Lived Experiences Among Grade 10 Students in Playing 4 Pics 1 Word for Vocabulary Learning

| Cristie Ann L. Jaca[1,*] | Bernardo M. Tumulak III[2] | Verner V. Boaquin[3] |

[1,2,3]*Cebu Technological University-Main Campus, Cebu City, Philippines*

*cristieann.jaca@ctu.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study unraveled the lived experiences among Grade-10 (Wisdom) Students of Tuyan National High School in playing the mobile word game 4 Pics 1 Word. The data were gathered through one-on-one interviews using researcher-made questionnaires and analyzed using the Braun and Clarke (2006) six-phase framework for doing thematic analysis, particularly semantic and latent approaches. Based on the findings of the study, the themes that emerged from the students' responses were: challenged, engaged, enhanced critical thinking skills, and increased vocabulary skills which show that students have varied learning experiences. Moreover, the study found that the students' experiences in playing the word game helped them develop an interest in learning new words, increase their self-confidence in expressing themselves, improved analyzation skills, and improved reading comprehension skills. This implies that their gamified learning experience helped them improve their vocabulary skills and attitudes toward learning vocabulary. Further, this study concludes that gamified learning, surrogated with image presentations, is lucrative to students' experiences in learning vocabulary thus gamified teaching of vocabulary should be imposed.

KEYWORDS

4 pics 1 word; Grade 10 students; lived experiences; thematic analysis; vocabulary learning.

INTRODUCTION

Since Gamification is already employed in language teaching, students have more effective and interactive experiences that stimulate their engagement, critical thinking skills, and attitudes toward the learning process (Maloney, 2019). However, along with the employment of Gamification in the teaching-learning process, students in the Philippines still struggle to develop their English language skills that include communication both oral and written, language literacy, vocabulary skills, and most importantly reading comprehension. This notion is derived from the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) Report which reported that one of the areas in that high school students in the Philippines got lower scores was reading comprehension. Based on the statistical data, there are over 80% of Filipino students around the age of fifteen did not pass the minimum level of Reading proficiency. Aftermath, into the bargain, as a facet of the investigation, Manlapig (2020) reported in CNN Philippines that Frederick S. Perez, the current president of the Reading Association of the Philippines (RAP), ordered to have a thorough analysis of the PISA results and give full attention and intervention in strengthening the four basic elements in reading: fluency, reading comprehension, word recognition, and most of all vocabulary for these elements are the main foundation to

achieve English language proficiency. In the same vein, studies have found that incorporating Gamification, in all forms, helped improved the quality of the language learning experience and engagement among students, nevertheless, there have been no existing studies, particularly in the Philippine educational practices, focusing on a specific on a particular Gamification in teaching vocabulary that uses dual codes that would stimulate the students' motivation, active engagement, and critical thinking to have an effective learning experience. Along the same line, with the popularity of 4 Pics 1 Word, a mobile word game that uses images and jumbled letters to stimulate the players' motivation and critical thinking, this study has found out as per participant-ocular that Grade 10 students of Tuyan National High School have been using the said word game.

Because 4 Pics 1 Word is very popular and highly used by many, there have been no existing studies focusing on the student's experiences in using the word game or the word game itself being used in the teaching of vocabulary. Thus, the purpose of this study is to unravel the experiences of the Grade 10 students of Tuyan National High School in playing 4 Pics 1 Word as a means of learning English vocabulary and to devise a gamified instructional material, based on the results of the study, that can be used in the gamified teaching approach in the actual classroom setting to improve the vocabulary skills of the students.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1.) What is the students' profile in terms of:
    1.1) Age
    1.2) Gender
2.) What is the students' experience in playing 4 Pics 1 Word?
3.) What is the effect of using 4 Pics 1 Word on students' vocabulary skills?
4.) What instructional materials can be developed to help improve the student's vocabulary skills?

STUDY OBJECTIVES

This study is intended to unravel lived experiences among Grade 1o students in playing 4 Pics 1 Word and to develop a gamified vocabulary teaching toolkit to improve the students' vocabulary skills

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Practical Significance

This study would benefit the following entities: The administrator, faculty, students, parents, and future researchers.

Administrators. The study may provide school administrators with the idea that online gamification such as 4 Pics 1 Word is beneficial to the student's vocabulary development. They may start incorporating mobile word games into the process of teaching and learning or even devise new, modified mobile applications and gamified instructional materials that teachers would use or employ in their pedagogical approach.

Faculty. The findings of the study would serve as an insight into the improvement of digital learning incorporation into instructions, teaching methods, techniques, and

strategies. This study may stimulate the institution and teachers to employ the mobile word game 4 Pics 1 Word in the teaching process or device instructional materials related to the concept of 4 Pics 1 Word. Moreover, they could encourage students to venture into playing the word game as one of their sources of learning. This does not limit this to English courses only; instructors who handle other courses could incorporate the word game or device or modify instructional materials or learning activities that are related to the concept of 4 Pics 1 Word to help students develop their vocabulary skills.

English Teachers. The findings of the study will provide them with ideas that incorporating mobile word games such as 4 Pics 1 Word promotes a fun learning experience for the students. Aftermath, this study might be the inspiration for the modification of instructional materials for teaching English vocabulary.

Students. With the view of students' high engagement in mobile devices and other interesting mobile applications, this study would help them realized that there is fun while learning. This may also be a constructive educational opportunity for students to develop their vocabulary skills as they venture into the mobile word game 4 Pics 1 Word.

Parents. As one of the stakeholders in the school, they may be enlightened that mobile applications specifically mobile word games such as 4 Pics 1 Word have become a toolkit that can be used as a learning source for their children. They may also encourage their children to engage themselves in learning while having some fun and excitement.

Future Researchers. The findings of this study will be used as a reference guide by other future Researchers by which the topic or phenomenon being studied is related to the subject discussed and presented in this research paper.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

In terms of limitations, this study only focused on the experiences of the selected Grade 10 students in playing the mobile word game 4 Pics 1 Word and its effects on the student's vocabulary skills based on their exposure to the word game. This research paper opens more avenues for further research in terms of the following research topics: the use of innovative gamified word games in teaching English vocabulary, the development of gamified instructional materials for vocabulary teaching incorporating dual codes, and experimental study on the use of 4 Pics 1 Word to the student's attitude in learning vocabulary.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

This study is anchored by the Gamified Learning Theory by Richard N. Landers (2015). Gamification or Gamified Learning Theory is defined as the use of game elements in non-gaming contexts or systems to improve users' experience and engagement, which vitalizes the motivation to learn and to be challenged while having fun. This implies that the use of gamification in a non-gamified context is to strengthen the relationship between instructional design and the outcomes of the learning experience. It aspires to affect learning-related behavior or attitudes. Gamification has become a pertinent and popular technique or strategy employed across different contexts to motivate people to venture into particular target behaviors. Gamification is used to influence a person's behavior toward learning in a particular context. Further, it targets elevating the interest, motivation, and engagement of a person in a learning experience. Aftermath, the theory claims that humans achieve a meaningful learning experience because there is not only mere learning involved; there is also active engagement, critical- thinking, a hiked-up challenge, and collaboration (Landers, 2015).

In a Brief History of Gamification, Gamification has been pervasive in past years since the 21st century, which is the birth of digital development, which blew up but only took flight with popularity in the 2010s. Moreover, the term is believed to have been coined by Nick Pelling 2003, a British computer programmer and inventor (Chitroda, 2015). Studies also found that using Gamification motivates students to learn because of the enjoyment of the learning experiences. Studies found that children were able to learn while playing video games. From the input above, Gamification is a good tool to provide students with a great learning experience that stimulates their senses and propels their active engagement and critical thinking. Additionally, Gamified Learning Theory implies that the Gamification process of teaching does not directly affect learning but stimulates the habit of learning in a moderating process (Zaric et al, 2021). Gamification has been around for about five years, including being employed in pedagogical approaches. Teachers have been investigating its effects on students' academic performance. Interestingly, students have developed a positive attitude towards learning because of the new elements incorporated. Students became much more active, motivated, and challenged in solving problems and answering questions. Gamification has slowly progressed in the teaching process considering that students in this generation have a shorter attention span (Sailer, 2019).

Along the same line, this study is also surrogated with the Dual Coding Theory by Allan Paivio (1991) which claims that the cognitive faculty of humans is unique because it has become specialized for dealing with language and non-verbal objects and events simultaneously. Simply put, this theory assumes that there are two subsystems in humans' cognition: those specialized for the representation and processing of non-verbal objects/events (imagens) and those specialized for dealing with language (logogens) (Schnotz & Hortz, 2010). Moreover, this theory argues that incorporating dual codes will help enhance the language learning experience of a human, especially when it is applied in mnemonics, problem-solving, and concept learning. The employment of both codes in the learning experience of humans fosters genuine motivation for learning and active learning engagement, most particularly in vocabulary learning. The employment of both codes in the learning experience of humans fosters genuine motivation for learning and active learning engagement most particularly in vocabulary learning. Allan Paivio discovered that our memory has two channels (codes) by which it deals with verbal and visual stimuli. Albeit, it stores them independently, they are still linked. Thus, it improves the information retrieval capacity. Simply put, the word or image stimulates retrieval of the other. When teachers impose a dual coding mindset on their instructional materials, either adopted or adapted, the student's cognitive load is reduced. This implies that their working memory capacity increased. Hence, there is a learning improvement (Becton, 2022). This supports the idea that learning vocabulary should be supplemented with pictures and images for better learning and retention. The theories mentioned above are a great ancillary for this study, for it aims to unravel and discover the learning experiences of the Grade 10 students of Tuyan National High School using the online word game 4 Pics 1 Word in learning English vocabulary.

The establishment of online gamification has become much more pertinent to the teaching and learning process. Most teaching strategies, both in the pre-pandemic and new normal, incorporated adapted gamified instructional materials and online gamification to stimulate learning engagement and motivation among students, thus; gamification turns learning into something fun and interactive, therefore resulting in better student engagement. Students can obtain interactive and personalized learning, which is a good asset in enhancing their learning experience (McCain, 2019). Given the dominance of technology, it is not

refutable that there are practical and beneficial ramifications it brings. A mobile application, widely known as an app, is a kind of application software intended to run on a mobile phone. It never ceases to increase its popularity; as stated by the Market Research Firm Gartner, 102 billion apps were downloaded in 2013 (91% of them were free), but they will still generate $26 billion increasing by 44.4% from $18 billion in 2012 (Pham, 2021). As a ramification of the advancements, that platform for learning a language, particularly vocabulary, has built a connection with gamification as they develop online word games that students could use to expand their vocabulary tank at their own pace. Online gamification increased the level of enjoyment and involvement among high school students in learning English courses. Students can learn better when there is an incorporation of gamification because this would not only elicit learning but also a genuine love for learning (Cristobal et al., 2022).

Because an average of six and a half hours a day of screen time is spent by children between the ages of five and sixteen (Cheeduse, 1995) in Kent (2019), many teachers and parents reduce the amount of screen time among children. However, a different approach can also be viewed and proven beneficial. That is, word games posit lucrative outgrowths for children's vocabulary learning experiences as facets of their screen time.

As stated by Kent (2019) in his Brief History of Word games, the evolution of word and language learning through gamification never ceases to evolve. In 1913, the first Crossword Puzzle was developed followed by the birth of Scrabbles during the 1930s. As the world digitally evolves, it also provides a wide range of availability for word games through the advent of technology. To name a few, Words with Friends (2009), Bookworm (2012), and Word scrapes (2017) are some of the new and highly downloaded online word games brought by the digital evolution. Further, the evolution does not end with mere letters and words only; there is also the incorporation of images that would stimulate the children's visual faculty. As stated by Morris (2013), children learn best when they see visuals and images that would help them retain information. One of the most downloaded and played online word games is the 4 Pics One Word. 4 Pics One Word was developed by LOTUM GmbH, a mobile app developer based in Germany. It was released on February 13, 2013, and is downloadable for iOS and Android and can be played by a single-player or multiplayer. It is one of the most popular mobile game applications, with over 50 million downloads. It is a word game that presents you with four images and asks you to guess what the word, which could be seen from the puzzle as an option, the present is (Taboola, 2022). Further, Taboola (2022) explained in this blog that this word game not only promotes fun but also helps improve memory and critical thinking because it stimulates the visual learning of the people who play it. College students in Korea and China reported that mobile apps were effective for practicing pronunciation, vocabulary, listening, and reading skills. The use of language learning apps as a didactic tool for vocabulary building in an EFL context for six-month fosters high school students' vocabulary building effectively (Guaqueta et al., 2018). Teachers have been investigating its effects on students' academic performance. Interestingly, students have developed a positive attitude towards learning because of the new elements incorporated. Students became much more active, motivated, and challenged in solving problems and answering questions. Gamification has slowly progressed in the teaching process considering that students in this generation have a shorter attention span (Sailer, 2019). Learners' scores and their receptive lexical knowledge increase, but the acquisition of productive knowledge has also improved. This refers to the online flashcards that come from online games that are accessible and used by teachers in their teaching process. For example, playing video

games has been demonstrated to be preferable among Romanian EFL learners (Cristeaa & Fărcaşiub, 2015).

Players of video games are considered independent learners as they execute the technical skills required to play these games. They learn how to play specific video games by independently understanding the instructions given before playing the game. Online Quizlet promoted EFL learners' vocabulary development. It is an online game where players have fun learning new knowledge. This game develops the vocabulary of the players and their ability to familiarize themselves with and understand the meaning of a word through pre-and post-tests and a questionnaire. Comparable to previous studies, the findings were significantly positive (Dizon, 2016). The existence of mobile devices promotes a convenient way for users to access things that they want. Part of these convenient ways is the applications installed on their mobile phones, specifically the game applications, where they find entertainment and are unconsciously learning from it (Akcil et al., 2021). The correct application of vocabulary learning strategies is the biggest contributor to a learner's success rate in learning vocabulary and, most importantly, in their learning progress, and one of them is incorporating game elements so that students will learn better (Yunus & Saifudin, 2019). Learners, most of the time in the age of technology, are very interested in learning with mobile devices. This provides them with an interactive and collaborative online learning experience. This is in line with the idea of gamification, wherein students are engaged, challenged, and motivated to learn, especially language learning (Strajer, J.F., 2012; Lukassen et al., 2014; Lane-Kelso, M., 2015). Some educators have been incorporating gamification into their teaching because it has a different and positive impact on students' engagement (Tews et al., 2015).

RESEARCH METHODS
Study Procedures

Study approach
This paper employed the descriptive phenomenological research method coupled with the thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006) which looked into the lived experiences among Grade-10 students of Tuyan National High School in playing 4 Pics 1 Word as a way of vocabulary learning.

Study site and participants
The purposive sampling technique is used to select the ten grade 10 students of section Wisdom of Tuyan National High School who have direct involvement in playing 4 Pics 1 Word. The study is particularly conducted in Junior High School Building, Second Floor, second room, and section Grade-10 Wisdom where there are over 50 students. The school is headed by Ruben Altubar Jr. the principal of the Junior High Department who aims at making the institution conducive and innovative for a better learning experience for both teachers and students.

Study instrument
The instrument utilized in this study is a researcher-made interview questionnaire which has predetermined questions to be asked in a predetermined order. Further, the interview relied merely on asking questions to gather and collect data from the respondents. Before conducting the study, a transmittal letter was submitted to the principal of Tuyan National

High School. The letter served as permission to administer the prepared interview questions for the students-respondents. Consequently, the researchers interviewed the purposively selected ten students.

Data Analysis

In interpreting the data, this study utilized thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006). The data was gathered through a one-on-one and structured interview. The data gathered was transcribed as part of the familiarization of the raw data. The researchers carefully examined and familiarized the transcribed responses to arrive at the initial codes. Further, the researchers were coding the data to identify the initial codes to label the varied responses of the students. After codes were created, patterns were identified that generated the themes that summarize the experiences of the students. Along the same line, the researchers did a thorough review of the initial themes to come up with the final themes that represent the students' varied experiences. For questions numbers one and two, the approach utilized is semantic in doing the thematic analysis because the themes emerged from the explicit content of the data. The latent approach is employed in question number three for the themes were conceptualized from reading into subtext and assumptions underlying the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Grade-10 (Wisdom) Students' Profile and Experiences in playing 4 Pics 1 Word

Table 1.1 Students' Profile in Playing 4 Pics 1 Word

The table reflects the students' profile in playing 4 Pics 1 Word in terms of their age and gender**.**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Age	Exposure	Time-Frequency
Male	2	20%	16	3-4 years	2-3 hours a day
Female	8	80%	15-16	1-2 years	1-2 hours a day
Total	**10**	**100%**			

Part of the one-on-one interview is to determine the students' profile in playing the mobile word game 4 Pics 1 Word. As reflected in Table 1, it clearly shows that the selected ten Grade 10 students have the age bracket of 15–16 and have been using the mobile word game for one to four years and one to three hours a day. This implies the exposure of the students to playing the mobile word game every day. Despite the number of male respondents, they spend the most time playing each day. The range of two to three hours is not reflected as one sitting or playing. They play for at least an hour in the morning, one hour in the afternoon, and at least one hour at night. Likewise, the female respondents also spend one to three hours each day playing, but not in one sitting. The table implies, with the years of exposure and time spent playing, that the male respondents discovered the mobile word game in the mobile application store earlier than the female respondents. That is, they are more exposed to playing 4 Pics 1 Word than the female respondents. Above all, both male and female respondents have been playing the mobile word game 4 Pics 1 Word

since the year they started in which they have procured lucrative varied learning experiences.

Themes That Emerged from the Grade-10 Students' Responses

The four themes for their experiences were identified to wit: challenged and motivated; developed focus and active engagement; frequent utilization of critical thinking; and enjoyed and expanded vocabulary. Further, themes for the effects of 4 Pics 1 Word on the students' vocabulary skills were conceptualized based on the underlying ideas of their responses.

1. Challenged

4 Pics 1 Word is challenging in nature. It is a word game that is intellectually-stimulating that the players unravel the word that is being implied in the pictures presented. That is, this word game-propelled challenge ignites the players to be motivated to learn. During their specific time of playing 4 Pics 1 Word, the students always feel challenged especially when they had a hard time understanding and grasping some of the pictures presented or shown. Moreover, when they reached the difficult level of the word game, the challenge elevated. There are pictures that students have a hard time analyzing and understanding to unlock the word implied in the pictures. Consequently, the students were motivated to figure it out, accomplish the level, and discover the vocabulary that the pictures depicted. As expressed by the Grade-10 students:

S1: *"I always feel challenged and difficult because there are four pictures and you have to guess the word and there are words that are not familiar so I collect them so that hmm learn new words. I always want to know what"s the right word that sometimes, hmmm, I used hints."*

S2: *"I am very challenged because there are pictures that are difficult to guess that make me want to solve it."*

S3: *"There is always a challenge but sometimes easy. And I feel so motivated because I want to know the right word by looking and, you know, analyzing the pictures and like it's challenging."*

This patently showed that in order not to alleviate the motivation among students to learn, there should be a challenge exhibited in learning by imposing a gamified learning experience. 4 Pics 1 Word is one way of stimulating the student's interest and motivation by eliciting morphological challenges through the presentation of pictures. As reflected in their responses, one student expressed that the mobile word game 4 Pics 1 Word is challenging and pushes him to be motivated to get the correct word. This experience helped them learn how to be motivated to do and achieve things. Through the presentation of pictures in teaching vocabulary and as a way of gamified instructional material, students will be challenged and motivated to learn and improve their academic performance level because the element of bringing the challenge into learning posits motivation for the students to have the drive to accomplish and achieve their goals. Simply put, this concept increases the level of their motivation by imposing challenges that would foster their engagement (Rohman, 2016). That is, it is lucrative to utilize gamification with dual codes (pictures and words) in teaching and learning vocabulary.

2. Engaged

Learners in this digital generation have a shorter attention span and fluctuating interest in specific matters. Having that said, it is indispensable to stimulate their active engagement at the beginning of the teaching-learning process to capture their interest and attention. 4 Pics 1 Word is a mobile word game that presents four images and asks players to give the word depicted from the shown pictures. This concept helped the students develop their focus and active engagement in learning English vocabulary through playing the mobile word game. There is an active learning process exhibited from their experience in playing 4 Pics 1 Word.

S5: "Oh, it is always fun and engaging that, you know, it helps me to be mentally active in learning. It is like it is not just a game, it's ah, I think my focus in accomplishing things practiced and develop because that there is like the active practice of my brain. I and the words I learned I use them in speaking with my friends or even writing essays.

S2: "There are pictures that make me so interested that sometimes I feel like I don't want to like spare time to play this and focus on the words that I will learn. I feel excited to play this mobile game."

As reflected in the responses of the students, it is suggested to have a vocabulary drill through the employment of the 4 Pics 1 Word concept at the beginning of the class to stimulate the students' active engagement and focus, because learners in the 21st century have a shorter attention span by which their interest will fluctuate at any point. Engagement should have been elicited in the learning experience among students because the effectiveness of gamified-based learning showed how fun learning helped to engage the students in a meaningful and active learning experience. Playing the mobile word game propelled the students' rigor thus it helped them to be engaged in the learning experience. Moreover, their learning experience gave them excitement in learning more vocabulary and collecting them so that they would remember all the words that they have learned and use them in writing and speaking activities Some educators have been incorporating gamification into their teaching because it has a different and positive impact on students' engagement (Tews et al., 2015). Additionally, gamification can be perceived by students in different ways, requires constant refinement to be useful, and can incorporate gamification principles into educational activities. This provides students with a better, fresher, and more active learning experience toward the subject matter (Putz et al., 2020).

Through presenting pictures and a gamified approach to teaching, students' attention and active engagement will be captured and stimulated. This implies the need to foster a gamified learning experience in the classroom, coupled with visual representations so that students will be much more active and engaged in learning vocabulary. Gamification is the vivid evidence that helped students develop interests and engagement in the process of learning (Boyinbode, 2018).

3. Enhanced Critical Thinking Skills
One of the elements that are stipulated in 4 Pics 1 Word is it exhibits the critical thinking of the players by which they will analyze the pictures presented and the jumbled letters to come up with the correct word depicted from the pictures. That is, the nature of the 4 Pics 1 Word mobile application is to elicit the player's critical thinking by presenting four images that depict a certain vocabulary. Learning in digital platforms and venturing students into gamified learning experiences especially in language learning in 32 all

aspects motivate students to learn more, utilize more of their critical thinking, and impose problem-solving skills (Zheng et al., 2015). As students have been playing the mobile word game they have also developed their critical thinking and improved their memorization skills. The students would carefully analyze and critically think about the correct word depicted in the four pictures shown. As the Grade-10 students expressed:

S9: "It sometimes stressful that hmmm that I need to think so hard and critically so that I could answer the correct word. But I like it because it helps me to practice my critical thinking."

S10: "When you play it, you need to use your critical thinking because you are only, hmmmmm, like given pictures to see and guess the word. I always feel so mentally stressed but it's worth it. New words such as new learning."

One way to exhibit the students' critical thinking is to impose activities that stimulate such skills. The concept of 4 Pics One Word can be used as instructional material to impose a gamified learning experience for students that would stimulate their critical thinking and analysis skills to improve their learning experiences. Further, showing pictures in teaching and learning vocabulary helped improve their memory. The use of images and visual representations in teaching and learning vocabulary is easier to retain than without images. When teachers impose a dual-coding mindset on their instructional materials, either adopted or adapted, the student's cognitive load is reduced. This implies that their working memory capacity increased. It is clear from the responses of the students that playing 4 Pics 1 word for vocabulary learning helped them boost their critical thinking. Hence, there is a learning improvement (Becton, 2022). This supports the idea that learning vocabulary should be supplemented with pictures and images for better learning and retention.

This strongly reflects the Dual Coding Theory of Paivio (1991), which states that incorporating both images and words helped improve the retention of information and the learning experience of the students. The images presented will serve as an ancillary for a better memory enhancer to remember information effectively (Moradan & Vafaei, 2016). Teachers and instructors should adapt and modify instructional materials accordingly by providing pictures that make students use their critical thinking, active engagement, and fascination toward learning (Wasilewska, 2017, p. 45).

4. Increased Vocabulary Skills

Gamification is incorporated into the teaching-learning process to impose genuine fun in learning among students. As per verity, online gamification increased the level of enjoyment and involvement among high school students in learning English courses. Students can learn better when there is an incorporation of gamification because this would not only elicit learning but also a genuine love for learning (Cristobal et al., 2022). The grade 10 (Wisdom) students conspicuously stated how their true enjoyment of playing the mobile word game helped them expand their English vocabulary. With fun in learning, it is easier for them to learn because there is an enjoyment that surrogates the learning of English vocabulary. Moreover, the presence of pictures also gave them a fun experience that also helped them learn new words.

S5: "It's just so enjoyable that it makes me happy and academic advantage 'cause I learned new words which are very different from other online games I played."

S2: "There are pictures that are interesting and fun and it is more enjoyable when I got the word correctly. It's fulfilling to, ahhh get the word."

Because it is a mobile word game, students attained a fun and enjoyable gamified learning experience. Since students learn better when the learning approach is gamified, gamified teaching approaches for teaching vocabulary should be considered now in the teaching approaches of the institution, especially in English language teaching. This also implies that their vocabulary skills have increased because of the gamified concept of learning. It helps them to retain the words longer when learning is associated with game elements that elicit fun and enjoyment.

Noting that *"there are pictures that are interesting and fun and it is more enjoyable when I got the word correctly, it's fulfilling to, ah get the word,"* this implies that through the concept of the mobile word game, students learn words effectively when it is gamified. Thus, gamified teaching of vocabulary will help increase their vocabulary tank. Incorporating games into the teaching process provides excitement for learners' learning experiences and improves their performance and vocabulary acquisition (Korlu and Mede (2018).

The Effect of Playing 4 Pics 1 Word in Students' Vocabulary Skills

1. Developed Interest in Collecting New Words

Playing 4 Pics 1 Word has developed the students' interest in collecting new, unfamiliar words that they have employed in their writing and discourse. Their responses patently claim how playing the word game helped them enhance their vocabulary skills. A student expressed: *"It is very helpful because I can learn new English words then whenever I play I always feel motivated but sometimes in difficult. Sometimes easy but more complicated. But most of all, it helped through in learning new words searching in Merriam." As the nature of 4 Pics 1 Word, students accumulate a lot of unfamiliar words with definitions that seem so familiar and easy to understand."* One student also expressed that,*" these words that I have learned from the game help me understand certain conversations from the movie and different stories online."* This conspicuously shows that their interest in collecting new words helped them improve their reading comprehension. With their habit of playing the mobile word game, their reading comprehension skills will continue to elevate as they continuously learn new words.

Once they unraveled the correct answer, they would segue to their mobile dictionary and search for the meaning of the words. This, after they had learned the meaning of the words, they immediately wrote them in their vocabulary notebook with example sentences. Consequently, with these new words that they have gained, they have become much more interested in learning more words, either through constantly playing 4 Pics 1 Word or through reading books. This promotes a higher potential for learners to have an interest in learning vocabulary in a repetitive and enjoyable process until it is absorbed (Waluyo & Bucol, 2021).

The experience of playing the mobile word game gives the students the habit of collecting new words every day, which they already incorporate into their writing and conversations. Students also become much more interested in reading books in which they can learn new words that they can include in their vocabulary notebooks. Students in Nigeria became much more interested in learning vocabulary due to the hype that online gamification brought to their learning experience (Boyinbode, 2018). This implies that playing the mobile word game is a great tool for elevating the students' interest in learning vocabulary that will help them improve their communication skills both oral and written. Further, through the words collected from the mobile word game, students will be able to improve their reading comprehension.

2. Increased Confidence in Expressing Oneself

With the words that they have learned and collected, students have become confident in expressing their ideas and thoughts with ease and spontaneity in writing. When it comes to speaking, students are still anxious about what words to use, but when it comes to writing, students stated that it is easy for them to construct and express their ideas about certain subject matter with the words that they have learned from the game. One of the students stated, *"Oh, it is always fun and engaging that, you know, it helps me to be mentally active in learning. It is like it's not just a game, it's ah, I think my focus in accomplishing things is practiced and developed because hmmm there is like acting as if of my brain. And the words I learned, I use them in speaking with my friends or even writing essays."* This patently emphasized how playing 4 Pics 1 Word helped them increase their confidence in dealing with people and in expressing themselves with the words that they have been learning from the mobile word game.

Playing the mobile word game has become a habit, and as time goes by, the students will learn heaps of words day by day. This will help them become well-effective communicators and leaders because they have the facility of the language, and simultaneously, they will learn how to relay information that is easy to understand. Further, this will help them become globally aware because it will be much easier for them to understand the world around them in general. They will become effective facets of the community, doing the desired professions that require communication. It has the potential to develop a conducive learning environment by applying gamification as a strategy in teaching and as a way of introducing learners to the essence of technologies in their studies. It also has the potential to increase students' motivation in learning as it promotes engagement and an enjoyable teaching-learning process, which enhances their confidence in verbalizing their ideas (Dahalan et al., 2023).

3. Improved Analysation Skills

With years of exposure to playing the mobile word game 4 Pics 1 Word. Students have a constant practice of employing and stimulating their critical thinking with the nature of the mobile game itself. As one student expressed, *"Playing this game boosts my capabilities in understanding things easily. Like when I watch movies or read stories and articles I always encountered new and unfamiliar words but since I learned big words from the game, I can easily understand them now. I can easily figure things out, especially in reading."* This statement supports the study of Zheng et al. (2015) that gamified way of teaching and learning helps students to be mentally active which helps improve their analyzation skills. This conspicuously explained that their experience in playing the mobile word game 4 Pics 1 Word improved their analyzation skills not just in reading but also in other aspects of learning.

4. Improved Reading Comprehension Skills

With the set of vocabulary collected through playing the word game, students have become effective when it comes to reading. For one, grade 10 students he the ability to grasp the context of the reading passage even if it contains unfamiliar words and collocations. As students proudly expressed, *"Reading books d other sources of reading become easier for me somehow. It is part of you know routines now plying 4 Pics that help me to learn new words and remember them when I read or watch movies."* Student 6 also testified *"I learn to love reading especially English books I mean read books but sometimes lose interest*

because of the words I don't understand. However, after I learned new words I became a reader since I can understand the whole concept."

Their habit of reading books stems from their learning experience in playing the mobile word game 4 Pics 1 Word. The reading habit developed with the emergence of the new words learned from the word game. This matter has helped the grade 10 students to improve their reading comprehension skills which are a great asset in achieving English language fluency. That being said, playing 4 Pics 1 Word developed their habit of reading and improved their reading comprehension skills.

CONCLUSION

This result provided a glimpse of the lived experiences among the Grade 10 (Wisdom) students of Tuyan National High School in playing the mobile word game 4 Pics 1 Word. With the emerging themes, it can be concluded that playing 4 Pics 1 Word elicits lucrative ramifications that would help improve the learning experience among students, especially in learning English vocabulary. Students developed an interest in accumulating new words, which they have incorporated into their writing and discourse. This implies that students also improved their confidence in expressing their ideas. Further, this dictates how gamified learning improves the learning experience of the students, and therefore a gamified English vocabulary teaching approach is suggested to exhibit an enjoyable learning experience for students. Along the same line, this study found out, based on the student's experiences, that learning vocabulary through pictures in a gamified approach helped them retain the words longer by way of frequent utilization of their critical thinking in playing the mobile word game 4 Pics 1 Word.

In light of the findings of the study, it is suggested that gamified teaching of English vocabulary since the students have a lucrative gamified learning experience in playing 4 Pics One Word. Moreover, the administrators of the institution should encourage the teachers to incorporate Gamification in teaching English vocabulary that employs dual codes which are pictures and letters that would stimulate the students' interest and active engagement. Along with it, the English teachers of Tuyan National High School could devise gamified instructional materials that incorporate images in teaching English vocabulary that would stimulate the student's critical thinking and motivation. Lastly, teachers should encourage their students to venture into playing the mobile word game 4 Pics 1 Word during their free time at school to expand their vocabulary and to intellectually entertain themselves.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

Before the data collection, the researchers sought approval from the student respondents through a consent form that solicited their voluntary participation in this study. To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, the respondents' identities were assigned a code. Likewise, the data collected were bound to privacy to ensure that it is solely used for academic purposes only.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researchers are grateful to the School Principal of Tuyan National High School, Dr. Ruben P. Altubar Jr., and his teachers for granting us the opportunity to conduct the study. With his consent, the researchers were able to interact and collect data with the Grade 10 student respondents.

REFERENCES

Akcil, U., Uzunboylu, H., & Kinik, E. (2021). Integration of technology to learning-teaching processes and Google Workspace tools: A literature review. *Sustainability, 13*(9), 5018.

Alawamleh, M., Al-Twait, L.N., Al-Saht, G.R. (2020). The effect of online learning on communication between instructors and students during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Asian Education and Development Studies.*

Becton, L. (2022). Dual Coding Theory: The Complete Guide for Teachers. *Education Corner, Education that matters.* http://bit.ly/3YD9KS2

Boyinbode, O. (2018). Development of a Gamification - based English vocabulary mobile learning system. *International Journal of Computer Science and Mobile Computing. IJCSMC. Vol.7*, Issue.8, August 18, pg. 183. 191.

Chen, C., Chen, L. & Yang, S. (2019). An English Vocabulary learning app with self-regulated learning mechanism to improve learning performance and motivation. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 32*(3), 237-260.

Chitroda, H. (2015). Gamification in 2015: Top Statistics and Facts. *KnolSkape.* https://knolskape.com/blog/gamification-2015-top-statistics-facts/

Cristobal, J., Hermano, C., Ibana, J.B., James, M.G., Ligot, M.L., Lampitoc, D. Improving the Grade 9 Students' Engagement in Online Synchronous Classes in English Through Interactive Games. *American Journal of Education and Technology Vol 1 No. 1 (2022).*

Cristea, S. L., & Fărcaşiu, M. (2015). Investigating Romanian EFL students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of vocabulary activities. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 191, 1403-1407.*

Dahalan, F., Alias, N. & Shaharom, M.S.N. (2023). Gamification and Game Based Learning for Vocational Education and Training: A Systematic Literature Review. *Educ Inf Technol (2023).*

Dizon, G. (2016). Quizlet in the EFL classroom: Enhancing academic vocabulary acquisition of Japanese university students. *Teaching English with Technology, 16(2), 40-56.*

Guaqueta, C.A., Garces C., & Yicely, A. (2018). The Use of Language Learning Apps as a

Didactic Tool for EFL Vocabulary Building. *ED.govies Institute of Education Sciences.*

Hanafiah SHM, Mat Teh KS, Kadir MFA (2019). Accustoms gamification in education improves student motivation, engagement, and academic performance. *Int J Recent Technol Engin 8(2 special issue 3):364–367.*

Kent, E. (2019). 3 great word game apps to improve children's vocabulary. *Edtech Blogger post.* https://www.kent-teach.com/

Korlu, H., & Mede, A. (2018). Autonomy in vocabulary learning of Turkish EFL learners. *The EUROCALL Review, 26(2), 58-70.*

Landers, R.N. (2015). Developing a Theory of Gamified Learning: Linking Serious Games and Gamification of Learning. *SAGE Publications, Reprints, and Permission*. DOI: 10. 1177/046878114563660.

Lukassen, M.B., Pederson, A., Nielsen, A., Wahl, C., & Surensen, E.K. (2014). Digital education with IT: How to create motivational and inclusive education in a blended learning environment using flipped learning- a study in nurse education. *I. European conference in e-learning (p.305). Academic Conferences International Limited.*

Makoe, M., Shundi, T. (2018). Developing a Mobile App for Learning English Vocabulary in an Open Distance Learning Context. *ED.govies Institute of Education Sciences.*

Maloney, S. (2019). Gamification in English language teaching: more than child's play. English for Asia. https://bit.ly/3YOk5eh

Manlapig, M. (2020). What's to Blame for Low Reading Comprehension of the Filipino Youths?*CNNPhilippinesLife. https://bit.ly/3ZxEoxB*

Martin, F, & Ertzberger, J. (2013). Here and now mobile learning: an experimental study on

the use of mobile technology. *Computers and education, 68, 76-85.*

McCain, P. (2019). How mobile apps are transforming the education industry? *eLearning industry.* http://bit.ly/3J4rgsB

Moradan, A., & Vafaei, M. (2016). The effect of glosses on incidental vocabulary learning of Iranian EFL learners. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature, 5(6), 34-42.* . http://bit.ly/41ZTMVe

Morris, Bradley., Croker, S., Zimmerman, C., & Gill, D. M. (2013). Gaming Science: The Gamification of Scientific Thinking. *Department of Lifespan Development and Educational Science, Kent State University, Kent, OH, US.* DOI:10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00607.

Pham, L. (2021). Mobile applications: definitions, technology types, and examples 2022.Magenest, One-Stop Solution. Quizlet on Low-Proficiency Students. *Computer Assisted Language Learning Electronic Journal, 22(1), 2021, 164-185*

Putz L. M., Hofbauer F, & Treiblmaier, H. (2020). Can gamification help to improve education? Findings from a longitudinal study. *Comput Hum Behav110 (November 2019):106392.*

Rhoman, I.M. (2016). The effectiveness of using pictures in teaching vocabulary: An experimental research at the seventh grade of SMP Hasanaddin 5 Semarong in the academic year of (2016/2017). *Educational and Teacher Training Faculty Walisongo State Islamic University Semarong*. https://bit.ly/3F9zK0K

Sailer, M. (2019). Does Gamification of Learning Work? *Gamification Research Network.* Retrieved from. *https://bit.ly/3F53POT*

Schnotz, W. & Hortz, H. (2010). Dual Coding Theory. *International Encyclopedia of Education (Third Edition)*. https://www.sciencedirect.com/

Strayer, J.F. (2012). How learning in an inverted classroom influences cooperation, innovation, and task orientation. *Learning Environment Research, 15(2), 171-193.*

Taboola (2022). Taboola Reports Q2 2022 Results. Investors.tabool.com. Retrieved from https://investors.taboola.com/news-releases/news-release-details/taboola-reports-q2-2022-results#.

Tews, M.J., Jackson, J., Ramsay, C., & Michel, J.W. (2015). Fun in the College Classroom: Examining Its Nature and Relationship with Student Engagement. pg. 16-26. *College Teaching Volume 63, 2015. Taylor & Francis Online*

Ulla, M. B., Perales, W. F., & Tarrayo, V. N. (2020). Integrating internet-based applications in English language teaching: Teacher practices in a Thai university. *Issues in Educational Research, 30(1), 365-378.*https://www.iier.org. au/iier30/ulla-abs.html Waluyo, B., & Bucol, J.L. (2021). The Impact of Gamified Vocabulary Learning Using Quizlet on Low-Proficiency Students. *Computer-Assisted Language Learning Electronic Journal, 22*(1), 2021, 164-185

Wasilewska, M. (2017). The power of image nation: How to teach a visual generation. In Donaghy, K., & Xerri, D. (Eds.), *The image in English language teaching. (pp. 43-50). ELT council.*

Yunus, K., & Saifudin, M. S. (2019). Vocabulary learning strategies among English as second language learners. *Journal of Qualitative Social Sciences,1(1), 12-1.*

Zaric, N., Ropke, R., Lukarov, V., & Schroeder, U. (2020). Gamified Learning Theory: The

Moderating role of learners' learning tendency. *International Journal of Serious Games 8(3): 71-91.* DOI:10.17083/ijsg.v8i3.438

Zheng, D., Bischoff, M., & Gilliland, B. (2015). Vocabulary learning in massively multiplayer online games: context and action before words. *ACADEMIA Accelerating the world's research.* https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1075534.