A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF GRAMMAR GAMES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT)

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Abstract
Grammar games have become widely adopted in English Language Teaching (ELT) to enhance students' grammatical competence through engaging and interactive approaches. This study systematically reviews existing literature on the effectiveness of grammar games by analyzing their application, benefits, and overall impact. Using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, data were collected from Taylor & Francis, PubMed, and Mendeley databases. From an initial pool of 102 articles, 14 met the eligibility criteria, with nine included in the final analysis through the PRISMA framework. The findings demonstrate that grammar games significantly enhance student motivation, participation, and mastery of grammar. Tools like Kahoot!, Duolingo, Quizizz, and traditional games contribute to a more student-centered environment. Challenges such as time constraints and off-focus behavior were noted. The study recommends further research into long-term effects and the integration of grammar games into complex grammar instruction.
Keywords: A Systematic Review, English Language Teaching (ELT), Grammar Games

INTRODUCTION

Technology, now an unavoidable part of everyday life, also plays an important role in learning. Its presence has significantly impacted education, prompting teachers to re-evaluate their teaching methods. In addition, Technology has positively changed the role of the teacher and supported a more student-centered approach to learning. Using various technological tools in language learning allows teachers and students to achieve more optimal results (Castillo-Cuesta, 2020a). The advancement of Technology and task-based learning creates an ideal combination, fostering interactions that benefit both parties. Integrating Technology into task-based instruction allows

educators and learners to understand better how Technology can reinforce and support the benefits of language teaching (Razali dkk., 2023). Enhancing technological advancements and digitalization in English language teaching demands extensive cooperation between educators, policymakers, and technology developers (Judijanto & Torihoran, t.t.). Technology has developed very rapidly in this day and age. Many changes and developments have occurred, such as communication tools, which can now be video telephones, and even learning can use Technology. Technology is important in education because it can modify and improve various learning experiences, especially language learning (Nursyahida dkk., t.t.). With a wide range of platforms and applications created to improve the educational process, Technology in education is growing and becoming widely used (Khasyi, 2024). Students can also use a variety of simple dictionaries, create flashcards, and navigate the internet using the language they are learning. You can look for conversation partners and mentors online (Altun & Ahmad, 2021).

For a long time, educators have incorporated games into English instruction, making it a popular and effective teaching method (Tari & Safitri, 2023). Grammar games are beneficial in teaching English because they motivate students to learn, and Students remain motivated and avoid boredom during the learning process. Teachers have been using games to teach English for years, and they have proven to be one of the most popular and successful learning strategies. Games keep students engaged, make learning entertaining, and improve language mastery (Widiani dkk., 2023). A learning approach incorporating games can boost students' enthusiasm and self-efficacy in the learning process. At the same time, these behavior patterns focused on learning contribute to academic success (Widiani dkk., 2023). However, Games provide many benefits in English teaching, from increasing learning motivation and encouraging teamwork to creating more contextualized and flexible learning. The interactive and fun atmosphere in games makes students more enthusiastic about understanding the material, thus increasing their motivation. In addition, the Game allows students to work in teams, communicate, and solve challenges together, which helps them develop social skills. Learning becomes more contextualized as students can understand and apply language concepts in more accurate and meaningful situations. Flexible games allow teachers to customize activities according to student's abilities and learning objectives, thus creating a more optimal and engaging learning process (Widiani dkk., 2023).

Several studies have emphasized the benefits of game-based learning in improving learners' motivation, comprehension, and retention of grammar rules (Baxtiyorova, 2024). Digital games like Kahoot!, Quizizz, Duolingo, and traditional board and card games have shown positive outcomes in fostering grammar mastery (Baxtiyorova, 2024). In addition, grammar games encourage active participation, teamwork, and the application of grammar in communicative tasks (Said dkk., 2022).

Unlike previous studies, which focused on specific game implementations in isolated settings, this systematic literature review aims to provide a broader perspective on using grammar games in English language learning across different contexts. It explores how grammar games are utilized, their benefits, and their impact on students' English language proficiency.

Based on the context described above, this systematic literature review aims to summarize and analyze the existing literature on the use of grammar games in different countries and the factors that influence it. Therefore, the research questions in this study are: 1) How are grammar games used in English language learning among students? 2) What are the benefits of grammar games for English learning? 3) what are the impacts of grammar games on English learning?

Technology in English Language Teaching

According to the book Teaching English Language Learners through Technology (Erben dkk., 2008), Using Technology to teach English is helpful and practical. Software, digital media, and the internet can improve students' English language skills. This lesson uses theories rooted in the Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) approach, which emphasizes integrating Technology into language learning to enhance student interaction and engagement. Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky) is also relevant, as Technology is a mediating tool that supports collaborative learning. In addition, Multimedia Learning Theory (Mayer) explains that combining text, audio, and visuals in Technology can improve language comprehension.

Relevant scholarship should also be described. Discuss relevant literature, but do not need to include a full historical review. Assume that the reader understands the fundamental issues, so there is no need to present a thorough historical overview. In the introduction, a scholarly account of previous research summarizes relevant recent studies and acknowledges previous research contributions. Tell the reader whether other study aspects have been covered previously and explain how the use of evidence in this study differs from previous research.

Grammar Games in English Language Teaching

Grammar games use the theory of constructivism and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. In constructivism, learning occurs through active experience and social interaction. Grammar games provide opportunities for students to engage directly with grammar in a more fun and interactive situation. The games allow students to build their understanding of language structures contextually through practical experience and collaboration with classmates. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach emphasizes language teaching in the context of honest communication and language use in relevant situations. Grammar games create opportunities for the practical use of grammar in communicative activities,

allowing students to practice speaking, listening, and writing skills more naturally (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

RESEARCH METHOD

Description of Sample

This study used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to investigate the role of Grammar Games in English Language Teaching (ELT). The sample included journal articles from reputable academic databases, including Taylor & Francis, Mendeley, and PubMed. Only publications released between 2020 and 2024 were considered to ensure the sources' relevance and quality. These selected studies specifically focused on integrating Grammar Games in English Language Teaching (ELT) and were written in English. In addition, only empirical studies with full-text availability were included in the analysis. Articles that did not explicitly address Grammar Games in a language learning context involved participants outside of formal educational settings or were review papers with no new empirical findings were excluded from the sample. These selection criteria ensured that the literature reviewed provided substantial insights into the effectiveness of Grammar Games in improving English language proficiency.

Procedure

This study followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework to ensure a structured and transparent review process. This procedure consists of four main stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. 1) Identification: Relevant studies were retrieved from academic databases such as Taylor & Francis, PubMed, and Mendeley. Keywords such as "Grammar Games in English Language Teaching (ELT)" were used to find potential studies. 2) Eligibility: The remaining studies were further evaluated based on the predefined inclusion criteria: (a) publication year between 2020 and 2024, (b) focus on Grammar Games in English Language Teaching (ELT), (c) written in English, and (d) Availability of full text was one of the considerations. Studies that did not meet these criteria were excluded from the analysis. 3) Inclusion: The final selection consisted of empirical studies that provided substantial insight into the role of Instagram in improving English language proficiency. These studies were analyzed to synthesize the findings and identify key themes related to the research objectives. By following the PRISMA methodology, this study ensured a rigorous and replicable approach in reviewing the existing literature on the impact of Instagram on English language learning.

Study Selection Criteria

This research review analyzed recent empirical studies based on the following inclusion criteria: 1) Articles listed in Mendeley, PubMed, Taylor & Francis Online, 2)

Articles published in the last 5 years, i.e., in 2020-2024, 3) Articles with a population of undergraduate students in universities, 4) Articles using English, 5) Articles that are original and available in full text.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result

Based on the results of a systematic search in three major academic databases (Taylor & Francis, PubMed, and Mendeley), only articles relevant to Grammar Games in English Language Teaching were selected. The search across all online research platforms resulted in 102 articles identified through the initial screening process. After removing duplicate and irrelevant articles based on the title and abstract, 21 studies were obtained for further review. Of these, 14 articles met the eligibility criteria, and five articles were finally selected for further analysis based on methodology and relevance to the objectives of this study. The search results of each research platform are described in Table 1. This article selection process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021). The PRISMA flowchart (Figure 1) illustrates the stages of article selection used in this study.
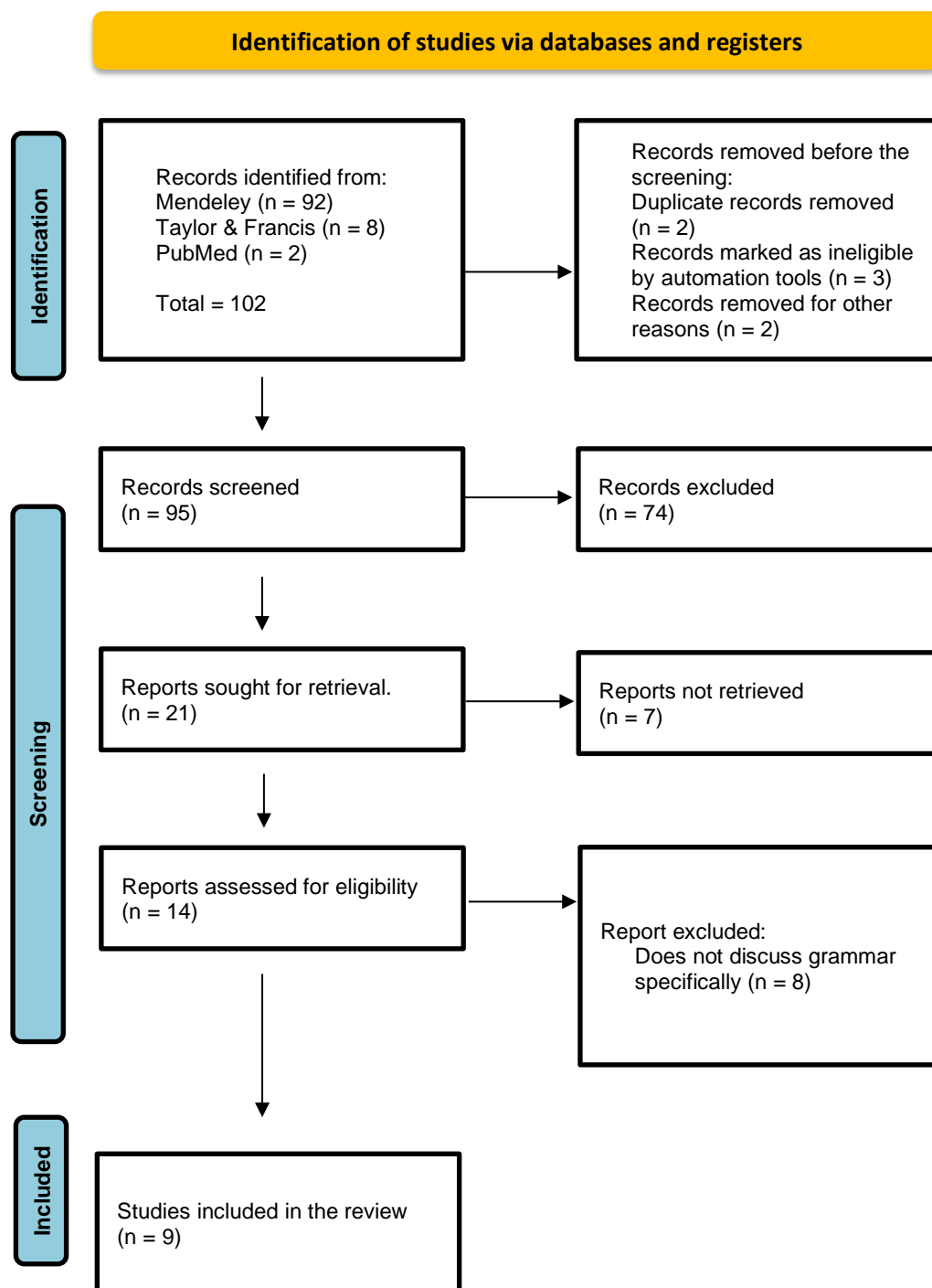
Identification of studies via databases and registers

Identification

Records identified from:
Mendeley (n = 92)
Taylor & Francis (n = 8)
PubMed (n = 2)

Total = 102

Records removed before the screening:
Duplicate records removed (n = 2)
Records marked as ineligible by automation tools (n = 3)
Records removed for other reasons (n = 2)

Screening

Records screened
(n = 95)

Records excluded
(n = 74)

Reports sought for retrieval.
(n = 21)

Reports not retrieved
(n = 7)

Reports assessed for eligibility
(n = 14)

Report excluded:
Does not discuss grammar specifically (n = 8)

Included

Studies included in the review
(n = 9)

Table 1.

Summary and characteristics of the final studies selected

No	Authors, Year & Country	Mean Characteristic	Variable	Study Design	Measure	Findings
1	(Mohd Iskandar Idris, Nur Ehsan Mohd Said and Kim Hua Tan,	31 Grade 3 students (9 years old) in a national	Gamified learning (Kahoot!), English	One-group pre-test post-test research design (quasi-	Pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed	The use of Kahoot! Significantly improved students' post-test scores compared to

	2020, Malaysia)	primary school in the central region of Peninsular Malaysia.	grammar learning (simple present tense), learning motivation, and affective filter.	experimental) with a four-week intervention.	using paired sample t-tests.	their pre-test scores, and Gamification helped lower learners' affective filters and increase their motivation during grammar lessons.
2	(Paola Cabrera-Solano, 2021, South America)	61 EFL undergraduate students (aged 22 to 56) enrolled in two pre-intermediate courses at a private university in southern Ecuador.	Game-based learning (Genially), academic performance (grammar and vocabulary), learning motivation, and students' perceptions.	A quasi-experimental design with control and experimental groups over sixteen weeks. A d	Diagnostic survey, pre-test, post-test, students' perceptions survey, and semi-structured interview were used.	Genially, games improved students' academic performance in online EFL instruction, particularly in grammar and contextual vocabulary knowledge.
3	(Indah Sri Redjeki & R. Muhajir, 2021, Indonesia)	Second-year students enrolled in the "Grammar for Written Discourse" course.	Gamification (Duolingo), grammar learning, students' attitudes, learning motivation.	Action Research	Observations, questionnaires, and documentation.	Duolingo was an effective tool for implementing Gamification in grammar learning. Students showed positive attitudes and improved learning outcomes, and Duolingo supported an innovative and engaging English learning experience.
4	(Ratna Ayu Pawestri Kusuma Dewi, 2021, Indonesia)	Eighth-grade students from a state junior high school in Surabaya; two groups: VIII C (experimental) and VIII A (control).	Teacher races games (Gamification), grammar mastery (simple past tense), and students' writing development.	Experimental quantitative study with pre-test and post-test (control and experimental groups).	Tryout test, pre-test, post-test, t-test statistical analysis.	The teacher races game improved students' grammar mastery, as indicated by a t-values (10.93) higher than the critical t-table values (2.009).
5	(Khalif Rahma Riesty Fauzi, Hidayatul Munawaroh & Sulistyaningsih, 2024, Indonesia)	32 seventh-grade students at a junior high school.	Game-based activities, grammar learning (simple present tense), student motivation, active	Classroom Action Research (three cycles)	Pre-tests, game-based lessons, observations, reflective assessments.	The games-based approach improved students' grammar learning, motivation, active participation, and collaboration. Students showed a deeper understanding

| 6 | (Afraa Husam Sami, 2021, Iraq) | Theoretical/conceptual study | Game strategy, grammar learning, motivation, learning environment. | Theoretical background and literature review. | Review existing literature and theoretical framework on the game strategy in grammar teaching. | The game strategy helps improve students' grammatical knowledge, foster motivation, and create a more engaging and comfortable learning environment. |

(continued from previous row) of grammatical concepts and were willing to use English spontaneously.

Discussion

A synthesis of various studies shows that gamification and language games significantly improve grammar learning for ESL/EFL students. Various research methods, such as quantitative experiments, classroom action research, and literature reviews, agree that integrating games into grammar teaching can increase student motivation, engagement, and comprehension.

Empirical studies utilizing platforms such as Kahoot, Duolingo, and Teacher Races Game have shown significant improvements in grammar test results after implementing interventions. This is due to the role of digital games as interactive tools in multimedia-based education systems, which can potentially increase the effectiveness and appeal of learning, especially for young students (Altawalbeh, 2023). Pre-test and post-test-based research with t-tests also confirmed that students learning with a game-based approach achieved better results than conventional methods. This is in line with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which highlights the role of a supportive learning environment in improving language success.

Action research has shown that games improve student participation, collaboration, and academic achievement. Integrating games allows learners to learn the target language more precisely and enthusiastically (Lau dkk., 2022).Games targeting simple present and past tense proved effective in supporting student's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and helping them internalize grammar rules. The literature review confirms that games are physical and create a fun and meaningful context for grammar practice. The dynamic nature of games also helps reduce students' anxiety and build their confidence in language production.

However, some challenges exist, such as the time required to design suitable games and the risk of students focusing more on the game aspect than grammar learning. Game-based learning methods can be time-consuming for learners, with session lengths often tricky to estimate. The competition factor, transparency of

results, and the tendency to compare achievements with other students can be a source of discomfort. As a result, many students find gamification classes more demanding and prefer more conventional teaching methods (Jääskä & Aaltonen, 2022). However, these can be overcome through proper scaffolding, clear learning objectives, and reflection.

Overall, Gamification proved to be an effective pedagogical strategy for supporting cognitive and affective achievement in grammar learning. It has also been identified as a powerful strategy for driving learning engagement and motivation (Azzouz Boudadi & Gutiérrez-Colón, 2020). Future research is recommended to explore the long-term impact of Gamification on retention and the application of more complex grammar while encouraging educators to adopt game-based techniques in the learning process.

The Use of Grammar Games in English Language Learning

English is crucial in global communication, making early and effective language instruction increasingly essential. Therefore, we must learn English from an early age. Behind it all, many students are not interested and are too lazy to learn English. Therefore, one of the solutions is to use interesting methods, namely by using games as learning media. By integrating elements of games and competition in learning, games can motivate students to be more actively involved in language activities (Omonova, 2024). Gamification in learning can include aspects such as social competition, badge reward systems, leaderboards, and challenges that allow students to earn badges to monitor their progress and increase participation in the class (Gusta, t.t.).

Gamification also incorporates game mechanics into various fields, including teaching and learning, to create a more enjoyable experience and increase student interest in learning (Jannah dkk., 2023). The use of grammar games in ELT has been implemented in various parts of the world with positive results. Research proves that grammar games are often communicative in English language learning. Countries like Japan and South Korea apply grammar games in technology-based learning, while in Europe, grammar games are primarily used in task-based learning. Research has also found that grammar games can be adapted for different levels of students and different learning contexts. Games are becoming increasingly important and valuable in learning other languages in an increasingly modern world (Widiani dkk., 2023).

Learning grammar in a new language can be challenging. Many language learners struggle to master grammar, which can ultimately affect their overall learning experience (Fauzi dkk., 2024). Learning grammar should be a fun and engaging experience for students. Therefore, teachers need to build a relaxed and supportive classroom environment so that students feel comfortable learning, one of which is using games as a learning strategy. When you hear the word "games," it is popular

with children, but grammar games are not only played by children. Adults can also play grammar games. There are so many games that can be played to learn grammar. Many game activities can be used. The researchers found three grammar game activities students can use: Word Guessing Game, Board and Dice, and Run and Guess (Fithriani, 2022). Learners are motivated to earn points, receive badges, or climb the leaderboard, enhancing their engagement in grammar games (Murat Culduz, 2023). In addition, online/digital games can be used for English learning. Digital games are a practical, interactive, and fun way to learn and provide feedback. Teachers use a modern, game-based learning approach to encourage students' active participation in engaging and meaningful activities (Castillo-Cuesta, 2020b). They are Kahoot!, Duolingo, Quizizz, and others. This approach will make students enjoy their learning process more. Moreover, it allows them to apply the grammar concepts they have learned, helps them remember grammar rules better, and develops stronger language skills (Prawira, 2020).

The Benefits of Grammar Games for English Learning

Grammar games have several key benefits in ELT, such as increasing students' learning motivation, making learning more interactive, and helping students understand grammar contextually. Apart from that, grammar games also allow students to learn in a more natural and fun approach, thus improving retention. Using games in the classroom provides various benefits. Some of them are: Games provide various tools that support the learning process and help students design and develop their learning strategies. In addition, their flexible nature allows games to be used to teach various aspects of language, with adjustments to students' abilities and learning targets; games make the classroom atmosphere more interesting by presenting a variety of activities that can maintain students' interest and attention; games can also increase students' motivation to learn; in addition, games provide opportunities for students to use language and achieve learning goals without feeling burdened by perfection; games also encourage students' active participation and increase their confidence in communicating; Ultimately, the application of games shifts the role of the teacher from being an instructor to a facilitator in the learning process (Widiani dkk., 2023). Mobile games can serve as an effective tool to enhance skills as well as student engagement in modern learning environments. The Game boosts students' motivation to learn English in the classroom and provides an interactive and entertaining method to accelerate the language acquisition process. One significant advantage of using mobile games in schools is their ability to help students learn English more effectively and quickly (Ruliany & Purnawarman, 2021). Grammar games significantly improve students' ability to use grammar rules effectively in real-life situations, making noticeable improvements in their practical language (Aratea & Pasubillo, 2024). Grammar games also help learners develop problem-solving skills by

challenging them to find solutions, collaborate with classmates, and agree on the best strategies to complete language-related tasks effectively (Zuniga dkk., t.t.).

The Impacts of Grammar Games on English Learning

In recent years, Technology has been increasingly used in education, including language learning. One method that is gaining popularity is using digital-based games to help students understand grammar more engagingly and interactively. Compared to conventional methods that often feel boring, games make learning fun and encourage students to be more active. More than just an entertainment tool, various studies have shown that games in language learning improve students' understanding of grammar but also help them reduce anxiety while learning. Incorporating game elements such as levels, points, leaderboards, and competition in grammar learning can increase students' external motivation while positively shaping their learning habits. Moreover, these elements can foster internal motivation, making it easier for students to grasp complex grammar concepts (Pan dkk., 2021).

One of the studies supporting the effectiveness of grammar games found that digital games such as Quizizz can increase students' learning motivation through the features of scores, leaderboards, and immediate feedback (Munuyandi dkk., 2021). These features encourage students to be more actively involved and build a more interactive and fun learning atmosphere. In addition, the results show that most students feel more relaxed and less pressured when learning grammar through games, as they can enjoy the learning process without burden. Many students claim to understand grammar rules naturally while playing without memorizing theories, which is often dull. Interestingly, most students prefer the digital quiz method over the traditional method because they find learning this way more fun and easy to understand. This shows that using grammar games helps students understand grammar concepts better and improves their confidence and fluency in English.

In addition to digital-based games, using board games in grammar learning has also proven effective in improving students' understanding of grammar (Triani dkk., 2023). Examine the effectiveness of the Snakes and Ladders game in improving the accuracy of grammar usage in oral and written communication. The research findings showed a significant increase in the experimental class, where the average post-test score increased significantly higher than the control class that did not apply the Game. The higher score increase in the experimental class showed that using grammar games helped students understand grammar rules better and apply them in authentic contexts. During the Game, students had to form correct sentences to proceed to the next step, which helped train their speaking and writing skills with more precise grammar. Compared to the lecture method, which tends to be passive, games provide a more active and enjoyable learning experience, making students more engaged in learning English.

Furthermore, Grammar games improve students' understanding of grammar and positively impact their motivation to learn English. Students who learn grammar through conventional methods such as lectures and written exercises often feel bored and uninterested, while games make them more enthusiastic, active, and comfortable in learning grammar. The element of competition in the Game also triggers the spirit of learning and creates a more dynamic classroom atmosphere, so students are more motivated to understand grammar well. Thus, grammar games help students understand grammar concepts and increase their engagement in the learning process.

However, the success of grammar games in learning depends on several factors. One factor that makes games effective is the element of interactivity and competition, which motivates students to be more active in the learning process. In addition, the learning-by-play method makes grammar concepts easier to understand without boredom. Games that involve movement, such as Snakes and Ladders, are also more appealing to students with kinesthetic learning styles. More than just providing variety in learning, grammar games also help students apply grammar in authentic contexts to memorize rules and use them in daily communication.

On the other hand, some challenges need to be considered when using grammar games. Students may lose interest and motivation to learn if the Game is too difficult or easy. Also, if the Game has unclear rules, they may feel confused and lose focus on the learning objectives. The imbalance between the fun of playing and the understanding of the material can also be an obstacle, where students enjoy the game aspect more than actually understanding the grammar. Therefore, teachers must choose and design games suitable for students' abilities, provide clear guidelines, and balance entertainment elements and learning objectives to maximize the benefits. Previous research shows that using games in English language learning has many academic and instructional benefits, such as increasing student motivation, creating a better learning environment, and providing a more authentic learning experience (Abdeen & Albiladi, 2021).

Various studies have concluded that grammar games significantly positively impact English language learning. Besides helping to improve grammar understanding and communication skills, grammar games also help students overcome anxiety, increase learning motivation, and create a more interactive classroom atmosphere. However, their effectiveness largely depends on how the games are implemented in learning. If designed and used well, grammar games can be an effective and fun learning strategy for mastering English.

CONCLUSION

Based on the systematic review, this study concludes that grammar games are pivotal in enhancing English language learning, especially in teaching grammar to EFL and ESL learners. First, grammar games are widely used in various educational

contexts by integrating digital and physical formats, such as Kahoot!, Duolingo, Teacher Races Game, and board games like Snakes and Ladders. These games are applied in diverse learning environments, from formal classrooms to online platforms, adapting to different student levels and learning objectives.

Second, the benefits of grammar games are evident in increasing students' motivation, promoting active participation, and creating a more interactive and engaging learning atmosphere. Grammar games help students understand grammar contextually and practically, reduce anxiety, and foster collaboration and communication skills among peers. They also contribute to lowering students' affective filters, making grammar learning feel more accessible and less intimidating.

Lastly, the impacts of grammar games on English learning are significant. The reviewed studies consistently show that students who engage in game-based grammar activities achieve better learning outcomes than those who use conventional methods. Grammar games improve grammar mastery and enhance students' confidence, fluency, and willingness to communicate honestly in English. However, to maximize their effectiveness, educators must carefully design and implement games well-aligned with learning objectives and student needs. Therefore, grammar games are a recommended pedagogical strategy to make grammar instruction more effective, enjoyable, and impactful for English learners. The findings emphasize the potential of grammar games as a supplementary technique and a core component in modern language instruction.

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