

# **MASTER'S DISSERTATION**

## **Gamifying Grammar: Enhancing Grammar Skills Through Game- Based Learning**

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## **Abstract in Catalan**

Aquest document proposa analitzar com la gamificació i l'Aprenentatge Basat en el Joc donen suport als alumnes de 2n d'ESO en la millora de les competències gramaticals en la llengua anglesa. El principal objectiu és comprovar si mitjançant la gamificació, un grup d'estudiants pot optimitzar l'aprenentatge i l'ús de la gramàtica. De la mateixa manera, els objectius específics es basen en comparar el rendiment dels dos grups per identificar quin dels dos aconsegueix millors resultats. Per una banda, les respostes extretes del grup experimental, en el qual es va introduir la gamificació, són comparades amb les del grup de control, el qual va utilitzar el mètode tradicional. L'anàlisi de les qualificacions demostra una diferència entre els dos grups, així com quina classe ha aconseguit millors resolucions. Finalment, el document presenta les implicacions teòriques i pràctiques, i també les limitacions i possibles futures línies de recerca.

**Keywords in Catalan:** gamificació, aprenentatge basat en el joc, competències gramaticals, gramàtica, escape room.

## **Abstract in English**

This paper aims to analyze how gamification and Game-Based Learning assist students from 2nd of CSE to improve their English grammar competencies. The primary objective is to verify whether by implementing gamification, learners are able to understand and enhance their grammar knowledge. Similarly, the specific aims include comparing the performance among two groups to determine which one achieves better results. In order to do that, a quasi-experimental study was conducted between two groups, control and experimental. By introducing Game-Based Learning among the experimental group, the results are compared with those of the control group, which followed the traditional method. The analysis of these results revealed a distinction between the two groups: while both groups showed substantial improvement, the experimental group—despite its initially weaker performance—achieved comparatively greater gains. The theoretical implications of the study revealed that the experimental group refined their English grammar knowledge and competencies with the assistance of Game-Based Learning. Similarly, the practical implications demonstrated a more determined control over grammatical structures from students of that group, as they experienced a higher motivation.

**Keywords in English:** Gamification, Game-Based Learning, grammar competencies, educational escape room.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Detection of the Problem to Solve**

Inside a class of students from 2<sup>nd</sup> of CSE, who demonstrated a pre-intermediate level of English language (A2), they were not capable of developing their grammar abilities coherently. Foremost, those learners found it challenging to construct grammatically correct sentences. During the internship, learners from this class revealed strong issues about subject-verb agreement or adequacy to the grammar presented at the time. Some of them specified that the reason for not understanding the English grammar was because they were influenced by their mother tongue. Therefore, they always tried to learn the language following the same structures as their first language contained.

For this reason, elaborating a dynamic activity that incorporated students' instructional materials at the time might be helpful. With the assistance of Game-Based Learning, learners might not feel too influenced by their mother tongue. Similarly, as they would experience the non-stressful context of a game, they might intend to understand in a better way English grammatical structures.

### **1.2. Justification for the Innovative Proposal**

Due to the fact that these students were in the early stages of secondary school, developing a more dynamic and interactive exercise, rather than a master class, might be more approachable for them. In this way, the intention was to prepare a Game-Based Learning methodology. In this gamified context, learners were divided into small groups, and they needed to construct grammatically correct sentences in order to overcome the activity presented.

With this implementation, students did not only work on progressing their grammar competencies, but they were also introduced to problem-solving and group work. Additionally, on

account of the activity being oriented to a fictional scenario, they had to perform as the main characters of that story.

Furthermore, the task was based on the grammar units that learners were working on at the time. In this manner, they were able to develop on the adequate material in relation to their level. Whereas they might think of it as a game, they were actually enhancing their understanding and proficiency of English grammar.

In this way, as the implementation covered the term Game-Based Learning, the application of new technologies and resources to develop on this gamification was implied as well. Therefore, the methodology included all the necessities and materials in order to create a pedagogical innovation.

Şahin (2023) guaranteed that Game-Based Learning “enhances cognitive and social skills” (p. 927). Similarly, the author assured that by applying Game-Based Learning tasks within a class, students were capable of motivating themselves to improve their learning.

Apart from that, Lathwesen and Belova (2021) confirmed that “Educational escape rooms can be developed for all levels of educational institutions and for a wide variety of topics” (p. 3). This aspect might be beneficial for students to engage with the topic and environment of the class, thus motivating them to learn grammar.

## **2. Literature Review**

This section presented the different theories and perspectives regarding the implementation of Game-Based Learning among ESL students. In order to adequately organize this division of the project, a distinction was made between Game-Based Learning and Gamification. Secondly, benefits and challenges of GBL were evaluated in relation to their impact on students’ grammar proficiency. Finally,

the most common gamification tools and a real educational escape room were examined to assess their effectiveness.

### **2.1. Game-Based Learning and Gamification to Improve Grammar**

According to Kapp (2014), Game-Based Learning employed a real game to make students elaborate on their competences and learning process. This educational gamified scenario consisted of a beginning, a “game play” and a closure that usually led to the “win state”, in which learners obtained a prize (Kapp, 2014, p. 44). On the contrary, the author also clarified that Gamification was based on applying diverse gamified components, such as winning limited activities; instead of performing a real interactive simulation.

Equally, Manokaran et al. (2023) claimed that with GBL, teachers could help students perceive grammar as an entertaining part of the subject. In the same way, the authors stated that in comparison with traditional teaching techniques, gamification was able to assist learners to make them acknowledge and understand grammar, rather than only memorizing it. In their study, the researchers reflected that with the “Wheel of Grammar”, students who encountered difficulties when learning grammar became more able to assemble grammatically correct sentences.

Similarly, Nasike (2021) expressed that gamification influenced students to develop a solid understanding of English grammar. According to the author, as learners constantly maintained their concentration on answering each question correctly, they demonstrated a higher engagement on the subject.

### **2.2. Benefits and Challenges of GBL in Grammar Acquisition**

In order to explain the benefits that teachers and students might take from GBL, Fithriani (2018) presented a review of implementing game-based grammar activities among ESL learners. According to the

author, integrating games in grammatical activities supported learners to view grammar classes as more engaging and less stressful. Furthermore, the author claimed that with gamified tasks, lecturers were capable of assisting their pupils in many fields, “using game-based activities in grammar learning is hoped to help promote students’ language skills” (Fithriani, 2018, p. 177).

Likewise, Nasike (2021) assured that pupils engaging enthusiastically in classes with games could be beneficial for them to approach English grammar with positivism. Moreover, in her paper she guaranteed that “This feeling of fun is created in the players through their sense of success (...) which is motivating to students to study English grammar” (Nasike, 2021, p. 18).

As explained by Lathwesen and Belova (2021), educational escape rooms were beneficial to both teachers and students, as they could be adapted to the different levels. These scenarios also helped emphasize learners’ attention on the topic, while they were actually acknowledging educational competencies.

On the contrary, Rayhan et al. (2025) asserted that gamification also contained some challenges. For example, the author stated that learners might only concentrate on “getting external rewards”, instead of studying an actual academic subject. Furthermore, the study also expressed that some game-like activities might be majorly competitive “making learning less healthy and enjoyable” (Rayhan et al., 2025, p. 219).

### **2.3. Conventional Gamification Tools for Enhancing Grammar Acquisition**

In the first place, Suo et al. (2018) observed that while students were playing the *Quizizz* game, their concentration on the topic and practice of their skills was higher rather than on a master class. Second, Koç & Sütçü (2023) compared the differences between a

quasi-experimental quantitative study using *Kahoot!* to assess students on grammar and vocabulary. In the article, the experimental group revealed a considerable contrast with the control group, which followed the traditional method, as *Kahoot!* had generated an enjoyable and ambitious atmosphere (Koç & Sütçü, 2023).

Similarly, Lathwesen and Belova (2021) attributed all of these emotions to the “flow theory”, which was based on the learner emphasizing all of their attention only on the game (p. 2). As they stated, escape rooms, which had been gaining popularity since 2012, were one of the Game-Based Learning tools that produced this principle. In their paper, the authors remarked the definition of educational escape room as “a physical adventure game in which players have to work through various puzzles and tasks in a collaborative manner (...) within a certain time limit” (Lathwesen & Belova, 2021, p. 2).

In their study, Lathwesen and Belova (2021) claimed that educational escape rooms were a suitable option for enhancing students’ knowledge. As they asserted, escape rooms contained the adaptability to create a “formal and informal learning” (Lathwesen & Belova, 2021, p. 3). In other words, teachers were able to elaborate an educational escape room that displayed the setting of an actual gamified scenario, focusing on the curriculum of their learners (Lathwesen & Belova, 2021).

Conversely, Şahin (2023) stated that digital educational escape rooms were an approachable strategy to introduce GBL among academic fields. Owing to their adaptability to any course or age of students, along with the captivating environment that they produced on students, these tools were able to make learners enjoy the knowledge of a topic (Şahin, 2023). Moreover, the author claimed that the purpose of digital educational escape rooms was to draw students’ attention to the subject. In this way, learners developed their

competencies in an engaging context based on group work, as well as they obeyed commands without feeling pressured (Şahin, 2023).

### **3. Research Proposal**

#### **3.1. Problem Definition**

Students from 2nd of CSE faced difficulties when they had to construct grammatically correct sentences or texts by themselves. Furthermore, some students showed a high presence of their L1 when developing grammar competencies. For this reason, an implementation of various Game-Based Learning scenarios on the experimental group would assist to compare their results with the control group, in which the traditional method was applied. The principal aim was to analyze the data collected from the diverse gamification exercises and the Educational Escape Room. In this way, students would demonstrate whether they had acknowledged adequately the grammar competencies presented previously.

#### **3.2. Research Question**

To what extent did the experimental group improve their grammar skills with Game-based Learning in comparison with the control group?

#### **3.3. Hypothesis**

By implementing some Game-based learning scenarios, students would feel more motivated and interested in learning the adequate structure of constructing grammatically correct sentences. Therefore, their academic competence and knowledge on this field would improve.

#### **3.4. Aims**

- **General Aim**

To evaluate whether students from 2nd of CSE were able to improve their grammar abilities with GBL's assistance.

- **Specific Aims**

- To analyze how the experimental group might achieve improved results.
- To maintain learners' motivation and interests constantly active to make them experience an enhancement in their academic progress.

#### **4. Educational Intervention**

For the educational intervention, learners from both groups completed the pre-test the class before the first session (see Appendix C). Afterwards, six sessions were conducted about first conditional sentences for the experimental group. Each session lasted around 50-55 minutes and included: Initial activities lasting 10-15 minutes; development activities covering 20-25 minutes, and finally reflection activities of 10-15 minutes for students to corroborate whether they had acknowledged the competencies presented. On the contrary, the control group did not receive any intervention as learners followed the traditional method.

In the first session of the experimental group, the theory about first conditional sentences' form was displayed using PowerPoint slides. Additionally, the implementer explained in detail all the characteristics and solved learners' doubts. Afterwards, the class spent 20-25 minutes to complete the first game-like activity, which was about matching the beginning of a first conditional sentence with its end. Finally, the class completed a *Kahoot!* test to verify whether they had understood the grammar (see Appendix A1). During the fourth following sessions, learners completed similar activities (see Appendices A2, A3, A4 and A5).

In the last session, students were splitted into two groups and performed an escape room (see Appendix A6). In this exercise, each

group had to overcome seven envelopes containing riddles about first conditional sentences (see Appendix B). The groups had 35 minutes to complete the activity. Afterwards, a reflection was made about whether students felt they had enhanced their grammar competencies with the educational intervention. Finally, both the control and experimental groups completed the post-test in the class after the last session (see Appendix C).

## **5. Methodology**

### **5.1. Participants**

This quantitative study of Game-Based Learning scenarios for one group of students and the traditional method for another one, was aimed at two classes of 2nd of CSE. Both groups resulted in a total of 30 participants—15 students from the experimental group, and 15 students from the control group.

According to its Center's Educational Project (CEP), this high school was situated within a town, which was 30 km from the capital, surrounded by the beach and residential areas, most of which were vacation homes. The entire village contained a total of 31,000 inhabitants, which increased to 58,000 in summer. The center was the only one in the city offering secondary school, T&D, and other post-compulsory education programs. As stated by their CEP, this locality displayed an upper-middle economy, with most of its population working on the public services.

The groups were not arbitrarily arranged, due to the fact that the experimental group had a lower level in comparison with the control group. Therefore, it needed to be considered that the control group might provide a higher proficiency even applying the traditional technique, as it had demonstrated more fluency in this subject.

To provide inclusive and accessible learning for all students, neither group contained any students with special needs requiring adaptations to any exercise or activity. Therefore, all participants in the experimental group performed the sessions equally, as well as both groups received the same pre- and post-test.

## **5.2. Research Design and Variables**

A quasi-experimental quantitative research design was adopted as the groups were not randomly allocated. In order to develop this type of research, two groups of 2nd of CSE were involved in all activities: Group B was the experimental group applying Game-based learning, as it presented a lower English level. On the contrary, Group C became the control group following the traditional method. Considering that only one group of students took part in the methodology, the number in total is 15 (11 male participants and 4 female participants).

This implementation was elaborated to introduce an independent variable: Game-Based Learning. With the assistance of this independent variable, the purpose was to enhance students' grammar competencies, which constituted the dependent variable.

Notwithstanding, other strange variables had to be considered, although these might not be under control. For example, students' difference in level—the control group's greater proficiency than the experimental group. Another strange variable could have been that some students performed the pre-test but not the post-test or vice versa. Finally, some participants could have not attended the center in one or more of the sessions. Therefore, the session could not be conducted effectively.

For the purpose of elaborating a quantitative study, both groups answered a pre-test before the implementation about grammar competencies (see Appendix C). Afterwards, the experimental group

experimented a series of gamified sessions. With the Game-Based Learning approach, students became the active role in all activities, always guided by the teacher's support. On the contrary, the control group did not experience any innovative technique, as it followed the traditional method. Therefore, although learners actively performed the activities from the books, they did not become any active role.

At the end of the study, all participants were handed out the same exam, as a post-test, after carrying out all the sessions from the implementation (see Appendix C). By this means, the answers from the experimental group might reflect an enhancement in the post-test.

### **5.3. Data Collection Instruments**

At the beginning of this study, an observation period was crucial to select which group of students was going to be given GBL. Similarly, the observation stage helped to identify the necessity or issue to address.

In order to evaluate the dependent variable, both groups completed pre-tests and post-tests before and after conducting the methodology (see Appendix C). As this study followed the curriculum that learners were working on at the time, the entire procedure and the tests covered the grammar topic of the first conditional. In this way, students' grammatical abilities were assessed tracking the demanded matter of the time.

Regarding the exams, some of their exercises had been taken from the suggested tests of the center's English language books, *On Track 2*; whereas other ones had been created by the implementer inspired by the book. The pre-tests and post-tests contained five grammar exercises about first conditional, such as choosing the best option; completing the sentences with the correct form of the verbs; finding the mistakes and correcting the sentences; putting the words

in order to create sentences, and rewriting the clauses using the first conditional (see Appendix C).

The reason for choosing these instruments to evaluate students' competencies was based on the type of study implemented. As the methodology was adapted to conduct a quantitative study with a control group, the most appropriate tools to assess each group's outcomes were pre-tests and post-tests. According to Bryan and Karshmer (2013), "pre-tests enable researchers to establish a baseline level of knowledge and determine, by comparison to the post-tests results, whether the instructional design produced the desired results" (p. 578). In this way, as the intention was to compare experimental group's results with those of the control group, and experimental group's answers in the pre-test with the post-test, T-tests were executed. To this extent, with the pre-test, the previous knowledge that learners might have of the mentioned topics was considered, as well as whether these competencies were amended after practicing them with Game-Based Learning.

#### **5.4. Procedure**

As this study was prepared to be introduced within an academic context of underage students, the Ethics document specified the type of analysis that was going to be conducted. Therefore, to carry out all the activities and sessions mentioned, the Ethics document was necessary before implementing the learning scenario.

##### **Pre-test Administration**

In order to successfully elaborate this study, the process was sequenced. Initially, during the first weeks, the observation period was crucial to identify the issue to work on: Grammar. Thereafter, a quantitative study was determined, as the situation presented two groups from the same course, although both did not demonstrate the same level. Selecting Group B as the experimental group was the

wisest decision, as it was the class that faced more difficulties when learning the English language, in comparison with the control group.

The observation period assisted to prepare the sessions and the pre-test not to make students feel too pressured or anxious. The pre-test contained the five grammar exercises previously mentioned, and its administration took place in the class preceding the first session, lasting 55 minutes.

### **Treatment**

After carrying out the pre-test, the six sessions for the experimental group were introduced. As both groups would be working on the first conditional when the learning scenario would be applied, the most adequate decision was to prepare the entire sessions under this subject. The first lesson covered the necessary theory and gamified activities for students to acknowledge how to construct first conditional sentences (see Appendix A1). Consequently, the following fourth sessions executed exercises from students' books as GBL scenarios. For example: cards about matching the beginning of a first conditional sentence with its end; scrambled dictation of sentences for one group to put them in the correct order and vice versa, or mimics to guess which first conditional sentence a student is performing, among others (see Appendix A2, A3, A4, A5). Lastly, the last session is an educational escape room including all the materials used in the learning scenario (A6).

### **Post-test Administration**

After carrying out all the didactic sequence, the post-test intervention took place the day after the last session. This exam contained the same exact exercises with the same contents as the pre-test did. However, students from the experimental group did not recognize it, which was beneficial to verify whether they had purposefully enhanced their grammar competencies.

## 5.5. Data Analysis

The data gathered from pre-tests and post-tests was analyzed using a series of T-Tests. This statistical method assisted in examining whether the experimental group had demonstrated an enhancement in the post-tests, compared with the initial results from the pre-tests. Furthermore, answers received from the control group's post-tests were compared with the experimental group. Thus, to measure if Game-Based Learning in fact upgraded learners' grammar competencies in comparison to the traditional teaching method.

Given that this study employed a quantitative analysis of two groups, the most adequate method was T-Tests to review learners' statistical advancement in the targeted skills. With T-tests, diverse analyses were executed: *Independent Sample Tests* for both groups in each phase (pre- and post-tests); whereas the *Paired Sample T-Tests* were employed to analyze a possible distinction between the pre-test and the post-test in each group. These analyses provided statistical data to understand whether the two groups presented a variation in their scores, as well as how much that variation was valued. In order to establish a statistical analysis between participants, the significance level was determined at  $p < 0.05$ .

## 6. Results

The following data presented was obtained from diverse T-Tests (pre- and post-test), both given equally to the control and experimental groups. In order to analyze the results gathered from the various tests, the scores were examined by applying Independent Samples T-Test on both groups, to verify whether they evidenced statistical variations in pre- and post-tests. Moreover, Paired Samples T-Test was also conducted to both groups individually with the aims of: validating whether the experimental group depicted distinctions in

their grammar competencies, and detecting a plausible disparity on the control group's grammar acquisition.

Considering that this study only presented one research question and goal, the data was displayed in accordance with this order. Therefore, the following analysis revealed the data that assertively confirmed or refuted the research question and goal.

### 6.1. Descriptive Data

To determine whether the experimental group improved their grammar skills after implementing GBL, their performance was compared to the control group. The data was analyzed using T-Tests to identify statistical variances in both groups (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** *Experimental and Control Group Pre-test and Post-test Means*

<b>Descriptives</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Pre-test	Control Group	15	5.400	2.345
	Experimental Group	15	3.200	2.145
Post-test	Control Group	15	8.000	1.813
	Experimental Group	15	5.533	2.503

*Note:* Means revealed the average obtained from both groups in pre- and post-tests measuring grammar competencies.

Initially, Table 1 presents that both groups' means differed in the pre-test. The control group's means ( $M = 5.400$ ,  $SD = 2.345$ ) demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of the grammar, whereas the experimental group ( $M = 3.200$ ,  $SD = 2.145$ ) originally exhibited insufficient competencies. As mentioned before, the control group manifested a greater proficiency due to both groups were not randomly allocated, yet students were arranged according to their English

capabilities. In the same way, the control group also demonstrated a greater competence on the post-test ( $M = 8.000$ ,  $SD = 1813$ ) than the experimental group ( $M = 5.533$ ,  $SD = 2.503$ ). Nevertheless, the experimental group post-test means ( $M = 5.533$ ,  $SD = 2.503$ ) verified that students enhanced their grammar competencies, in comparison with the pre-test ( $M = 3.200$ ,  $SD = 2.145$ ), after the implementation.

## 6.2. Independent Samples T-Test

Based on the descriptive data presented above, differences had been observed between two groups in both stages (pre- and post-test). Therefore, Independent Samples T-Test was conducted to determine whether these distinctions were statistically significant (see Table 2). Alternately, the purpose was to regard the contrarities between both groups.

**Table 2.** *Experimental and Control Group Independent Samples T-Test Results*

<b>Independent Sample T-Test</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p</b>
Pre-test	2.675	30	0.012
Post-test	3.091	30	0.004

Firstly, the pre-test scores displayed a difference between the control and experimental group ( $t(28) = 2.675$ ,  $p = .012$ ), confirming that precisely both groups had presented variances from the beginning. Nonetheless, the post-test outcomes demonstrated that certainly the experimental and control groups evidenced significant differences among their pre- and post-test ( $t(28) = 3.091$ ,  $p = .004$ ). This variation demonstrated that both groups were not on the equal competency level in each stage (pre- and post-test). This is explained by the fact that students were not randomly allocated from the

beginning, which was the reason for conducting a quasi-experimental study.

### 6.3. Paired Samples T-Test

By analyzing with Paired Samples T-Test, the aim was to identify conceivable changes on the experimental group post-test scores. Furthermore, control group pre- and post-test results were similarly examined. Therefore, Paired Samples T-Test was primarily conducted on the experimental group (see Table 3), and afterwards, on the control group (see Table 4).

**Table 3.** *Experimental Group Paired Samples T-Test Results*

Measure 1	Measure 2	t	df	p
Pre-test	Post-test	-8.122	15	<0.01

As Table 3 exhibits, the experimental group portrayed a significant evolution in their pre-test scores compared to their post-test data ( $t(14) = -8.122, p = .001$ ). By conducting Paired Samples T-Test, an amendment between the first exam and the final one could not be detected. Despite that, considering the primarily analysis of experimental group pre-test ( $M = 3.200, SD = 2.145$ ) and post-test means ( $M = 5.533, SD = 2.503$ ), these data were associated with the differences identified in the Paired Samples T-Test to reveal a positive progression of students' grammar competencies.

**Table 4.** *Control Group Paired Samples T-Test Results*

Measure 1	Measure 2	t	df	p
Pre-test	Post-test	-8.510	15	<0.01

Contrarily, Table 4 also reveals a deviation in control group post-test results in contrast with the pre-test ( $t(14) = -8.510, p = .001$ ). Recurrently, the analysis of pre-test means ( $M = 5.400, SD = 2.345$ )

and post-tests means ( $M = 8.000$ ,  $SD = 1.813$ ) of the control group also presented an amelioration, which could be associated with the above Paired Samples T-Test results.

## **7. Discussion**

### **7.1. Interpretation of Results**

The general aim of this implementation was to evaluate whether Game-Based Learning may enhance the grammar competence in the experimental group. In order to conduct the execution, the preparation of each session was accurately designed to provide an accessible learning for all students (see Appendix A).

Considering the descriptive data, the means demonstrated that both groups achieved a refinement in their scores. Similarly, the Independent Samples T-Test was useful to identify the group difference. As this is a quasi-experimental study, both groups were not randomly assigned as the control group presented a greater level than the experimental group. Taking this into consideration, it can be justified that the control group achieved higher scores because of their prior proficiency.

Notwithstanding, as this study aimed to amend the experimental group's grammar abilities, the Paired Samples T-Test was applied. This analysis revealed the group improved their outcomes on the post-test compared to the pre-test.

On account of that, these findings were in line with Nasike (2021), who discovered that learners' grammar competencies improved while they developed an exercise including GBL. Correspondingly, the experiment's results also supported Lathwesen and Belova's (2021) "flow theory", which suggested that students' constant concentration aids in their understanding of grammar.

Furthermore, the revealed outcomes concurred with Manokaran et al. (2023), who claimed that game-like activities support students to make them understand the grammar, instead of only memorizing it.

After discussing the results and agreeing with previous research, the research question could be answered by confirming that Game-Based Learning positively enhanced learners' grammatical competencies. As the results displayed, the experimental group had been able to improve their grammar skills to a great extent, although not as much as the control group, because of their level difference. Furthermore, the previously stated hypothesis was also supported by Paired Samples T-Test, as it showed that the experimental group significantly improved their grammar proficiency through GBL.

## **7.2. Theoretical Implications**

Implementing Game-Based Learning and gamification in the experimental group resulted in higher understanding of grammar structures and meanings. This fact could be explained by what Fithriani (2018) stated: "Through games, students also have the opportunity to use language in a non-stressful way focusing on both the message and the language" (p. 177). According to Nasike (2021), students from the experimental group addressed the grammar of the unit with more interest as they "have time to use their thoughts when engaging in gamification, which allows them to develop creative ideas and understandings" (p. 17).

## **7.3. Practical Implications**

As reflected in the data gathered from the pre- and post-tests and analyzed by using T-Tests, this implementation succeeded in making the experimental group boost their grammar proficiency in English. Even though the means from the experimental group did not outperform the results of the control group, students using GBL demonstrated a better understanding of the concepts after introducing

gamification in class. Lathwesen and Belova (2021) previously mentioned that escape rooms are a proper option for game-like activities among students, as they integrate “formal and informal learning” (p. 3). For this reason, the escape room in the final session (see Appendix A6) promoted collaborative learning and provided learners with an enjoyable and motivating activity which was also curriculum-based.

#### **7.4. Limitations**

First of all, it was important to note that the control group’s results significantly differed from the experimental group, as they were not randomly allocated. In this way, the fact that the control group’s scores were significantly upgraded, even using traditional techniques, was a substantial limitation.

Another challenge to take into account was the limited period of time to deliver the methodology. Due to aspects related to deadlines and the center’s own schedule, only six sessions had been prepared. Therefore, if the experimental group could have had more time to engage with Game-Based Learning and its activities, their results could have been as satisfactory as the control group, or even greater.

#### **7.5. Future Research Lines**

From this point on, future lines of research might focus on how this comparison between GBL and the traditional method would result among more balanced groups. In other words, the fact that students were not randomly allocated complicated the analysis of the data. Nevertheless, if the groups had been organized with participants that demonstrated the same level, the effectiveness of this execution might have greater potential.

Likewise, the possible refined outcomes after a longer implementation on the experimental group could be examined as well. In this way, the data could be compared to that of the control group,

to corroborate whether GBL assists students to outperform the traditional method.

Finally, future research lines should also be centered on investigating innovative methodologies for approaching students' doubts. In this way, a more in-depth approach on how learners face difficulties when learning the English language could be conceived.

## **8. Conclusion**

This study was primarily based on verifying whether Game-Based Learning, as an innovative approach, might effectively enhance students' English grammar competencies. Furthermore, the comparison of this group with a control group, which followed the traditional methodology, was also a considerable factor to notice that improvement. After gathering all the results, the stated hypothesis that GBL increases students' motivation leading them to a deeper understanding of the grammar was supported by the analysis conducted with the T-Test series.

Correspondingly, the general aim was achieved, as the Paired Samples T-Test displayed that the experimental group strengthened their abilities and comprehension of the grammar. In the same way, during the sessions the specific aims were also reached, as learners continuously developed their collaborative learning and commitment.

Given that the designed riddles for the escape room closely aligned with the exercises of the pre- and post-test, students' improvement became more evident. In this regard, the escape room not only assisted in promoting learners' interests of English as a motivational subject, but also familiarized them with the type of test they would complete afterwards.

Taking into account previous literature review and the sessions implemented, the final statement was that Game-Based Learning truly motivated students to engage with the English language. Moreover, the Paired Samples T-Test showed that the experimental group almost doubled their pre-test scores due to the new methodology.

As a final consideration, Game-Based Learning was an innovative approach that motivated students to change their perception of an arduous concept to an engaging one. Nevertheless, while gamification is often well-accepted, teachers should ensure it is carefully adapted to serve academic purposes and develop students' English competence.

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## 10. Appendices

### 10.1. Appendix A. Table 5. Curricular Elements of the Educational Intervention

<b>Title</b>	<i>Escaping from the First Conditional!</i>
<b>Course</b>	2nd of CSE
<b>Subject</b>	English Language
<b>Contextualization:</b> Inside of a class of 15 students from 2 <sup>nd</sup> of CSE, they face difficulties when learning the English grammar, more specifically to produce grammatically correct sentences. By introducing Game-Based Learning, learners may feel more motivated and interested in the topic, thus enhancing their grammar competencies. This educational intervention is divided into six sessions covering the topic “first conditional sentences”. During these sessions, students will perform game-like activities, using exercises and contents from their books. In the last session, learners will develop their active role and perform an educational escape room in which they will have to demonstrate they have acquired the required knowledge.	
<b>Specific Competencies</b>	
<b>SC 4:</b> To understand written sentences to interpret their meaning.	
<b>SC 5:</b> To elaborate written sentences using the demanded grammar.	
<b>SC 10:</b> To solve problems through respectful and inclusive use of language.	
<b>Cross-curricular Competencies</b>	

- **Digital Competence 3:** To participate and interact through technological platforms.
- **Learning to Learn Competence 3:** To respect and value others' perspectives, thus motivating collaborative and autonomous work.

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria</b>
Students improve their grammar comprehension and skills.	<b>SC 4.1, 4.2.:</b> To comprehend and recognize the meaning and structure of first conditional sentences.
	<b>SC 5.1.:</b> To consider the adequacy and correct grammar of the sentences.
Students make a fair use of digital resources to learn academic competencies.	<b>DC 3.1.:</b> To use appropriately digital gamification tools to promote group work.
Students learn how to communicate respectfully among others.	<b>SC 10.2:</b> Using language strategies respectfully for solving real-life situations
	<b>LLC 3.2.:</b> To develop group work strategies to achieve the final purpose.
<b>Knowledge</b>	
Understanding and applying diverse strategies for analyzing and producing written sentences, or even short texts, focusing on form, structure and meaning.	

Communicating ideas and concepts among diverse speakers through respectful use of language, aiming to enhance the practice of it.

**10.1.1. Appendix A1. Table 6. Session 1**

<p>LS Description: For the first session, all the class participated as a whole for the initial and reflection activities, whereas students were divided into two groups of 7-8 participants in the development activities. Regarding the materials, PowerPoint slides were applied to display the theory; also cards were prepared for the development activities, and finally <i>Kahoot!</i> was the device for the reflection.</p>		
<b>Session 1</b>	<b>Description of Activities</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<b>Initial Activities</b>	<b>Explanation of the first conditional.</b> The teacher displays and explains slides from a PowerPoint containing first conditional clauses' forms, structures and examples. Afterwards, she also acts as a guide and involves students to provide examples of the theory to verify if they have understood it.	20-25 minutes.
<b>Development Activities</b>	<b>Matches:</b> The class is divided into two groups. The first group contains cards with the beginning of first conditionals ("if" clause), while the second group contains cards with the end of the others (main clause). Each "if" clause has to find their main clause correctly. Afterwards, students have to work together to put themselves in order to create the story. The	15 minutes.

LS Description: For the first session, all the class participated as a whole for the initial and reflection activities, whereas students were divided into two groups of 7-8 participants in the development activities. Regarding the materials, PowerPoint slides were applied to display the theory; also cards were prepared for the development activities, and finally *Kahoot!* was the device for the reflection.

	teacher acts as a guide and helps those students who ask for assistance.	
<b>Reflection Activities</b>	<b><i>Kahoot!</i></b> about first conditional sentences. Students have to reflect they have understood the theory explained by completing some game-like short tests.	15 minutes.

**Vectors**

- **Quality of Education:** To discuss collaboratively and respect diverse perspectives to achieve the final purpose.

**Universal strategies and supports**

- **Formative Assessment:** Students become an active role and have to work collaboratively to complete problem-solving activities, which assist them in acknowledging their academic progress.
- **Summative Assessment:** Teacher’s observations to identify progress on students.

**10.1.2. Appendix A2. Table 7. Session 2**

<p>LS Description: For the second session, all the class performed the initial and reflection activities, whereas students were splitted in pairs for the development activities. Regarding the materials, a tennis ball was used for the warm-up; cards with words from the vocabulary were also created for the development section, and finally learners used their computers to complete a <i>Blooket</i> test.</p>		
<b>Session 2</b>	<b>Description of Activities</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<b>Initial Activities</b>	<p><b>Warm-Up:</b> The teacher says an incorrect first conditional sentence and throws a ball to one student. That student has 10 seconds to correct the sentence. If not, they throw the ball to another student until the sentence is corrected. The activity continues with other sentences from diverse participants.</p>	15 minutes.
<b>Development Activities</b>	<p><b>Cards:</b> In pairs, students contain cards with one word from the vocabulary of the unit. They have to make sentences using the first conditional for the rest of the class to guess the words.</p> <p>The teacher acts as a guide and helps those students who ask for assistance.</p>	25 minutes.
	<p><b>Blooket</b> about first conditional sentences.</p>	15 minutes.

LS Description: For the second session, all the class performed the initial and reflection activities, whereas students were splitted in pairs for the development activities. Regarding the materials, a tennis ball was used for the warm-up; cards with words from the vocabulary were also created for the development section, and finally learners used their computers to complete a *Blooket* test.

**Reflection  
Activities**

Students have to reflect they have understood the theory explained by completing some game-like short tests.

**Vectors**

- **Competency-based Learning:** To develop problem-solving skills to analyze any situation and accomplish its result.
- **Quality of Education:** To discuss collaboratively and respect diverse perspectives to achieve the final purpose.

**Universal strategies and supports**

- **Formative Assessment:** Students become an active role and have to work collaboratively to complete problem-solving activities, which assist them in acknowledging their academic progress.
- **Summative Assessment:** Teacher's observations to identify progress on students.

**10.1.3. Appendix A3. Table 8. Session 3**

<p>LS Description: For the third session, all the class performed the initial and reflection activities, whereas students were divided into groups of 7-8 participants for the development activities. Regarding the materials, students needed their books and notebooks to complete the development phase, and their computers for the <i>Quizizz</i> games.</p>		
<b>Session 3</b>	<b>Description of Activities</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<b>Initial Activities</b>	<p><b>Warm-Up:</b> One student imitates a first conditional sentence from an exercise of the book. Another student has to guess which sentence is. If the second student guesses it correctly, they do the next one. If not, the participant changes.</p>	10 minutes.
<b>Development Activities</b>	<p><b>“Running Dictation”:</b> Class is divided into two groups. First group contains first conditional sentences and has to scatter the words and dictate them to the second group. The second group has to put them in order as fast as they can. Then, the roles change, and the group that makes more correct sentences in less time wins.</p> <p>The teacher acts as a guide and helps those students who ask for assistance.</p>	30 minutes.
	<b>Quizizz</b> about first conditional sentences.	15 minutes.

LS Description: For the third session, all the class performed the initial and reflection activities, whereas students were divided into groups of 7-8 participants for the development activities. Regarding the materials, students needed their books and notebooks to complete the development phase, and their computers for the *Quizizz* games.

**Reflection  
Activities**

Students have to reflect they have understood the theory explained by completing some game-like short tests.

**Vectors**

- **Competency-based Learning:** To develop problem-solving skills to analyze any situation and accomplish its result.
- **Quality of Education:** To discuss collaboratively and respect diverse perspectives to achieve the final purpose.

**Universal strategies and supports**

- **Formative Assessment:** Students become an active role and have to work collaboratively to complete problem-solving activities, which assist them in acknowledging their academic progress.
- **Summative Assessment:** Teacher's observations to identify progress on students.

**10.1.4. Appendix A4. Table 9. Session 4**

<p>LS Description: For the fourth session, students were not divided into groups at any stage. Regarding the materials, for this session only the whiteboard, a flyswatter, and students' computers were required.</p>		
<b>Session 4</b>	<b>Description of Activities</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<b>Initial Activities</b>	<b>Warm-Up:</b> The teacher reviews the theory of first conditional sentences by asking students questions using "if" clauses. The students have to answer with the proper main clauses.	15 minutes.
<b>Development Activities</b>	<b>"The Flyswatter Game":</b> The teacher writes on the whiteboard four aspects related to the first conditional ( <i>condition, result, whole sentence, incorrect sentence</i> ). Four students come to the whiteboard and have to identify to which aspect the sentence said by the teacher belongs. The student that guesses it correctly wins and does the next sentence. All students participate throughout the entire class. The teacher acts as a guide and helps those students who ask for assistance.	25 minutes.
<b>Reflection Activities</b>	<b>Kahoot!</b> about first conditional sentences. Students have to reflect they have understood the theory	15 minutes.

LS Description: For the fourth session, students were not divided into groups at any stage. Regarding the materials, for this session only the whiteboard, a flyswatter, and students' computers were required.

explained by completing some game-like short tests.

**Vectors**

- **Competency-based Learning:** To develop problem-solving skills to analyze any situation and accomplish its result.

**Universal strategies and supports**

- **Formative Assessment:** Students become an active role and have to work collaboratively to complete problem-solving activities, which assist them in acknowledging their academic progress.
- **Summative Assessment:** Teacher's observations to identify progress on students.

**10.1.5. Appendix A5. Table 10. Session 5**

<p>LS Description: For the fifth session, the entire class developed the initial and reflection activities as a whole. However, students were divided into three groups of five participants for the development activities. Regarding the materials, posters were prepared for the warm-up; learners used their notebooks in the development exercise, and their computers for the reflection.</p>		
Session 5	Description of Activities	Timing
<b>Initial Activities</b>	<p><b>Warm-Up:</b> Class is divided into four corners (<i>totally agree, agree, disagree, and totally disagree</i>). The teacher writes four first conditional sentences about real-life problems on the whiteboard (<i>climate change, pollution, gender equality, education</i>). Learners have to put themselves on one corner and give reasons, using first conditional phrases, to support their vision.</p>	15 minutes.
<b>Development Activities</b>	<p><b>Creating first conditionals:</b> In three groups of five participants, students are given four words and they have to create an original story using first conditional sentences. The group that makes the most original story wins.</p> <p>The teacher acts as a guide and helps those students who ask for assistance.</p>	25 minutes.

LS Description: For the fifth session, the entire class developed the initial and reflection activities as a whole. However, students were divided into three groups of five participants for the development activities. Regarding the materials, posters were prepared for the warm-up; learners used their notebooks in the development exercise, and their computers for the reflection.

<p><b>Reflection Activities</b></p>	<p><b>Booklet</b> about first conditional sentences. Students have to reflect they have understood the theory explained by completing some game-like short tests.</p>	<p>15 minutes.</p>
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- Vectors**
- **Competency-based Learning:** To develop problem-solving skills to analyze any situation and accomplish its result.
  - **Quality of Education:** To discuss collaboratively and respect diverse perspectives to achieve the final purpose.

- Universal strategies and supports**
- **Formative Assessment:** Students become an active role and have to work collaboratively to complete problem-solving activities, which assist them in acknowledging their academic progress.
  - **Summative Assessment:** Teacher’s observations to identify progress on students.

**10.1.6. Appendix A6. Table 11. Session 6**

<p>LS Description: For the last session, the class was not divided for the initial and reflection activities, although to perform the escape room, students were splitted in three groups of five participants. Regarding the materials of this session, the teacher handed out seven envelopes containing the riddles of the escape room to each group (21 envelopes in total), and learners needed their pens.</p>		
<b>Session 6</b>	<b>Description of Activities</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<b>Initial Activities</b>	<b>Explanation of Escape Room.</b> The teacher explains the instructions for the escape room and acts as a guide confirming students whether they have completed the riddle correctly or not.	15 minutes.
<b>Development Activities</b>	<b>Escape Room:</b> The class is divided into three groups of five students. Each group must overcome 7 envelopes containing riddles about first conditional sentences. The group that completes all riddles correctly wins.  The teacher acts as a guide and provides feedback to students for them to understand which aspects they need to amend.	35 minutes.
	The teacher asks students whether they believe they have	5 minutes.

LS Description: For the last session, the class was not divided for the initial and reflection activities, although to perform the escape room, students were splitted in three groups of five participants. Regarding the materials of this session, the teacher handed out seven envelopes containing the riddles of the escape room to each group (21 envelopes in total), and learners needed their pens.

**Reflection  
Activities**

improved their grammar abilities after the implementation. A short debate on students' perspective is conducted.

**Vectors**

- **Competency-based Learning:** To develop problem-solving skills to analyze any situation and accomplish its result.
- **Quality of Education:** To discuss collaboratively and respect diverse perspectives to achieve the final purpose.

**Universal strategies and supports**

- **Formative Assessment:** Students become an active role and have to work collaboratively to complete problem-solving activities, which assist them in acknowledging their academic progress.
- **Summative Assessment:** Teacher's observations to identify progress on students.

## 10.2. Appendix B: Educational Escape Room's Riddles

### 1. Complete the first conditional sentences.

- If you \_\_\_\_\_ (eat) too much candy, you \_\_\_\_\_ (get) a stomachache.
- If we \_\_\_\_\_ (not recycle) more, we \_\_\_\_\_ (not help) the planet.
- Marc \_\_\_\_\_ (get) a good grade, if he \_\_\_\_\_ (study) for the exam.
- She \_\_\_\_\_ (not pass) the writing exam, if she \_\_\_\_\_ (not practice) the writing.

### 2. WOW! You overcame the first riddle, very good! Now, put the words in order to create first conditional sentences.

rains / we / take / umbrella / it / if / will / an

-

invite / she / doesn't / me / won't / I / the / go / party / if / to

-

classroom / they / if / clean / it / better / look / will / the

-

wake / doesn't / early / up / if / Anna / late / be / will / she

-

### 3. Here you have first conditional sentences splitted into sections. Some are entire sentences, some are "if" clauses, and others are main clauses. Put them in the correct order

**to create a short paragraph. Write the numbers at the beginning of the sentences. Good luck!**

- If they are not careful,
- Teenagers won't have enough time to study,
- If teenagers keep using social media every day,
- Social media will help people stay connected, if it is used responsibly.
- social media could become dangerous for them.
- it will continue to be a big part of their lives
- if they spend too much time on their phones.

**4. You are doing very well, keep going like this! In this next challenge you need to make questions using the first conditional to guess which color will appear if we mix other ones. GO!**

- If they \_\_\_\_\_ (mix) red and blue, what color \_\_\_\_\_ they \_\_\_\_\_ (get)?
- If he \_\_\_\_\_ (mix) yellow and blue, what color \_\_\_\_\_ (appear)?
- Which color \_\_\_\_\_ it \_\_\_\_\_ (become) if we \_\_\_\_\_ (mix) red and white?
- Which color \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ (use) if she \_\_\_\_\_ (paint) the ocean?

**5. In this challenge you need to create the riddle yourselves! Make a riddle using 3 first conditional sentences that help to guess the next word: Mobile phone. You can do it!**

- 
- 
- 

**6. You're almost there!! Complete the questions using the first conditional, and then answer them correctly. Good luck!**

- What \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ (eat) if you \_\_\_\_\_ (want) to be healthy?
  - a) Fruit and vegetables
  - b) Candy
  - c) Salads and meat
  - d) a) and c) are correct
  - e) None of them are correct
- If Marta \_\_\_\_\_ (not bring) her homework, what \_\_\_\_\_ (happen)?
  - a) Her teacher will congratulate her.
  - b) Her teacher will get angry.
  - c) Marta will be afraid because her teacher will be happy.
- If they \_\_\_\_\_ (forget) their lunch at home, what \_\_\_\_\_ their mother \_\_\_\_\_ (say)?
  - a) Very good guys!
  - b) You don't have anything to eat now!
  - c) Now you have what you deserve!
  - d) a) and c) are incorrect
  - e) b) and c) are correct

**7. You got to the final challenge!! Very good! Now you need to complete these three paragraphs by putting in order the**

**words in brackets. Afterwards, you also have to choose the correct order for the paragraphs. Good luck!**

**Paragraph 1**

Governments can also influence the population to fight against climate change. If \_\_\_\_\_ (production / plastic waste / stop / they / the / of), \_\_\_\_\_ (pollute / won't / too much / factories).

**Paragraph 2**

Many people don't understand how they damage our environment by polluting. If \_\_\_\_\_ (habits / don't / we / change / our), \_\_\_\_\_ (worse / the / get / will / situation).

**Paragraph 3**

We can do many small actions to make our planet cleaner and healthier. The Earth \_\_\_\_\_ (better / be / place / will / a), \_\_\_\_\_ (clothes / we / and / reuse / plastic bottles / if).

**Which is the correct order?**

- a) 1 - 2 - 3
- b) 2 - 1 - 3
- c) 3 - 1 - 2

### 10.3. Appendix C: Pre-test and Post-test

#### GRAMMAR - FIRST CONDITIONAL

##### 1. Choose the correct options to complete the first conditional sentences. (5 marks)

- a) If he takes the bus into the city, it **cost** / **costs** / **will cost** 4€.
- b) If Emma **doesn't study** / **will study** / **study** hard for this test, she won't pass it.
- c) Molly and Mark **don't** / **doesn't** / **won't** come to our house this weekend if their mum is still sick.
- d) I'll be cold later if I **don't** / **won't** / **doesn't** take a jacket.
- e) I'm sure we 'll **win** / **win** / **wins** the competition if we try hard.

##### 2. Fill in the gaps using the verbs in brackets in the first conditional. (5 marks)

- a) If you \_\_\_\_\_ (**study**), you \_\_\_\_\_ (**pass**) the exam.
- b) If we \_\_\_\_\_ (**not hurry**), we \_\_\_\_\_ (**miss**) the bus.
- c) If it \_\_\_\_\_ (**rain**), I \_\_\_\_\_ (**take**) an umbrella.
- d) If she \_\_\_\_\_ (**not eat**) healthy food, she \_\_\_\_\_ (**get**) sick.
- e) If they \_\_\_\_\_ (**work**) hard, they \_\_\_\_\_ (**finish**) the project on time.

##### 3. The following sentences contain some mistakes. Find them and correct the sentences. (5 marks)

- a) If she will study, she passes the exam.
- b) If they don't will arrive on time they miss the bus.

c) He doesn't succeed, if he doesn't work hard.

d) If you will eat too much you are going to feel sick.

e) I won't know the time if she will not call me.

**4. Put the words in brackets in order to create sentences with the first conditional. (5 marks)**

a) (you / bed / go to / early / you / better / if / feel / tomorrow / will).

\_\_\_\_\_.

b) (is / it / we / rainy / stay / will / home / if).

\_\_\_\_\_.

c) (if / call / I / you / will / help / you).

\_\_\_\_\_.

d) (my friend / if / we / comes / go / will / to the park).

\_\_\_\_\_.

e) (the train / if / we / run / don't / miss / will / we).

\_\_\_\_\_.

**5. Rewrite the following sentences using the first conditional. (5 marks)**

a) It's snowing now, so we won't go to the beach.

If it \_\_\_\_\_ (**snow**), we \_\_\_\_\_ (not go) to the beach.

b) You have to finish your homework to go out this afternoon.

If you \_\_\_\_\_ (**finish**) your homework, you \_\_\_\_\_ (**go out**) this afternoon.

c) Alba needs to buy a ticket to attend the concert.

If Alba \_\_\_\_\_ (**not buy**) a ticket, she  
\_\_\_\_\_ (**not attend**) the concert.

d) Marta and Paul have to wake up early to catch the train.

If Marta and Paul \_\_\_\_\_ (**wake up**) early, they  
\_\_\_\_\_ (**catch**) the train.

e) They will not finish the project because they are not working together.

If they \_\_\_\_\_ (**not work**) together, they  
\_\_\_\_\_ (**not finish**) the project.