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Students' & Teachers' Voices

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Research Papers



Artículos de Investigación

Study of the Use of Tangible-Ludic Materials in Elementary School

Estudio del Uso de Materiales Lúdicos Tangibles en la Escuela Primaria

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ABSTRACT

In the current educational environment, it is essential to search for strategies to improve meaningful learning through tangible-ludic materials. An open issue is the lack of interest from the students in the process of learning English as a foreign language through a traditional approach, where the students only repeat structured monotonous sentences and have a limited interaction with educational material. The goal of this paper is to identify the effects of the use of tangible-ludic materials – the type of material that students can handle and touch and which appeal to their sense of fun and curiosity – at a primary school, particularly in second grade. We carried out an action research initiative to observe the student's reactions and the learning vocabulary level A1 acquired through the use of the designed set of nine tangible-ludic materials originally meant for kindergarten age children. The idea of using tangible-ludic materials with this particular group of children was to innovate the process of understanding inside the classroom and stimulate the creativity of the students. The data collection was done through the use of field diaries, an interview, and a questionnaire. The resulting data was then analyzed to find out the impact of these materials in these children's learning of vocabulary. As a result of this initiative, we concluded that the use of tangible-ludic materials impact meaningful learning positively; identifying six significant effects: tangible ludic-materials act as classroom motivator, effective language reproducer, learning appropriation promoter, teamwork facilitator, stimulant of meaningful learning, and as a natural aid in authentic classroom management.

KEY WORDS

Tangible-ludic material, Teaching Languages, Meaningful Learning

RESUMEN

En el medio ambiente educativo actual, es esencial buscar estrategias para mejorar el aprendizaje

significativo a través de materiales lúdico-tangibles. Un problema actual es la falta de interés de los estudiantes hacia su proceso de aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera a través de un enfoque tradicional, donde los estudiantes solamente repiten oraciones monótonas y tienen una interacción limitada con los materiales educativos. El objetivo de este artículo es el de identificar los efectos del uso de materiales educativos lúdico-tangibles (el tipo de materiales que los estudiantes pueden manipular y tocar y que a la vez atraen su sentido de diversión y curiosidad) a nivel de primaria, particularmente en segundo grado. Llevamos a cabo un estudio de investigación acción para poder observar las reacciones de los estudiantes, así como su aprendizaje de vocabulario de nivel A1 adquirido a través del uso de un set de nueve materiales tangibles-lúdicos los cuales eran destinados originalmente para niños de nivel preescolar. La idea de utilizar materiales tangibles-lúdicos con este grupo de niños en particular fue el de innovar el proceso de comprensión dentro del salón de clases, así como estimular la creatividad de estos alumnos. La recolección de los datos se llevó a cabo mediante el uso de diario de campo, una entrevista y un cuestionario. Los datos obtenidos fueron analizados para determinar el impacto de estos materiales en el aprendizaje de vocabulario de estos niños. Como resultado de esta iniciativa, se puede concluir que el uso de materiales tangibles-lúdicos impactan de manera favorable el aprendizaje; se identificaron seis efectos significativos: los materiales tangibles-lúdicos actúan como agentes motivadores en el salón de clases, reproductores de un lenguaje efectivo, promotores de la apropiación del lenguaje, facilitadores del trabajo en equipo, estimuladores del aprendizaje significativo, así como un auxiliar natural del manejo del salón de clases.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Materiales tangibles-lúdicos, Enseñanza de lenguas, Aprendizaje significativo

Nowadays, it is important to find strategies to improve activities in the classroom and contribute to more meaningful learning for students. In Mexico, although the English language is now an official subject in all public primary schools, in reality, not all of the public schools have the class as part of the curricula (for diverse reasons) giving priority to Spanish and Mathematics. Several studies have described that recurrent problems, in those schools which have English as part of the curricula, are how the teachers approach the class and that the materials used are not highly relevant for children, causing a monotonous and irrelevant class, leaving aside the goal of obtaining meaningful learning (Bernaus, 2001).

As English student-teachers, in the practicum of the Program for the Betterment of English Teaching, known as PROMETE (in Spanish), we identified that students, of second grade at a primary school, do not pay attention to vocabulary retention activities if they are presented in a traditional way. This observation encouraged us to explore different strategies and novel materials to make the lessons conducive to English learning. We introduced tangible materials in two classes, observing a change in the students' attitude, which we used as a guideline for the development of the present paper. Thus, this article is based on the action research initiative to find out about the effects of tangible-ludic materials in elementary school, mainly in the vocabulary area for level A1 (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for the Languages CEFR), which is taught in second grade of public primary schools. The identification of these effects is relevant today in the local educational context, because the English language at an elementary level (in the schools that have English as part of the curricula) has become very important in recent years.

The study established as a roadmap the answering of a main research question and two subsidiaries research questions:

- ◊ What are the effects of using tangible-ludic materials for teaching English at the primary school level?
- ◊ How does the English teacher use tangible-ludic materials for primary school?
- ◊ What is the role of the student when using tangible-ludic materials for learning English at primary school level?

In order to answer these questions, we built a theoretical framework based on disciplines from various areas, such as linguistics, didactics, and psychology. The linguistics area provides the appropriate approaches according to cognitive, affective and physiological traits, as well as the description of the attitudes and behaviors that determine the preferred forms of student learning. The previous was mainly based on approaches and methods of language teaching proposed by Richards & Rodgers (2014). The didactic area is supported by the Theory of Didactic Transposition of Chevallard (1998), which explains the process of converting theoretical learning into tacit or practical learning for the development of teaching and learning materials. Regarding psychology, we included the Theory of Human Development, based mainly on Papalia, Feldman, & Martorell (2012). In this area, the cognitive and psychosocial development of children, and the influence on second language learning in them are identified. The previous with the main focus of teaching English and the importance of the use of teaching and learning materials for children between 6-7 years of age.

As teachers, it is our duty to make use of innovative resources to contribute to the development of the English language abilities of our students to promote meaningful learning. The previous can be done through the use of tangible-ludic materials. This implementation represents a good alternative to innovate the teaching-learning process.

The methodology proposed for this study is an action research initiative (Creswell, 2014); which allows us to identify the effects of tangible-ludic materials. The participation of the researcher is to design tangible-ludic materials to be used in a second-grade classroom at a public primary school as well as an observer and data collector based on the use of those materials. The role of the student-teacher in charge of the English class is to act as a model for the students, giving clear instructions and responding to the student's needs in the teaching-learning process while using those tangible-ludic materials. This process allows the students to interact through innovative teaching and learning materials in order to acquire the vocabulary level A1 (according to the CEFRL) of English. In this case, the student's role is vital in learning English as a foreign language, because they are the ones who react to the use of tangible-ludic materials. Therefore, the use of materials in the classroom allows students to respond to the stimulus, in this case, the tangible-ludic materials, according to the role and attention of the teacher. Hence, we establish that an active participation in the environment of the class is linked to the student's needs and learning style, which is part of the conclusions that are obtained from this study.

This article includes a theoretical framework which discusses the relevant theories linked to the study. In addition, the teaching-learning process and the teaching of English were addressed. Then, the methodology is presented based on the Action-Research method and the grounded theory. After, the data analysis and the discussion of the effects of using tangible-ludic materials for teaching English is explained. Finally, we present suggestions for further research, recommendations and conclusions of the present study.

Theoretical Framework

It is relevant for an English teacher to have a working understanding of the range of teaching methods for the teaching-learning process of English. Richards & Rodgers (2014) establish that people perceive and acquire knowledge differently. In addition, they have preferences towards specific cognitive strategies that are the ones that will ultimately help them give meaning to new information. For example, some people prefer to learn in groups, others individually, some opt for experimentation, and others require one-on-one advice. Regarding these combinations, we can establish students' needs to find out whether the use of tangible-ludic materials is favorable for their learning. Cognitive, affective, and physiological traits will determine how students perceive, interact, and respond to a learning environment or, more simply, the description of the attitudes and behaviors that determine the preferred forms of learning of the individual. Furthermore, in the didactics area, Chevallard (1998) mentions the didactic transposition theory, which can be interpreted as the knowledge that can be modified, so that it is understandable and accessible to other people and the society where it is transmitted. In our case, it provides an understanding of the design considerations that must be taken into account for the implementation of tangible-ludic materials. Every social project for the English teaching-learning process is dialectically constituted with the identification and designation of wise content as content to be taught. In our case, the vocabulary must be identified and adapted to teach children in the second-grade at the primary school.

Thus, the Human Development theory identifies the phases of children in their human development, including the stages of cognitive and psychosocial development and how they influence the learning of a second language in the students, considering the external and internal factors of those students. These aspects of human development, contribute to our research in a significant way because the growth of the body and the brain, the development of sensory capacities and motor skills, as well as health are part of the physical development. This development influences other aspects of human development, which includes the cognitive aspect. The ability to speak depends on the mouth and brain physical development, as well as their cognitive development. For example, in this research, students are between six and seven years old. So, considering their age and their characteristics, the use of tangible or ludic materials would work as an aid to develop their language skills, allowing students to develop their cognitive learning abilities, according to their needs (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Papalia, Feldman, & Martorell, 2012).

In order to define the characteristics of children between six and seven years, we use the conductive (Papalia, Feldman, & Martorell, 2012) and Piagetian approach (Papalia, Feldman, & Martorell, 2012; Labinowicz, 1987) as learning mechanism approaches. By considering these approaches, we defined five characteristics that describe the children considered for this study.

First, children have self-centeredness as one of their main characteristics; for example, students do not find it easy to share information or materials with their peers, they only think about themselves and they are used to obtaining what they generally want, regardless of who is around them (Levy, 1991; Halliwell, 1992).

Second, children show enthusiasm for daily activities, thus, in the classroom, students are always eager to try new activities. However, it is difficult for them to concentrate, if the teacher only offers them one activity and stays with the same activity for a long time, without considering other learning approaches the teacher loses their interest. Therefore, the attention of the students must be maintained at all times, through activities such as games, role plays, and jokes, which strengthens the relationship with the teacher because the teacher must consider the needs of

the students, to help their development in the teaching-learning process (Levy, 1991).

Third, they are remarkably dynamic at those ages, students constantly seek different learning channels, they learn through their senses, some students are more visual, i.e., they prefer to learn through observing images or objects; while students who are more kinesthetic, prefer to touch objects, jump, run, and in short, channel their energy through movement. The auditory learners choose to listen to songs, sounds, and repeat vocabulary, these students feel more at home in a classroom in which noise is part of it (Levy, 1991; Halliwell, 1992; Kang Shin & Crandall, 2014).

Fourth, curiosity is a key element in children of these ages, as it encourages them to pay attention to the innovative things that their teacher presents to them. Thus, the teacher must implement fun language activities that involve children's curiosity, as far as the children are concerned, they are not trying to learn words: they are playing (Kang Shin & Crandall, 2014).

Fifth, the role of imagination stimulates children's desire to learn by playing. Therefore, the means are needed to be able to learn playfully, in the same way it is relevant to mention that children are delighted in imagination and fantasy play. Students must have freedom of expression when carrying out learning activities, in order to focus on their imaginative role and stick to the student's curiosity to explore their creative side (Levy, 1991; Madylus, 2020; Kang Shin & Crandall, 2014).

Learning plays a fundamental role in the human development of children by interacting with tangible materials, learning to develop their senses to the fullest, exploring a creative area, and learning significantly (Halliwell, 1992). There are some aspects to improve the learning process that can be identified, such as the interest of the students in the work that will be done and the importance of capturing the child's attention when carrying out teaching and learning activities. Meanwhile, in this research, we talk about the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language to children, in agreement with Halliwell (1992), who emphasizes that for effective teaching, teachers must be creative and be aware of the needs of each of the students in the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, Caballero Arnaz (2018) affirms that scaffolding is essential for students, where the teacher acts as a link, and the students investigate their reality, understand it and take possession of said reality to distinguish it within the knowledge of the student's needs, which ends with their own ideas of learning. This investigation brings to light that words are not enough, the child must be able to explore with their senses, and the activities must be supervised by the teacher considering students' previous knowledge to carry out the activities. Therefore, materials play an important role in the teaching and learning process of children.

The material used in a classroom is closely related to the teaching-learning process; therefore, it helps the teacher to deliver the content, and the students not only acquire the vocabulary, they can relate it to experiences (Morales, 2012). Teaching and learning materials are used to promote the development of abilities in students, as well as in the improvement of attitudes related to knowledge, through oral and written language, imagination, socialization, better self-knowledge and of others (Scott & Ytreberg, 1991; Tomlinson, 2003; Bikandi, 2000).

Teaching materials can be classified as visual, tangible, and ludic (Tomlinson, 2003). Visual material, refers to everything that can be appreciated through the sense of sight (ibid). Tangible material refers to any material that can be manipulated through the senses, it should be colorful, with various textures, sizes, and related purposes for creative learning (ibid). Materials must be reviewed to inspect that they comply with the standards of image quality, texture, and sound in any case (ibid). In other words, materials must have a purpose to be used in learning the language. Ludic materials point out that gathering resources facilitates the teaching-learning

process, and they are used within the educational environment to facilitate the acquisition of concepts, abilities, attitudes, and skills (Scott & Ytreberg, 1991; Tomlinson, 2003; Bikandi, 2000).

According to Morales (2012) teaching materials have three main goals: 1) *Providing information*, a didactic material has the function of offering information to one or several people, the information that it provides must be of relevance to the recipient. In an educational context, the reason for providing the information through this way is to help the receiver understand easily (Morales, 2012; Madrid, 2001); 2) *Meeting a goal*, this point is very important, because the purpose of an activity is key, in a meaningful class, one could have the best material, but if it does not have a learning purpose, it would not work for the purpose of a particular lesson (Morales, 2012; Palacios, Marchesi & Coll, 2004); 3) *Guiding the T-L (teaching-learning) process*, the teacher plays a vital role in the development of the class, due to the monitoring of activities, behavior and teaching towards his students; that is, within the classroom, the teacher can assign a series of activities, but if they are not followed up in the sessions, the students may present problems in order to learn in a meaningful way, and the ludic material would not work to retain the information, that is why the student guide will always be the teacher (Morales, 2012; Maldonado Sánchez, 2016).

Methodology and Application

The method used in this investigation is action-research. The goal of this research is to find out about the effects of the use of tangible-ludic materials in teaching English in a primary school. The reason behind this goal is that one of the researchers got involved with the PROMETE community as part of her social service. Her role included observing the student-teachers doing their practicum at the primary school. Therefore, this researcher acted as a participant-observer. One of the things she noticed was that student-teachers had a difficult time getting and maintaining the children's attention. She theorized that one of the reasons was that they were using a teacher-centered approach to teaching, in which the children were only required to respond to the direct instructions of the student-teachers. In other words, student-teachers were using conventional teaching materials. She became interested in the lower level groups of primary school (first and second) as those students were the youngest in the primary school. She talked to the primary school student-teachers and the one from second grade was open to any suggestions for improvement in her second-grade class.

As a result, an intervention plan was developed focused on analyzing the effects of the use of tangible-ludic materials as a possible solution to the observed situation. The plan involved the participation of the researcher as a designer of the tangible-ludic materials, considering the level of the English language of the children at the time (A1 according to the CEFRL). This researcher talked to the other two researchers and together they devised an intervention plan as well as to define the tangible-ludic materials and their descriptive sheets. She then provided the materials to the student-teacher to be used with those second graders. The same researcher acted as a participant-observer and data collector based on the implementation of tangible-ludic materials for the teaching-learning process.

Furthermore, a qualitative approach was used in the analysis of social and educational phenomena. The research is focused on the subjects: a group of eight young learners, out of nineteen that belonged to the same group, and a student-teacher, who play their roles in a real context (second grade class of primary school). According to Taylor & Bogdan (1998), this type of research will expose people's experience as they live it, as well as how they perceive it, which is relevant for the local educational context because English language learning and teaching at primary school level has become very important in Mexico in recent years. Taylor & Bogdan

(1998) establish that the goal of qualitative research is to provide a research methodology that allows an understanding of the complex world of lived experiences from the point of view of the people who live it. In our case, this led us to understand the needs of the students and their reactions to the use of these tangible-ludic materials.

The methodological design focuses on the participatory action-research summarized in three phases, according to (Bernal, 2010):

- ◊ Initial Contact Phase: The contact with the community is carried out by formally inviting them to participate in the project. In our case, the approval was requested to the headmaster of the primary school, where the students of the second-grade primary school have contact with the researchers to develop the study proposed.
- ◊ Intermediate phase: In this phase, we must design the objectives and assign specific responsibilities considering the tasks and roles of the participants. Besides, the data recollection methods are defined to obtain the complete image of the phenomenon. Field diaries, interviews, and a questionnaire were used for the present investigation.
- ◊ Study execution and evaluation phase. The project must propose a solution to the problem that was identified in previous phases. In our case, a comprehensive analysis of the effects of tangible-ludic materials. Hence, periodically we analyze and evaluate the data collected along with the project. We focused on observing whether the use of tangible-ludic materials represents a benefit for the community, transforming the learning-teaching process of the English language.

In order to collect data to solve the stated research questions (see introduction), three instruments were created for the intermediate phase of this research:

1. A field diary that allows us to provide the resolution of the research question: What are the effects of using tangible-ludic materials for teaching English at the primary school level? From this diary it can be reported whether the objectives of the session are satisfied. Including the observation of how the teacher approaches the class; that is, if the instructions given to the class were clear, as well as what the students' reaction towards the activity and the class in general were based on the perspective of the attending researcher. This diary is an aid which helps us have another perspective for the research analysis.
2. An interview with the student-teacher at the end of the research application period. This interview helped us answer the following: 1) to know if the teacher uses tangible-ludic materials in her classes; 2) to determine the type of materials used by the teacher to promote English language learning, for example, flashcards, role-playing games, vocabulary games, play dough, or other, the last choice required the student-teacher to elaborate; 3) to analyze the considerations of the teacher about whether or not the use of teaching-learning material in the classes is necessary; 4) to indicate how many materials the teacher used in the classes; 5) to bring to light the perception of the student-teacher regarding the effectiveness of the use of tangible-ludic materials based on the attention of the students; 6) to determine the visible effects on the teacher about the use of tangible-ludic materials; and 7) to contribute to answering if the student-teacher considers favorable and recommends the use the tangible-ludic teaching and learning materials, to strengthen the learning of the English language.
3. A questionnaire to the young learners which was designed to determine the role of the students in the use of the tangible-ludic materials used in their classes. This questionnaire was designed using visual clues so that the young learners were able to identify the different materials. Then the emoticons (happy and sad faces) were used for them to

indicate their likes and dislikes related to the listed materials. The questionnaire goals are to explore how the materials affect or motivate the students, and to know their effects on the students' learning, this was done by verifying whether the student-teacher uses tangible-ludic materials, according to the perception of the students. Also, young learners determined with a happy or sad face depending on whether or not their teacher uses tangible-ludic materials in the classroom. Finally, young learners rated each material by choosing an emoticon which indicated whether they liked or not using each material. In this way, we evaluated the effectiveness of each material and their impact in the students learning process.

The PROMETE program (practicum required by the School of Foreign Languages) consists of twenty-five classes to apply throughout the semester September-December 2019. The main interest is to focus on the materials that the teacher uses for the learning of vocabulary. Hence, only the five classes in which the student-teacher had overt vocabulary interventions were used for our research. The tangible-ludic materials used in each session by the student-teacher have been designed according to the vocabulary topic marked by the PROMETE syllabus for second grade of primary school. The language used during the application of these materials is English. Generally, the lesson covered three main parts: 1) the introduction, which would be a warm up, 2) the main vocabulary activity, each one depending on the topic marked by the syllabus; and 3) the conclusion, where the students will give their opinion about what was developed in the previous activities of the session. All three parts of the vocabulary session made use of tangible-ludic materials.

As a consequence, tangible-ludic materials corresponding to three different vocabulary topics were designed to be implemented during five classes of the semester. These materials were adapted and created according to the previously mentioned topics: farm animals, fruits, and vegetables.

Topic 1: Farm animals

The topic included two types of tangible-ludic materials; a farm including farm animals' finger puppets – cow, horse, donkey, pig, sheep, rabbit, chicken, and duck; and a farm animals' memory game using the same animals. This topic lasted one class.

The farm and the finger puppets were made of felt which makes them practical, flexible, and durable for handling by the young learners (see figure 1). This material was designed to appeal to



Figure 1: Felt farm and farm animals' finger puppets

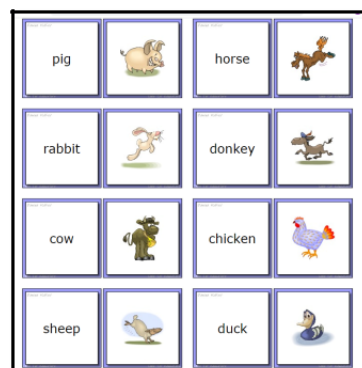


Figure 2: Farm animals' memory game (Tools for Educators®)

the inherent dynamism of the students within the age groups of the second graders of the class as it allowed them to manipulate it and participate in the introduction of the farm animals' vocabulary. Then it was used as a practice tool in which the young learners placed the different animals within the farm according to the student-teacher directions.

The memory game was designed using Tools for Educators® website, printed, and plasticized (see figure 2). It included the images and the names of the eight farm animals mentioned above. This material was designed to encourage curiosity to help young learners pay attention to the animal figures and their names by matching both cards as in the

traditional memory game; this game was used as a conclusion of the farm animals' vocabulary sequence.

Topic 2: Fruits

This topic included four types of tangible-ludic materials; two sets of felt fruits including apple, pear, grapes, watermelon, banana, orange, pineapple, cherry, and strawberry. A big cardboard fruit tree – about 1 meter tall. Two felt children – a boy and a girl. And a set of flashcards using the same fruits. This topic lasted for two classes.

The fruits were made of felt with a smooth, soft texture, they were tridimensional making them easy to handle by the children (see figure 3). Children were divided into teams and within each team each child had a number of felt fruits; this with the purpose of attending the egocentric characteristic of children within these age groups. That is, they find it hard to share things with their peers so this allows them to work individually within a team. The activity aimed to present the names of the fruits and children to respond to the student-teacher presentation of the fruits.



Figure 3: Felt fruits

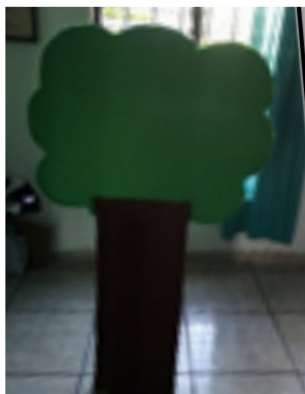


Figure 4: Cardboard fruit tree

The cardboard tree was made as an interactive diorama, it was over one meter tall and had painted leaves (see figure 4). Although the tree allowed for students to

compete among the two teams, it still satisfied the needs of children of working individually. That is, they had to compete among two teams by running and placing on the tree the felt fruit called by the teacher, and by being each child in charge of certain fruits, the material appealed to their sense of individualism. The activity aimed to practice the presented vocabulary of fruits.



Figure 5: Felt children

The felt children were made as puppets which had an opening for the mouth and a fabric bag attached to them to be able to catch the eaten fruit (see figure 5). Children 'fed' the felt fruit to the felt children according to the instructions of the student-teacher (can you feed the girl a cherry?), this activity was part of the conclusion for the first session of the fruit topic.

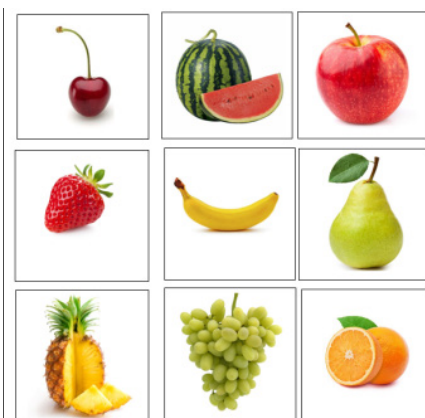


Figure 6: Fruit flashcards

The fruit flashcards were nine – apple, pear, grapes, watermelon, banana, orange, pineapple, cherry, and strawberry. They were 20x20 cm plasticized images of the fruits (see figure 6). This activity appealed to their dynamism and their need to touch and feel things. The flashcards were used in two activities: as a review of the name of the fruits from a previous class where children had to name the fruit shown by the pictures, and as part of vocabulary practice where they had a felt fruit (see figure 3) in their hands and had to run to a pile with the flashcards facing down and find the matching one. Once they found it, they had to say the correct name, if they said it correctly, they got to keep the felt one and return the flashcard to the pile.

Topic 3: Vegetables

This topic included four types of tangible-ludic materials: a felt vegetable garden including the following felt vegetables: corn, chili, potato, beans, broccoli, tomato, radishes, mushrooms, peas, onion, cucumber, lettuce, carrots, cauliflower and cabbage; a plasticized bingo using the same vegetables; a set of homemade play dough in different colors; and, finger paints, as well as vegetables worksheets. This topic lasted for two classes.

The vegetable garden was made of cardboard and felt, and the felt vegetables had a tridimensional soft texture, that made them easy and durable to be handled by children (see figure 7). Children were divided into teams and within each team each child had a number of felt vegetables which they had to place in the garden following the student-teacher’s instructions. This activity sought to appeal to the enthusiastic nature of children within these age groups. This enthusiasm is triggered by the possibility of exploring new activities; that is, students are always eager to experience and learn new things. The students using the garden could interact and recognize the name of each vegetable. The goal of the activity was to present the names of the vegetables and children to respond to the student-teacher presentation of them.



Figure 7: Vegetable garden

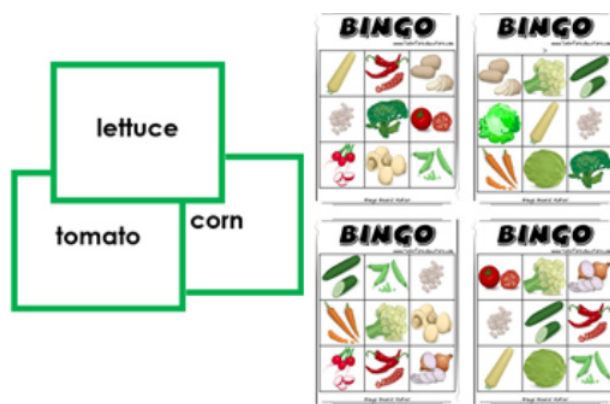


Figure 8: Vegetable bingo (Tools for Educators©)

The vegetable bingo boards were designed using Tools for Educators© website; the bingo calling cards were designed by one of the researchers. Each board was printed on a 10x15 cm card, and the calling cards were printed on a 5.5x7 cm cards; both components were plasticized. The bingo boards included the images of fifteen vegetables, mentioned above; the calling cards had only the names of the vegetables printed on them (see figure 8). This material sought to encourage curiosity to help students practice relating the images and names of the vegetables already presented using the felt vegetables by playing bingo

in teams; when the student-teacher called the vegetable name and she also showed the card with the name on it, if the student had that vegetable, he/she repeated the word aloud. This game was used as an intermediate activity to review the vegetables vocabulary.

The play dough was homemade and non-toxic; using flour, salt, water, cream of tartar, oil, and food coloring (see figure 9). As an interactive play dough, it had a malleable, soft-texture in different colors. This material was used as a warm up activity of the second class, in order to use the previous knowledge about the vocabulary of vegetables, children practiced the previous class. Children were divided into teams; within each team each child had a small amount of play dough in different colors. This activity had as a purpose to satisfy the student’s curious and dynamic nature. The previous was achieved by exploring and manipulating new textures and materials, as students are always eager to experience learning through their senses. Their sense of touch was mainly used, in this case,



Figure 9: Play dough vegetables produced as result of the activity

as they modeled the vegetable figures with play dough. The goal of the activity was the practice of the vocabulary seen in a former class through the use of a different technique.

Finger paints were made with water and food coloring. A worksheet was created in order to provide a model to the students to further practice the vegetable vocabulary by writing the names on the line (see figure 10). The activity helped them explore their creativity and need of handling things by painting them using their fingers. Also, the finger paints on a vegetable worksheet allowed students develop their sense of individualism. The activity aimed to practice the presented vocabulary of vegetables and to conclude the session with a fun activity. This game was the concluding activity to review the vegetables vocabulary.

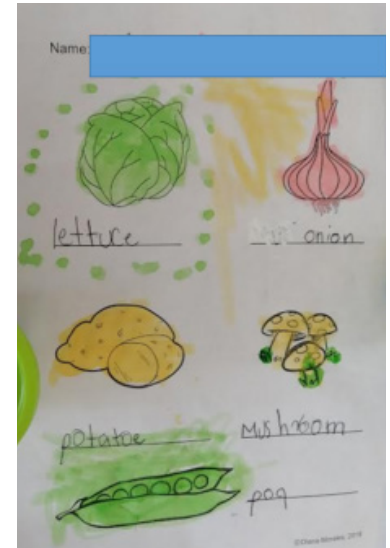


Figure 10: Finger paints on a vegetable worksheet

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data collected was carried out using Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2014), which is considered suitable for qualitative investigations that use action-research as a method. Following the data analysis proposed by Charmaz (2014), the results will depend on how they are categorized or named, as well as the definitions of each code. The codes try to respond to four effects produced as a result of using tangible-ludic materials: 1) the effect of motivating students; 2) the effect of developing the creative process of students; 3) the effect of understanding, organizing, and synthesizing educational content, logical thinking, and reasoning; and, 4) the effect of facilitating communication and interaction with students in learning a foreign language.

In the present study, first, the data was obtained from the application of the tangible-ludic materials in a second grade of primary school class. Second, the data was collected by means of the designed instruments (field diary, an interview, and a questionnaire). The information of the instruments was categorized to determine common patterns or elements that allow their characterization, see column Data in the table in Appendix 1: Sample of data coding. Using this data, the actions and elements that best define the activities and actions observed were codified, which is presented in the column Code of the same table (see Appendix 1: Sample of data coding). This process allowed the researchers to highlight the critical elements identified during the class when interacting with tangible-ludic materials.

Hence, the code was defined by the most frequently repeated words in the data in order to create a code of keywords, identifying the categories. In Appendix 1: *Sample of data coding*, the actions or elements that best define the activities carried out were identified and highlighted with a specific color to facilitate the understanding of the codes, see column Code in the table in the same appendix.

The column *Category* in the table in Appendix 1: *Sample of data coding* indicates the name used to categorize the elements of the codes depending on its similarity. This process focused on the code obtained, considering both their interpretation and that of the other subjects involved, strengthening the understanding of the investigated social phenomenon, which is the use of tangible-ludic materials in primary school.

The *Tenet* column in the table in Appendix 1: *Sample of data coding* is a thorough explanation of the effect categories. It allows us to conceptualize the effects of the use of tangible-ludic

materials in the English class with children at the primary school level in this study.

Results

After the data analysis was done, we found that the effects of using tangible-ludic materials for teaching are the following: 1) Classroom Motivator; 2) Effective Language Reproducer; 3) Learning Appropriation; 4) Teamwork Motivator; 5) Stimulant of Meaningful Learning; 6) Authentic Classroom Management. See Table 1 for the definitions of the effects of tangible-ludic materials listed.

Table 1: Definitions of the effects of tangible-ludic materials

Effects of tangible-ludic materials on teaching English.	Definition
Classroom Motivator	This effect is characterized by the motivation that the teacher provokes as an axis, which is a visible product of the materials in the classroom (Olmeda Ortega, 2010).
Effective Language Reproducer	This effect refers to the teacher as a mirror of learning using tangible materials, such as felt figures, which facilitate the student to reproduce the expected learning in a fun and innovative way (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).
Learning Appropriation	This effect refers to the ability to retain information that potentially becomes meaningful learning. Retention helps to achieve this learning through the use of tangible-ludic material, which allows students to use this medium to develop the content seen in class, to be able to identify it in a meaningful way (Caballero Arnaz, 2018).
Teamwork Motivator	This effect refers to teamwork as something that is always sought in the classroom, but sometimes it is very difficult to achieve with the students, due mainly to the lack of organization of such work. The presence of the teacher in the classroom giving clear instructions influences the development of activities in each session (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).
Stimulant of Meaningful Learning	This effect refers to the use of tangible materials as the ultimate stimulant for the development of activities that promote meaningful learning in the student. Through the use and monitoring of activities using tangible-ludic materials, the teacher promotes and motivates students to learn (Morales, 2012).
Authentic Classroom Management.	This aspect refers to the positive effects found in relation to classroom management; namely, control – related to discipline and students’ engagement), effective monitoring of the activities and time management derived from the use of tangible-ludic materials. These activities had something in common, the teacher gave clear guidelines for the participation and use of said materials and children were interested in taking part in those activities, the materials acting as a natural classroom management tool (Halliwell, 1992).

These effects, on one hand, meet the criteria to find the best way to make the English class enjoyable for second-grade primary school children. On the other hand, the teacher is a motivating example for the students, and they can significantly take advantage of the tools to acquire the language in a ludic way. Tangible-ludic materials are feasible to innovate the

teaching-learning process in primary schools and the importance of using significant resources for learning a foreign language, according to the positive results that we observed in the students of second-grade primary school.

Classroom Motivator, according to the perspective of Olmeda Ortega, (2010), relate to how the pedagogical environment within the classroom when teaching is essential in order to motivate students in learning a foreign language. As we observed from our collected data, motivation is an attractive product of interest in student activities, avoiding pressure and stress in carrying out monotonous activities inside the classroom. Motivation is the product of the visual attractiveness of the use of teaching and learning tangible-ludic materials. Motivation was maintained during the three stages of development of the class, including, 1) the opening of the class, where the vocabulary recognition is to be learned or practiced, 2) development of activities and 3) the closing, within which are activities to review the topic that was seen. All of the above were consistent with the motivational aspects found in the use of tangible-ludic materials. These materials also facilitated the relationship with the stated contents of the class in the syllabus; therefore, they allowed a significant construction of new learning. This motivating aspect of using tangible-ludic materials was verified; as they acted as stimulants of student motivation, where positive elements could be identified. Not only the nature of the materials themselves but also the role that the student-teacher played as a motivating moderator of the results of each student, within the teaching and learning process.

Effective Language Reproducer is an incentive for the teaching-learning process. From the perspective of Richards & Rodgers (2014), people perceive and acquire knowledge differently. In addition, they have preferences towards certain cognitive strategies that are the ones that will ultimately help them give meaning to the new information. In this research, the teacher acts as a model of attention in the classroom, when implementing relevant activities for the students, taking into account prior planning and analyzing the students' needs. Thus, it was considered the young learners' prior vocabulary knowledge for the follow-up classes, and it had shown that children learned by playing, due to the effusive reactions that have been verified throughout this investigation. This effect was also demonstrated by how the young learners were able to reproduce the vocabulary effortlessly.

Learning Appropriation refers to the ability to retain information that potentially becomes meaningful learning. It is related to the way students learn in an effusive, creative, and meaningful manner. Caballero Arnaz (2018) affirms that in the case of the acquisition of the English language, the presence of models and the constant response to the individual's successive responses, in a continuous exchange of two people, constitutes meaningful learning guided by an accessible model. From the data collected we realized that the learning appropriation effect makes reference to the ability shown by the students to retain information that can potentially become meaningful learning. That is, the use of tangible-ludic materials accomplished the objective of vocabulary retention in a ludic manner, which allowed the teacher to stimulate and facilitate understanding of the English language during the sessions. It is a significant contribution to the use of these materials at the primary school level since the teaching and learning materials showed a positive effect on the students.

Teamwork Facilitator; teamwork is something that most of the time is difficult to accomplish with students in those age groups, due not only to the age of the students but also to the lack of organization in the classroom. Teamwork has been managed for certain specific activities and with the constant monitoring of the teacher in charge of the group. Richards & Rodgers (2014), establish that some people "prefer to learn in groups, others individually, some opt for

experimentation and others require advice, cooperation between students by showing interest in integrating into group dynamics to carry out activities in the classroom". Through the classes that we observed, students reacted positively and understood what it was like to work cooperatively almost without noticing it. They supported and integrated their classmates in the activity, compared ideas, and managed to not only repeat vocabulary but to recognize it through the use of tangible-ludic teaching and learning materials. This showed that, by using tangible-ludic materials we can accomplish active participation, encouragement of healthy competition in the opening, developing, and closing activities of each English class session.

Stimulant of Meaningful Learning, according to the theory, Morales (2012) establishes the importance of developing and using teaching materials. From this perspective, a material that the student can manipulate has a more significant facilitating potential than a material that is only manipulated by the teacher, because the student's manipulation of the teaching and learning materials is fundamental as it promotes meaningful learning in the student because it encourages reasoning through participation, and this participation creates a long-lasting impression in the student. The previous coupled with the monitoring of the activities, and the clear instructions provided by the teacher within the classroom, is essential in the learning of the English language. It was observed that the tangible-ludic materials used in the second-grade classroom promoted meaningful learning. Also, the student-teacher acted as a link by creating an atmosphere that was conducive to learning boosting student's motivation to learn. In general, children were able to remember and use the vocabulary learnt and practiced through the use of tangible-ludic materials better.

Authentic Classroom Management, which is related to teaching and the skills that make up a teacher is a factor that is closely related to what is traditionally known as class control. Halliwell (1992), emphasizes that for effective teaching, teachers must be a model for students, stimulate their creativity, promoting student's safety in the teaching-learning process. Class control focuses on observing the factors that influence classroom management, such as the volume of the teacher's voice and the appropriate manner to give clear instructions. It is vitally important in this process to talk about the procedure and the rules with the class to cooperate together in the development activities. The active participation shown by the students in this research project was key in all the learning activities. Therefore, we can say that the teaching through the use of tangible-ludic materials promoted a positive environment to stimulate an effective vocabulary teaching-learning process. Authentic classroom management was reflected in the students' faces, in their level of participation, and in several signs of motivation that were evident in the class. This factor was fundamental as using tangible-ludic materials facilitated meaningful learning in the classroom.

Conclusion

This research contributes to the theoretical framework of the effects of the use of tangible-ludic materials at the primary school level, as well as by its methodological design. According to Briones (2003), research objectives are those specific goals that must be achieved in order to answer a research question and that guide the development of the research. We followed a qualitative approach by using an Action-Research method and grounded theory to define the effects of tangible-ludic materials. The main question, what were the effects of the use of tangible-ludic materials in primary school level? was answered by the following process. A description of the theoretical framework was presented, including approaches such as communicative teaching, human development, teaching-learning process, and teaching materials. Then three instruments were designed to recollect the data. After analyzing the data observed, using Charmaz's Theory

Based (2014), we determined the six effects of using tangible-ludic materials, 1) Classroom Motivator, 2) Effective Language Reproducer, 3) Learning Appropriation, 4) Teamwork Motivator, 5) Stimulant of Meaningful Learning, and 6) Authentic Classroom Management.

Hence, the goal of this research was pleasantly fulfilled; it was possible to identify the effects of the use of tangible-ludic materials, categorizing them in turn, to contribute to the literature. The data analyzed in this study is made from the perspective and voices of the study subjects. Although the effects found are not discussed in the literature, due to the responses of the study subjects – the student-teachers and the incipient learners –, the effects described here can be analyzed around the reasons student-teachers have for implementing tangible-ludic materials. From the subjects of the study of this research, all of them agreed that learning with tangible-ludic materials was better than the traditional manner, as we could observe from the answers to the questionnaire. The student-teacher of the program PROMETE affirmed during the interview that these kinds of materials helped develop the teaching-learning process in an effective manner, due to the active participation of students, and the motivation of the teacher, but she also mentioned that to carry out activities like role-plays, painting, and memory games, the teacher must give clear instructions and be aware of the responsibility to consider student's needs in the classroom. In this research, the student-teacher confirmed that when she asked the vocabulary to students, they were excited to realize that they actually remember the words. The evaluation at the end of the classes through a ludic activity was successful because all students remembered the words. In short, they were able to recognize the fruits, the animals, and the vegetables that they learned through the sessions where the teacher applied these kinds of teaching and learning materials.

Based on the previous analysis, we learned about the effects of using tangible-ludic materials at the primary school level, specifically in second-grade primary school children, from six to seven years old in the municipality of Villa de Álvarez. According to the results, it is possible to affirm that using tangible-ludic materials has a positive effect and contribute to educational environments related to an innovative English teaching and learning process.

Recommendations

It is our recommendation to have a bigger scale study on the design and implementation of tangible-ludic materials at a primary level. In addition, we could use a scale of activities that can be implemented through the measurement system of tangible-ludic materials, allowing enrichment in the classroom to acquire English. Regarding the teaching roles, the children, the parents, and the infrastructure as a facilitator of meaningful language learning, a material sheet could be created that classifies the competence that would be worked on in each session in order to establish a communicative approach. Additionally, the following topics remain as research proposals: 1) Deepen the understanding of the characteristics of each of the tangible-ludic materials by level and the common elements shared by the educational environments where English is taught to children. 2) Carry out a comparative study between the learning of English vocabulary of primary school children in the private educational system and the public educational system, using tangible-ludic materials. The list could go on, as the research topic is challenging and very exciting. However, we consider it pertinent to conclude this section leaving open the possibility for the reader to consider developing their own subject matter based on the previous proposals.

Appendix 1: Sample of data coding

DATA	CODE	CATEGORY	TENET
<p>Class November 1-06</p> <p>Topic: Farm animals</p> <p>Material: Animal farm (finger puppets), memory game, animal flashcards (pig, rabbit, horse and donkey)</p> <p>SI: The material turned out to be attractive for the students, they got excited, they shouted and they ran with the teacher to be able to touch the material that was interesting and new to them and they wanted to know what they would do with it” At the beginning of the activity the teacher gave clear instructions.</p> <p>The teacher showed an energetic attitude, the students wanted to participate from the first activity when she selected the farms with the animal puppets, the students raised their hands, and shouted “Teacher, teacher”.</p> <p>The teacher used the board to write the vocabulary of the names of the animals that she would see in that session, they were donkey, horse, rabbit and pig.</p> <p>The students worked as a team, to show the finger puppets that the teacher indicated, at first they believed that it was like a lottery, and if they all showed the animal quickly, their team would win in the activity.</p>	<p>The material was attractive Interacting with the material was effusive to the students</p> <p>Clear Instructions</p> <p>Positive attitude</p> <p>Active Participation</p> <p>Use of the board in the class</p> <p>Teamwork</p> <p>Facilitates classroom management</p> <p>Facilitates student's attention</p> <p>Give clear instructions</p> <p>Organization in the application of activities</p> <p>General review of vocabulary</p>	<p>Classroom Motivator</p>	<p>When faced with a different way of working on the topic of farm animals, that is, through the use of tangible materials, reactions of approval and pleasure are observed, among which an effusive way of responding by the students stands out, a closer approach to the teacher, either to question or give feedback to the fact that the material they are using is pleasant for the student.</p> <p>The signs of approval observed range from a more participative attitude, a warm approach to the teacher with signs of physical affection (smiling, jumping, and calling the teacher effusively). Inside the classroom, it works as a stimulant of student motivation, it is a product of the visual appeal of the use of materials, during the three stages of development of the class, which includes: the opening of the class, where the vocabulary recognition that will be learned in class through games, development activities and closing, within which there are activities to review the topic that was seen, in this case the teacher asked the name of the farm animals, and the children identified without any problem the vocabulary they learned that session.</p>

<p>The teacher used attention getters, when the students got too excited, and began to raise their voices for the teacher to pay attention to them.</p> <p>The teacher smiled, asked each team where the farm animal was, in the grass or on the farm, and interacted with her students, she showed a flashcard, and the students were in teams standing, ready to show them the finger puppet of the animal she mentioned in English.</p> <p>To collect the material, the teacher told them that she would count to 5 and they would have to deliver the materials and put them on the desk, and all the teams collaborated effectively and managed to deliver their material.</p> <p>When the teacher began to apply the memorama activity, she asked the students to make 2 teams, forming 2 lines, the students were standing and showed them the vocabulary cards of the animals to review for each team, and explained the instructions, that each time it was their turn, they would flip 2 cards up, if they had the image of the animal and the name of the animal, it would be a pair, and they should repeat the name of the animal in English in order to have the card.</p> <p>The teacher applied the activity in this way to have a better order of application of the activity, improve the organization and respect the times of the activity.</p> <p>The teacher asked: Is that Correct?, that asked to verify the answers among all and to be able to review the vocabulary that was seen in class.</p>			
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- » Ser aceptados mediante un concurso de selección, dentro de los periodos que al efecto se señalen.
- » Recibir una carta de aceptación por parte del Comité Evaluador de la institución.
- » En caso de ser seleccionado en la **Licenciatura en Letras Inglesas**, contar con Certificado de Bachillerato con un promedio mínimo de ocho (8.0) o su equivalente y entregarlo con la demás documentación solicitada el día y en el lugar establecidos, de acuerdo con los términos señalados en la institución.
- » En caso de ser seleccionado en la **Maestría en la Enseñanza del Idioma Inglés y Lingüística Aplicada**, contar con Título de Licenciatura, Cédula Profesional, Carta de motivos, Certificación TOEFL (500 puntos mínimo).



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