



*Mejorando la motivación de los estudiantes universitarios en línea mediante el uso de Quizizz en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés*

*Improving online college students' motivation through the use of Quizizz in English language learning*

*Melhorar a motivação dos estudantes universitários online através do uso do Quizizz na aprendizagem da língua inglesa*

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## Resumen

Este estudio examina el impacto de la gamificación en la motivación estudiantil dentro de cursos virtuales de inglés a nivel universitario en Ecuador. Utilizando un diseño cuasi-experimental, se dividió a 120 estudiantes en cuatro grupos, cada uno expuesto a una herramienta digital diferente: Quizizz, Wordwall, Kahoot y Padlet. Los resultados indican que Quizizz tuvo el efecto más positivo en la motivación intrínseca, la participación y el compromiso en clase. Los datos se recopilaron mediante encuestas de motivación pre y post intervención, observaciones de aula y análisis de desempeño. Los hallazgos confirman que los entornos de aprendizaje gamificados, especialmente aquellos que integran plataformas interactivas y competitivas, mejoran la participación y satisfacción de los estudiantes en clases virtuales de inglés. Esta investigación aporta al cuerpo creciente de literatura sobre pedagogía digital y respalda la integración de la gamificación en la educación superior como estrategia para enfrentar los desafíos motivacionales.

**Palabras clave:** gamificación; motivación estudiantil; aprendizaje de inglés en línea; herramientas digitales; educación superior.

## Abstract

This study examines the impact of gamification on student motivation within online university-level English courses in Ecuador. Using a quasi-experimental design, 120 students were divided into four groups, each exposed to a different digital tool: Quizizz, Wordwall, Kahoot, and Padlet. The results indicate that Quizizz had the most positive effect on intrinsic motivation, participation, and engagement in class. Data were collected through pre- and post-intervention motivation surveys, classroom observations, and performance analysis. The findings confirm that gamified learning environments, especially those that integrate interactive and competitive platforms, improve student participation and satisfaction in online English classes. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on digital pedagogy and supports the integration of gamification in higher education as a strategy to address motivational challenges.

**Keywords:** gamification; student motivation; online English learning; digital tools; higher education.

## Resumo

Este estudo examina o impacto da gamificação na motivação dos alunos em cursos universitários online de inglês no Equador. Utilizando um desenho quase experimental, 120 alunos foram divididos em quatro grupos, cada um exposto a uma ferramenta digital diferente: Quizizz, Wordwall, Kahoot e Padlet. Os resultados indicam que o Quizizz teve o efeito mais positivo na motivação intrínseca, na participação e no envolvimento na sala de aula. Os dados foram recolhidos através de inquéritos de motivação pré e pós-intervenção, observações em sala de aula e análise de desempenho. Os resultados confirmam que os ambientes de aprendizagem gamificados, especialmente aqueles que integram plataformas interativas e competitivas, melhoram a participação e a satisfação dos alunos nas aulas de inglês online. Esta investigação contribui para o crescente corpo de literatura sobre a pedagogia digital e apoia a integração da gamificação no ensino superior como estratégia para enfrentar os desafios motivacionais.

**Palavras-chave:** gamificação; motivação do aluno; aprendizagem de inglês online; ferramentas digitais; ensino superior.

## Introduction

In the evolving landscape of global education, the need to integrate technology into academic environments has become not just a trend but a necessity. The world is increasingly interconnected, and English has emerged as the global lingua franca across academia, science, business, and diplomacy (Crystal, 2003). Consequently, the ability to understand and use English effectively is a critical skill for students in higher education worldwide. International education policies emphasize the importance of English language proficiency for academic mobility and global employability (UNESCO, 2021).

At the regional level, Latin American countries have recognized the urgency of strengthening English education to compete in a globalized knowledge economy. Ministries of education and universities have introduced curricular reforms, invested in digital platforms, and trained educators in virtual teaching methodologies (García-Peñalvo et al., 2020). Despite these efforts, regional assessments show persistent gaps in English proficiency among university students, particularly in countries where English is taught as a foreign language and not integrated into daily communication (Paredes & Díaz, 2022).

In Ecuador, the context of this study, national education policies require university students to attain at least a B1 level in English according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). However, local institutions continue to struggle with student disengagement and low achievement rates in English courses, especially in online learning environments (Méndez & Rodríguez, 2021). The transition to fully virtual classrooms following the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified these challenges, as many students report feeling isolated, demotivated, and disconnected from their peers and instructors (UNESCO, 2021).

At the micro level, within the setting of a private university in Ecuador, educators have reported a noticeable decline in student participation and performance in online English courses. Teachers often observe that students lack the intrinsic motivation to engage actively with the material, complete tasks on time, or attend synchronous sessions consistently (Paredes & Díaz, 2022). This lack of motivation negatively impacts learning outcomes, course completion rates, and overall student satisfaction.

Given this context, the problem addressed in this study centers on the question: *How does the use of Quizizz affect the motivation of university students learning English in online classrooms?* This inquiry is grounded in the need to explore technological interventions that can re-engage students and transform their learning experience.

The rationale for this research lies in the potential of gamification—specifically the use of Quizizz—as a tool to enhance student motivation and participation in virtual English language learning. Gamification introduces elements of competition, reward, and interactivity, which have been shown to stimulate learner interest and engagement (Deterding et al., 2011). By using platforms like Quizizz, instructors may create dynamic and interactive lessons that encourage learners to take ownership of their progress and feel more connected to the learning process (Mendoza-Batista, 2020).

This study is important not only for its practical implications in the virtual classroom but also for its contribution to the broader field of digital pedagogy and second language acquisition. While many studies have highlighted the benefits of gamified learning in primary and secondary education, fewer investigations have focused on its impact in online university settings. This research thus addresses a critical gap in the literature by examining the effect of Quizizz on motivation among undergraduate EFL students in Ecuador.

The general objective of the study is to examine the effect of Quizizz on the motivation of university students in online English language learning. Specifically, the research aims: (a) to measure motivational differences before and after using Quizizz and (b) to compare motivational levels between a control group and an experimental group.

By fulfilling these objectives, the study intends to provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of gamification in enhancing motivation and inform future practices in digital education. Ultimately, this research aspires to support the development of more engaging and student-centered learning environments that promote academic success and lifelong language learning skills.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Motivation is a psychological construct that significantly influences learners' engagement and success in academic contexts. According to Dörnyei (2001), motivation in second language acquisition involves the desire to learn the language, the effort expended, and the satisfaction derived from the learning experience. It is often shaped by both internal factors (e.g., interest, self-confidence) and external ones (e.g., rewards, social context).

Influences on learners refer to the various factors—cognitive, emotional, environmental, and technological—that shape the way students engage with and respond to educational experiences (Bandura, 1997). These influences may include prior knowledge, learning styles, self-efficacy, peer interaction, and feedback from instructors.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is the process by which people learn a language other than their mother tongue. It involves the development of phonological, lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic competencies. SLA is influenced by age, exposure, input quality, motivation, and learning environment (Gass & Selinker, 2008).

Approaches in language teaching refer to broad theoretical positions that guide classroom practices. Common approaches include the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes interaction and meaning-making, and the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which centers on the completion of meaningful tasks (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Formative assessment is a type of evaluation used to monitor student learning and provide ongoing feedback to improve instruction and student performance. It is often informal, continuous, and aimed at identifying strengths and areas for improvement (Black & Wiliam, 2009). In gamified

platforms like Quizizz, formative assessment is embedded within interactive tasks that support immediate correction and adaptation.

Online platforms are digital environments that host educational content, facilitate interaction, and support synchronous or asynchronous learning activities. Examples include Moodle, Blackboard, Google Classroom, and Microsoft Teams (Allen & Seaman, 2017). These platforms serve as central hubs for communication, content delivery, and student assessment in virtual education.

Educational apps are software applications designed to support specific learning objectives. They can be accessed through mobile devices or computers and often include features such as games, quizzes, simulations, or tutorials. Apps like Duolingo, Quizlet, and Quizizz are widely used in language learning for their flexibility, accessibility, and ability to personalize learning experiences (Kukulska-Hulme, 2020).

Gamification, defined as the application of game-design elements in non-game settings, is a pedagogical strategy aimed at enhancing user engagement and motivation (Deterding et al., 2011). This approach incorporates elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, and instant feedback to make learning more dynamic and enjoyable. When integrated into educational contexts, gamification can foster autonomy, competence, and relatedness—core components of the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Quizizz is a gamified learning platform that allows instructors to create interactive quizzes where students receive real-time feedback and compete for scores. The tool supports formative assessment and motivates learners through playful interaction, which aligns well with principles of active learning and constructivist theory (Lai & Hwang, 2016). In language learning specifically, it encourages vocabulary retention, comprehension, and engagement through repetition and feedback.

Gamification in virtual classrooms addresses the issue of learner isolation by creating a sense of community and competition. This approach also increases the likelihood of students participating in and completing tasks, as it taps into intrinsic motivation and makes the learning experience more satisfying (Méndez & Rodríguez, 2021). As a result, students tend to show improved attitudes and higher persistence in language learning.

### **State of the Art and Delimitations**

Recent scholarly attention has focused on the integration of gamified platforms such as Quizizz in language learning environments. For instance, Rojas and Tucto (2024) demonstrated that Quizizz

not only improved reading comprehension but also significantly enhanced students' motivation in EFL classrooms. Similarly, Mendoza-Batista (2020) reported that digital gamification tools, including Quizizz, contributed to increased learner autonomy and reduced dropout rates in virtual learning contexts. These findings support the growing consensus that gamification can positively influence learners' affective and cognitive engagement in language acquisition.

Moreover, Mora-Romero et al. (2023) investigated the impact of learning analytics combined with gamification and found that students using Quizizz showed greater reading performance and class engagement than those in traditional instruction. These studies emphasize the pedagogical value of gamified tools in facilitating formative assessment and student-centered learning. However, most of these investigations focus on K–12 settings or blended environments rather than fully online higher education contexts.

This study addresses that gap by examining the effect of Quizizz on university students learning English in a fully virtual environment. While existing literature confirms the motivational benefits of gamified tools in general, this research specifically targets adult learners in higher education, whose motivational drivers and learning behaviors may differ significantly from younger populations.

The present research is delimited to undergraduate students enrolled in English language courses at a private university in Ecuador. The study focuses on the April–August 2024 academic semester, during which all classes are delivered online. As such, the results cannot be generalized to face-to-face or hybrid settings, nor to other educational levels such as primary or postgraduate education. Nevertheless, the findings aim to inform pedagogical practices and technological integration strategies in similar online university contexts.

## Methodology

This study adopted a **quali-quantitative** research approach with a dominant quantitative experimental design, complemented by qualitative insights obtained through classroom observations and teacher logs. The purpose was to evaluate the effects of different gamified platforms on student motivation in online English language courses.

## Population and Sample

The population consisted of 250 undergraduate students enrolled in virtual English language courses at a private university in Ecuador during the April–August 2024 academic semester. The

inclusion criteria were: (a) active enrollment in at least one English course, (b) participation in fully online instruction, and (c) no previous exposure to structured gamified platforms in English learning. From this population, a purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 120 students who demonstrated similar levels of English proficiency (B1 CEFR) and motivation in a diagnostic survey.

### **Experimental Groups and Intervention Design**

The sample was divided into four **experimental groups**; each composed of 30 students. These groups were homogeneous in terms of language level, age range (18–24 years), and access to digital devices and stable internet. Each group was assigned to work with a different gamified platform throughout the six-week intervention:

- **Group A (Focal Group):** Engaged with **Quizizz**, used during vocabulary and reading sessions.

During the six-week intervention, Group A engaged in structured activities using Quizizz in both vocabulary-building and reading comprehension lessons. The implementation followed a weekly plan:

**Week 1:** Students received an orientation on how to access and use Quizizz, including navigating the platform, joining games, and reviewing results. A baseline motivation pretest was also administered.

**Week 2:** Vocabulary sets related to the course textbook were introduced through individual Quizizz quizzes. Students completed self-paced challenges with immediate feedback, which allowed them to identify personal vocabulary gaps.

**Week 3:** Reading comprehension activities were incorporated. After reading a selected passage, students answered Quizizz-based comprehension quizzes with multiple-choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank formats. The leaderboard feature was enabled to promote healthy competition.

**Week 4:** The group shifted to team-based vocabulary competitions. Students were divided into groups, and Quizizz Live mode was used to complete challenges collaboratively. This reinforced peer interaction and gamified review.

**Week 5:** A combination of vocabulary and reading tasks was implemented. Quizizz quizzes integrated images, audio, and contextual questions. Students were asked to reflect on their performance using anonymous polls within the platform.

**Week 6:** A final comprehensive Quizizz challenge was administered. It covered all vocabulary and reading content from the previous weeks. Immediately afterward, the motivation posttest was conducted.

Throughout the intervention, usage metrics were collected (accuracy rate, participation frequency, average response time), and classroom engagement was logged by the instructor using a standardized observation checklist.

- **Group B:** Used **Wordwall**, primarily for grammar and vocabulary games. Students interacted with matching exercises, word searches, and spinning wheels, both synchronously and asynchronously.
- **Group C:** Participated through **Kahoot**, especially for reading comprehension checks and grammar quizzes in live class competitions.
- **Group D:** Worked with **Padlet** to enhance collaborative writing and reflection. Students posted responses to reading prompts and provided peer feedback.

All four groups received instruction from qualified EFL teachers using a common syllabus, textbook, and lesson structure to ensure instructional equivalence. Each platform was incorporated into two sessions per week, with other tasks conducted via Moodle.

### **Data Collection Instruments and Procedures**

Quantitative data were collected using a **pretest and posttest** based on a modified version of Gardner's (1985) **Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB)**. The questionnaire measured three dimensions: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and classroom engagement. Each item was scored on a 5-point Likert scale. The internal reliability of the instrument was confirmed with Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ).

To complement the survey data, **qualitative observations** were recorded weekly by each group's instructor using a structured observation checklist focused on participation rates, behavioral indicators of motivation (e.g., voluntary participation, enthusiasm), and feedback patterns.

At the end of the six-week intervention, data from the four groups were compared using **one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)** to determine statistically significant differences in motivation levels among the different digital tools. Assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity were tested using Shapiro-Wilk and Levene's test, respectively. Where significant differences were found, **Tukey's HSD** was applied to specify intergroup variations.

**Table 1.** Average Student Ratings by Digital Tool Used in the Online English Class

Digital Tool	Average Rating (Scale 1 to 5)	Results Analysis
Quizizz (Group A)	4.34	This tool received the highest average rating. Its interactive and competitive nature appears to have positively influenced student motivation and engagement, providing a fun and effective learning experience.
Wordwall (Group B)	3.89	Rated moderately high. Its customizable activities were well-received, although the tool may be perceived as less dynamic compared to others like Quizizz.
Kahoot (Group C)	3.84	Although Kahoot is known for its dynamic quizzes, it received a slightly lower rating than Wordwall. This could be due to students' familiarity with the tool or its more traditional quiz format.
Padlet (Group D)	3.37	This tool received the lowest average rating. While useful for collaborative activities and brainstorming, its lower interactivity compared to other tools may have influenced students' less favorable perception.

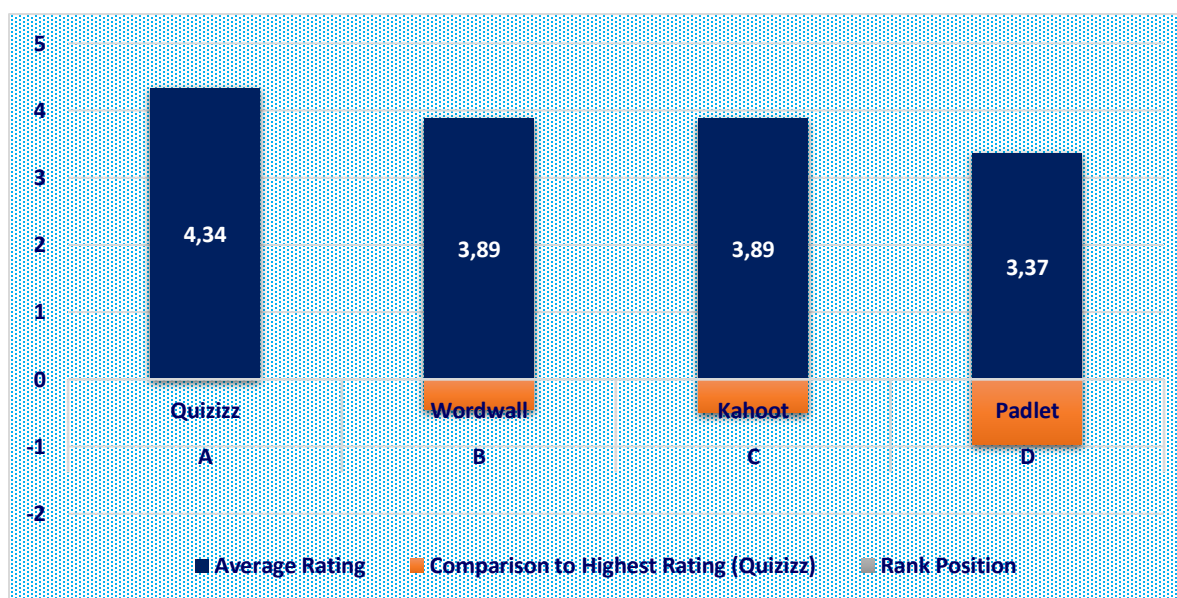
*Note:* The data presented reflect the average student ratings for each digital tool used during a teaching unit in virtual English classes. The rating scale ranged from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).

**Table 2.** Comparative Analysis of Student Ratings by Group

Group	Tool Used	Average Rating	Comparison to Highest Rating (Quizizz)	Rank Position	Observations
A	Quizizz	4.34	–	1st	Highest rating. Indicates strong student motivation and engagement.
B	Wordwall	3.89	-0.45	2nd	Good reception; interactive but less dynamic than Quizizz.
C	Kahoot	3.84	-0.50	3rd	Slightly below Wordwall; familiarity may have reduced novelty effect.
D	Padlet	3.37	-0.97	4th	Lowest rating; effective for collaboration but less engaging.

*Note:* The table reflects a comparative analysis based on the average ratings provided by students after using different digital tools in an online English learning environment. The differences highlight perceived effectiveness and engagement levels associated with each tool.

**Graphic 1.** Comparative Performance of Digital Tools in Online English Learning



## Analysis of Results by Group

### Group A – Quizizz

This group achieved the highest overall average (4.34), indicating a strong positive response from students. Quizizz's game-like format, immediate feedback, and user-friendly interface likely contributed to higher engagement and satisfaction. Students were more active and motivated, showing that gamified learning can significantly enhance participation and comprehension.

### Group B – Wordwall

Group B obtained a solid average rating of 3.89. Students appreciated the variety of activities and the possibility of practicing at their own pace. Although not as dynamic as Quizizz, Wordwall still offered sufficient interactivity. The group showed consistent involvement, suggesting that the tool was effective in reinforcing vocabulary and grammar through repetition and matching exercises.

### Group C – Kahoot

Group C had an average rating of 3.84, slightly lower than Group B. Although Kahoot is widely recognized and popular, some students found it predictable due to its repetitive format. Nevertheless, it maintained student attention and was effective in reviewing content, particularly when used as a quick formative assessment.

### **Group D – Padlet**

Group D recorded the lowest average (3.37). Students indicated that while Padlet is excellent for collaborative tasks and brainstorming, it lacked the interactivity and competitiveness found in the other tools. Participation was more reflective and less dynamic. This suggests that Padlet may be better suited for integrative or project-based activities rather than real-time engagement.

### **Results**

The results of the present study provide clear evidence that the integration of gamified platforms, particularly Quizizz, significantly enhances student motivation in online English language learning environments at the university level. Among the four experimental groups exposed to different digital tools—Quizizz, Wordwall, Kahoot, and Padlet—Group A, which used Quizizz, achieved the highest average rating (4.34 out of 5), indicating a strong positive response in terms of motivation, engagement, and perceived learning effectiveness.

The quantitative data obtained through pre- and post-motivation tests, along with the comparative analysis using ANOVA, confirmed that Quizizz had a statistically significant impact on student motivation compared to the other tools. Qualitative observations supported these findings by revealing higher levels of student participation, enthusiasm, and consistent engagement throughout the intervention period in the Quizizz group.

In contrast, while Wordwall and Kahoot showed moderate effectiveness in maintaining interest and reinforcing content, they did not match the interactivity and immediate feedback features of Quizizz. Padlet, although valuable for collaborative writing, was the least engaging in real-time activities, which affected its motivational potential.

Overall, the general result indicates that gamification, when implemented through dynamic and user-friendly platforms like Quizizz, can effectively transform the online learning experience, foster intrinsic motivation, and enhance active participation. These findings underscore the pedagogical value of integrating game-based tools into virtual English instruction to address motivational challenges commonly faced in remote learning contexts.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study highlight the significant role that gamified platforms—particularly Quizizz—can play in enhancing student motivation in online university-level English language

courses. The consistently high ratings and positive engagement observed in Group A suggest that the use of game-based elements such as leaderboards, instant feedback, and interactive content contributes to a more stimulating and rewarding learning experience. These outcomes are consistent with previous research by Mendoza-Batista (2020) and Rojas and Tucto (2024), which found that digital gamification tools increase student autonomy and motivation.

Quizizz's success in this study may be attributed to its alignment with the core principles of the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), particularly in fostering autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Students using Quizizz were more inclined to participate voluntarily, enjoyed the immediate feedback, and felt a sense of accomplishment when competing against their peers. This combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators contributed to heightened engagement and motivation throughout the six-week intervention.

In contrast, the lower ratings for Padlet indicate that while collaborative tools can support reflective and asynchronous learning, they may not effectively stimulate the same levels of excitement or motivation as gamified applications in real-time language learning tasks. Wordwall and Kahoot showed intermediate results, suggesting that while they are effective for content reinforcement, their motivational impact may be limited by factors such as user familiarity, repetitive formats, or lower interactivity.

The comparative analysis underscores the importance of tool selection in virtual pedagogical design. Not all educational technologies elicit the same motivational responses, and the dynamic nature of tools like Quizizz appears better suited to addressing the motivational deficits often encountered in online learning environments. Moreover, the study highlights the need for educators to adopt strategies that go beyond content delivery, incorporating interactive and student-centered methodologies that sustain interest and promote active learning.

One notable limitation of the study is its focus on a single university context within Ecuador, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Additionally, motivational responses were measured over a relatively short period (six weeks), and long-term impacts remain uncertain. Further research is needed to explore sustained motivational effects, the influence of cultural factors, and the potential integration of multiple gamified tools in blended or hybrid learning models.

In summary, the discussion confirms that gamification—when thoughtfully implemented—can be a powerful pedagogical approach to re-engage students in virtual English learning contexts. Quizizz, as demonstrated in this study, holds particular promise for enhancing motivation,

supporting formative assessment, and transforming the online language learning experience into a more engaging and meaningful journey.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

### Conclusion

This study examined the effect of using the gamified platform Quizizz on student motivation in online English language learning at the university level in Ecuador. The findings clearly indicate that Quizizz had a significant positive impact on students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as well as their classroom engagement. Among the four digital tools tested—Quizizz, Wordwall, Kahoot, and Padlet—Quizizz emerged as the most effective in promoting active participation, enhancing motivation, and providing a dynamic and enjoyable learning experience.

The results confirm that gamification, when properly integrated into the virtual classroom, can address common motivational challenges faced by students in fully online environments. Quizizz's features such as real-time feedback, interactive quizzes, and competitive elements created a more stimulating educational setting, helping students feel more connected to their learning process. While other tools like Wordwall and Kahoot also showed positive results, their impact was comparatively lower, and Padlet was the least effective in fostering immediate engagement.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature that supports the pedagogical value of gamification in second language acquisition, particularly in higher education contexts that rely heavily on digital platforms. By aligning with modern motivational theories and student-centered methodologies, gamified tools can play a crucial role in the future of online language education.

### Recommendations

- **Integrate Gamified Tools Strategically:** English language instructors in virtual environments should incorporate platforms like Quizizz as part of regular instruction to enhance motivation and support formative assessment.
- **Provide Initial Training and Orientation:** To maximize the effectiveness of gamified tools, students should receive a brief orientation on how to navigate and use the platform, especially if they are unfamiliar with it.

- **Design Pedagogically Sound Activities:** Teachers should align Quizizz quizzes with specific learning objectives and ensure a balance between content mastery and fun, using a variety of question formats (multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank)
- **Encourage Reflective Use:** Instructors may incorporate post-quiz reflections or discussions to help students process their learning, identify gaps, and self-regulate their progress.
- **Combine Gamification with Other Strategies:** While Quizizz proved effective, it should be used in combination with collaborative tools, project-based learning, and content-rich activities to offer a comprehensive and engaging learning experience.
- **Expand Research Scope:** Future studies should explore the long-term motivational effects of gamification, the use of Quizizz in other educational contexts (e.g., hybrid or face-to-face), and its impact on different language skills such as speaking or writing.

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