

**GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND  
INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM**

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*“Learning and innovation go hand in hand. The arrogance of success is to think that what you did yesterday, will be sufficient for tomorrow.”*

*William Pollard*

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<b>2. Descripción</b>	
<p>El presente trabajo de grado da cuenta de una investigación acción participativa en un aula de quinto grado del IED Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, sede B en la ciudad de Bogotá. Este proyecto se basó en la promoción de la participación y motivación de los estudiantes mediante el uso de la estrategia de gamificación en el aula con el fin de mejorar su interacción durante la clase de inglés como lengua extranjera. Lo anterior, dado que el diagnóstico reveló que la principal dificultad de los estudiantes era comunicarse usando la lengua extranjera. Como conclusión, se determinó que, mediante la estrategia de gamificación, los estudiantes encontraron una buena fuente de motivación para desarrollar sus habilidades de interacción en clase a través de las actividades planteadas que les permitieron acercarse a un uso real de la lengua conociendo su entorno y comunicando sus propias ideas.</p>	

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#### 4. Contenidos

Este trabajo de grado comprende seis capítulos los cuales presentan el desarrollo de una investigación acción basada en el paradigma cualitativo desde la contextualización e identificación del problema, hasta los resultados obtenidos de la intervención pedagógica llevada a cabo.

El primer capítulo presenta la introducción, la cual comprende el contexto institucional y local, la caracterización de los participantes, la descripción del problema, la justificación del proyecto y la

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pregunta y los objetivos de investigación que delimitan el estudio. El segundo apartado incluye el estado del arte y el marco teórico que fundamentan y soportan los conceptos previamente mencionados en la pregunta de investigación.

A continuación, el tercer capítulo especifica la metodología que posibilitó el desarrollo del proyecto a través de un paradigma de investigación cualitativo y el tipo de investigación acción. Además, este capítulo incluye los instrumentos y procedimientos de recolección de datos. Por su parte, el capítulo cuatro refiere las visiones de currículo, aula, aprendizaje y lengua de la investigadora y expone la propuesta de intervención pedagógica que fue diseñada e implementada teniendo en cuenta el problema, la pregunta de investigación y los objetivos ya planteados.

Por último, el capítulo cinco contiene el análisis de resultados que emergió del proceso de codificación y categorización de la información obtenida a través de la aplicación de los instrumentos de recolección de datos, con el fin de responder a la pregunta de investigación. Finalmente, el apartado seis presenta las conclusiones, implicaciones, obstáculos y propuestas para posibles investigaciones futuras.

## 5. Metodología

Este proyecto se llevó a cabo bajo los lineamientos del paradigma de investigación cualitativa y la investigación acción, los cuales guiaron el diseño de la metodología, los instrumentos de recolección de datos y el subsecuente análisis de éstos. Los instrumentos utilizados fueron una entrevista a la docente titular, dos encuestas a los estudiantes durante la intervención pedagógica, trabajos elaborados en clase, diarios de campo y grabaciones de audio de algunas interacciones registradas en clase. A partir de la información obtenida, los datos fueron agrupados y codificados para encontrar similitudes y diferencias a la luz de la teoría fundamentada, que permitió la categorización y obtención de resultados y conclusiones provenientes de la implementación de la propuesta pedagógica planteada.

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## 6. Conclusiones

La realización de esta investigación permitió dilucidar las siguientes conclusiones en relación al uso de la gamificación como estrategia pedagógica en el fortalecimiento de un entorno llamativo y agradable con el fin de mejorar la interacción en el aula de quinto grado del IED Domingo Faustino Sarmiento:

- La gamificación tuvo un impacto positivo en la actitud, participación, motivación y desempeño de los estudiantes en la clase de inglés, como lengua extranjera.
- Las mecánicas y principios de juego contribuyeron a crear un ambiente centrado en la interacción estudiante-estudiante, la cual aumentó gradualmente y permitió el desarrollo de las habilidades de los estudiantes.
- La gamificación posibilitó la construcción de un ambiente propicio para el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera, en el cual los estudiantes tuvieron la oportunidad de monitorear su propio proceso de aprendizaje siendo conscientes de sus debilidades y fortalezas y descubriendo poco a poco qué hacer para mejorarlas.
- La interacción entre los estudiantes aumentó gradualmente evidenciando una mejora, no sólo en sus habilidades comunicativas, sino también en su autoconfianza y fluidez al hablar.
- La construcción de un entorno de aprendizaje llamativo y centrado en los intereses de los estudiantes es clave en el mejoramiento de sus habilidades en lengua extranjera.

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative action research study aimed to determine the impact of using gamification, as a pedagogical strategy in fostering engagement with the purpose of improving interaction at, IED Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in an EFL classroom of fourth graders between the ages of 8 and 11 years old. To this effect, data collection instruments used were interviews, field notes, surveys, and recordings; these were applied for ensuring the reliability and validity of data triangulation. Moreover, the methodology selected was the grounded approach through which categories of analysis were established to understand and explain the problem found in the field. Findings revealed that gamification had a positive impact on students' agentic, behavioral, and emotional engagement which influenced significantly learners' attitude and performance towards interaction. Moreover, data showed that interaction improved notoriously throughout the implementation of game mechanics, game principles, and activities which were intended to increase learner-learner and learner-group interaction with a communicative focus.

**Key Words:** Gamification, game principles, game mechanics, engagement, interaction, communication.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **Local and institutional context**

This research study took place at IED Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. The school offers the levels of elementary, high school, and technical education to 11<sup>th</sup> graders in the accounting and recreation areas during the morning and afternoon shifts. The institution has four branches; nevertheless, this project was held at branch B, located at 91A Street # 60 – 01 which belongs to the Rionegro neighborhood and to the Barrios Unidos locality, on the northwest of Bogotá. This neighborhood is characterized by being a residential area with small industries; however, it is composed also of several parks, recreational areas, and cultural centers.

This school was founded in 1969 in the Bejamín Herrera neighborhood with the name “Colegio Experimental Benjamín Herrera”, but three years later, it was moved to Rionegro neighborhood and it was renamed as “Colegio Distrital Domingo Faustino Sarmiento” honoring a famous Argentinian pedagogue. The institution began the accounting technical education in 1987 while the recreation program started in 2014; therefore, nowadays, the school offers the two possibilities of technical education to its students.

In relation to the PEI “Calidad educativa para la formación integral y laboral”, the school aims to develop the different domains of students, to turn them into citizens capable of transforming the Colombian society based on values such as respect, dignity, love, and peace. Moreover, the school pursues an integral and multidimensional development for its students by working in all their dimensions: cognitive, socio-affective, psycho-creative, sexual, personal, and occupational (IED Domingo Faustino Sarmiento). For this reason, it is evident that they pursuit

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not only academic success, but also the optimal development of their students by promoting the development of their affective and emotional domains.

Furthermore, the institutional mission and vision are centered on educating students with a human and professional quality, who are guided by principles, values, and scientific knowledge and who are able to accept diversity. For this reason, the pedagogical model followed by the institution is Social Constructivism, which emphasizes on the collaborative nature of learning and social interaction as key elements in the educational process. Because of this, language is conceived as the most important mediator of interaction, between students; its relevance is not only on the right use of the mother tongue as a tool for learning and interacting, but also on acquiring a foreign language, as a necessary instrument for nowadays communication. For this purpose, the institution has implemented immersion classes to approach children to English during extra class time.

### **Participants**

The students who participated in this project belonged to grade 402-502, which was composed of 30 students between the ages of 8 and 11 years old. Among them, there were three students with special needs (Down syndrome and Cognitive deficit), and two students who came from social foundations. Due to these characteristics of the participants, educational inclusion played an essential role in the development of classes and in the construction of interpersonal relationships among students. Regarding EFL lessons, these students had three English class sessions a week; each one lasted 45 minutes. However, some of the children took one more hour of class because they belonged to the immersion classes after curricular hours at school.

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## Problem Statement

Considering the diagnosis made based on the data collection instruments and procedures applied (teacher's interview, students' survey, and observations made in field) during the first stage of the research, it was possible to evidence that due to the lack of an involving, engaging, and motivating environment during EFL classes, the strongest difficulty of students was that they were not able to interact spontaneously among them by communicating their own ideas using EFL. These learners must be reaching the A2 level of language proficiency according to the *Guía de Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lengua Extranjera*. Hence, students should be prepared to participate in short conversations using sentences with predictable structures and to talk about issues related to their environment (MEN, 2006). However, even though students could create short sentences with simple structures, they hardly put them into practice orally by using them in conversations, because this kind of activities which demand interaction between student-teacher and student-student, were not fostered in their EFL classes.

Therefore, interaction should be enhanced to allow learners to communicate by using the foreign language and to be proficient users of it in concordance to the level they should have for being fourth graders, as stated in the Estándares Básicos, published by the Ministry of Education. Taking into account communication as a key element of the learning process, being a proficient user of the language implies to manage abilities of reception, interaction, and production (Council of Europe, 2011); as well as developing the necessary abilities to comprehend, understand, and express meaning in order to be able to communicate a message.

Bearing these aspects in mind, this problem seemed to be caused by two main factors: lack of interaction to allow communication among students using EFL, and lack of strategies

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which promote involvement by giving special attention to engagement. In relation to the first factor, interaction between peers was limited and it was not fostered during class time; as a result, students had their strongest difficulties in expressing and communicating their own ideas. This could have been caused due to the vision of EFL as an isolated set of grammatical structures, which are not put into practice in a communicative way and as part of real-life situations. In this way, most of the time students worked individually and they did not even use EFL to participate in class. In view of this, it was necessary to pursue the objective of allowing students to use the foreign language in a realistic context, which implied reaching communication and interaction as the main objectives of their learning processes.

The second aspect was related to the repetitive activities that students carried out in class, such as writing sentences and always using the same vocabulary which could result in a decline of engagement and involvement during EFL classes. As the Council of Europe suggests:

“Successful task performance is more likely where the learner is fully involved; a high level of intrinsic motivation to carry out the task – due to interest in the task or because of its perceived relevance, for example to real life needs or to the completion of another linked task (task interdependence) – will promote greater learner involvement; extrinsic motivation may also play a role, for example where there are external pressures to complete the task successfully (e.g. to earn praise or in order not to lose face, or for competitive reasons).” (2011, p. 161)

Because of this, learning a foreign language must be conceived as an experience to involve students in their active learning process by increasing their interest and motivation. This might be achieved by changing the perception of EFL only as a school subject which implies

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isolated grammar. Consequently, it is necessary to look for new strategies which allow students to have an approach to real life communication and its dynamics resulting in interaction.

### **Rationale of the Study**

It is universally acknowledged that the main purpose of communication is to generate an exchange between its participants. Thus, a language should allow human beings to express themselves, to be part of social interaction by establishing new relationships, and to have a major access to today's world through a wide approach to knowledge. Therefore, a language should not be thought just as a way to develop intrapersonal skills, but to allow interaction and communication between people all around the world by enhancing interpersonal skills as well. For this reason, it is vital to remark that the primary purpose of the great majority of learners interested in EFL is to communicate in the real world; in this aspect, interaction plays a central role in communication (Council of Europe, 2011).

Because of this, the EFL classroom should be conceived not as an isolated place where students learn and repeat grammatical structures and verbal tenses; but as a rich environment which allows the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and different kinds of messages between the diverse participants of the classroom and the educational community. To achieve this, it is indispensable to include interaction as one of the main objectives of the curriculum. For all of this to happen spontaneously, a fully- engaging and involving EFL environment should be conceived as a crucial element in the improvement of communication in the EFL classroom.

In order to achieve this goal, realistic communicative topics and situations should be included in EFL classes, to allow students to have an approach to daily life communication. For this, new strategies and activities which imply students' engagement considering their interest

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and needs, might be imperative in an EFL learning context. At this point, gamification becomes essential as a pedagogical strategy to allow students to have a new experience of language learning, through the use of game elements adapted to an educational context, and as a possibility to enhance real interaction in EFL.

### **Research Question**

- What is the impact of using Gamification as a pedagogical strategy in the strengthening of an engaging environment in order to improve interaction in an EFL classroom of fourth graders at IED Domingo Faustino Sarmiento?

### **Research Objectives**

**General objective:** To determine the impact of using gamification as a pedagogical strategy in the strengthening of an engaging environment in order to improve interaction in an EFL classroom of fourth graders at IED Domingo Faustino Sarmiento.

### **Specific objectives:**

- To identify the role of gamification in the strengthening of an engaging environment in an EFL context.
- To examine the impact of students' engagement on the enhancement of interaction in an EFL classroom.
- To identify the types of interaction and engagement which occur in an EFL class which implements gamification as a pedagogical strategy.

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In this way, the theoretical constructs which underpin this research study will be depicted in the next chapter, in order to provide support to the question and objectives formulated in this section as part of the diagnosis carried out throughout the first stage of the present study.

## **CHAPTER II**

In this chapter, the theoretical framework and the state of the art are presented by taking into account the three main constructs of this research. First of all, in the state of the art; some research studies were reviewed and consulted as a support from previous and relevant investigation carried out around the principal theoretical concepts of this project. Secondly, a general overview of each construct is presented: the first one is *Gamification* as a pedagogical strategy to enhance students' engagement in their learning process, the second one is *Interaction* understood as a fundamental condition for EFL learning, and the third construct is *Engagement* as a key element in the EFL classroom.

### **State of the Art**

This section presents the review of five research projects which study the influence of gamification in non-game contexts, the role of interaction in the EFL classroom, and the importance of engagement in the EFL learning process. Three of these research studies are international projects, one comes from a national university, and the last one is part of the Languages Department's database of Universidad Pedagógica Nacional.

Firstly, the article "How games and game elements facilitate learning and motivation: a literary review" by Christian Karl Grund (2015) examines different research projects to present the theoretical foundation of the influence of game elements in learning. The methodology used

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consists on the categorization of theory taking a neutral perspective. According to the research, there are six theories that have to do with the use of game elements and structures to enhance motivation in the learning process; three of them (flow theory of motivation, self-determination theory, and experiential learning theory) are the most mentioned in the reviewed articles. Thence, the author describes in detail these theories and emphasizes on the effect they have in gamification to facilitate learning and motivation. Finally, some theory-driven design guidelines for game-based learning are presented. Owing to this, the relevance of this research to my project is that it provided me with a wide variety of theory in relation to gamification and its theoretical background. It also presented enough references to enrich this research process.

Secondly, Christopher M. Garland (2015) conducted the research “Gamification and Implications for Second Language Education: A Meta-Analysis”, which is based on discovering what elements are important when using gamification in an educational situation and what the effect of gamification is in an educational setting. To solve these questions, the researcher carried out a deep literature review in order to obtain data for a meta-analysis to find the overall effects of gamification on learning a second language; some of them have to do with game design elements, age level, instructional medium, etc. Subsequently, the implications for second language acquisition are described by mentioning that even though there is not enough research in the field of gamification in second language acquisition, “evidence strongly suggests that gamification could have beneficial effects in the language classroom” (Garland, 2015. p. 65) when specific game elements and variables are considered. This research was significant for my study, as it revealed the relationship between gamification and educational settings, and most specifically the advantages it could have in an ESL setting; however, it also showed the possible

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negative effects which were taken into account in the building of the pedagogical proposal of this project.

Thirdly, the research “Authentic Oral Interaction in the EFL Class: What It Means, What It Does not” (2010) carried out by José David Herazo Rivera at the Universidad de Córdoba conceived interaction and oral communication as key elements which need to be included in EFL secondary school classrooms in Montería. For this purpose, the researcher worked with student-student and teacher-student interaction by applying four samples of oral communication exchanges using script-based dialogues between students and teacher-student IRF interaction. The results of this project claim that “both the script-based dialogue and the teacher-student IRF interaction have very little to offer in terms of EFL proficiency growth” (Herazo, 2010), because of the lack of spontaneity between the participants. In light of these results, the author suggests that the role of “relegating students to passive members of the language exchange” (Herazo, 2010) must be changed to provide them with opportunities to automatize their language. In view of this, the relevance of this research to my project was that the results brought up the question of what activities should be planned to allow the interaction to occur spontaneously and in what way should they be developed? This was an essential aspect in this research in which gamification played a central role.

Furthermore, the project “Gamification and gameful design for communicative skills” (2014) presented by Triana intended to determine the influence of implementing gamification on communicative skills of intermediate students at UPN’s Centro de Lenguas. Hence, the researcher established the categories of gamification, gameful design, and the development of communicative skills in a gameful environment. The research was carried out under the

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paradigm of qualitative research and the action-research type of study; additionally, the data collection instruments used included field notes, questionnaires, and artifacts. The results demonstrated that gamification was a successful strategy in terms motivation, engagement, and involvement to improve students' communicative skills in the EFL classroom. The relevance of this research to my project was that it contained an interesting variety of references to be reviewed and also that it showed the positive effects of gamification as a helpful tool in the foreign language learning process.

Lastly, the research "Multidimensional classroom engagement in EFL contexts" (2017) held by Ali Dinçer, Savas Yeşilyurt, and Hakan Demiröz aimed to extend the researchers' knowledge about language learners' classroom engagement taking into account the variables: course achievement, course absence, and motivational orientation to learn English. The participants of this research were 122 adult EFL learners from the faculty of education of a Turkish state university. Additionally, the authors included theory about engagement and its sub-dimensions, and the data collection instruments used were a self-report questionnaire, the attendance record, and a multi-dimensional classroom engagement scale. The findings showed that classroom engagement changed according to the achievement obtained in the last students' test, also according to the absence rate, and students with less motivational orientation to learn English were less engaged than others. With all this in mind, the significance of these results for my research was that they allowed me to discover some factors which influence students' engagement and how it would be reflected on their achievement in the foreign language class.

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## Theoretical Framework

The following paragraphs present the three constructs of this research based on a literature review under the light of theory. First of all, *Gamification* is considered as a meaningful pedagogical strategy in educational contexts. Secondly, *Interaction* is conceived as a vital element for EFL learning. Finally, the significance of an emotional factor such as *Engagement* is considered as essential in the EFL classroom.

### **Gamification: a pedagogical strategy in educational contexts.**

According to Kapp (2012) Gamification entails using game-based mechanics and game thinking to engage people, motivate action, promote learning, and solve problems in non-game contexts. These aspects mentioned by Kapp come originally from video games and are being increasingly applied today to non-virtual environments. In addition, the inclusion of game elements into other areas of life focuses on joining what make games too appealing and enjoyable to common daily life situations. Therefore, *Gamification* becomes into the craft of deriving all the fun and engaging elements found in games and applying them to real-world activities to make them delightful (Chou, 2013).

Moreover, *Gamification* is also being used to develop skills and change behaviors (Burke, 2014) due to its motivational power. This motivational factor represents one of the key elements of gamified environments because its success is really all about motivating players to achieve their goals; even the ones they may not even know they have (Burke, 2014). In this way, this strategy could be applied to diverse contexts by taking into account that it intends to engage

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people at a meaningful level in which they are able to maximize their own skills and be aware of their progress with a clear purpose.

However, specifically in the educational field, the need to ensure students' interest and participation has meant that game mechanics have become core teaching tools (Oxford Analytica, 2016). To this extent, *Gamification* is perceived in this project as a student-centered strategy which allows learners to be aware of their own learning processes by keeping engaged due to the fact that they live learning as an everyday involving experience. Likewise, it enhances students' engagement at school.

Gamifying an educational system leans on the insertion of some game principles, mechanics, and emotional features to teaching-learning practices. Regarding game principles, it is essential to know that all games share some fundamental characteristics: they have a clearly defined set of rules, a rapid feedback system, a well-established goal, and levels (Oxford Analytica, 2016). For this project, all these elements not only operate as the structure which regulates the gamified system; but also provide students with a well established set of rules and dynamics which gives them confidence about the way the gamified EFL classes work. *Table 1* shows the game principles that were used in this research.

<b>Game principles</b>	
<b>Rules</b>	The commands which guide the structure of a game and which allow players to know how to act and what to do in most of the cases. As Kapp (2013) stated: without rules, games would not exist.

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<b>Feedback System</b>	It allows the player to be conscious of the consequences of his/ her actions but without telling him /her how to fix them. It must be often instant to allow the student to be aware of his/her own process.
<b>Goal</b>	It is the main purpose or objective of the game, “the simple introduction of a goal adds purpose, focus, and measurable outcomes” (Kapp, 2013). Usually, there are several mini-goals to achieve before reaching the biggest one which means that the game is over.
<b>Levels</b>	This is the element which allows the participants to observe their progress, achieve mini-goals, and improve their skills progressively according to the abilities required in each one of the stages of the game.

*Table 1. Game principles of the research*

Furthermore, mechanical elements constitute the features which create an environment to stimulate learning, promote motivation, enhance engagement, and incentivize involvement; these include: reward structures, avatars, and leaderboards. *Table 2* presents these elements.

<b>Mechanical elements</b>	
<b>Reward structures</b>	These include points and badges as visible symbols of achievement which aim at triggering motivation for participants to keep interested and engaged in the game (Oxford Analytica, 2016).

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<b>Avatars</b>	They provide players with a customized representation of themselves designed with creativity and self-expression to build up a profile which includes achievements and progression of the participant.
<b>Leaderboards</b>	This element is a powerful motivator which consists on a list that shows the top scores and includes competition between participants. Although they could be motivational for the students at the top, those at the bottom could suffer loss of confidence (Oxford Analytica, 2016); that is why they should be used carefully.

*Table 2. Mechanical elements of gamification of the research*

*Gamification's* mechanical elements are of special importance because they work on the premise that we all have an innate desire to improve. Thus, reward structures become vital to add motivation to learning activities which allow students to work on mastering their skills by overcoming the challenges presented. In relation to this aspect, Burke (2014) affirms:

The rewards, such as points and badges, are the hallmarks of gamification. But how can badges and points motivate people? The simple answer is that they don't. It's what they mean that motivates people. In some cases, they mean progress toward reaching a seemingly impossible goal and, ultimately, the triumph of succeeding.

On the other hand, avatars become the players' or students' representation of themselves and their peers, and a leaderboard functions as the observable measure of avatars' progress which depicts social recognition. Thereby, both elements are useful to certify skills attainment and goals achievement and they are necessary to incorporate social recognition as a powerful motivator (Burke, 2014).

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Finally, there is a last key emotional element known as *Flow Theory of Motivation*, this is one of the theories behind *Gamification* of learning. Flow is defined as a mental state of full involvement, engagement, and focus on the task at hand (Oxford Analytica, 2016); for this reason, it is conceived as the ideal goal of designing gamified activities and environments. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that for students to achieve this mental state, there must be a balance between challenge and the skills required to accomplish the main goals of the game.

### **Interaction as an imperative factor in EFL learning.**

The role of *Interaction* has been considered as fundamental in language learning from the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky, who stated that children learn a language by watching others interacting until they finally reach their independence by developing their own ability to communicate and interact with others (1978). This means that learning a language is a social process which is carried out through the socialization of the child with his/her environment and his/her peers by concluding on successful communication. At this point, Vygotsky's *Zone of Proximal Development* plays a central role, because it implies the distance between a student's ability to perform a task under an adult's guidance and/or with peer collaboration and the student's ability to solve the problem independently (Vygotsky, 1978). For this reason, the *ZPD* becomes the fundamental zone where learners interact and communicate among them with the purpose of achieving learning.

In this respect, the concept of *Scaffolding* becomes crucial as it is "the dialogic process by which one speaker assists another in performing a function that he or she cannot perform alone" (Ellis, 2005, p. 180). In this way, *Scaffolding* is conceived in this study as a kind of interaction commonly held between the teacher and the student with the purpose of helping students to be

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able to interact spontaneously with their peers in an immediate future. For this reason, the most knowledgeable speaker will not always be the teacher, but also the student when interacting with his/her classmates.

As *Scaffolding* and *ZPD* occur in a parallel way, *Interaction* may always be taking place in an EFL classroom; consequently, learning occurs during *Interaction* held in the *ZPD*. Such affirmation leads us to the definition of *Interaction* built for this research: language development may also take place during *Interaction*, since “feedback which learners get from their teachers and peers drives them to test their hypotheses and refine their development knowledge of the language system” (Hedge quoted by Zhang, 2009). Because of this, *Interaction* among EFL learners makes possible the improvement of the different language skills, even though it focuses on oral production. This is evident as through interacting among peers, students should not be just speaking, but also listening and constructing grammar structures to produce short conversations by themselves.

Moreover, *Interaction* approaches learners to real life communicative events and situations; “in the era of communicative language teaching, interaction is, in fact, the heart of communication; it is what communication is all about” (Brown, 1994); because of this, *Interaction* has become one of the most fundamental elements in an EFL classroom by allowing students to be part of daily-life situations which imply communication. In fact, oral interaction in an EFL context can occur in different ways; these include: learner-teacher, learner-learner, and learner- group interaction (*See table 3*).

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<b>Types of Interaction in an EFL Context</b>	
<b>Learner-learner</b>	This is the main kind of interaction addressed in this research, as it allows the participants to be part of real-life situations by using the foreign language as their main means of communication. By interacting directly with a classmate every student approaches him/herself to the real use of English as a foreign language intended to allow verbal exchanges among its participants.
<b>Learner-group</b>	Learner-group interaction provides every student with the confidence necessary for being part of daily life communicative events. In this way, when a learner interacts not only with one classmate but with all of them at the same time by participating actively during class time and going in front of the whole group to speak loudly, he/she could acquire the security necessary to speak in the foreign language.
<b>Learner-teacher</b>	It is conceived as one of the most common kinds of oral interaction in an EFL context; however, its purpose should be to promote the previous two kinds of interaction by allowing students to be part of real communicative events. Also, learner-teacher interaction is part of the ZPD and scaffolding strategies functioning as a tutoring and guiding opportunity for both participants.

***Table 3. Types of interaction included in the research***

However, it is essential to mention one of the most renowned effects of *Interaction*, which is included in the learner-learner kind: *Negotiation of Meaning*. It is about verbal exchanges that occur when speakers try to prevent the breakdown of the communicative event (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005). Nonetheless, this *Negotiation of Meaning* should be addressed as a

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goal to achieve during the whole process of EFL learning, and not as an immediate result of isolated activities. Additionally, negotiation of meaning should result because of the implementation of activities which promote learners' self-interest on interaction, as a meaningful strategy to communicate by using the foreign language.

### **Engagement as an influential factor in EFL learning.**

*Engagement* refers to the quality of a learner's connection or involvement with the endeavor of learning (Mohseni & Rahmanpanah, 2017). Therefore, it becomes an influential learning factor because of its importance in students' involvement in foreign language acquisition. *Engagement* has to do especially with behavioral and emotional aspects which depict the extent to which learners indicate on-task attention, effort, persistence, interest, enthusiasm, and enjoyment (Skinner, Kinderman, & Furrer, 2009); thus, it represents a meaningful element for students to achieve learning in a catching and appealing way which provides them not only with learning, but also with delight at the same time.

Additionally, for a student to be fully engaged, there are key elements which should motivate him/her such as the environment, strategies, activities, and the context which surrounds him/her when learning. Thus, "meaningful student involvement throughout the learning environment" (Martin & Torres, 2016, p. 1) should be part of an engaging EFL learning context. As a result, learners will be caught up into a meaningful environment where not only the development of their skills will be promoted, but also their interests will be taken into account to achieve their goals. As Goleman (1995) states "an engaged learner is absorbed in what he is doing as if his awareness is merged with his actions."

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Thereby, *Engagement* is understood in this research as a multidimensional construct associated with student achievement, positive behaviors, enjoyment, and interest; which is also a determining factor in the process of learning a foreign language. It includes four sub-dimensions: behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic (Dinçer, Yeşilyurt & Demiröz, 2017) from which only three will be included in this project, due to their relationship with the two constructs presented previously (*See Table 4*).

<b>Engagement sub-dimensions</b>	
<b>Behavioral</b>	It is related to putting effort, attention, and concentration on developing a specific task and keeping high persistence to achieve goals. (Reeve, 2012).
<b>Emotional</b>	It has to do with the presence of task-facilitating emotions around a learning activity such as: interest, curiosity, enthusiasm, effort, attention, etc. (Reeve, 2012).
<b>Agentic</b>	It refers to the proactive, intentional, and constructive contribution into the flow of the learning activity; this means enriching the learning activity, rather than passively receiving it as a given. (e.g., offering input, making suggestions, participating actively). (Reeve, 2012).

***Table 4. Engagement sub-dimensions of the research***

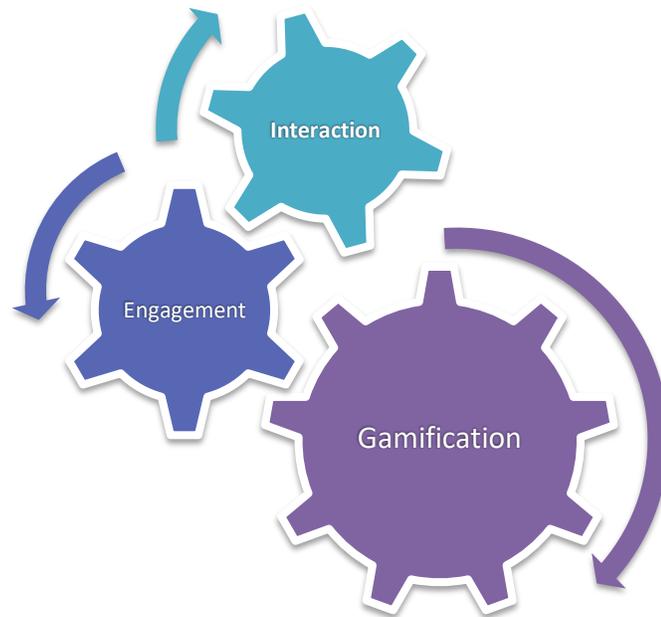
Finally, it is also essential to mention the interrelation between *Engagement* and *Motivation*. Although these two concepts are deeply related to each other and could cause confusion, the main distinction is that while *Engagement* refers to the extent of a student's active involvement in a learning activity, *Motivation* refers to any force that energizes and directs behavior (Reeve, 2009). The key aspect is that "motivation is a private, unobservable

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psychological, neural, and biological process that serves as an antecedent cause to the publicly observable behavior that is engagement” (Reeve, 2009, p. 151). Hence, *Motivation* is not an observable behavior while *Engagement* is.

Nevertheless, some *Motivation* elements such as *Mastery*, proposed by Daniel Pink, are observable behaviors which were also included in this research. *Mastery* is defined as the desire to improve; if a learner is motivated by mastery, he/she will likely see his/her potential as being unlimited, and he/she will constantly seek to improve his skills through learning and practice (Pink, 2009). Noticeably, these kinds of elements become crucial when observing the results of promoting learners' *Engagement*.



*Figure 1. Interrelation between the constructs of the research*

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The three constructs and the literature review presented in this chapter constitute the theoretical framework of this research, which can be understood as the basis of the analysis process which will be conducted according to the methodological design and data collection procedures, which will be described in the next chapter.

### **CHAPTER III**

This chapter presents the research design followed in this study. It includes a brief description of the type of study and the research paradigm, an account of the data collection instruments and procedures, the explanation of the methodology for data analysis, and the ethical issues addressed in this study. All these elements and instruments are focused on ensuring the reliability and validity of data triangulation.

#### **Research Paradigm**

This research study followed a qualitative research paradigm which was fundamental to determine the impact of using *Gamification* as a pedagogical strategy in the strengthening of an engaging environment in order to improve *Interaction* in the EFL classroom. A qualitative research uses methods such as participant observation or case studies which result in a narrative, descriptive account of a setting or practice (Parkinson & Drislane, 2011). Thus, previous observation of the setting to identify a problem or a need of students is a key aspect of qualitative research, which ended into an effort to find a solution to the problem and to provide a detailed description of its results.

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Additionally, qualitative research “turns the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. It involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005.p. 3). Because of this, even though the data collection instruments necessary for a qualitative research do not provide measurable analysis of data, they allow the researcher to build up a wide description of the results including experiences, limitations, impacts, and reflections including his/her own voice.

According to Merriam (quoted by Delgado & Chapetón, 2015), qualitative research seeks information related to the way people interpret experiences and the way these have an impact in their lives. Because of this, the present study aims to collect information about students' experiences in relation to their involvement into a gamified class which promotes engagement and interaction in the EFL learning process. For this purpose, the qualitative paradigm of this study goes hand in hand with the action-research type of study.

### **Type of study**

This research project belongs to the action-research type of study due to its approach based on the identification of a problem and the subsequent attempt to improve it. In this way, observations made in field and the immersion in a real EFL context at a public school of Bogotá made possible the characterization of the dynamics of the class based on students' interests and needs to formulate the problem of this research.

Action- research is held within the ongoing social processes of particular societal contexts, and it typically involves developments and interventions inside those processes to bring about improvement and change (Burns, 2005). For this, especially in education, action-research

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aims to impact students' and teachers' dynamics and practices "teachers are empowered to make changes related to teaching and learning" (Hine, 2013. p. 153). By following the cyclical process of this type of study, researchers can find reliable results. The first stage is related to the design of the study and the plan of the processes to be followed. The second step is to collect data using different instruments and procedures. Thirdly, the information gathered is analyzed and classified. Next, the communication stage focuses on presenting the outcomes to an audience. Finally, the researcher uses the outcomes of the study to solve the problem previously identified.

In view of this, due to the problem found about the lack of strategies and activities which promote engagement and interaction; this study focuses on using gamification as a pedagogical strategy to foster students' engagement, to allow them to be involved enough to interact with others by using the foreign language with confidence in the EFL class. Thus, action-research type of study is evident by identifying a problem on a specific population, gathering data, and endeavoring to find a positive outcome for it.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The instruments used for this research study aim to ensure that the data collected for the subsequent analysis in the triangulation process are valid and reliable. Triangulation "involves the carefully reviewing of data collected through different methods in order to achieve a more accurate and valid estimate of qualitative results for a particular construct" (Hoyo & Allen, 2006. p. 42); that is to compare the information gathered through the different instruments to make it reliable. For this reason, interviews, field notes, artifacts, surveys, and recordings will provide different perspectives of the data collected in this research study.

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**Interviews.** As “interviews are best suited for understanding people’s perceptions and experiences” (Blandford, 2013. p. 23), this instrument is perfect to hold a conversation which allows the researcher to gather specific data needed, which cannot be observed. In this research, a semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to plan the specific questions necessary to obtain detailed information about the subject matter, but also to ask other additional information or explanations if it was necessary. In this way, one interview was applied to the homeroom teacher at the beginning of the research process to know her perceptions about students’ characteristics and needs in terms of EFL learning (See Appendix G: Interview N° 1).

**Field notes.** Field notes are written records to describe what is happening in the research place by using the strategy of note-taking. Nonetheless, they are not just a narrative of what is happening in the class but are focused on a particular aspect of teaching and learning (Wallace quoted by Delgado & Chapetón, 2015). For this reason, in this study field notes focused on registering students’ experiences, reactions, and attitudes in relation to the use of gamification, the improvement of engagement, and interaction.

Moreover, a key aspect for the use of field notes is that decisions about what to write and what aspects require special attention are essential in elaborating a field note (Emerson et al, 1995). Because of this, the field notes used in this study took into account not only the narrative description of what happened during the EFL class, but also the observer’s interpretation of those events. With these characteristics in mind, this study implemented field notes as a data collection instrument present in the entire research process; a field journal was made with the observations made in the field. (See Appendix C: Field Note N° 1).

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**Surveys.** This data collection instrument consists on a series of questions which are focused on gathering specific information to find patterns in the group of students. Through a survey, a researcher can get data about a community's beliefs and behaviors (Driscoll, 2011). Taking this into account, in this research project, surveys were used as an instrument to obtain information related to students' behavior, experiences, and attitudes of the students about gamification as a pedagogical strategy to promote engagement and interaction in the EFL class. For this reason, two surveys were applied to students: one at the beginning to characterize the population (See Appendix A: Survey N°1), and another one (See Appendix B: Survey N° 2) during the implementation of the pedagogical intervention to know students' perceptions about the process held.

**Recordings.** This data collection instrument allows the researcher to obtain qualitative data with the opportunity of not losing details of the information gathered. Specifically, in this research, recordings were of vital importance in terms of having a register of the interaction between students. Therefore, several samples of recordings of some students' interaction were taken during the three cycles of the pedagogical intervention (See Appendix H: Recordings' Transcription) to analyze students' progress in the EFL learning process. Furthermore, this instrument was of vital importance when analyzing data around the types of interaction held during the English sessions.

**Artifacts.** It refers to the written, visual, and physical material relevant to the study (Merriam quoted by Delgado and Chapetón, 2015). Specifically, for this research, artifacts were understood as students' work done in class, which was useful to evidence the skills that learners developed in relation to engagement and interaction in the EFL class time. This implies that

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during the research, several pieces of artifacts were collected (See Appendix I: Students' Artifacts) in order to include physical objects found within the study setting (Merriam quoted by Delgado and Chapetón, 2015). Thus, these artifacts were collected and registered along the pedagogical intervention process.

### **Procedures for data collection**

The procedures for data collection of this research started by sending the consent form (See Appendix D, Consent Form) to the parents of the 30 students from group 402 at IED Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in which all the parents authorized their children to participate in this project. On the other hand, the observations and field notes started on February 15<sup>th</sup> of 2018 and finished on May 6<sup>th</sup> of 2019. Moreover, the cycles of action-research were applied in accordance to the context of the study to characterize the participants, build the diagnosis, gather information, identify the problem, and define the methodology of this research.

On the other hand, the cycles of the pedagogical intervention started to be applied on August 14<sup>th</sup> of 2018 and finished on May 6<sup>th</sup> of 2019. The first cycle and half of the second one were applied during the second semester of 2018, and the second half of the second cycle and the last cycle were applied on the first months of 2019. Along this time, data collection instruments were applied in order to gather data for their following analysis process. Recordings, field notes, and artifacts were collected constantly as activities were developed. However, surveys were applied in November of 2018 and May of 2019. On the other hand, the teacher's interview was applied in February of 2018 to characterize students and their needs.

This chapter provided the reader with a detailed description of the methodological design, data collection procedures and instruments, type of study, and research paradigm, which are the

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guidelines underpinning this research study. Bearing all these characteristics in mind, some of the researcher's visions and the instructional design for the implementation of the pedagogical intervention of this project will be depicted in the next chapter.

### **CHAPTER IV**

In this chapter, the visions of curriculum, learning, language, and EFL classroom are presented, as well as the instructional design which contains the cycles of development of the gamified proposal for the implementation stage of this project. The elements included in this section are closely interrelated with the three constructs presented previously, so that the pedagogical intervention is consistent with the theoretical framework of the research.

#### **Vision of Curriculum**

The concept of curriculum has been conceived throughout history in multiple ways, being commonly understood as the syllabus of any training program. However, there are essential sociocultural and philosophical foundations which underlie the curricular vision; in addition to some elements such as educational objectives, activities, and learning, which make up this construct. Bearing these considerations in mind, the curriculum is conceived in this study as “an instrument of education that allows a human group to create a possible material and spiritual image of what they want to be” (Hernández, 1993. p. 34). Thereby, the curriculum involves students' interests and needs, as well as the current conditions of the educational context. Moreover, it underlies the ideologies of the educational community around the pedagogical model, education, learning, and language, as well as the conception of man and society that an

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institution wants to reach throughout the learning process. From there, the syllabus, learning objectives, assessment criteria, and activities emerge.

### **Vision of Learning**

Nowadays, it is a well-known fact that learning is a process which takes place since we are in the womb of our mothers and ends until the day we die. However, for this to happen, interaction becomes one of the fundamental sources of learning. In this project, social interaction is understood as part of everyday life and of the real world; because it is in interaction where the construction of knowledge happens. Dewey believed that children should come to school to practice with others in a community that gave them the experiences to share with a society (Allazzam, 2015). In this way, EFL settings should be perfect scenarios to allow interaction between students, because it is there where students from an early age have the possibility to have an approach to real communicative situations. “When social interaction becomes part of the classroom dynamics, classrooms become active places” (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995); thus, learning occurs in an active, involving, and engaging way. For this reason, it should always be enjoyable to the learner (Vygotsky quoted in Allazzam, 2015).

### **Vision of Language**

The concept of language has been widely studied going from structuralism to theories that are closer to its social dimension. On account of the fact that social interaction was a central construct in this project, a definition from the social point of view of language is presented. As Halliday states, “language is the means by which people interact” (1979, p. 19); so, language is conceived as a human behavior which contributes to the integral development of a human being. Furthermore, language is rooted in our primitive reactions, and transmitted socio-culturally;

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explicitly, through heuristic means, and implicitly, through exposure to, and practice of, the language (Wittgenstein quoted in Moyal-Sharrock, w, d). In this way, much more than an isolated set of grammatical rules, language was conceived in this research as the imperative tool for communication, which allows interaction with the real world in everyday situations. Because of this, the social dimension of language is an essential aspect to take into account in EFL learning processes.

### **Vision of EFL Classroom**

Classrooms have been considered as the physical space where learning occurs. However, classroom's conceptions change according to the teacher and students' role, and also according to the pedagogical model and approach of every institution. Nevertheless, for this research, the vision of EFL was of great importance because it was understood as one of the main enablers of both the learning experience and live interaction. Additionally, as a classroom implies exposure, immersion, communication, and cooperation, it is not always the same room in a school, but any place where teaching and learning involving practices could be carried out.

In this way, "learning in the classroom becomes uniquely interactive" (Shpancer, 2004. p. 25). As a result, an EFL classroom is a space where students not only listen, but also participate actively by receiving attention from their teachers and classmates. Besides, the classroom is an efficient way for a teacher to deliver himself to the students in person (Shpancer, 2004). Likewise, in an EFL classroom, the teacher and students show reciprocity through communication in the target language. For this reason, language becomes the means instead of the end of learning. An EFL classroom turns into a conducive environment for a worthwhile learning experience.

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### Instructional design

The pedagogical intervention of this project was divided into three cycles, which aimed to improve interaction and engagement by including gamification as a pedagogical strategy in the EFL classroom. Each one of these cycles and lesson plans applied (See Table 5) was intended to allow students to interact among them and also with the teacher. However, interaction and engagement were considered two constructs which would increase gradually, going hand in hand with the development of the cycles of application. For this to happen, firstly, students explored and discovered how to talk about themselves, then they were able to speak about their environment, and finally they discovered that they were able to interact with other students in a more natural and independent way, by using the foreign language. In the end, students were ready to interact with unknown people through audios by having a short conversation in which they described themselves and their neighborhoods. The sequence of these cycles had to do with improving students' engagement by using gamification in the EFL class, so that at the end of the project interacting in a foreign language became a comfortable and enjoyable activity for them.

	Lesson	Objectives	Language and vocabulary	Interaction
<b>MISSION I: The Birth</b>	-Avatar: My own representation of myself.	<b>Goal:</b> I am able to recognize myself and the characteristics which make me special.	-Adjectives to describe physical appearance, and personal characteristics.	-Learner-teacher interaction.
	- I like myself: Do I have superpowers and Achilles' heels?  - My mood: Do I feel with the courage to save a princess every day?	<b>Sub-goals:</b> -To describe myself and my likes. - To talk to others about me. - To trust in myself and show it to others with confidence.	-Possessives.  - "I like" "I am" "I have".	-Learner-group interaction.  -Learner-learner interaction.

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	-Who am I? Which is my secret identity?	<b>Engagement goal:</b> - To develop behavioral, emotional, and agentic engagement during my EFL classes.		
<b>Data Collection Instruments: Fieldnotes, Survey 1, Recordings, Artifacts.</b>				
<b>MISSION II: The Awareness</b>	-My henchmen, enemies, villains and superheroes.	<b>Goal:</b> I am aware of the environment and the people who surround me.	-Vocabulary and descriptions about the city: places, addresses, activities.	-Learner-teacher interaction.
	- My barrack: What does it look like?  -Bikini Bottom: My neighborhood	<b>Sub-goals:</b> -To identify the characteristics of the people around me. -To characterize the places I visit the most. -To identify some of the renowned places of my country. -To interact with my classmates taking into account the knowledge of my environment.  <b>Engagement goal:</b> - To develop behavioral, emotional, and agentic engagement during my EFL classes.	- "I can" "There is/ There are" "I live" "It is"	-Learner-learner interaction.  -Learner-group interaction.
<b>Data Collection Instruments: Field notes, Recordings, Artifacts.</b>				
<b>MISSION III: The Finding</b>	-Gothic city: My own city and its renowned places.	<b>Goal:</b> I interact with others from my city being engaged and self-confident of my knowledge.	-Structures and vocabulary about city places and adjectives to describe them.	-Learner-teacher interaction.
	-Others in my city: Can I speak in English with others?	<b>Sub-goals:</b> -To feel comfortable when talking to others by using the foreign language. -To be able to speak and participate in short conversations about me. -To discover that I can find a new friend from my	- "What I like the most from my city is..." "I am from" "I live in" "I like my city because" "There is a mall, a church, etc."	-Learner-learner interaction.  -Learner-group interaction.

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		<p>own city through English speaking.</p> <p><b>Engagement goal:</b>          - To develop behavioral, emotional, and agentic engagement during my EFL classes.</p>		
<b>Data Collection Instruments: Field notes, Survey 2, Recordings, Artifacts.</b>				

*Table 5. Proposal for the pedagogical intervention.*

For these cycles to function as expected there was a key element necessary to understand the way in which engagement and interaction were interrelated in the EFL class; it is: the use of a personalized and gamified grading system. This system was based on obtaining 4 printed coins during each cycle of application (one or two per lesson plan applied); each coin reflected each student's improvement and interest on interacting during class time. When a student completed 4 coins in his/her score card, he/she was ready to obtain a badge and climb on the next level of the leaderboard. However, there were different colors of coins: red coins represented poor commitment during class and an advice to a student to improve his/her attitude, green coins represented few failures in relation to *Interaction*, and yellow coins represented an excellent performance in relation to *Interaction*, participation, effort, and commitment to the class (See Appendix F: Scorecard).

In this way, *Gamification* worked as the driving strategy in order to engage students in interacting among them and also with others. As a result of this, the pedagogical intervention of this project was intended to incentivize and encourage students to participate in their EFL classes in an interactive way. The cycles of application aimed to empower students to improve their language proficiency level in order to accomplish the A2 level stated by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional, in terms of oral production for fourth graders in Colombia. For this to be

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possible, each cycle (mission) in this research aimed to improve interaction and engagement hand in hand, as explained below.

**Mission I: The Birth.** During the first stage of application, the mission of the gamified proposal was to get students to become familiar with the use of a scorecard, a leaderboard, badges, and coins. Furthermore, the language focus was on providing learners with the vocabulary and structures necessary to speak about themselves. Therefore, the main objective of this first level was for learners to be able to learn not only about the game mechanics and principles of this study, but also about themselves in the target language. That is the reason why this stage was named “the birth,” it is because students were expected to discover and be conscious that they were able to describe themselves by using short structures such as “I am,” “I have,” “I like,” and vocabulary about physical appearance, personal characteristics, and feelings. In this way, interaction started to be part of the EFL class and students became engaged thanks to the use of the gamification elements mentioned before. The time of intervention for the four lesson plans of this mission (1-Avatar: My own representation of myself. 2-I like myself: Do I have superpowers and Achilles’ heels? 3-My mood: Do I feel with the courage to save a princess every day? 4-Who am I? Which is my secret identity?) (See Appendix E: Lesson plan n°1) went from August 14<sup>th</sup> to October 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2018. During this period of time, data collection instruments such as recordings, field notes, and students’ survey were also applied.

**Mission II: The Awareness.** In the previous stage students could speak about themselves and started interacting in class time; however, during the second mission, “the awareness,” they were intended to recognize that they must be able to talk also about their classmates to maintain a short conversation. Students went from discovering that they could use the English language to

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speak about themselves, to find out that they were also able to speak with their closest partners. The dialogues were guided by the teacher to allow students to receive feedback and feel comfortable when speaking. In this way, students learned structures and vocabulary about their friends and classmates, school, and their neighborhood. Thus, interaction played a central role in which engagement also intervened by allowing students to be involved in the EFL class. The time of the intervention for the three lesson plans of this mission (5- My henchmen, enemies, villains and superheroes. 6-My barrack: What does it look like? 7-Bikini Bottom: My neighborhood) went from October 9<sup>th</sup> to March 18<sup>th</sup> of 2019. During this period of time, data collection instruments such as recordings, field notes, and artifacts were applied and collected.

**Mission III: The Finding.** Finally, the last objective of this research was for students to be conscious of the power of learning English as a foreign language, in terms of interacting with the world around them. For this reason, students were expected to be ready to interact with others that were unknown for them, so they could experience simulated real-life communicative events. For this to happen, they learned vocabulary and structures about the city and made comparisons between people. As a result, they interacted with students from Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, using the foreign language through audios in which they received a personalized answer to maintain a short conversation. Consequently, students reached the last level in the leaderboard and got the last badge by completing the audios to communicate with others using EFL. The time of the intervention for the two lesson plans of this mission (8- Community heroes: people in my city. 9-Others in my city: Can I speak in English with others?) went from March 25<sup>th</sup> to May 6<sup>th</sup> of 2019. During this period of time, data collection instruments such as recordings, field notes, and the last students' survey cycle were also applied.

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Finally, the raw data collected during these three cycles of application were coded following a grounded approach, analyzed, and categorized considering the research question and objectives to provide the results of this study. Consequently, these procedures allowed findings to emerge by being categorized. These categories of analysis, results, and its following discussion will be presented in depth in the following chapter of the research.

### **CHAPTER V**

Along the development of this chapter, data analysis and findings are presented. Firstly, the procedures for data analysis are depicted; these include the approach and the perspective used in this research study. Additionally, the categories of analysis are displayed as well as the necessary data samples to support the results obtained from this study. Finally, a discussion of the findings is included. All the elements in this section give an account of the reliability, validity, and triangulation of the data gathered throughout the pedagogical intervention held.

#### **Procedures for Data Analysis**

In order to analyze data, the *Grounded Approach* was used with the purpose of providing an in-depth perspective from the data collected, through the different types of instruments applied. This approach “involves systematic coding of data, regardless of the details of the study design” (Blandford, 2013) and implies the identification of categories of analysis which allow the researcher to elicit meaning and provide a detailed understanding of data. It is essential to highlight that categories in *grounded theory* emerge from data and they evolve throughout the research process (Willig, 2013). In this way, categories are identified by coding and they become the basis for new theory which could emerge from the study after the analysis process.

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Moreover, the perspective of analysis this study accounts for is *Emic*. Thus, behavior is described from the perspective of cultural insiders and analyzed in constructs drawn from their self-understanding (Morris et al, 1999). There is a special interest of the researcher not only in describing, but also in interpreting the observable events in the EFL classroom by being immersed within the setting and next to the participants. Hence, *emic* research involves sustained, wide-ranging observation of a single cultural group (Morris et al, 1999), in which the researcher is more likely to be part of the participants of the study.

Taking into account the approach and the perspective mentioned previously, the process for data analysis started by grouping the raw data obtained through the different instruments utilized in plastic binders of different colors: blue for surveys, white for field notes, yellow for artifacts, and pink for recordings' transcriptions. Most of the data were copied into digital files to prevent any damage of the information gathered. Subsequently, each group of raw data were read carefully and once the reading finished, all data were revised again with the purpose of finding patterns and particular information according to the research question and objectives.

As long as data were systematized and examined, it was easier for the researcher to start the analysis by using the method of *color coding*. It constitutes a visual alternative to "traditional" *Grounded Theory* coding and analysis, by using colors to reflect the code, concept, and finally category to which a piece of text is assigned (Stottok, Bergaus & Gorra, 2011). In this way, data were highlighted considering findings related to key aspects from the research's theoretical framework, by using different colors as follows: green for interaction, pink for gamification, and yellow for engagement. Moreover, labels were assigned to each group of

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similarities found across data; the name given to each group correspond to the three major concepts of the study.

As a result of the coding process, it was possible to establish interrelations among groups and come up with categories and subcategories which emerged from the data itself and are also connected with the research question and objectives. These categories interpret, rather than simply label, instances of phenomena by looking for relations of similarity and difference and give way to the data analysis (Willig, 2013). Therefore, they evidence the results of this study and provide the supporting data necessary to examine participants' experiences when exposed to *Gamification*, as a pedagogical strategy in EFL teaching with the purpose of improving students' *engagement* and *interaction* during class time.

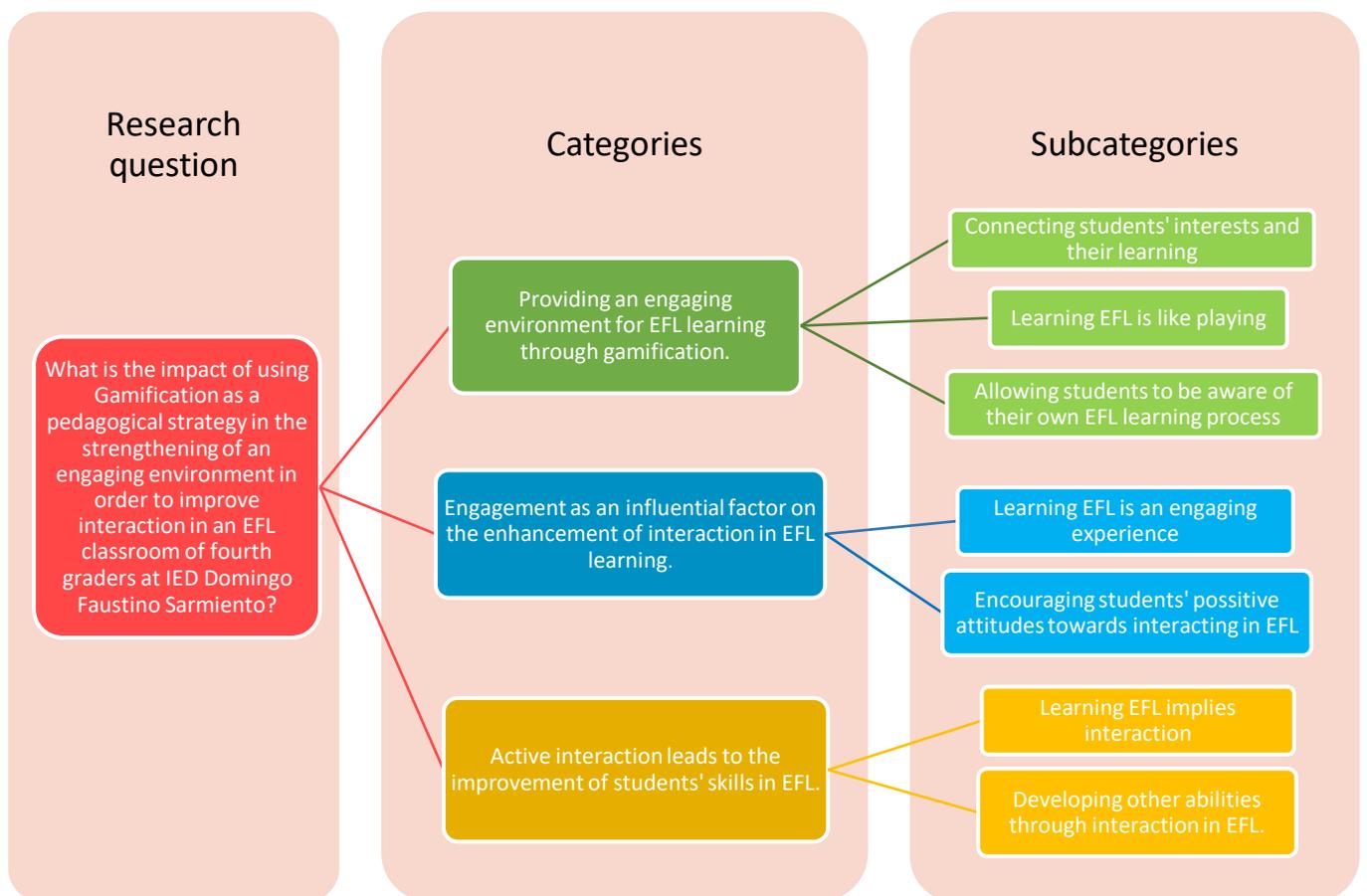
Thus, the categories and subcategories of analysis allowed the researcher to hold the triangulation process by going back to the different data collection instruments used to obtain information and looking for those continuous patterns of behaviors, which could be useful to underpin the analysis carried out and to display data in a hierarchical way. Bearing this in mind, the following section presents the graphic obtained through the coding process to reach the categories of analysis and a detailed description of them.

### **Categories of the Analysis**

The main objective of this research was to give an account of the impact of using *gamification* as a pedagogical strategy in the strengthening of an *engaging environment* in order to improve *interaction* in an EFL classroom of fourth graders. On top of that, characterizing students' experiences and responses around language learning and the way in which they got engaged and interacted with others was also a central purpose of the research study. With a focus

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on keeping these goals as the primary points of interest, categories and subcategories were determined by emerging through the process of grouping together different pieces of data that shared central features or characteristics with one another (Willig, 2013). *Figure 2* shows this hierarchical organization which made possible the analysis of the information obtained and its following results.



*Figure 2. Categories and subcategories of the analysis*

As it is indicated in *Figure 2*, the three main categories aim to respond the research question and its following objectives. As categories of analysis emerged directly from data, they

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are also connected with the constructs included in the theoretical framework of the study and reflect the interest of the researcher in finding relationships among them. Hence, categories show the connection between those concepts while subcategories are designed to look for and interpret specific details from each association found. Through all categories and subcategories, the necessary evidence to support the results is provided along the analysis. Bearing this in mind, each category and its corresponding subcategories will be explained in detail during the next paragraphs.

### **Category 1. Gamification provides an engaging environment for EFL learning.**

This category responds to the implementation of *Gamification* as a core pedagogical strategy in the EFL classroom to allow the strengthening of an engaging environment for learning. Environment is a key influential factor which refers to the social, psychological and pedagogical contexts in which learning occurs, that affects the students' attitude and their performance in a specific area (Yi, 2006). For this reason, *Gamification* pointed out to set up a positive learning environment in which students could develop their skills in EFL by getting involved through the class' dynamics, structure, and assessment system. As displayed in Chapter 2, these elements came out of the game principles and mechanics proposed by Kapp (2013), Oxford Analytica (2016), and Burke (2014).

Consequently, data revealed that *engagement* arose from applying *Gamification* features to the EFL classes, so students got interested in learning. Since *connecting students' interest and their learning* had a positive impact on their perception of the class, it was possible to immerse them in the mechanics of conceiving that *learning EFL is like playing*. Additionally, as participation and interest increased notoriously in most of the students, they became much more

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*aware of their own learning process* by asking frequently how to get their coins, badges, and go on to the next level. Hence, these three subcategories which emerged from data analysis are broadened in the following lines.

**Connecting students' interests and their learning.** Considering students' passions and interests in EFL learning was essential since it promoted their involvement and engagement during class time. Data revealed that including students' preferences in the pedagogical intervention made the EFL learning environment much more appealing for them. At this point, it is important to highlight that using *Gamification* as a pedagogical strategy for teaching EFL resulted from students' own answers and opinions during the first stage of this study. As they manifested they liked videogames and enjoyed playing online games, *Gamification* was included as the main strategy to connect learners' passions and their learning process.

As a result, students' attitudes turned positive towards the activities held and the gamified grading system used which was based on game elements such as coins, badges, scorecards, and a leaderboard (explained in Chapter 4). It was observed that along the process, learners were interested in accomplishing their tasks and committed to have an enthusiastic participation:

- 13. **T:** During this activity, some of the students who do not participate
- 14. frequently, went to the board and made a big effort to speak in front of
- 15. their classmates.

**[Field note #3. September 04<sup>th</sup>, 2018]**

As described, some students who did not participate frequently decided to do it, due to the fact that implementing game elements in the class provided an easy environment in which

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most learners enjoyed participating in the classroom activities (Yi, 2006). As registered in students' survey, they manifested they felt comfortable and liked class time and activities:

**S1:** "Siempre nos divertimos"

**S2:** "Ha sido muy útil para alentarnos"

**S3:** "Las actividades fueron chéveres porque me gustaron las clases"

**[Students' survey Cycle 1]**

As it could be perceived, when students were asked if they enjoyed classes and what the utility of avatars and a leaderboard was in the EFL class, they answered they liked classes because they felt encouraged by the gamification elements used. Therefore, increasing engagement was one of the most notorious impacts of using *Gamification* in the EFL class. It functioned as a tool to set up an environment where students got interested in learning; as a result, *Gamification* engaged and motivated learners across all kinds of activities using game mechanics (Burke, 2014) which allowed students to be an active part of their learning.

**S2:** Exterminator is ugly.

**S2:** Profe es que tiene dos nombres. ¿Puedo decir los dos?

**T:** Ok.

**S2:** Barba de chiva is short. I like exterminator ears.

**T:** Ok. Very Good!

**[Recording #2. Avatar: My own representation of myself.]**

In this way, considering students' interests and likes with the purpose of speaking and interacting about them, leads us to the statement that allowing everyone to be a participant in an EFL learning environment, makes possible learners' engagement around the foreign language

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itself and promotes students' encouragement through a positive environment. Consequently, not only behavior but also skill improvement was evident and became an observable event:

- 8. T:** Students showed great interest about reading aloud and understanding
- 9.** the sentences in the book by relating them with the previous
- 10.** activity (feelings and emotions explanation)

**[Field note #5. September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018]**

The impact of enhancing engagement was noticeable in students' gradual improvement of their skills. Most of them were concerned about endeavoring to do their best. Additionally, as they discovered that they could enjoy learning EFL, they liked to carry out the proposed activities in which they progressed in some skills and they were self-conscious about it:

**S4:** Mejoré porque participo más, ya sé más cosas en inglés.

**[Students' survey, cycle 1]**

To sum up, it was possible to deduce from data that taking into account students' interests influenced in a favorable way their EFL learning processes and the perception they had about the class.

**Learning EFL is like playing.** Game principles and game mechanics were essential for building up a positive environment for learning in which students felt comfortable and involved when interacting in EFL. In this way, these Gamification features helped to create a gamified environment where learners were capable not only of changing their perception about the EFL class, but also of learning and improving their own skills by being engaged at a powerful level which allowed them to progress. As data revealed, using game principles (rules, feedback, goals,

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levels) and game mechanics (reward structures, avatars, leaderboard) was a key element for engaging students:

**10. T:** One of the repetitive students' questions when I arrive to the classroom is:

**11.** -Teacher, ¿hoy podemos subir de nivel?

**[Field note #3. September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018]**

**6. T:** They ask frequently: - Teacher ¿qué debo hacer para pasar al siguiente nivel?

**[Field note #6. September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018]**

The excerpts above show how interested students were in obtaining coins and badges to go on to the next level. They were engaged in having all their activities well done and performing actively during class time, so they would be able to reach the next level in the leaderboard.

Furthermore, it was also perceptible that gamification principles were completely clear for everyone in the classroom, as they could recognize how rules, goals, and the level system worked. All of them knew how many coins they needed to reach the next stage of the leaderboard and what the color of every coin meant.

**S5:** La amarilla para mí es que me fue bien, verde que me debo esforzar, rojo: debo mejorar.

**[Students' survey, cycle 2]**

On the other hand, by being visually exposed to the leaderboard and scorecard; students had a constant and motivational reminder of their processes in the EFL class and about what they had to do better. Thus, gamification of visual elements promoted students' involvement and commitment towards the class and activities held:

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[Student's artifacts sample: scorecard, first level & leaderboard with students' avatars]

When students were asked about the utility and purpose of gamification elements in the classroom, most of them answered that avatars and leaderboard were useful to guide them and that learning became enjoyable by using them:

**S3:** Nos enseñan de una manera divertida inglés

**S4:** Han servido para guiarnos

**S5:** Por hacer las tareas se gana un puntaje y el avatar pasa el nivel

**S6:** Sirven para saber si voy bien o mal

[Students' survey, cycle 1]

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As described, it is evident that these mechanical elements of gamification were essential when setting up an environment where learning could occur by involving children around the subject area. As stated by Burke (2014): How can badges and points motivate people? The simple answer is that they don't. It's what they mean that motivates people. In some cases, they mean progress toward reaching a seemingly impossible goal and, ultimately, the triumph of succeeding. In this case, gamification elements meant great performance and skill achievement for students, so they became engaged in them. Each one of them gave a specific meaning to the leaderboard and coins in relation to the EFL class.

Moreover, the gamified environment allowed children to feel "nicely challenged" through some of the activities held which emerged from gamification and made interaction in EFL possible. The avatar's creation was one of the activities which had an important influence of gamification but also allowed students to interact:

**T:** Start Tatiana

**S1:** Rosita is young

**T:** Very good!

**S1:** \*Whisper\* Profe es que no sé cómo se pronuncia esto.

**T:** Pretty.

**S1:** Rosita is pretty

**T:** Excellent!

**S1:** I like Rosita('s) mouth.

**T:** Good! And the last one?

**S1:** I like Rosita('s) ribbon.

**T:** Very Good! Hi five!

**[Recording #1. Avatar: My own representation of myself.]**

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As data revealed, game mechanics and principles also influenced and made teacher-learner interaction possible. In this way, it is essential to mention that the effect of gamification was not only visible when observing students' engagement and behavior, but also when enabling students' skills and performance to improve through activities based on the avatar's creation and description, strengths and weaknesses seen as superpowers and Achilles' heels, physical description seen as superheroes and villains' depiction, vocabulary about places based on barrack's description, etc. All these elements were key for setting up an environment where students enjoyed learning EFL by discovering the class as a possibility to know about their interests and likes.

**Allowing students to be aware of their own EFL learning process.** The gamified environment included a personalized grading system which became one of the backbones of the class. For this reason, most students were able to be self-conscious about their own EFL learning process by looking at the scorecards placed in their folders and observing the leaderboard every class. These elements provided students with a frequent reminder of their performance:

**S6:** Ha sido útil para ver si vamos bien o mal

**S7:** Uno sabe si va bien o no

**S8:** Sabemos cómo vamos en clase

**S9:** Sirven para las notas

**[Students' survey, cycle 1]**

As displayed, when students were asked about the importance of the leaderboard, avatar, and scorecard, they answered that these elements were the main indicator for them to know how their performance during class time was. Moreover, learners could identify that these

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gamification features were intended not only to grade them in a different way, but also to engage them to do their best at every class:

**S11:** Con las monedas sé si voy bien o mal.

[Students' survey, cycle 1]

As mentioned, students got interested in this grading system much more than in the traditional one as they got easy access to their grades and performance through coins and badges. In this way, students were excited about obtaining their coins because through the color of the coin, they could recognize what they had done right and which things they could do better:

**8. T:** When I explained again the way in which coins and badges work for the new  
**9.** students that arrived this year to the group, I asked to the class what the meaning of  
**10.** every color of the coins was. One of them told the whole classroom: - “La moneda  
**11.** amarilla es la mejor, pero las otras no son malas... Son un aviso, porque podemos  
**12.** mejorar”

[Field note #20. February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019]

Evidently, although the color of coins could have been a discouraging element for some of the students, most of them recognized green and red coins as “warnings” which allowed them to know that they needed to work harder and do their best to get a yellow coin again. Therefore, gamification elements did not become only a grading system but also, an important boost for learners.

**S8:** La moneda amarilla significa que uno se esfuerza en hacer las cosas. La verde que más o menos. La roja que uno debe esforzarse en hacer mejor las cosas.

[Students' survey, cycle 2]

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[Student's artifacts sample: student's coins]

These elements gave them the opportunity to know if their efforts had positive results and to be rewarded because of them. In this way, even though coins and badges are mainly extrinsic rewards; with time, they became intrinsic boosters for learners. Due to the fact that intrinsic rewards sustain engagement because they engage people at an emotional level which immerses them in their own learning process (Burke, 2014); it is possible to affirm that at the end of the process, students reached “mastery”, which is one of the three elements of intrinsic motivation suggested by Pink (2009). *Mastery* is conceived as the desire to continually improve at doing something that matters but motivated by a strong personal achievement and progress desire. At getting mastery, people are able to work for self-improvement and personal goals by themselves. In EFL classes, some learners demonstrated this mastery element in their observable attitude to work continuously and progressively for learning.

Moreover, although some of them kept asking for coins, students could recognize their own aspiration of learning EFL by seeking repetitively for doing their best during class time and reflecting about their own learning paths including their strengths and weaknesses.

To conclude, it was possible to observe the positive impact that gamification elements had on building up a new grading system in which students felt much more involved in and committed to their learning. Thus, using gamification as a pedagogical strategy in the EFL

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classroom allowed the teacher to connect students' interest and their learning processes to make them feel engaged and comfortable, by adapting the class to gamification mechanics and principles, which permitted students to be self-conscious and aware of their skill improvement and performance.

### **Category 2. Engagement as an influential factor on the enhancement of interaction in EFL learning.**

This category refers to the impact caused by engaging students around EFL classes on the improvement of interaction in the foreign language. Data analysis showed that students became much more willing to interact among them by using EFL when they were fully involved during class time. Engaging students resulted not only from using gamification features, but also from guiding them to interact gradually by discovering they were able to communicate among them and with others using EFL. In this way, *learning turned into an engaging experience* were most of the students reflected three sub-dimensions related to engagement when doing tasks with a specific purpose: doing their best to get coins and going on to the next level of the leaderboard. On the other hand, *encouraging students' positive attitudes towards interacting in EFL* was one of the key findings revealed by data; learners enjoyed interaction which was not only held orally but also in writing.

**Learning EFL as an engaging experience.** Students' engagement in EFL classes became observable through the process held during the three missions of the pedagogical proposal. Being engaged was perceptible in different ways in the course of the activities and strategies used in class time. Hence, the engagement subcategories proposed by Dinçer,

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Yeşilyurt & Demiröz (2017) were visible from students' attitudes and behaviors; however, *behavioral and emotional* kinds were much more visible than *agentic engagement*:

7. **T:** The matching pairs game was very appealing for students. Their
8. excitement and will to participate was evident and they even
9. wanted to repeat the game.

**[Field note #6. September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018]**

13. **T:** When doing the activity "wheel of emotions" students payed attention
14. to every single detail. They participated actively, and they liked to shout out
15. their answers to each question to share them with their partners before
16. writing on their own wheels.

**[Field note #6. September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018]**

These pieces of data expose mainly *emotional engagement* due to the fact that students were interested, curious, and enthusiastic when developing the activities (Reeve, 2012); this kind of emotions facilitated the class and made the activities function as attention grabbers in which students were highly interested in learning. This engagement subcategory was present almost all the time during most of the activities done. It is necessary to highlight that the activities in which emotional engagement emerged included appealing material which became essential for promoting students' engagement.

On the other hand, *agentic and behavioral engagement* were manifested much more in activities which included peer or group work. Most students became an active part of the class by giving their own opinions, participating, suggesting new ideas, and showing up their previous knowledge about some topics. In this case, learners got excited and interested in being the key and fundamental character of the class.

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- 10. T:** The “mix up game of emotions” was very useful. Students worked in groups
- 11.** to throw dice to build different emotions. Moreover, when they had to
- 12.** decide what was the name of each emotion, all of them worked together as a
- 13.** team. It was evident that they enjoyed the activity and they were
- 14.** able to speak in EFL most of the time.

**[Field note #5. September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018]**

Learners demonstrated they felt fully engaged when developing some specific activities which included oral interaction, group work, new material, and working in different spaces. They were conscious about the activities which made them feel really interested in learning and participating in the EFL class:

- S12:** Cada actividad era más interesante.
- S13:** Cuando jugamos “chino cappuccino” y salimos al patio.
- S14:** Cuando vimos un video en la sala de sistemas.
- S15:** Las actividades fueron diferentes y divertidas.

**[Students' survey, cycle 1]**

The excerpts above show the influence of the environment, the strategies, and the prepared materials as essential elements for reaching students' agentic engagement by allowing students to be actively involved in class time. At this point, it is necessary to affirm that making EFL learning enjoyable is possible when personalized instruction is held, and external support features are designed to build meaningful experiences for students. In this way, learners became not only the class audience but also important contributors of it:

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[Student's artifacts sample: mix up game & worksheets]

Finally, according to Reeve (2012) engagement is much more than being motivated, it makes learning possible (e.g. academic performance and skill development) and awakens students' positive feelings towards the learning activity. Thus, learners' engagement turned EFL learning into a significant experience in which extrinsic factors influenced intrinsic disposition, behavior, and perceptions about the class.

**Encouraging students' positive attitudes towards interacting in EFL.** This subcategory emerged from analyzing students' attitudes when interacting at the beginning of the study as opposed to their reactions when asked to interact at the final stage of the project. As soon as they internalized that they could listen, understand, and speak in EFL using short and simple utterances which improved with time, they lost fear of speaking and saying what they knew in English instead of using their mother tongue every time they could during class time. For this reason, engagement helped students to conceive interaction as a common and natural communicative process:

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4. T: Today we went outside of the classroom for each student to read out loud
5. the descriptions of their families. I noticed that some of them described their
6. families without looking to their notebooks, so I said to all of them that if they
7. could do it without reading it will be better. Two students said: “Ah profe,
8. yo también puedo sin el cuaderno” and when they had their turn they did it perfectly.

[Field note #09. October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019]

During some activities this attitude of trying without reading or going in front of the whole class voluntarily to show their knowledge to their partners, was repetitive. It was evident that those activities which were intended to allow students to interact among them (learner-learner) in groups or peers, were much more successful than learner-group or learner-teacher interaction, as learners were confident with some of their classmates most of the time.



[Student's artifacts sample: what do you think about me? Students' written interaction activity]

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Nevertheless, it is necessary to mention that although interaction quantity and quality improved, students continued interacting only when they were asked to do it. Interaction in EFL was neither spontaneous nor automatic; however, students got used to try by themselves when an instruction was given. Moreover, when coins and badges were mentioned, some of the students who did not participate actively did their best to speak by using EFL:

- 6.T:** As soon as I mentioned that I was going to give coins to the ones who
- 7.** participate actively, the students who did not participate during the previous classes,
- 8.** tried to do it today. Some of them remain shy but they could do it without mistakes.

**[Field note #8. October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018]**

Therefore, engagement plays a central role when encouraging learners at endeavoring to improve their performance and skills. However, as students became engaged gradually with time, these attitudes of participating only because of the rewards, changed notoriously:

**S16:** Ahora participo más.

**S17:** He mejorado porque aprendí más.

**S18:** Yo he mejorado por las actividades y los juegos.

**S19:** He mejorado porque antes no hablaba inglés.

**[Students' survey, cycle 1]**

Consequently, students not only notably changed their attitude towards interacting and learning EFL, but also became self-conscious about their advances and progress along their processes. When engagement went from being just extrinsic to become intrinsic and an inner booster for learners, interaction reached a new and unknown level for our EFL class.

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### **Category 3. Active interaction leads to the improvement of students' skills in EFL.**

This category refers to the effect interaction caused on students' skills and performance in EFL classes. Data showed that increasing interaction gradually had successful results on students' EFL learning process. Thus, learners started from minimum learner-teacher interaction during the first stage, then they went on to learner-group and learner-learner interaction and they finished the process by having learner-unknown speaker interaction. This revealed that at the final stage of the study, students were able to communicate by themselves in simulated daily life situations which allowed them to discover that EFL is not only a school subject but a real language they can use to express themselves and have access to new communicative events.

As a result, it is possible to affirm that *Learning EFL implies interaction*, keeping in mind that the four main skills of the foreign language can be fostered through the use of interaction as a fundamental factor in EFL learning. Moreover, students *develop other abilities through interaction in EFL* due to the fact that not only listening, reading, writing, speaking, and grammar are important when learning a language but also some other aptitudes such as self-confidence and trying without fear of failure are essential aptitudes too.

**Learning EFL implies interaction.** Students' interaction in EFL increased gradually with time; likewise, their skills improved while interacting actively not only in speaking but also writing in EFL. At this point, it is important to mention that interaction does not occur only orally but also in writing. Thus, although fostering speaking was the target objective of the pedagogical intervention, written activities where students could communicate their ideas to others through paper, also worked great.

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As students were used to receive “professorial classes” where the teacher was the only interlocutor in the classroom, interacting frequently meant a big challenge for them. Data showed that during the first stage of the study, when only teacher-learner interaction was held, students felt comfortable; but when learner-group was required, some of them felt fear of speaking aloud:

9. Students participate by using EFL just when they are asked to do it...
10. When I asked some students to participate they answered: “No puedo profe”,
11. “Me da pena”.

**[Field note #1. August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018]**

However, with time when activities which implied peer or group work were proposed, learner-group and learner-learner interaction seemed to happen more spontaneously and the use of EFL increased significantly, due to the fact that students created their own *Zone of Proximal Development* where most of them felt comfortable when speaking, writing, and sharing with their peers:

6. During the monitored conversation activity, students seemed to be fully engaged.
7. They enjoyed speaking with their classmates. They are discovering that they
8. can interact using EFL in short dialogues.

**[Field note #4. September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018]**

It is evident that strategies and activities which allowed students to interact among them, were essential for building an EFL learning environment where learners became active participants of their own skill improvement. These activities were essential during class time as students were able to recognize that they could speak English and when they did it:

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**S20:** Hablamos cuando hicimos la actividad de las entrevistas.

**S21:** Cuando jugamos a las frutas.

**S22:** Cuando hicimos la actividad de las caras.

**[Students' survey, cycle 1]**

In this way, skill improvement was not only an external observable event but also an advantage about which some learners were conscious as they became self-aware of their own learning processes:

**S23:** Ahora sé hablar más en inglés

**[Students' survey, cycle 1]**

Therefore, including interaction as one of the backbones of learning EFL became a key characteristic of our class time so students got used to communicating by using EFL for tasks which required their linguistic awareness just as in real life communicative events:

**S1:** My name is Samuel. I am 10 years old. I like my hero academia and to sleep.

**T:** Very good. You go.

**S2:** My name is Nataly Sofia. I am 10 years old. I like... emm...

**T:** You can say I like to swim or dance...

**S2:** ¿Cómo se dice patinar?

**T:** Skating

**S2:** I like skating and eat.

**T:** OK. You go Maria Camila

**S3:** My name is Maria Camila. I am 10 years old. I like to dance and sing.

**[Recording #2. I like me]**

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In the excerpt above, students were able to introduce themselves by using simple structures and verbs; however, we went from those structures to these more complex ones:

**S2:** Hi! My name is Ana Melo. I am 10 years old. I study at Domingo Faustino Sarmiento school. I live in Rionegro neighborhood. I like my neighborhood because there is a mall, a restaurant, and a park. What about yours?

**[Recording #20. My neighborhood]**

This last exercise of introducing themselves was held spontaneously and fluency was achieved by most of the students. On the other hand, they went from speaking aloud as in learner-group interaction, to achieve learner-learner interaction without any trouble when speaking:

**S1:** This is my house: There is one kitchen, there is one room, there are two bathrooms, there are two bedrooms, there is one terrace.

**[Recording #8. Learner-group interaction. My barrack: How does it look like?]**

**S1:** Which are your weaknesses?

**S2:** My weaknesses are: I am disorganized. I am lazy. I am talkative

**S1:** Which are your strengths?

**S2:** My strengths are: Smart and punctual.

**[Recording #4. Learner-learner interaction. I like me]**

As students improved notoriously when interacting, learner-group and learner-learner interaction became central during class-time and teacher-learner went into the background and functioned as a guide when needed. Thus, students achieved successful communication among them which increased with time.

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During the final stage of the study, we were ready to have our simulated real-life conversations by recording audios and getting answers from unknown people. The main purpose of this activity was to allow students to discover that they were able to speak using EFL not only at school, but that they could also communicate with people outside by speaking and understanding what they said. The result of this activity was great: students could interact by using EFL in a conversation and they enjoyed speaking:

**S1:** Hi! My name is Dana Gabriela, I am 10 years old. I study at Domingo Faustino Sarmiento School. I live in Lisboa neighborhood. I like my neighborhood because there is a park, a café, and a library. What about yours?

**F1:** Hi Dana! My name is Stefany Hernández, I am 23 years old. I study at Universidad Pedagógica Nacional and I live in Mosquera town. I like my city a lot because there are parks, there is a central church and there is a mall. Nice to meet you Dana!

**[Recording #20. My neighborhood. Dana's intervention and response.]**

When all students listened to their voices in the audios, they were not only able to recognize that they could speak in English, but also that they could find their mistakes in terms of fluency and pronunciation. For this reason, it is necessary to affirm that interaction allows students to develop and improve their skills in EFL, and at the same time; they discover that they are capable of using the foreign language with the purpose of communicating their ideas:

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1. How old is he/ she? 21
2. Where is she/he studying? Universidad pedagogica nacional
3. Where does he/ she live? obispo
4. Which city places did he/she mention? Hospital, theater, Bank
6. What were my mistakes when speaking? me salto i like neighborhood y fue nervios
7. Did you like this activity? Why? yes i like this activity por que interactivamos con ellos

[Student's artifacts sample: audio's comprehension worksheet]

Thus, interaction must be conceived as a fundamental condition for foreign language learning (Herazo, 2010) which allows learning to occur with a communicative focus rather than a grammatical one. Data revealed that although students needed some previous knowledge to communicate, they could speak using the structures they knew and learning some others while interacting. In this way, not only teacher-learner interaction was held in the classroom, but also learner-learner increased with time and started to happen spontaneously, as soon as students felt comfortable enough to express themselves. Consequently, when students discovered that speaking went beyond the school and exceeded the limits of the classroom, they experienced real life communication.

**Developing other abilities through interaction in EFL.** Interaction became essential in the EFL classroom due to the fact that it not only promoted language skills development; but also, because it had a special power when promoting other abilities such as self-confidence and

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trying without fear of failure which made learning an engaging experience and which went hand in hand with promoting speaking, listening, writing and reading in EFL learning.

Foreign language learners cannot speak the language or express themselves freely and fluently without some degree of self-confidence (Brown, 1994). As stated by Brown, self-confidence is one of the abilities which affects EFL learning. It has to do with the individual's perception of his or her abilities (Dörnyei, 2001) which becomes an observable event to others when the learner shows comfort, security, and success when using EFL. In this way, data showed that the use of gamification and activities which were intended to foster learner-group interaction had a positive impact on students' self-confidence:

- 4. **T:** It was great to see that most of students could speak without reading or hesitating
- 5. about the family's topic. They were able to describe their own families without help.

**[Field note #18. March 27th, 2018]**

As displayed in the excerpt above, students became gradually engaged and enthusiastic about participating orally during class time, this attitude was observable in most students' behavior with time and it made classes much more active, dynamic and it built up a conducive environment for interaction.

**S6:** This is my house. There is one... one chicken.

**T:** A chicken?

**S6:** Umm... a... kitchen?

**T:** Yes, a kitchen. What else?

**[Recording #16. This is my house: Oral description]**

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As displayed in the excerpt above, students also showed a great advance when trying to use different structures without fear of failure:

1. How old is he/ she? 21
2. Where is she/he studying? universidad pedagogica nacional
3. Where does he/ she live? nakanisa
4. Which city places did he/she mention? big park, mall, track
5. What were my mistakes when speaking? X Live why my speaking is nerviosam
6. Did you like this activity? Why? yes why fun and interactive and help pronotation

### [Student's artifacts sample: audio's comprehension worksheet]

This artifact illustrates how students associated meaning and vocabulary they had learnt previously to answer a question. This situation happened not only in writing, but also in speaking activities where students were intended to communicate among them. Trying without fear of failure turned into a common practice during class time and evidenced that a good learner is the one who can engage in communication in different contexts without having any problem (Norton and Toohey, 2001). This way of using the language is one of the main effects of promoting interaction, known as: negotiation of meaning. It is about making learners understand and being understood by their interlocutors (Yufrizal, 2001), this could imply code switching, associating meaning, using new vocabulary, etc. Therefore, this attitude of trying without fear of failure became essential when interacting and making EFL learning an involving experience where

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students could develop not only the four main skills of the language, but also other abilities which are also vital for encouraging students to communicate by using EFL.

Bearing these categories of analysis and findings in mind, the following chapter aims to present the conclusions of the research study, its implications, limitations, and some ideas and recommendations for further research which emerged along the development of the data analysis. All this in order to present the end point and completion chapter of this project.

### **CHAPTER VI**

This chapter deals with the main conclusions of the study in response to the research questions and objectives. It also includes the implications of the research for the school where the project was held, the participants, the ELT community in Colombia, and for the researcher. An account of the limitations and some suggestions for further research are also presented.

#### **Conclusions of the study**

As mentioned previously, this qualitative action research study aimed to determine the impact of using gamification as a pedagogical strategy in the strengthening of an engaging environment in order to improve interaction in EFL learning. Several findings emerged from the analysis process which came out from the data gathered, coded, and grouped in categories throughout the three cycles of the pedagogical intervention at the public school.

Consequently, in response to the research question: What is the impact of using Gamification as a pedagogical strategy in the strengthening of an engaging environment in order to improve interaction in an EFL classroom of fourth graders at IED Domingo Faustino

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Sarmiento? Data showed that gamification had a great impact on students' engagement in learning EFL. Thus, gamification principles and mechanics contribute to create a learner-centered involving experience, which embraced EFL learning as a practice where skill development did not occur in an isolated way, but where learning was enjoyable and allowed students to understand EFL learning as a continuous process. Moreover, the use of a personalized grading system where students could monitor their progress showed that learners were in a constant challenge where their improvement was mainly promoted by themselves and they knew how to go on to the next level, by doing their best all the time.

In this way, gamification was a key strategy for setting an engaging environment for students where learning could occur by being interconnected with their interests and likes. Hence, learning reached a new level when engaging students in terms of their behavior, participation, and emotions which emerged during class time. Those emotions such as curiosity, liveliness, and enthusiasm were essential for allowing students to feel really interested on learning, improving their skills and interacting among themselves. This is a proof that isolated grammar lessons were only writing takes place, are far from creating an experience which includes students as the center of the act of EFL learning. For this reason, identifying emotional, behavioral, and agentic engagement as vital when promoting interaction improvement was necessary to carry out different kinds of activities.

What is more, enhancing active interaction resulted in the improvement of the four main EFL skills. Interaction must be understood as a fundamental condition for EFL learning through which not only speaking, but also listening, writing and reading could be developed. Data showed that communication was possible when activities which promoted it and seemed

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appealing for students were held. Consequently, when students were asked to make interviews, work in groups, play games, or have short conversations; they had to write, read, listen, and speak. This encouraged them to develop all the abilities to perform within a communicative context. Furthermore, learner-learner interaction allowed learners to be part of real conversations where EFL was the means to express their ideas. As long as students were able to go from teacher- learner interaction only, to learner-learner and learner-group interaction as the center of each class; they could use the language instead of listening to it from teachers all the time.

Finally, interaction also strengthened students' perception of what EFL is for. When students' voices were recorded and all of them received a personalized answer from a pre-service teacher different from me, they had a real interaction by giving and understanding information from an unknown person with the purpose of communicating their personal information. That was the most positive impact interaction had on learners: they went from barely speaking with isolated vocabulary to have a short conversation using different affirmative sentences, vocabulary, questions, greetings, and farewells to communicate. They could discover what EFL is for: a means to understand the world through real communication.

In sum, this research study revealed that gamification had a positive impact on students' engagement in learning EFL, which influenced their perception, attitude, and performance when interacting with others. Although interaction did not happen in a totally spontaneous way yet, students showed a great advance in speaking, and writing with the clear goal of establishing a contact by interacting with others. Consequently, gamification set up an environment where students felt involved in interacting and they were immersed in an experience which allowed them to develop different skills and abilities which complemented their EFL learning process.

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### **Implications of the study**

The first implication which arose from the development of this project is related to the school where the research was conducted. EFL learners must be conceived at the institution as active participants of their own learning process, a change of mind towards what students can do in fourth and fifth grade must take place. Practices such as writing using isolated vocabulary should change if students are intended to make a real use of the foreign language. It is also important to highlight that due to the fact that EFL teachers at the institution have not obtained an EFL teaching degree, they do not have a clear understanding of the purpose of communicating and developing different skills instead of just writing; hence, the institution needs to work on training EFL teachers in order to expand their vision about implementing new strategies which conceive EFL as a real language, which is useful outside the school too.

Regarding the participants, although most of them showed great interest most of time and remained engaged, they must continue working on their own process at home and rethink their commitment with their learning processes, so they will not be negatively affected when they come back to the traditional grading system. Moreover, as they already discovered what they are capable of, they should take the initiative to speak spontaneously in EFL and overcome the boundaries of the school for its usage.

There is another implication linked to the ELT community in Colombia. As gamification is a strategy which has not been deeply studied in the country, it is necessary to continue implementing it as part of EFL teaching, as it makes possible to promote the development of the different skills. Furthermore, the main necessity is to include interaction as a fundamental condition for EFL learning. Teachers cannot continue working on writing and vocabulary all the

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time. It is necessary to integrate all skills and work with all of them as a whole, which allows students to be part of today's massive communication world.

Lastly, some implications emerged from the development of this project for me, as the teacher-researcher. The main one is related to leading an action research study where I had a real immersion along with the participants, this allowed me to know the problem closely and to notice the impact the project had on students. This aspect helped me to discover through research a way to continue my learning process. On the other hand, facing daily situations at a real public school helped me to live and understand the profession of being an EFL teacher in a real context. Finally, this research process allowed me to discover some gaps in my academic training which I must continue working on.

### **Limitations of the study**

The experience of conducting this study was gratifying and enriching from an academic dimension, but also from the personal one. Nevertheless, there were some limitations regarding time and the homeroom's teacher help when applying my project. First, due to the institution's schedule, field trips, and teachers' activities, students were doing another kind of activities at the same time we had the EFL classes. For that reason, the pedagogical proposal had to be modified to fit the time we had to develop the project. On the other hand, the homeroom teacher did not help me to develop activities where interaction was the main purpose, as she did not consider speaking and oral interaction too important; on the contrary, she preferred to do writing activities all the time. Thus, in some classes she asked me to modify some activities.

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### **Further research**

This research study characterized the impact of using gamification in order to engage students in a transition between teacher-learner to learner-learner interaction during class time. However, further exploration in this field could study thoroughly the role that self-confidence has on students' EFL learning process and how it improves with time. On the other hand, it would be interesting to develop a bigger project where students could not only interact with a person from the same country using EFL, but with a foreigner, so they can broaden their conception of what EFL is for. A last topic for research could include a deep analysis of the different kinds of engagement and their influence on the development of EFL skills.

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GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Students' Survey N° 1

STUDENTS' SURVEY  
CYCLE 1

Name: Angel Felipe Cycle #1  
Date: Today is today 6 of November Grade: 402

-¿Qué tan divertidas y diferentes fueron las actividades? ¿Por qué?

Por que se son diferentes y no iguales

-¿Qué tan difícil fue realizar esas actividades? ¿Por qué?

Too easy Nicely challenging Too challenging

por que eramos desorganizado y hablabamos mucho

-¿Has hablado e interactuado con tus compañeros y tu profesora en inglés? ¿Cuándo?

cuando ismos lo

-¿Usar un avatar y una tabla de puntaje ha sido útil para la clase? ¿Por qué?

si porque uno

de las entrevistas si o no

- ¿Qué temas y vocabulario has aprendido últimamente en la clase de inglés?

a. Physical description b. Emotions c. Family d. Farm animals  
e. Strengths and weaknesses

- ¿Crees que tu nivel de inglés a mejorado o desmejorado durante las últimas clases? ¿Por qué?

he mejorado porque la profesora nos enseñamos cosas

# GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

## APPENDIX B: Students' Survey N°2

**STUDENTS' SURVEY  
CYCLE 2**

Name: *Sofia Martin Torres* Cycle #2

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: *502*

-¿Qué es lo que más te motiva a dar lo mejor de ti mismo y a esforzarte en la clase de inglés?

*Me motiva la profesión que quiero ser cuando grande*

- Durante la clase de inglés ¿qué significa para ti cada uno de los colores de las monedas entregadas?

*Amarillo = que me fue bien Verde = que me esfuerce*  
*Rojo = que no me esfuerce*

<p>- Durante la clase de inglés ¿Has hablado en inglés con tus compañeros y profesora? ¿Cuándo?</p> <p>  </p> <p><i>En los audios</i></p>	<p>-¿Has comunicado tus ideas en inglés a otras personas fuera del salón de clase? ¿Cuándo?</p> <p>  </p> <p><i>Yo ablo con mi hermana mayor</i></p>
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- ¿Has mejorado durante la clase de inglés? ¿En qué habilidades?

*SI* ~~X~~ *NO*

a. Speaking   b. Writing   c. Reading   **d. Listening**  
e. Vocabulary

- ¿Te gusta hablar en inglés? ¿Crees que es importante? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuándo es importante hacerlo?

*Si por que cuando salgo del país*

# GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

## APPENDIX C: Field Note Sample



### PRACTICA ASISTIDA- 20182 FIELD NOTE FORMAT



#	DESCRIPTION	COMMENTS
<p><b>FIELD NOTE # 3</b>  <b>NAME OF THE OBSERVER/TEACHER: Laura Esquivel</b>  <b>HOMEROOM TEACHER: Ceniaida García</b>  <b>NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 30</b>  <b>DATE: September 04, 2018</b>  <b>LESSON PLAN: #2 I like me: Do I have superpowers and Achilles' heels?</b></p>		
1 2 3 4 5 6	<p>During the first hour of class, we went out of the classroom to play the game "what makes me special" in which the teacher said a characteristic which could be a weakness or a strength. Students should decide if that characteristic was a positive or negative one for them and they should run to cross the line and stand in weakness or strength as it corresponds.</p>	<p>This activity allowed children to work and interact as a group and also individually. They showed great interest on deciding between strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, they were able to remember the vocabulary and structures already studied; because of this, in most of the cases they did not ask about meaning but they understood the foreign language itself.</p>
7 8 9	<p>We also played the games "chino cappuccino" and "double this that" in which students worked in pairs. I asked them to change pairs twice and most of them did it without any problem.</p>	<p>As these games were played in the previous class, children already knew most of the song and they could sing and repeat by themselves. It was evident that they enjoyed working in pairs and speaking English.</p>
10 11 12	<p>Children asked repeatedly "teacher ¿hoy podemos subir de nivel?"</p>	<p>This question showed two key aspects: students understood how the leaderboard and coins work and they are interested and excited about getting their coins.</p>
13 14 15	<p>I placed some weaknesses and strengths on the board and students classified them. Most of them did an excellent job; however, it was necessary to repeat each adjective for all the class.</p>	<p>During this activity, some of the students who do not participate frequently, went to the board and made a big effort to speak in front of their classmates.</p>
16 17 18 19 20 21	<p>Students worked on worksheet #1 in which they recognized the vocabulary and structures about the topic of the class and they were able to identify their own weaknesses and strengths by coloring strengths in blue and weaknesses in red. We all worked as a team by going step by step and reading each sentence on the worksheet, this allowed us to understand together every sentence.</p>	<p>It was very important for students to be honest with themselves and recognize their own personal characteristics. They were engaged at coloring each sentence with the respective color. Additionally, they wanted to read the sentences and appeal aloud about their weaknesses and strengths even though I told them not to do it.</p>
22 23 24 25	<p>First coins were delivered for achieving the objectives of lesson plan #1. As I told students that I was going to deliver the coins until the end of the class, they were anxious and asking about the coins during class time.</p>	<p>These first coins are evidently a powerful motivator for students. All of them obtained yellow and green coins because of their participation during the last two classes. They were happy about pasting their coins and they asked when they will have the next coins</p>

# GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

## APPENDIX D: Consent Form Sample



Bogotá, 13 de febrero de 2018

Estimados padres de familia, la presente comunicación se da con el fin de extender la invitación y solicitar su autorización para la participación de su hijo en el proyecto de investigación que se llevará a cabo por parte de estudiantes de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional en la Institución Educativa Distrital Domingo Faustino Sarmiento en el área de inglés. Para llevar a cabo este proyecto de investigación se realizarán observaciones y acompañamiento de las clases de inglés y sólo si usted así lo autoriza, su hijo será entrevistado y/o fotografiado en algunas ocasiones. La participación en esta investigación es completamente voluntaria. Igualmente, al aceptar, usted podrá retirarse del proyecto en cualquier momento sin que eso lo perjudique en ninguna forma.

Agradecemos su colaboración, interés y participación en este proyecto.

Cordialmente,

Laura Milena Esquivel Gómez. Estudiante de noveno semestre de Lic. En Español e Inglés-Universidad Pedagógica Nacional.

Yo \_\_\_\_\_ mayor de edad, identificado con Cédula de Ciudadanía N° \_\_\_\_\_ de \_\_\_\_\_, con domicilio en la ciudad de \_\_\_\_\_, autorizo expresamente la participación del estudiante \_\_\_\_\_ del curso \_\_\_\_\_ en este proyecto.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma



Bogotá, 13 de febrero de 2018

Estimados padres de familia, la presente comunicación se da con el fin de extender la invitación y solicitar su autorización para la participación de su hijo en el proyecto de investigación que se llevará a cabo por parte de estudiantes de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional en la Institución Educativa Distrital Domingo Faustino Sarmiento en el área de inglés. Para llevar a cabo este proyecto de investigación se realizarán observaciones y acompañamiento de las clases de inglés y sólo si usted así lo autoriza, su hijo será entrevistado y/o fotografiado en algunas ocasiones. La participación en esta investigación es completamente voluntaria. Igualmente, al aceptar, usted podrá retirarse del proyecto en cualquier momento sin que eso lo perjudique en ninguna forma.

Agradecemos su colaboración, interés y participación en este proyecto.

Cordialmente,

Laura Milena Esquivel Gómez. Estudiante de noveno semestre de Lic. En Español e Inglés-Universidad Pedagógica Nacional.

Yo Olivia Gamboa G mayor de edad, identificado con Cédula de Ciudadanía N° 51322342 de Bogotá, con domicilio en la ciudad de Bogotá, autorizo expresamente la participación del estudiante Jadeth Megollón S del curso 402 en este proyecto.

Olivia Gamboa G

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma

## GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

### APPENDIX E: Lesson Plan N°1

<b>LESSON PLAN 1: Avatar: My own representation of myself.</b>				
<p><b>INSTITUTION:</b> IED Domingo Faustino Sarmiento <b>LEVEL:</b> 4<sup>th</sup> grade, beginner.  <b>NUMBER OF STUDENTS:</b> 29  <b>DURATION:</b> 2 lessons= 3 hours of class.  <b>RESEARCH QUESTION:</b> What is the impact of using Gamification as a pedagogical strategy to enhance self-confidence in order to improve interaction in an EFL classroom of fourth graders at IED Domingo Faustino Sarmiento?</p>				
<p><b>OBJECTIVES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To introduce some of the elements of gamification as a pedagogical strategy to be included in the EFL classes.</li> <li>- To develop students' self-confidence in relation to their own perception of themselves and their specific characteristics.</li> <li>- To enhance students' interaction using the foreign language to talk about themselves.</li> </ul>				
PROCEDURE	INTERACTION	GAMIFICATION ELEMENTS	LENGHT	MATERIALS
- Each student will choose a colored paper from a bag. The papers contain adjectives to describe physical appearance. They will have to get into a group with the partners who have the same color of paper and they will try to find out the meanings of those adjectives.	Student- student interaction	-	<b>20 mins</b>	-Colored papers with adjectives
-Students will share what they think about the meaning of the adjectives. The teacher will write the meanings and correct them, explaining that those adjectives have to do with physical appearance.	Teacher-student interaction	-	<b>15 mins</b>	-Board and markers
-Teacher will present some images of characters from videogames to the students. They will name them and describe their characteristics by using the adjectives from the previous activity.	Teacher- student interaction	-Avatars	<b>15 mins</b>	-Printed images of the characters/avatars

## GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

-Students will start creating their own avatar for the leaderboard in the classroom. They will start by recognizing their specific characteristics to include them into the avatars; for this, they will write down the characteristics they like and the ones they would like to change.	Individual work	-Avatars	<b>20 mins</b>	-Notebook
-Teacher will explain to the students that there are different kinds of shapes, colors, and materials they can use to create their avatars by placing the materials in front of the classroom. Students will be free to choose what they like to create their avatars with but taking into account the characteristics they found in the previous activity.	Teacher- student interaction	-Avatars	<b>30 mins</b>	-Different materials such as colors, glue, glitter, cardboard...
-Students will complete their avatars by creating a profile which includes a creative name and some characteristics of them. The teacher will explain where the avatars will be placed in the classroom and how they will be functioning in the EFL classes.	Teacher-student interaction.	-Avatar profile and description  -Leaderboard	<b>20 mins</b>	-Worksheet about avatars' profile.
-Students will show and talk to the whole group about the work they have made by creating their avatars and their profiles. They will use the vocabulary they learnt to describe the physical appearance and personal characteristics of their avatars.	Student- student interaction	-Avatar profile and description  -Leaderboard	<b>40 mins</b>	-Avatars and profiles.
-Each student will select the avatar that he/she liked the most from their partners' work. They will interact between them to tell their classmates what they liked the most of their avatars.	Student- student interaction	Avatar profile and description  -Leaderboard	<b>20 mins</b>	-Avatars and profiles.

# GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

## APPENDIX F: Scorecard

**MY SCORE**

**MY NAME IS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPER MARIO**

**1st LEVEL**

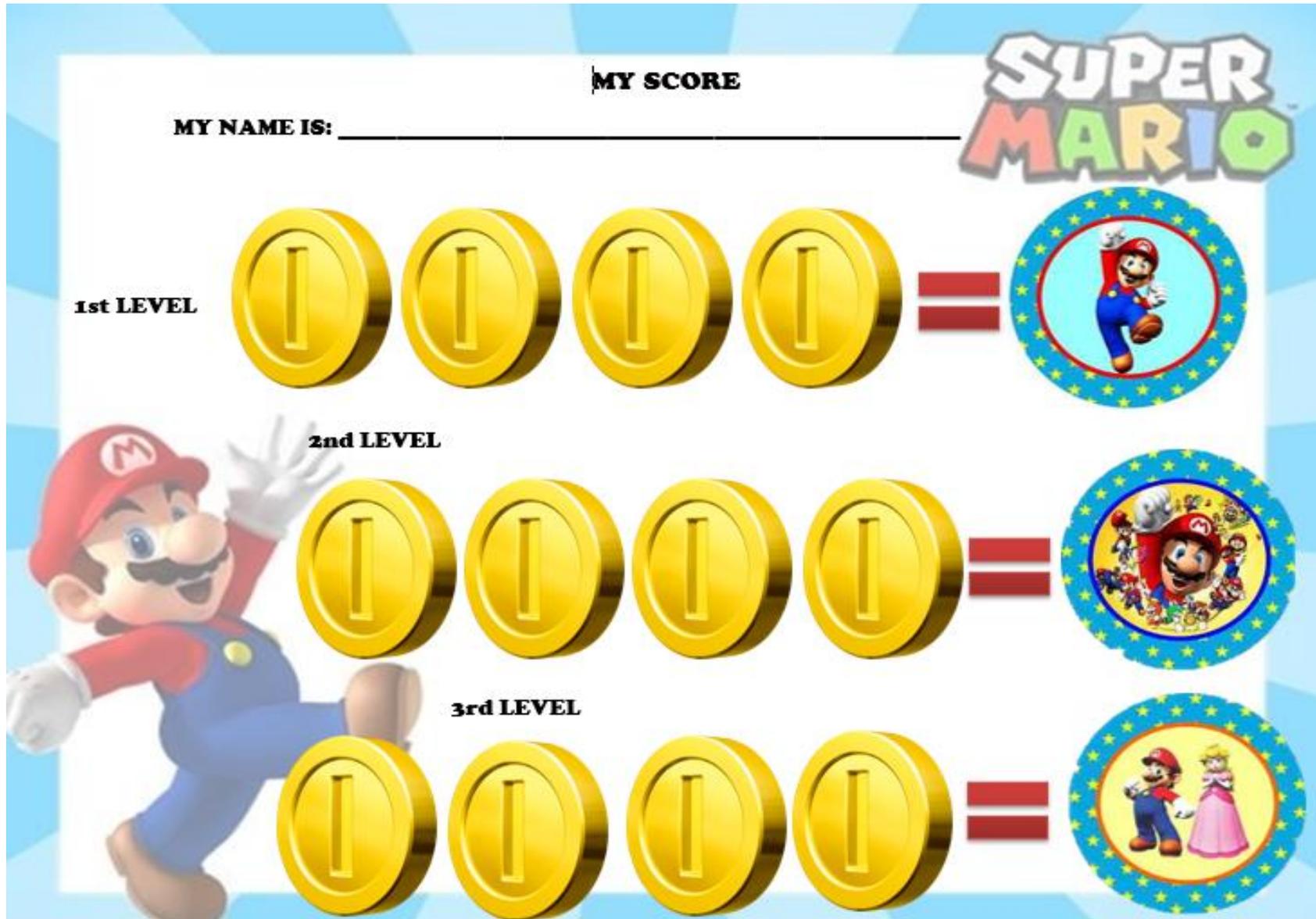
4 gold coins = 1 level (Mario)

**2nd LEVEL**

4 gold coins = 1 level (Mario and friends)

**3rd LEVEL**

4 gold coins = 1 level (Mario and Princess Peach)

The scorecard is set against a light blue background with a white central area. At the top right, the words 'SUPER MARIO' are written in a colorful, bubbly font. Below this, there are three rows representing levels. Each row starts with a label ('1st LEVEL', '2nd LEVEL', '3rd LEVEL') followed by four gold coins. A red equals sign follows the coins, leading to a circular reward icon. The 1st level icon shows Mario. The 2nd level icon shows Mario surrounded by other characters. The 3rd level icon shows Mario and Princess Peach. On the left side of the 2nd and 3rd level rows, there is a large illustration of Mario in his classic red hat and blue overalls, waving.

# GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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## APPENDIX G: Teacher's Interview



### Universidad Pedagógica Nacional de Colombia IED Técnico Domingo Faustino Sarmiento Entrevista Docente



1. ¿Cuál es su especialidad o área de formación específica?
2. ¿Qué experiencia posee en la enseñanza de la lengua inglesa?
3. ¿Utiliza alguna metodología específica? ¿Cómo desarrolla generalmente sus clases de inglés?
4. ¿Cuál es el objetivo principal de la clase de inglés?
5. ¿Qué tipo de actividades utiliza en sus clases?
6. ¿Qué tipo de materiales utiliza en sus clases?
7. ¿Cómo es el comportamiento de los estudiantes en clase?
8. ¿Qué problemas dificultan el normal desarrollo de la clase?
9. ¿Cuáles son las necesidades particulares del grupo en cuanto a relaciones interpersonales e interacción en el aula?
10. Para usted ¿Qué opinión tienen los estudiantes sobre los temas y las metodologías manejadas en clase?
11. ¿Hay algún proyecto que se maneje en el área de inglés específicamente? ¿Cuál? ¿Por qué y cómo se escogió el mismo?
12. Desde su punto de vista ¿Los estudiantes logran utilizar la lengua extranjera de una manera eficiente según lo planteado en los estándares básicos de competencias? ¿Por qué?
13. ¿Qué influencia tiene el uso de la lengua materna en el aula de clase?
14. ¿Qué uso hacen los estudiantes de la lengua extranjera en el aula de clase? ¿En qué momentos y para qué la utilizan?
15. ¿Cuáles son las mayores fortalezas y debilidades de los estudiantes en cuanto a las habilidades en lengua extranjera?
16. ¿Hay algún estudiante con necesidades especiales en el grupo? ¿Cómo se aborda la inclusión educativa del estudiante desde la clase de inglés?

## GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

### APPENDIX G: Teacher's Interview

<b>TEACHER'S INTERVIEW #1</b>		
<b>NAME OF THE INTERVIEWER: Laura Milena Esquivel Gomez</b>		
<b>HOMEROOM TEACHER: Cenaida García</b>		
<b>DATE: April 5, 2018</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>TEACHER'S ANSWERS</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
1	El área artística, yo soy licenciada en preescolar pero mi especialidad es artística, el folclor.	Este es uno de los aspectos que puede tener mayor influencia en la clase de EFL dado que la profesora no está formada específicamente en el área.
2	Hace cuántos años no me acuerdo pero son como más de 7, porque a mí me ha gustado el inglés pero veo que a los profes les cuesta un poquito de trabajo porque pues nosotros no tenemos esa especialidad o esa capacitación en inglés, entonces yo lo poco que sé y lo que entiendo lo enseño. Como yo lo entiendo lo he enseñado fácil, aquí toca como partes como despacio... Además yo no tengo inglés fluido. Recibimos una capacitación en la Universidad Distrital con la secretaria de educación.	En cuanto a los años de experiencia, aunque la profesora ya tiene bastantes años enseñando inglés; su práctica no se ha visto mayormente enriquecida por otra capacitación en el área. Por esta razón, ella reconoce que su nivel de lengua no es fluido y de la misma manera lo enseña.
3	Cada año pensamos en un proyecto de aula, me gusta es como relacionarlo como las temáticas de inglés. En el plan de estudios hay unos núcleos temáticos, yo adapto eso al proyecto. Pero involucramos también otro vocabulario, hoy por ejemplo fue con lo del salón de clase...	Aunque el proyecto de aula es un aspecto bastante mencionado por la profesora, este no se trabaja de manera continua en clase según lo observado. El proyecto suele estar un poco desconectado de las demás actividades.
4	Bueno, aparte de guías, a veces con internet pero el internet falla. No les pedimos libro porque nos toca sujetarnos a lo que dice el libro... También que participen los niños, que hablen.	La profesora menciona el uso del internet; sin embargo, este es un recurso que se usa poco en clase. Además, también se ha observado que los niños tampoco hablan entre ellos.
5	Cuando podemos ir al aula de informática, la grabadora, a veces les pido láminas... Según como uno vaya pensando el desarrollo de cada clase.	El uso de guías y cuaderno es notorio y frecuente.
6	Que los niños aprendan, pero el aprender la segunda lengua como lo enseñamos nosotros yo pienso que no es; porque yo no les hablo todo el tiempo en inglés. Si todas las áreas fueran en inglés, eso sería la segunda lengua... Pero pues la idea es que reconozcan un poquito del inglés y pues que no lleguen al bachillerato como tan de ceros.	En este punto es importante resaltar que la profesora hace claridad en el hecho de que el inglés no se enseña como segunda lengua sino como lengua extranjera. Sin embargo, para ella el inglés tiene fines únicamente académicos y no comunicativos.
7	A ellos les gusta, les gusta cuando va otra persona, les fascina porque generalmente ustedes les hacen más actividades y a ellos les gusta.	Este aspecto es esencial dado que la profesora reconoce la importancia del practicante en el aula.
8	Que el niño no estudia, ellos buscan de internet y no aprenden. La idea es que lo poquito que veamos lo apliquen y lo aprendan, yo quiero promover el uso del diccionario. La indisciplina afecta porque en inglés necesitamos concentración.	Este obstáculo ha sido observado y registrado anteriormente, los estudiantes buscan ejemplos de oraciones en internet en lugar de construirlas por sí mismos.
9	Pues a mí me gusta mucho es tratar de saber qué pasó y fundamental que pidan disculpas.	Las relaciones interpersonales son un punto positivo en el aula.
10	A ellos les gusta, la dificultad es que no hacen el deber de estudiar y leer y hacer tareas en casa. No se interesan en casa y el inglés es repita, haga y lea. Ellos aquí escasamente esperan a lo de la clase.	La falta de compromiso es un elemento que influye bastante en la clase de EFL.

**GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM**

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**APPENDIX H: Recordings' Transcription Sample**

<b>RECORDING #2</b>		
<b>LESSON PLAN: #2: I like me: Do I have superpowers and Achilles' heels?</b>		
<b>TEACHER'S NAME: Laura Milena Esquivel Gómez</b>		
<b>STUDENTS: 1-6</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
1	S1: My name is Samuel. I am 10 years old. I like my hero	<p>This activity was key for students' interaction. They enjoy speaking in the foreign language next to their classmates and it is evident that they feel comfortable when using known structures for them. However, when I asked them to include the structure "I like" the majority of them used it correctly by adding some verbs that they had already learned.</p> <p>Even though during this activity each student spoke individually and by his/her own, different kinds of interaction were held such as: learner-group and learner-teacher.</p> <p>Speaking activities are very helpful to include Maria José as part of the whole group. Nevertheless, the procedure with her is to tell her the structure so she can repeat.</p> <p>It is relevant to highlight that students are able to create structure to speak about themselves to others.</p>
2	academia and to sleep.	
3	T: Very good. You go.	
4	S2: My name is Nataly Sofia. I am 10 years old. I like... emm...	
5	T: You can say I like to swim or dance...	
6	S2: ¿Cómo se dice patinar?	
7	T: Skating	
8	S2: I like skating and eat.	
9	T: OK. You go Maria Camila	
10	S3: My name is Maria Camila. I am 10 years old. I like to dance	
11	and sing. T: Ok. Very good. Super! Maria José, ven sigues tú.	
12	S4: ¿Yo?	
13	T: Si tú. A ver dime "my name is Maria José"	
14	S4: My name is Maria José	
15	T: I am... ¿cuántos años tienes?	
16	S4: 8	
17	T: I am eight years old.	
18	S4: I am eight years old.	
19	T: Excellent! You go!	
20	S5: My name is Juan David. I am years 10. I like play y I like read. S6: My name is Nicol. I am 9 years old. I like swim and draw.	
21	T: Draw! Very good!	

# GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

## APPENDIX I: Students' Artifacts Sample



**GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM**

**APPENDIX I: Students' Artifacts Sample**

Today is Tuesday - 25 twenty five of September



My wheel of emotions



1. I feel Sad
2. I feel Happy
3. I feel Surprised
4. I feel Hungry

5. I feel Relaxed
6. I feel Confident
7. I feel Tired
8. I feel worried

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# GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

## APPENDIX I: Students' Artifacts Sample



**GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM**

**APPENDIX I: Students' Artifacts Sample**

-Today is Tuesday 21 of August

My Avatar's Profile



- Pich has blonde hair
- I like Pich eyes (Peach)
- Pich is pretty
- I like Pich's mouth
- Pich has a pretty mouth

21 AUG. 2018

3

**Strengths**

- I am creative
- I am Brave

**Weaknesses**

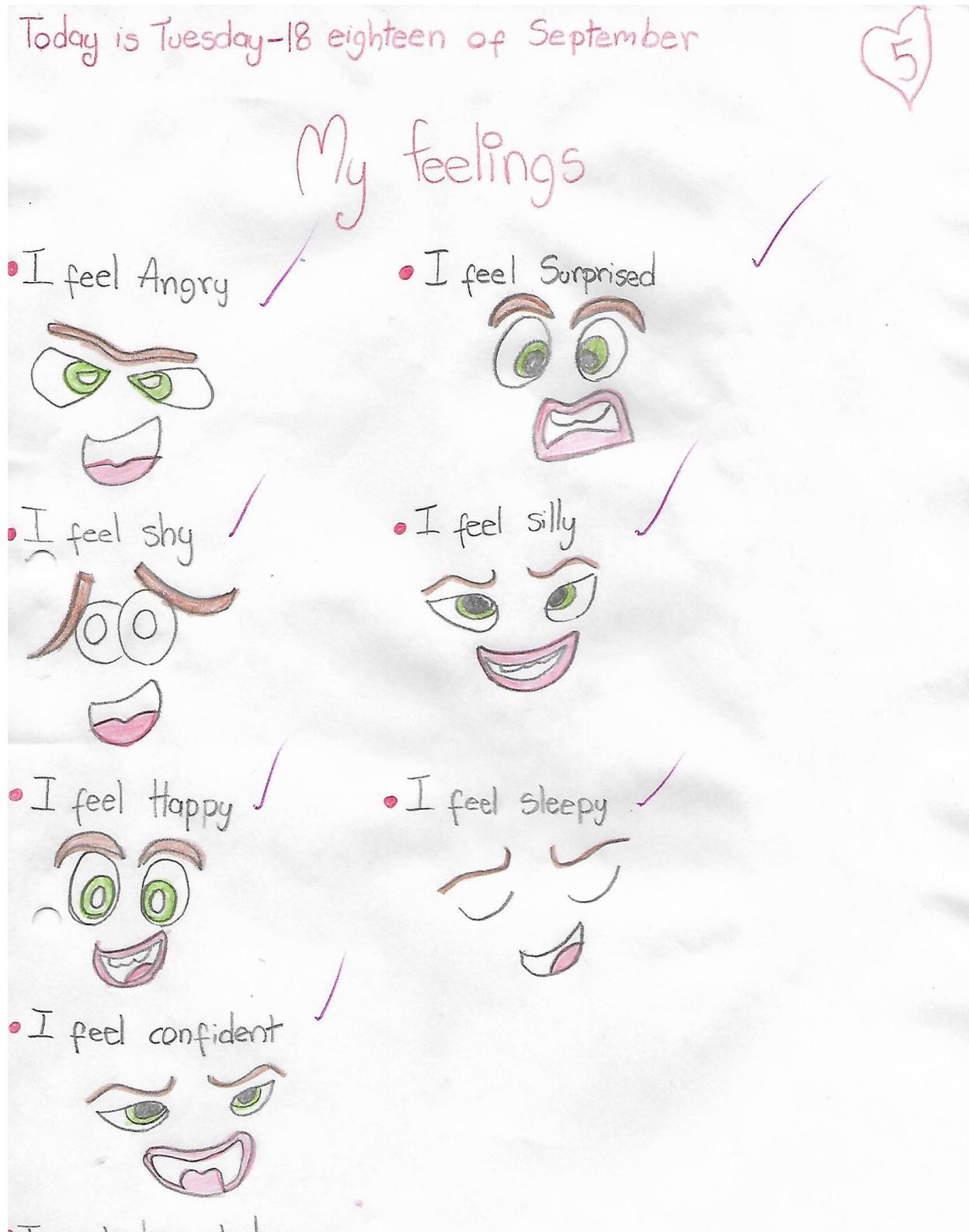
- I am talktive
- I am Irresponsible

04 SET. 2018

- ♥-she feels Happy
- ♥-she feels Hungry
- ♥-she feels Lonely
- ♥-she feels Confident

**GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM**

**APPENDIX E: Students' Artifacts Sample**



# GAMIFICATION: A MISSION TO FOSTER STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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## APPENDIX I: Students' Artifacts Sample

