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SCHOOL OF PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN
LANGUAGES-ENGLISH**

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Development of digital learning activities for EFL vocabulary acquisition among fifth graders at a private school in the city of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas in the Scholastic Year 2025-2026.

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We certify that this research project was presented by **Campuzano Espinoza, Jhon Alejandro** as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the **Bachelor's Degree in EFL Pedagogy**.

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I would like to dedicate this achievement primarily to my family, to my parents, Jorge Enrique Campuzano and Marlene Espinoza, to my brother Jorge Luis Campuzano Espinoza, and to the rest of my relatives who have supported me throughout this journey with their advice, words, and wisdom. For shaping me into the person I am today through both good and bad experiences.

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary acquisition and retention are fundamental to the successful development of English as a foreign language (EFL) in young learners, but there are various ways of presenting and consolidating vocabulary in the classroom. This is a descriptive case study that investigates vocabulary teaching approaches and the pedagogical design of digital learning activities used to facilitate vocabulary learning in a fifth-grade EFL setting. Teaching approaches, activity sequences, student participation, and the role played by online resources were recorded through classroom observations and teacher interviews. The results show that vocabulary teaching integrates traditional methodologies with tasks that use new technologies, although the use of digital tools is not always based on pedagogical reasons. Digital activities that include games and interactivity were positively associated with student participation and more repeated exposure to vocabulary, while discrepancies in activity design could hinder long-term retention. This study demonstrates that digitally supported vocabulary activities that are well designed and closely aligned with learning objectives, as well as including recycling, generate better learning outcomes with young learners of English as a foreign language.

Key words:

vocabulary, digital learning, student engagement, young learners, TEFL.

INTRODUCTION

English is widely now spoken as a global language and plays an essential role in educational, business, and social fields and in communication for learning and accessing information beyond the borders of the native environment of the learners. Vocabulary is indispensable in learning a language, and it is necessary for the four language abilities of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students who do not possess a strong core of lexical knowledge will find it difficult to either fully understand or accurately convey what they are saying (Mukhtar & Ali, 2023). Findings from studies of second language vocabulary learning also consistently indicate that vocabulary is a good predictor of overall language proficiency and is considered as important as other linguistic subsystems by teachers and learners alike (Alshumrani, 2024).

Nevertheless, numerous young EFL learners continue to face overwhelming problems in learning and remembering vocabulary. These take the form of poor definition of words, problems of recall of word meaning, and barriers to using vocabulary in communication (Adakhiel, 2021). Traditional classroom methods, such focus as on rote learning and out-of context practise, are still commonplace in many countries, but they tend not to captivate learners' attention or result in profound, practical knowledge of lexis (Alshumrani, 2024).

In a private school in, Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, Ecuador, it is evident that fifth grade students continue to struggle with learning vocabulary in their English lessons. Teachers have observed that traditional teaching methods could be a factor in these troubles. However, a formal, documented study of current vocabulary teaching practices in this context is noticeable in lack of knowledge. The absence of such descriptive information limits our knowledge of the realities of the classroom and prevents us from making informed interpretations about what the students are actually experiencing in their learning.

This study fills this gap by investigating fifth-grade English teaching vocabulary classroom itself, especially new word presentation and new word practice in the class. In so doing, the study intends to make explicit the teaching and learning vocabulary procedures employed in this educational setting.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Vocabulary learning is fundamental to teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), as it forms the basis for the development of all other language skills. However, many young EFL learners, especially those at the beginner level, struggle to acquire and retain new words, which limits their ability to communicate effectively in the foreign language. In Ecuador, vocabulary teaching continues to rely mainly on traditional methods, such as rote memorisation, textbook exercises, and teacher supervision in the classroom; none of these types of learning are very effective in promoting long-term vocabulary retention and providing students with the much-needed opportunity to learn vocabulary in a meaningful, interesting, and contextually appropriate way (Haque et al., 2024).

At a private school in the city of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, a group of fifth-grade students are having difficulty with vocabulary acquisition during EFL classes. While traditional pedagogical practices are presumed to be the cause, there is currently a significant data gap; no qualitative or quantitative research exists documenting how vocabulary is taught in this classroom. Furthermore, there is no registered information regarding the integration of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) tools in the EFL lessons. This lack of documented evidence makes it difficult to determine how current practices align with modern EFL standards and, consequently, to define the pedagogical and technical parameters that would characterize a digital intervention for this specific population.

Therefore, this research aims to analyse the current instructional context to establish a set of pedagogical and technical requirements can serve as a guide for teachers and curriculum designers in the selection and design of digital vocabulary activities for young learners of English as a foreign language.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What teaching methods and strategies does the instructor currently use for vocabulary acquisition in the fifth-grade classroom?
2. How do the current teaching practices align with modern contextualized EFL standards for young learners?
3. What are the pedagogical characteristics and technical requirements for a set of digital activities designed to address the vocabulary learning needs for the fifth graders at a school in Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas in Ecuador?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Main Objective

To determine the pedagogical and technical requirements for digital learning activities by analyzing the alignment of current instructional methodologies with modern EFL standards, at a private school in Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas.

Specific Objectives

1. To describe the teacher's current methods and strategies for teaching vocabulary in fifth grade.
2. To analyze how the current teaching practices align with modern contextualized EFL standards and principles for young learners.

3. Determine the pedagogical characteristics and technical requirements for a set of digital activities designed to address the vocabulary learning needs of fifth graders at the private school in Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, Ecuador.

JUSTIFICATION

Vocabulary knowledge is a cornerstone of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, as it supports the development of the four main language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For young learners, early and effective vocabulary acquisition is essential for their overall linguistic development. However, traditional teaching methods often rely on memorisation and decontextualised exercises, which lead to passive rather than active acquisition and limit students' opportunities to use new words in meaningful communication (Melisa & Yuliana, 2024).

In recent years, literature has shown a growing presence of digital resources for teaching English. Online games and interactive materials offer contextualised and motivating opportunities to practise vocabulary (Castillo-Cuesta and Quiñónez-Beltrán, 2022; Cuenca-Calva et al., 2024). However, there is still a need to systematise the pedagogical and technical characteristics of these digital environments, particularly for young learners in the Ecuadorian context. Currently, there is a lack of documented research that bridges the gap between modern digital theory and the specific realities of school classrooms in cities such as Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas.

This study is justified by its potential to transform “theoretical” digital standards into practical pedagogical parameters tailored to a specific educational context. By describing current methodologies and identifying the requirements for effective digital interventions, this research provides a roadmap for teachers and curriculum designers. Ultimately, this work contributes to the professionalisation of teaching English as a foreign language at the aforementioned school, offering an organised framework for selecting

and creating digital activities that promote meaningful and long-term vocabulary retention.

CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocabulary Acquisition

EFL vocabulary development

Vocabulary development is widely documented as a fundamental part of learning English as a foreign language, as lexical knowledge directly supports the processes of comprehension and interpretation of messages. In their analysis of reading performance in English as a foreign language, Mukhtar et al. (2023) point out that vocabulary knowledge functions as an essential support for understanding written texts, as learners rely on lexical recognition to construct meaning from the information received. From this perspective, vocabulary growth is described in the literature as a structural component of linguistic competence that contributes to performance in all linguistic skills, rather than functioning independently.

In recent years, research has also examined the effect of individual word characteristics on the vocabulary learning trajectories of students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Studies demonstrate that word acquisition rates are not constant for all items but are influenced by quantifiable factors such as frequency of use, linguistic similarity, and semantic variability. These aspects are designated as predictors of acquisition difficulty and retention stability in long-term vocabulary learning models (Zeng et al., 2022). The same line of evidence highlights sustained vocabulary development as a function of repeated and frequent exposure and contextual interactions with target items across all modes of learning.

In general, research on vocabulary learning in English as a foreign language describes vocabulary growth as a gradual development that depends on context, through repeated and contextualised exposure to target lexical items, combined with the active participation of learners in the selection of these items, which is based on constructs from the situational and sociolinguistic dimensions and therefore implies the theoretical rationale underlying structured and focused vocabulary teaching and activity planning.

Importance of Vocabulary in Language Learning

Studies on second language (L2) and foreign language learning indicate that vocabulary knowledge is essential for students to understand and convey meaning. Recognition of lexical items in spoken and written language is extremely important for correct comprehension, as they are the unit of language identified and interpreted in context. The influence of poor vocabulary on language learners' message processing and meaning extraction is profound, as it negatively affects their overall language skills. In this sense, vocabulary is considered the basic unit through which the target language can be approached and processed (Zheng, 2024).

Vocabulary knowledge is also strongly linked to language development, as well as contributing to comprehension. Learners with a richer lexical knowledge are more likely to express their ideas clearly and actively participate in communicative activities, while a limited vocabulary always have a negative impact on accuracy and fluency in speaking and writing. Research suggests that vocabulary development is reinforced through multiple exposure to words and active engagement with them in educational activities. For example, Shin and Kim (2023) demonstrate that exposure frequency and depth of processing conditions have an effect on vocabulary learning outcomes, and Min and Li (2025) show that longitudinal vocabulary development is positively related to written production in L2. Overall, the above findings can best be explained by the hypothesis that lexical knowledge facilitates both receptive and productive aspects of language use and directly leads to improvements in students' overall communicative illocutionary competence.

Vocabulary acquisition Theories

Involvement Load Hypothesis

The involvement load hypothesis suggests that vocabulary is learned on a semantic scale, which is a function of three components: need (the learner's motivation to use the word), search (the learner's effort to find the meaning or form of a word), and evaluation (the learner measures the appropriateness of the word in a context). This combination is believed to

predict learners' mental effort investment in vocabulary tasks (Liu and Reynolds, 2022). In other words, the effect of learning is more related to the depth of cognitive activity after exposure than to the amount of exposure to new word forms (Liu and Reynolds, 2022).

Studies have shown that meaningful use of language, such as making decisions on language use, leads to better retention than recognition or repetition practice. High-involvement activities, especially those that involve need, search, and evaluation, have consistently been found to produce the strongest gains in vocabulary learning in EFL contexts (Liu & Reynolds, 2022; Qin, 2023). For example, Qin (2023) observed participants in tasks with higher involvement load significantly better retained the targeted vocabulary items compared with those in the low load task, and Shin and Kim (2023) found that greater exposure frequency along with different types of activity repetition and deeper processing lead to significantly positive effects on vocabulary learning of young EFL learners. These results stress the importance of cognitive involvement and repeated meaningful processing in learning vocabulary effectively.

Multimedia and Multimodal Learning Theory

The multimedia and multimodal learning theory suggests that learning improves when information and messages are integrated through verbal and visual channels, compared to when they are presented through single channels. Research on multimedia learning has shown that integrating text with relevant pictorial, verbal, and visual cues facilitate learners' construction of a coherent mental model of new learning material (Mayer, 2024).

Research on multimedia cognition indicates that dual-channel presentations can enhance learning and retention by allowing separate processing of the information load to be learned. If designed properly, multimedia materials can minimise unnecessary cognitive load and focus learners' attention on what is important in the information to be learned (Mayer, 2024). But what matters for effectiveness is the quality of instructional design, not just the presence of multimedia components.

Depth of Processing Theory

The depth of processing theory suggests that information is more likely to be remembered if learners process meaning at the semantic level, as opposed to when they process only phonological or orthographic information. In the process of vocabulary acquisition, deep processing of vocabulary takes place when learners infer meaning, relate words to what they know and apply them in a sensible way instead of going through pure oral/aural meaning repetition (Qin, 2023).

Studies on different kinds of vocabulary exercises have demonstrated that meaning-based tasks (e.g. production of contextualised sentences, semantic comparison, categorisation) help to sustain vocabulary in the longer term better than those that require just recognition. A lexical task that is processed such as by assessment and application of lexical meaning will lead to stronger memory traces than one that is processed for form alone (Qin, 2023). It is not the length of the task but rather semantic engagement that counts.

Dual Coding Theory

The dual coding theory states that learning improves when information is processed using two different systems at the same time: the verbal system and the visual system. From this perspective, vocabulary learning improves when exposed to linguistic forms (written or spoken words) and visual information (images, diagrams, etc.). The dual activation of these channels also allows students to establish stronger associations between form and meaning when learning new vocabulary (Noor-UI-Ain & Pervaiz, 2025; Luo, 2022).

Studies investigating the use of dual coding theory in vocabulary teaching have found that verbal narration, coupled with visual stimulation in the form of images, animations, or digital multimedia materials, positively influences vocabulary learning and memory. Noor-UI-Ain and Pervaiz (2025) added that when learners are exposed to verbal and visual modes of processing vocabulary, they create more than one mental representation of

the same idea, which reinforces their memory and helps them retrieve it during language use. Similarly, Luo (2022) found that CAVT based on dual coding theory can effectively improve students' comprehension and memorisation of new words by integrating images, word forms and contextual examples into digital learning platforms.

These results emphasise the need to use visual cues and multimedia materials in vocabulary teaching. By integrating textual information with relevant visual representations, educators can establish learning contexts that elicit deeper cognitive processing, which promotes more efficient vocabulary retention, especially in young learners who are inclined towards multimodal teaching methods (Noor-Ul-Ain & Pervaiz, 2025; Luo, 2022).

Challenges in EFL Vocabulary Learning

Research in English as a foreign language (EFL) has reported that vocabulary learning is a complex task for teachers and learners, particularly the beginning and intermediate levels. Among the difficulties that are most highlighted is the persistence of certain traditional routines in teaching, including direct translation, habit formation, and exercises based around the textbook. As Santos and Veiga (2022) point out, when the teaching of vocabulary promotes form-based activities and isolated practice, learners tend to develop shallow processing of words. In such situations, vocabulary learning is often shaky, and the opportunity to use the learned vocabulary items in communication is limited.

Another constraint that is consistently acknowledged is that of the contextual and diversified presentation of vocabulary. When lexical items are presented mainly in the form of decontextualised lists, learners may understand the meaning but are at a loss as to how to use the items, where to use them, or how to adapt them to particular situations. Melisa and Yuliana (2024) illustrate that vocabulary acquisition is hindered when learners fail to be exposed to words in various contexts and forms of tasks. This issue is even more pronounced in EFL teaching situations, where access to moulding

students' receptive and productive vocabularies by interaction with English beyond the classroom is naturally restricted.

Fogging motivational barriers is also pivotal to the success of vocabulary learning. Research shows that insipid teaching styles and low interaction activities may cause students to lose interest and not put much effort into studying vocabulary. Haque et al. (2024) observe that in the case of boring and unchallenging vocabulary practices, participation in the students tends to decrease as time passes. In contrast, recent classroom studies have shown that motivation-related barriers can be mitigated to a certain extent with the use of gamification-based methodologies. Such as, Nurfadilah et al. (2025) found out that gamification-based vocabulary activities have the potential of challenging some of the learning difficulties as it increases student engagement and sustains retention by means of repeating indoctrinations of lexical items with clear purpose.

Furthermore, emotional elements such as reluctance and low confidence to speak might have an indirect effect on limited use of vocabulary. Nevertheless, Jamoom and Bahron (2024) reveal that learners' hesitancy and fear of making mistakes diminish their active language use, which in turn limits the chances to consolidate newly acquired words through practice - although their argumentation is more frequently related to spoken language. The implication for teachers in both cases is that vocabulary learning in the EFL classroom is not just a cognitive if affective one.

Overall, current research characterises vocabulary learning in EFL as a complex activity influenced by factors such as instructional design, exposure in context, and learner participation. The results highlight the importance of teaching methods for vocabulary which include contextualisation, multiple task formats, and interactive practice schemes, and not solely based on methodologies focusing on memorisation.

Current EFL Vocabulary Teaching Practices

In recent studies on English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching, a gradual shift is depicted between the teacher → student relationship in

vocabulary teaching, from more teacher-centred methods to more interactive and student-centred ones. Instead of tackling vocabulary largely through isolated lists and drills, a number of current approaches present lexical material through task-based work that offers interpretation, selection and contextual application. These modifications contextualize vocabulary learning in a meaning-based process rather than a form-based practice that focuses on discovering and practicing new words in guided communicative practice rather than simply memorizing words. For example, Yang (2023) describes that interactive models transfer the responsibilities from the teacher to the students and involve them to actively construct knowledge in context and collaborate with each other, instead of passively memorizing the content. Just as Nikolaou and Galani (2024) demonstrate how embedding vocabulary in meaningful contexts, like contextualised animated videos, greatly exceeds rote learning by fostering inference and use over isolated repetition.

Modern instructional designs also demonstrate increased realization of stimulus-based and multimodal activities in the service of vocabulary learning. As Nikolaou & Galani (2024) claim, learners generally manifest more positive attitude and involvement when language tasks are designed around meaningful stimuli, such as written language activities with musical support. Exercises on technology, such as interactive websites and software, multimedia presentations, and games, are frequently used to provide additional exposure as well as opportunities for controlled repetition. Visual, auditory, and interactive components can be seamlessly blended in digital classroom settings to enhance student engagement and lengthen practice time (Haque et al., 2024). A similar trend is emphasised by Maisani et al. (2022) who note that tech-mediated vocabulary tasks frequently involve guided practice and feedback loops to support recognition and storage.

Moreover, digital narrative and visual media are now widely employed in vocabulary teaching practice. The presentation of words in comics, storytelling resources and game scenarios comes within situational frames which offer more observable patterns of use. Castillo-Cuesta and Quiñónez-Beltrán (2022) mention that such formats facilitate a way for learners to infer meaning

from contextual information, and similar applications in the classroom show parallel effects of engagement (Cuenca-Calva et al., 2024).

In short, the recent trends of vocabulary teaching in the EFL contexts are characterised by the presentation of vocabulary in the context, the organisation of learners for doing activities incorporating one another in structured fashion, and the pragmatic availability of digital resources for facilitating the guidance and support of lexical learning.

Vocabulary retention

Short-term vs. Long-term Vocabulary Retention

Retention of vocabulary within EFL research is usually analysed in terms of short-term memory versus long-term retention. Short-term retention is a measure of learners' recall for words that are taught or practiced in a recent session. This form of memory is present in post-task activities but is temporary access to lexical items rather than stable knowledge of lexemes. Altalhab (2018) points out that immediate memory measures might overrate what counts as vocabulary learning in case there is no follow-up reinforcement.

At the same time, long-term retention is described as the prolonged recollection and use of vocabulary over a period of time. Studies show that words acquired via brief exposure and limited rehearsal are prone to be forgotten. If it is not systematically reactivated, it becomes weaker over time (Altalhab, 2018).

Research findings about learning condition suggests that the durability of retention is influenced by how learners process and review lexical items. Shin and Kim (2023) found that as exposure frequency increased with deeper semantic processing and varied repetition tasks, delayed retention performance was stronger. Their results indicate that retention is enhanced when the vocabulary is used multiple times in meaning-focused tasks as opposed to uniform practice patterns. This contrast clearly emphasizes that

successful vocabulary teaching should be assessed not only by immediate performance but also in terms of delayed recall and sustained lexical access.

Factors Affecting Vocabulary Retention

EFL vocabulary teaching research attests to a wide array of factors which influence whether words can stay anchored in memory across time. One factor that seems to repeat is how often after the initial presentation students have contact with the target vocabulary. When teaching in this way, exposure to vocabulary is doubled when using vocabulary being learned is more likely to be forgotten, while treating words at different moments of work in the classroom makes memorization become more solid. The result presented in Gantari (2024) suggests that lexical items that have been spaced out and experienced repeatedly stand a better chance to be retained over time.

Instruction design is yet that other pertinent variable. Methods that are based largely on translation and memorization drills may produce quick recognition, but not always lasting mastery. Retention is better when learners have to make sense of and use vocabulary rather than just reciting it. This trend has been confirmed in analyses of classroom where greater engagement in activities led to more stable outcomes (Santos & Veiga, 2022).

Context is an equally important factor in this context. Vocabulary taught via examples, guided procedures and situational usage is more consistently retained than vocabulary learned in isolation. Contextual presentation in combination with different types of tasks/ activities could constrain memory traces and lead to retention for longer intervals according to Gantari (2024). To summarise, frequency of repetition, task type, and context of use are three interlinked aspects that influence vocabulary retention in the environment of EFL teaching.

Spaced Repetition and Practice

Studies of vocabulary learning in English as a foreign language regularly demonstrate that reviewing words by means of spaced repetition, which spaces out exposure to target vocabulary over time and supports memory

traces to progressively grow instead of fade after an initial exposure, is an effective method of learning and retention. Saksittanupab (2024), observes that when review is spaced between sessions, learners have a more stable and better consolidated long-term memory compared to massed practice.

Format as well as timing of repeated practice matter. Retrieval and use of vocabulary in subsequent (not only during the initial) tasks also enhance lexical knowledge to be retained for a longer time. Saksittanupab (2024) states that when repetition is distributed across sessions, students have more stable and better consolidated long-term memory than when they practise intensively.

Retention through digital activities

Recent studies in the field of EFL teaching have shown that digital learning environments contribute positively to vocabulary consolidation, as learners receive repeated and meaningful encounters with words. When digital technology is used in vocabulary tasks, learners process lexical items via multimedia inputs, contextualised tasks, and interactive formats, which stimulate attention, participation, and gradual memory consolidation (Haque et al., 2024; Maisani et al., 2022).

Research also suggests that digital media activities (e.g. online games, interactive platforms, multimedia exercises) facilitate the retention of vocabulary through the implication of words in various contexts and moments of learning rather than as isolated lists. In both types of presentations, readers often receive a combination of visual, auditory, and responsive cues that stimulate recall and active application (both are known to enhance retention over time). Elsewhere, evidence on the comparison between digital and non-digital methods of retrieving indicates that a structured digital flashcard system and practice on a platform can increase retention if spaced and cumulative (Karimi and Amiri, 2025; Cuenca-Calva et al., 2024).

Notably, the above-mentioned research also points to the positive implications of digital comics and storytelling platforms for the learning of vocabulary. In that they help learners associate meaning with use while

providing motivation and continuity of exposure, target words are embedded in narrative sequences and simulated communicative situations (Castillo-Cuesta & Quiñónez-Beltrán, 2022). From this perspective, retention of digital vocabulary can be conceptualised as the gradual accumulation of lexicon knowledge enabled through contextualised, reiterated, and interactive digital experiences.

EFL Learning

EFL Learning in Young Learners

Research in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) indicates that the performance of young learners is greatly determined by their developmental stage as well as the manner in which instruction is delivered. Since children think differently from older learners, teaching English as a foreign language aimed at young children should take their cognitive and socio-emotional development into account. Learners usually become more willing to participate and have a steadier involvement in EFL activities when teacher-made classroom practices matrices contain age-suitable interactional patterns, tempo, and task categories (Lucas, 2023).

In recent years, research has also found that early learning is less about merely being exposed to language and more about being exposed to language in a particular way. Instructional strategies with visual representation, focused vocabulary instruction, and repeated reading tasks enable learners to associate meaning with the target language more naturally. Therefore, intentional activities serve to connect information and learning in a way that enhances vocabulary acquisition and meaningful early language learning (García et al., 2025).

Motivational elements, as well as the classroom environment, also determine the children's reactions to the TEFL methodology. There is evidence that learners are more inclined to communicate in English and stay focused on tasks when they feel safe, included, and actively involved. Therefore, activities that facilitate participation and that encourage learners to

use language intentionally promote not only engagement but also more stable learning environments (Lucas, 2023).

Overall, learning English as a foreign language in young learners can be viewed as a developmentally sensitive process in which the organisation of the instruction, the engagement of the learner, and the social supportiveness of the learning environment coalesce to support success in language growth.

Engagement in Young EFL Learners

In English classes, engagement is realised when students watch, commit to tasks, and have a desire to learn in class activities. Research finds that young learners display higher and more sustained levels of engagement when classroom activities are orientated to their emotional and developmental needs, particularly when they are treated as active participants in the learning process rather than as passive consumers of instruction (Lucas, 2023).

The level of engagement can also be influenced, at least partially, by the methods of teaching. There is some evidence to suggest that more interactive, learner-centred approaches to learning may lead to higher levels of engagement and task focus than more instruction-heavy lesson formats. When learners are allowed to work together, investigate, and ponder post-lessons, they are likely to be more attentive and fruitful contributors to overall teaching activities in an EFL context (Maisani et al., 2022).

Recent evidence also suggests that engagement increases when learning activities are aligned with learners' interests and when learners are given the chance for real interaction. For instance, the context of peer exchange and technology-mediated interaction may prompt behavioural and cognitive engagement and thus raises students' level of investment in language tasks (Lee, 2025). It provides evidence for the theory that engagement is heightened when students find an activity to be socially pertinent and meaningful.

in general, these ideas illustrate the engagement of young learners as a multidimensional entity consisting of behavioural engagement, emotional investment (affect), and active cognitive engagement, which is highly affected

by teaching methodologies and modes of interaction in the educational context.

Types of EFL Learning Approaches

The studies in EFL demonstrate a variety of pedagogical directions which influence classroom teaching and students' learning. For younger nonnative language learners, these styles differ from teacher to teacher. The learner's role and the presentation of language as distinct or integrated products within meaningful contexts. Traditional teacher-directed methods generally stress explicit interpretation, memorisation and mechanical practice whereas contemporary approaches stress learner engagement, interaction and contextual utilisation (Maisani et al., 2022).

Student-centred, interactive approaches are gaining more and more importance in English teaching. Such approaches motivate students to communicate, collaborate, and engage in meaningful activities that move them toward more routine practice, with which they can attain understanding by means of language use. These approaches foster active involvement, greater concentration and learning of the knowledge more effectively, as well as the effect of 'learning is becoming with leaning' (Yang, 2023).

Developmentally based strategies are very effective for youth in the process of learning English. Game-based, visual and experiential learning methodologies allow learning to be customised for children's cognitive and emotional level so that they are not overwhelmed, and comprehension and engagement can be built up gradually (Lucas, 2023). A lot of current EFL methodology involves a mixture of the traditional and the interactive, combining elements of tight teacher control with space for pupil investigation and co-operation.

The mixed approach allows for structured teaching and enables students to take control and be active participants, which is especially useful in early EFL classrooms (Maisani et al., 2022). More generally, English language teaching methods may be seen as alternative ways of

conceptualising student participation, interaction, and linguistic contextualisation.

Cognitive Development and Language Acquisition

Development of cognitive structures and language learning are interdependent in young EFL learners. Therefore, how children attend, learn, store, and use new linguistic information in early language development is shaped by the developmental status of their cognitive systems including attention, memory, and conceptual abilities (Lucas, 2023).

Employment of personalised teaching method in accordance with the learner's cognitive age results in better knowledge acquisition. With contextual cues, visual supports, and repetition, these strategies have demonstrated to reduce cognitive load and to support the assimilation of incoming information with prior knowledge (García et al., 2025). In consequence, this ensures steady advancement of comprehension and production.

With the growth of cognitive control and conceptual knowledge, young children have access to fuller forms of interactive communication. Tasks that are high enough in challenge and low enough in support, to encourage a motivated concentration, good memory function, and worthy engagement. Educationally appropriate instruction certainly maximises engagement and language development both lectures (Lucas, 2023).

In conclusion, cognition, and English as a foreign language (EFL) learning are closely related processes. Ability-appropriate practices (involving meaningful input, visual/guided scaffolding, and appropriate challenges) enable strong comprehension, continuing engagement, and steady language gains in young learners.

Traditional vs. Digital Teaching Methods

Characteristics of Traditional EFL Instruction

Traditionally methods used to teach English language as a foreign language (EFL) often involve teaching from a textbook, whereby the tutor holds teaching practice sessions and employs translation techniques while

providing clear explanations on grammar and vocabulary. In this method of teaching, the teacher has a dominant role in organising classroom activities which should happen in linearly progressive manner, and students are required to practice language forms repeatedly through written task and memory work. As shown in the study by Santos and Veiga (2022), these educative models often enable and foster formal linguistic correctness and the use of language rules for communication purposes.

This method of teaching does not enable the learners to apply what they have acquired in authentic contexts. When teachers just tell their students the vocabulary and grammar rules, the students have time to practice what they've learned when they talk to each other. According to Santos and Veiga (2022) this kind of teaching makes students short-term memorisation. In fact, they do not learn it in a way that makes them stick to the language. So, students don't get enough practice. This is the result of workers only using lessons, and not allowing them to interact. Language teaching should enable learners to use the language they are learning in real life, and this kind of teaching restricts what the learner can do with the language.

Limitations of Rote Memorization

Numerous studies focusing on vocabulary learning have identified several drawbacks associated with rote learning. Although repeated exposure to and memorisation of word lists may contribute to the initial recognition of new terms, this method of language teaching and learning rarely leads to stable memory or flexible language use. It has been shown that learners who rely heavily on memorisation also tend to forget words after using them in short-term tests and that these words are difficult to use in real communication (Santos and Veiga, 2022).

The impact of learning-centred instruction on student motivation, particularly among young English learners, is a subject that has been the subject of much research. In instances where vocabulary practice is confined to rote repetition devoid of contextual relevance and authentic interaction, there is a tendency for classroom engagement to diminish. As Santos and Veiga (2022) discuss, conventional lessons that prioritise form can impede

students' active engagement, therefore diminishing the interest and prolonged commitment to vocabulary learning activities.

Shift towards Digital Pedagogy

Recent research pointed out a growing tendency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, and this was defined by a gradual turn towards the adoption of digitally supported pedagogical approaches. These strategies aim to enhance the learner engagement and exposure to English in a more contextualised way by means of different input channels and task types (Haque et al., 2024; Maisani et al., 2022). Empirical results also suggest that digital pedagogy may enhance vocabulary learning as it nurtures repetition, visual scaffolding, and task-based interaction.

Digital pedagogy revisits vocabulary items in a variety of moments and formats through gamified exercises, multimedia prompts, and feedback-driven activities encouraging processing as well as recall. As demonstrated by recent research, this pedagogical change is not simply the adoption of new tools, but also a more profound methodological shift in teaching vocabulary learning, exploiting technology to better align vocabulary teaching with learner involvement and contextualised practice (Castillo-Cuesta & Quiñónez-Beltrán, 2022; Cuenca-Calva et al., 2024).

Digital Learning Activities

Digital Learning in Education

Recent literature describes digital learning in education as the integration of technological tools and digital resources into the learning process to achieve learning goals in different learning contexts. Rather than completely replacing traditional learning, digital learning is often presented as a complementary method to improve the delivery, practice, and reinforcement of content. In educational settings, digital learning provides access to multimedia materials, interactive tasks, and flexible learning environments that can adapt to different student needs (Maisani et al., 2022).

Furthermore, studies indicate that the utilization of online platforms, multimedia resources, and technological activities that enable students to engage with knowledge outside of the actual classroom are characteristics of digital learning in education. These approaches improve engagement and comprehension in all subject areas, including language instruction, by making learning materials more accessible through visual, aural, and interactive modes (Haque et al., 2024). From an educational perspective, digital learning promotes flexibility, accessibility, and the use of technology into regular teaching procedures as opposed to using it as a single or incidental tool.

Additionally, increased learner-centered instructional design—in which students actively interact with learning materials through guided digital activities—is encouraged by digital learning environments, according to current study. This setting enables educators to arrange material in a way that promotes engagement, self-directed learning, and interaction with educational materials, bringing digital learning into line with contemporary teaching techniques (Young, 2023).

Types of Digital Learning Activities

Digital learning activities are defined as structured tasks delivered through technology with the purpose of promoting student participation, guided practice, feedback, and knowledge construction in mediated environments. As emphasised in the current literature on educational technology, the design of such activities should be informed by pedagogical goals and interaction patterns, rather than by the specific tools involved (Nguyen et al., 2020). Classification frameworks are useful analytical categories for research in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as they group items by learner engagement and instructional purpose (Nguyen et al., 2020).

In the field of EFL, recent studies have examined a variety of digital activities designed to enhance vocabulary and engagement. These activities are often categorised based on design features and learner interaction patterns (Nguyen et al., 2020). The following groups are commonly identified in current digital language learning research.

Interactive Digital Learning Activities

Interactive digital activities are designed so that learners must continuously respond to prompts on the screen through actions such as selecting options, matching elements, completing short answers, or making guided choices. These responsive formats contrast with passive viewing due to their requirement for ongoing cognitive participation. Research in the field of digital pedagogy has indicated that structured interactivity constitutes a pivotal feature of effective technology-mediated learning environments, as it fosters active processing and timely feedback cycles (Bond et al., 2021). In the context of EFL settings, interactive task models are frequently utilised to facilitate vocabulary and reading development. These models employ a combination of prompts, learner input, and corrective feedback, arranged in repeated engagement sequences, to support learning. As Yang (2023) observes, these formats function primarily as guided practice systems centred on learner response and adjustment.

Gamified Digital Activities (Gamification)

Gamification is the use of game elements, such as points, levels, badges, and progress bars, in non-game activities such as instructional tasks that lack game features. The goal is not to create fun for its own sake, but to increase persistence and motivation by means of structured systems of challenges. Panmei and Waluyo (2022) argue that in gamification, motivational mechanics are intentionally integrated with learning objectives as a pedagogical design approach. In EFL vocabulary practice, gamified platforms tend to present lexical activities as progression mechanisms to keep learners actively involved. Research studies have shown that learners are more engaged and complete more tasks when vocabulary practice is structured as challenges and rewards (Panmei & Waluyo, 2022; Pratiwi et al., 2023).

Adaptive Digital Learning Activities

Adaptive digital learning activities are based on performance-driven adaptation mechanisms which are able to adapt the sequencing of the tasks, the level of challenge and the manner in which feedback is provided. Instead

of all learners following the same path of progression, these systems examine patterns of response and mistake information to derive personalised learning trajectories. Studies in educational technology describe adaptive solutions as being data-informed spaces that naturally accommodate diverse pacing and focused intervention (Yaseen et al., 2025). In the context of vocabulary learning, adaptive designs have been associated with higher levels of proactivity among learners. This is related to the matching of task complexity to learner demonstrated ability, allowing repetitions on specific deficits, and fast moving on when mastered (Yaseen et al., 2025).

Mobile Learning Activities (M-learning / MALL)

MALL is a method of teaching vocabulary and language exercises via mobile devices, allowing learners to practice outside the limits of a traditional classroom. This strategy caters to flexibility and short bursts of acquisition in the target language. Systematic reviews have reported that brief and repetitive mobile learning sessions, which often include text, audio, and visual information, enhance vocabulary acquisition by means of distributed exposure and easy access Dağdeler (2023). The portability of mobile devices allows more frequent exchanges in mobile environments, making them an important method to provide reinforcement beyond the hours of class.

Digital Storytelling and Digital Content Creation Activities

Digital storytelling and content creation activities request learners to create multimedia products, including told stories, presentations, or visual stories. These activities have a focus on production rather than response, and concern vocabulary choice, idea organization and meaning making in digital media. Studies in EFL settings show that building narratives with multimedia support facilitates deeper engagement into lexical choice and expressive language use (Murad et al., 2023). Such activities are usually termed as productive digital tasks, in which creation and expression are emphasised over recognition.

Drill-and-Practice Digital Activities

Drill-and-practice tasks are repetitive duties with feedback and performance monitoring in order to enhance learning. Tasks for repeated exposure and correction are aimed to establish automaticity (Shin & Kim, 2023). In EFL vocabulary and pronunciation trainers, they constitute the systematisation practice cycles through which after an initial presentation memory is consolidated. Shin & Kim (2023) also confirmed that drill-and-practice is effective in promoting retention when exposure frequency is increased through different types of repetitions, illustrating the importance of repetition in vocabulary learning.

Benefits of Digital Learning in Language Acquisition

Studies demonstrate that digital learning is an effective instrument in supporting language learning as it provides students with multiple types of resources, such as diverse materials, interactive challenges, and learning at their own pace. Through audio, video and entertaining exercises, digital resources also allow for multimodal engagement with linguistic content, leading to better understanding and more effective retrieval from memory (R. A. R. Zambrano et al., 2025).

For the EFL environment, digital tools were demonstrated to prolong learners' exposure to the target language out of the traditional classroom. As noted by E. G. R. Zambrano et al. (2025), the use of interactive digital tools to enhance participant engagement and performance within learning process allows for a more vibrant learning experience that inspires involvement and constant exercise. This is especially true for younger learners, who flourish in dynamic and diverse surroundings that cater to their developmental levels as evidenced by Nikolaou and Galani (2024) who revealed that contextualized animated videos significantly improve vocabulary acquisition as they offer multimodal and meaningful input appropriate to the characteristics of young learners.

Digital learning is the approach that has been demonstrated to have the highest relation to motivation, which is an essential element in language

learning. According to Concepción and Maldonado (2025), digital platforms make content more attractive and accessible, contribute to keeping users engaged over time, and promote good learning experiences.

Interaction and Engagement through Digital Platforms

Digital tools have proven to be useful instruments to encourage interaction and get students actively immersed in the class in EFL contexts. The availability of these instruments contributes to ease communication, cooperation, and the delivery of real-time feedback, all of which are regarded as crucial factors in language learning and teaching success (Concepción & Maldonado, 2025).

These platforms allow interaction between teachers and students but also provide interaction with peers. The use of these instruments has been shown to lead to greater student involvement in learning activities in class, thereby boosting class attendance and promoting connection with learning contents. This interactive nature facilitates the acquisition of more meaningful and communicative abilities in language (Concepción & Maldonado, 2025).

Engagement is particularly important for young English learners as their attention and interest, if maintained, can have a significant impact on learning gains. Interactive digital platforms promote active usage of language which motivates and develop skills (E. G. R. Zambrano et al., 2025).

Contextualized Learning and Autonomy in Digital Environments

Digital contexts have enhanced context-based learning by situating language content in situations that are both meaningful and relevant. These exercises allow students to see how language is functioning in real or simulated environments, rather than fragmented pieces. In the research by R. A. R. Zambrano et al. (2025), it was noted that digital tools have the potential to combine real-life materials with interactive activities in the area of context. Simultaneously, these situations encourage autonomy of the learner. Learners can pace themselves, learn what they need to, and work independently on

activities. This autonomy has been verified to promote ownership of progress in English acquisition (R. A. R. Zambrano et al., 2025).

In relation to digital learning environments the provision of sequenced autonomy for young learners supports the fostering of independent learning styles and intrinsic motivation. The crafting of these activities is critical and needs to be a balance between active inquiry and suitable instructional scaffolding (R. A. R. Zambrano et al., 2025).

Integration of Technology in EFL Classrooms

Technology has been integrated into EFL classes in the intention of enhancing or transforming learning. It is an intentional use of digital technologies to support teaching and learning, and it enhances rather than replaces traditional teaching methods (R. A. R. Zambrano et al., 2025).

In the field of EFL, the use of digital devices in the classroom is an additional chance for students to practice and communicate. Their inclusion can make lessons more fun by varying teaching methods and motivating students to participate actively (R. A. R. Zambrano et al., 2025).

For young learners of English, technology integration works best if the activities correspond to their cognitive and developmental characteristics. Thoughtful application of digital technologies can facilitate language learning and encourage learners to remain motivated and engaged (E. G. R. Zambrano et al., 2025).

Digital Activities as Motivational Tools

Digital-based activities have turned out to be the best motivating activity in learning English. Students with motivation are more likely to engage actively in this work and to keep on. Digital tasks engage students' motivation as they facilitate a more participatory and fun learning process (E. G. R. Zambrano et al., 2025).

These assignments promote participation through interactive content, with instantaneous feedback and choice on the part of the student. Online

platforms provide a highly engaging environment that enhances learner motivation and the quality of learning results (Concepción & Maldonado, 2025).

For younger students, digital tasks are especially useful for keeping them focused and interested in English. Interactive and colourful activities lead to a greater engagement with the material and promote active learning experiences (E. G. R. Zambrano et al., 2025).

CHAPTER II. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodological framework applied in this study, which reviews current methods for teaching vocabulary in a fifth-grade EFL classroom and identifies the pedagogical and technical features needed in digital learning to support vocabulary acquisition. In elementary foreign language contexts, vocabulary learning is often supported through a variety of strategies and resources in the classroom; However, the implementation of these practices and the pedagogical structure of digital activities require systematic description at the classroom level. For this reason, the study adopted a descriptive, qualitative methodological orientation, focusing on actual teaching practices.

The study adopted a qualitative design. In education, qualitative research has become the preferred and powerful method to study teaching and learning-related activities and people (such as teachers, students, and other classroom members), and to analyse these activities and individuals in terms of contextual circumstance, mainly employing rich verbal data. Qualitative research centers on collecting and interpreting text and other forms of non-statistical information that have been sourced from natural environments, and from the point of view of the participants. Recent methodological literature supports qualitative description when the intent is to capture and make sense of teaching in situ (Nirwan et al., 2024).

This approach is appropriate for the present research because the research questions are aimed at describing teaching methods, examining their alignment with contextualised principles of English as a foreign language for young learners, and determining the pedagogical and technical characteristics of digital vocabulary activities. These objectives require detailed observation and interpretative analysis rather than experimental procedures. Using qualitative methods, the researcher can collect evidence in the classroom about teaching strategies and activity design features without disrupting the normal teaching process.

In practical terms, this means that information is gathered directly from teachers and students in the classroom in order to produce an organized description of vocabulary teaching strategies and features of digital activities. This kind of research supports low-inferential systematic descriptions based on observational data and participant interpretation, according to methodological debates of qualitative descriptive designs (Doyle et al., 2019).

Moreover, this research is based on descriptive research design. Descriptive research describes performance, situations, and teaching qualities through examination of them in the context in which they occur and without executing practicable interventions. Qualitative descriptive designs are said to be especially suitable when a structured description of an observed event is the aim rather than identifying causal relationships, as suggested by contemporary methodological literature (Doyle et al., 2019). In the field of education research, this approach is commonly applied to capture evidence of classroom activities and teaching methods directly (Nirwan et al., 2024).

Within this framework, the present study describes current vocabulary teaching strategies, analyses their alignment with contextualised EFL standards for young learners, and identifies the pedagogical and technical requirements of digital learning activities designed to support vocabulary.

Context of the Study

The investigation was conducted in a private school located in Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, Ecuador, during the academic year 2025-2026. Setting The study took place in a fifth-grade English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class in which vocabulary teaching is a routine practice in the curriculum.

The collection of data was conducted during regular educational sessions, without disrupting planned teaching methods. The purpose was to observe and document existing vocabulary teaching approaches and the usage of digital activities in a typical educational environment. Qualitative descriptive methodology emphasizes the necessity of observing instructional occurrences in their natural setting to get accurate and context-sensitive descriptions (Doyle et al., 2019).

Participants of the Study

The population for this study involves of twenty fifth-grade students enrolled in General Basic Education at the chosen institution. According to the institutional placement regulations, the learners are at the novice level of English as a Foreign Language. Classroom records and teacher reports show that students' vocabulary knowledge and engagement patterns vary, making the group ideal for a descriptive study of vocabulary teaching approaches and digital activity application.

The group's English professor also contributes to the research by sharing professional and instructional knowledge on vocabulary teaching tactics, classroom methodologies, and the selection and usage of digital learning activities. Including the teacher perspective allows for a more full explanation of the instructional strategies addressed in the investigation questions.

Because the investigation's objective is descriptive and context-specific, the intact classroom group was selected as the study population. When the aim is to describe practices and features within a specific instructional setting, qualitative descriptive research is frequently used with bounded educational groups (Nirwan et al., 2024).

Research Instruments

The research tools utilized in this study were selected to gather descriptive and context-based data on current vocabulary teaching practices and the pedagogical usage of digital learning activities in a fifth-grade EFL classroom. The instruments, like qualitative descriptive research, were designed to collect extensive classroom evidence and professional teaching perspectives rather than numerical measurements. Qualitative descriptive technique encourages the use of observation and interview tools to document instructional processes and participant perspectives in real educational contexts (Doyle et al., 2019).

This research used two qualitative instruments: a structured classroom observation form and a teacher interview. Each instrument was associated with the research questions and objectives to ensure that the data obtained directly supports the descriptive and analytical purposes of the study.

Structured Classroom Observation Form

The structured classroom observation form was used to document how vocabulary instruction is taught in common English classes. Structured observation instruments are widely used in classroom-based qualitative research to systematically document instructional practices, interaction patterns, and pedagogical the utilization of resources in authentic learning situations (Nirwan et al., 2024).

This observation instrument was adapted using the instructional perspective framework given by Almusharraf (2020) in his study on vocabulary acquisition and teacher practices, which was published in Cogent Education. The adapted version was updated to include classroom-level indications of vocabulary teaching tactics and the utilization of digital learning activities in an EFL setting.

The instrument contains predetermined categories for classroom layout, lesson development, teacher and student interaction balance, vocabulary teaching strategies, types of learning activities, and the use of digital tools. It also includes open descriptive sections for documenting relevant classroom events, instructional examples, student response patterns, and environmental elements. This framework promotes systematic observation while retaining contextual data.

Teacher's Interview

The teacher interview was applied to collect thorough information about vocabulary teaching approaches, instructional decision-making, and methodological criteria for selecting and utilizing instructional tools and classroom resources. Qualitative descriptive research recognizes interview-

based instruments as effective means for gathering opinion from professionals and interpretative instructional explanations (Doyle et al., 2019).

This instrument was adapted from the semi-structured interview with teachers proposed by Almusharraf (2020). In the study Teachers' perspectives on enhancing learner autonomy for vocabulary development: A case study was published in Cogent Education. The updated version is matched with the current study aims and focuses on vocabulary instruction techniques, teaching tactics, and instructional resource use in an EFL classroom.

The instrument consists of open-ended questions that explore vocabulary teaching strategies, class organisation, activity selection, student participation practices, and assessment approaches.

Data collection procedures

In order to gather the necessary information for this study, prior authorisation was obtained from the relevant school authorities to carry out research activities within the classroom. Once authorisation was obtained, the data collection process was organised in accordance with the usual class schedule so as not to interrupt teaching time.

Online platforms offer a stimulating environment, increasing motivation and the quality of learning outcomes (Concepción & Maldonado, 2025). The administration of the classroom observation protocol was in-person and took place during regular English classes between a group of twenty fifth-grade students and the teacher. The observations were conducted over the course of three consecutive weeks, from Monday to Thursday every week, and each session lasted for about an hour and a half. Each observation took place in the students' natural classroom and with the students' normal class schedule.

During his observation, the investigator was not involved in the class activities nor make any pedagogical decisions. The researcher's participation was limited to observation solely in an attempt to prevent the possibility of the technique of teaching and subsistence patterns of student engagement being further affected. The pedagogical approaches, activity types, teacher–student

Either the interactions or the use of the teaching materials were documented with the structured observation protocol and with the narrative components of field notes. In addition to observing the classes, a documentary-style interview with the teacher was conducted. A variety of open-ended questions were posed to the teacher, who responded in writing. This format enabled the participant to answer with ample time and reflection and ensured that the information provided was both crystal and fulsome.

The combination of intensive classroom-based observation and responses from teacher interviews facilitated the collection of rich descriptive data on vocabulary teaching practices, teaching approaches and resource use in the teaching of vocabulary. The data collection was planned to suit to the descriptive purposes of the study, and at the same time maintain consistency and cause minimum disturbance.

Data Analysis

Teacher's Interview

The teacher interview responses were analysed qualitatively and descriptively. Each response was examined to determine any reported patterns of instruction, favoured techniques, approaches to teaching vocabulary and testing procedures of the instructor. In this study, the teacher's narrative of classroom practice provides the focus of analysis in terms of the organization of vocabulary teaching and the resources and strategies for promoting student learning and engagement.

1. What are your main instructional strategies for teaching vocabulary to your fifth-grade students, and what is your rationale behind it?

Regarding the first question, the professor responds that vocabulary teaching depends on visual aids, presenting words in context, and allowing students to receive multiple late exposures to the word. The reported strategies consist of showing images, real objects, gestures, and simple definitions before students encounter new vocabulary in reading and writing

exercises, as well as in listening and speaking activities. The teacher explains that vocabulary is taught within context, through the meaningful use of the language, rather than teaching a list of isolated words. The justification states that the introduction of new vocabulary for fifth-grade students learning English as a foreign language through multiple senses and in a real context can facilitate learning and improve the memorisation of new words. This writing implies a contextual and multimodal way of teaching vocabulary, as described by Haque et al. (2024).

2. Each student has her or his way of learning English. Could you describe how you verify that your vocabulary teaching strategies are effective and which strategies you have found most successful in promoting student engagement?

In reply to the second question, the teacher comments that the influence of vocabulary strategies is monitored by means of continuous formative assessment during lesson. This method consists of monitoring classroom behaviour, students' oral and written responses, and collecting exit tickets to the conclusion of a class. The teacher considers student independent application of vocabulary as the primary indicator of successful learning. As for engagement the teacher states that students are most engaged when playing interactive games, partner discussions, drawing and doing hands on activities. The reply indicates that the assessment may include performance evidence criteria as well as tangible engagement behaviours (Santos & Veiga, 2022).

3. How do you usually start your vocabulary lessons for your students? Do you set clear learning objectives, and do you follow a lesson plan or guide to structure the session?

On the organization of the lessons, the teacher states that vocabulary lessons usually start with activating students' background knowledge and then the teacher tells the students the objectives of the lesson in a simple language. Lesson plans usually have a string of four lesson components through it: an introduction of the topic, guided practice with the teacher, independent practice, and a closure that serves as a formative assessment. At the same

time, the teacher does express that flexibility is necessary, especially when dealing with student responses and the “dynamic” nature of the classroom. The implication is that teaching vocabulary is done according to a predetermined plan, and that learning activities to teach vocabulary are presented in a sequence, rather than being an extemporaneous presentation of words. This is consistent with task-based instruction models that categorise tasks according to their pedagogic function and the sequence of learning expected (Nguyen et al., 2020).

4. How do you give directions or instructions to your fifth-grade students during vocabulary lessons to ensure they understand and actively participate?

The teacher states that in relation to question four, the task instructions are written in simplified language, and it is also modelled, using visual support, gestures and concrete exemplification. This means that the written instructions are spoken, and by the teacher gesturing and pictorially guiding the students through each step. The teacher also routinely monitors comprehension by having students paraphrase the instructions or explain what they will do prior to doing the task. This strategy underlines the necessity of the clearer guidelines to be able to involve students in vocabulary activities to the fullest. Through the use of different explanatory formats and confirmation of understanding the teacher's intention is to avoid misunderstandings and to have all students ready to start with their vocabulary work.

5. How do you teach new vocabulary in context to your students, and how do you make it meaningful and engaging for them?

The answer of the teacher to the question number five demonstrates the need of presenting new vocabulary chunks in communicative situations instead of working them as isolated items. The teacher urges the students to relate new words to their performance and speak in full sentences. Activities like role-play, guided interactive reading, and small group projects allow students to apply new vocabulary in context. This method of vocabulary instruction focuses on meaning construction and language use

for communication and on student participation through situational practices and expression in a learner-centred manner (Melisa & Yuliana, 2024).

6. What teaching approaches do you use to enhance your fifth-grade students' vocabulary learning, and which ones have proven most effective in keeping them engaged?

In answer to the sixth question, the teacher emphasises that the communicative language teaching, the collaborative work, and individualised support for instruction are the main methods adopted to enrich students' vocabulary learning. This means that the practice of vocabulary tends to be organised over pair and group work, rather than just isolated individual works. As well, the teacher describes the implementation of scaffolded supports, including sentence frames and guided language patterns, so students of all proficiency levels will be able to complete class activities with the needed support. Movement-oriented, interaction-based activities are reported to hold attention and active participation more than memorizing-focused activities. This implies that advice on how to teach vocabulary is an active process itself, shaped by social interaction, where suggested topics and the appropriate contextual support keep student involvement (Yang, 2023).

7. How do you usually assess your students' understanding of English vocabulary, and how do you check if they are actively engaged during these assessments?

In answer to question number seven, the teacher indicates that vocabulary knowledge is assessed with a mixture of formative and summative assessments. These procedures include tests, short writing assignments, oral presentations, classroom observations, and assessments through games. This answer implies that assessment should move beyond testing on students' ability to recite definitions. It should also evaluate whether students can use the vocabulary in context, and the level of activity in doing the learning tasks. The teacher adds that they assess engagement with understanding through listening to students' effort, seeing if they complete the required tasks, and

observing if they are willing to answer questions. This underscores the need for tracking not only learning but also students' continuity in progress in the domain of vocabulary development (Castillo-Cuesta & Quiñónez-Beltrán, 2022).

8. What are your main tools or methods for assessing fifth-grade students' vocabulary learning, and which tools help you monitor their engagement and participation?

The teacher reviews tools for monitoring both vocabulary learning and students' engagement with potential tools such as rubrics, vocabulary journals, exit tickets, observation checklists, and digital quiz applications. In other words, verifications are carried out at multiple time points. Taking notes lets you follow students' progress over time and exit tickets can give you real-time information about what students learned from a particular class. Checklists enable a more standardised form of structured observation of participation patterns. The reference to digital quizzes (and other interactive forms) insinuates the use of technology predominantly for assessment rather than as the principal mode of instruction. In conclusion, the reply highlights a mixed method approach to evaluation with in-built tools for sustained monitoring in the classroom, coupled with "rigorous evaluation" (Cuenca-Calva et al., 2024).

Classroom Observation Form

Data from the structured classroom observation forms were examined using descriptive methods to identify repeated patterns in vocabulary teaching, lesson organisation, types of activities, and levels of student participation over the three weeks of observation. This analysis focuses on observable classroom practices based solely on recorded field notes. It considers instructional delivery, the types of tasks assigned, the distribution of participation, and the use of instructional resources.

Classroom observation form: Week 1 (Sep 8 – 11)

In the first week of observation, the teacher maintained a consistent routine with the introduction of vocabulary: direct explanation, examples on the

board, and short, controlled model sentences. The class basically consisted of the direct presentation of vocabulary and grammar, then the students wrote their own sentences following patterns from examples in class. The teaching oscillated between exposition and guided practice.

These segments included brief group games and guided sentence-writing tasks that required students to use the target vocabulary. It was observed that there was more verbal participation during these activities compared to the explanation periods. The teacher also used brief board sketches and gestures to clarify ideas and support the presentation of meaning.

The use of technology during this period focused solely on a listening task transmitted through the room's speaker. Most of the students participated in the guided activities and in small groups, although with varying degrees of participation throughout the class, and some remained silent after several attempts. The pedagogical method seemed to be predominantly teacher-directed, with predetermined moments for interaction, although students were given very limited time to actively produce.

Classroom observation form: Week 2 (Sep 15 –18)

During the second week of observation, vocabulary instruction primarily consisted of exercises written on the board for students to complete on their own. These exercises included sentence correction, completion, and development, which the teacher wrote on the board and students copied into their notebooks. Most of the class time was spent on teacher explanation, modeling, and individual writing practice.

Compared to the first week, there were fewer interactive segments observed. Group work mainly consisted of short vocabulary games that required students to produce sentences, and these activities took up less class time than the individual exercises. Throughout the week, students primarily produced their work in writing rather than through spoken interaction.

During the explanation phases, visual aids such as brief drawings on the board and gestures were used to clarify concepts. No digital instructional tools or audio devices were utilized during the observed sessions. Participation was primarily assessed through completion of written work, with few voluntary oral contributions. A small group of students participated less during both independent tasks and group activities.

Classroom observation form: Week 3 (Sep 22 – 25)

During the third week of observation, vocabulary instruction primarily consisted of textbook activities and exercises assigned by the teacher for students to copy and complete. A significant portion of class time was spent on copying material, reviewing sample sentences, and completing sentence-level exercises from the textbook or written on the board. The instruction followed a repetitive sequence, with the teacher explaining the material and students completing individual written tasks under supervision.

The vocabulary activities involved correcting sentences, completing them, and writing new sentences using previously introduced words. The majority of class time was focused on explaining and clarifying answers, with the teacher providing step-by-step guidance before and during the task. To aid in understanding, the teacher occasionally used brief sketches on the board and hand gestures. While group activities were included, they took less time than individual activities based on textbook and board exercises.

Most student work completed during this week was submitted in writing. No digital teaching tools were utilized, and there was no observed use of speakers or other audio devices. Student participation was primarily shown through completing written tasks, with spoken contributions occurring mainly when students were directly called on. The weekly pattern suggests that instruction is mainly teacher-directed and focused on practice exercises.

CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the data obtained through the teacher interview and the structured classroom observation form, it can be concluded that:

- Firstly, data collected from both instruments show that EFL vocabulary teaching, in the fifth-grade classroom, is mainly carried out through structured procedures led by the teacher. Vocabulary items are typically introduced through explanations, examples on the board, and model sentences, followed by individual written exercises such as sentence completion, correction, and controlled sentence production. These results directly describe the current teaching strategies used by the teacher, which are primarily teacher-directed, with minimal variations in activity patterns.
- Similarly, when comparing the interview with the teacher with the classroom observation records during the three weeks, there is general consistency between the strategies described by the teacher and those actually applied in class. However, the observational data indicated that, although interactive and contextual techniques are mentioned in the interview, in practice these appear minimally and are not applied systematically. This shows that the teaching intention and classroom execution are aligned in terms of structure but differ in terms of the degree of methodological variety.
- In relation to student participation patterns during the observed lessons, the data collected shows that engagement tends to increase during group work and games, guided sentence-building challenges, and moments when visual drawings or physical actions are used to illustrate meaning. Conversely, participation levels are lower during prolonged periods of copying and individual activities, this also happens during exercises based on workbooks. This contrast helps to clarify how the format of the activity influences student response within the teaching model observed.

- In terms of the use of digital resources, both data collection tools indicate limited technological integration during regular vocabulary teaching. Although the teacher recognises the usefulness of digital and multimedia tools, classroom observations show that digital support was minimal and occasional, and that most vocabulary practice was devoted to the use of the textbook, the blackboard and oral explanation. This difference highlights the gap between the perceived value and actual use of digital tools in the classroom.
- It should also be noted that the students' opinions on how they felt during the vocabulary learning process were not directly collected due to time and availability constraints. Interviews or surveys were not used to assess how the students felt or how they emotionally reacted to the teaching method. However, a secondary access to what the students thought of the teacher's instruction was through careful observation of the participation patterns and the general behavioural attitudes of the class. The predominance of teacher-led methodologies indicates a significant misalignment with modern, student-centered EFL standards. While students demonstrated higher engagement during interactive segments, the overall reliance on rote written practice correlates with periods of student disengagement, suggesting that the current approach does not fully support active vocabulary acquisition. Although these are inferences based on what was observed in the classrooms rather than what was reported by the teachers or students, they offer a situational understanding of how the teaching method influenced the classroom environment and participation rates.
- Overall, these results provide insight into the teaching conditions that should guide the pedagogical and technical design of digital vocabulary learning activities. The combined results indicate that such activities should be designed with a clear interaction structure, contextualised use of vocabulary, multimodal support and guided feedback mechanisms, as well as developing a clear objective so that they respond directly to the learning needs and teaching deficiencies identified in this study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of interviews with teachers and the observation of fifth-grade English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lessons, as well as a review of the literature, some suggestions are presented to improve vocabulary teaching through the implementation and organization of digital learning activities.

- Vocabulary teaching planning should incorporate the structured development of digital learning activities customized for vocabulary instruction, rather than depending solely on textbooks and board exercises. These activities should be designed with specific vocabulary objectives, task instructions, and expected language output.
- Encourage teachers to design digital vocabulary activities that not only focus on repetition and fill-in-the-blank formats, but also on interactive task structures that require guided use of vocabulary, contextual application, and decision-making by the student.
- Gamification elements, such as scoring systems, progress indicators, and challenge-based tasks, should be integrated into the instructional design of digital vocabulary activities instead of being added as a last resort for incentives.
- Multimodal components, such as images, text, and audio, should be used to construct digital vocabulary activities that improve vocabulary clarity and meaning reinforcement across many educational channels.
- Teachers should provide sets of digital vocabulary tasks with increasing levels of cognitive effort, such as recognition tasks, guided production tasks, and contextual usage activities, to ensure progression in the complexity of instruction.

- Instead of focusing solely on the availability of digital tools, digital vocabulary activities should be planned with specific educational objectives in mind. Teachers must first specify the vocabulary to be learned, how students will interact with the activity, the context in which the words will appear, and how feedback will be provided. This ensures that technology serves the educational objective and the vocabulary acquisition process, rather than being used solely for convenience.
- Finally, it is recommended to implement the digital vocabulary activities proposed in this research, as they offer opportunities for fifth-grade EFL students to engage in more interactive vocabulary practice.

PROPOSAL

The findings obtained through the research instruments provided valuable information that guided the development of a pedagogical proposal for vocabulary learning in EFL through digital and interactive activities, designed to support vocabulary acquisition and increase student engagement among fifth-grade learners.

General Data				
Project Title:	Engaging Young Learners: Enhancing EFL Vocabulary Through Digital Interactive Learning			
Project Team:	Campuzano Espinoza, Jhon Alejandro			
Main Objective:	To develop and implement three digital learning activities that support vocabulary learning among fifth-grade EFL students and promote active participation during English lessons.			
Specific Objectives:	To identify students' vocabulary learning needs through a diagnostic assessment.			
	To encourage students to practice and use new vocabulary through interactive digital tasks.			
	To encourage the use of digital resources as complementary teaching tools that help teachers create more dynamic and interactive English classes.			
	To encourage the use of digital resources as complementary teaching tools that help teachers create more dynamic and interactive English classes.			
Execution time:	Starting	08/09/2025	Ending	29/01/2026
Evaluation time:	Starting	02/02/2026	Ending	06/02/2026
Project Description				
Justification: This project proposes the use of digital interactive activities to support vocabulary learning among fifth-grade EFL students				

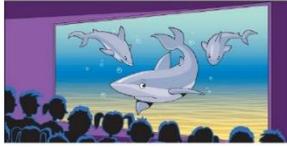
as an alternative to traditional teaching methods based mainly on repetition and teacher explanations. Through the integration of digital platforms and gamified tasks, students can interact with new vocabulary in more engaging and dynamic ways. These activities aim to promote active participation, motivation, and contextualized vocabulary practice during English lessons.

Execution Matrix						
Objective (number)	Activity	What will be done	What change is expected - Outcomes	Resources	Time	Responsibility
S.O.1	Identification of students' strengths and weaknesses in terms of their knowledge and use of English vocabulary.	Diagnostic Test: Students will take a vocabulary diagnostic test to help the teacher identify their current vocabulary level and the areas that need improvement.	Clear identification of students' current vocabulary level, allowing teachers to tailor digital activities to their learning needs.	Diagnostic test sheets (Movers vocabulary test), pencils	1 class session	Teacher
S.O.2	Design digital vocabulary activities for fifth-grade students.	Digital booklet: Create and apply digital vocabulary tasks (games, quizzes, multimedia activities) aligned with fifth-grade content	Students expand vocabulary knowledge and demonstrate better understanding of word meanings and usage	Digital platforms, computer, projector, internet	4 weeks	Teacher

SECTION 3

Look at the pictures and read the story. Write some words to complete the sentences about the story. You can use 1, 2 or 3 words.

A FAMILY HOLIDAY



Vicky lives with her parents and her two brothers, Sam and Paul, in the city. Last week, they had a holiday by the sea. Sam is ten, Vicky is eight but Paul is only five. They went to the cinema on Wednesday because it rained all day. They saw a film about sharks. The sharks had very big teeth. Paul didn't like watching them and he closed his eyes.

Examples:

Vicky's family went on holiday last week Vicky has two brothers who are called Sam and Paul.

Questions:

The family had a holiday by (1)..... . It (2)..... all day on Wednesday and the family went to the cinema. Paul didn't enjoy seeing (3)..... in the film.



On Thursday, Paul thought about the film. He didn't want to swim in the sea. He sat on the beach and watched Sam and Vicky. They played in the water. Mum gave Paul an ice cream but he didn't want it. Then Dad said, "Come on Paul! Let's go for a swim." But Paul didn't want to.

Sam and Vicky (4) in the sea. Paul didn't want the ice cream that his (5)..... gave him. Dad wanted to go for (6)..... with Paul.

SECTION 4

Look and read. Write YES or NO.



Examples:

There are five white towels in the bathroom. YES

The two smallest bears are washing their faces. NO

Questions:

1. A big brown bear is having a shower.
2. There are some glasses below the mirror.
3. The yellow bear is fatter than the blue bear.
4. There are four toys in the bath.
5. There are lots of boxes in the cupboard.
6. The floor is wet and there is a toothbrush on it.

Activity #1

Activity:	English Stars Battle: Jeopardy Vocabulary Game (Twine - digital)
Objective:	To reinforce descriptive vocabulary (clothing, accessories, physical appearance, feelings, family) through fun, competitive gameplay while practicing speaking, listening and quick thinking in English.
Resources:	
	Computer / projector
	Twine game file (.html) or link already prepared with all questions, points, feedback and automatic scoring
	Optional: images / flashcards for 5–10 min warm-up before starting the game
Link:	https://jhon-ce.itch.io/englishstarsbattle
Duration:	40–60 minutes (depending on class size and number of questions)
Description:	
1.	The teacher does a quick 5–10 minute warm-up: review key vocabulary (clothing, accessories, physical appearance, feelings, family members) using images, repetition and simple sentences.
2.	The class is divided into two teams (e.g. 10 vs 10 students or similar balanced groups).
3.	The teacher opens the Twine Jeopardy game (.html file) on the projector / shared screen so everyone can see clearly.
4.	The game displays the main board with categories and point values (e.g. 100–500 points). Higher points = more difficult / longer answers required.
5.	Teams take turns choosing a category and point value by saying it aloud (e.g. “Feelings for 400”).
6.	The teacher clicks the chosen square → the question/prompt appears.
7.	The team has 1 minute to discuss quietly, then one or more representatives give the answer aloud (encourage full sentences when possible).
8.	The teacher clicks to reveal the correct answer → Twine automatically shows feedback (simple “Correct!”, “Good try! The answer is...”).
9.	Points are added automatically by the game and shown on screen.
10.	The game continues with teams alternating turns until all questions are answered or time runs out.
11.	The game ends when: all questions have been attempted OR every student has participated at least once (teacher monitors speaking turns).
12.	The team with the highest score (shown automatically by Twine) is declared the winner.

Images of activity #1

ENGLISH STARS BATTLE! ✨



TOPICS

- Clothes
- Body
- Feelings
- Actions
- Family

ACTIVITIES CHART

TEAM A

📄 PTS

TEAM A TURN

TEAM B

📄 PTS

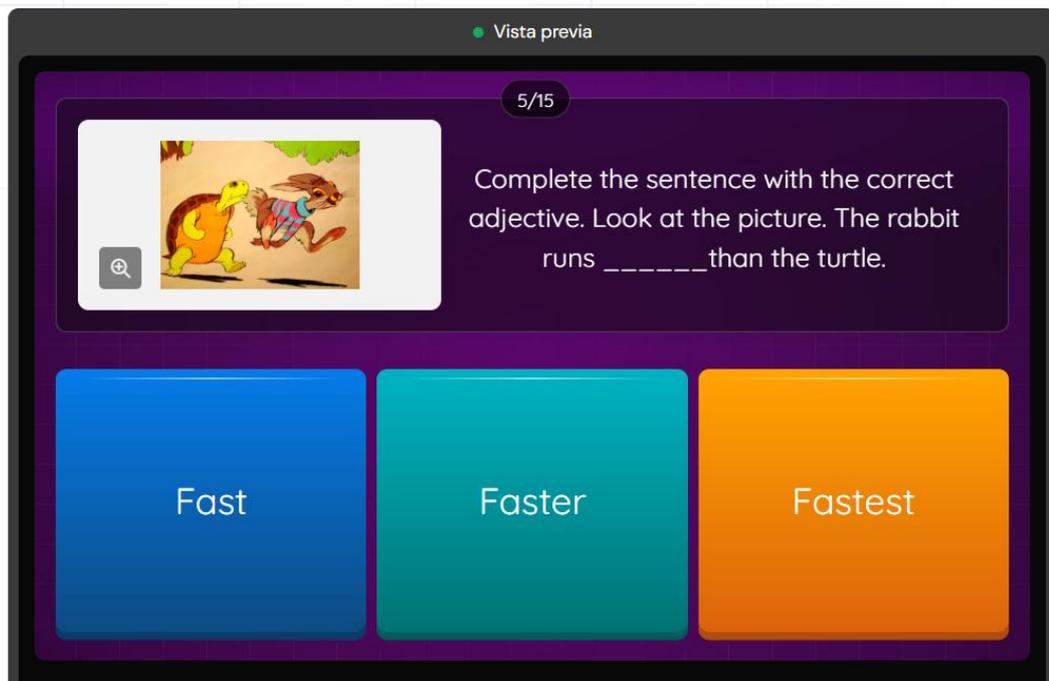
ENERGY	CLOTHES	BODY	FEELINGS	ACTIONS	FAMILY
100	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2
200	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2
300	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2
400	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2
500	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2	Q1 Q2

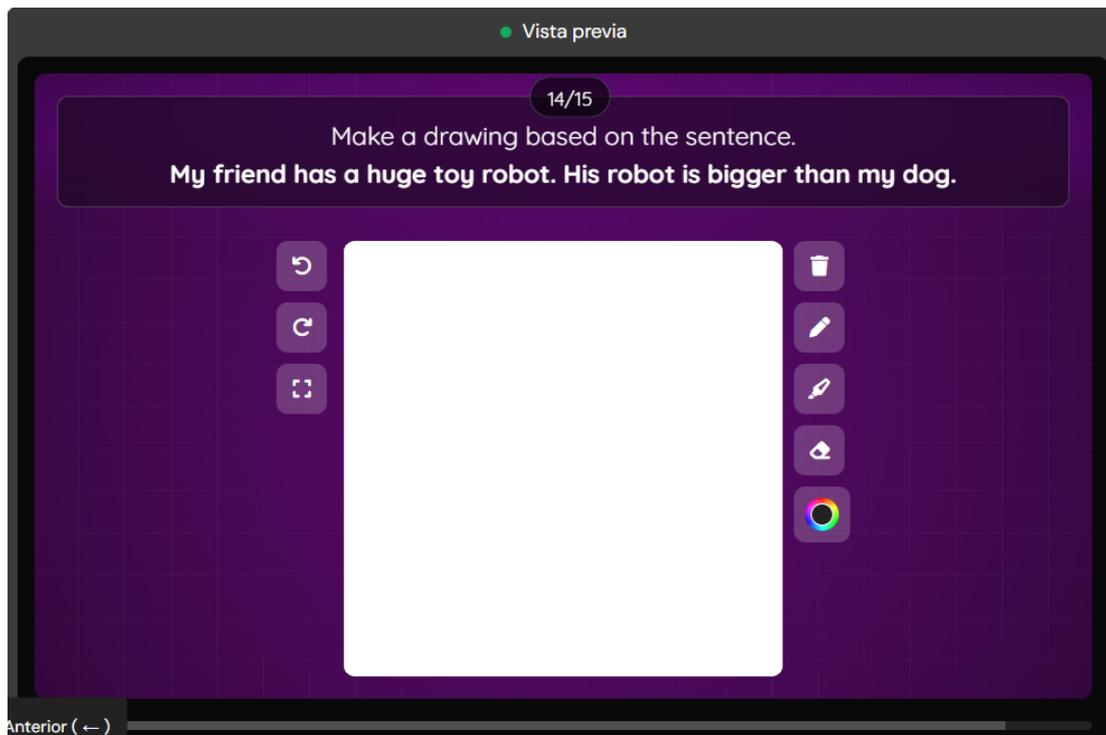
END SHOW ▶

Activity #2

Activity:	Home Description Activity - Comparatives & Superlatives Vocabulary (Wayground - digital)
Objective:	To reinforce vocabulary and correct use of comparative and superlative adjectives
Resources:	
-	Wayground activity pre-created with timed 26-minute session.
-	Student devices (phones, tablets, laptops or shared classroom computers) to join via Wayground code/link
Duration:	Approximately 35–45 minutes (warm-up + 26 min activity + wrap-up)
Link:	https://wayground.com/admin/quiz/6998b5b51e9664bd6ff3434e
Description:	
1.	Students join using the Wayground code/link
2.	Digital activity runs for 26 minutes (automatic timer).
3.	Question types: multiple choice, fill in the blank, drawing + describe using comparatives/superlatives.
4.	Automatic points, instant feedback, and on-screen leaderboard.
5.	Teacher monitors progress and common mistakes.
6.	Wayground generates post-activity reports with individual/group scores, participation data and vocabulary mastery insights for follow-up.

Images of activity #2

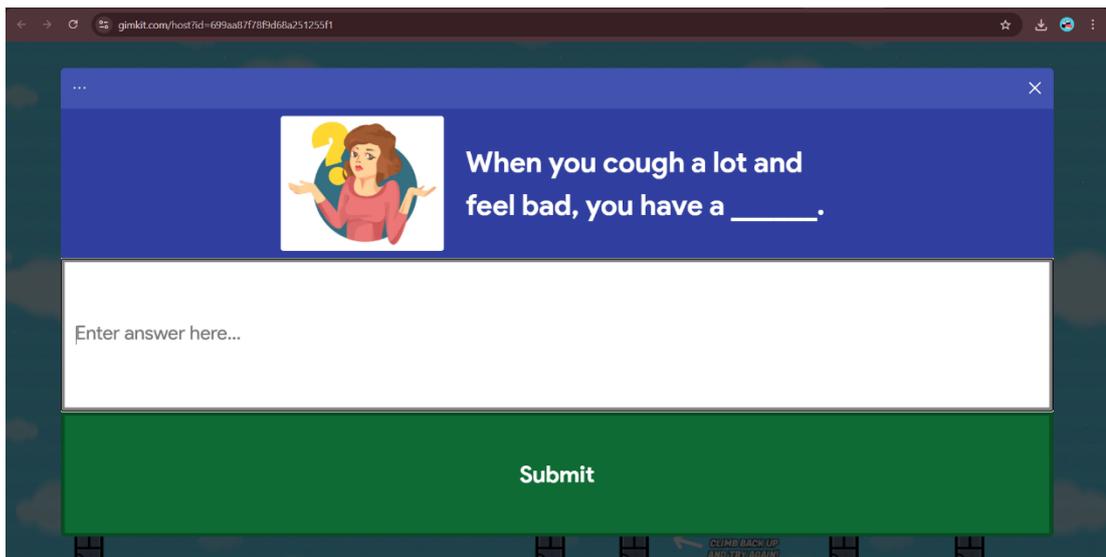
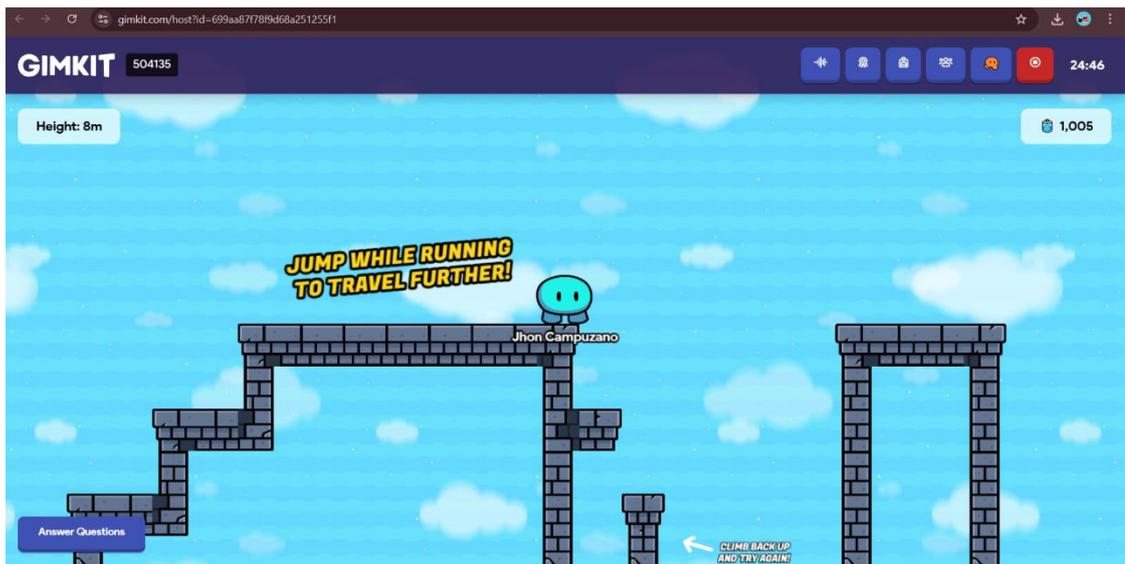




Activity #3

Activity:	Vocabulary Review - Don't Look Down (Gimkit - digital)
Objective:	Review and reinforce textbook vocabulary through fun, competitive platforming gameplay while practicing quick responses.
Resources:	
-	Computer lab access (computers for students)
-	Gimkit account and pre-created kit with vocabulary questions
-	Projector/screen for teacher host view (optional leaderboard display)
-	Students join via game code/link
Duration:	50-60 minute
Description:	
1.	Divide class into small groups/turns (5 students at a time in lab).
2.	Teacher starts Gimkit game in "Don't Look Down" mode and shares join code.
3.	Each group of 5 plays for 10 minutes (teacher manages turns/rotations).
4.	Students control characters on platforms: answer questions correctly to gain energy and jump/climb higher.
5.	Question types: multiple choice, complete sentences, guess the riddle, complete mini-stories.
6.	Wrong answer = no energy/advance; correct = move up toward the top.
7.	The student who has climbed the highest (the one who has reached the highest point) wins the round.
8.	Rotate groups until all participate.
9.	Closing (3-5 min): announce overall winner, discuss tricky questions.

Images of activity #3



Gamification Features Integrated in the Activities

To improve student motivation, participation, and vocabulary learning in EFL classrooms, this proposal uses gamification techniques that are inherent in all digital activities: an automatic real-time scoring system, immediate feedback, competition (individual or team), timers, and clear winners. These elements make playing vocabulary games fun, a competitive challenge that encourages students to respond quickly, accurately, and creatively.

Correct answers are rewarded with points or progress in the game (energy to level up in Gimkit, points in Twine or Wayground), mistakes are punished with loss of progress or points, and immediate feedback is provided so that students can learn from their mistakes instantly. Competition is key: teams compete in Jeopardy for the highest score, individuals compete for the highest score in task rankings, and small groups or one-on-one compete to reach the top in Don't Look Down. This generates excitement and a certain fullness of participation.

Achievements have been rewarded and celebrated by announcing clear winners at the end of each activity (the team with the most points, the student with the highest mark on the assignment, the group or individual who reaches the greatest height) and through simple classroom rewards such as verbal praise, congratulations in front of the whole class, or small certificates that can be printed out for the best students or teams.

The three activities were created on accessible digital platforms based on their interactive features and potential to make vocabulary practice more interesting and effective.

The Jeopardy-style Twine game was based on descriptive vocabulary (clothing, accessories, physical appearance, feelings, family). With automatic scoring, students can freely select categories and values (higher value = more difficult question), a variety of different questions, immediate and clear feedback on mistakes, and a time limit once each student has had one attempt. The game is projected in class and the class is divided into two teams of ten students each, with a brief explanation of the vocabulary beforehand.

Wayground was selected for the task based on comparative and superlative adjectives to describe objects, people, animals, etc. This is a timed task lasting 26 minutes, which is completed when the time is up or the student finishes, and consists of multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank questions, and drawing questions (in which they must draw and describe using the target adjectives and vocabulary). It features automatic scoring, immediate feedback at the end of the test for each item, and a score table.

Gimkit in Don't Look Down game mode was the tool used to review vocabulary from the textbook in class. In this platform game, students answer multiple-choice questions, complete sentences, riddles, and mini-stories with questions to gain energy and ascend to higher platforms, but they also run the risk of being unable to move if they answer incorrectly. This activity is carried out in the computer lab with 5 students at a time (10 minutes each), and the winner is the one who reaches the highest level.

These platforms were adapted to match the vocabulary topics in the class and textbook, providing immediate feedback, scores, and varied formats to encourage active development of English vocabulary.

		UNIT COST	SUBTOTAL	
Diagnostic phase	Equipment			
	Laptop	\$350,00	\$350,00	
	Printing diagnostic tests	\$0,15	\$3,00	x20
Implementation Phase	Office Supplies			
	Software: Microsoft Office	\$0,00	\$0,00	
	Canva Website	\$55,00	\$55,00	
	Twine	\$0,00	\$0,00	
	Wayground	\$8,00	\$8,00	
	GimKit Pro	\$15,00	\$14,99	
	Equipment			
	Laptop	\$350,00	\$350,00	
	Projector	\$789,99	\$789,99	Provided by the institution
	Internet	\$20,87	\$20,87	Provided by the institution
Project evaluation	Office supplies			
	Pack of A4 blank sheets	\$0,90	\$0,90	
	Printing	\$0,15	\$0,30	x2
	Subtotal	\$1590,06	\$1593,05	
	Contingency reserves	5%	\$79,65	
		TOTAL BUDGET		\$1672,70

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Form (Week 1)



Date: Week 1 (September 8-11)

Class level: 5th grade

Number of students: 19

1. Background Information

a) Observer Name: John Alejandro Campuzano Espinoza

b) Observer's location in the class: Back of the classroom

2. Classroom and background

a) Room location and layout (e.g., type of student seating, instructor on podium, etc)

The classroom has two straight rows at the front and center, near the whiteboard. The back row is arranged in a wide semicircle. There are two additional desks located on the slightly curved sides, facing the whiteboard. The classroom is equipped with a projector.

b) How varied are the English classes (especially for vocabulary teaching) in this course?

Circle one percentage for each to show the approximate balance between Instructor Delivery and Active Student Participation: For the whole course - Instructor → Student

100%/0% | 80%/20% | 60%/40% | 50%/50% | 40%/60% | 20%/80% | 0%/100%

3. Narrative Description of Class – Field Notes

- General flow of the lesson
- Normal vocabulary teaching practices observed
- Use or non-use of digital tools
- Teacher actions that clearly increase or decrease student motivation
- Any noticeable differences in participation among students or groups.

During this week, the class began a new unit focused on superlative forms and related vocabulary. Lessons typically started with the teacher presenting target words and structures on the board. Vocabulary was introduced through written examples and model sentences, followed by oral repetition and short comprehension checks. The teacher frequently demonstrated sentence patterns and asked students to produce similar examples. In several moments, meaning was supported through quick drawings on the board and simple physical actions. Practice activities included sentence construction tasks and guided exercises. Students worked both individually and in small groups. Group activities mainly took the form of short vocabulary games, where students created sentences using assigned words. The teacher moved around the classroom while students worked and corrected answers orally and on the board. A listening activity from the textbook was played once using the speaker. No projector or digital tools were used. Participation was higher during interactive tasks, while a small group of students remained quieter; however, they tend to participate more in group activities and games.

Adapted from:

Almusharraf, N. (2020). Teachers' perspectives on promoting learner autonomy for vocabulary development: A case study. *Cogent Education*, 7(1). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2020.1823154>

Appendix 2: Classroom Observation Form (Week 2)



Date: Week 2 (September 15 - 18)

Class level: 5th grade

Number of students: 19

1. Background Information

a) Observer Name: John Alejandro Campuzano Espinoza

b) Observer's location in the class: Back of the classroom

2. Classroom and background

a) Room location and layout (e.g., type of student seating, instructor on podium, etc)

The classroom has two straight rows in the front and central area, close to the board. The back row is arranged in a wide semicircle. Two additional desks are located on the sides in a semi-curved formation, all facing the board. The classroom is equipped with a projector.

b) How varied are the English classes (especially for vocabulary teaching) in this course?

Circle one percentage for each to show the approximate balance between Instructor Delivery and Active Student Participation: For the whole course - Instructor → Student

100%/0% | 80%/20% | 60%/40% | 50%/50% | 40%/60% | 20%/80% | 0%/100%

3. Narrative Description of Class – Field Notes

- General flow of the lesson
- Normal vocabulary teaching practices observed
- Use or non-use of digital tools
- Teacher actions that clearly increase or decrease student motivation
- Any noticeable differences in participation among students or groups.

Vocabulary instruction this week was mainly conducted through board-based and textbook exercises. The teacher regularly wrote activities on the board, including connecting sentences, completing sentences, and developing original sentences with target vocabulary. Students copied the instructions and exercises into their notebooks and completed them individually. Each task was preceded by a brief explanation and examples from the teacher. Vocabulary meaning and usage were clarified through written models, occasional board drawings, and teacher gestures. The lesson sequence usually followed explanation, individual written work and whole-class correction. The teacher reviewed answers by calling on students and writing correct forms on the board. Group work occurred less frequently and mostly took the form of short vocabulary games, where students produced sentences in a more dynamic format. No digital tools were used during this week, and the speaker was not used. Most students remained focused and engaged in the tasks, although some needed repeated prompting and explanation to participate.

Adapted from:

Almusharraf, N. (2020). Teachers' perspectives on promoting learner autonomy for vocabulary development: A case study. *Cogent Education*, 7(1). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2020.1823154>

Appendix 3: Classroom Observation Form (Week 3)



Date: Week 3 (September 22-25)
Number of students: 19

Class level: 5th grade

1. Background Information

a) Observer Name: John Alejandro Campuzano Espinoza

b) Observer's location in the class: Back of the classroom

2. Classroom and background

a) Room location and layout (e.g., type of student seating, instructor on podium, etc)

The classroom layout remained unchanged, with straight rows in the front and center, a semicircle row in the back, and two side desks in a semi-curved formation, all facing the board where the teacher is located.

b) How varied are the English classes (especially for vocabulary teaching) in this course?

Circle one percentage for each to show the approximate balance between Instructor Delivery and Active Student Participation: For the whole course - Instructor → Student

100%/0% | 80%/20% | 60%/40% | 50%/50% | 40%/60% | 20%/80% | 0%/100%

3. Narrative Description of Class – Field Notes

- General flow of the lesson
- Normal vocabulary teaching practices observed
- Use or non-use of digital tools
- Teacher actions that clearly increase or decrease student motivation
- Any noticeable differences in participation among students or groups.

This week's lessons focused more strongly on textbook activities and board-written exercises. Students frequently copied vocabulary tasks and sentence exercises from the board before completing them individually. Activities included correcting sentences, completing missing information, and writing original sentences using previously taught vocabulary. The teacher provided step-by-step explanations and sample answers before students began each task. Vocabulary meaning was reinforced through repeated examples, visual support, and supporting gestures. Compared with earlier sessions, most practice time was dedicated to individual written work rather than group tasks. Group activities were limited to brief vocabulary games involving sentence production. The teacher monitored progress by walking around the room and checking notebooks. Answers were reviewed collectively and corrected on the board. No digital tools were used during these classes, and the speaker was not used. Participation levels varied, with some students responding frequently and others remaining mostly quiet.

Adapted from:

Almusharraf, N. (2020). Teachers' perspectives on promoting learner autonomy for vocabulary development: A case study. *Cogent Education*, 7(1). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2020.1823154>

Appendix 4: Teacher's Interview

GRADUATION WORK B2025

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

Interviewer: John Campuzano

Name of the teacher: Methlyn Boya

Date of the interview: Friday, December 12, 2025

	QUESTIONS
1	What are your main instructional strategies for teaching vocabulary to your fifth-grade students, and what is your rationale behind it?
2	Each student has her or his way of learning English. Could you describe how you verify that your vocabulary teaching strategies are effective and which strategies you have found most successful in promoting student engagement?
3	How do you usually start your vocabulary lessons for your students? Do you set clear learning objectives, and do you follow a lesson plan or guide to structure the session?
4	How do you give directions or instructions to your fifth-grade students during vocabulary lessons to ensure they understand and actively participate?
5	How do you teach new vocabulary in context to your students, and how do you make it meaningful and engaging for them?
6	What teaching approaches do you use to enhance your fifth-grade students' vocabulary learning, and which ones have proven most effective in keeping them engaged?
7	How do you usually assess your students' understanding of English vocabulary, and how do you check if they are actively engaged during these assessments?
8	What are your main tools or methods for assessing fifth-grade students' vocabulary learning, and which tools help you monitor their engagement and participation?

Adapted from:

Almusharraf, N. (2020). Teachers' perspectives on promoting learner autonomy for vocabulary development: A case study. *Cogent Education*, 7(1). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2020.1823154>

Appendix 4.1: Answer to Interview Questions

1. What are your main instructional strategies for teaching vocabulary to your fifth-grade students, and what is your rationale behind it?

My main instructional strategies include **explicit vocabulary instruction, visual supports, contextual learning, and repeated exposure**. I pre-teach key words using visuals, realia, gestures, and student-friendly definitions. I also focus on teaching vocabulary in context through reading, writing, and speaking activities rather than in isolation. The rationale behind this approach is that fifth-grade ESL students learn best when vocabulary is meaningful, multisensory, and connected to their background knowledge. Repeated exposure across different activities helps students retain and use new words more confidently.

2. Each student has her or his way of learning English. Could you describe how you verify that your vocabulary teaching strategies are effective and which strategies you have found most successful in promoting student engagement?

I verify the effectiveness of my strategies through **ongoing formative assessment**, such as observing student participation, listening to oral responses, reviewing written work, and using quick checks like exit tickets. I also pay attention to whether students can use the new vocabulary independently in speaking and writing. The most successful strategies for engagement have been **interactive activities** such as games, partner discussions, drawing, and hands-on tasks. When students are actively involved and motivated, their vocabulary learning improves significantly.

3. How do you usually start your vocabulary lessons for your students? Do you set clear learning objectives, and do you follow a lesson plan or guide to structure the session?

I usually start my vocabulary lessons by **activating prior knowledge** and introducing a clear learning objective in student-friendly language. For example, I explain what words we will learn and how students will use them by the end of the lesson. I follow a structured lesson plan that includes an introduction, guided practice, independent practice, and review. Having a clear plan helps me stay organized while still allowing flexibility to adjust based on students' needs.

4. How do you give directions or instructions to your fifth-grade students during vocabulary lessons to ensure they understand and actively participate?

I give directions using **clear, simple language**, and I model the task whenever possible. I also use visuals, gestures, and examples to support understanding. After giving instructions, I check for comprehension by asking students to repeat the directions or demonstrate what they are

Appendix 4.2: Answer to Interview Questions (Part 2)

expected to do. This approach helps ensure that all students understand the task and feel confident participating.

5. How do you teach new vocabulary in context to your students, and how do you make it meaningful and engaging for them?

I teach new vocabulary in context by embedding it in **stories, informational texts, class discussions, and real-life situations**. I encourage students to connect new words to their own experiences and use them in complete sentences. To make learning meaningful and engaging, I use activities like role-playing, interactive reading, and collaborative projects. This helps students see how vocabulary is used in authentic communication.

6. What teaching approaches do you use to enhance your fifth-grade students' vocabulary learning, and which ones have proven most effective in keeping them engaged?

I use a combination of **communicative language teaching, cooperative learning, and differentiated instruction**. Group work and pair activities allow students to practice vocabulary in a low-stress environment. Differentiation, such as providing sentence frames or word banks, supports students at different proficiency levels. The most effective approaches are those that allow students to interact, move, and actively use the language rather than just memorize words.

7. How do you usually assess your students' understanding of English vocabulary, and how do you check if they are actively engaged during these assessments?

I assess vocabulary understanding through **formative and summative assessments**, including quizzes, writing assignments, oral presentations, and informal observations. I also use games and interactive activities as assessments to keep students engaged. During assessments, I monitor student participation, effort, and use of vocabulary in context to ensure they are actively engaged and not just recalling definitions.

8. What are your main tools or methods for assessing fifth-grade students' vocabulary learning, and which tools help you monitor their engagement and participation?

My main tools include rubrics, vocabulary journals, exit tickets, observations, and digital tools such as online quizzes or interactive platforms. Vocabulary journals allow me to track student progress over time, while exit tickets provide quick feedback on understanding. Observation checklists and participation rubrics help me monitor student engagement and participation during lessons and activities.

Appendix 5: Institutional Request



FAH-PINE-015-2025
Guayaquil, 25 de noviembre del 2025

Mayra Piedad Guamán Chamba, Mgs.
Rectora
Crear Innovation School
En su despacho.

Reciba un cordial saludo. Por el presente solicito a usted, muy comedidamente y salvo su mejor criterio, se permita al señor John Alejandro Campuzano Espinoza CI# 2300455363 estudiante del 8vo ciclo de la carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros – inglés, de la Facultad de Artes y Humanidades de la Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil, realizar recolección de información para elaborar su Trabajo de Integración Curricular (Proyecto de titulación) denominado "Impact of Digital Learning Activities for EFL Vocabulary Acquisition among Fifth Graders at a Private School in the City of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas in the Scholastic Year 2025-2026"

El señor Campuzano estará realizando dicha actividad en la clase de inglés que reciben los estudiantes en la institución que usted acertadamente dirige, durante el mes de noviembre, diciembre 2025 y enero 2026.

De antemano agradezco la atención brindada.

Atentamente,


Lcdo. Stanley González Ubilla, M.Ed.
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DECLARACIÓN Y AUTORIZACIÓN

Yo, **Campuzano Espinoza, Jhon Alejandro**, con C.C: # 2300455363 autor/a del trabajo de titulación: **Development of digital learning activities for EFL vocabulary acquisition among fifth graders at a private school in the city of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas in the Scholastic Year 2025-2026**, previo a la obtención del título de **Licenciado en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros - Inglés** en la Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil.

1.- Declaro tener pleno conocimiento de la obligación que tienen las instituciones de educación superior, de conformidad con el Artículo 144 de la Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior, de entregar a la SENESCYT en formato digital una copia del referido trabajo de titulación para que sea integrado al Sistema Nacional de Información de la Educación Superior del Ecuador para su difusión pública respetando los derechos de autor.

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C.C: **2300455363**

REPOSITORIO NACIONAL EN CIENCIA Y TECNOLOGÍA			
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TÍTULO Y SUBTÍTULO:	Development of digital learning activities for EFL vocabulary acquisition among fifth graders at a private school in the city of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas in the Scholastic Year 2025-2026.		
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REVISOR(ES)/TUTOR(ES)	Espinoza Pinzón, Liz Stephanie		
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RESUMEN/ABSTRACT:	<p>Vocabulary acquisition and retention are fundamental to the successful development of English as a foreign language (EFL) in young learners, but there are various ways of presenting and consolidating vocabulary in the classroom. This is a descriptive case study that investigates vocabulary teaching approaches and the pedagogical design of digital learning activities used to facilitate vocabulary learning in a fifth-grade EFL setting. Teaching approaches, activity sequences, student participation, and the role played by online resources were recorded through classroom observations and teacher interviews. The results show that vocabulary teaching integrates traditional methodologies with tasks that use new technologies, although the use of digital tools is not always based on pedagogical reasons. Digital activities that include games and interactivity were positively associated with student participation and more repeated exposure to vocabulary, while discrepancies in activity design could hinder long-term retention. This study demonstrates that digitally supported vocabulary activities that are well designed and closely aligned with learning objectives, as well as including recycling, generate better learning outcomes with young learners of English as a foreign language.</p>		
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