning a meaningful process. Particularly for language learning, online games can potentially be beneficial for the process of acquiring new vocabulary. Specifically for vocabulary

learning, integrating online games in the process of teaching vocabulary has become popular due to the increasing teachers' belief that it can enrich the learning process (Hasram et al. 2020).

### **2.5.1 Gamification tools**

Nowadays, primary, secondary and even college students are considered to be "digital natives". They have grown in a digital era and are very familiar with technology and it is easier for them to adapt to new technologies (Kiryakova et al. 2014). Due to the spread of Coronavirus, not only online lessons have taken a central role to learning, but also instructional games and platforms such as Kahoot and Quizizz have gained acceptance and popularity as they are recognized as tools that boost student engagement and provide immediate feedback. This is when the gamification concept becomes important.

Gamification can be considered "the use of game design elements in non-game contexts" (Deterding et al. 2011, p.9). Among the advantages of gamification, we can list that "facilitates learning and encourages motivation using game elements, mechanics and game-based thinking "(Kapp, 2014 p.42). Moreover, research has shown that instructional activities/teaching strategies are beneficial for students. (Plump & La Rosa, 2017).

For this study purposes, two gamification tools were introduced and implemented throughout the lessons. These gamification tools are Kahoot! and Quizizz.

Kahoot! is a gamification tool that is mainly used to engage students within the class. It is a free online tool, which is based on current user-centered and behavioral design methodologies. Kahoot! has rapidly become successful among teachers and students as it provides opportunities for instructors to adjust their lessons based on students' understanding of different features such as the use of quizzes. Simultaneously, this gamification allows the creation and use of surveys which allows anonymous (or not) classroom participation, which further engages all students. (Plump & La Rosa, 2017).

The official teacher's starter guide to Kahoot! which is available in the official Kahoot! website mentions some of the benefits and advantages of using Kahoot! For example, this gamification tool allows to:

- "1. Introduce new topics.
2. Review content at class and home
3. Engage students via distance learning
- 4.Run formative assessment

5. Teach interactive lessons
6. Break the ice and reward the class
7. Collect student opinions
8. Foster creativity and teamwork and engage colleagues with professional development" (Kahoot, 2020, p.2)

The Kahoot! App contains many features that can be incorporated when creating a lesson. These are presented in the figure below:

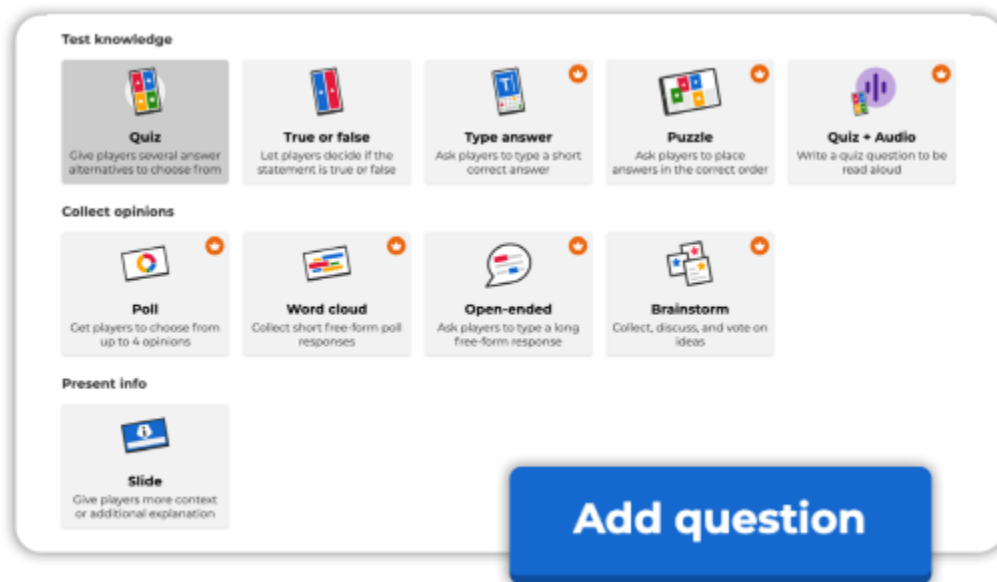


Figure 1: Features of Kahoot! (Kahoot, 2020 p.10)

As illustrated in figure 1 this platform offers a wide variety of options when it comes to designing a lesson, as it is possible to create different types of questions, such as true or false, polls, word clouds, among others. However, it is important to point out that only some of these features are available for free, and in order to access to all of them is necessary to subscribe to the website.

The second gamification tool used for this study purposes is Quizizz, which has gained popularity in recent times. Quizizz is a multiplayer game for quiz-games which allows students to work at their own pace and get immediate feedback. In addition, it allows for students to work as a class and also get immediate feedback (Plump & La Rosa, 2017). Quizizz is considered to be an educational tool that enables students to participate in fun activities while learning. Moreover, studies report that according to students' reviews, It is considered to be a positive tool that has contributed to their learning experiences. Zhao (2019) argues that Quizizz has proven to be beneficial for the classroom as it is ideal for implementation within an education context. Quizizz allows students to play multiplayer activities and compete among them, which makes learning both interactive and fun.

Besides, teachers can monitor the whole process and get statistics at the end of the quiz. Additionally, Quizizz comes with other features such as memes, avatars, and music, which contribute to capture and retain students' attention and increase their motivation towards the learning process. (Zhao, 2019). Some of the features just mentioned are presented and explained in the image below:



Figure 2: Quizizz features. (Quizizz, 2020 p.12)

Considering the relevance of incorporating new features into our teaching contexts, such as online games and online platforms Kahoot! and Quizizz were implemented into the classroom, in order to determine if they can contribute to improving students' participation in online classes.

## **CHAPTER III: METHOD**

This intervention was conceived as an action research study. Burns (2016) defines action research as “the combination and interaction of two modes of activity – action and research”. According to this scholar the main goal of action research is “to bridge the gap between the ideal (the most effective ways of doing things) and the real (the actual ways of doing things) in the social situation” (p.289). This study intends to analyze and implement the use of games within the English class to determine if they play a role in students’ participation.

### **3.1 Research problem**

Participation is an essential part of both at school and online learning. The Chilean Ministry of Education (2016) establishes participation as a key aspect, which contributes to students' development. In addition, participation, in a sense, provides the teacher feedback and assurance that students are indeed engaged in the class. However, COVID-19 pandemic has increased the challenge of engaging students and making sure that students are engaged in the class. Particularly in this case, the teacher-researcher of the current study noticed that most of her first year secondary students (14+) seemed reluctant to speak and intervene in class (both in Spanish and English), regardless of the strategies implemented. At this level, students are supposed to have 6 hours of English per week. However, due to COVID-19 pandemic, the number of hours was reduced from 6 to 4 (Ministerio de Educación, 2020). Therefore, the exposure to the language that students usually had was reduced. Considering the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education (2016), it is essential that students practice and are exposed to speaking, writing, listening and reading; however, students were not willing to turn on their cameras, speak or provide comments through the chat, which infused uncertainty on the teacher on whether students were really involved in the class, and if learning was actually taking place. On the other hand, an essential strategy for teaching during the pandemic has been the implementation of platforms and online games. There is a wide variety of them and the different features they contain allow students to learn within a fun environment and allows the teacher to have feedback on students’ participation and results. Therefore, this study aims to answer the following research question: How does the use of online games or platforms increase 10<sup>th</sup> grade students’ level of participation in online classes?

### **3.2 Research objectives**

The main objective of this action research is as follows: To explore the contribution of using online games or platforms on students’ levels of participation in English lessons.

Regarding the specific objectives intended for the research are presented above:

1. To identify students' response regarding participation to the implementation of online games or platforms within the English lesson
2. To identify students’ perception towards the implementation of online games or platforms in the English lessons

### 3.4 Participants

The research was conducted in a public school located in Quirihue, Ñuble region, Chile. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students were working with a hybrid model, as they attended some classes at the school, and others, such as the English lesson were given online. Twenty 10<sup>th</sup> grade students participated in this study. English lessons took place twice a week via Zoom. Due to the pandemic, during 2020 lessons had to be canceled and students had fewer English lessons than in previous years. Regarding their English level, it corresponds to an A2 level, which according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001), is considered the one of the lowest levels of language use, which means that students can interact in a simple way, ask and answer simple questions.

### 3.5 Procedure

Within a four -week time frame, this study intended to identify if the use of Kahoot and Quizizz would increase students’ levels of participation in class. In 4 sessions, learners were exposed to the use of platforms Kahoot and Quizizz. Among the activities carried out in these platforms, polls, alternative questions, true or false questions, completion items and visits to virtual museums, were included. Figure 3 shows the activities, contents covered and platforms employed for each session

<u>Session</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Contents covered</u>	<u>Platform used</u>
1	Introduction of the unit. Presentation of new vocabulary. Polls, alternative, true or false questions, and virtual tour visits to museums were included.	Vocabulary related to arts and museums	Kahoot
2	Introduction of grammatical content: modal verbs. Open-ended questions, alternative and true or false activities were included	Modal verbs	Kahoot!
3	Introduction of new vocabulary, and review of the vocabulary, and review of the vocabulary learned in previous lessons. Polls, alternative, true or false questions, and virtual tour visits to museums were included	Vocabulary related to the museum	Quizizz
4	Review of grammatical contents. Polls, alternative, true or false questions, and virtual tour visits to museums were included.	Modal verbs	Quizizz

Figure 3:Activities, contents and platforms employed for each session.

As mentioned before, both platforms allow the use of different features, which allow the implementation of different activities within the same platform. Some of the activities are presented above:

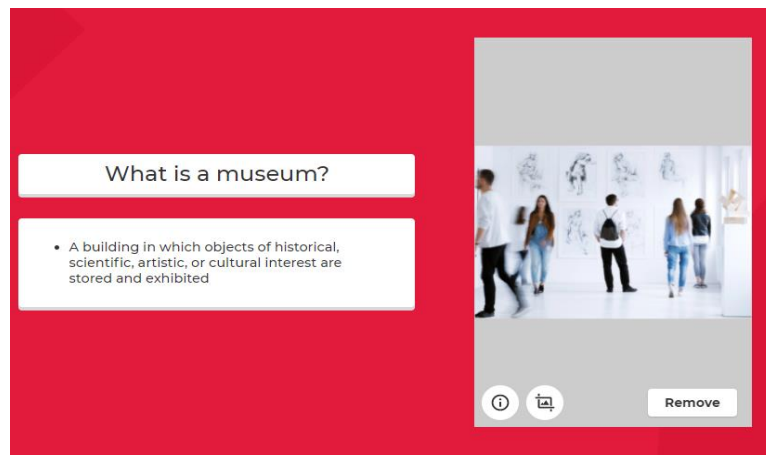


Figure 4: Slide of the first session

Kahoot! allows for teachers and students to access multiple features. Among these, it is possible to create a slideshow (which can include other characteristics such as polls and multiple-choice questions). In both lessons (1 and 2) where Kahoot! was implemented, slideshows were used in order to provide students with context and explanations of the concepts.

Kahoot! also includes poll questions, where students can express their opinions on different topics. Both lessons included poll questions.

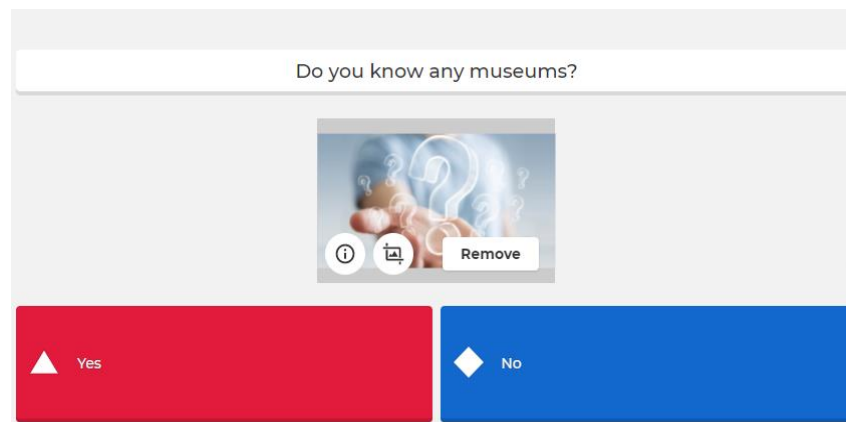


Figure 5: Poll implemented in the first session.

Multiple choice questions is another feature of Kahoot! These were included as a way to assess the contents just reviewed. Is important to mention that students got immediate and personal feedback.

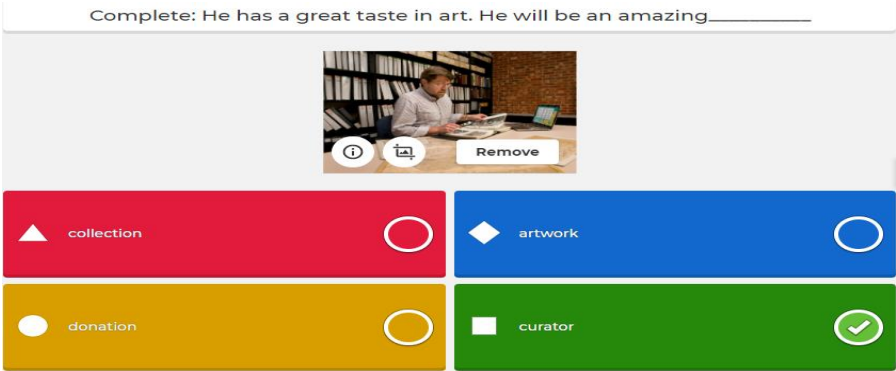


Figure 6: Fill in the blank, session 1.

A shared feature of Kahoot is that it allows access to different websites, which allows visitors to visit them easily. During the lessons, different virtual museums were visited.

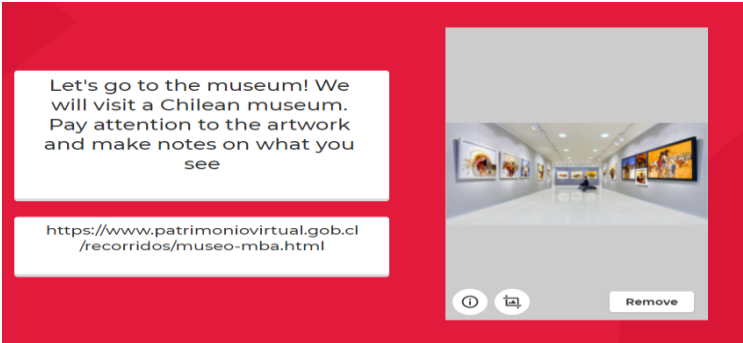


Figure 7: Virtual tour visit

An important characteristic of Quizizz is that it allows students to write their own answers, which are displayed in the teachers' screen.

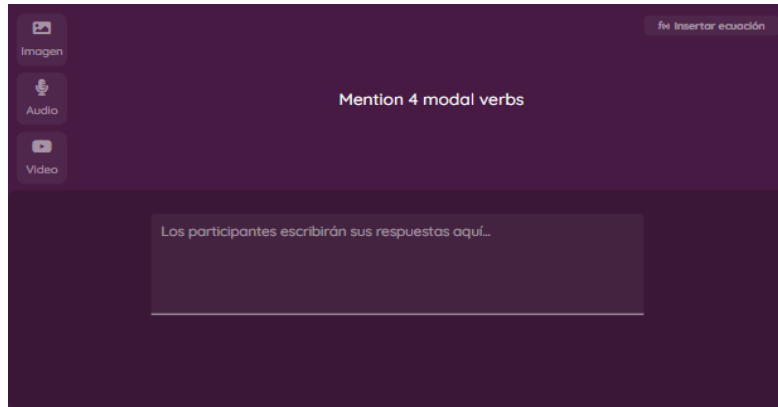


Figure 8: Open ended question.

As well as Kahoot, Quizizz also allows to create slideshows and include different types of questions such as multiple-choice questions, such as the one presented in figure 9:



Figure 9: Alternative question Quizizz

### 3.6 Data collection techniques

The study aimed that the methods selected can provide information about students' perception towards the use of games and is intended to analyze their contribution (if any) to students' participation. The instruments chosen to achieve this task were a Likert scale and an observation schedule. Throughout the entire process, lessons were video recorded to obtain further data. Moreover, the teacher-researcher kept an observation schedule, in order to monitor and register students' behaviors.

#### 3.6.1 Likert scale

A Likert scale was chosen as it was expected to gather students' insights and beliefs on the intervention. A Likert scale is defined as "a set of statements (items) offered for a real or hypothetical situation under study. Participants are asked to show their level of agreement (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) with the given statement (items) on a metric scale" (Joshi, 2015, p.397). The Likert scale was designed by the teacher-researcher, considering the information that was aimed to be obtained such as students'

familiarity with online games, and their perceptions towards the use of online games and the benefits that they might have on their participation and learning process. Both a pre and post intervention Likert scale were designed and applied. The pre-intervention Likert scale consisted of 5 statements, which intended to obtain data in relation to students' beliefs before the intervention took place. The post-intervention Likert scale consisted of 6 statements (5 were the same as in the pre-intervention Likert scale, and 1 statement was added, regarding students' beliefs on the impact that the intervention had in their learning process) which intended to analyze if there were any changes in their beliefs after the intervention took place. The instrument was revised and approved by experts. (See appendix 1 and 2)

### **3.6.2 Observation schedule**

The second instrument chosen to collect data was an observation schedule. Here all the aspects to be analyzed were previously determined by the researcher, based on the relevant aspects for this research, such as the number and type of interactions that students made. Morgan and Harmon (2001, p 973) state that direct observation, such as the one carried out in the current study, allows the researcher "to observe and record the behaviors of the participants rather than relying on reports". In this action research, the observation schedule was oriented to observe students' participation. In order to obtain these data, the number of students' interventions were counted (spoken and written interventions). Specific behaviors such as students' spoken interactions with the teacher and among their classmates were counted and observed (see Appendix 3).

### **3.7 Data analysis techniques**

Frequency analysis was used to analyze the data collected by means of Likert scale and an observation schedule. In addition, the qualitative comments and field notes from the observation schedule were analyzed through thematic analysis. In the latter, recurrent topics on lessons were viewed and analyzed in order to identify the most predominant themes to gather insight on students' behavior during the implementation. Theme analysis focuses on the qualitative aspects of the research (Joffe and Yardley, 2004) and allows the researcher to examine, extend and even refute previous findings. (Boyatzis, 1998). The use of more than one data collection techniques allowed the researcher to have a deeper insight and understanding of the picture, and furthermore as mentioned before it will allow triangulating the data. (Berg & Lune, 2012)

## CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

The results obtained from the data gathered during the intervention process will be presented according to the specific objectives of the study.

### **4.1 SO1: To identify students' response regarding participation to the implementation of online games within the English lesson**

The data collected for this specific objective was gathered by means of an observation schedule that the teacher-researcher kept as a record of the lessons and the types of interactions that took place during them. In addition to keeping a record of the overall aspects of the lesson, the instrument intended to observe the frequency in which some behaviors took place, in order to determine if the use of games increased the frequency of participation through the course of the lessons. The specific activities observed during the sessions were the following: making comments in English, making comments in Spanish, interactions through the chat with the teacher, interactions through the chat among classmates, oral interactions with the teacher and oral interactions among classmates. Qualitative comments and field notes from the teacher-researcher were included as part of the data analyzed. The following findings will be presented by game platform: Kahoot for lesson 1 and 2 and Quizzes, for lesson 3 and 4.

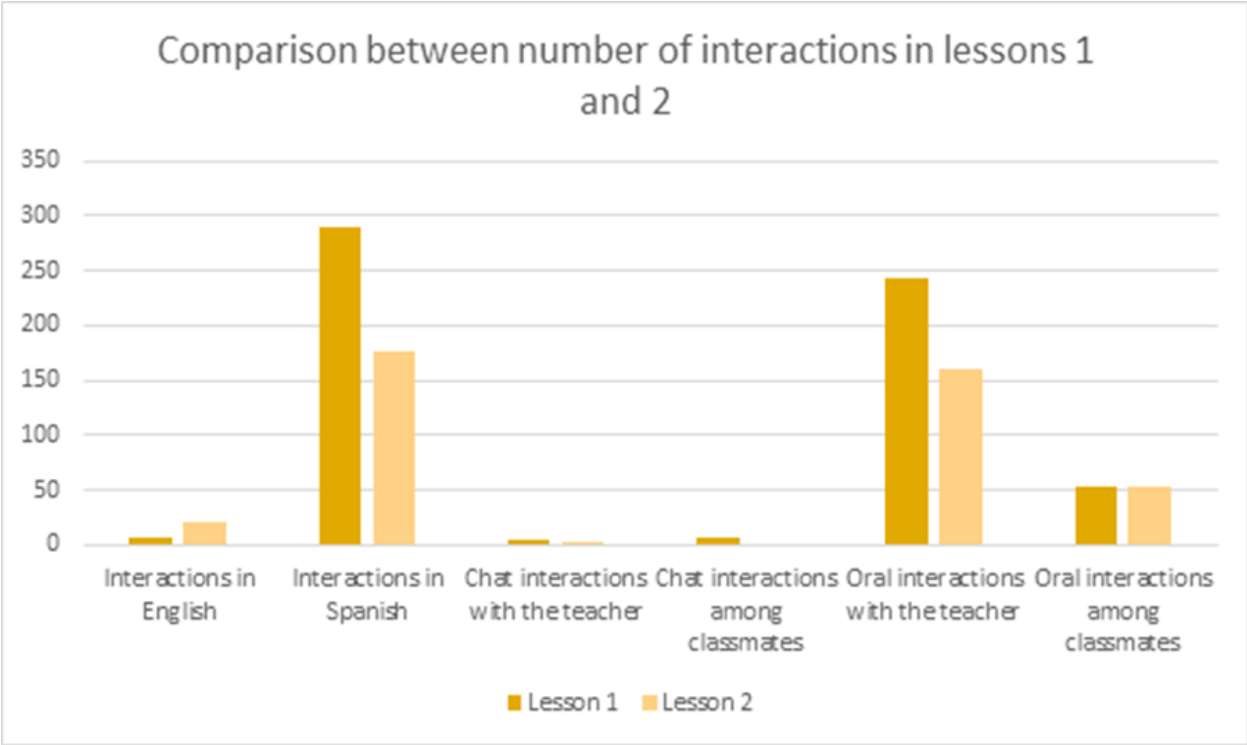


Figure 10: Activities, and number of times observed in the first and second session with Kahoot!.

As shown in Figure 10, the total number of interactions in the first lesson was 297; 9 of them being in English and the rest of the interactions being in Spanish. Whereas in the second lesson the total number of interactions was 198; 21 of them being in English and the rest in Spanish. Figure 10 also illustrates that the number of total interactions decreased by lesson 2 by 33% in relation to lesson 1. However, the number of interactions in English increased three times.

From the qualitative data collected, it was possible to identify some of the recurrent themes and topics that emerged, which are the following: “short interactions in English”, “interactions in Spanish”, “relatability to the topics” and “engagement with the class”. These are explained and summarized in the table below:

Table 4.1 Summary of the themes emerged in lessons 1 and 2.

Theme	Frequency	Example
Short interactions in English	9 times	“Students answer some questions in English; however, their answers are very limited and short”
Interactions in Spanish	4 times	“Most of the interactions are done in Spanish. Students seem to understand what they are being asked in English, but they chose to answer in Spanish”
Relatability to the topics	5	“They share their experiences with the class (that they have been in a museum that was mentioned in the class)”
Engagement with the class	10	“Students seem willing to participate. They seemed to be engaged within the class. Even though not everyone is able to access the game (due to connectivity problems) they still participate in the class, by providing comments”

When it came to English interactions, a recurrent theme in both the first and second lesson was that these comments seem to be precise and short, and they are all directed to the teacher. Although comments in English were still limited, there was a significant increase in the number of these between session 1 and 2.

Another recurrent theme that emerged from the field notes of both lessons was that students made most of their comments in Spanish, regardless that they seem to be engaged and willing to learn. In both lessons, students seem to be entertained with the platform and they were able to relate the topics to their daily lives, as seen in the following extract of lesson 1:

*T: yes. Ahora, my question, do you know any museums? ¿Conocen algún museo? No importa que no hayan ido, pero ¿conocen alguno?*

*G: yo sí*

*T: What do you say? Yes? no? maybe?*

*M: Sí profesora, yo conozco un museo, el Smithsoniano*

*F: Yo también conozco museos profe, he ido pero no me acuerdo el nombre*

*M: También el que está en Francia, que no me acuerdo como se pronuncia*

*T: The Louvre*

*M: ese mismo*

*T: El Smithsoniano, lo vamos a ir a visitar. Another question, have you ever been to a museum?*

*D: yo sí*

*C: yo sí*

*T: Here in Quirihue there is a museum*

*C: En el museo que está aquí de Quirihue, hay un choclo.*

*T: Really?*

*C: Si, hay un choclito ahí y está muy viejito*

*G: ¿Y por qué un choclo?*

*T: Yeah, why? ¿Por qué tienen un choclo?*

*C: No sé, y está demasiado viejito, está todo negro*

*T: Si volvemos presencial el segundo semestre, vamos a ir a visitar ese museo*

This extract illustrates that students were able to connect to the lesson contents and relate them to their live experiences. The Kahoot platform allows linking web pages, therefore, it was possible for the students and the teacher to carry out a number of virtual tours of different Chilean and international museums around the world, which seemed to engage

students. However, in the second lesson there were no virtual tours, and the lesson focused more on grammar than vocabulary.

In lesson 3 and 4, the platform used to carry out the class was Quizizz. This tool had never been used before in previous lessons; therefore, students were not familiar with it. Results are displayed in figure 10.

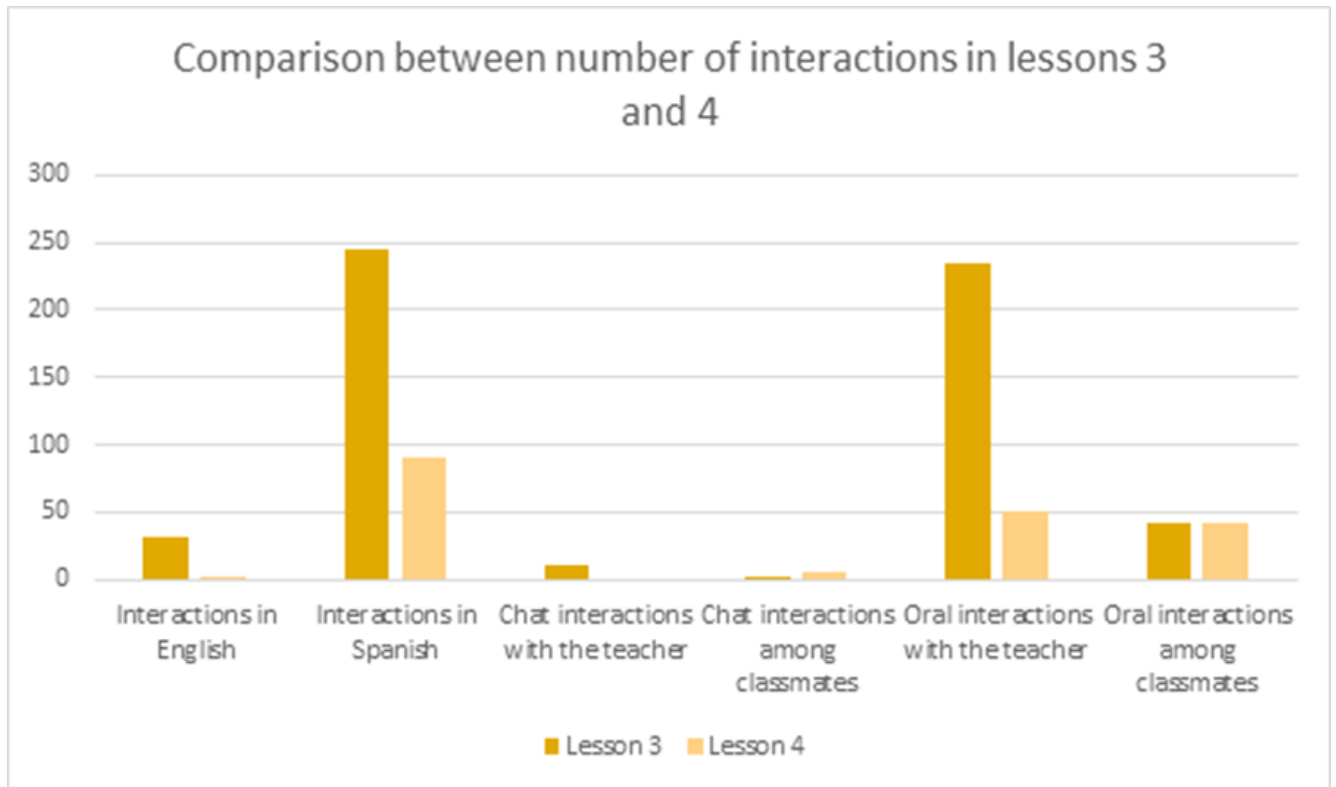


Figure 11: Activities, and number of times observed in the third and fourth session.

Figure 11 shows a summary of the activities observed in the third and fourth session, detailing each activity and the number of times that they were observed. It shows that the total of interactions in lesson number 2 was 272; 32 of them being in English and the rest of the interactions being in Spanish. However, in lesson number 4 the total of interactions was 93; 3 of them being in English and the rest of the interactions being in Spanish. The number of total interactions decreased 65% in relation to the third lesson, and 68.6% in relation to the first one. Figure 11 illustrates that the number of total interactions in lesson 3 increased by 27% in relation to the second lesson; however, when comparing the number of interactions with the first lesson the total of interactions decreased by 8.5%. With regard to the number of interactions in English, this increased from 21 to 32, being the highest number of interactions in English throughout the sessions. However, when comparing lesson 3 and 4, the number of interactions in English decreased from 32 to 3, being the lowest number of interactions in English throughout the sessions.

From the qualitative data, it was possible to identify 4 recurrent themes, namely: “willingness to participate”, “short and direct interactions in English”, “relatability to the topics” and “engagement with the class”.

Table 4.1 Summary of the themes emerged in lessons 1 and 2.

Theme	Frequency	Example
willingness to participate	8 times	“Students seem to be engaged and willing to participate”
Short and direct interactions in English	4 times	“Students do not seem to be as involved in the class as in the previous lessons”
Relatability to the topics	5 times	Students seem to be involved with the class and relate to the topics
Engagement with the class	6 times	Students seem confident to exchange opinions and are able to interact with each other. They are able to connect the topics to their lives. They also interact in English more frequently.

One of the recurring themes between lesson 3 and 4, is students’ willingness to answer questions. Students did so in a short and direct way if they answered in English. In both lessons, students seemed willing to interact in Spanish. This data source also revealed that in lesson 3 students seemed more relaxed in comparison to previous lessons and did not seem so self-conscious and afraid to make mistakes in English.

Finally, Figure 12 shows how student participation fluctuated between sessions. While the analyses by game platform separately showed limited or no variation on students' participation, the overall analysis unveiled that the number of interactions in English actually changed. Figure 13 illustrates that Lesson 1 and 3 were the sessions with the highest percentage of participation. Additionally, those sessions were when the games were introduced, and vocabulary was covered. Conversely, lessons 2 and 4 were sessions with no new game- platforms introduced and grammar points were addressed.

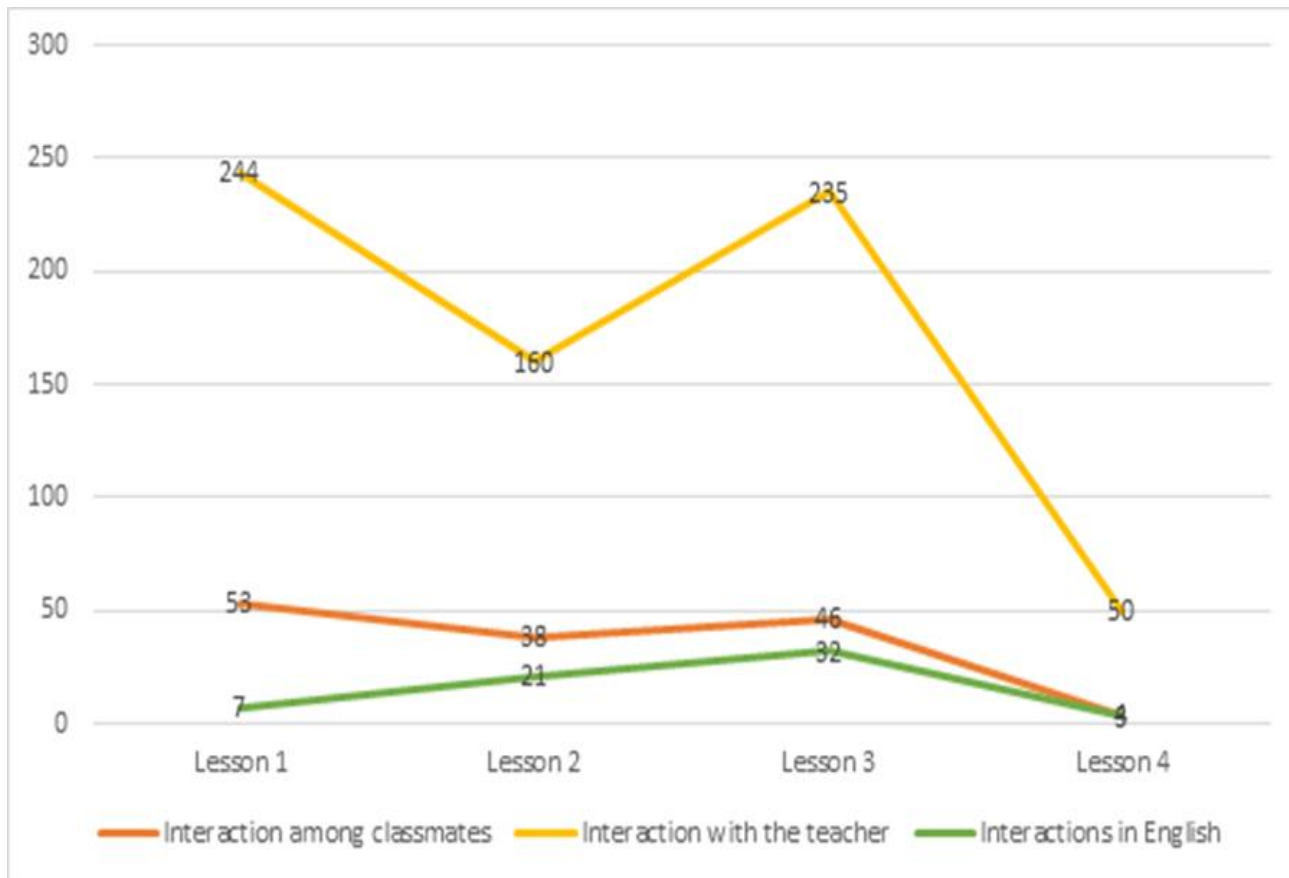


Figure 12: Students' levels of participation throughout the lessons

In relation to the question of students' response regarding participation in the implementation of online games within the English lesson, qualitative data shows that there was a difference in relation to the lessons with no new games. If we focus strictly on the number of interactions in English, it could be argued that there was a significant increase between the first 3 lessons; however, it cannot be said the same for the fourth lesson.

Field notes also indicate that a recurrent theme in both lessons 1 and 3 is that students are engaged and eager to participate. Another common factor among these lessons is that in both, session number 1 and 3, new platforms were presented. A similar, but opposite situation happens with sessions number 2 and 4. In both lessons, students continued to work with the platforms presented in the previous session, showing a decrease in their interactions and did not seem to be engaged as much as in the previous lesson.

#### **4.2 SO2: To identify students' perception towards the implementation of online games in the English lessons**

The data obtained for this specific objective was analyzed by frequency analysis. The instrument used to gather information regarding this objective was a Likert scale that was applied twice, before and after the intervention; However, the Likert scale applied after the sessions included one extra dimension: the contribution of online games to students' learning process.

When comparing students' responses regarding the first dimension "online games familiarity", the number of students that are very familiar with them has increased by 5%. However, the percentage of students that are uncertain has also increased by 5%. Before the intervention took place 75% of the students believed that the use of online games increased their levels of participation. Results of the pre-intervention Likert scale are displayed in Figure 13 below.

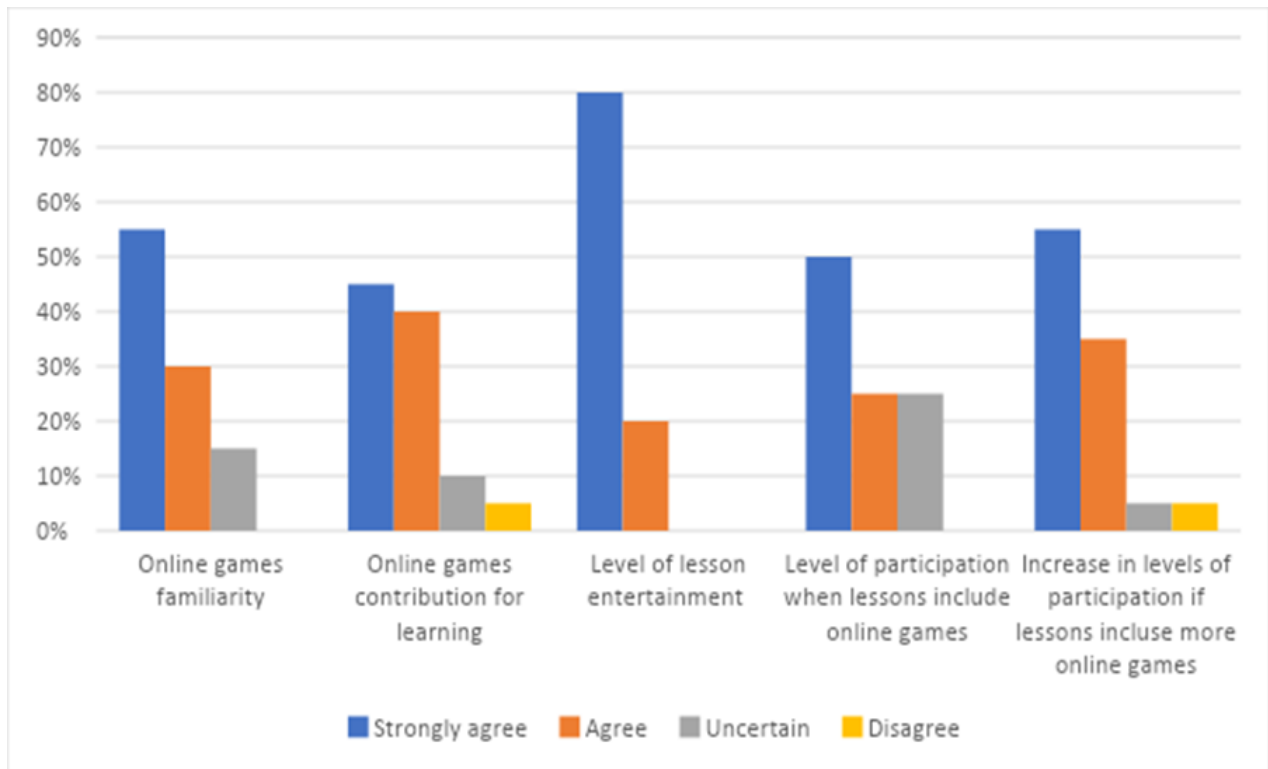


Figure 13: Summary of students' perceptions towards online games pre-intervention

After the intervention, this percentage increased to 90%. As mentioned before, one dimension was added on the post- intervention Likert scale, in order to identify whether students believed that online games contributed to their learning process. Results show that 80% of the students believed that games contributed positively to their learning process. Results of the post intervention are presented in Figure 14.

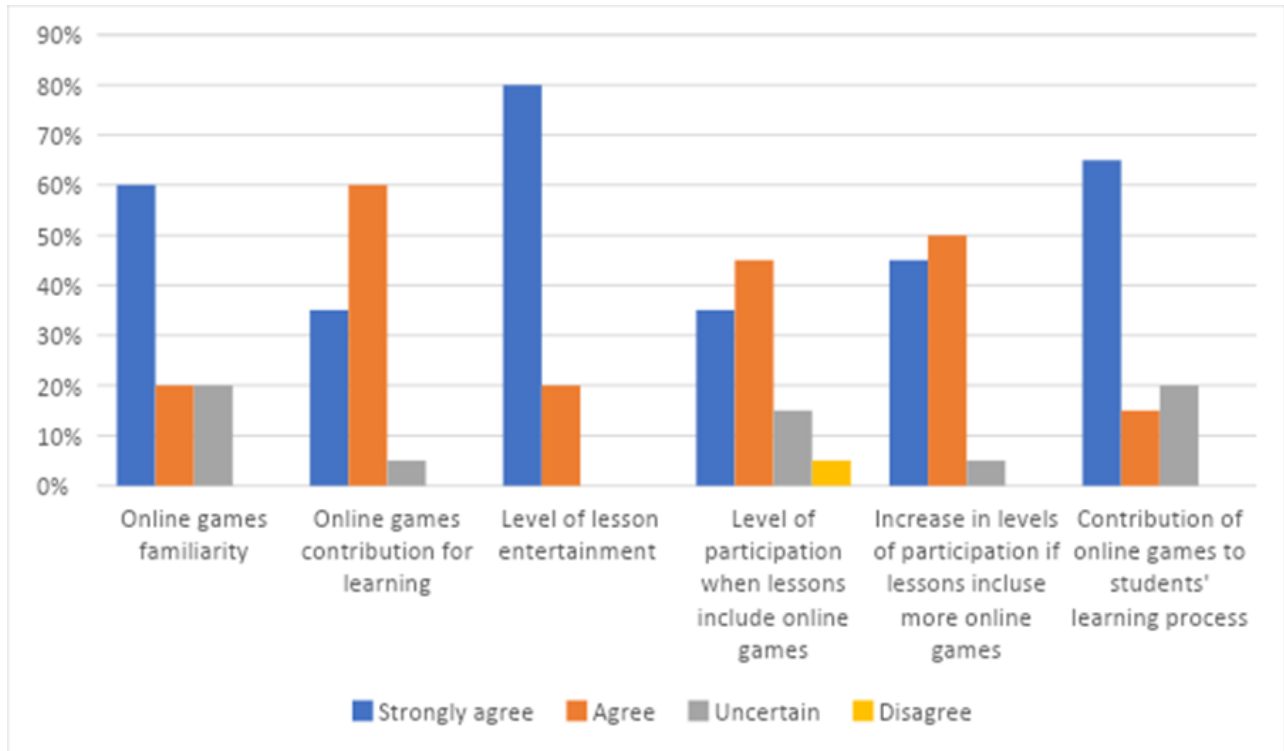


Figure 14: Students perceptions towards online games post-intervention

## CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify how the use of online games could increase 10th grade students' level of participation in online classes.

### 5.1 Students' engagement in lessons where platforms were presented

Kahoot! and Quizizz were implemented. The first two lessons were tackled by using Kahoot. Session number 3 and 4 were carried out by using Quizizz. Results showed that participation fluctuated between sessions. Lesson 1 and 3 were the sessions with the highest percentage of participation. These were also lessons where new platforms were introduced and no grammar points were covered. Data shows students' high levels of engagement in lessons, especially where platforms were introduced. These results can be supported by Plump & La Rosa (2017) that state that instructional games such as Kahoot and Quizizz have gained acceptance and popularity as they are recognized as tools that boost student engagement and provide immediate feedback, which have led to students and teachers to widely accept and welcome these platforms. Moreover, recent studies have shown that students seem to have a positive response to them. They seem to inculcate learners' interest and a sense of passion towards learning English (Yunus & Kim Hua, 2021). Halim et al (2020) also state that students appear to show elevated motivation and positive perceptions when using online platforms, such as these. The positive features of Kahoot and Quizizz mentioned above, can account for students' high levels of participation in lessons 1 and 3. However, data obtained from lessons 2 and 4 showed a significant decrease in participation, especially in lesson 4. There are two possible explanations for this decrease: First, the contents covered through lessons were mainly grammar based. The teaching and learning of grammar points has been for a long time a difficult issue to tackle. It is usual that just mentioning this topic brings discomfort to both teachers and students (Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam, 2011). Second, the overuse of the platforms (as 2 whole lessons were carried out using each) which might have made lessons predictable and less engaging for students. However, as the regular use of these platforms in the everyday classroom is fairly new, there are no studies regarding the overuse of them and the impact that they might have on students' engagement on both the platforms and the lesson. Therefore, this topic could potentially be an interesting topic to be explored in future studies.

## **5.2 Students' disengagement on lessons where grammar points were covered**

The analysis identifies a significant decrease in participation from lessons 1 to 2 and 3 to 4. As mentioned earlier, a potential explanation for these decreases might be that lessons 2 and 4 were lessons where only grammar points were covered. The role of grammar instruction is essential to the teaching and learning of a language, however, it is widely known to be a major issue in the ESL classroom. (Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam, 2011). (Ahmad et al., 2017) state that learners do not like grammar-based lessons and they feel discomfort when the instruction of grammar is mentioned as they regard it as “a tedious and boring thing” (p.58). This, together with the problems that can be encountered within an online lesson, such as the difficulty to monitor students' understanding (Mansour and Mupinga, 2007) can possibly explain the decrease in students' levels of participation in grammar-based lessons.

By analyzing the data obtained, the decrease in students' participation in grammar-oriented lessons becomes evident, although interactive platforms were used. A possible explanation for this is the lack of relatable topics for students, (opposite to what occurred in lessons 1 and 3) which might have caused a decrease in students' interest in the lesson. The difficulty to cover grammar points within the ESL lesson appears to be relevant, no matter the different approaches to the lesson.

## **5.3 Students' willingness to speak in English**

Participation fluctuated between sessions. While the analysis by game platform separately showed limited or no variation on students' participation, the overall analysis revealed that the number of interactions in English actually changed. Findings show that the number of interactions increased three times from lesson 1 to 3. This suggests that although the number of interactions in Spanish seem to remain similar throughout the lessons, there was a significant change in the English interactions. Field notes provide further information, as they indicate that students were willing to interact in Spanish, but the same did not happen when it came to interacting in English. The affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) might provide an explanation for this, as he states that learners' attitudes and emotions can impact a student's learning process. Anxiety is also a variable that could affect students' performance, with low anxiety being an important factor when it comes to learning. However, lowering students' anxiety levels can be a challenging process as online lessons can be and are usually intimidating for students, especially when they are not used to them (St Clair, 2015). As this problem seems to be emerging from the COVID context of online lessons little is still known in this regard. more research remains to be done on it, and it can be an interesting topic for future research.

## **5.4 Implications**

Regarding implications, this study might help provide some insight on implementing online platforms for online lessons. When it comes to practical implications, it is important to take into account that the fact of implementing platforms or games into the classroom,

does not imply that the class will be successful. There are also other factors to consider, such as the context in which the class takes place (online or face to face lessons), students' willingness to participate, and the amount of time devoted to each game or platform, as if use for extended periods could cause students to lose interest. It is important to keep reviewing our teaching practices, and implementing new activities and methods that best suit our students. As exploring participation and how to increase it by using platforms in online contexts is a newly recent topic in our country, further research would be useful and could help provide more insight on the topic.

Particularly in my case as a teacher-researcher, although results were not as expected, as there was no linear increase on students' participation levels, there was a positive response toward the implementation of these platforms. Therefore, I find pertinent to keep on exploring different tools that can contribute to students' learning process. It is important to also consider that when this study was carried out, lessons were taken and given online. Currently, the school (and most schools over the country) have returned to on-site lessons, therefore, different strategies to increase participation and ensure learning need to keep being explored.

## **Limitations**

During the implementation and course of this action research some limitations were encountered. As the study took place within a length of 4 sessions, it is important to keep in mind that results might have varied if the study had been done in a shorter or longer span of time, therefore, the results obtained within this research might not be applicable for all contexts. On the other hand, it is also important to keep in mind that this research was carried out in an online environment during the COVID-19 pandemic, when no face-to-face lessons were being done. Therefore, the results might have been different if done in other contexts.

## CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION.

This study's main aim was to determine whether the use of the online platforms Kahoot! and Quizizz had an impact on 10<sup>th</sup> grade students' levels of participation in the English class. The study also aimed to identify students' perceptions towards the use of online platforms. Regarding the first point, findings show, there was no increase in students' levels of participation, although there was fluctuation throughout the lessons. Lessons where new platforms were introduced and no grammatical points were covered were lessons where levels of participation were the highest. Furthermore, although it was not consistent until the end, there was an increase in the number of interactions in English, which could be attributed to the use of platforms.

Regarding students' perception towards the use of online platforms, results show that the vast majority of students have a positive attitude towards the implementation of these. Although they had a positive perception of these platforms before the intervention was carried out, after the intervention, the approval of the use of online platforms and the recognition of their benefits increased.

Although this study was carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic, and on-site lessons are regaining a place in education it is important to keep on exercising the practices that resulted in positive outcomes during the pandemic. It is essential to keep on exploring and improving our practices and the different alternatives that are offered to us teachers, to face the challenges that our students' face not only due to the pandemic, but also on a day-to-day basis.

Regarding the implications of this study for the teacher-researcher, it is important to mention that although the results were not as expected, meaning there was no increase in participation, the positive response of students makes invaluable and essential to keep on exploring and implementing new platforms, in order to adapt to students' interests and necessities. Gamification tools and platforms are proven to have a positive effect on students' learning; therefore, it is important to keep on exercising and promoting the use of new technologies. Undoubtedly, this will be a common practice for the teacher researcher in order to keep on improving and exploring new teaching methods and approaches.

As a suggestion for further research regarding the use of online platforms such as Quizizz and Kahoot! It would be interesting to consider some extensions of this project. For instance, it would be interesting to carry out this research in a different context. It would be intriguing to see the results of this intervention in a different age group, for example in a primary school. It would also be positive to develop this study on more schools and educational establishments of our country, in order to have a clearer picture of the impact that online platforms can have on students' levels of participation.

Furthermore, as there is a wide range of different platforms available, it would be interesting to also explore other platforms besides Quizizz and Kahoot!, such as for example: Quizlet, Padlet, and many other platforms that are available for us teachers to implement in our classes.

Finally, I find it important to consider that it is essential for us teachers to adapt. We were forced to adapt and learn how to use new technologies. Although the pandemic affected different areas, including education, there are some positive outcomes from this. Teachers and students learned about technology, and we got to explore different platforms and games that were not usually used in class. A new world was presented to us and we learned to adapt to different contexts, and emerging situations, such as for example, a pandemic. Not only that, but we got the opportunity to adapt to our students' needs and interests, and incorporate into our teaching aspects that are relevant for them such as technology and games, in order to create a propitious learning environment and make learning an entertaining and meaningful process.

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## APPENDICES

### 1. Likert scale applied to students pre intervention

#### Uso de juegos online

La siguiente escala Likert tiene por finalidad determinar las percepciones de los alumnos hacia el uso de los juegos online en las clases de Inglés. Marca una casilla por fila, de acuerdo a tu opinión. Recuerda que no hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas.

Nombre

#### 1. Estoy familiarizado con el uso de juegos online

Totalmente de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Totalmente en desacuerdo

#### 2. Creo que el uso de los juegos online es útil para mi proceso de aprendizaje

Totalmente de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Totalmente en desacuerdo

#### 3. Creo que el uso de juegos online hacen la clase más entretenida

Totalmente de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Totalmente en desacuerdo

4. Tiendo a participar más cuando las clases tienen juegos online

Totalmente de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Totalmente en desacuerdo

5. Si mis clases incluyeran más juegos online, participaría más

Totalmente de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Totalmente en desacuerdo

## 2. Likert scale applied to students post intervention

### Uso de juegos online

La siguiente escala Likert tiene por finalidad determinar las percepciones de los alumnos hacia el uso de los juegos online en las clases de Inglés. Marca una casilla por fila, de acuerdo a tu opinión. Recuerda que no hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas.

Nombre

#### 1. Estoy familiarizado con el uso de juegos online

Totalmente de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Totalmente en desacuerdo

#### 2. Creo que el uso de los juegos online es útil para mi proceso de aprendizaje

Totalmente de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Totalmente en desacuerdo

#### 3. Creo que el uso de juegos online hacen la clase más entretenida

Totalmente de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Totalmente en desacuerdo

4. Tiendo a participar más cuando las clases tienen juegos online

Totalmente de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Totalmente en desacuerdo

5. Creo que el uso de juegos online es útil para mi proceso de aprendizaje

Totalmente de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Totalmente en desacuerdo

6. Creo que el uso de juegos online ha tenido un impacto positivo en mis niveles de participación en clases

Totalmente de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Totalmente en desacuerdo

### 3. Observation schedule

Activities	Description of the activity	How many times was the activity observed	Extra notes
Making comments in English			
Making comments in Spanish			
Interactions through the chat with the teacher			
Interactions through the chat among classmates			
Oral interactions with the teacher			
Oral Interactions among classmates			