

# Gamification strategies on the development of English listening comprehension skills

## Estrategias de gamificación en el desarrollo de las destrezas de comprensión auditiva

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## Abstract

Listening comprehension plays an important role in the English learning process because it provides to the learner language input. This skill is one of the most important when learning a foreign language for understanding and responding a message. The main objective of the present research is to find out about the improvement of the English listening comprehension skills by using gamification among Superior Basic Education students at a Public Institution of Loja city, during the school year 2022-2023. This research used a mixed action research design in order to gather quantitative (scores) and qualitative (students' perceptions) data through the use of a pre-test and post-test, as well as a questionnaire and observation checklist. It is based on the development of 10 lessons following the nine-Gagne's events. The data were analysed by using two methods: the descriptive statistics method and theme analysis method. From there, the data analysed demonstrated that students significantly improved from 50% to 80% their listening comprehension after the application of the gamification. Furthermore, the mixed data obtained showed that students felt motivated, competitive and improved their listening comprehension subskills during the application of gamification in class. Specifically, students improved in listening for general understanding and listening for sequence, through the application of gamification strategies.

*Keywords:* english learning, listening comprehension, gamification, perceptions, strategies, skills.

## Resumen

La comprensión auditiva juega un papel importante en el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés porque proporciona información del idioma al alumno. Esta habilidad es una de las más importantes cuando se aprende un idioma extranjero para comprender y responder

un mensaje. El objetivo principal de la presente investigación es conocer el mejoramiento de las habilidades de comprensión auditiva en inglés mediante el uso de gamificación en estudiantes de Educación Básica Superior de una Institución Pública de la ciudad de Loja, durante el ciclo escolar 2022-2023. Esta investigación utilizó un diseño de investigación de acción mixta para recopilar datos cuantitativos (puntuaciones) y cualitativos (percepciones de los estudiantes) mediante el uso de una prueba previa y una prueba posterior, así como un cuestionario y una lista de verificación de observación. Se basa en el desarrollo de 10 lecciones siguiendo los eventos de nueve Gagné. Los datos fueron analizados utilizando dos métodos: el método de estadística descriptiva y el método de análisis temático. A partir de allí, los datos analizados demostraron que los estudiantes mejoraron significativamente de un 50% a un 80% su comprensión auditiva luego de la aplicación de la gamificación. Además, los datos mixtos obtenidos mostraron que los estudiantes se sintieron motivados, competitivos y mejoraron sus subdestrezas de comprensión auditiva durante la aplicación de la gamificación en clase. En concreto, los alumnos mejoraron en comprensión auditiva de la idea principal y escuchar para secuenciar, mediante la aplicación de estrategias de gamificación.

*Palabras clave:* aprendizaje de inglés, comprensión auditiva, gamificación, percepciones, estrategias, destrezas.

## 1. Introducción

Listening has an important role in the English language classroom because it provides language input for the learners. Through listening, learners can build an awareness about the interworking of language systems at various levels and thus it establishes a base for more fluent productive skills. Syafii et al. (2020) establish that listening is one of the most important language skills in the English class, and extend this skill is vital for better understanding of the language. It means that it is one of the most relevant skills in the acquisition of a target language because the learners are involved in the communication process. According to the Ministry of Education in Ecuador (MINEDUC) students from tenth year corresponding to superior basic education must achieve the level A2.1 in listening when they finish the school year. At this level, students will be able to identify and understand relevant information from English speakers. Nevertheless, most students do not fulfil these requirements in the English language domain. This might happen because there is not enough training for students in teaching and improving this important skill into the English language. It is imperative to mention that there are many strategies that can be included in teaching methodology to develop the listening comprehension skill. In this case, gamification strategies could be a possible solution to solve the problem found in the development of English listening comprehension skills. Some educators and authors established that use of gamification strategies in class are beneficial in many features. As Mee et al. (2020) mention that games are very advantageous and demonstrate a high amount of efficacy for English teaching.

Based on the aforementioned information, this research intended to improve the listening comprehension skill by using gamification among superior basic education students at a public school in the city of Loja during the 2022-2023 school year. Furthermore, the research aims to answer the central question: How can gamification improve English listening comprehension skill among superior basic education students at a public institution of Loja city? Taking into consideration this is a big question, it was divided into three

sub-problems: The first one is, what is the effectiveness of gamification on the improvement of English listening comprehension skill among superior Basic Education students at a public institution of Loja city? The second one is, what gamification strategies can help to improve English listening comprehension skills among superior basic education students at a Public Institution of Loja city? and the third one is what are the students' perceptions about gamification strategies on the development of English listening comprehension skill among superior basic education students at a public institution of Loja city?

In addition, several pieces of research give emphasis to the use of gamification strategies in the teaching and learning process and their support to improve listening comprehension skills. The studies done by Mazabel (2021) and Syafii et al. (2020) have focused on how to improve the listening comprehension skills using gamification activities. The evidence from the research showed that the teaching of listening using the game model provides several ways of teaching, and it is much more effective and valuable than that of the traditional method of teaching (Hariadi et al., 2021).

In the present research work, the gamification strategies were carried out with the aim of improving listening comprehension skill. Besides, the application of them was beneficial for the field of English language teaching. Consequently, this study contributed to science by creating an innovative methodology, with which students not only learn but they feel motivated and eager to participate in the learning process. Finally, it also contributed to the research community with a rich way of carrying out a study of developing listening comprehension skills through gamified strategies.

Based on that, in order to achieve the purpose of this study, the main objective of the research work was to improve English listening comprehension skill by using gamification among Superior Basic Education students at the Public Institution of Loja city. In order to fulfil this objective, the following specific objectives were stated: the first one says to verify the effectiveness of gamification on the improvement of English listening comprehension skill among superior basic education students at a public institution of Loja city. The second one intends to describe gamification strategies on the development of English listening

comprehension skills among superior basic education students at a public institution of Loja city. And the third one aims to explain the students' perceptions about using gamification on the development of English listening comprehension skill among superior basic education students at a public institution of Loja city.

Similarly, this article is distributed in the following sections: the first one is the abstract which embraces a brief summary of the article. The second one is the introduction, which contains the most important aspects of the research. The third one is the methodology where the research states the methods, techniques, and instruments to be used during the study. The fourth one refers to the results and findings. The fifth one is linked to the discussion that contains an analysis and comparison of the findings with previous studies. The sixth one is the conclusion segment depending on the results and finally the bibliography which has the list of books and articles cited that helped the researchers to have theoretical foundations.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Definition of gamification**

Gamification is understood to apply to any type of game with clear learning outcomes in order to stimulate learners' language acquisition, critical thinking and solving abilities. Kapp (2012) claims that gamification is using mechanics and game thinking to motivate students to solve problems by themselves. In other words, it is a new method to attract student motivation and engagement in order to achieve a goal. The aim of gamification is to engage students with content such as tasks that are not interesting in order to make it more enjoyable.

In addition, Zahra (2020) defined gamification as to build knowledge and support with knowledge retention. The power of gamification to increase learning is due to its graphical

attractiveness, its nature, and its ability to engage students. In other words, in gamified environments, students are inspired, so learners pick up, recycle and use more knowledge.

### **2.1.1. Importance of gamification in the EFL classroom**

The implementation of gamification in the EFL classroom is seen as a learning tool, which has rules, its own dynamics and includes reaching a goal. Therefore, the game is intended to help students and teachers to enhance second language learning in a way that involves the culture of the second language as well. For example, Morthy and Abdul Aziz (2020) mention that a benefit of gamification is to support students' learning in grammatical structures in a meaningful setting. Another benefit is the enhancement of the environment in the teaching-learning process, as it becomes relaxed and fun. At the same time, it allows the teacher to get closer to students and improve social relations. Additionally, another important point is the role of gamification in the development of teaching materials. It aims to train students to think analytically, logically, critically and creatively in communicating ideas or solving problems, expanding knowledge and facilitating the students in understanding the authentic material.

### **3.1.2. Motivation through gamification**

The main purpose of gamification is to create gratifying learning, and it also has the power to raise the attention and increase learning motivation which is reflected on students' learning results of this study. In addition, it has more benefits such as making connections between summaries and concepts in a real environment. In this sense, it is one of the main aspects that aid students build great meaning in the subjects they are studying. It is important to mention that games involve the use of a lot of different dynamics and mechanics in order to activate students' interest. For example, when students are energetic in any activity, it becomes a more meaningful experience. In this case, in the

educational field, students can develop, create or even explore tasks while they make their own decisions in order to influence goals. Werbach and Hunter (2012) proposed a framework showing how motivation is triggered by gamification in three different levels, which they named "elements". These are dynamics that involve mechanics that are in turn generated by the gamified components. Gamification has been integrated to engage students during the learning process with the purpose that the classroom seems more authentic and the students are more interested in learning (Boudadi & Gutiérrez-Colón, 2020).

### **3.1.3. Gamification Elements**

It is important to emphasise that gamification has some elements that teachers can incorporate in the class to get better results into the learning process. Buljan (2021) mentions some of them:

**3.1.3.1. Badges.-** They are viewed as a great way to award students for their achievements. In other words, badges are awards given to the students as a virtual image on their profile. Buljan (2021) states that the role of badges is to recognize and value the student's effort on each assignment.

**3.1.3.2. Leaderboards.-** Leaderboards are used to create competition among students. It means that students will want to win and will be motivated while they see their name on top. You can create separate leaderboards based on different teams. This is supported by Shpakova et al., (2016) who point out that badges and leaderboards show the reality of the students about how they will interact and work with each partner. In that sense, students can perform better to achieve a result and become the winners.

**3.1.3.3. Competition.-** Barros et al. (2021) mention that this element gives the feeling of victory to the students. It is important to mention that this strategy can arrange many powers to the students as it involves them interacting with their fellow gamers.



**3.1.3.4. Awards.-** They are viewed as compensation for doing something well showing good performance and outcomes. When students are given awards because they win a game, they are motivated to continue working harder and get better results in the class activities.

### **3.1.4 Choosing games**

Choosing an adequate game is helpful as it provides students a break and also permits students to practise language skills. It is important to know that as games are entertaining they are demanding, too. There are a variety of characteristics when choosing a game, such as the language to be targeted in the game, the skills that will be developed and the purpose. Zirawaga et al. (2017) mention that games can be used as a support tool to improve the learning experience of the students. Teachers should also consider some other teaching skills such as following rules, adaptation, interaction, critical thinking skills, creativity and teamwork.

There is a diversity of listening games, mainly designed for younger learners, that include partial dictation, writing down key words, 'word spotting'. For example: Simon says, Pointing, Passing the ball, The Great Shopping Race, Running Dictation Game among others.

These games are described as follow:

**3.1.4.1. Simon says.-** It is a game whose main role is to listen and follow instructions. It can be played with three or more students where one player takes the role of "Simon" and issues the instructions that usually are physical actions. The other players should follow the instructions given by "Simon" through the phrase "Simon says". If students do wrong activities, they are out of the game. At the end, the last student who follows all the instructions is the winner of the game.

**3.1.4.2. Pointing out.-** The role of this game is to follow instructions. It is played with printed materials and pieces of classroom language. This game involves the following steps: first, the teacher shows students the pictures and revises the vocabulary, then sticks the pictures on the whiteboard. After that, when all pictures are on the whiteboard the teacher

calls one of the students and gives instructions, so students have to listen to and point out the words mentioned in order to win points.

**3.1.4.3. Pass the ball:** In this game the students have to follow oral instructions and it is played with the whole class. It requires a speaker and a ball. It consists of following rules; first students have to sit on the floor in a circle. Then, the teacher reproduces a song and students have to pass the ball from one to another. Next, suddenly the teacher stops the song, indicating that students must stop passing the ball. After that, students who have the ball must follow the instructions. If they follow the instructions correctly they are winners.

**3.1.4.4. The Great Shopping Race.-** The main objective is asking for things and answering them. It is for beginners' level and it is developed with the whole class. First, the teacher has to divide the class into groups. Second, the teacher has to organise each group in a different place. Third, the teacher must place each group in a table or circle. Then, the teacher gives each group of students a shop name. After that, the teacher provides each group with a shopping list. The focus of this game is to buy the products on their list. Students need to move around in order to obtain the first product in other shops. The groups with the most products are the first and second place winners. This game is for learning specific vocabulary with any topic.

**3.1.4.5. Running Dictation Game:** This game is for practice dialogues, grammatical structures, vocabulary, commands or anything that students need to learn and practice. It is important to consider that this is not the time to introduce new vocabulary or grammatical structure. It means that this game should be developed with topics that students are studying or familiar with. It is played with any number and level of students. According to Syafii et al. (2020) the steps for this are: First, the teacher divides the class into 4 or 5 groups, and they should name a writer and a runner. It is important to inform them that the rest of the students in the group take turns at being the runner. Then, the teacher must have several copies of the words, vocabulary, phrases or short reading that can be taken from the students' books or from a song. After that, the teacher needs to paste the copies on the walls of the classroom. Then, the teacher tells students to start the game. The runner

from each group goes up to the wall and reads the sheet of paper and needs to memorise as much as possible before running back to their group and dictating the text or phrase to the writer. After that, the next student runs to read the text on the wall and remembers some and runs back to dictate again. Finally, students must read their text or phrases aloud. The winner in this game can be the groups who have fewer mistakes in the text.

### 3.1.5. Advantages of gamification

The use of gamification in the English class creates significant learning and cooperation among students. Teachers need to use different teaching approaches and methods that allow students to be active during the learning process with a great motivation and engagement.

According to Zahra (2020) there are some benefits of using gamification which are:

- **Student engagement.**- Gamification in the classroom starts from the deduction of the medium of games and what makes them fun. The interest aspect of the game increases motivation for students to participate in learning activities. From there, Abla & Fraumeni, (2019) mention that it is a condition of emotional social and intellectual ability to learn by curiosity, participation and the drive to learn more. In this sense, it is a process in which students are more interested.
- **Student Motivation.**- It consists of motivating students to excel their abilities. If students are not motivated, it is difficult to gain their will towards learning, and improve their academic achievement.
- **Collaboration skill.**- Gamification helps to increase and engage learners in improving key competencies. In other words, groups of students develop collaborative skills that involve working together in order to achieve a mutual goal by cooperating among them.
- **Knowledge Retention.**- The application of gamification reinforces the knowledge of language already learned and it helps to retain it in the long-term memory. In

addition, the role of gamification here is to apply attractive material such as flash cards, graphics to actively engage students in learning the English language.

- **Personalized Learning Environment:** Gamification learning settings offer students' choices about their tasks, challenges and levels, as well as the ability to personalise and tailor learning to each learner's needs.

Gamification can be a valuable tool as teachers are faced with new paradigms on how to keep learning attractive and effective to students. In other words, undoubtedly, gamification has a positive impact on student learning in the EFL classroom.

### 3.2. Listening comprehension

Listening comprehension is an invisible mental process and it allows students to understand the spoken language. Rost (2016) points out that listening comprehension is viewed as an interactive process, since listeners are concerned in building meaning. In that sense, when students improve this ability they become more participative and attentive in the communication process.

#### 3.2.1. Subskills of listening

Listening has many purposes in the communication process. It means that as a wide skill, it embraces many sub-skills. These subskills are described as follows:

**3.2.1.1. Listening for general understanding.-** It is to concentrate on listening carefully in the main points or parts of general information transmitted in the audio. Al-Jawi (2010) mentions that the idea of 'general' comprehension means not only focusing on analysing every word conveyed by the speaker, but rather the listener should be able to hear or get a broader idea of what is happening.

**3.2.1.2. Listening for detailed information.-** It involves training students to understand specific information such as details that are relevant and important in the text.

The main goal is to help students obtain detailed information they may need like dates, names or hours. Campos (2023) mentions that in this sub-skill students cannot ignore anything because they do not know exactly what information of the listening passage will be necessary to complete the task.

**3.2.1.3. Listening for specific information.** - This sub-skill is good for training the students to hear everything and to identify individual words. Al-Jawi (2010) points out that when listening to the news, only focus on something when the listener is interested in something more specific.

**3.2.1.4. Listening for specific vocabulary.**- Learning vocabulary through listening is one type of learning meaning-focused input in comprehension skills. Pesce (2013) mentions that listening activities provide opportunities to learn new words. In this sense, the purpose is to learn, memorise and identify words, collocations of phrases.

### **3.2.2. Listening resources**

Increasing listening skills is an important part of educating youngsters in the context of learning English as a foreign language. Teaching with resources supports instruction by catching students' attention, and by helping them to interact better in the process of English learning.

There are some listening games, which are described below:

**3.2.2.1. Music and Rhythm.**- Music seems to be a good strategy to support listening skills in the learning process. Teachers should learn from these listening strategies by using songs with different rhythms to help students become better listeners through what they like, which is music. A study conducted by Mobbs and Cuyul (2018) mentions that "An obvious advantage of music is that it is universal and loved by people of all ages and cultural backgrounds, so it is an excellent way to engage learners" in listening (p.23).

**3.2.2.2. Repetition Drills.**- Drilling consists in the repetition of oral patterns and structures. It implies that students imitate what the teacher says. One of the central

advantages is that they help students to increase confidence in pronunciation and identifying sounds. They also help the teacher draw students' attention to specific features of the English Language. As R (2013) mentions that this strategy is good because it offers students practise and acquisition of new skills and teachers can use it, at any stage of learning in the class, and as many times as necessary. In addition, this advantageous resource helps to improve students' speed and increases motivation as well.

**3.2.2.3. Visual materials and Flash cards.**– Visual materials are resources used by teachers in a learning process environment to increase students' motivation. In listening skill, the use of flash cards is so important because it helps listeners to comprehend the key points of audio materials. Creswell (2012) points out that an advantage of using images provides opportunities for the participants to share directly their perceptions of reality.

## 4. Materials and Methods

This research study used a mixed design approach methodology, that is, quantitative and qualitative data, which involves the creation of a measurable and observable data. The quantitative data was collected through the application of a pre-test at the beginning and a post-test at the end of the intervention plan to determine students' English comprehension skills levels before and after the implementation of the action research proposal. Whereas, the qualitative data was collected through the application of a questionnaire to students at the end of the process and an observation checklist was completed by the researcher as part of the research process. This enabled the researcher to verify the effectiveness of gamification on the improvement of English listening comprehension skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

The pre-test and post-test contained five questions and were designed with emphasis on selection items such as, multiple choice and matching questions. Additionally, it included items that required a short answer for example: write a short answer and fill in the blanks. These instruments aided to measure the level and the improvement

that students had in English listening comprehension skill, respectively. Also, these tests measured subskills of listening for general understanding, for identifying specific information and for sequencing while listening.

On the other hand, the questionnaire instrument contained six mixed questions: open and closed ones (Creswell, 2012). It was elaborated to collect qualitative and quantitative data based on a Likert Scale. It has the purpose of getting students' perceptions about the use of gamification strategies. Besides that, the researcher used an observation checklist instrument while giving the class to support the qualitative data obtained through the questionnaire which was useful to describe students' reactions about gamification strategies such as, motivation, emotions, badges, competition, leaderboards and games played in class on the development of English listening comprehension skills.

The participants were selected by a convenience sampling, that is, the researcher selects participants because they were willing and available to participate (Creswell, 2012). The sample was students of lower high school which is called superior basic education in Ecuador. These were thirty-three students from whom 19 were girls and 14 were boys, aged between 14 to 15 years old. They had an A 2.1 level of English proficiency according to the National Curriculum Standards. The researcher followed the procedure of a practical action research to give a solution to the improvement of EFL listening comprehension skills by using gamification. This model has been suitable for the researcher's purposes because this study has been sequenced in the following stages: diagnosing, action planning, acting and evaluating, and reflecting, which were suggested by Gerald Susman (1983).

In the diagnostic stage, the main problem which was identified through an observation made to tenth-grade students of a public institution. It was regarding the difficulties that students faced in the English listening comprehension skills. Once it was identified, the researcher applied a criterion referenced pre-test to check the students' levels of listening comprehension skills and having a starting point.

Next, in the action planning stage, after the identification of the problem in students' listening comprehension skills. The researcher designed ten lesson plans to be taught

during an eight weeks' periods of time. The lesson plans were elaborated in relation to Gagne's nine events that were categorised into the five stages of learning: in the warm-up step the teacher used songs, Simon says, and Pass the balls games in order to engage students' in the class. The next stage was **instruction and model**, where the teacher worked on training students to listen to the content of the class. Flashcards were also used flashcards to teach some contents such as the vocabulary of the class, and slides were used to teach grammar. The next stage was **guided practice**, the teacher in most cases used big posters where students had to listen and participate in order to fill in the listening exercises. These exercises trained students to listen for general understanding, listening for specific information and sequencing events while listening. In the stage of **less guided activities**, students developed activities by themselves by using worksheets with different tasks. During this stage the teachers' support was essential to solve any doubt and supported students by providing cues. In the **independent practice** stage, the listening games were used such as running dictation, pass the balls, Simon says, pointing and the great shopping and these games involve the different game indicators such as badges, leaderboards, badges and awards, and competition. Finally, the teacher used activities to evaluate students' knowledge such as songs, fill in the gap activities, and share personal experiences. Furthermore, these gamification strategies allowed students to interact among them and be more motivated in class. The flexibility of the plan allowed the teacher to adjust during the action phase by readapting gamified strategies implemented as an effective response to the research questions. During this stage a checklist was completed by the researcher in order to determine the students' perceptions about the application of gamification in listening comprehension skills.

Finally, in the **evaluating and reflecting** stage, the researcher applied the post-test to verify if participants had improved their English listening comprehension skills. And a questionnaire supported by an observation checklist to explain and describe gamification strategies on the development of English after reviewing the quantitative data gathered throughout and after the intervention plan. The results were presented in the data



interpretation with conclusions that can benefit in both developing future research on the subject as well as providing answers to the study's specific research questions.

Additionally, the data obtained through the different research instruments was processed and analysed by using descriptive statistics. With the use of frequency tables and the measures of central tendency, the data was interpreted to express the reality about the results found. This methodology helped the teacher in the measurement of the students' listening abilities through pre-test and post-test and at the same time it supported the comparison of the results with the evaluation of the learning through the scale established by the MNEDUC (2016). A thematic analysis was used to examine the qualitative data from questionnaire and observation checklist, it allowed the researchers to validate the findings by choosing the most important narrative data gathered from the open-ended questions. Finally, all the data gathered from the instruments was entered and processed by using the EXCEL program, which was helpful to elaborate the statistical analysis of the results.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Pre-test and Post-test

**Objective:** To verify the effectiveness of gamification on the improvement of English listening comprehension skills among superior basic education students at a public institution of Loja city.

The results of this research study after applying the instruments for collecting data are detailed in the upcoming part. The findings are presented in figure 1, which provides a comparative analysis.

## 5.2. Comparison of the Pretest and Posttest mean

**Table 1**

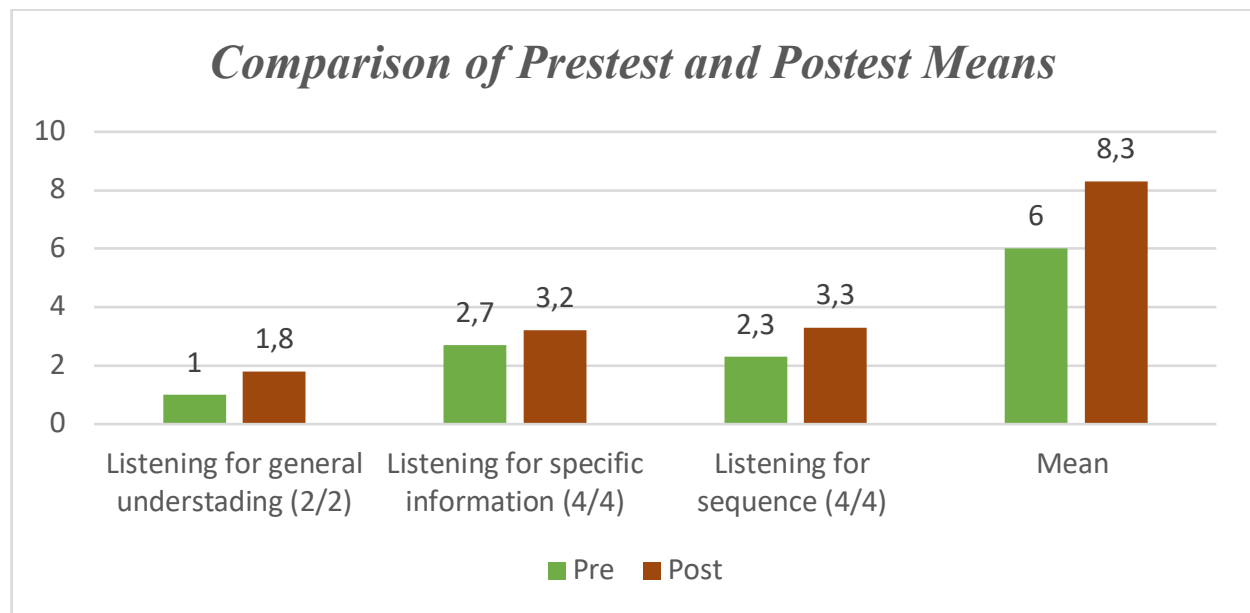
*Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test results*

Listening subskills	Pre-test	Post-test
Listening for general understanding (2)	1 (50%)	1.8 (90%)
Listening for specific information (4)	2.7 (67.5%)	3.2 (80%)
Listening for sequence (4)	2.3 (57.5%)	3.3 (82.5%)
Mean (10)	6/10	8.3/10

**Note.** Data taken from the pre and pos-test

**Figure 1**

*Comparison of the grades between the pre and post-test*



**Note.** Data taken from the pre and pos-test

The information presented in Table 1 and Figure 1, shows a comparison between the scores obtained from the pre-test and post-test. The general pre-test mean was 6 out of 10 points, while the post-test was 8.3 out of 10 points. These results provide important insights into the enhancement of English listening comprehension skills by using gamification. The results reflect the efficacy on the application of the intervention proposal based on gamification to develop the listening skills. These results evidence a strong improvement in the three sub-skills of listening focused in this study which are: listening for general understating, listening for specific information and listening for sequencing events.

It is noticeable that students' weaknesses were overcome after the intervention proposal was done. As it can be seen, they achieved an evident improvement in listening for general understanding from 1 out of 2 (50%) in the pre-test to 1.8 out of 2 (90%) in the post-test, with a significant difference of 40% of the students. It means that students could understand the majority part of the context that the audio listening task included. In the subskill listening for sequence from 2.3 out of four (57.5%) in the pre-test to 3.3 out of 4 (82.5%) in the post-test, with 25% of students showing an obvious improvement. Students demonstrated that they were capable of listening and ordering the events mentioned by the speaker. Nevertheless, students' enrichment in listening for specific information subskill was not successful as it was expected, but there was a noticeable improvement which is shown with the pre-test mean 2.3 out of four (67.5%) and the post-test mean 3.2 out of 4 (80%), with 12.5% of students who demonstrated their progress because they were able to recognize particular and relevant details mentioned in the audio. Lastly, the researchers used the results from the questionnaire to verify the improvement in the students' listening comprehension skills.

#### **4.2. Questionnaire results**

At the end of the intervention plan, a questionnaire instrument was applied to explain the students' perception about the use of gamification on the development of English

comprehension skills among tenth grade students in a public institution of Loja city. Additionally, an observation checklist instrument was used as support to describe students' perceptions about gamification strategies on the development of English listening comprehension skills. The results are presented in the following tables.

**Table 2**

*Indicators: Enjoyment and dynamics*

Questions 1,2	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	Total
Did you enjoy playing games with your classmates?	70%	10%	16.7%	3.3%	100%
Using a gamified presentation of the lesson makes the learning process more dynamic?	34.37%	59.37%	6.25%		100%

**Note.** Data obtained from the questionnaire

As a general tendency, table 5 shows that applied games for teaching English listening were positive. 70% of students answered that they "always" enjoy playing games, since they enjoy sharing with their classmates. Continuing, 59.37% of students indicated that using a gamified presentation of the lesson "usually" makes the course process more dynamic. It means that including listening games made the English class more interesting because it incentives a cooperative learning environment among students. It is important to mention that nowadays playing games in the class is an essential part of the learning process. Meanwhile, 3.3% of the students indicated that they "never" enjoyed playing games with their classmates. Some reasons for it, according to the students, were that they are not compatible with some of their classmates. From the notes written

by the researchers, some students did not like to play in class, because they did not understand some contents or the game.

**Table 3**

*Indicators: Motivation and competition*

Questions 3,4,5	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	Total
Did you feel motivated when you earned badges and rewards in listening games?	37.5%	31.25%	21.87%	9.37%	100%
Do you agree that a competitive environment helps to improve your English listening skills?	50%	43.75%	6.25%	-	100%
Did you feel motivated when you saw your name on the leaderboard?	12.5%	46.87%	34.37%	6.25%	100%

**Note.** Data obtained from the questionnaire

As shown in Table 6, 37,5% of students responded that they “always” felt motivated when the teacher provided them badges and rewards. Students commented that they felt happy when the teacher gave them badges and rewards because they had never received such a prize before. Thus, the students commented that earning “badges and rewards” means for them to improve and keep working. Additionally, the students commented that earning a “badge and rewards” inspired them to sustain their interest because they are highly motivating and entertaining, especially for weak learners. Similarly, 50% of the students indicated that games “always” provide a competitive environment that helps them improve their listening comprehension learning. The students commented that they had to learn very well carrying out a competition game among themselves; so, they could ensure the winning as a constructive competence among them. Continuing, 46.87% students indicated that they “usually” feel motivated when they see their names on the leaderboards

as they were empowered when they were first on the leaderboards during the listening games or activities. They were emotionally engaged by achieving goals, enjoying the feeling when they face a challenge and overcome it. These game elements are very beneficial as they can drive attention and learning naturally. On the other hand, 9.37% of the students commented that they were “never” motivated when the teacher provided them with badges and 6.25% were not motivated when they saw their names on the leaderboards. From the notes, they commented that most of the time only the best students are given badges or rewards because they always win the games.

**Table 4**

Games developed in the classroom

Using the following scale, rate the following games depending on which ones you liked the most to improve your listening?	Favourite	Liked	Disliked	Least favourite	Neutral	Total
Pointing out game	-	50%	45%	-	5%	100%
Running Dictation game	88%	12%	-	-	-	100%
The Great Shopping game	-	-	61%	-	39%	100%
Simon says game	85%	12%	-	-	3%	100%
Pass the ball game	95%	5%	-	-	-	100%

**Note.** Data obtained from the questionnaire

As it is visible in table 2, it shows the tenth-grade students’ preferences about different listening comprehension games, such as “Pointing out”, “Running dictation”, “The great shopping”, “Simon says” and “Pass the balls”. According to the students’ perceptions

95% of the participants, indicated as favourites "Pass the ball game" with 88% "Running dictation game" and "Simon says" game with 85%. All these games were useful for students to improve both listening skills and creativity. In addition, 50% of students indicated that they liked the game pointing. In relation to the game "The great shopping", 61% of the students indicated that they did not like the game because they found it difficult. And 39% of students indicated "neutral". With the notes written, the researchers could support that the students had problems understanding the rules of the game. In addition, most students said that in the game "The Great Shopping" their peers did not cooperate to work properly and it promoted much noise and indiscipline, so students felt a little frustrated which is reflected on why they did not like these games.

## 6. Discussion

The present research study aimed to improve listening comprehension skill by using gamification among superior basic education students at a public institution of Loja city. In that sense, the researchers sought to answer the following sub-questions:

The first question in this research was "What is the effectiveness of gamification on the improvement of English listening comprehension skill among superior basic education students at public institution of Loja city? Through the application of the pre-test and post-test it was clearly visible that students improved their overall score from 6 out of 10 to 8.3 out of 10 with a remarkable difference of 2.3 points. Students were able to understand the context, order information and recognize relevant information from the conversations. This means that students had a positive result in their listening comprehension after the application of gamification. Based on the research findings, it agrees with what is mentioned by Syafii et al. (2020), who determined that the application of games was helpful because students improved their listening ability when they developed tasks and activities. In addition, another study carried out by Mazabel (2021) concluded that students were more interested in wanting to play and learn and this was reflected in the activities, for

example they understood the conversations and different activities carried out. In fact, applying gamification in the English class is essential because it creates relevant learning environments, students can feel the progress by achieving goals, since they become more enthusiastic in the teaching process.

Regarding the second question of this study that says what gamification strategies can help to improve English listening comprehension skills among superior basic education students at a public institution of Loja city? The research identified the most suitable strategies that can help to improve listening comprehension skills are leaderboards, competition tasks, badges, rewards, and dynamic environment. In the literature review, it was found that gamification could help and encourage the students to sustain their interest to work, that is, they are more actively involved in the teaching and learning process. This is in agreement with what Andyani (2015) states about gamification. He suggests that gamified strategies help to maintain and encourage student's interest in the class. In fact, the gamified strategies were revealed to be a great contribution to improving the listening comprehension skills. Additionally, games make students face challenges to progress their listening skill, and they make the students' interested in the listening subject, and it motivates the students to be more attentive and do the tasks competitively in the English class.

The third question of the study raised was: what are the students' perceptions about gamification strategies on the development of English listening comprehension skill among superior basic education students at a public institution of Loja city during the school year 2022-2023? In response, the data gathered from observation checklist and questionnaire applied at the end of the process it is valid to say that that gamification strategies had a high acceptance by students. As mentioned in the literature review, Mee et al. (2020) comment that the combination of interesting gamified tasks or activities catches students' attention in English language learning, and the use of interesting and enjoyable games can motivate students to be participative in the English language class. What is more, they noticed that students could reduce students' anxiety by using gamification strategies in class. Similarly, Juntunen (2019) in her research work discovered that most students have good responses



to the teaching of listening by using gamification strategies. Thus, during the process the students were active and motivated, fostering them to work harder. Additionally, the use of gamified strategies in listening skills which can be played in groups helped students to develop critical thinking, problem solving and imagination with students (Juntunen, 2019). As a matter of fact, there were positive perceptions by part of the students on gamification strategies, used on the development of listening comprehension skills.

## 7. Conclusions

The use of gamification on the improvement of English listening comprehension skills among tenth-grade students was effective, since they have overcome many difficulties in this skill. In this sense, students improved their understanding of the context, specific details and the sequence of the information while they listened to. This allows the researcher to show that the use of gamification had a positive impact on the development of the listening comprehension skills.

The findings of this study showed that using gamification strategies such as giving badges, awards, leaderboards and implementing the sense of competition, through games with high school students, was significant, because they improve both listening comprehension skills and motivation to learn the English language. In that sense, it was evident during the learning process, students were eager to participate, were active in class and they were capable of achieving tasks and activities, thus having a dynamic contribution in the classroom.

What is more, the students' perceptions about gamification strategies in the English listening comprehension skills was positive, since the different good perspectives from students. It means that during the process of the implementation of these strategies and games in class, most students were interested in listening comprehension skills because these gave them not only many challenges to improve their skills, but relevance and significance in the contribution to fulfil the tasks.

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