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FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS ECONÓMICAS LICENCIATURA LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

"ENHANCING VOCABULARY THROUGH E-TOOLS IN A LECTURA BÁSICA GROUP FROM UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA NACIONAL, SAN CARLOS CAMPUS, SECOND QUARTER 2023"

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Abstract

The main purpose of this action research was to help students from a group of Lectura Básica of Universidad Técnica Nacional, San Carlos Campus enhance their vocabulary using e-tools. It has been focused on using e-tools during the lessons in addition, to highlight the advantages and great results that students can have with the correct use of technology in class to improve their vocabulary level.

This qualitative action research followed the next steps, students were first diagnosed to know their level, secondly, the researchers selected three different e-tools with the purpose of enhancing student's vocabulary level, and the last instrument applied, was a questionnaire related the student's perception of technology in their learning process in order to gather relevant information about the results of the research.

This questionnaire was attentively elaborated to get the most accurate results, four questions were asked, three multiple-choice questions and one open question so that students could express their ideas. The information obtained from it, and based on the perception of the researchers as well, it was found that for the participants e-tools are a potentially useful resource to enhance English vocabulary acquisition.

Keywords: e-tools, education technology, enhancement, skills, vocabulary acquisition

Resumen

El objetivo principal de esta investigación fue ayudar a los estudiantes de un grupo de Lectura Básica de la Universidad Técnica Nacional, Campus San Carlos a mejorar su vocabulario utilizando herramientas electrónicas. Se ha centrado en el uso de herramientas electrónicas durante las lecciones, además, en resaltar las ventajas y los excelentes resultados que los estudiantes pueden tener con el uso correcto de la tecnología en clase para mejorar su nivel de vocabulario.

Esta investigación cualitativa siguió los siguientes pasos, primero se diagnosticó a los estudiantes para conocer su nivel, en segundo lugar, los investigadores seleccionaron tres herramientas electrónicas diferentes con el propósito de mejorar el nivel de vocabulario de los estudiantes, y el último instrumento aplicado fue un cuestionario relacionado a la percepción de los estudiantes sobre la tecnología en su proceso de aprendizaje con el fin de recopilar información relevante sobre los resultados de la investigación.

Este cuestionario fue cuidadosamente elaborado para obtener los resultados más precisos, se realizaron cuatro preguntas, tres preguntas de opción múltiple y una pregunta abierta para que los estudiantes pudieran expresar sus ideas. A partir de la información obtenida, y también en base a la percepción de los investigadores, se encontró que para los participantes las herramientas electrónicas son un recurso potencialmente útil para mejorar la adquisición de vocabulario en inglés.

Palabras clave: herramientas digitales,tecnología educativa, mejoramiento, habilidades, adquisición de vocabulario

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First of all, I would like to thank God for allowing me to meet amazing people who made this process simpler and more beautiful and for guiding me through the whole process.

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Dedicatory

I Melannie want to dedicate this research to my husband Fresly Calderón Serrano and to my son Fresly Alexander Calderón Brenes who have always been with me, supporting me and giving me strength when I felt I could not take it anymore. For making so many sacrifices and being so patient, and especially for reminding me that with you by my side I can achieve everything I set my mind to.

I also want to make a special dedication to my dear grandmother who is in heaven and I know that from there she has guided me and accompanied me at every step, I miss her so much but I proudly dedicate all this sacrifice to her who always gives me the strength to continue.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This research is focused on the use and impact of some educational e-tools to promote the vocabulary acquisition of learners in a reading course Reading I from the major Inglés como Lengua Extranjera, Universidad Técnica Nacional, San Carlos Campus. This is because learning, conveying, and using a wide variety of vocabulary is essential to level up and enhance one's English communication performance in and outside the classroom. On the other hand, technology may have a huge impact on education since new e-tools and input have emerged lately that can help develop competencies, motivation, and improvement that learners can take to real life.

Taking into consideration these two variables hold an impeccable blend to boost learners' skills and knowledge; there is no secret technology has been taking up a big role at work, education, business, and other fields, because of its versatile use and vast benefits and advantages.

Thus, e-tools have come to stay and make everyone's lives better, and especially open a present-day paradigm that enriches the learning processes. It might be kind of tricky to learn unknown vocabulary, old school taught us to learn words by heart and just repeat having words in one's mind and probably use this passively; instead, the objective of this research is to learn and explore the vocabulary acquisition and involve e-tools to identify the learners' perception of advancement and improvement towards using technology in this specific field.

Taking advantage of technology to teach is one of the most effective ways to encourage students to keep practicing and improving, because as it was mentioned before, technology is a fundamental part of succeeding in the educational world; that is why teachers cannot miss the opportunity of using it to keep students motivated, learning, and practicing new words every day which is the main idea of this research.

1.2. Rationale

The outcomes from this action research may open opportunities to explore the benefits and applicability of e-tools in the English-teaching environment, and the limitless opportunities that both educators and learners have access to. Firstly, examining the results of using e-tools in the classroom and engaging learners to enrich their vocabulary add up to their process in a very positive and motivating way not only for the person who is teaching but for the person who is learning. Secondly, it is quite interesting to try to comprehend the vocabulary acquisition, which is a limitation and a problem identified for most of the learners when mastering a second language, at the beginning, middle and end of the educational path. Finally, being opened and updated is a must in this very global and competitive society and world in which we live. This allows us to grow, get out of our comfort zone, reinvent ourselves and, as a consequence, lead us to up-to-date strategies to enhance and boost these communication skills.

1.3. Purpose

The purpose of this research is to identify and apply the best e-tools to help students in the vocabulary acquisition process, giving them the opportunity to remember, recognize, and use vocabulary correctly in context so that they can enjoy while learning and at the same time understand the language better. On the other hand, teachers will have the freedom to be creative and use those innovative tools in thousands of different ways, this may help them to keep students focused and interested on learning new vocabulary which is very difficult without the use of e-tools since it tends to be boring and tiring for them because they need to fully understand the meaning of each word and it may change according to the context, that is why it is not an easy task for them however, e-tools gives both teachers and students the opportunity to learn vocabulary in a different and interesting way.

The researchers have been concerned about the difficulty that learners have to remember vocabulary as well as identifying it and using it properly in different contexts.

Many students may know the meaning of a word but when they are asked to apply it or identify it in a specific context they get confused, it is understandable because students are used to just memorize basic words to communicate but most of the teachers do not ask them to apply or try to use those words to express different ideas; that is the reason why they end forgetting their meanings or they just do not know how to use or recognize them when being used in different situations.

In this case the idea is to use e-tools to help students reinforce the vocabulary in an entertaining way so that teachers can get them to constantly review the new words and be able to identify them in various contexts. Students will be more willing to practice since they will be using technology, which is something that they love doing, in addition they will use it in the most creative and productive way possible because that is the teacher's goal, to take advantage of what students love and all the new e-tools that provide them the opportunity to encourage learners during the vocabulary learning process.

1.3.1. General Objective

To promote the vocabulary acquisition through e-tools in a group of Lectura Básica students of the major Inglés como Lengua Extranjera, Universidad Técnica Nacional, San Carlos Campus, in the second quarter of 2023.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

• To diagnose the vocabulary level according to the linguistic level A1 of the course.

• To implement e-tool activities in class for enhancement of vocabulary acquisition A1 in readings.

• To analyze the perception of e-tools and enhancement of vocabulary learners have.

1.3.3. Research questions

a) What is the initial level of A1 vocabulary recognition?

b) What are some strategies using e-tools that can be implemented to enhance vocabulary acquisition?

c) How familiar are learners with e-tools in the classroom and how can these tools contribute to the learner's enhancement vocabulary acquisition process?

1.4. Scopes and limitations

This research focuses on enhancing the vocabulary level in the English language, the researchers aim to point out the effect of incorporating technology during the lessons to improve learners' vocabulary level. The participants are 34 students taking the course of lectura básica from Universidad Técnica Nacional, the researchers started it on January 20, up to July 21, 2023. One of the limitations that the researchers had to face is the lack of relevant information related to the topic, even though it is a common topic it was a little bit difficult to find the information needed for the research. In addition, working with 34 students can represent a limitation according to the activities planned and the time estimated for them, taking into consideration the number of participants and the time that is available for each activity may help.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Literature Review

Learning and communicating effectively in a second language is quite a challenge, it requires to manage a wide variety of vocabulary, not only for understanding when listening to it, but also to actually apply it in real life conversations or interactions, and additionally, to be able to execute sounds properly and apply structure and grammar rules to hold the communication. This is the reason why when it comes to teach and learn a language, having good strategies to engage and motivate learners and educators is key to enhance the communicative skills, especially in a very globalized, challenging, and competitive world in which speaking other languages beyond your mother tongue provides many opportunities for the people and economic and social development.

Particularly, Costa Rica has been searching for successful educational paths that may boost the necessary English skills in learners and position itself in the loop for new investors and more quality jobs, so the country can be led to progress and more openings for its citizens. As a matter of fact, the website QCosta Rica (2017) mentions that our country is ranked in the position 38 among 72 countries in the world positioning in a "low proficiency", the situation is worrying due to there are a lot of needs in opportunities, and also having all the efforts and investment the government has been doing for the past decade.

Additionally, QCosta Rica (2017) highlights the sad reality that Latin America face towards English proficiency having only one country, Argentina, with a "high |proficiency" level and positioning Costa Rica in the number four in this continent, even though it is not enough to come out of the "low proficiency" zone as denoted in the figure 1.

Figure 1

QCosta Rica

Regional ranking – Latin America

 Source: Note. Information about the ranking in Latin American countries of English proficiency. From "How Much English is Spoken in Costa Rica & Central America", by QCosta Rica (2017).

In contrast, a more recent study has shown that the situation, five years later, has not changed much. This is what Latin American Post (2023) highlights in its article published that Argentina continues being in the best level all over the Latin American countries "In the complete list, it was ranked 30th and is the only country in the region that entered the high-level classification. Costa Rica ranked second in Latin America and 37th on the list, entering the medium level classification…" (Latin American Post, 2023). Despite the effort the government and thousands of educators do on a daily basis, the results are not getting any

better or getting better significantly and substantially, and consequently, this data is saying that there should be done something to enhance the performance of both learners and educators to communicate in English.

Saying this, there is a great aspect to analyze and find ways to contribute the English proficiency in the country. Firstly, applying diagnoses presents a big chance to impact in the classroom development since this instrument allows educators to know and recognize weaknesses and strengths; therefore, take action to channel the strategies towards the needs learners have. Diagnosing may show some elements pending to reinforce what works as background to proceed with the subject matter of the corresponding course.

In English, as a language, there is an international standard that fixes the specific abilities for each of the linguistic elements: speaking, writing, reading, and listening; therefore, this compromises educators to identify the level and adequate the pedagogical strategies to enhance the learners' performance.

On the other hand, teaching vocabulary can be considered as one of the most difficult parts for English teachers, when talking about the language from the educational perspective, knowing vocabulary helps students to be able to understand and express themselves correctly. A good reason why it may be a difficult part to teach is as Jamshidbek Muxammadi o'gli (2023) states about vocabulary that is "not simply a definition but understanding of how a word fits into the world. Vocabulary word knowledge can be understood through listening and reading, known as receptive vocabulary and through words spoken and written, known as productive or expressive vocabulary." So, it is quite a challenge to incorporate this in a practical way in the classroom rather than memorizing words in never-ending lists because that is what it is supposed to do or just because it was taught in that way a couple of decades back.

It is understandable that teaching vocabulary was something unusual years ago since it is a tough part of the language not only for students to learn it but also for teachers to teach it to them. It is quite a process to learn enough words to be able to express adequately

in a second language, Thornbury (2016) suggested some of the factors that make certain words more difficult to learn than others. Among them we can mention the pronunciation, spelling, length and complexity, grammar, meaning, range, similarity to the first language, similarity between English words, connotation, collocation, and appropriate use. These are just some of the difficulties that we can find when learning new vocabulary and it clearly shows that it includes all the areas of the language. (Thornbury, 2016)

In addition, educators also have to face different obstacles when it comes to preparing students in the vocabulary field. It starts by making the decision of the words that are going to be taught. There are many words that are important, however, it is impossible to pretend to have students learning all of them in a short period of time. That is why it is very important to choose only the main words that they will need so that they can focus and learn them properly instead of getting distracted with too many words that they may not need frequently. Another obstacle that they need to overcome is to get learner's attention, it is a total challenge in general but when talking specifically about vocabulary students tend to get bored, confused, and tired so it becomes even more difficult. According to Suardi Suardi (2019) it is also difficult for teachers to evaluate student's understanding and ability to apply the vocabulary taught since there is no specific way to do that. (Suardi Suardi, 2019).

Despite all those difficulties, there is an option that can help educators and learners to overcome them. Education has been taking advantage of all the benefits that technology can offer to enhance and improve the process of teaching and learning. Thus, as stated by Al Aroud, B., Yunus, K. (2020) about using e-tools in the classrooms can be the "essence of global learning and source of knowledge and information in which the internet is a main database for teachers and learners." This allows this research to have a profound support on the statement of the implementation of e-tools to enhance the vocabulary acquisition, giving the opportunity to picture technology as a great ally for education; additionally, Al Round & Yunus (2020) emphasizes that technology can provide flexible and accessible mode of

learning, and this can lead to solid and appropriate educational environments in the classroom and learning process.

E-tools offer a valuable opportunity to positively impact education by providing innovation, entertainment, and learning simultaneously. Researchers have identified several benefits, including improved skills for learners, enhanced ease of learning, the ability to analyze, explore, and choose activities that aid in better understanding and learning, and fostering interaction between in-person and virtual environments. This interaction is crucial to help learners recognize the importance of both environments. The integration of e-tools into the teaching and learning process is limitless. When teachers effectively utilize e-tools and teach students how to use them correctly, it can significantly transform and streamline the entire educational process.

Among the vast array of e-tools available for educational purposes, three relevant ones are applied in this project to support vocabulary acquisition. Firstly, Google Forms is a valuable tool for enhancing vocabulary acquisition. It is a free and user-friendly software that allows educators to create and distribute questionnaires easily. Moreover, educators can "get instant results as they come in. And you can summarize survey results at a glance with charts and graphs" (Google, 2023)

Another useful tool is Wordwall. While the app has a paid version, it offers free resources that can be utilized without any issues. According to Wordwall (n.d.), this software enables the creation of interactive and printable activities for various contexts. Interactive activities can be played on any web-enabled device and used individually or in a teacher-led setting where learners take turns. In the printable version, the e-tool allows for the download of PDF documents that can be printed and used in a physical classroom.

Lastly, Bookwidgets is a software that empowers educators to create interactive and auto-graded exercises using over 40 templates that work on smartphones, tablets, and computers (Bookwidgets, 2023). This e-tool also provides personalized feedback, offering

educators the information they need to quickly identify problem areas and learners requiring additional attention.

These mentioned e-tools are just a fraction of the available tools that can be utilized in teaching. With technology becoming increasingly advanced and learners eager to engage with knowledge through technology, educators must keep up with these advancements. The world and education are constantly evolving and reinventing themselves, and educators must adapt to teach the new generations who need to be prepared to face and thrive in the challenges that lie ahead.

CHAPTER III
DESIGN AND METHOD

3.1 Research Method

According to O'Brien (1998) action research is when a group of people find a problem, look for its solution and see if the solution worked or not. (O'Brien, 1998) But in this case the researchers chose action research because it gives the opportunity to do their research in the natural setting trying to understand or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them, which is very important since they are going to get more accurate results having people acting as they normally do during the problem found. It invites creativity and the use of innovative methods to get an insight into the participants' world. Action research typically uses qualitative data and according to Pharm (2015) it can help the researchers to understand the thoughts and feelings of the participants, and this can allow them to understand the meaning of what people add to their experiences which is the main goal of the researchers during this research. (Pharm, 2015)

3.2 Type of approach

The research method that the researchers use is qualitative, and the data collection methods that would be used are: process of observation, surveys and questionnaires.

Process of observation: As in What is observational research? (n.d) says, it is a qualitative data collection method where researchers observe the participants in their most natural settings, this allows researchers to see the participants make choices and react to situations in their natural setting, as opposed to structured settings like research labs or focus groups. Researchers usually use observation method when they want to: see how participants behave in a natural setting, see how real world factors influence the participants behavior, and to describe a phenomenon. Stating this, it is worth mentioning that this instrument is used to determine those elements in the learning process and vocabulary acquisition, these observations can provide enough information to the researchers to know the learners' reactions towards the e-tools and if they can actually solve the tasks, and if the vocabulary studied is applied throughout the class.

So, the researchers provide the e-material and activities to develop in the class and observe the interaction and development of the class.

Survey: This is the data collecting tool that allows researchers to understand the learner's perspective towards their perception of using e-tools and this lets researchers to ask if each participant noticed any enhancement in their vocabulary acquisition. A survey is applied at the end of the process to collect their opinions that are later analyzed and interesting information is concluded.

Questionnaires: are the ones that require participants to answer specific questions using their own words by writing in a space that is given to them. Additionally, this supports the diagnose researches need to apply. (Bhandari, Scribbr, 2021)

Streefkerk (2019) said that qualitative research is basically expressed in words, it is used to understand concepts, thoughts or experiences on topics that are not well understood. Qualitative data is more difficult to analyze than quantitative data since it consists of texts, images or videos, perceptions and information instead of numbers. (Streefkerk, 2019)

There were some qualitative data collection methods mentioned by Streefkerk (2019) which are interviews that consist on asking open-ended questions, focus groups that is a discussion between a group about a topic to gather their opinions for the research, ethnography that is participating in a community for a period of time to closely observe culture and behavior, and literature review which is a survey of published works by other authors. (Streefkerk, 2019)

Streefkerk (2019) also states that the most common approaches to analyze qualitative data are qualitative content analysis that consists on tracking the occurrence, position and the meaning of the words or phrases from the research, thematic analysis that is to closely examine the data collected to identify the main themes and patterns, and finally

discourse analysis that is to study how communication works on social contexts. (Streefkerk, 2019)

Bhandari (2020) expressed that qualitative research is good for:

- Flexibility: it allows for flexibility throughout the research process so it requires the researcher to have the ability to change and adapt the research process according to the emerging results.
- Natural settings: Qualitative researchers often collect data at the site where participants experience the issue or problem that is being under study. They do not bring the participants into a lab and they do not send them instruments to complete like in survey research. On the contrary, qualitative researchers gather close information by talking directly to people and seeing them behave and act in their context, in the natural setting, the researchers have face to-face interaction.
- Meaningful insights: A simple observation of how people behave in a situation, what they think, what they feel, but most importantly, explain what they are doing and trying to achieve.
- Generation of new ideas: qualitative research helps to obtain richer results and content by providing the researchers with creative responses, interactive creations, and trend reviews. (Bhandari, 2020)

By using action research and qualitative data the researchers are positive that the research is very useful, and it provides a lot of information related to the topic and a successful solution to the situation.

3.3 The context

San Carlos is one of the largest cantons of the country, with an area of 3.348 Km2, it represents a 34% of the area of the Huetar Norte Region and 29.1% of the area of the province of Alajuela and 6.5% of the total extension of Costa Rica. It is one of the youngest cantons of the country and currently in the territory of San Carlos are five formations recognized, which are: Venado, Buena Vista, Cote, Cureña and Quaternary Volcanic.

According to Reseña histórica San Carlos (2021) this canton limits to the north with Los Chiles, the San Juan River, and the Republic of Nicaragua. To the south with the cantons of Poás, San Ramón and Alfaro Ruiz; to the east with the Cuarto de Grecia River and the province of Heredia and finally to the west with the cantons of Miramar de Puntarenas and Tilarán de Guanacaste. (Reseña histórica San Carlos, 2021)

Ugalde et al. (2020) states that cattle is one of the main economic activities of this canton, it is because San Carlos provides more than 65% of the milk and more than half of the meat to the country, it also provides sugar cane, pineapple,citrus and tubers in large quantities. Populations such as Pital, Aguas Zarcas, Pocosol and La Fortuna, have grown in an incredible way, and in general the statistics on education, health and prosperity are better than those of the neighboring cantons which means that San Carlos is a great canton full of amazing activities and opportunities for its inhabitants (Ugalde et al. 2020).

3.3.1 Setting of information

The current research is applied in a college level. It has been chosen one public university: Universidad Técnica Nacional (UTN) in one of its campus, in this case San Carlos.

The UTN has a major specialized in English whose name is Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (ILE). This major emphasizes in teaching the language for communication and developing the four linguistics skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing; taking these up even to C1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) (Universidad Técnica Nacional, 2015).

As the goal of this project is focused on vocabulary, it has been identified that even this is key in all the courses and skills, the reading courses have faced a lot of challenges throughout the time because of the gaps of vocabulary learners experience; making vocabulary acquisition.

3.3.2 Participants

The participants of this action research are learners enrolled in the major Inglés como Lengua Extranjera in their first year of college. It is taken a group of 34 learners taking the course Lectura Básica, this is taken in the first or second quarter of the major and alongside this, they generally take other courses at the same time such as grammar, pronunciation and integrated English.

3.4 Data collection procedures and tools of initial Research.

A questionnaire is applied to the participants in order to obtain important information related to their vocabulary level, the researchers apply it during a class and then analyze the data collected. Additionally to this, some vocabulary enhancing activities will be applied and observations will be held to understand the interactions and reactions of the learners towards the e-activities applied. Finally, there is going to be a short questionnaire to identify the perception of the learners about e-tools and wether they may feel if it has helped or not.

3.4.1 Procedures of initial research

As learning English for real communication and expression of ideas, it is essential to identify vocabulary in speaking and listening or reading and writing. This is the reason why the problem is identified, and it is proposed to use the e-tools as support to enhance their vocabulary-learning process.

Firstly, the diagnosis to identify the level of vocabulary recognition of the learners based on A1 level according to MCER was applied in the first half of the quarter, the e-tool chosen was Google Forms, so learners could use their cellphones, tablets or computers to complete the test without a problem. There were also the readings from the diagnosis printed in case any learner requires it and/or there were any inconvenient with the visualization in their cellphones.

Using these collections data instruments were chosen as a way to let the researchers identity the level of the learners, their reactions and way to work with technology was and the questionnaire for their perceptions. One of the researchers have been working in the

university for more than five years, and on the day-to-day experience has denoted the importance of learning and understanding if and how technology might help learners in their process, especially, when it comes to bring the vocabulary up in a daily conversation and interaction with peers. The instruments were designed by the researchers and consulted with the director of the major and the professor in charge of the group for validation and observations to enhance the instruments.

During designing and applying instrument, there must be taken into consideration some aspects:

a) There might be internet problems on the specific day you planned to apply any activity involving e-tools. It is normal and a possibility, so the recommendation is to plan an extra activity that can be related to the prior and/or adapt the activity if individual to a group activity, so, only one piece of advice per group to complete the task.

b) For e-tools activities, some learners may say they do not have/bring a computer for the in-person class, their cellphone's battery died, and/or the e-activity cannot be opened on their mobiles. As a consequence, the educator would need to adapt the task by using their screen computer projected and solve it together, joining people in groups or making sure there are devices in the institution to ask for.

c) Friendly and easy-to-see colors used, well-detailed instructions, and follow-up must be preceded by the educator. In this way, learners can have a clear path, easy to see all the information, and educators definitely make learners are doing what is asked.

d) Time is key to success, not too much or too easy, not too little time or too hard. Either way can be kind of a big deal for learners and motivation does not flow under too much pressure or not so much effort.

e) If there is a learner with any sight issue, everything must be adapted.

As a matter of fact, there were no issues to apply instruments, but printed material as support was done as a way to foresee any of the situations mentioned above.

3.4.2 Instruments

The very first step in this collection of data is to apply an A1 vocabulary diagnosis test that allows the researcher to identify if learners are able to recognize little or significant vocabulary in this level by using the Google Form tool.

A Google form was created, this first part contained vocabulary-context recognition in multiple choice exercises, and the second part was formed by five readings that included true/false, multiple choice, sentence completion, and facts identification.

As part of the results, there can be inferred that the majority of the learners enrolled in the course were able to complete the diagnostic test.

Graphic No.1 Learners able to complete the diagnostic

Points scored

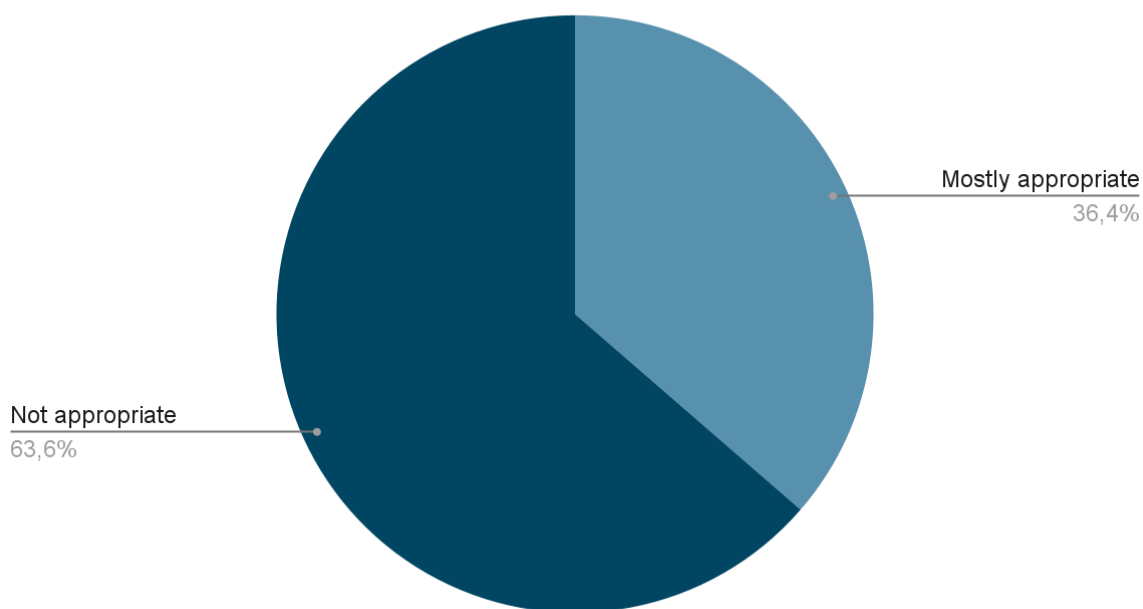Learners who did not
35,3%
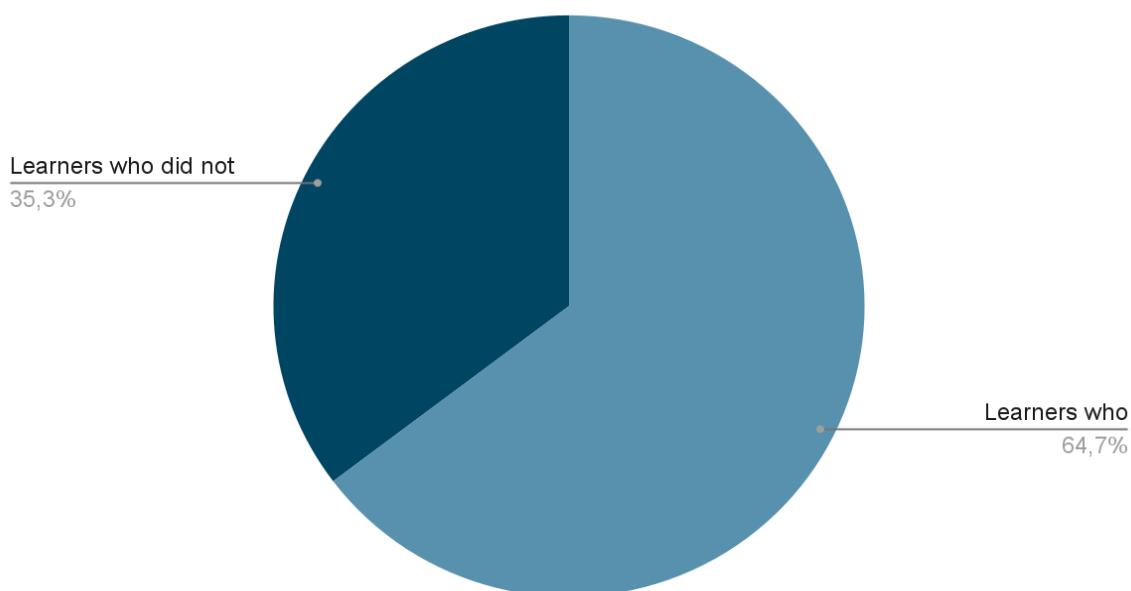
Learners who
64,7%

Source: diagnosis test applied to a group of learners in the Lectura Básica course from the Inglés como Lengua Extranjera major in June 2023.

On the other hand, out of 34 vocabulary recognition questions, only 4 students got most of the correct answers as the graph shows. Denoting that recognizing words in context, especially when given a context and providing a diverse word in the range of A1. Only 18,2% of learners were able to get most answers correct, not all the answers though.

In addition, in the exercise number 3 that students had to read the text, identify and understand the purpose, intention, and way of communicating the message, it was found that a good portion of the answers were wrong but there were 8 learners whose answers were mostly appropriate.

Graphic No.2 Learners who complete the diagnostic appropriately

Points scored

Source: diagnosis test applied in a group of learners in the Lectura Básica course from the Inglés como Lengua Extranjera major in June 2023.

3.4.3 Diagnostic Data Analysis

The diagnostic was applied to a group of 34 students enrolled in the course Lectura Básica in the major Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (ILE), but only 22 of them completed the

test. This test was applied in the first half of the quarter, and it was carried out through Google Forms.

This test was merely focused on two areas: vocabulary recognition in context and reading comprehension, taking into consideration that exercises to complete were designed according to the level A1 (beginner) of CEFR. Based on the data analyzed, the researchers came up with the following aspects:

- Most of the learners struggled recognizing vocabulary in context, most of the students recognized very familiar words such as student, apartments, etc that are used on a daily basis. However, when it comes to spelling and/or words with suffixes, prefixes or prepositions it becomes a challenge.

- Few students recognized most of the vocabulary in context. There were 34 vocabulary recognition questions, only 4 students managed to get most of the correct answers in this part.

- Basic collocations were also a challenge for the students since these may have been tough for them, this may occur because of the L1 interference. It can be easier to "think in Spanish" to find the answer, but collocations do not work that way, they have their peculiar way of working, you must be familiar with the way expressions are said and this is achievable thanks to the exposure to the language.

- It was an increased improvement towards reading comprehension because it can be easier for the student to read and complete questions; nonetheless, the reading tasks on the diagnostic applied were more about interpreting information. As a result, the students needed to identify if information provided in a different way was true or false, what actions/situations belonged to what character and completion of sentences.

- Most of the students showed understating of the true/false task. A majority of answers were correct. This means they mostly understood what they read.

- The task where a lot of students struggled the most in the reading comprehension section was exercise 5, which was the last exercise. In this task, students needed to read a short text and fill in the blanks with some

words to complete the sentences. A factor that may affect is that the task is the last one and probably, students were thinking about time based on the non-verbal communication they had, and also, having similar words may have confused learners a little.

- Exercise 3 was also tricky for students. In this task, the questions/answers were proposed from the writer's perspective. So, the task was to not only read the text but also identify and understand the purpose, intention, and way of communicating the message. It was denoted that a good portion of the answers was wrong. This does not mean students failed all the answers. There were 8 learners whose answers were mostly appropriate.

3.5 Action plan (proposal)

In this action plan the researchers decided to make use of e-tools in order to improve the acquisition and understanding of vocabulary in the group of Lectura Básica from Universidad Técnica Nacional, San Carlos campus. To achieve it different activities with e-tools are developed by the researchers. The first e-tool to be used is Bookwidgets, it gives the opportunity to create lots of interactive and useful exercises related to the subject needed. And the second one is Wordwall, this tool is a great option to teach vocabulary in a very creative and funny way since it allows to use of many different games adapted to what educators need to teach.

3.5.1 Description of deliberate intervention applied

Seeking the enhancement of vocabulary acquisition in a group of Lectura Básica in the major Inglés como Lengua Extranjera from Universidad Técnica Nacional in its campus in San Carlos, the researchers carried out an action plan based on exposing learners to recognize, learn and apply vocabulary through e-tools in the classroom. Students were exposed to technology in the classroom to show that diversification of strategies would provide substantial benefits that motivates both educators and learners. This is key, because in this context where the action plan is carried out, 100% of students have a smartphone and

the classroom has permanent and generally steady internet, also, there is a possibility of moving students in the campus in case the internet is weak in the classroom at the moment or to complete a task that requires so.

Going through a pandemic has allowed students to be exposed to technology and all of them know now the importance of the good and substantial use of technology in the classroom and learning process in general; however, using technology in the learning process does not mean use a divide just to "accomplish" the mission of using technology in the classroom, it needs to go deeper than this.

This is a wake-up call for coordinators and educators. Using e-tools requires planning and strategy, variations, flexibility, and adaptation, it demands that e-tools come to provide support and really add up to the development and enhancement of the learners; as a result, it requires time to research and analyze how to fit in this in the daily basis and the scenarios must be real and challenging.

Knowing this, it is important to choose the specific tools to start working on the creation of the material. In this very fixed context, three educational e-tools were chosen. The first one is Google Forms which can provide exercises to complete, recognize and solve determined question-answer tasks, therefore learners can open the link to work on any device and instantly get the answers as they submit the assignment.

On the other hand, Wordwall was chosen as well. This interesting and easy-to-use tool allowed learners to complete different challenges such as quizzes, matching, filling in the blanks, questionnaires, opening the box, word searching, and hangman. The tool mentioned is one of the easiest and friendliest e-tools and it is quite likable by many people.

The third e-tool chosen was Bookwidgets, this versatile tool allows to do a wide variety of options from worksheets with matching, fill-in-the-blanks, long and short answers to questions, recording answers, crosswords, memory games, bingo cards, mind maps, picture comparison, and flashcards. This tool can provide, in most of the cases, immediate feedback and answers provided by the learners.

3.5.2 Instruments used to assess the intervention/implementation carried out

The researchers applied a Google Form questionnaire as a diagnostic test in a group of Lectura Básica in the major Inglés como Lengua Extranjera. This questionnaire was provided at the end of the class, and learners were given one hour to complete it, all students completed the test on their cellphones, there were two students who mentioned the pictures of the texts were too small and they were not able to read it properly, so, the readings were provided in sheets of paper.

The diagnostic test was divided into two parts: 39 vocabulary recognition exercises in a multiple-choice section and five short texts with true/false questions, identification of the writer's intention, identifying facts from each of the characters in the text, and sentence completion. The reason it was designed like this is that knowing vocabulary not only consists of reading and understanding "most of it", but also, it is crucial to learn the skill to identify words by context.

In conclusion, having a diagnostic in Google Forms and using the cellphone to complete it may turn out to be a challenge, it may result in complicated work for a long period of time using the cell phones to answer and read questions. It is recommended to work on printed paper for this specific task, have a short test, or make sure all learners have tablets or computers.

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

4.1 Data Analysis Short introduction of what is this chapter about

After analyzing all the information gathered and applying activities using e-tools, concrete results are obtained about the use of technology and students' improvement in the vocabulary area, which are presented below.

4.1.1 Analysis Chapter II

Based on the authors cited in the chapter II of this research project, it can be mentioned that the researchers would like to highlight what the webpage Latin American Post (2023) cites about the precarious English level in Latin America despite all the effort and the projects that have been developed in the region and in Costa Rica to enhance the English level of the citizens; and considering the nearness the United State of America and the impact this English-spoken country has all over the area, there is not much improvement in the region in the English-speaking proficiency matter.

This information is useful for this research because the researchers could realize about how much teachers and students need to work on the language and especially in the vocabulary area. Considering the low level in the language of the country, researchers are able to understand that it is necessary to make students learn in a creative and innovative way so that they can truly improve the language level in the country since as it was already mentioned no other way of teaching used before has made the country improve its level in the language. However, it is not as easy as it sounds, because there are many aspects that teachers and the researchers need to take into consideration.

It can be highlighted for example the importance of teaching a language to actually apply it in a real world simulation, at least, if the scenario does not allow the educator to experience in a real-case scenario. As Jamshidbek Muxammadi o'gli (2023) states that learning vocabulary is not just a matter of memorizing, but to understand how words fit into the world and how this represent quite a challenge in the classroom due to the complexity of thinking outside the box and get creative to make this happen. Saying this, some aspects that must be taken into consideration according to Thornbury (2016) about learning

vocabulary and the challenge it represents are the pronunciation, spelling, length and complexity, grammar, meaning, range, similarity to the first language, similarity between English words, connotation, collocation, and appropriate use.

Denoting this, it can be sometimes difficult to evaluate vocabulary and based on what Suardi Suardi (2019) writes about not being a specific way to assess understanding and ability to apply the vocabulary, there may be some good strategies to implement in the classroom to reinforce the vocabulary acquisition which is as Al Aroud, B., Yunus, K. (2020) mentions that e-tools are a source of knowledge and information for teachers and students, picturing technology as a great ally for education, providing flexible and accessible educational spaces.

This author provided the researchers with very valuable information about the use of e-tools in the class since for the description he gives, he totally recognizes how important and helpful technology is for both of teachers and students, it clearly shows that when talking about vocabulary it is difficult not only for students but also for teachers, which is a great contribution for this researcher, use e-tools to help students improve their vocabulary and therefore their language level but also to help teachers during the difficult process of teaching vocabulary by reducing all the difficulties that it entails.

Finally, with all this information gathered, the researchers totally agree with the authors mentioned above, and believe that technology is one of the most innovative and useful way to teach students the language, however, as there are many aspects to take into account it is a must for teachers to know how to use it in the correct way so that students can completely achieve the purpose of improving their language skill and at the same time to finally start seeing results in the whole country in the language level.

4.1.2 Data analysis

The first instrument created is a diagnostic about putting and identifying vocabulary in context and vocabulary in reading comprehension. In this diagnostic, the tool Google Forms was applied in the course Lectura Básica in the major Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (ILE)

and the results led to identify that the major struggle was when the text was analyzed from the writer's perspective and when the exercises involved collocations.

The other instrument applied was the observation. Firstly, a series of activities using e-tool were created and applied in the classroom, as a consequence, three observations were made to determine the learners' attitude towards using technology on the weekly basis, in their classes.

Throughout the observations, learners showed a great opening to use e-tools. At the moment of completing or participating in e-activities, learners did not show any resistance or problem, once the instructions were given, learners completed the task. One important aspect to mention is that some learners needed to pair up to complete the tasks, due to a malfunctioning of their devices; moreover, the internet connection was not always the best, so not all learners managed to have connection and just some of the classmates.

Sometimes, the instructions needed to be widely explained depending on how specific and controlled the activity was, however, this did not represent a big issue for them, learners were actually very competent and fast to complete tasks.

For the final instrument applied, it was a questionnaire in which learners were asked questions related to their perception of technology in their learning process; and only 19 people answered the questionnaire and four questions were asked, three multiple-choice questions and one open question to express ideas.

Graphic No. 3

Do you feel technology can help you improve your English process?
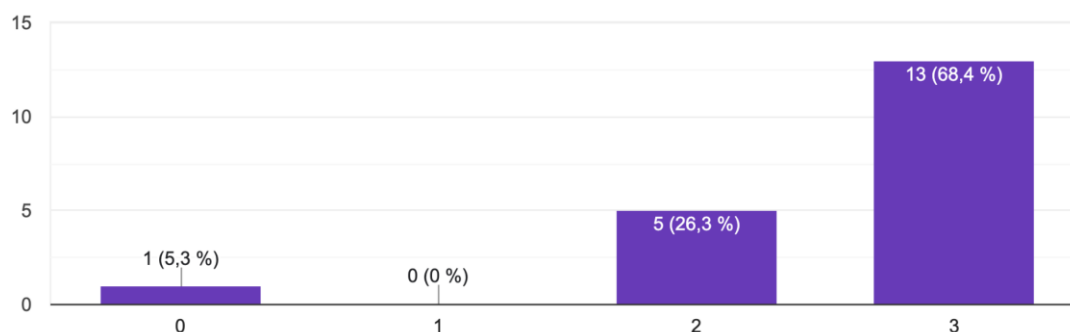
19 respuestas
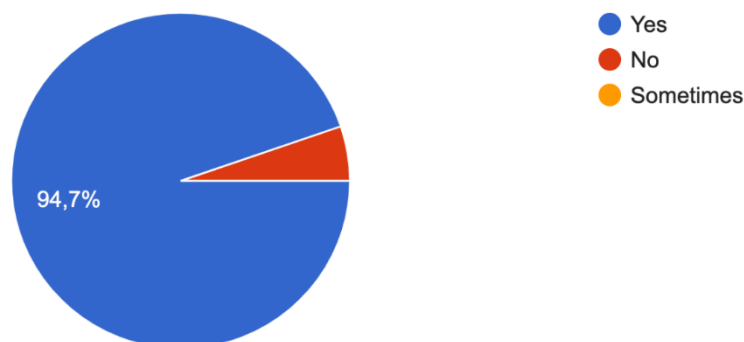
Source: questionnaire applied to a group of learners in the Lectura Básica course from the Inglés como Lengua Extranjera major in June 2023.

As the graphic shows, the answer is overwelming since 95% of people had a positive opinion about implementing these tools in the class. Most of the learners confirmed that based on how they feel about technology and e-tools in the classroom can help throughout the English learning process. This information may confirm what the experts consulted in this research highlighted about e-tools in the classroom.

Graphic No.4

Do you feel comfortable using different e-tools as practice in-and-out the classroom?
19 respuestas

Source: questionnaire applied to a group of learners in the Lectura Básica course from the Inglés como Lengua Extranjera major in June 2023.

The question was asked about most likely (5) to least likely (0) to feel comfortable using e-tool in the classroom or in assignments. As shown above, the great majority answered that they felt comfortable using these tools, this represents 68% of the answers, a total of 13 people. Additionally, 5 people, representing 26%, indicated they almost felt comfortable, or most of the time, as it can be interpreted. Only one person, that represents 5%, highlights he/she does not feel comfortable using e-tools in the class.

The results of this question show as well as the first question that the majority of the group holds a positive perspective about technology in the learning process.

As to the question number three, learners were asked to openly express how they felt technology can be useful in the learning process. The question asked is "How do you think technology can be useful in the English learning process?", the answers were:

- With audios, practices and videos
- We can use online translators and dictionaries
- You can learn a lot of vocabulary by reading.
- I think technology is very dynamic
- We can practice with exercises online
- Is important to practice the use of different forms of learning
- Can be useful because we can use apps to memorize, practice any topic.
- With games, using the necessary translator
- It helps us to improve the way in which we learn the english. It is easier to search exercises on Google than to do it written, and is more practical.
- It is easy to do exercise online and practices
- Many accessible practices
- You can see many videos in you tube to strengthen your knowledge
- Because it is more easy make exercises online
- It helps with the search of good information for learning
- With practice page
- I honestly believe that technology could enhance some skills, we can search some exercises online in order to solve them. As well as, it helps us to find out some other methods to learn English
- Speaking
- Through videos and online practices
- With videos and exercises

As shown above, the learners' opinions towards e-tools indicate that there are a wide variety of perks in their learning process and ways to use the technology that can burst the knowledge and enhance their performance.

Graphic No.5

After using different e-tools in the classroom, do you think you have learned more/improved your English?

19 respuestas
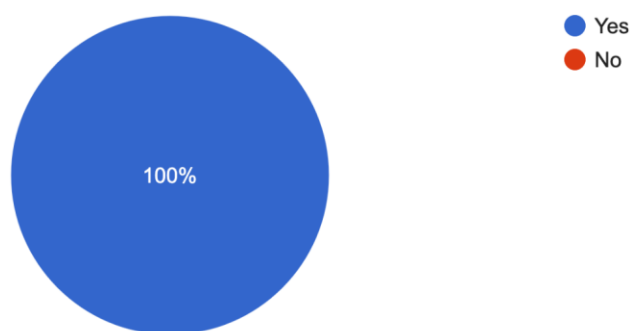
Source: questionnaire applied to a group of learners in the Lectura Básica course from the Inglés como Lengua Extranjera major in June 2023.

The final question asked to the learners refers to their perception and opinion if the e-tools implemented in the classroom made learners feel their level was improved and if they had felt they have learned more. The answer was clear, 100% of the people in this questionnaire expressed in a positive way the impact of technology in their learning process.

4.2 Restatement of questions

According to the information obtained from the data analysis, the answers to the questions that were stated in the introduction are very relevant. The intention of the first question is to see the acknowledgement that students have about technology for learning

purposes. It is very common for teenagers to be surrounded by technology all day and most of them can manage any device without any problem. Nevertheless, when talking about learning the researchers were not sure if it is common for them and if they think it may help them during the learning process or not, since some years ago it was not an option to use technology during the class; it is not a secret that it has been changing during the last years, especially when the pandemic started but what is not sure is if students find it helpful or not. However, according to the data analysis, the researchers found out that 95% of people had a positive opinion about using technology and the positive impact it has on their learning process, researchers were positively surprised with these answers.

The second question was in order to know if students like using e-tools not only to learn but also to practice in and out the classroom what they have already learned. This point is very important for the researchers since practice is the key to improvement and it is fundamental that students feel happy and excited to complete the practices and in that way they are going to try their best and will understand the topic completely. The results were very clear, the majority of the students (68%) feel comfortable using e-tools to practice, 26% of them almost feel comfortable and only one person (5%) does not feel comfortable with it. According to the analysis researchers agree that students participate more in the practices using e-tools than just using the notebook, it is more interesting for them to practice in an innovative way and even if some of them are not completely used to it, they end up enjoying it and most importantly, learning.

To finish, the last question referred to the results or improvement they think they have had after using e-tools during the lessons. Fortunately, 100% of the students expressed in a positive way the impact of technology in their learning process, which means that they agree that the activities they did using technology have been very helpful to improve their language skill, confirming that they not only thought it may be helpful but it actually was.

CHAPTER V
REFLECTIONS

5.1 Reflections

Since the very beginning when the researchers decided to become English teachers, their main objective has been to make students see the English subject in a different way and specially to improve their language level. It is not a secret that for most of the students English is not their favorite subject and there are some reasons why; for some of them it is very difficult, others just do not like it and for others it is very boring. This situation has also affected the whole country, showing that the language level is much lower than it should be since students receive English classes throughout school and college.

Researchers consider this information as a wake-up call to educators because it clearly shows that there is something that has not been done correctly during all these years. However, for the researchers there is an opportunity of being able to change the concept that students have about the language and additionally, the way teachers have been implementing this foreign language into the classroom, but how can they do that? When the pandemic hit the whole world leaving many changes in different areas such as education, the researchers found a possibility to get a higher impact.

Saying this, technology shows up as an excellent tool to it, it has been around for many years and nevertheless, it might have not been taken as much advantage as it could in the education field. Consequently, researchers have been studying different elements and found out that e-tool may influence positively learners if well implemented in the learning process, this may also gather learners' attention, involving learners in the process and therefore motivation and interest could rise.

Besides that, the researchers have chosen vocabulary enhancement since it is a fundamental part of the language and can improve their language level significantly. This action research was the opportunity that the researchers needed in order to test the effectiveness of e-tools to improve language proficiency and the perception of learners was

positive, even though, by experience and comments, it has been said many times the importance and good effects technology bring in education.

With the results the researchers had many feelings together. First of all, researchers found a lot of satisfaction applying instruments and researching about one topic that is so relevant in the English-speaking process. Secondly, researchers confirmed their perception and since the general objective was successfully achieved, e-tools are a great resource to enhance vocabulary acquisition. And finally, they felt grateful to the teacher and students who allowed them to put into practice everything they needed to come out with the results and learn more about the topic, so this can be applied in future working experiences in the classroom with learners.

5.2 Plan for further action

If this project is applied again the researchers concluded that the biggest change they would do is to look for more e-tools that can be used without internet connection in order to facilitate the application of the activities. It is important to mention that the ones that were used in this research were applied and completed successfully and that not all of them need access to the internet to use them, having the option to print the worksheets to support the activity in the classroom. However, there is always a possibility to have internet problems and that is why it would help significantly to look for more options that do not need internet and in that way the researchers have less possibility of having issues when applying the activities.

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the conclusions obtained by the researchers of this action research. The participants of the research were 34 learners from a group of Lectura Básica of the major Inglés como Lengua Extranjera at Universidad Técnica Nacional on the San Carlos Campus. After deeply analyzing the results obtained from the research, the researchers concluded

a. According to the specific objective 1, the results from the diagnostic test reaffirmed the reason why the researchers chose the topic to study, students have some difficulties when it comes to vocabulary.

b. As for the specific objective 2, the implementation of e-tools in the classroom of a group of Lectura Básica of the major Inglés como Lengua Extranjera resulted in a positive effect to enhance vocabulary acquisition.

c. Also, related to the specific objective 2 the e-tools used contribute to enhancing student's vocabulary acquisition by allowing them to learn and practice in a totally different way, keeping them engaged and eager to participate.

d. In addition, linked to the specific objective 2 the use of e-tools means a great opportunity to change and improve the way teachers prepare their lessons. Teachers have endless resources to present topics in an authentic way and prepare students with the language level they need.

e. Finally, according to the specific objective 3 the learners´ perception of technology implemented on the daily basis in the classroom has been a positive aspect and felt their improvement in the language has been significant, learners confirmed they have learned and enhanced since the diagnosis applied.

CHAPTER VII
RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this research, there are some recommendations that may be suggested if any other person considers to apply e-tools in the classroom to enhance vocabulary acquisition.

Recommendations to the teachers:

a. Implementing e-tools in the classroom requires very well-thought planning. Having clear instructions and understanding clearly the tool helps the learner at the moment of using it. This is important to be considered, due to there may be someone that can easily get frustrated and willing to give up and not work anymore. Additionally, if the instructions, objective or the goal of the activity, the pedagogical use might be felt useless and the educator would not get the results expected.

b. There must always be plan B and adaptations. Some of the factors that really influence the work of the day in the class are the lack of internet, not everyone has a smartphone, some cell phones may have the battery dead, the number of students, the environment and attitude of the group that day.

c. The follow-up teachers give to the learners before, during and after using the tools is essential to get some feedback and identify what works, what needs to improve and what definitely is not working in the group dynamic.

d. There should be taken into consideration peer activities to enrich the activity, but also, individual activities to see individual performance. In addition, there are some activities in groups that really help to unify and foment other transversal abilities and skills that are quite necessary in the real-world scenario.

Recommendations to the students:

    a. To have great results using technology in the classroom, it is important to focus only on the applications that the teacher is using to develop an activity, in that way students avoid distractions.

    b. Participation is the clue to improve in the language, even if it is using technology it is crucial for students to participate and complete the activities.

    c. Sharing may help a lot, as some students can have internet or device problems the other students can share with them so that everyone can participate and learn.

Recommendations to the institutions:

    a. Institutions should consider the idea of providing the necessary devices to each student since it can make the process easier.

    b. A good Internet is one of the most important services that institutions should offer, in that way it would represent one less problem.

Recommendations to the MEP

    a. MEP should start taking into consideration the importance and the effectiveness that using technology to teach has and start promoting different alternatives for teachers to use it in class.

    b. It is recommended to provide training and linkages with other institutions to enrich the pedagogical practices.

    c. Schools should promote free e-tools among educators. If there is any initiative or budget, provide licenses in the computer labs.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Diagnostic test

https://forms.gle/6kSJqGRCPwGkGhM47

Appendix 2: Noun and possessive practice

https://forms.gle/DzrvV9TskfJedzMp6

Nouns 'n possessives

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* Indica que la pregunta es obligatoria

Possessive

Write the correct form of the possessives into the gaps (apostrophe 's).

This is _____ book. (Peter) *   1 punto

Tu respuesta

The _____ room is upstairs. (children)   1 punto

Tu respuesta

_____ sister is twelve years old. (John) *   1 punto

Tu respuesta

Appendix 3: Adjectives

https://wordwall.net/es/resource/57701831

0:05   ◁ 1 de 10 ▷

amazing amazed

The magic show was [____].

≡   Enviar respuestas   🔊 ⤢

Appendix 4: Antonyms

https://wordwall.net/es/resource/55404306

Appendix 5: suffixes

https://wordwall.net/es/resource/58762112

Appendix 6: Prefixes and suffixes

https://www.bookwidgets.com/play/lufOS4Nn-iQAEeMYECgAAA/VEJV8V6/prefixes-suff?teacher_id=6052625094017024

Student View

Prefixes & Suffixes   ① ✉ 🗑

QUESTION 1 ☆

Check the words given, and use the prefix (in, un, re) suffix (ness) as it corresponds.

polite - happy - comfortable - sufficient - write - healthy - expensive - schedule - serious - acceptable - sensitive - able - think.

Unfortunately, I've scheduled two meetings for 3 o'clock. I'll have to ( ) one of the meetings.

Can money buy ( )? Can it put a smile on your face?

The train tickets didn't cost very much. They were ( ).

Smoking isn't good for your body. It's very ( ).

I wrote a story but I don't like it. I want to ( ) the ending.

I was ( ) to go to the meeting yesterday because I was sick. I couldn't go.

It wasn't nice to say that your friend was stupid. It was ( ).

Many people don't understand the ( ) of global warming. It's an important issue.

You're always late for work! It's ( )! You must come on time!

The money I have isn't enough to buy a new car. It's ( ).

We should ( ) our decision to buy a car. Let's think about it again.

Ouch! My new shoes are a little too small. They feel ( ).

I want to teach ( ) to my kids. I want them to say, "Thank you."

Appendix 7: Getting meaning by context

https://www.bookwidgets.com/play/B2sVLIRK-iQAEuh91MgAAA/NEBX9NQ/getting-meaning?teacher_id=6052625094017024

Getting meaning by context   ① ✉ 🗑

19th century opium wars between Britain and China before looking at prohibition in the 20th century and official efforts, often spectacularly unsuccessful, to stop the use of illegal drugs.

6) The museum asks visitors to themselves decide what could be the best approach to narcotics -- prohibition, drug eradication schemes, decriminalisation or legalisation -- but it pulls no punches on the tragedy and trauma inflicted by drugs on abusers. A final, heart-wrenching gallery recounts the powerful true stories of victims of drug abuse around the world through intimate video testimonies by their families.

7) "The feelings which develop through a visit to the museum change toward the very end when there is evidence of the death and suffering that drug abuse produces," said Antonio Maria Costa, executive director of the Vienna-based UNODC. "The end message is very strong, namely that use of drugs should be fought. Society has to use all its instruments, which means law enforcement for sure, but not only law enforcement. Prevention and treatment are equally important."

QUESTION 1 ☆

1. The word "disorientation" in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to:

○ being introduced

○ total confusion; nothing being clear

○ hapiness

○ understanding

QUESTION 2 ☆

2. The word "distorted" in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to:

○ famous

○ extraordinary; very unusual

○ bent; twisted; strange shape

○ unclear

Appendix 8: Questionnaire: students´ perception

https://forms.gle/DrDoCaUV5FbgfyPq9

Technology Perception

Any responses submitted here will never be shared with anyone under any circumstances, ever. All responses are anonymized and only used in aggregate for evaluation purposes.

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No compartido

* Indica que la pregunta es obligatoria

Do you feel technology can help you improve your English process? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Sometimes

Do you feel comfortable using different e-tools as practice in-and-out the classroom?   *

	0	1	2	3	
Not likely	◯	◯	◯	◯	Most likely

How do you think technology can be useful in the English learning process? *