The impact of digital learning tools on English language acquisition among students at the Universidad Popular del Cesar (UPC)

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Abstract

Educational digital tools are technological resources that can be used to present content, practice knowledge, and develop activities related to learning. In English language teaching, these tools offer different ways to work on vocabulary, grammar, reading, and listening comprehension. Their main contribution is to provide more opportunities for practice, although their usefulness depends on how they are integrated into educational activities. Among the platforms that can support this process is Educaplay, which allows teachers to create activities such as matching words, completing exercises, and answering quizzes. Cadena Villegas et al. (2023) studied a pedagogical strategy that incorporated Educaplay into English learning and highlighted the importance of planning activities according to educational objectives. More specifically, Vargas-Saritama and Espinoza Celi (2024) investigated the use of Educaplay to improve vocabulary learning and retention among students learning English as a foreign language in Ecuador. These studies show the academic interest in exploring the use of interactive activities in language learning. Kahoot! and Quizizz allow teachers to create quizzes and exercises that provide feedback on students' answers. España-Delgado (2023) analyzed students' perceptions of Kahoot!, Quizizz, and Quizalize in English classes and found that participants considered these platforms entertaining and useful for learning activities. On the other hand, Genially allows users to design presentations, games, and interactive materials that can be used to explain content and encourage participation. Castillo-Cuesta et al. (2024) studied the use of Genially and Kahoot! in English teaching in a university context and reported positive results in student motivation and participation. These platforms do not serve exactly the same purpose, so their usefulness should be analyzed according to the objective of each activity. In this research, they are considered specific examples of digital tools that students can use to practice English. However, it is not assumed that all participants know these platforms or use them with the same frequency. Gamification, motivation and English language learning Gamification consists of incorporating elements commonly found in games, such as points, challenges, rewards, levels, and feedback, into activities with an educational purpose. In English language learning, these elements can make certain exercises more dynamic and provide students with information about their answers. However, participating in an entertaining activity does not necessarily mean that students have learned or retained all its content.

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