BACHELOR IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (TRILINGUAL)

2019-2020 academic year

GAMES FOR SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY

Author: Ainhoa Isabel del Río Matesanz

Director: Mari Mar Boillos Pereira

29 May 2020, at Leioa

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GAMES FOR SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY

Ainhoa Isabel del Río Matesanz
UPV/EHU

Games for second or foreign language teaching are becoming an innovative educational method in which a safe, immersive environment is created. The main aim of this project is to analyze in-depth the game-types and game-aims that a specific Elementary school has. To that end, observatory-based research has been accomplished. The results of the research revealed the different amount of game-types and game-aims that the Elementary school provided, including in the research two variables: different academic years, and subjects in which English is used. To sum up, the investigation reveals the number of games the school is provided with and the importance of acquiring the foreign language through immersive gaming environments.

Game-based learning, second or foreign language teaching, immersion, language acquisition, observatory-based research

Los juegos como herramienta para la enseñanza de la lengua extranjera se están convirtiendo en un método educativo innovador con el fin de crear un entorno seguro y de inmersión en la lengua. El objetivo de este trabajo es hacer un análisis de los tipos de juegos y de los objetivos que estos juegos tienen en una escuela concreta de Educación Primaria. Para ello, se ha llevado a cabo una investigación basada en la observación. En los resultados de la investigación se ha recogido el número de los diferentes tipos y objetivos que tienen los juegos en esta escuela de Educación Primaria, incluyendo en la investigación dos variables: los diferentes cursos escolares y las diferentes asignaturas en las que se hace uso del inglés. En resumen, en el trabajo queda reflejado el número de juegos que la escuela ofrece y, por lo tanto, la importancia que se le da a adquirir la lengua extranjera mediante el uso de juegos en entornos de inmersión.

Aprendizaje basado en juegos, enseñanza de la lengua extranjera, inmersión, adquisición de la lengua, investigación basada en la observación.

Jokoak atzerriko hizkuntzaren irakaskuntzarako tresna bezala erabiltzen ari dira, ingurune segurua eta hizkuntzaren murgilketan oinarritutako metodo berritzailea sortzeko asmoz. Lan honen helburua, Lehen Hezkuntzako eskola zehatz batek dituen joko-mota desberdinak eta jokoen helburuen analisia egitea da. Horretarako, behaketan oinarritutako ikerketa bat burutu da. Ikerketaren emaitzetan, Lehen Hezkuntzako eskola honek dituen joko-motak eta jokoen helburuak batu dira, bi aldagai desberdin kontuan hartuz: ikasturte desberdinak eta ingelesa erabiltzen duten ikasgaiak. Lanean beraz, eskolak eskaintzen dituen jokoen kopurua agertzen da, eta hortaz, atzerriko hizkuntza ikasteko asmoz murgiltze-ingurunean jokoen erabilpenari ematen zaion garrantzia.

Jokoetan oinarritutako ikaskuntza, atzerriko hizkuntzaren irakaskuntza, murgilketa, hizkuntzaren jabetze-prozesua, behaketan oinarritutako ikerketa

INTRODUCTION

English is the first foreign language taught in many schools as it is considered a crucial communicative competence that children should achieve from the early stages of schooling (Meyer, 2012). However, learning a new and foreign language, as Phuong & Nguyen (2017) state, is like constructing a building were builders would be the learners. If the building is not constructed carefully, the building and, consequently, learning a language effectively would have adverse outcomes. Taking this into account, Gozcu & Caganaga (2016) suggest introducing games as a resource for the teaching of a foreign language, as they provide an enjoyable and entertaining environment in which learners feel comfortable and relaxed to use the target language. Furthermore, games provide situations or contexts where the use of the language is useful and significant. Consequently, learning a language through gaming is considered a handy educative tool to acquire a foreign language.

This Final Degree Project is based on the hypothesis that many foreign language teachers do not use or do not have access to innovative methods such as games. The lack of games could lead to not benefiting from a friendly and welcoming environment to make use of the language. Therefore, this investigation aims to look for the presence and availability of different games at a specific school to analyze three different aspects: the presence of different game-types and game-aims, the presence of games for teaching languages depending on the course, and last but not least, the presence of games in English transversal subjects.

With the idea of giving response to the previously mentioned approach, this Final Degree Project consists of four parts. Firstly, there is a theoretical framework that revolves around gaming as a tool to teach the second or foreign language as well as contextualize and justify the developed investigation. Secondly, the methodology presents the objectives that want to be persuaded in this project. Then, there is the analysis and data collection discussion part, in which the collected information is discussed and linked to the previously worked theoretical framework. Finally, after conducting the project, there is an organized reflection about the come conclusions.

1.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this part of the project, a full definition of what game-based language teaching is given, as well as a classification of different types of language learning games. Also, general and specific benefits of learning the second language through games are given to promote this new educational methodology. Lastly, different investigations and studies are presented to prove the efficiency of using the game-based language learning technique to acquire a second language.

1.1. Definition of what game-based language teaching means

Playing and gaming are two words that are commonly mixed up or not given the excellent use of the language when talking about educational practices. As Turker (2016) defines, playing is free to try, and there is no required equipment. It is also considered safe to error, and there are no precise rules of engagement that are needed to follow. According to Walther (2003), playing sets the subject free to act and perform without material consequences. Also, world-building and open-ended territories are crucial factors in playing.

On the contrary, gaming requires resources, which makes it costly. Also, there are some rules and structures that are mandatory to follow to achieve the success that it is clearly defined. According to McBride (1979), gaming refers to having to achieve a specific goal and using only permitted rules. These rules need to be accepted and applied to make possible such activity.

For the last ten years, the concept of gaming has evolved significantly, and its use has expanded to education to become an effective teaching technique in different disciplines, such as in teaching the second language (Karagiorgas, & Niemann, 2017). Gaming technique teaching is commonly classified into two main types: gamification and game-based teaching. Similarly, game-based teaching is very often classified into two types: game-enhanced and game-based practices.

Karagiorgas & Niemann (2017) report that gamification has become a viral tool in the education area. As a proof of this, the educational gamification technique has been implemented in an entire public school in New York City. According to Huotari & Hamari (2012), gamification is based on applying game principles and game-design elements in a non-

game context with an educational purpose. Another way to look at gamification is to simulate gameful situations with advanced behavioral outcomes using improved motivational management. For that purpose, features like points, badges, levels, and leaderboards are used to gamify the teaching of language learning but in a way that is not supposed to entertain (Karagiorgas, & Niemann, 2017). An example of that could be *ClassDojo*.

On the other hand, the whole idea of game-based teaching is divided into two different types, as mentioned above: game-enhanced and game-based disciplines.

As Reinhardt (2018) explains, game-enhanced practices involve the use of regular or vernacular games that their main goal is not to teach a language. This game industry is extensive, and their focal point is to entertain even though sometimes these games can be used to learn a language indirectly, such as the *Trivial* or *Risk* board game. These types of games are often engaging, and it can sometimes be difficult to pedagogically mediate them, as Becker (2007) mentions too. These games can either be linked to technology or not, such as *Cluedo* or *Monopoly* board-game, among many others.

An example of technology-based game-enhanced practice could be massive multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG). This type of game requires learners to do different activities such as communicating with others to solve problems, complete quests, read maps and directions, and use the intellectual side of the brain to be able to travel. These interactions make students learn the second language while enjoying the process and immersing them in an interactive 3D virtual world (Karagiorgas, & Niemann, 2017). The ones that require ICT are *World of Warcraft*, *The Sims*, or *Everquest*, among many others.

According to Karagiorgas & Niemann (2017), game-based disciplines or serious games are specifically designed for language learning and are supposed to make boring everyday activities or tasks more enjoyable. As Meyer (2012) explains, young language students find game-based learning an engaging and safe environment where they can make mistakes and experiment. In other words, a non-threatening environment is promoted, and children receive immediate and simultaneous feedback.

According to Meyer (2012), these games can be classified into three types of game activities: a) games for repetition and memorization, b) games for problem-solving, and c)

role play and scenarios. The first type is based on drill-based exercises that usually are vocabulary-related training games. This type of gaming activity is used as a motivator to produce and practice a foreign language. The second and third types, on the contrary, are a little bit more complicated, and students are active in solving problems. Frequently, these gaming practices require students' more use of different domains of the language. The purpose of these two last types of gaming activities is to create an immersive social context among students (Meyer, 2012).

All the above can also be classified depending on the use of ICT or not. Serious games, including ICT, often lack proper video graphics, which make them completely different from the popular vernacular games. Because of this, game-based practices are not as engaging and educationally effective for students as game-enhanced practices (Becker, 2007). Examples of game-based or serous games could be *Pictionary*, *Scrabble*, vocabulary learning flashcards, or any online game whose main objective is to teach vocabulary or grammar structures like *MindSnacks* or *Mingoville*.

All the gaming techniques mentioned above have something in common. Reinhardt (2018) names it as being "Gameful" in language learning. This means that the two terms explained above (game-enhanced, and game-based) assume that the learner or player of the designed activity is focused on learning but without losing the fact of being in a game and playing by its rules. A complement of it would be to create educative environments while finding language learning opportunities in activities that are vernacular and not explicitly designed for learning.

1.2. Benefits of game-based language teaching

Game-based language teaching has several benefits in educational settings, and these can be classified into two main groups: general benefits and specific benefits. General benefits refer to the ones that can be achieved in any subject or learning environment by using the game-based and game-enhanced teaching techniques. Specific benefits refer to the ones gained in a second or foreign language teaching subject or environment.

1.2.1. General Benefits

One of the significant general benefits of game-based teaching is motivation. Hanson-Smith (2016) explains that games might not make us smarter or more intelligent, nor better

at multitasking, but they give us the satisfaction of achievement and mastery of ability. Two types of motivation can be experienced in game-based learning: Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. A game-related extrinsic motivation refers to any external reward like earning points or completing levels. On the contrary, intrinsic motivation refers to rewards that improve self-worth and enjoyment, such as beating one's own best record or controlling aspects of the game. According to Hanson-Smith (2016), students, while playing games move from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation because they lead to gratification achievement, as mentioned above. Motivation is very commonly linked to feeling engaged or to curiosity, and as Squire states, "any time that we turn a child off to learning rather than awakening their intellectual curiosity, we've failed" (2011, pg.100).

Moreover, games are a valuable tool to increase children´s systematic thinking and problem-solving. Systematic thinking is the idea of understanding how different parts of a system can influence one another. Problem-solving helps students think outside the box and memorize critical sequences or elements while using logic to complete new levels. An example of this could be being able to read a map that is going to be of total use to solve a mystery or having a budget to create the best football team, and so forth. (Squire, 2011).

Also, gaming creates a cultural and participatory environment for experimentation. Thus, the use of trial-and-error is seen as a very educational approach. Besides the ones already mentioned, gaming creates social interactions with other kids, and synchronous learning is achieved. That is, content learning and social skills learning (Squire, 2011).

If technology-related game-based language teaching is put into practice, Kayımbaşıoğlu, Oktekin, & Hacı (2016) explain that benefits like individualized learning, interactive learning, and independent learning can happen. As a result, students who need additional assistance can work on a more focused program with additional time. Also, students who want to progress quicker have the chance to do so too. In short, different learning rhythms are considered, and personalized teaching is enabled.

1.2.2. Specific Benefits

Immersion in a second or foreign language is the most significant benefit students achieve from using the game-based and game-enhanced technique. What is more, this immersion leads to a second or foreign language acquisition (Gozcu, & Caganaga, 2016).

As Genesee (1994) explains, teaching EFL in an immersive environment is a vibrant and meaningful communicative context. The aim of learning a language is about being able to communicate among students and teachers instead of focusing on grammatical perfection. Students use the English language for communication and problem-solving without focusing on English grammar structures by using the game-based teaching technique. Students feel motivated to learn a language when they feel that they are increasing their competence, achieving academic goals while using the second language for communicative purposes.

Furthermore, these communicative skills will increase if this immersion classrooms have native English speakers as Umansky & Reardon (2014) affirm. If this is the case, English students will have broader access to English-speaking peers and more contextualized and relevant interactions. Moreover, error while using the language must not be considered as a bad thing, but as an effort that students make to master a complex linguistic system. In immersion programs, students´ progress through different language stages is searched for until they reach language proficiency (Genesee, 1994).

According to Krashen (1981), bilingual specialists state that immersion practices are precious resources for language acquisition. That is why the word immersion is commonly linked to acquiring a language, and contrarily, the word learning is left apart. As Haynes & Zacarian (2010) state, there is a big difference between acquiring and learning a language. Acquiring a language is meant to be an unconscious process while learning a second language is a conscious one. As a result, students who have not learned English during their preschool years and are now learning English as an additional language are considered "English language learners" (ELL). ELL must learn about the language appropriate use and structure. For example, a Spanish native speaker will have to learn how to place adjectives before nouns in English, even though Spanish is done oppositely.

On the contrary, when students are immersed and acquiring a second language by gaming, they are generally not aware of being acquiring a language. Students know that they are using the language for communication and often cannot describe or explain the rules of what they have acquired; they merely have a feel for the language. What is more, the acquisition of a language is responsible for fluency in that second language, and in many cases, students are not conscious of what they have precisely acquired (Krashen, 1981). When

students acquire a second language, as explained above, great success is happening, as they will forever remember the indirect content learned without even knowing that they did (Haynes, & Zacarian, 2010). This last idea explained above, is the most significant benefit students can achieve, from acquiring the second language through gaming.

1.3. State of Art

For the last five years, many studies and investigations have been made to prove the efficiency of teaching the second language through gaming. In this section of the project, different research data will be given to support the effectiveness of games as a foreign language teaching method.

Zhonggen (2018) worked on a study to look for the effectiveness of learning English vocabulary using game-enhanced and pencil-and-paper-based techniques. To do so, a pre- and post-test was done to 107 Chinese participants divided into three groups. Group A, with 33 participants were assigned the interactivity-prone game assisted vocabulary learning approach; group B, (38 participants) were assigned to the less interactivity-prone game assisted vocabulary learning approach; and group C, (36 participants) worked with the pencil-and-paper approach.

The results showed that the more interactive game assisted vocabulary learning approach (group A), was more effective than the less interactive one (group B), and the less interactive game assisted EFL vocabulary learning approach was notably more effective than the pencil-and-paper approach (group C). Interactivity is one of the most important factors when talking about acquiring English vocabulary as a foreign language. Thus, it was not surprising to see how students in group A that worked with a platform with word competition and collaborative activities had the most effective results (Zhonggen, 2018).

Additionally, Gozcu & Caganaga (2016) researched how the *Twister* game can have positive effects on elementary EFL students. In order to do the investigation, semi-structured interviews and observation techniques were used. The study results indicated that participants acquired the English language by using the game *Twister* and not using any memorization technique or activity. Moreover, the game was useful to recall or remember words without the use of any written source. Indeed, as Gozcu & Caganaga (2016) mention, learning vocabulary by looking and remembering is not an adequate way of acquiring EFL

because words should never be seen as an independent issue without its context. Also, the results showed students´ positive EFL outcomes when not feeling anxiety and stress while learning. What is more, students were focused on the effectiveness of the interaction and not that much on being worried about the corrections or mistakes made.

Equally important, Karagiorgas & Niemann (2017) created different massive multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG) scenarios for their study. A game called *Talking Island* was designed in Taiwan, and around 30% of the activities in the game were related to mastery-learning games like flashcards. Another MMORPG game called *Wonderland* was analyzed in Japan to see how these students improved their English social interactions by using greetings, informal language, humor, small talk, and friend-making.

The results demonstrated the effectiveness of MMORPG. All students with no gender differences increased their English vocabulary by 40% by interacting with non-player characters (animations that appear on the screen). This type of game helped them understand the grammatical syntax of English just by reading well-structured phrases while playing the game. Besides, players who interacted with other players in the game-chat by written or spoken messages saw a 100% increase. (Karagiorgas, & Niemann, 2017)

Putri, Setiyadi, & Sudirman (2018), on the other hand, designed a quantitative study to determine if board games can be a useful technique to improve students´ speaking skills. To do so, a pretest and post-test was made to 36 students that participated in the study. While marking the speaking skills, four aspects were considered: grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. The results showed an incredible increase in the students´ speaking achievement (58.2 to 78.2). Also, students had a score increment or growth in all domains (all scores out of 25): comprehension, increased from 19 to 20.9; vocabulary, raised from 16 to 18.95, grammar, went from 16.2 to 19.38; and fluency, increased from 17 to 18.9. Bearing in mind the collected results, it was found that grammar was the most improved aspect while speaking in English. Furthermore, as Putri, Setiyadi, & Sudirman (2018) state, board games can be a convenient and useful tool to improve students´ speaking skills. (Putri, Setiyadi, & Sudirman, 2018)

In the same way, Susanti, & Trisnawati, (2019) designated a study to prove the students´ ability to acquire English basic grammar by using board games. To do so, the study

participants were divided into two cycles, and the study data were collected using the quantitative and qualitative methods. Each cycle had two meetings in which different board games were used depending on the grammar contents that were needed to practice. The results showed that cycle 1 had a good improvement in the first post-test after the first meeting with a score of 69 and, with the second meeting and post-test, increased the score to 76. Also, students' attitude towards the English language was positive, and they enjoyed practicing grammar through board games. Concerning the second cycle, at the end of the first meeting, the post-test score was 79, and after the second meeting, the post-test score increased to 84. (actively. (Susanti & Trisnawati, 2019)

To sum up, games have been proved to be significantly more effective than the classic multiple-choice questions, hard copy texts, and lists of words. This language acquiring technique enables the improvement of different domains of a language, from vocabulary and grammar structures to speaking and comprehension.

2. METHODOLOGY

In this part of the project, to achieve the selected objectives for this final degree project, the chosen methodology is explained. Firstly, there is the aim of the research, as well as the research questions. Then, there are the characteristics of the school when explaining the case study, and finally, there is an analysis of the data collection procedure.

2.1. Aim of the research and the research questions

This case study research aims to look for games used as second language learning materials in a particular elementary school to analyze them depending on the variables. Bearing in mind the aim of the case study, this final degree project study is based on the following research questions:

RQ 1: Are there different game-types and game-aims in this concrete Elementary school in Leioa (Bizkaia)?

RQ 2: Are there differences in the presence of language teaching games depending on the course? Do different school levels have different didactic aims?

RQ 3: Is the presence of games limited to English classes, or are they also used in subjects in which English is worked crosswise?

2.2. The case study

The subject of this case study is English language gaming materials in a specific catholic school in Leioa (Bizkaia). This Elementary school has three classes in each academic year, adding 18 classes in total. Each class has approximately 26-27 students, which means there are 486 students in total. Furthermore, this school gives importance to Trilingualism (Spanish, Basque, and English). 2 out of 3 classes per school year are taught in these three languages. The third class in each school year teaches English just as a subject and not as a transversal content.

This case study was chosen to be done in this school because of the number of English hours per week (11-12 hours) that these children have in their academic years. To carry out this investigation, a permit was obtained from the school, who notified of the objective of the investigation.

2.3. The data collection procedure tool

To respond to the research questions stated above and taking into consideration, it is an observatory-based research; the following data collection tool has been created. This tool classifies the types of games that can be found in the school, considering the theories expounded in the theoretical framework. These games have been found on textbooks, apps in students´ iPads, or on regular classrooms shelves. All elementary academic year students use the same publisher (Oxford) in their English subject book called *Big Questions* and the same publisher called SM (mas savia) collaborating with the University of Dayton, for social and natural science subjects. Students from the fourth school year have digital books on their iPad for the subjects mentioned above. Concerning teachers, their books include flashcards to learn English vocabulary as well as a digital and interactive app to project on the digital board. Also, the games that each classroom has on the shelves mostly belong to the school even though some belong to teachers.

Continuing with the data-collection, observation-based research has been accomplished. In other words, the gaming materials that this specific school provides are going to be classified and analyzed without taking part in those. To classify the games provided in this education center, this sample of the rubric below (see table 1) will be used and completed by doing a circle or underlining the appropriate option depending on the types

of games that are being analyzed. For example, game-based with the need of ICT; game-based with no ICT needed; game-enhanced with the need of ICT; and game-enhanced with no ICT needed. Once the classification is done, the school year mentioned in the bottom part of the table will be selected, as well as the contents that that school year has for each discipline (vocabulary, grammar, speaking, reading, listening, and writing). These contents will be written in a left side column located in each discipline (colored in different colors). Also, inside each discipline, a different classification is made depending on whether that game is being used in English as a subject class or in subjects where English is a transversal content. Lastly, there is a final category were games are classified into individual or teamwork-related games.

Table 1

Game-types classification tool

CLASSIFICATION OF GAMES											
GAME-BASED / GAME-ENHANCED											
ICT NEEDED / ICT NOT NEEDED											
VOCABULARY		GRAMMAR		SPEAKING		READING		LISTENING		WRITING	
ENG.	TRANS.	ENG.	TRANS.	ENG.	TRANS.	ENG.	TRANS.	ENG.	TRANS.	ENG.	TRANS
I* T*	I* T*	I* T*	I* T*	I* T*	I* T*	I* T*	I* T*	I* T*	I* T*	I* T*	I* T*
SCHOOL YEAR											

CONTENTS

I* INDIVIDUAL WORK
T* TEAMWORK

Then, the game that is being analyzed is taken, for example, the *Memory* cards game for first-year school students. This game will be classified in the game-based rubric that no ICT is needed. Afterward, the disciple that is going to be acquired is selected. In this case, vocabulary with the content of learning the names of the animals in the English as a subject class. If the game is played individually, the *Memory* cards game will be classified in the corresponding box. This same procedure will be done with the rest of the games that the school provides.

3. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS´ DISCUSSION

In this part of the project, the collected information is presented. This information has been obtained by making use of the data collection tool explained above. To present this information, the three research questions mentioned above will be adopted.

Are there different game-types and game-aims in this concrete Elementary school in Leioa (Bizkaia)?

Before analyzing the results, it is necessary to mention that these games are being analyzed according to their existence in the school and not according to their use. Consequently, bearing in mind the possible existence of the four types of games (game-based with the need of ICT; game-based with no ICT needed; game-enhanced with the need of ICT; and game-enhanced with no ICT needed), a notable difference on their amount has been obtained (see figure 1). Also, when collecting the results in this figure, no school year difference has been made to just focus on the different game-types.

Firstly, the total number of game-based with ICT needed is 4 (8,5%). These are the games that this specific school provides: *The memory game, Daisy the dinosaur, hangman,* and *Scrabble (*language learning adapted)*.* All these games are played by using a personal iPad as they are played individually. Secondly, according to game-based, with no ICT needed type of game, the total amount that this school contains is 32 (68%). These are some examples that this elementary school has: *the memory* game *(*using cards*), vocabulary related dominoes, the Simon says* game*, crosswords, word search, word wheels, and* individual and group games taken from students´ textbooks*.* These last types of games refer to the games that can be found in the last pages of almost every unit of the English textbooks *(Big Questions English book)*. Besides these games, the rest of the games are commonly distributed by the teachers. Continuing with the results, there is no evidence of the existence of game-enhanced with ICT needed type of game (0%). Finally, game-enhanced with no need of ICT type of game added 11 in total (23,5%). This number includes *Bingo, deck of cards, Legos, Who is it?, Family cards* game*, Storycubes, Hedbanz, Gestures, Battleship, Trivial,* and *Scrabble.*
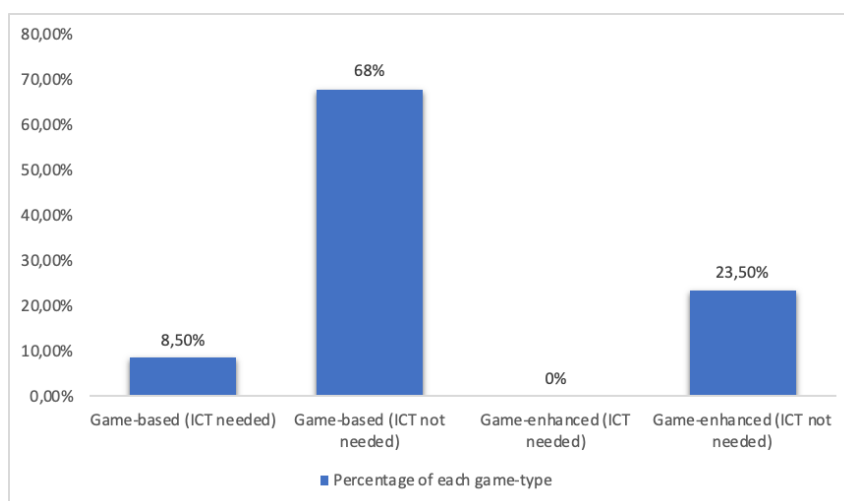
Figure 1: Classification of different game-types using percentages

Bearing in mind the obtained results about game-types, a notable difference can be seen concerning the researched investigations explained in the theoretical framework. Zhonggen (2018), and Karagiorgas & Niemann (2017) independently investigated the effectiveness of using ICT-need game-enhanced practices. Both agreed on the effectiveness of online interactivity. Their investigations assured how students who had online interactions improved different domains of the foreign language, such as in grammar, vocabulary, and speaking. However, if we observe figure 1, despite their verified benefits, the non-existence of ICT-need game-enhanced games can be seen in this elementary school.

Continuing with the aim of the games, different domains of the language have been used to collect data. Domains of the language refer to different knowledge areas that, in this case, are vocabulary, grammar, speaking, reading, listening, and writing have been used as relevant focal points. These results confirm the aim of using games in this elementary school (see figure 2). The 100% of the games (n=47), both game-based and game-enhanced, have the goal of acquiring vocabulary. 57% of the games (n=27) have the aim of improving grammar

and the 59,5% of the games (n=28) to work on speaking. Also, a 63,8% of the games (n=30) have the objective of practicing listening. However, 4,25% of the games (n=2) are used to improve writing and reading.

According to these results, the clear focus of this elementary school when using games is vocabulary. However, researches such as Susanti, & Trisnawati (2019) worked on a study in which speaking was the aim of using the gaming technique. Other investigators, such as Putri, Setiyadi, & Sudirman (2018), worked on studying the improvements that students had when using games. They concluded their research stating that grammar was the English domain that students improved the most. Nevertheless, in this same study, students improved their vocabulary skills from 16 to 18.95 out of 25 points. According to vocabulary improvements, Gozcu & Caganaga (2016) studied a case in which students acquired English vocabulary by playing the *Twister* game without using any written source. These authors explained how learning vocabulary by looking and remembering is not an adequate way of acquiring EFL because words should never be seen as an independent issue without its context. Bearing in mind this last investigation in which it is proven how games can be an effective technique to improve vocabulary, it can be assured how this concrete Elementary school supports this same idea (see figure 2).
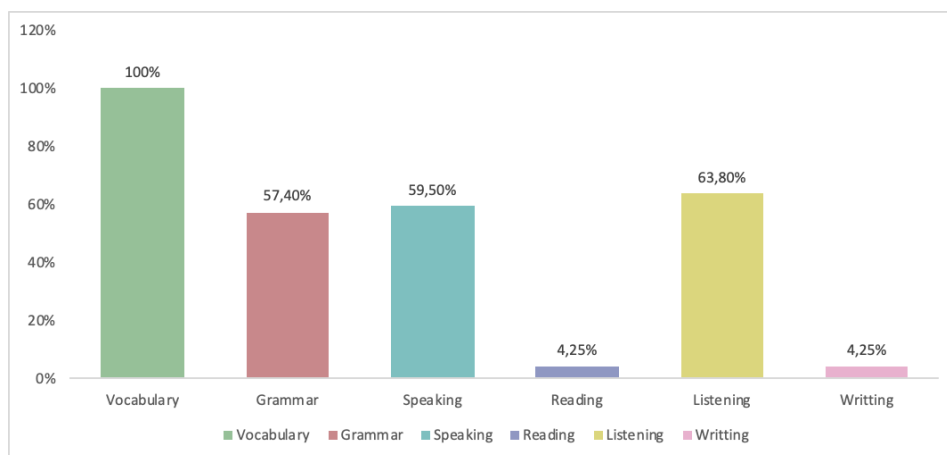

Figure 2: Classification of game-aims without considering different academic years

To make a more in-depth game-types data collection, games in the books and games in the classroom have been analyzed. Textbooks provide the 45% of the games in this Elementary school (n=21), and on the contrary, the 55% of the games (n=26) are games that can be found in the classroom.

About the aims that games in textbooks and games in the classroom have, a notable difference has also been observed. Following the results of games in the textbooks, 100% of the games (n=21) are used to work on vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and listening. Nevertheless, no textbook games have the aim of working on reading comprehension or writing expression. They aim to review the new content learned in almost each book unit. Also, they are mostly used as listening and speaking activities with vocabulary and grammar contents review (see annex 1). Contrarily, according to the obtained results of games in the classroom, the 100% of the games (n=22) are used to improve vocabulary, the 27% of the games (n=6) have the aim of improving grammar, the 32% of the games (n=7) have the objective of improving speaking, the 36% of the games (n=8) have the goal of working on listening and the 9% of the games (n=2) are used to improve reading and writing.

Consequently, after obtaining this information, a clear difference in game-aims can be appreciated between games in the books and games in the classroom. Games in the classroom work on all of the different language domains; games in textbooks, on the contrary, just work on four disciplines. However, both game-types focus on vocabulary as their prime objective (see table 2).

Table 2:

Classification of the analyzed games

	Vocabulary	Grammar	Speaking	Reading	Listening	Writing
	Memory (iPad)					
	Daisy Dino.					
1-2 school years	Memory (cards)					
	Domino					
	Vocabulary game					
	Simon says					
	Games in the book	Games in the book	Games in the book		Games in the book	
	"Burro" (cards)					
	Bingo					
3-4 school years	Hangman (iPad)					
	Word wheel					
	Crossword					
	Word search					
	Vocabulary game					
	Simon says				Simon says	
	Games in the book	Games in the book	Games in the book		Games in the book	
	Legos	Legos	Legos	Legos	Legos	
	Who is it?	Who is it?	Who is it?		Who is it?	
	Family cards	Family cards	Family cards		Family cards	
	Story cubes	Story cubes	Story cubes		Story cubes	
5-6 school years	Scrabble (iPad)					
	Word Wheel					
	Starts with letter…					Starts with letter…
	Hedbanz	Hedbanz	Hedbanz		Hedbanz	
	Gestures		Gestures		Gestures	
	Battleship		Battleship		Battleship	
	Trivial	Trivial		Trivial		
	Scrabble					Scrabble

If we take a more in-depth look at the aims of games that require ICT and games that do not need ICT, a clear difference can be observed (see figure 3). According to the results of ICT not needed games, 100% of the games (n=43) are used to acquire vocabulary; 62% of the games (n=27) have the aim of improving grammar and the 65% of the games (n=28) to work on speaking. Also, 70% of the games (n=30) are used to improve listening. However, the %5 of the games (n=2) have the objective of improving reading and the %7 of the games (n=3) to work on writing. On the contrary, according to the achieved results of ICT needed games, 100% of the games (n=4) have the aim of improving vocabulary, and the 25% of the games (n=1) have the goal of working on writing. However, there is no evidence of ICT needed games that are used to acquire grammar, speaking, reading, and listening (n=0). After collecting this information, the only purpose-related link that these two game-types have in common is to improve vocabulary (see table 2). Moreover, not many ICT needed games (game-based or game-enhanced) are provided in this Elementary school. As a result, as Kayımbaşıoğlu, Oktekin, & Hacı (2016) explain, benefits such as individualized learning, interactive learning, and independent learning cannot happen.
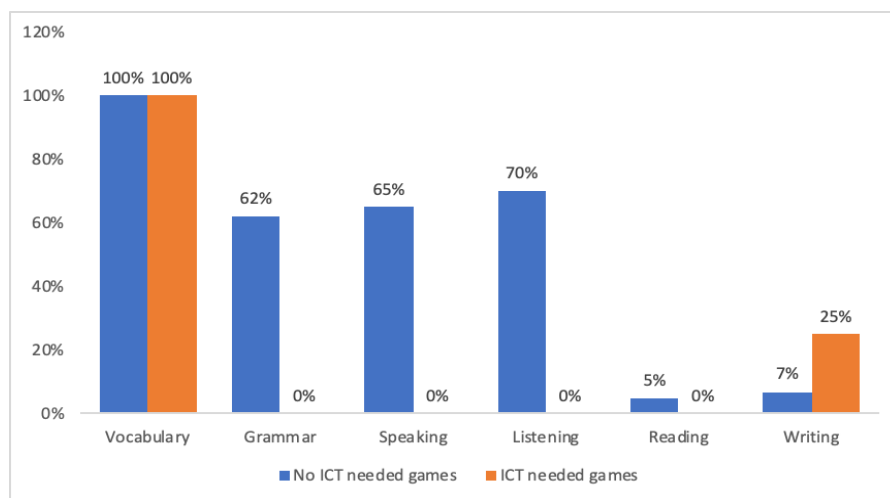

Figure 3: Aims that games that require ICT and games that do not need ICT have

Are there differences in the presence of language teaching games depending on the course? Do different school levels have different didactic aims?

To analyze the number of games that each school year is provided with, figure 4 has been created. It is relevant to mention that the classification of the figure has been done

separating the academic years into three groups (1-2; 3-4; 5-6). The rationale behind this division is the distribution in which teachers share the English language learning gaming materials. If we take an in-depth look to figure 4, a notable difference can be seen in the number of games the school provides for students from different school years. First and second school year students have a total amount of 20 games, third and fourth school year students have 19 games, and fifth and sixth school year students have a total of 8 games.
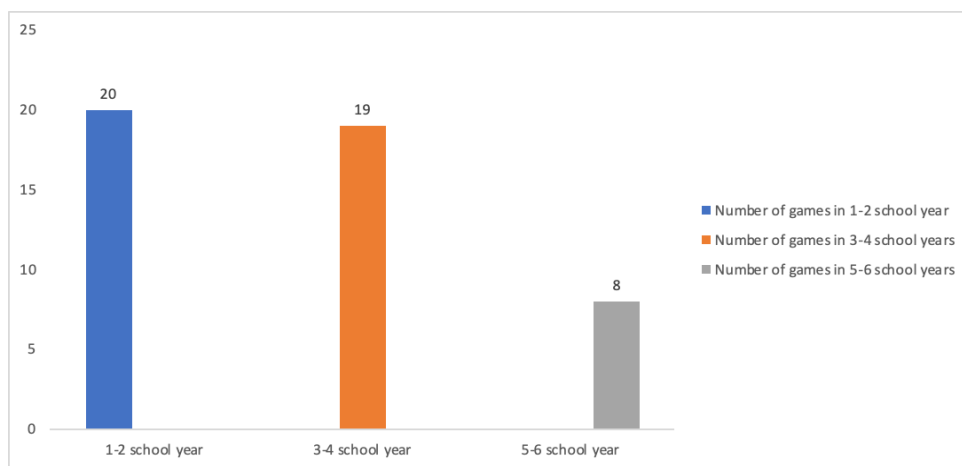

Figure 4: Total number of games provided for each academic year

Bearing in mind the amount of games that are provided for each school year, notable differences can be seen concerning the educational aims these games have (see figure 5). First and second school years are provided with 20 games that can be used to improve vocabulary (100%), 12 games can be used to improve grammar structures, and speaking skills (%60), and 13 for listening (65%). On the contrary, no games are presented to work on reading and writing (%0). It might seem surprising that these two language domains stated above (reading and writing) have no presence when gaming. However, it is essential to mention that the first and second school year students learn how to read and write in Basque and Spanish while leaving English a bit behind in these two educational aims. Then, third and fourth school-years have a total of 19 games to develop vocabulary (100%), 13 games to develop grammar structure, and speaking skills (68%), only one game to improve reading (5%), 14 games to work on listening skills (73%). Lastly, no games are presented to improve writing abilities (0%). To finish with, fifth and sixth school years, have games that can be used to improve all domains of English language: 8 can be used acquire vocabulary (100%), two games

to develop grammar skills (25%), three games to apply speaking abilities (37%), one game to work on reading (12%), three games to improve listening skills (37%), and last but not least, three games that can be used to improve students' writing (37%).
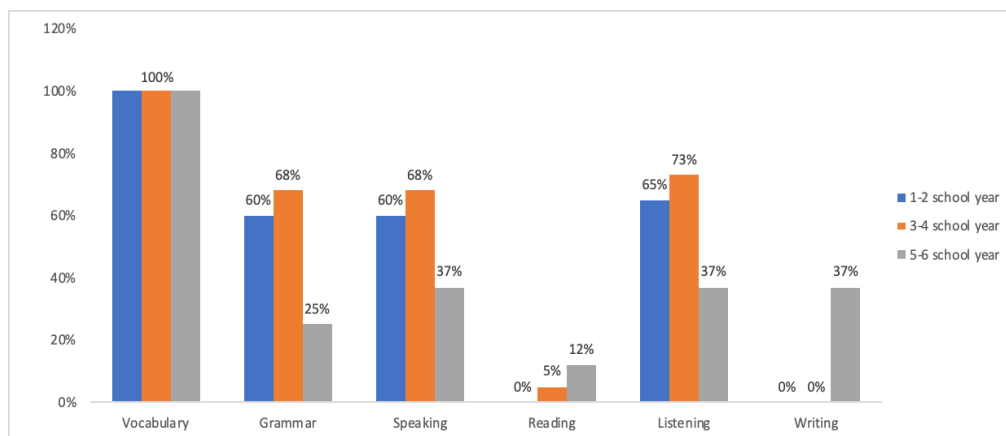

Figure 5: Exhibition of the percentages of games that are used to achieve different didactic aims

The results show that even if the number of games the school provides decreases while students get older, the number of language domains they need to use increases. A high number of games that 5-6 school-years students can use are enhanced-games, which means that as Reinhardt (2018) explains, there are practices that involve the use of regular or vernacular games that their main goal is not to teach a language. Accordingly, fifth and sixth school-years students will have a bigger facility at being immersed in the English language and acquire it too. These vernacular games also require the use of more language abilities, and thus, the difficulty of playing those games also increases. However, even though games are useful no matter the age of the learner, English textbooks (*Big Questions*) do not reflect that. A clear evolution can be seen if we analyze the games that these English textbooks provide for each academic year. As students get older and consequently improve their English language skills, fewer games are provided in their *Big Questions* called book. Nevertheless, first and second school year students are provided with a different game each unit, which in most of the cases has the didactic aim of reviewing: vocabulary, grammar structures, speaking, and listening. The different didactic aims that games have in this concrete Elementary school can be better appreciated in Table 2.

Is the presence of games limited to English classes, or are they also used in subjects in which English is worked crosswise?

If we take an in-depth look at the first and second academic years (see figure 6), a clear difference in the number of games used in the English class and transversal classes can be seen. Regarding games used in transversal classes, it is just 25% of the total amount of games. Among these games, there are the *Memory* and *Daisy the Dinosaur* games, in which iPads are needed. First and second school years, students do not have individual iPads; that is why a subject called "computers" is used to play these games. Also, games such as *Memory* (with cards), *Domino* (word and picture), and *Simon says* are used in social or natural science subjects with the aim of learning vocabulary. Continuing with third and fourth academic years, a clear difference can be seen concerning the number of games used for the English class and transversal classes. As for games used in transversal classes, it is only a 16% out of the total number of games. Inside this 16%, we find games such as *Hangman* game (using the iPads in the "Computers" called subject), *Simon says* game (social science or natural science classes to learn vocabulary), and *Legos* (social science class to build a sustainable city in small groups). Lastly, the fifth and sixth school years have no games to use in transversal classes. That is why the total amount of games (100%) is used in English as a subject class.
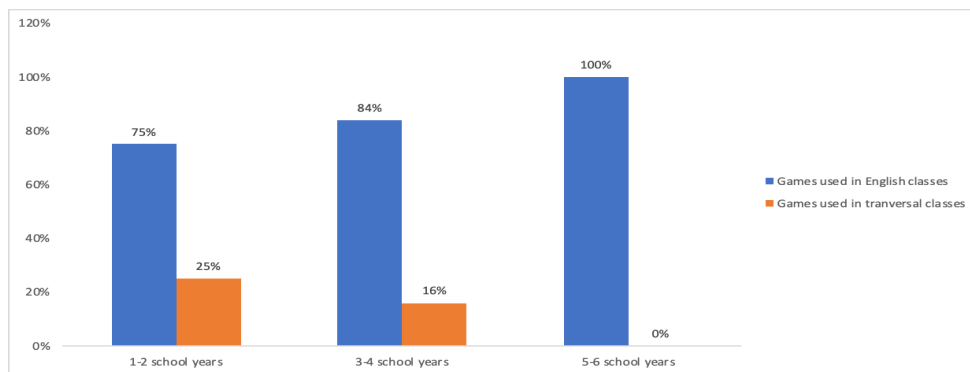

Figure 6: Classification of games in English, and transversal classes depending on the academic years

In conclusion, notable differences can be seen from one school year to another. First and Second-year students are the ones who have the most significant opportunity to use games in transversal classes as a higher amount of them is provided. On the contrary, fifth and sixth school years, even though their English level is higher, there are no games for them

in transversal classes.

Bearing in mind, the results explained above, leads us to believe that this Elementary school does not consider beneficial the use of games in fifth and sixth school years. Nevertheless, motivation is one of the most excellent general benefits teachers would be provided from when teaching through gaming. As Squire (2011) explains, motivation creates an engaging and curious feeling that teachers should always have it as a focal point to awaken students´ intellectual curiosity. Moreover, the use of games creates social interactions among kids while learning new English content.

About the specific benefits mentioned in the theoretical framework, students´ English language acquisition is searched for when using the gaming technique. As Haynes & Zacarian (2010) state, acquiring a language is meant to be an unconscious process while learning a second language is a conscious one. What is more, the acquisition of a language is responsible for fluency in that second language, and in many cases, students are not conscious of what they have precisely acquired (Krashen, 1981). This being the case and following the ideas explained by these authors, the higher the number of games used, the better English fluency students will have. If we take into consideration this last idea and see figure 4, we believe that fifth and sixth school-year students might not benefit from games to improve their fluency.

To finish with, the main aim of using games in transversal lessons is to work on acquiring the language. As Genesee (1994) explains, the focal point of using the second or foreign language to learn new content is to focus on communication among students and teachers instead of focusing on grammatical perfection. What is more, according to Krashen (1984), when students are immersed and acquiring a second language, they are generally not aware of being acquiring a language. That "feel" for the language in which students often cannot describe or explain the rules of what they have acquired is what it is searched for when teaching social or natural science in English. Therefore, the foreign language in this concrete Elementary school is used during crosswise subjects just on 1-2 and 3-4 academic years.

Consequently, while students are in these school years, they will be more quickly immersed in the language and acquire a foreign language. Nevertheless, even though last year's students (5-6 academic years) have received crosswise English subjects during their previous school years, no evidence can be observed for the last academic years. Therefore,

the non-use of English transversal subjects for 5-6 school years might impact the immersion process students can experience. Moreover, consequently, 5-6 academic years students may have a lower foreign language acquisition during the last years of Elementary education.

4.CONCLUSIONS

To conclude with this observatory-based research, the gaming materials that this specific Elementary school in Leioa (Bizkaia) provides have been collected and analyzed depending on different variables: game-types, game-aims, game-aims according to different school-years, and games in which English is worked crosswise. Bearing this in mind, several conclusions have been reached according to the previously mentioned objective.

Concerning game-types and game-aims, the highest number of games that this Elementary school provides are ICT not needed game-based practices. That is, games that have been created to teach a language (English, in this case). As it can be seen,all the games have the aim of acquiring vocabulary. However, many of them are played in groups, which leads to the idea of practicing speaking and listening while reviewing the vocabulary contents learned in a specific book unit. On the other hand, no ICT needed enhanced games have been found, even though researchers such as Zhonggen (2018), and Karagiorgas & Niemann (2017) independently stated that one of the most effective ways of acquiring a language was by having online interactive practices and being immersed in a language.

Continuing with the idea about the availability of game-types, and game-aims depending on students' schoolyears, notable differences have been observed. As students get older, the availability of games that they have decreased, but the number of vernacular games increases. Vernacular games refer to games that have not been created with a language didactic purpose. Consequently, these types of games require a greater use of the language and, thus, a higher use of different domains of the language or educational aims. Moreover, as Susanti, & Trisnawati, (2019) explain, games have been proved to be a more practical than classic language teaching. This way of acquiring a language enables the improvement of different domains of a language, from vocabulary and grammar structures to speaking and comprehension.

Concerning the availability of games that students can use in transversal classes, it has been observed that younger school years are provided with more games than older schoolyears. Nevertheless, according to Haynes & Zacarian (2010) and Krashen (1981), the higher availability of games, the better immersion will students experience, and thus, the

better foreign language acquisition they will achieve.

 Last but not least, even though this research had the objective of doing an observatory-based research and analyzing and collecting information about the provided games to acquire the foreign language in a specific Elementary school, no teaching effectiveness evidence has been collected. Consequently, further investigations and researches would be interesting to make to prove the effectiveness of using the gaming technique to acquire a second or foreign language. Apart from this further investigation stated above, it would also be interesting if the same type of observatory-based research was made in a school where English has not as much importance as in this one. In this way, a comparison between the gaming materials that different Elementary schools have would be able to accomplish.

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