
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Use of Language Games to Facilitate Grammar Learning by ESL/EFL Students: A Literature Review

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| ABSTRACT

Lessons no longer use the chalk-and-talk method of traditional teaching and learning. In order to improve student engagement throughout the session, teachers and students are exposed to various task-based processes. Using language games to help teach different abilities is One of the most widely used and favored instructional strategies. With the rise of digital learning tools and online applications, classroom language games have advanced and become more complex. It is easier to satisfy the needs and passions of your learners while playing language games in class when you employ interesting and relevant materials together with a range of teaching techniques, especially when teaching grammar in its proper setting. Several studies concentrating on various targeted language areas and abilities like grammar have employed a variety of language games to demonstrate how they affect learners' knowledge, competence, and enthusiasm for learning a language. This study will examine how language games are used to teach and learn grammar to students of English as a second language (ESL). The evaluation will be based on the assessment of existing studies. The results show that language games may be used effectively to teach and learn grammar to ESL students. This research helps demonstrate the value of language games as a teaching method to facilitate students' English grammar learning.

| KEYWORDS

English as a second language, grammar games, learning tools, Artificial Intelligence, mobile games

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

As grammar is a relatively important language structure that students need to acquire to construct coherent sentences, it is impossible to overstate the significance of anything in English (Savignon, 2017). The grammar study combines words to generate understandable sentences (Thekes, 2011; Goodman & Goodman, 2014). While some ESL students could feel hesitant because they fear making grammatical errors that might confuse the original thoughts, they must confidently form sentences and convey their views. The use of technology as a teaching tool has been suggested since some people find it difficult to understand grammatical rules (Baharudin & Yunus, 2018). It illustrates how language games may enhance grammar instruction and learning while, more importantly, assisting students in honing their grammar abilities. This approach to teaching and comprehending English grammar is flexible and successful, especially when dealing with young and teenage ESL learners. Grammar instruction, sometimes known as language awareness, is required in those nations for ESL competency. Textbooks and workbooks explain the main grammar principles that students must understand by the conclusion of their secondary school careers.

An improved language teaching and learning method has emerged in recent years with the development of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methods. "CLT is a language education technique that emphasizes the conveyance of meaning rather than the practice of grammatical forms in isolation," claim Ngoc and Iwashita (2012). (p.26). A

CLT method impacts classroom procedures for 21st-century second and foreign language acquisition so that students can be communicatively competent in light of the circumstances in which English is taught (Savignon, 2017). Language games fall under the category of CLT because they are learner-centered, meaningful collaborative and interactive activities, use relevant and genuine resources, emphasize meaning and linguistic forms in context, and instructors' facilitation responsibilities (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, as cited in Ngoc & Iwashita, 2012). Participants experience relaxation and enjoyment, and it encourages language learners to use language in communicative and creative ways (Adeng & Shah, 2012). Language learning is characterized as playing language games via play that incorporates communicative learning features (Willis & Willis, 2013; Adeng & Shah, 2012) (Godwin-Jones, 2014). As a result, it reinforces the idea that grammar instruction and acquisition should occur in a correct context and in a genuine manner rather than in isolation. Language education may be aided by digital and analog (physical) games, which come in two varieties. Language instructors and students still find value in traditional board games like Wheel of Grammar (WOG), Snake and Ladders, and Grammar Monopoly. Although schools with enough capabilities for digital language games to take place might choose websites like Quizlet and Edmodo, together with A fantastic example for learning English is playing enormously online multiplayer game-playing like Frogplay.

According to Hall (2017), outgoing and interaction-based English language teaching methods often recommend minimizing teacher speech to give students more time for discussion, language practice, and language production. Naturally, this complies with the standards for a 21st-century teaching and learning strategy where students are responsible for their learning and include the Advanced Instructional Rationales components in grammar sessions (p.23). The use of language games in CLT is essential for ensuring the proficiency of ESL students and the assurance to use proper grammar while executing all language abilities, particularly when resolving puzzles and challenges. The learning environment is quickly changing to challenge and prepare students for an atmosphere with (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) that promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Meng, 2014). The current English textbooks in Malaysia give the practices and functions for the intended grammar components. However, they do not include CLT ideas. "The Subject-Verb Agreement (SVA) and Verb-To-Be (VTB) provided in textbooks in elementary and secondary schools are frequently in the form of tables which might slow down the learning process since most learners find it disagreeable," according to Chambers & Yunus (2017), who share this perspective (p.1642). In textbooks and workbooks, the style and way the grammatical rules are presented are crucial design elements since they help draw students' attention. Language games are useful for teaching ESL students grammatical structures and utilizing them in practical and communicative situations. Savignon (2017) affirms that learners "appear to concentrate best on grammar when it pertains to their communicative demands and experiences" (p.4-5). This encapsulates the efficacy of grammatical instruction using different autonomous and communicative techniques.

Education must be purposeful and productive to develop abilities to stay up with recent technological improvements. As a result, ESL students should understand the fundamentals of grammar to utilize it for conversation rather than only for testing. Students should be exposed to the language's structural and functional elements and its formal ones, such as its grammar and forms. Both should be modified and absorbed to establish a connection for proper usage rather than differentiated. In order to better understand how language games might be used to teach and learn grammar with a focus on ESL students' fluency, interest, and motivation, this study analyses prior research. In order to help EFL college students comprehend the structure and substance of literary works, the current study suggests integrating mobile fiction Apps (MFAs) into reading education. The article will outline the benefits of utilizing MFAs, literary appreciation skills that can be cultivated with MFAs, and instructional phases with MFAs. It will also include examples of fiction Apps that can be obtained from the Google Play and iPhone App Stores. MFAs can be utilized in ESL/EFL classrooms as extension activities or as a supplement to reading teaching. (Al-Jarf, R. (2022).

2. Literature Review

Language games employed in the teaching and learning process offer several benefits, including enhancing ESL students' fluency and language abilities while adhering to many different communication styles. It fosters an atmosphere that is both enjoyable and conducive to successful educational endeavors. Children, as stated by Goodman and Goodman, "learn language best in an environment that is packed to the brim with opportunities to study appealing things and ideas" (2014). (p.197). According to Ellis, playing language games provides students with a setting in which they may engage, utilizing the target grammatical forms in a manner that is both more interesting and more authentic (2006, as quoted in Alijanian, 2012). Grammar is no longer generally accepted as a context-free set of rules established concerning language forms. (p.415). It should be taught to increase interaction among students as they employ the right grammatical structures and the flexibility to use the language introduced as the primary medium of instruction (Willis & Willis, 2013). According to Krashen, performance in a second language may be broken down into two independent systems, which are referred to as "the acquired system" and "the learned system" (1988). The learned system (learning) is the product of an intentional procedure that produces linguistic information, such as grammatical rules, whereas the acquired system (acquisition) results from meaningful interaction or natural communication in the target language.

In contrast, the developed system requires significant interaction or simple touch in the target language (Krashen, 1988). The students take an active role (Thirusanku & Melor, 2014), and their participation in language games promotes their comprehension

of the need to practice grammatical structures in ordinary speech regularly. Real-world scenarios provide English as a Second Language (ESL) students the opportunity to improve their language abilities and sense of confidence by forcing them to deal with various problems daily.

Despite this, Alijanian (2012) researched and showed that "both CLT and direct grammar instruction were liked equally by the instructors." CLT and direct grammar teaching (p.416). According to Chambers and Yunus (2017). More evidence supports the claim that English as a Second Language (ESL) students should first master the foundations of grammar before being provided with communicative exercises. According to Alijanian (2012), students are more likely to get distracted if the rule is not explained right away (p.417). Teachers' perspectives on grammatical instruction are the primary subject of this research. A study conducted by Taheri on Iranian students learning English as a foreign language indicated that games are more effective for language learning than traditional form-focused training since the latter lacks some of the features present in games (2014). This research aims to determine how grammar instructors feel about using instructional games compared to a more conventional method. (p.548). Many traditional approaches start by teaching grammatical forms before setting communicative exercises for learners to apply such conditions, claim Willis & Willis (2013). (p.18).

Additionally, Thekes (2011) notes that "some English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers still fall into the comfortable trap of presenting grammar through rules" and that "the constant explanation of grammar rules and decontextualizing grammar are quick ways for teachers to demotivate their learners" (p.1). As a result, there is a need for a change in grammar instruction to get away from the conventional approaches that are often utilized in grammar sessions (Briewin, Naidu & Mohamed, 2013; Taheri, 2014). TBLT is a method that, according to Willis & Willis (2013), promotes students to participate in meaning rather than just mastering language skills.

Learning a new language via fun activities like playing games has improved students' formal reasoning and learning talents, which are crucial for their growth as potential professionals (Rahman & Bakar, 2018; Thirusanku & Yunus, 2014). Alijanian compares two competing theories on how best to teach grammar: the traditional approach that treats grammar as a separate subject (which she argues does not help students learn the language) and the more recent view that students learn grammar best when it is presented contextually (within a text) (2012). (p.417). These contrasting opinions provide light on teachers' differing perspectives on how best to teach grammatical concepts. The task-based language teaching (TBLT) method, of which language games are a part, is to produce ESL students who can communicate effectively in real-world circumstances using the grammatical structures they have learned (Willis & Willis, 2013). A study was done on this topic (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Students can take charge of their learning once they are interested in and motivated by the language, despite criticisms that this approach is unstructured and that students must take the initiative by using a reliable objective to stand in independence and capability (Benson, 2011, as cited in Chik, 2012).

2.1 Using Language-Related Games to Pique Attention in Knowledge

According to Adeng & Shah (2012), "games are the best idea to learn the grammar of a second language," and "grammar education that is excessively focused on rules and memorization causes learners to lose their interest and drive." (p.23). It becomes apparent that playing interactive games while practicing the language in various communicative contexts is more engaging than using workbooks. ESL students are more motivated to master a specific grammatical rule via real-world context-related activities in realistic language games. Also, it is essential to use various classroom exercises and learning techniques. Learners with multiple needs are encouraged to join and engage in grammar classes (Chambers & Yunus, 2017). There is no question that language games contain activities to meet ESL learners' demands and allow them to study in a productive and supportive setting. The development of a learner's second language is significantly impacted by their first language, according to studies. Low competence level L2 learners typically employ traditional strategies like direct writing and the translation technique when writing in L1. Studies determine how L1 transfer affects writing quality. (Saleh, N. et al (2021).

As stated by Chik (2012), "Learners can practice foreign language learning and use autonomously through exercises they were enthusiastic about and decided to move the learning process beyond the classroom," Godwin-Jones (2014) claims that "games can offer an immersive environment in which extensive use of the target language is made" (p. 10). (p.96).

Other than the fact that it may be used in classes even when the classroom is not equipped with modern technological equipment, Language games, both digital and non-digital, pique the attention of English as a Second Language (ESL) students, encouraging them to engage in the sometimes tedious grammatical courses. ESL learners may learn well since the context is provided to match the targeted grammar points because it replicates the real times and locations. Providing context when introducing targeted grammar items can, in the words of Briewin et al. (2013), "arouse interest, stimulate interaction and help them to understand places, people, and events as well as simplify situations that would otherwise be abstract and difficult to explain in words." It can also "help them to understand places, people, and events." (p.250). Pupils are instructed on the appropriate tenses to employ in each case. Additionally, Baharudin and Yunus (2018) found that learners can learn grammar more autonomously through language games because they can make logical connections between the knowledge and its application. This is consistent with Butler's (2017) statement that game-like materials "allow personalized instruction and promote independence to cater to the legitimate

interests of learners" (p.735). Since English and Chinese have been the two languages most thoroughly researched in terms of the use of AR technology, the vast majority of studies concentrate on the consequences of its implementation in the acquisition of English. Additionally, a significant amount of research has been conducted in higher education institutions like universities, followed by other facilities devoted to early childhood education. (Marrahí-Gómez, et al (2022).

Although acknowledging that "it makes the lesson more interesting and protects them from getting bored," Nedomova (2007, as stated in Adeng & Shah, 2012) disagrees (p. 575). Adolescent ESL students are at an age when they are ready to play and explore, which draws them in and encourages them to participate actively in the grammatical games throughout the course. Similar sentiments are expressed by Mubaslat (2011/2012), who claims that "games need to be at the center of teaching foreign languages and that games should be employed at all levels of class" (p.4). So, it is acceptable to conclude that including interactive games in grammar instruction helps to pique students' attention. Godwin-Jones (2014) states that "game playing may be a powerful agent for learner autonomy, a possible resource for long-term language preservation, and an entry-point for increasing interest in learning other languages" (p.11). Learning-oriented students will be emotionally invested in the lesson and completely grasp its meaning. In the long term, this component aids students in understanding and remembering the task, particularly the highlighted grammatical points. Learning via language games is a pleasant diversion from a dry grammar lecture for ESL instructors seeking strategies to keep students engaged and interested in learning the English language (Briewin et al., 2013; Mubaslat, 2011/2012). (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2014).

2.2 Games to Improve Effortlessness in the Target Language

Developing ESL students' English proficiency is crucial to a successful language course. Students who get grammar training understand English more accurately than they otherwise would (Chambers & Yunus, 2017). In order to advance in a game, ESL students must converse with other players actively (Godwin-Jones 2014; Chambers & Yunus 2017; Adeng & Shah 2012), which offers opportunities for effortlessness and skill growth. It's fantastic that "they are exposed to cultural and linguistic information that they are unlikely to have met in a textbook or the classroom," says Godwin-Jones (2014), adding that "learners are employing language in real and meaningful ways to achieve a job via games" (p.10). According to Chambers and Yunus's (2017) study, the Wheel of Grammar program has assisted Form Five students at a school in Sarawak with constructing simple sentences and applying the proper fundamental Subject-Verb Agreement norms (SVA). Likewise, Adeng & Shah (2012) found that "grammar games stimulate, amuse, and increase fluency" in their study on the use of competitions in instruction grammar (p.28). It differs from conventional language instruction, which prioritizes grammar drills and restricts total opportunities for speaking and writing in English in real-world situations. Language games provide ESL students additional opportunities to use the language individually and help them gain fluency (Willis & Willis, 2013). They also let them work with partners and in groups. Role-playing is the ideal illustration of a game since it inspires students to be creative and spontaneous. ESL students are encouraged to explore, discover, and work together through playing games (Mubaslat, 2011/2012). They progress their verbal skills via social engagement and trial-and-error learning. According to this research, language games emphasizing learners' autonomous knowledge and learner-centeredness should replace the conventional teaching approach to foster and advance ESL learners' fluency in speaking the target language (Adeng & Shah, 2012). Learners may experience less anxiety, more self-assurance, and good feelings and behaviors when speaking the target language in an enjoyable environment without feeling intimidated (Adeng & Shah, 2012).

2.3 Games to Inspire and Encourage Language Learners

It is essential to cultivate motivation in students of English as a Second Language (ESL) so that they will be pushed to learn the grammar of a second or foreign language. According to Briewin and colleagues, some students are given more work "because they recognize the importance that grammar plays in sentence production" (2013). (p.252). Hence, most of the time, they are conscious of enhancing their grammatical skills to speak English fluently, but they may not be ready to understand the rules immediately. Language learning games like TBLT would suit the situation nicely since teaching and learning tactics are among the aspects that affect students' persistence in learning grammar. The motivational theory known as "Flow Theory," created by Mihaly Csikszentmihaly in (1975), may be linked to the motivating factors of language games (Oppland, 2016). In addition to finding delight while working on the task and making sure the action is neither too challenging nor easy to avoid getting bored or irritated, it defines a state of mind that is experienced when participating in hard activities in a gratifying range between tedium and concern (Franciosi, 2011). Grammar instruction has traditionally taken place in person. Despite the advent of the digital age, physical classroom settings still dominate language instruction in the nation. Since the education system is now dealing with modular distance learning, there is a wide range of topics that can be studied. As a result, by looking at what schools have done, mistakes and issues that could occur with modularized instruction could be avoided. (Oranggaga, Saliha Dicasaran. (2022).

Thekes (2011) claimed that "learners are amused and become engaged in gaining it," and Adeng & Shah (2012) concur that "games are motivating and engaging means of teaching language" (p.28). It includes difficult yet doable tasks for students to complete, resulting in the best possible learning and emotional experiences (Oppland, 2016). To further explain, the Flow Theory examines how perceptions of educational environments impact learning and motivation (Oppland, 2016). Due to the extrinsic and intrinsic reasons that language games provide for learners, they would therefore be a great addition to grammar lessons. This is supported

by Godwin-Jones (2014), who claims that "identity and inner revelation could further provide the sort of intrinsically motivated that pledges users to learn more" (p.13). In particular, since games improve the learning environment in the classroom, they encourage students to learn more than conventional teaching approaches do (Mubaslat, 2011/2012). When games are used, it lessens ESL learners' anxiety about learning a different language's grammatical structure (Franciosi, 2011). Games "encourage autonomous learning among the learners, therefore, pushing them to be more confident in learning," according to Baharudin & Yunus (2018: P107).

This is because the learners are in control of the circumstances and not the other way around. In addition, playing games and completing group assignments promote involvement, collaboration, and interpersonal contact (Adeng & Shah, 2012; Savignon, 2017). New technologies, including cell phones, internet access, television, computers, and video games, are now commonplace in students' daily life. The older generations were not at all like the current ones. They were raised among new mechanics and found it impossible to envisage life without them. (Al Jawad, et al (2021).

3. Discussion

This study aims to explore the teaching and learning of grammar using language games by focusing on the advantages of doing so and related to earlier research on learners' fluency, interest, and motivation. The difficult, laborious, and antiquated methods often used to study grammar are the root cause of the primary problem that ESL students struggle with low levels of passion, fluency, and drive. Consequently, this article focuses on the need to introduce students related to the usage of language games in analog (physical) and digital (games) forms. Yet, there have been debates over the relative advantages of teaching grammar in the traditional manner as opposed to teaching it via games. Games are a good and desirable alternative when learners are not interested in or cooperative with grammar instruction because they promote engagement, connection, and learning in context. This concludes that games are a good alternative because they encourage concentration, harmony, and contextual learning. Also, time is saved because students are instantly introduced to grammar in context and build fluency in constructing sentences. (Adeng & Shah, 2012) Research has shown that playing language games is enjoyable, and when educational goals are combined with elements that promote engagement and pleasure, the process of learning grammar is sped up (Mihaly Csikszentmihaly, 1975 in Oppland, 2016). Students learning English as a second language may significantly enhance their grammatical fluency by participating in gaming activities (Briewin et al., 2013).

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates how instructors may utilize language games to improve ESL students' comprehension and acquisition of grammar because they help them become more fluent, interested, and motivated learners. The technological generations of today place a high importance on grammar ability since it shows expertise and is useful in social situations. The same holds for the skill of boosting self-assurance via the choice of language that is appropriate for the position. Grammar should thus not be taught or learned in a classroom but rather via appropriate strategies that enable students of English as a second language to easily connect to how it is utilized. Last but not least, language games are expected to aid instructors in creating entertaining educational resources that capture students' interest, intelligibility, and enthusiasm and respond to their proficiency level and educational needs. This is because such materials will consider learners' preferred modes of learning. Grammar lessons are undoubtedly simplified, making them far more comprehensible for ESL students.

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