

LEVERAGING ONLINE GAMES FOR ELT: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract

The use of online games in English Language Teaching (ELT) has gained attention for its potential to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. This study systematically reviews existing literature on the effectiveness of online games in improving vocabulary, grammar, reading, speaking, listening, and learning motivation while identifying key success factors. Following the PRISMA guidelines, 30 studies published between 2020 and 2025 from Google Scholar, PubMed, and Mendeley were analyzed. The findings show that online games create an immersive and interactive learning environment, increasing motivation and facilitating contextual language acquisition. Gamification elements such as points, leaderboards, real-time feedback, and adaptive challenges improve engagement and retention. However, challenges such as limited technological access, insufficient teacher training, and curriculum integration issues hinder implementation. The study concludes that while online games offer significant benefits for ELT, their effectiveness depends on strategic integration and teacher support. Future research should explore best practices for combining online games with traditional teaching methods to optimize learning outcomes.

Keywords: *educational technology, English Language Teaching (ELT), language skills, teaching strategies, Online Games.*

1. INTRODUCTION

This study provides a comprehensive review of the usage of online games in English language education (ELT). This review aims to investigate the effectiveness of online games in enhancing various areas of English language abilities, such as vocabulary, grammar, and speaking, as well as to determine the factors that influence the success or

failure of online game implementation in ELT contexts. It will examine the numerous empirical studies undertaken to assess the impact of online games on English language learning and discuss their implications for teaching practice and curriculum development.

Today, the Use of online games in English language learning is growing with technological advancements and students' interest in interactive media. (Suciawati et al., 2024) Online games are not only used as a source of entertainment but also as a means of learning that can improve English proficiency more enjoyably and effectively. Various studies have found that online games can help students learn to read, understand grammar, and improve their reading skills through more natural and contextual interactions. In addition, factors such as motivation, active participation, and social interaction in games are important factors that influence the effectiveness of language learning. Because of this, it is critical to understand how online games may be optimally integrated into the context of English language learning, as well as to understand the challenges and opportunities that arise during implementation.

Based on the Research, online games have positively impacted English language learning, especially in improving students' linguistic and non-linguistic skills. Several studies have shown that online games can help students expand their vocabulary, understand grammatical structures in context, and improve their speaking skills through the interactions that occur in the game. In addition, studies have found that motivation and active engagement in the game play an important role in successful learning. The immersive and interactive environment of the game allows students to learn more naturally and less like a dull academic activity. However, despite the many benefits, some studies have also revealed challenges in implementing online games in learning, such as limited access to technology, teachers' lack of understanding of how to integrate games into the curriculum, and potential distractions that can hinder the achievement of learning goals. Therefore, more Research is needed on the optimal strategies for implementing online games to achieve maximum results in the context of English language learning.

Unlike typical Research, which focuses exclusively on the effectiveness of online games in improving English language skills, this study also highlights the pedagogical and technological aspects that play a role in their successful implementation. It measures student learning outcomes and explores how in-game interactions, gamification mechanisms, and instructional design can support a more meaningful learning process. Furthermore, it considers teachers' and students' perspectives on using online games as learning tools, which has been overlooked in previous studies. Adopting a more holistic approach, this Research endeavours to furnish a more comprehensive understanding of

how online games can be adapted to suit the needs of English language learning in various educational contexts.

Based on the context described above, this systematic literature review aims to synthesize the existing literature on using online games in English language learning in different countries and the factors behind it. Therefore, the research questions in this study are: 1) What is the research picture of online games among learners in schools and universities? 2) What factors predict the benefits of online games in learning English as a foreign language (ELT)? 3) What skills in ELT are most developed through online games?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Technology in English Language Teaching

According to the book *Teaching and Learning with Emerging Technology: A Future Perspective* (Muthukumar et al., n.d.)

To communicate, create, distribute, store, and manage information, schools use a variety of ICT tools through methods like switching from chalkboards to interactive digital whiteboards, using students own smartphones or other devices for learning during class time, and the flipped classroom model, where students watch lectures at home on the computer and use class time for more interactive exercises ICT has in some contexts also become essential to the teaching-learning interaction. These methods can promote higher-order thinking skills, offer inventive and individualized options for students to express their understandings, and leave students better prepared to handle ongoing technological change in society and the workplace when teachers are digitally literate and trained to use ICT.

2.2. Online Games in English Language Teaching

According to the book *Gaming for Classroom-Based Learning: Digital Role Playing as Motivator of Study* (Baek, 2010)

Players in virtual worlds can enjoy manipulating concrete objects in the world, exercising immersive explorations of the new world hidden from them. Especially in virtual gaming and simulation, they assemble several objects and create new objects as they see fit. These activities allow players to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize given data, objects, or facts. They have an opportunity to explore whatever ideas they have in mind. Thus, virtual gaming adds many more self-directive activities and live experiences for classroom-based learning.

3. METHODS

3.1 Description of Sample

Sample Method

Description of the sample

This study adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines in its search strategy. It employed predetermined keywords according to the systematic topic in English language learning using online games. The keywords utilized in the search included "online games and English language teaching," "game-based learning and English," "digital games and language acquisition," "gamification and ELT," and "educational technology and language learning."

A comprehensive search was conducted in several prominent academic journal databases, including Google Scholar, PubMed, and Mendeley. The period covered in this study was from 2020 to 2025 which met the predefined inclusion criteria.

3.2. Procedure

A primary reviewer conducted an initial search using the developed list of keywords, and the selection procedure was carried out using the following steps: a) Title screening — If the title of the article shows relevance to the research topic, it will be recorded in the reference software Mendeley Desktop 1.19.8. Duplicate articles found in the database will be removed using the duplicate removal feature in Mendeley.

b) Abstract screening: Articles that fail to provide sufficient information about using online games in English language learning or do not fit the inclusion criteria will be excluded.

c) Full-text screening: Articles that pass the initial screening will be read in their entirety to evaluate their suitability for this study. The systematic review will include articles that do not meet the exclusion criteria.

3.3. Study Selection Criteria

The selection of articles for this study was guided by a set of criteria designed to ensure the inclusion of articles that met the highest standards of quality and relevance. The following criteria were employed:

- 1) The articles under consideration must have been published in databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis Online, EBSCOhost, or SpringerLink.
 - 2) The articles must have been published within the last five years, specifically from 2020 to 2025.
 - 3) The articles were required to examine English language learning using online games in a formal education environment.
 - 4) Articles written in English.
 - 5) Articles that are both original and available in full text.
- Conversely, the exclusion criteria included:
- 1) Research that focused on gaming in subjects other than English.
 - 2) Studies that addressed

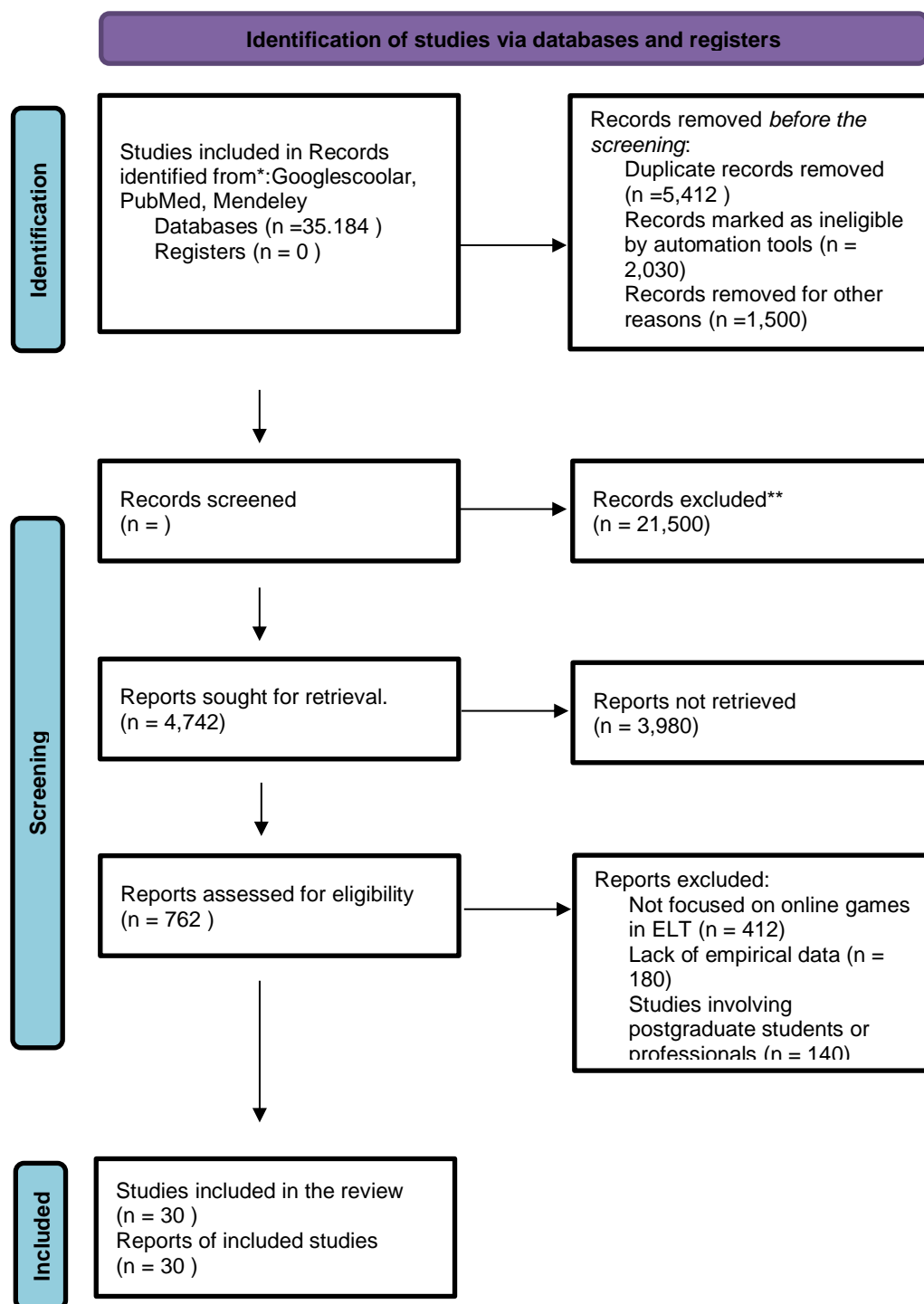
non-digital or traditional games.³) Studies involving subjects other than students or college students (e.g., professionals or workers).

Fourthly, articles of a review, meta-analysis, or academic opinion without empirical data were excluded.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Result

INSERT PRISM TABLE



MATRIKS

No	Authors	Country	Mean characteristic	Variable	Study design	Measure	Findings
1.	Harwati Hashim, James Ngu Ming Zhi, Amy Ling Wen Xin, Aik Yong Qi, Evelyn Then Xing Ying (2022)	Malaysia	40 literature studies related to gamification in English language learning	Gamification in language learning, ESL proficiency improvement, Student motivation and engagement	Thematic Analysis Analysis of gamification in ESL learning, Examines platforms like Minecraft Edu, Roblox, Quizizz, and Kahoot!	-Analysis of engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes through gamified activities -Evaluates the effectiveness of rewards, leaderboards, challenges, and feedback mechanisms	Gamification boosts ESL proficiency by enhancing motivation, engagement, and interactive learning. Tools like Minecraft Edu and Roblox improve vocabulary, grammar, and communication through immersion, while Quizizz and Kahoot! Aid grammar retention with instant feedback. Leaderboards and rewards encourage participation but must be balanced. Overall, gamification makes language learning more effective and enjoyable. (Hashim et al., 2025)
2.	Farzaneh Khodabandeh (2022).	Iran	60 elementary EFL students	Use of Augmented Reality Games (ARG) in EFL learning, Learning how to give and ask for directions, WhatsApp-based flipped and blended classrooms	Quasi-experimental design, Comparison of flipped, blended, and face-to-face teaching methods	-Pre-test and post-test on asking and giving directions -18-item multiple-choice test, written and oral assessment	The study found that students in flipped and blended classrooms using ARG performed better than those in traditional face-to-face classes. The ARG-based learning helped students interact with 3D virtual environments, improving their spatial language understanding. Students showed increased engagement, motivation, and comprehension. However, no significant difference was found between the flipped and blended groups. The study suggests integrating ARG in EFL education enhances learning effectiveness and interaction. (Khodabandeh, 2023)
3.	Aurelia Stefania Odang, Stefanus Igolois Grenga Uran, Wendelinus Oscar Janggo (2023)	Indonesia, Maumere	13 eleventh-grade science students	Use of Pictionary Game in English vocabulary learning, Improvement in reading and	Classroom Action Research, Two-cycle design using observation, interviews, questionnaires, and tests	-Vocabulary tests (reading and listening) before and after game implementation -Observation of student engagement and learning behavior	The implementation of the Pictionary Game improved students' vocabulary mastery significantly. By the end of the second cycle, 83.33% of students passed the reading test and 75% passed the listening test. Students became more enthusiastic, engaged, and collaborative. The study also identified best practices such as goal-oriented teaching,

				listening skills			progressiveness, varied pacing, and consistent encouragement. (Odang et al., 2023)
4.	Lailatul Abidah, Ria Arista Asih, Estu Widodo (2023).	Indonesia, Malang	57 grade XI students	The Use of Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL) in vocabulary learning, Improving students' vocabulary mastery	Mixed methods, Quasi-experimental with experimental and control groups	-Pre-test and post-test (30 multiple-choice, fill-in, and word-matching questions) -Interview with the experimental group	The study's results show that using DGBL through Wordwall.net increases students' vocabulary mastery. The experimental group's average score increased higher than the control group's. Students also feel more motivated and enjoy learning with this method. However, the main obstacle to implementing DGBL is the limitation of internet connections in schools.(Abidah et al., 2023)
5.	Dang Thi Thi, Le Van Thinh (2023)	Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City	101 fifth-grade EFL students (11 years old)	Impact of Extramural English (EE) on reading and listening proficiency, Students' experiences with EE activities	Mixed-method design (quantitative and qualitative), Listening & reading tests, questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews	-Cambridge Movers test (listening & reading sections) -EE activity questionnaire (frequency, types of EE) -Interviews with top 20 scoring students	The study found a positive correlation between EE activities and students' listening and reading skills. Students who spent more time engaging in EE activities—like using English learning apps, surfing the internet, watching cartoons, listening to songs, and reading comics—had higher test scores. Game-based apps and internet use had the strongest effects.(Thi & Thinh, 2022)
6.	Sami Al-Mubireek (2020)	Saudi Arabia, Dammam	27 EFL teachers (41 male, 86 female)	Use of handheld devices (smartphones, tablets) in EFL teaching, Teachers' perceptions and frequency of use	Mixed-method research, Survey (5-point Likert scale) and one-on-one interviews	-Questionnaire with 13 items about device usage in teaching -Interviews on teacher attitudes, barriers, and suggestions	Most teachers used handheld devices rarely or occasionally in class. Devices were mainly used for teaching vocabulary, showing visual aids, or communicating with students. Teachers with less experience were more open to using technology. Barriers included poor internet, distractions, lack of training, and cultural concerns. Despite the challenges, many teachers supported integrating handheld devices, especially for enhancing motivation and engagement.(Al-mubireek & Arabia, n.d.)

7.	Andri Donal, Nirwana Syahputra (2021)	Indonesia	3 children aged 9, 10, and 11 years old	English vocabulary acquisition during the COVID-19 pandemic, Sources and types of vocabulary acquired by children	Descriptive qualitative research, Naturalistic observation and semi-structured interviews	-Observation, interviews, recordings, and field notes -Categorization of vocabulary by word class (noun, verb, adjective, adverb)	Children aged 9–11 acquired English vocabulary informally during the COVID-19 pandemic through five main sources: imitation, online games, music, television, and food packaging. Most words acquired were nouns, followed by verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Online games were the most influential source. While beneficial for vocabulary growth, parental supervision is necessary due to exposure to inappropriate words. (Education et al., 2021)
8.	Amatul Hafeez Alvi (2023).	Saudi Arabia, Abha	100 preparatory year students	Andragogy-based blended learning model, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the field of Medicine, Challenges and solutions in online learning	Quasi-experimental Research, Comparison between traditional learning groups and groups using blended learning models, Learning satisfaction surveys	-Pre-test and post-test scores of the online questionnaire (Google Forms) -Likert Scale	This study found that the andrographically-based blended learning model significantly improved student learning outcomes in the "English in Medicine" course. Students who studied with a blended model scored higher on the post-test than those taught traditionally. This model increases engagement, motivation, and understanding through interactive tools such as virtual hospitals, online medical dictionaries, and Kahoot-based quizzes. However, challenges, such as technological barriers and digital literacy, need further attention. (Alvi, 2023)
9.	Isabel Machado Alexandre, Pedro Faria Lopes, Cynthia Borges (2023)	Portugal, Lisbon	Research-based on application development without direct respondents, focusing on making	Development of technology-based educational games, Learning English as a foreign	Design and development (R&D) research, Usability heuristics analysis in educational game development, Evaluation of game	-Nielsen's usability and heuristic principles -RETAIN model to evaluate the effectiveness of educational games -Comparison case studies with language learning apps like Duolingo and	This Research developed EnLang4All, an educational game for English learning designed with usability and knowledge retention in mind. The game is designed to be intuitive and engaging and increase learning motivation through game elements such as reward systems, challenge-based interactions, and adaptation to user preferences. The study highlights that educational games can be an effective learning

			educational games for English learning	language, The effectiveness of games in knowledge retention and motivation to learn	effectiveness in English language learning	Babbel	tool if designed well, but challenges in UX design and accessibility still need to be considered.(Alexandre et al., 2023)
10.	Syafiqah Hasram, M. Khalid M. Nasir, Maslawati Mohamad, Md. Yusoff Daud, Mohd Jasmy Abd Rahman, Wan Muna Ruzanna Wan Mohammad (2021).	Malaysia	121 grade 5 students	Use of WordWall (WOW) online games in English vocabulary learning, Students' motivation in learning English, Improvement of vocabulary scores after online game intervention	Quantitative Research with experimental methods, Use of pre-test and post-test to measure vocabulary improvement, and Survey to measure student motivation with the ARCS-V model	-Vocabulary test before and after using the WOW game -Likert scale-based questionnaire to measure motivational aspects: Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction, and Desire Statistical Analysis using paired t-tests	Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa penggunaan gim WordWall (WOW) secara signifikan meningkatkan kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa kelas 5. Skor post-test menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dibandingkan pre-test, dengan efek positif yang besar dalam ilmu perilaku. Siswa menunjukkan tingkat kepuasan, perhatian, dan relevansi yang tinggi terhadap gim WOW, although their confidence and desire to learn are at a moderate level. The main obstacle in using online games is the limitations of devices and internet connections at home. This study recommends the integration of educational games in English language learning to improve students' motivation and learning outcomes.(Hasram, 2021)
11.	Sendy Wiranata, Nasrullah Nasrullah, Inayati Fitriyah Asrimawati (2024)	Indonesia, Banjarmasin	A systematic literature review study on Research on the integration of technology in English language learning from 2018 to 2024	Integration of technology in English language learning, The Influence of technology on teaching methods and learning outcomes,	Various academic journals, Evaluation of the impact of technology integration in English language teaching	-Systematic search in academic databases such as ERIC, Google Scholar, and Web of Science -Analysis based on the literature evaluation model of Khan et al. (2003) grouping of findings in aspects of technology integration, digital	The study found that integrating technology in English language learning shows a positive trend, especially in improving student engagement and learning effectiveness. Technologies such as mobile apps, virtual simulations, and online learning platforms have changed teaching methods. However, the main challenges are the digital divide between teachers and students, the lack of professional training for educators, and the limited technological resources. This study recommends implementation strategies aligned with pedagogical

				Challenges and opportunities in the Use of technology for language learning		resources, and technology-based assessment	goals so that technology integration can significantly impact English learning outcomes.(Wiranata et al., 2024)
12.	Cristian Alexander Chiroque Chero (2022)	Peru, Piura	10 young EFL learners aged 11–12 years	Students' language learning needs (necessities, lacks, and wants), Development of a Need Analysis (NA) framework for exam prep courses	Descriptive study using a mixed-method approach, Combination of questionnaire, diagnostic test, and classroom observation	-Self-made questionnaire addressing subjective needs, lacks, and wants -Diagnostic test (reading, writing, listening, grammar, vocabulary) -Teacher analysis of exam handbook (for objective needs)	The study proposed a comprehensive NA framework addressing subjective and objective needs. Learners showed both intrinsic (enjoyment, progress) and extrinsic (certification, peer influence) motivations. Diagnostic tests revealed weaknesses in listening, reading, and writing, despite students perceiving reading as a strength. Students preferred group work and engaging activities like online games and art crafts. The study emphasized aligning teaching with both exam requirements and learners' preferences.(Alexander & Chero, 2022)
13.	Maram Meccawy Asma Alzahrani, Zinah Mattar, Rawan Almohammadi, Samah Alzahrani, Ghadeer Aljizani, Zilal Meccawy (2023)	Arab Saudi, Jeddah	12 intermediate students (ages 12–14)	The Use of Game-Based Learning (GBL) as an Assessment Tool in English Learning, The Effect of GBL on Academic Performance and Student Self-Efficacy	Quasi-experiments with control groups and experiments, Testing using Google Forms and role-playing games designed as assessment tools	-Google Forms-based English test (24 multiple-choice questions) -Likert scale questionnaire to measure student self-efficacy	The results of the study show that the Use of GBL as an assessment tool does not have a significant impact on students' academic performance compared to traditional methods. However, GBL increases students' self-efficacy due to the presence of interactive elements such as direct feedback, rewards, and game characters who act as "English Masters."(Meccawy et al., 2023)
14.	Lisbeth M. Brevik, Thea Holm	Norwegia	34 vocational students (ages 16–17)	The relationship between informal English	A qualitative study with classroom observation for	-Interviews with students and teachers regarding their English learning	The study found that students who frequently use English in digital activities, such as playing online games and social media, are more confident using

	(2023)			learning (through online games and social media) and formal learning in the classroom, The Influence of technology use in English language teaching	three weeks, data collection through interviews, analysis of student assignments, and recording of computer screen activities	habits outside of school -Project-based assignment analysis that integrates the Use of English in the classroom	English in class. Teachers who integrate elements of students' informal activities into formal learning successfully increase student participation and engagement in lessons.(Brevik & Holm, 2023)
15.	Hadisaputra (2022)	Indonesia, Makassar	A literature review on the impact of online games on early childhood	The Influence of Online Games on Children's Critical Power, Creativity, and Problem-Solving Skills, Strategies for the Use of Online Games in Early Childhood Education	A literature study with descriptive analysis of 25 scientific articles	An analysis of the literature that discusses the positive impact of online games on education and health aspects	Online games benefit early childhood if used in a targeted pattern and with parental guidance. The main benefits are increased critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. Parents play an important role in choosing the type of educational game and ensuring its Use is by the child's Development.(Makassar et al., 2022)
16.	Yea-Ru Tsai (2024)	Taiwan, Kaohsiung	EFL students in Taiwan, consisting of 80 participants in two groups (experimental and control)	The UseUse of gamification in English language learning, The impact of gamification on student motivation and engagement	Quasi-experiments with control groups and experiments, Moodle-based learning with gamification elements (points, badges, leaderboards, and	- Likert scale questionnaire to measure learning motivation Analisis online activities (discussion forums, quizzes, and Wordwall-based games)	The results showed that students in the gamification group had higher learning motivation than the control group, especially regarding relevance and satisfaction. In addition, they were more active in discussion forums and completed more quizzes than the non-gamification group. The gamification elements most influencing motivation are discussion forums, Wordwall games, and badge systems. (Tsai, 2024)

					competitions)		
17.	Lee Chai Chuen, Nor Azrina Mohd Yusof (2021)	Malaysia	22 non-native Mandarin learner	Use of LiSCReW Family Board Game for learning Chinese characters, Learners' confidence in character recognition, pronunciation, and reading	Developmental research, Three phases: interviews, product development, playtesting and evaluation	-Questionnaire assessing confidence levels, game design, and learning application -Likert-scale feedback and open-ended comments from participants	The LiSCReW board game improved students' confidence in recognizing (90.9%), pronouncing (68.2%), and reading (54.6%) Chinese characters. Most students rated the game's design and content as excellent. Some suggested adding audio or writing components. Despite not using formal statistical tests, responses were overwhelmingly positive, indicating LiSCReW's strong potential as an engaging learning tool.(Chuen, 2021)
18.	T.Darvenkumar, W. Christopher Rajasekaran (2023)	India	166 tertiary- level students aged 17-24	Use of online games in improving English language and communication skills, Students' attitudes and perceptions toward online games in language learning	Quantitative research using a quasi-experimental survey design, Descriptive statistical analysis using SPSS	-15-item questionnaire via Google Forms using a 5- point Likert scale -Data analyzed for frequency, mean, standard deviation, and reliability (Cronbach's alpha)	The study found that online games are perceived as effective tools for enhancing English communication skills. Many students reported acquiring new vocabulary, improving reading and listening, and feeling more engaged during language learning through games. Social aspects, such as playing with friends, also contributed to language development. While some students faced challenges in understanding game content, most agreed that gaming strengthened their motivation and overall language performance. (Darvenkumar & Rajasekaran, 2023)
19.	Catherine Hui Tiing Wong, Melor Md Yunus (2023)	Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia)	30 grade 5 students	Use of online board game "Flippity" in learning to speak English, Improvement	Quasi- experimental Research with mixed-method methods, Comparison of pre-	-Pre-test and post-test speaking based on CEFR rubrics - Google Form- based online questionnaire - Semi-	The study found that using the online board game "Flippity" significantly improved the speaking skills of 5th graders in terms of fluency, fluency, interaction, and coherence. Students show increased speaking confidence and have a more enjoyable learning experience. However, some

				of students' speaking skills, Motivation of students in learning English	test and post-test scores of speaking skills, Semi-structured interviews to understand student perceptions	structured - interview with five selected students	students still face challenges in pronunciation and vocabulary. The study recommends further Use of "Flippity" in English language learning and additional Research to see its effectiveness on other language skills such as listening, reading, and writing.(Hui & Wong, 2023)
20	Andri Donal and Nirwana Syahputra (2021)	Indonesia	Children aged 9-11 years acquiring English vocabulary during the Covid-19 pandemic	Independent variable: The process of acquiring English vocabulary & Dependent variable: The types of English vocabulary acquired by children	Descriptive qualitative study	Observation of children's activities, Semi-structured interviews, Field notes, and recordings	Children acquire English vocabulary through various ways, including imitating someone's words, playing online games, listening to music, watching television, and reading vocabulary on food wraps; the types of vocabulary acquired include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs; most vocabulary was acquired through online games, Parents need to supervise children's UseUse of gadgets, as not all English vocabulary they acquire aligns with Indonesian culture. (Education et al., 2021)
21	Nurhaida Lakuana, Desrin Lebagi, Dwi Wahyu Dermawan (2021)	Indonesia,	Junior high school students.	Independent variable: Playing online games (PUBG and Mobile Legends) & Dependent variable: Improvement in English language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and	Qualitative Research	-Interviews with students, Observations and field notes, Video recordings of students playing online games	Online games have a significant impact on improving students' English skills. Students frequently communicated in English with other players through typing and voice chat. Speaking and listening were the most affected skills, as students had to interact in real-time during the game. Exposure to English texts in the game environment also helped improve reading and writing skills. Players learned new vocabulary from in-game terms and commands such as "knock," "go," "healing," and "med kit." The study concluded that online games can effectively teach English, especially communication-based skills.(Information, 2024)

				writing)			
22	Wanyu He (2023)	Amerika Serikat, New York University	This study discusses the impact of online games on English language learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Use of online games in English learning - Influence on student motivation and engagement - Impact of games on the Development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theoretical study and analysis of learning-based game design - A case study of the Development of Flytrap Vocab, an online-based educational game - Analysis of affordances (playfulness, accessibility, multimodality, motivation, engagement) in games to support language learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Explanation of the concept of game-based learning and its application in language education: A -study on the elements of game design that are effective in improving language skills Evaluation of the benefits of the Flytrap Vocab game in helping students understand sentence structure and build vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Use of games in English learning increases student motivation and engagement. - Learning-based games allow students to develop reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills more effectively. - Game design elements such as incentive systems, interactive animations, and challenge-based approaches help to increase the appeal and effectiveness of learning. - The Flytrap Vocab game provides a more fun and adaptive learning environment than conventional methods. - The main challenge is to ensure that the game is accessible to all students and has a design that matches their level of language proficiency (He, 2023).
23	Paola Cabrera-Solano (2022)	Ekuador, Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja	The 61 EFL students experimental group (32 students) and a control group (29 students), with an age range of 22–56 years and a B1 English language proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Use of genially-based games in English learning - Influence on grammar and vocabulary comprehension - Students' perception of games in online learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quasi-experimental Research - The experimental group used Genially games in grammar and vocabulary learning, while the control group used traditional methods - The study was conducted in an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pre-test and post-test to measure grammar and vocabulary comprehension before and after the intervention Student perception -survey uses a semi-structured Likert scale of interviews to gain a deeper perspective from students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - College students who used the Genially game showed significantly improved grammar and vocabulary comprehension compared to the control group. - Most students (75%–87.5%) stated that Genially helps them understand grammar, expand vocabulary, and make learning more enjoyable. - Genially, games allow students to practice grammatical structures in various contexts and enrich their understanding of vocabulary more effectively. - Learning motivation increases due to the attractive game design, appropriate challenges, and a feedback system that helps understand English concepts. - The main challenges in implementation are access to a stable internet

			level (CEFR).		online learning environment for 16 weeks		connection and limitations in the technological skills of some students.(<i>International Journal of Educational Methodology Game-Based Learning in Higher Education: The Pedagogical Effect of Genially Games in English as a Foreign Language Instruction</i> , 2022)
24	Rita Yeboah, Kwaku Darko Amponsah, Priscilla Commey Mintah, John Sedofia, Phyllis Bernice Kwarteng Donkor (2023)	Ghana, Accra	30 primary school teachers from 9 public schools	Teachers' knowledge, use, and perception of game-based learning, Challenges in implementing game-based learning in primary classrooms	Illustrative case study, Data collected through semi-structured interviews	-Interview questions grouped into four sections: knowledge, usage, impact, and challenges -Thematic analysis using Braun & Clarke's (2006) method	Most teachers acknowledged that games motivate learners, enhance understanding, and make lessons engaging. Non-digital games like “Ludu”, “Ampe”, and “Mother and Child” were commonly used, especially in teaching English and Math. However, barriers such as lack of digital resources, large class sizes, noise, and time constraints were major challenges. Training is needed to expand teachers' understanding and effective implementation of both digital and non-digital game-based learning.(Yeboah et al., 2023)
25	Nan Wei (2022)	Tiongkok, Henan Polytechnic Institute	This study discusses the approach to developing language intelligence in multimedia-based English teaching using the perspective of game theory.	- The Use of multimedia in English teaching, Development of language intelligence based on game theory - The effectiveness of artificial intelligence-based learning models on	- Theoretical model study, Development of artificial intelligence-based assessment mechanism to improve English learning - Simulation of the Use of models to assess learning efficiency	-Use of artificial intelligence-based models to evaluate the quality of students' pronunciation and language comprehension -Implementation of game theory-based simulations in a multimedia learning environment -Analysis of the effectiveness of the method with Comparison of simulation results	- Multimedia and artificial intelligence-based learning models can improve the effectiveness of English language learning. - The Use of game theory allows the system to provide real-time feedback to students, improving pronunciation accuracy, syntactic comprehension, and speaking skills. - Multimedia technology allows students to learn more independently and access teaching materials flexibly. - Simulations show that this method can significantly improve the efficiency of English learning compared to traditional methods. - The main challenges in implementation are the complexity of the Development of artificial intelligence systems and the need to support

				students' English comprehension		before and after the application of the model	technological devices. (Wei, 2022)
26	Afra Ibnat Achol & Shakila Akter (2022)	Bangladesh, Bangladesh University of Professionals	There were 15 children aged 8– in online gaming, and three parents who gave their opinions through the survey.	- Pengaruh Online games on children's English language skills development, Development in four key skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing - Parents' opinion on the impact of games on English language learning	- Mixed research methods (quantitative and qualitative) - Survey of gamers' children and their parents - Direct observation of two children playing online games	-Closed and open questionnaire on online gaming exposure and its impact on English -Observation of children's interactions during and after play sessions Data analysis with tables, diagrams, and interpretations of findings	- Listening: Most children experience improvement in understanding instructions in English while playing games, especially in multiplayer games that involve voice communication. - Speaking: Many children use the new vocabulary they learn from games in everyday conversation, especially action verbs and game terms. - Reading: Most children can read words that appear frequently in games, which helps them expand their passive vocabulary. - Writing: There is almost no improvement in writing skills because children have trouble remembering the spelling of the words they learn from the game. - Parents' View: Some parents admit that their children better understand English after playing games but are also concerned about the negative impact of games on children's academics. - The Potential of Games in Learning: Most children believe games can be a good tool for language learning.(Achol & Akter, 2022)
27	David Gortaire Díaz, María José Sandoval Pérez, Elma Romero Ramírez, Julio Mora Aristega (2022)	Ekuador, Universidad Técnica de Babahoyo	- 29 English - 105 students participating in gamification-based learning	- The Use of gamification in English vocabulary learning - The effect of gamification on student motivation, engagement,	- Exploratory case studies with mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) - Survey of teachers and students on the Use of gamification in online classrooms -	-Questionnaire to teachers about their experience in implementing gamification -Questionnaire to students to measure the perception and effectiveness of gamification in vocabulary learning Descriptive statistical	- Positive Impact: 100% of teachers stated that gamification helped improve students' vocabulary, and 86.2% of teachers preferred to use online games over traditional methods. - Student Engagement: Students showed high enthusiasm in learning vocabulary through gamification, with an average satisfaction score of 4.70/5. - Benefits of Gamification: Teachers reported that gamification increased interaction (79.3%), motivation to learn (69.0%), and helped understand complex topics

				and vocabulary retention - Perceptions of students and teachers on the effectiveness of gamification	Analysis of gamification platforms used, such as Kahoot! and Wordwall	analysis to assess trends and patterns of data	(51.7%). - Implementation Challenges: Some teachers have difficulty adapting teaching materials into game formats, and technology adaptation is an obstacle for more senior teachers. - Student Perception: Most students consider gamification as a fun learning tool, with high scores in terms of game dynamics (0.81), game characteristics (0.75), and relevance to class material (0.82).(Díaz & Aristega, 1858)
28	Damar Miftahuddin & Noor Malihah (2022)	Indonesia, UIN Salatiga	- 7 MMORPG players who have experience playing on a global server - Observations are made during the game session to identify vocabulary acquisition	- The Use of Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) in English language learning - The Influence of MMORPGs on EFL learners' vocabulary improvement - In-game social methods that help with vocabulary mastery	- Qualitative study with a phenomenological approach - Data is collected through interviews, observations, and documentation of player interactions in the game	-Interviews with players to understand their experience in acquiring vocabulary Direct -observation of in-game communication, including interactions with other players and Non-Playable Characters (NPCs), Triangulation analysis of data to increase the validity of findings	- Social & Guild Interaction: Communicating with fellow players helps participants learn new vocabulary, especially those related to team strategy and coordination. - NPC Quests & Instructions: Players must understand the instruction text to complete the mission, enriching their understanding of vocabulary. - Markets & Trade: Negotiations between players in buying and selling items introduce economic terms and transactions in English. - Storyline: Reading the in-game narrative helps players understand the context of using vocabulary in more complex situations. - Item Description: Information about the game's weapons, armour, and equipment contributes to acquiring vocabulary related to objects and actions.(Miftahuddin & Malihah, 2022)
29	Yuni Hariyanti & Junita Duwi Purwandari (2022)	Indonesia, Jakarta veteran development university	- Case study on an Indonesian student studying - This student was	Language Learning Beyond the Classroom (LLBC) - The effect of using	- Case study with a qualitative approach - In-depth interview with one study participant -	-Unstructured interviews to understand participants' learning strategies Data -analysis with a deductive approach based on	- Movies: Watching movies helps participants improve their listening skills, especially in understanding accents and using everyday language. - Books: Reading digital books (e-books) is the primary strategy for improving reading skills and enriching vocabulary. - Games: Role-playing games

			chosen as an example of a successful EFL learner because he received a full scholarship	movies, books, and games in improving English language skills - The role of learner autonomy in language mastery	Analysis based on four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing	language skill categories Observation of participants' learning patterns outside the classroom	improve reading and speaking skills. Participants feel more confident in using English when interacting with the game. - Online Community: Participants join discussion forums about books, movies, and games, which help improve writing and speaking skills in English. - Learning Autonomy: Participants demonstrate high independence in managing their English learning and building a supportive learning environment outside the classroom.(Purwandari et al., 2022).
30	Luz Castillo-Cuesta (2022)	Ecuador, Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja	- 48 A2-level (CEFR) - Divided into two groups: experimental (23 students) and control (25 students)	- The Use of Genially-based games in online English learning - The Influence of Genially on reading and writing skills in English - Students' perception of the Use of Genially in learning	- Pre-test and post-test through the Canvas platform, including reading comprehension and short essays - Assessment rubric to measure the Use of grammar, vocabulary, and paragraph structure Likert scale - questionnaire to assess students' perception of Genial	-Pre-test and post-test through the Canvas platform, including reading comprehension and short essays - Assessment rubric to measure the Use of grammar, vocabulary, and paragraph structure Likert scale -questionnaire to assess students' perception of Genially	- The experimental group experienced significant improvements in reading and writing compared to the control group ($p = 0.0186$). - Genially-based games help students identify main ideas and supporting details in reading texts - Organizing ideas in paragraphs and essays - Improving grammar and vocabulary comprehension - Most college students (91.3%) find Genially an engaging and motivating tool for learning English. - The main challenge in implementation is game design planning and providing effective feedback to students. (Castillo-cuesta, 2022)

Participant Characteristics

After the selection process, 30 articles relevant to this research topic have been identified. The participants in these studies are EFL students from various educational levels, ranging from elementary school to university. The participants come from different countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Ecuador, China, Portugal, and Bangladesh. The total number of participants in these studies exceeds 1,000 students from various educational institutions. The study programs or majors involved in these studies include English language education, linguistics, education, computer science, social sciences, and multimedia studies. The participants varied in terms of gender, educational level, and English proficiency, providing diverse perspectives on using online games in English language learning.

Approach and Types of Study

A total of 30 studies have been analyzed regarding the use of online games in English language learning, employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Various research methods were used, including experimental, quasi-experimental, classroom action research (CAR), quantitative descriptive, qualitative, correlational, and design-based research. The instruments used in these studies include questionnaires based on the Likert Scale, pre-tests and post-tests, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and statistical analysis using SPSS, ANOVA, and T-tests.

The studies are categorized based on their research design. Four studies applied an experimental design, five studies used a quasi-experimental approach, five studies employed Classroom Action Research (CAR), eight studies conducted quantitative descriptive research, and seven studies used qualitative methods. One study adopted a design-based research approach focusing on game development for English learning.

Overview in Different Countries

Research on online games in English language teaching (ELT) has been conducted in various countries, demonstrating its effectiveness in improving language skills. Online games provide an interactive and engaging learning environment, enhancing students' motivation, vocabulary, and communication skills.

In Indonesia, studies found that online games significantly contribute to vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and speaking skills. For instance, research by Odang et al. (2023) and Abidah et al. (2023) highlighted how digital games help students improve vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension.

In Malaysia, studies such as those by Hashim et al. (2025) and Hasram (2021) reported that gamified learning platforms like Quizizz and Wordwall increased students' motivation and engagement in learning English.

In Saudi Arabia, research by Al-Mubireek (2020) and Meccawy et al. (2023) found that mobile-based games and game-based assessments effectively enhance student participation and self-efficacy in English learning.

In Vietnam and Iran, augmented reality games and digital game-based learning have been found to improve students' speaking and listening skills. Research by Khodabandeh (2023) demonstrated how ARG-based learning enhances students' comprehension and motivation.

In Ecuador and China, studies highlighted the role of game-based learning in improving reading comprehension and writing skills. Research by Castillo-Cuesta (2022) and Wei (2022) showed that Genially-based games and multimedia-supported learning significantly contribute to English language learning outcomes.

Overall, the studies indicate that online games positively impact English language learning by providing interactive and immersive experiences that boost students' motivation, vocabulary, pronunciation, and overall proficiency.

Predictors of Online Games' Effectiveness in ELT

The second objective of this study is to identify the factors contributing to the effectiveness of using online games in English language learning. Several internal and external factors influence the effectiveness of online games as a learning tool.

1. Internal Predictors

Student motivation and engagement play a crucial role in the effectiveness of online games for English learning. Online games increase students' interest and motivation by providing an enjoyable learning experience, as demonstrated by Hashim et al. (2025) and Hui & Wong (2023). Additionally, exposure to game-based vocabulary and pronunciation drills has been found to enhance vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation skills (Odang et al., 2023; Darvenkumar & Rajasekaran, 2023). Online games also promote autonomous learning, enabling students to explore new words and expressions independently, as highlighted by Alexander & Chero (2022) and Alvi (2023). Interactive dialogues and real-time communication in multiplayer games significantly improve listening and speaking skills, as evidenced by studies from Thi & Thinh (2022) and Miftahuddin & Malihah (2022). However, some challenges exist, such as distractions and a lack of focus among students when games are not properly monitored. Research by Donal & Syahputra (2021) and Lakuana et al. (2021) pointed out that excessive gaming could lead to reduced academic focus.

2. External Predictors

Teacher support and guidance are critical in ensuring the successful integration of online games into English learning. Studies by Anggraini (2021) and Susanti et al. (2022) found that teacher involvement enhances the effectiveness of game-based learning. However, limited technological accessibility remains a significant barrier, with research by Zulkflee et al. (2022) and Yeboah et al. (2023) highlighting issues such as unstable internet connections and a lack of adequate devices. The cultural and educational context also plays a role in determining the success of online games in language learning. Brevik & Holm (2023) found that students who frequently engage in digital activities outside the classroom adapt better to game-based learning. Additionally, parental involvement is crucial for younger learners, ensuring that online games contribute positively to their language acquisition. Studies by Achol & Akter (2022) and Donal & Syahputra (2021) emphasized the need for parents to monitor gaming activities to maximize their educational benefits. The analysis shows that a well-structured approach to implementing online games in English learning can enhance students' engagement, motivation, and language proficiency. However, challenges such as technological barriers, lack of teacher training, and distractions must be addressed to maximize the benefits of game-based learning in ELT.

5. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the effectiveness of online games in improving reading and listening skills in English learning. A systematic review of various studies found that online games can improve students' text comprehension and listening skills through a more interactive, contextual, and challenge-based learning experience. Gamification elements, such as leaderboards, point systems, instant feedback, and interactive audio features, are crucial in increasing student learning motivation and engagement.

Regarding reading comprehension, interactive story-based games, quizzes, and text-based dialogues help students understand vocabulary, grammar, and reading skimming and scanning strategies. Meanwhile, in the aspect of listening comprehension, interactive audio-based games, voice-overs, and communication simulations improve students' ability to understand intonation, accents, and meanings of words in a more accurate context. Thus, online games provide a more immersive learning environment than traditional learning methods.

However, despite its many benefits, implementing online games in English learning also faces challenges. Some factors that hinder this method's effectiveness include limited internet access, lack of technological infrastructure in schools, and teachers' readiness to adapt games into the curriculum. In addition, the uncontrolled Use of online games also has the potential to be a distraction for

students, so the right implementation strategy is needed so that games can continue to be used as a practical learning tool.

Overall, online games have great potential as a tool for learning English, especially in improving reading and listening skills. For this method to be applied optimally, a strategy that considers the selection of appropriate games, integration with the curriculum, technology support, and training for teachers in using education-based games is needed. Further Research is needed to explore how combining online games with traditional learning methods can result in a more effective and balanced approach to English language learning. With proper application, online games can be an innovative solution for improving students' English skills at various levels of education.

Table 1. Title

Year	No
2020	1
2021	5
2022	11
2023	11
2024	2
2025	-
Total: 30	

Table 1. Title

country	No
2020	-
2021	4
2022	11
2023	9
2024	5
2025	1
Total:	

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to express his deepest gratitude to the English Language Education Study Program and the Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin State Islamic University Banten, who have provided academic support and facilities that enable this Research to be carried out correctly. The support from this institution is invaluable in collecting and analyzing data related to the Use of online games to improve reading and listening skills in English learning.

He also expressed his gratitude to the supervisors, who have provided valuable direction, input, and guidance throughout this research process. In addition, high appreciation was given to the research participants, who actively participated and provided in-depth insights into their experience using online games as an English learning medium. Their input and experience are important in corroborating this study's findings.

The author also wants to express gratitude to his family, friends, and fellow students, who have provided moral support and motivation during this research process. The results of this Research can positively contribute to the Development of technology-based learning methods, especially in using online games to improve reading and listening skills in English. The author hopes that this Research can be a reference for future Research in game-based learning and technology in language education.

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Her name is Risya Kamila. She was born in Pandeglang on February 22, 2005, and is now 20. She comes from a very warm family that is full of support and loves her. Thanks to her family, she can grow up like now. She is the first of two siblings. She has a younger brother, and she likes to play and do many positive activities that can make her happy. Of course, she is always enthusiastic about learning and likes Korean dramas and K-pop.

She started her education at SDN Cilaja 2 Pandeglang, then continued his MTS and MA education at Pondok Pesantren Modern Darussalam Pandeglang. Modern Islamic Boarding School Darussalam Pandeglang continues to university at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanudin Banten. She is majoring in English education, faculty of tarbiyah and keguruan, and she is a 6th semester student.

While at the boarding school, she was a member of the organization. She also became the head of the scout section. She has participated in several competitions at the boarding school, such as volleyball competitions, scouts, etc. She likes to sing, so she won a singing competition. Moreover, when she was at the boarding school, she learned two languages, namely Arabic and English. Now that she can speak these two languages, she is also interested in learning Korean. Maybe she is not proficient in Korean for now, but she already knows some basic Korean vocabulary. Although she did not join any organization at this college, she was not silent about adding her insights into education. She attended webinars regularly to add insights, improve skills, and build professional networks. Now, she is writing an article in collaboration with her friend Eti Nurcholisah, with the article **"Leveraging Online Games for ELT: A Systematic Review"**. Writing this article can also help her gain insight into the education world.

Outside of her education, she likes to do exciting and valuable activities, such as playing with her friends, which can make her happy. She also really likes watching Korean dramas in her spare time to fill the void and doing other activities, such as cooking and sports.

She hopes to complete her undergraduate education smoothly and on time and, hopefully, continue her bachelor's education to a master's degree. Hopefully, she can fulfill her goals well, contribute to developing this world of education, and be useful to many people.

(NIM: 221230006)

Penulis 2



Eti nurcholisah was born in padarincang serang banten on september 28, 2003, and is now 21 years old. She is often called Olis. She is the third child of four siblings. Her father is a laborer, and her mother is a trader. She is a student at the Islamic University of Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, majoring in English tardis. She has a strong determination and a high curiosity about something, which can be a valuable experience for her.

In her educational journey, Olis completed her primary education at Cibojong 1 Elementary School from 2010 to 2016. Then, she continued her education to MTsN 2 serang from 2016 to 2019 before entering SMAN 1 Ciomas and majoring in Science from 2019 to 2022. After completing her secondary

education, she continued her studies at Sultan Maulana Hasanudin University Banten, where she is currently completing her education to obtain her Bachelor of Education (S.Pd.).

She is an active and accomplished individual in various fields, ranging from academics, organizations, and photography to entrepreneurship. With her passion for self-development and social contribution, she continues to show dedication and commitment to the various activities she participates in. Her journey of achievement began in 2022 when she won third place in the Kartini Day Photo Contest organized by HMJ Constitutional Law. Her love for photography continued to grow until, in 2023, she won 1 in the Ambassador Photo Contest of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Keguruan and became the Finalist Ambassador of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Keguruan. Besides excelling in arts and competitions, she is also active in student organizations. In 2023, she joined the English Department Student Association, especially in the field of Women's Empowerment, showing her concern for social issues and gender equality. Her organizational skills continued to grow until 2024 she was trusted to serve as General Secretary of the English Department Student Association of UIN SMH Banten. He also participated in community service as Secretary of the Advocacy and Media Department of the Padarincang Student Association for 2024-2026.

To continue developing her insights and professionalism, she also attended the Seminar on the Accessibility of BUMN Apprenticeship in the same year. Besides being active in organizations and education, she has a strong entrepreneurial spirit. Since the year 2022, she has established a culinary business called Cakekita, which continues to grow and become part of various campus activities. In 2024, her business even became a sponsorship for the Tadris English Ambassador and the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Keguruan Ambassador, proving that she can manage a business while supporting various academic and social activities. One of his academic achievements is writing an article with Risya Kamila entitled **“Leveraging Online Games for ELT: A Systematic Review”**. With all the achievements she has made, she continues to be committed to growing in various fields. She believes that hard work, dedication, and the spirit to keep learning are the primary keys to achieving success and providing benefits to many people.

(NIM: 221230019)

Penulis 3

Naf'an Tarihoran is a Professor at State Islamic University of Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia. His research interests include curriculum development, Islamic Education and Management, Integrated reading and writing, the application of technology to language learning and teaching, language and culture, and the Development of effective teaching methods and instructional materials for EFL students and teachers.